THE SANTISSIMA ANNUNZIATA OF FLORENCE, MEDICI PORTRAITS, AND THE COUNTER REFORMATION IN ITALY

by

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A defining feature of the Counter-Reformation period is the new impetus given to the material expression of devotion to sacred images and relics. There are nonetheless few scholarly studies that look deeply into the shrines of venerated images, as they were renovated or decorated anew during this period. This dissertation investigates an image cult that experienced a particularly rich elaboration during the Counter-Reformation – that of the miracle-working fresco called the Nunziata, located in the Servite church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Nunziata had become the primary sacred image in the city of Florence and one of the most venerated Marian cults in Italy.

My investigation spans around 1580 to 1650, and includes texts related to the sacred fresco, copies made after it, votives, and other additions made within and around its shrine. I address various components of the cult that carry meanings of civic importance; nonetheless, one of its crucial characteristics is that it partook of general agendas belonging to the Counter-Reformation movement. That is, it would be myopic to remain within a strictly local scope when considering this period. The evidence nonetheless also demands more than a simple broadening of “context”. This thesis shows that key aspects of the material articulation of the Nunziata’s cult were deeply integrated with actions and attitudes emanating from the Church’s policy centres, in particular, Rome and Milan. At the same time, the sanctuary was a chief site for the expression of
the power and privilege of the Medici, who were the ruling family of Florence and most prominent patrons of the fresco’s cult. My study therefore accounts for the intertwining of two strains of representation -- the Medici as ideal Counter-Reformation princes and the Santissima Annunziata as a powerful miracle-working image.
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Introduction

A defining phenomenon of the Counter-Reformation period is the new impetus given to developing the material culture of sacred images and relics. This included the cults of Marian images, which had become especially popular in the course of Catholic history. By the Renaissance period the preeminent shrines in Italy included those of the Virgin of Loreto (probably the most honoured image cult at the time), the Salus Populi Romani at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome, the Vallicella Madonna (also in Rome, in the Oratorian church called the Chiesa Nuova), and the Madonna dell’Albero in the Duomo of Milan. All of these sites were renovated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and they appear at different points in this dissertation. My focus, however, is an image cult that also experienced a particularly rich material elaboration from the later decades of the sixteenth century to roughly the mid-seicento (c.1580-1650) – that of the miracle-working fresco in the Servite church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence. (fig. 0.1) During the course of the Renaissance period, the Nunziata’s shrine came to be among the most famous in Italy, perhaps second only to that of the Madonna of Loreto. It was also one of the oldest in Florence, having been founded by the 1360s. By the mid sixteenth-century, it was the principal sacred image in the city and as such an important locus of civic identity.¹ The Nunziata is a fourteenth-century fresco, still in situ, on the entrance wall within the nave of the church. (When facing the entrance, it is to the right. figs. 0.2, 0.3, 2.1) It shows the Annunciation, but the thaumaturgic power of the image was believed to lie specifically within the face of the Virgin. (fig. 0.4) The earliest written account of the legend

dates to 1456, and claims that the painting was commissioned by the Servites in 1252 from an artist named only as Bartolomeo. The existing fresco dates to the fourteenth century. As the legend goes, Bartolomeo found himself unable to paint the face of the Virgin; but, after falling asleep, he awoke to find it completed. In Francesco Bocchi’s telling of the tale in the later sixteenth century, both the face of Gabriel and that of the Nunziata are completed “by the hand of God, and with divine virtue [dalla mano di Dio, e da virtù divina]”, although some say the former was made by human hands.²

My investigation includes texts from the period related to the fresco of the Nunziata, as well as additions and renovations made within and around its shrine. It addresses various components of the cult that carry meanings of civic importance. Nonetheless, this thesis takes into account aspects that extend beyond strictly Florentine concerns. That is, a crucial characteristic of the cult of the Nunziata from the later sixteenth century on was that it partook of more general agendas belonging to the Counter-Reformation movement. Art historical studies of the Renaissance period tend to be circumscribed geographically to cities or city states.³ As my

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² Bocchi, 1592, 24-25. I provide here only a brief summary of the foundation of the cult, which has been covered extensively by others. For an especially detailed account that examines different versions of the story, see Megan Holmes, “The Elusive Origins of the Cult of the Annunziata of Florence,” in The Miraculous Image in Late Medieval and Renaissance Culture, Erik Thunø and Gerhard Wolf eds., (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2004) 97-122. The face of the Nunziata has been heavily restored. It was first retouched by Alessandro Allori, as directed by Francesco I de’Medici in the 1580’s. A second restoration dates to the nineteenth century. See Chapter One of this thesis, n.12.

research progressed, however, it became clear that it would be myopic to remain within a strictly local scope when dealing with this period. The evidence nonetheless also demands more than a simple broadening of “context”. As this thesis will show, during the Counter-Reformation period, key aspects of the material expression of the Nunziata’s cult were deeply integrated with actions and attitudes emanating from the Church’s chief policy centres, in particular, Rome and Milan.

The production of texts on sacred images was a central strategy in the renewal of Marian cultic culture during the Counter-Reformation period, and publications about the Nunziata from this time are both typical and exceptional in their form and content. An emblematic Counter-Reformation work is the monumental *Atlas Marianus*, published in several volumes during the 1650’s by the Jesuit Wilhelm von Gumppenberg. It lists around 1,200 images of the Madonna located throughout the world.\(^4\) Its general intent is therefore to show that it is the ubiquity of popular devotion that proves the legitimacy of the cult images, a kind of bottom-up argument. Less well known today, but of equal scope and even earlier in date, is Don Felice Astolfi’s *Historia Universale delle Imagini Miracolose della Gran Madre di Dio reverite in tutte le parti del Mondo* (Venice, 1623). Astolfi gives extensive consideration to the legend of the Nunziata’s origins and Medici involvement at her shrine.\(^5\) He is also attentive to larger concerns surrounding

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\(^5\) Ibid., 283-85, 744. See also 676 for an account of the cleaning of the image by the painter Alessandro Allori and as ordered by Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici sometime in the 1580’s. For the latter, and for his account of the Nunziata in general, Astolfi relied to a great extent on Francesco Bocchi, *Sopra l’immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata di Fiorenza: dove si narra come di quella è grande la*
Marian images. In his introduction, he justifies the globalization of Mary’s cult and the validity of each image operating within it by amplifying the famous legend of St. Luke, who painted the Virgin in person. Astolfi provides a precise date for this work (55 CE), so as to ground the story historically. He moreover claims that Luke himself made multiple copies of the Madonna, specifically in response to “the fervour of the faithful, that is, so the true image of Mary could be brought to every part of the world.” Astolfi says that the saint, seized and filled by the spirit of God, worked feverishly to paint as many images as he could.  

The critical issue at stake here – that all cult images be “true likenesses” – also appears in this thesis. Chapter One analyzes a Servite story that argues for the Nunziata’s resemblance to her divine counterpart. And this tale, like Astolfi’s embellishment of the St. Luke legend, is an example of the creative efforts that could arise out of the need to maintain the orthodox authority of sacred images. Giani’s story is nonetheless also a site-specific and highly allusive text in the ways it assimilates the spiritual potency of the Nunziata with the secular power of her chief custodians, the Medici Grand Dukes of Florence.

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maestà (Florence, 1592). This text will be cited frequently throughout this study, and I refer to the following edition: Francesco Bocchi, Della Imagine Miracolosa della SS. Nunziata di Firenze: Opera di Messer Francesco Bocchi scrittore del Secolo XVI (Florence: T. Baracchi, 1852) 67-68. In the seventeenth-century Don Felice Astolfi furthermore notes Medici devotion at the shrine of the Madonna of Loreto. Don Felice Astolfi, Historia Universale delle Imagini Miracolose della Gran Madre di Dio reverite in tutte le parti del Mondo: e delle cose maravigliose, operate da Dio Signor Nostro in gratia di lei, e a favor de’divoti suoi (Venice: Sessa, 1623), 744, 759.

6 “Il fervor de’fedeli, accioche si potesse portare per ogni parte del mondo l’Imagine vera di Maria.” And “[p]otiamo credere, che giorno, e notte faticasse per farne, come di cosa desideratissima, piu e piu ritratti. Aggiuntovi, che lo spirit di Dio, che in esso abbondava, come lo spirava, così movealo a farne quanti piu potesse, per conseguir anco il merito di haver cooperato alla Gloria della Reina dell’Universo.” Astolfi, 5.
A widely produced textual genre of the period was the compendium of miracles. From the later sixteenth century on, printed miracle collections were issued for virtually every sacred Marian image in Italy, including the Nunziata, which saw no less than four between 1592 and 1619. The stories in these include that of Catherine Cornaro, the Renaissance Queen of Cyprus, whom the Nunziata cured of her lustfulness. There are also miracles wherein the Nunziata heals illnesses, saves souls from the plague, or frees prisoners taken by the Turks. Many were well known among the populace, such as the baby who was born black but then turned white by the Nunziata, a tale that was a favourite of the Grand Duke Francesco I de’ Medici. (I include here

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7 See Bocchi, 1592; Luca Ferrini, *Corona di Sessanta Tre Miracoli della Nunziata di Firenze* (1593); Pagolo Baroni, *La Corona della Vergine....tradotta di prosa in ottava rima* (three editions: 1614, n.d., and 1619); Giovanni Angelo Lottini and Jacques Callot, *Scelta d’alcuni miracoli e grazie della Santissima Nunziata di Firenze* (1619). Ferrini and Lottini’s texts were dedicated to Christina of Lorraine, wife of Ferdinand I de’ Medici. For these miracle compilations, see Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, “Media, memory, and the ‘Miracoli della SS. Annunziata’,” *Word & Image*, 25, n.3 (July-September, 2009), 272-92. Matthews-Grieco also provides an extensive list of miracle books that were published in central Italy in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Matthews-Grieco, 291, n.76. For an overview of the use of miracles as proof of the efficacy of sacred images and relics during this period by authors such as Onofrio Panvinio, Simone Maioli, and Baronius, see Giuseppe Scavizzi, *The Controversy on Images from Calvin to Baronius* (New York: P.Lang, 1992), 177, 237.

8 Ferrini, 42-43; Bocchi, 1592, 88-92.

9 The votive is dated to 1280 by some sources. Richa, V.8, 1. Ferdinando Mancini, writing in 1650, adds that the miracle was confirmed for Francesco I by the painter, Jacopo Ligozzi. Ferdinando Mancini, *Restaurazione d’alcuni piu segnalati miracoli della S.ma Nunzita di Fiorenza*, manuscript, dated 1650. This text is transcribed and its illustrations reproduced, with notes by Iginia Dina, “Ex-voto d’argento all’Annunziata nel 1650,” in La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studi e documenti sulla chiesa e il convento (Florence: Convento della SS. Annunziata, 1978), (Dina/Mancini) 86/5. Recently, however, this story has been recently identified as not appearing in the Nunziata’s miracle corpus before the end of the sixteenth century. Megan Holmes, “‘How a woman with a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary gave birth to a very black child’: Imagining ‘Blackness’ in Renaissance Florence,” in *Fremde in der Stadt. Ordnungen, Repräsentationen und Praktiken. 13. –15. Jahrhundert (Inklusion/Exklusion. Studien zu Fremdheit und
Jacques Callot’s illustration, from Giovanni’s Angelo Lottini’s *Scelta d’alcuni miracoli e grazie della Santissima Nunziata di Firenze* (1619). fig.0.5) A fifteenth century story about the servant of a Spanish Ambassador who was unjustly sentenced to death and then miraculously freed by the Nunziata was also recounted in verses sung by women and children in the streets of Florence.\(^{10}\) The miracle books also come into play in this study. In the seicento they are the model for the transformation of the votive collection in the church which takes on a new, discursive form.

Another text that frequently informs my arguments is Francesco Bocchi’s *Sopra l’immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata di Fiorenza: dove si narra come di quella è grande la maestà* (Florence, 1592). Like other books of the period that promote the cause of a single sacred image or relic, this gives a history of the work and accounts for its thaumaturgic power. It nonetheless was also written by the foremost Florentine art theorist of the late sixteenth century, and it reflects the exceptional way that secular and religious concerns were conjugated with this particular cult; as such, it doubles as an encomium to the piety and power of the Medici. At a number of points, Bocchi figures the equation of the affective and effective potency of the Nunziata’s countenance with that of the Grand Duke. His text is therefore a starting point for my

\(^{10}\) For the miracle of the baby, see Chapter Two of this thesis. For the miracle of the Spanish servant, see Matthews-Grieco, who cites Ferrini and Lottini for the recounting of the miracle in popular song. She also discusses the importance of oral tradition to Pagolo Baroni’s translation of Ferrini’s collection into verse form, in his *La Corona della Vergine...tradotta di prosa in ottava rima* (Florence: Francesco Tosi, 1614). The latter was dedicated to the wife of Cosimo II de’ Medici, Maria Maddelena of Austria, but Baroni states directly that this chapbook was intended for popular consumption. Matthews-Grieco, 276.
understanding of a constellation of Medici portraits (votive and otherwise) at the Nunziata’s shrine in terms of the image of the ideal Counter-Reformation prince.

Before further adumbrating the key topics of this study, the existing scholarship on the shrine of the Santissima Annunziata should be reviewed. Most tends to look at the early years, from the mid-fourteenth century, when it was first established, through the sixteenth century. Louisa Bulman’s dissertation of 1971, based on a deep investigation of archival sources, outlines the material culture and patronage activity at the church of the SANTISSIMA Annunziata up to around 1520.11 The treasure trove of artworks dating across centuries and found within the convent and church has also been of considerable interest to art historians. A number of these have been the subject of specific investigations. Many involve premier Renaissance and Baroque artists, such as Michelozzo Michelozzi, Fra Angelico, Pietro Perugino, Viet Stoss, Andrea del Sarto, Agnolo Bronzino, Alessandro and Cristofano Allori, Bernardino Poccetti, and Jacopo Ligozzi.12 The Cappella San Luca, the chapel granted after 1563 to the Academia del Disegno by


12 Among the works best known today is a cover for an armadio that held silver votives, painted by Fra Angelico and others with forty-one scenes, primarily showing the life of Christ. Six of these panels are now lost. The remainder are currently in the Museum of San Marco, Florence. Also well studied is the fresco cycle on the walls of the atrium (or Chiostro dei Voti) of the church was painted between 1511 and 1516, primarily by Andrea del Sarto (seven scenes), with single scenes by Franciabigio, Pontormo, and Rosso Fiorentino. It depicts episodes from the life of the Virgin and the life of San Filippo Benizi, general of the Servite Order beginning in 1267. The large cloister of the convent (otherwise known as the Chiostro dei Morti) holds another of Andrea del Sarto’s best known works, the fresco of the Madonna del Sacco, painted in 1525 and located in the lunette over the door leading to the transept of the church. Also in the Chiostro and dated to the early seicento is a fresco cycle telling the history of the Servite order. Poccetti completed fourteen of the twenty-five lunettes that comprise this project, working with Ventura...
Cosimo I de’Medici, is located off of the large cloister of the convent adjoining the church. This space holds contributions by Giorgio Vasari, Pontormo, Giambologna, and the Servite sculptor, historian, and playwright Giovan Angelo Lottini, among others. The site thus evidences a centuries-long commitment to the visual arts by the Servites, along with such noble patrons as the Falconieri, Pucci, Gonzaga, and especially the Medici. My study touches on a number of artworks at the Santissima Annunziata according to their relevance to seicento projects. In

Salimbeni; and after Poccetti’s death in 1612, the cycle was completed by Fra Arsenio Mascagni (1608-14) and Matteo Rosselli. An overview of these and other works within the Nunziata is found in Francesca Petrucci, Santissima Annunziata (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1992). Further bibliography is provided in the body of this thesis for specific works discussed there.

13 Alessio Falconieri was one of the seven patrician founders of the Servite Order. In the mid fourteenth century, the family engaged the architect Neri di Fioravanti to construct a chapel, placed prominently in the right transept of the church. The body of Giuliana Falconieri was placed under the altar in 1676. Giuliana was Alessio’s niece and she was granted the habit of the Tertiary Order of the Servites by the general of the Order, Filippo Benizi. As such, she became the founder of the female order of the Servites, the Serve di Maria delle Mantellate. The Falconieri chapel was redesigned in the 1760’s by Ferdinando Fuga, following Giuliana’s canonization in 1737. Ibid., 40-41. By the mid fifteenth century, the Pucci were responsible for the Chapel of the Madonna del Soccorso in the tribune of the church, but they eventually gave up rights to this space, and in 1594 it was granted to the sculptor Giambologna, who constructed his own tomb monument there. The Pucci, however, erected the oratory of San Sebastiano in 1452, located off the entrance atrium (the Chiostro dei Voti), to the right. At the high altar was placed Antonio del Pollaiolo’s Martyrdom of St. Sebastian (1475; it entered the collection of the National Gallery in London in 1857). In 1605, the Pucci engaged the sculptor and architect, Giovan Battista Caccini, to redesign the interior of the oratory. Paintings by Florentines, including Bernardino Poccetti, were also added during the seventeenth century. The Pucci had previously employed Caccini for the restoration of the portico of the church and its extension across the facade, a project begun in 1599 and completed 1604. Ibid., 58-60, 12-14. For Gonzaga patronage for the tribune of the Nunziata and their votives offered at the shrine in the fifteenth century, see Bulman, sections III,1-48 and IV, 1. On both Falconieri and Gonzaga patronage, see Brown, passim.
Chapter One, I investigate the elaborate reframing of Andrea del Sarto’s arresting *Salvator Mundi* (c.1515), located in the *coretto* adjoining the Nunziata’s tempietto. (fig.1.5)

When it comes to the artistic heritage at the church, the scholarship of the Servite historian, Eugenio Casalini, must be acknowledged. Over a number of years Padre Casalini has published on a great number of topics that span the full history of the church and the cult image. He has edited and contributed to an extensive catalogue that documents the history of material arts production at the Nunziata and includes historical accounts of feast day and liturgical practices.\(^\text{14}\) He has furthermore examined aspects of the tens of thousands of votives offered to the image that were displayed primarily in the nave of the church. From the mid-fourteenth century up until the renovations of the first half of the seicento, which I investigate in this thesis, they were an ever-accumulating testimony to the Nunziata’s efficacy and benevolence. Their numbers grew continually through the centuries such that the interior of the church was encrusted with them. By the mid-fifteenth century votives were also hung from the ceiling. Their forms included painted panels, mass produced body fragments of wax or papier maché (limbs, hearts, breasts, as so on), and generic kneeling figures of pressed metal. Most famously, both during the Renaissance and today, there were the full scale multi-media votive statues with portraits made of wax. The latter, with their uncanny verism, have long been a source of fascination for scholars, beginning with Aby Warburg and Julius von Schlosser.\(^\text{15}\) Subsequent historians have revisited the significance of these offerings at the Santissima Annunziata and votives in general.

\(^{14}\) Eugenio Casalini, “La Santissima Annunziata nella storia e nella civiltà fiorentina,” in *Tesori d’arte dell’Annunziata di Firenze. Conoscenza e valorizzazione delle arti minori*, ed. Eugenio Casalini et. al. (Florence 1987), 75-111. This volume also has an extensive bibliography.

\(^{15}\) See Chapter One, n.7.
This study explains how the teeming and ever-proliferating display of the Nunziata’s votives was, from time to time, culled or attempts were made to bring order. And I especially take up the issue of the significance of Medici votive portraits at the Santissima Annunziata, with reference to studies by, among others, Megan Holmes, Georges Didi-Huberman, and Hugo van der Velden. My primary concern is a topic that has been barely touched upon in the previous scholarship – the re-display and revaluation of the votives in the seicento, which was more radical than any previous renovation effort. I will demonstrate how the seicento projects at the Santissima Annunziata together present a complex case study of the creation of a Counter-Reformation interior. They were intended both to promote the Nunziata as a sacred image and fashion the image of the Medici as Counter-Reformation rulers. Nonetheless, the representation of the grand dukes as ideal Christian princes was achieved at considerable cost to the functioning of the votive display as a testimony to the Nunziata’s power that had been bestowed over the centuries upon so many of her devotees.

There are some recent scholarly considerations of parts of the Nunziata’s cult that date from the later sixteenth century on. Sarah Matthews Grieco provides a detailed account of the compendia of the Nunziata’s miracles that were published in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and she has placed these in the context of the Counter-Reformation.16 There is also a forthcoming volume, Das Gnadenbild der Santissima Annunziata in Florenz: Verehrung - Verbreitung – Verwandlung, following a conference held in April, 2009 at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. This compilation includes papers concerned with the period of interest here: Eckhard Leuschner’s study of the international dissemination of the image of the Nunziata by means of prints produced primarily in Rome and Antwerp in the later sixteenth

16 As in n.7 above.
and early seventeenth centuries; an examination of the miracle collection compiled by Lucca Ferrini at the end of the sixteenth century and its relation to the votive culture at the shrine, by Megan Holmes; Christina Strunck’s paper on the silver altar frontal commissioned by Ferdinand I de’ Medici in 1600; and Thomas Frangenberg’s consideration of Francesco Bocchi’s treatise on the Nunziata of 1592. Another paper from this meeting, by Susanne Kubersky-Piredda and on copies after the Nunziata, has been published. Bocchi’s text has also been explored as a as work of art theory by Gerald Schröder and Steven Sowell.

A recent book by Alice Sanger looks at Florentine Grand Ducal piety in terms of gender and focuses on how the Medici women staked out their presence within the sacred geography of the city. The Santissima Annunziata was frequently a site for their demonstrations of devotion and patronage. In a number of publications, Marcello Fantoni has examined the involvement of the Medici Grand Dukes in the cult of the Nunziata. Important to this thesis are Fantoni’s investigations regarding Medici control over the viewing of the Nunziata and other uses of the cult in the creation of their image as Christian princes. Fantoni has addressed how the Medici sought to identify their own sacrality with that of the Nunziata. I add further dimensions to his

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17 Chapter One of this dissertation will also appear in this collection. Another paper from the meeting has already been published: Susanne Kubersky-Piredda, “... ’et sia ritratto nella forma medesima’. Das Florentiner Gnadenbild der SS. Annunziata und seine Repliken,” in Multiples in Pre-modern Art, ed. Walter Cupperi (Münich, Diaphanes, 2014), 201-228.


19 Alice Sanger, Art, Gender and Religious Devotion in Grand Ducal Tuscany (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014). See, for example, 16-17, 53-54, and 94-97.

20 Marcello Fantoni, La corte del granduca: forme e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento (Rome: Feltrinelli, 1994), and other writings that will be cited in this thesis.
findings throughout this thesis. As I will show, Medici involvement with the Nunziata’s cult, which began in the mid-fifteenth century with Piero di Cosimo de’ Medici, who commissioned the tempietto enclosing the image from Michelozzo Michelozzi,\(^{21}\) was ramped up during the Counter-Reformation period. I also demonstrate the ways the Medici forged links between themselves, the Nunziata, and the central Catholic authorities of the period, most particularly in Milan and Rome.

Of particular relevance to my general approach are a number of studies by Megan Holmes that are devoted to Florentine miraculous images up to c.1600, with the Nunziata as a primary concern. Her work includes articles on the Nunziata’s votive culture and the legend of the creation of the fresco.\(^{22}\) A recent book investigates in depth the history of image cults within the city of Florence and its environs, and it presents important new models for comprehending the material elaboration of their sanctuaries. Holmes proposes not just that miraculous images have a place in Renaissance art history, but also that their study brings about a fundamental shift in our perceptions of the period. For one, given the expense and attention granted to the adornment of their shrines, miraculous image cults bridge the realms of “popular culture” and elite art production – or, perhaps better put, they question the validity of any such distinction.\(^{23}\)

\(^{21}\) Chapter One outlines further Piero di Cosimo’s commissions and Medici patronage in general at the Nunziata.


\(^{23}\) A nuanced view of “popular culture” is also proposed in recent accounts of Counter-Reformation social history. See for instance, David Gentilcuore, “Methods and Approaches in the Social History of the Counter-Reformation in Italy” Social History, 17, 1 (Jan, 1992): 74-75. The Conclusion of this dissertation also has further bibliography.
Holmes therefore challenges a dominant mode in Renaissance studies to distinguish between an era of auratic images and one of “art” (the work of Hans Belting being the chief source for this tendency). Considering miraculous images in this expanded field — as enshrined and activated by different types of material means — reveals their temporal complexity. Accordingly, our conceptions of Renaissance artists and their practices must be adjusted, given their involvement in cultic visual culture. The latter includes the making of copies after miraculous images and the fashioning of votives, either for others or to be offered by the artist himself.

Another of Holmes’s fundamental arguments is that “it is impossible to come to terms with miraculous images, as efficacious sacred objects, without paying close attention to their materiality.” Indeed, the latter is in fact the actual evidence of an image’s miraculousness. Moreover, the material manifestations of image cults are “dynamic”: they typically involve a complex of elements or aspects that operate in a number of ways — “enshrinement, veiling, repainting, and dressing up, as well as occasions when [the images] were desecrated”, and these must be seen as interacting with one another. All these aspects furthermore give expression to the paradoxical nature of sacred images: they articulate that the sacred personages represented by

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25 For instance, both Benvenuto Cellini and Filarete (Antonio di Pietro Averlino) made offerings to the Nunziata, the former a marble crucifix and the latter a large scale votive effigy. Holmes, 2014., 258. For the full argument, see Chapter 8, “Image Cults and the Florentine Renaissance”.

26 Ibid., 146. For this point see also Jacobs, with regards to how votive displays function as evidence for the powers of miraculous images. Jacobs, 98-125.

such images are simultaneously sensual and ineffable, present and remote, accessible and inaccessible.\textsuperscript{28}

Holmes’s points are entirely consonant with my own and with other recent approaches to votives, in that the overall stress is on the \textit{relational} nature of miraculous images. This is to say, such images should be seen as agents or mediators whose power and meaning are generated within their rapport with other objects and persons (including the thaumaturge), as well as between those other objects and persons. Fredrika Jacobs and Robert Maniura also focus in this manner on the votive culture that accrued to Italian miraculous images. Jacobs has examined narrative votive panel paintings, which originated and flourished during the Renaissance period. With their highly individualized qualities, the works function as testimony to both the power of the thaumaturge and the devotees’ personal, life-changing encounters with this sacred patron. Their physical design and the act of their placement in relation to their miraculous images and relics are therefore crucial to their significance. Maniura argues that the meaning of votives lies in the entire votive exchange between votary and sacred patron, the latter mimicking (although still different in kind than) an actual social interaction.\textsuperscript{29} In a related vein, a recent volume by Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser argues that the central significance of miraculous images is

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 2014. See, for example, the arguments on p.207, and the interesting findings regarding metaphors and conceptions of visuality, 271-72.

\textsuperscript{29} Following this, Maniura argues that an image, in taking part in this ritual performance, would never be “taken literally as a manifestation of the sacred person….\[T\]he image is the focus of a persuasive performance and the votive offering is an element of that performance. Rather than establishing a presence, the images form an arena in which to negotiate a relationship.” Like Holmes, then, he goes on to question Belting’s distinction “between image and art”. Robert Maniura, “Ex Votos, Art and Pious Performance,” \textit{Oxford Art Journal}, 32, n.3, (2009): 425 and passim. Fredrika H. Jacobs, \textit{Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Renaissance Italy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
their purpose as loci for commonly held identity. Cult formation is undertaken by men and women (the authors’ stress is on lay persons) so as to “re-enchant the world, and in that process…create a new sense of community.”

In my own study, I have not organized the material so as to present discreet investigations of individual phenomena related to the Nunziata. Rather I locate the significance of the fresco in how it is “framed” in a number of ways—by means of, for instance, texts, copies after the Nunziata, votive offerings (portraits in particular), adornments to its shrine, and ritual practices such as unveiling. I am concerned with how these aspects interact with one another and how the image is set in rapport with other cults and persons within and outside Florence. A “relational” conception of circumstances thus also informs my treatment of patronage. Holmes argues that image cults challenge the typical art historical view of the work of art as a direct reflection of a patron’s intentions. As this thesis shows, at the shrine of the Nunziata during the Counter-Reformation period the making of Medici identity and that of the Nunziata were mutually defining processes. Certainly, too, any beautification of the shrine on the part of the Medici or anyone else would have been understood to have been abetted, if not instigated by first and foremost, the holy patron—that is, the Nunziata herself had “agency” as a “patron”.

The case study I have chosen is in fact an exceptionally rich illustration of the ways that the realms of the sacred image and princely power could intersect at a cult site during the period. Yet this thesis also stresses the interdependence of the authority of both the Nunziata and the Medici with

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31 Holmes, 2014, 266.
32 On sacred beings as patrons with “agency” see Ibid., 266.
broadly held policies and practices emanating from the chief Catholic centres outside of Florence.

Each chapter takes up a topic that is inscribed within two broad sets of circumstances that thus encompass this dissertation as a whole – the uses of Medici portraiture at the SANTISSIMA Annunziata and the participation of Florence in the Counter-Reformation movement, according to agendas that were set by the highest authorities of the Church. To the latter end, I will demonstrate how ties were forged between this Florentine cult and the Catholic centres of Rome and Milan. These associations were articulated in a number of ways in the material aspects of the Nunziata’s shrine.

Chapter One begins by summarizing the history of Medici patronage at the Santissima Annunziata. It then moves on to examine a particular conceptualization of the Nunziata’s image that is developed in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century and in relation to Medici stewardship of the Nunziata – the fashioning of the sacred fresco as a Holy Face. The foundation for the latter is the long-standing belief that the miracle-working power of the Nunziata lay specifically in the Virgin’s countenance, which, according to legend, was painted by an angel. The basis of this chapter is a passage from a Servite text dated 1604 and written by the leading historian of the Servite order, Arcangelo Giani. Giani spins a tale that establishes the sacred status of the Nunziata by making it akin to a Holy Face of Christ. He also identifies both the Holy Face and the Nunziata with the affectiveness of the countenance of Cosimo I de’Medici, ruler of Florence and chief patron of the Nunziata’s cult. The concepts at play in his story therefore include the special bond between the grand ducal family and the sacred image, but they also belong to broader Counter-Reformation concerns. And there are material components of the Nunziata’s cult that correlate in that they assert the validity of both the Holy Mother and images
as a focus of worship. The production of portraits of Christ, the Nunziata, and the Medici are examined as integrated phenomena, and most of these works are gifts from the Medici to powerful and influential associates of the period, such as Carlo Borromeo. As I show, the tradition of the Holy Face is decisive not only for claiming the powers of the sacred fresco and the Medici as its most privileged stewards, but also for situating the Nunziata among the most venerable and justified image cults.

Chapters Two and Three examine the history of the Nunziata’s votives, with special attention to the late sixteenth century on. While these offerings have been the subject of a number of studies, their fate during the Counter-Reformation period has only been briefly mentioned in existing scholarship. And yet, the fortunes of the votives at the shrine of the Nunziata are a particularly complex example of the Counter-Reformation tendency to reshape and revitalize a devotional tradition by means of new decorative schemes that frame a holy image or relic. Chapter Two first outlines the history and types of votives offered to the Nunziata beginning in the fourteenth century. In doing so, it collates evidence from the period and material from a number of previous modern studies. It also addresses the interrelated issues of the functions and materiality of votives, both of which have been subjects of much scholarly interest and speculation. I am especially concerned with the potential for votive portraits to carry a social and political status that was concomitant with their devotional purpose. There is no clearer example of this kind of meaning for votives than the Medici portrait offerings at the Nunziata from the fifteenth century on. Most important to my argument in this chapter are the radical changes (most fully realized, others planned) to the display of votives in the seicento. This renewal of the Nunziata’s votive culture is examined in light of general tendencies in Counter-Reformation interiors as well as the representation of the Medici as Christian rulers. It is thus an
exceptionally complex case of a princely monument erected within a public, popular shrine and by means of the radical renovation of this site. Most significantly, these changes seem to have created, as far as I know, a unique situation at an image shrine during the period – specifically, they fundamentally altered the nature of the votives. The traditional devotional function of the offerings, which depends on their placement at the shrine by individual votaries at particular points in time, was considerably diminished, if not lost entirely, as a result of their renovation according to Medici and Counter-Reformation interests.

The significance of the redisplay of votive portraits – and especially those of the Medici -- during the seicento is further explored in Chapter Three. I examine the situation of the Medici offerings in light of Florentine political history and theory, as well as more generally held Counter-Reformation ideals regarding rulership. These votive effigies belong to a constellation of portraits that includes other Medici likenesses in and around the shrine, including those in the piazza outside of the church – the equestrian statue of Ferdinand I de’Medici, begun by Giambologna and completed by Pietro Tacca in 1608, and seicento portrait busts and a fresco in the loggia of the Ospedale degli Innocenti. Together these works embody the Medici as Christian princes according to the two primary ideals that the sovereign is God’s instrument of social order and an exemplary mirror of pious virtue for his people. All of these monuments perform the over-watching presence of the Medici dynasty as guarantors of civic order. At the same time, they also represent the allegiance of the Grand Dukes and the Nunziata’s cult to the principal initiatives of the Counter-Reformation. In this regard, a particularly striking finding of this dissertation is that there is the deliberate inclusion of non-Medici votive portraits with the grand ducal ones, and these works make clear the intimate rapport between the Medici and Counter-Reformation Rome. In the same vein, the chapter finishes with an extensive account of a set of
portraits that have only been only briefly mentioned in the existing scholarly literature. These are located at the sacristy serving the Nunziata’s chapel, and they depict members of a Jewish family who converted to Christianity and were assimilated to a substantial degree into the house of the Medici. As I argue, these portraits were to also testify to not only devotion to the cult of the Nunziata, but also the alliance of the Medici with the power of Papal Rome.

The fourth and final chapter of this study looks at a specific Medici votive, which was by far the most expensive and prominently situated among all portraits ever offered to the Nunziata. This is the silver altar frontal made (and probably also designed) by Egidio Leggi and commissioned by Ferdinand I de’Medici in 1600. It shows Ferdinand’s son and successor as grand duke, Cosimo II, kneeling in thanks before the Nunziata after his recovery from an illness. I discuss this work as an example of a type of image that has been identified by Klaus Krüger as specific to the Counter-Reformation period: it shows a person of pious prestige (typically a saint, and among the examples are representations of Carlo Borromeo) in an act of devotion before a sacred image or object. Works of this compositional type are therefore arguments for the legitimacy of worship before images, visual rejoinders to Reform attacks on the use of – or more properly, response to – images in religious practice. I expand on Krüger’s discussion of the significance of the display of acts of worship, and argue that devotional gestures (and in particular, kneeling) signified the bodily, religious-social conditioning of the viewer of the image. At the same time, however, I demonstrate that to the early modern eye, kneeling was also an outward sign of immediately experienced and true religious feeling. The latter part of this chapter then demonstrates how a number of Florentine paintings dated c.1600 and the Medici

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paliotto are particularly inventive instances of the image type. In sophisticated ways they play with the enacting of devotional experience and the metapictorial implications of this kind of composition. Taken together, these works are therefore yet another facet of the vital participation of Florence in the fundamental strategies of the Italian Counter-Reformation.
Chapter 1

The Nunziata in the Counter-Reformation period: The Making of a Holy Face

1.1 A Tale of Two Faces: The Nunziata and a Holy Face

The fresco of the Santissima Annunziata has been identified as a kind of Holy Face at least since the second quarter of the quattrocento. When the story of the origins of the Nunziata was codified at that time, the claim that the countenance of the Virgin was painted by divine means granted the fresco a special status in the competitive milieu of Florentine image cults, making it the only acheiropoieton – or, sacred image not made by human hands – in the city. (fig. 0.4) The legend was furthermore almost certainly intended to associate the Nunziata with the most famous acheiropoieta, the versions of the Holy Face, or true likeness of Christ, that were believed to have been fashioned miraculously, such as the Mandylion, the Veronica, and the Lateran Christ. The latter was purportedly begun by St. Luke and completed by an angel.¹ (fig. 1.1) This implicit correlation of the Nunziata with these most sacred portraits in the Christian tradition was thus long-standing; nonetheless, for reasons and in ways to be outlined in this study, the Nunziata came to be more definitively framed both conceptually and visually as a Holy Face during the Counter-Reformation period.

An excerpt from a biography of Filippo Benizi, a text undertaken in 1598 and completed in 1604 by the chief Servite historian of the period, Arcangelo Giani, will be used as a touchstone throughout my argument. The cult of Benizi, a thirteenth-century General Superior of the Order, was officially approved in 1516 by the Medici pope, Leo X. It had over time come to

be integrated with that of the Nunziata. By the early trecento, Servite sources say that Benizi had a vision before a sacred image, which as early as the late quattrocento was identified as the Nunziata. Giani’s biography of Benizi includes a commentary on the origins of the fresco, wherein is recounted an extraordinary story whose primary purpose is to prove that the face of the Nunziata is an accurate depiction of the Virgin. More specifically, Giani asserts that the Nunziata’s face is identical to a portrait of Christ, which is, according to Giani, itself an authentic likeness. Moreover, Cosimo I de’Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany at the time, is the one who discovers this resemblance:

At the time that the most Serene Cosimo was made Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pius V, a bishop of the house of Orsini gave him some gifts of items of great antiquity and precious things that had been found about a hundred years ago in Lake Bolsena. Among these was a piece of very fine serpentine stone. And wanting to know [what was underneath], because on the surface there had built up a large layer of tartar (which demonstrated that the stone had spent a long time in the lake), the Grand Duke took a piece of iron. He scraped at [the tartar] by hand and revealed a very clouded piece of glass. Breaking that, he finally found a face of Jesus Christ, made of tempera in a squash rind recessed in the stone. It was so beautiful and unaged, it was as if it had been just made. The amazement of the Grand Duke was marvelous. The judgment of the experts of history was that the Face was made at the time of Nero and St. Peter. And it satisfied this author to admire the majesty of this Image, showing it to [the painter, Jacopo] Ligozzi, who (for our purposes) gave this judgment: putting the two Faces together, they appeared to be Brother and Sister, and if one put his beard on the face of the Nunziata, she appeared to be him, and he her. The

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2 Holmes, 103. Benizi was eventually beatified in 1645 and canonized in 1671.
argument is clear enough that the author of that Miraculous Face [i.e. the Nunziata] had to have worked devoutly, and that it was not by human mastery, but rather by a supernatural operation that this most worthy Face was painted.

Shortly after Giani wrote this text, a relic portrait of Christ is recorded as occupying a prominent place in the collections of the Medici. Inventories dated 1616 and 1635 from the reliquary chapel in the Palazzo Pitti include brief descriptions of hundreds of relics and images, including several small copies of the Nunziata, and the first item on both lists is a “Volto Santo”.

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The 1635 inventory is the more detailed of the two and it specifies an image on cloth, set within an elaborate historiated frame of gold, silver, and painted panels showing the Triumphs of the Passion. Alice Sanger has recently identified the latter as a *Volto Santo*, recorded by the Medici court diarist Cesare Tinghi as having been given to Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena of Austria. Her collection of relics was housed in the chapel. This *Volto Santo* was painted on cloth and, as such, was a replica of the Veronica. Tinghi further relates that the gift was from Monsignor Pietro Strozzi and he dates it to February 14, 1618. This does not account, however, for the *Volto Santo* recorded in the Pitti Chapel inventory of 1616, nor do the details of the object Tinghi describes align with the image in Giani’s story.

The Pitti *Volto Santo* nonetheless serves as a starting point for discerning the recurrence and importance of Holy Face-related imagery within the contexts of Florence and the Medici during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. What is more, along with other objects and events cited in this paper, it might have been an inspiration for Giani’s story. Whether or not Giani’s tale is fictional in part or in whole, it is richly allusive. It presents intertwined themes that

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5 Tinghi also praises the magnificent effect created by lanterns that surrounded the Volto Santo and that illuminated the relics shelved on the walls of the chapel. Alice Sanger, *Art, Gender and Religious Devotion in Grand Ducal Tuscany* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 88-89.
inform other manifestations of the Nunziata’s cult that date from around 1580 into the seventeenth century and that are investigated in this chapter – the representation by various means of the Nunziata as a Holy Face and the privileged relationship the Medici enjoyed with the sacred fresco. It will however also been shown how Giani’s tale partakes of broader concerns and strategies that reach beyond Florence and have to do with the circumstances of sacred images and Marian worship during the Counter-Reformation period.

1.2 Medici Patronage at the SS. Annunziata, with a Focus on the Holy Face

In his dedication of the biography of Benizi to Christina of Lorraine, wife of Grand Duke Ferdinand I de’Medici, Giani praises how the devotion of the Medici and their munificence has beautified her shrine. The Medici began to establish their presence at the SS. Annunziata in the mid-fifteenth century, when the Servites replaced the existing patrons at the church with the Medici and their supporters, allowing them to become chapel owners and Signoria-appointed operai. In 1448, Piero di Cosimo de’Medici commissioned a marble altar that is located below the fresco and he had Michelozzo Michelozzi design the marble tempietto that encloses the chapel space for the image. Antonio Filarete reports that Piero initiated the project according to the wishes of his father, Cosimo I, who was devoted to the Annunciate Virgin. Piero also donated a large silver chest shuttered with a panel painted by Fra Angelico and his workshop. This armadio was intended to protect the most precious silver votives offered to the Nunziata and it was placed in the coretto, or small oratory, adjoining the tempietto space. In a further show of personal piety, Piero also obtained a pair of private rooms overlooking the oratory and from

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6 In his dedication, Giani points out Ferdinand’s patronage for the renovation of the Servite convent at Monte Senario, located north of the city and dating to the foundation of the order. He later outlines the patronage of Piero de Medici. Giani, n.p., 188.
which he could descend to the Nunziata’s chapel.\(^7\) Over the next century and a half, a number of Medici (including Lorenzo il Magnifico, his son Guiliano, Duke Alessandro, Leo X, and Clement VII) added their portraits to the thousands of other votives that filled the church.\(^8\)

\(^7\) For a full account of Piero’s commission, including Filarete’s statement, see Dale Kent, *Cosimo de’ Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron’s Oeuvre* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 202-210. Kent points out that the Medici received more praise from their contemporaries for the tempietto than for any other commission and argues that the Medici presence at the Nunziata would not have been perceived at the time as the “privatization of the miraculous”; rather, their contributions would have been understood as adornments of an important civic shrine. For further on Piero’s commissions and related documents, see Pellegrino Tonini, *Guida Storico-Illustrativa. Il Santuario della SS. Annunziata di Firenze* (Florence: M. Ricci, 1876), 87, 292-96. See also Eugenio Casalini, *Il Beato Angelico e l’Armadio degli Argenti della SS. Annunziata di Firenze* (Florence: Convento della SS. Annunziata di Firenze, 2007); and idem., “Armadio degli Argenti,” in *Tesori d’arte dell’Annunziata di Firenze. Conoscenza e valorizzazione delle arti minori*, ed. Eugenio Casalini et. al. (Florence: Alinari, 1987), 99-100. Piero also donated thirty silver lamps to the Nunziata’s precinct. During the period of the Republic, in 1527, these were melted down by the Signoria which was desperately in need of funds. Dora Liscia Bemporad, “L’oreficeria,” in *Tesori*, 299. Replacements were commissioned by Grand Duke Cosimo I and hung in the same location as the earlier versions, under the cornice of the tempietto. Francesco Bocchi and Giovanni Cinelli Calvoli, *Le bellezze della città di Firenze* (Bologna: Forni, 1974; originally published Firenze : G. Gugliantini, 1677), 434.

The most intense period of Medici oblations nevertheless dates to the time Giani was writing. In 1600, Ferdinand I replaced Piero’s marble altar with a *paliotto* in silver, a work executed and likely also designed by Egidio Leggi. (fig.1.2) This antependium was a votive commissioned by Ferdinand after his son and future grand duke, Cosimo II, recovered from an illness, and its central panel overtly displays Medici prerogative: it shows Cosimo kneeling in thanks before the sacred fresco while, in the left foreground, male members of the Medici court, and opposite, frati of the Servite convent, look on. In 1607, Ferdinand refurbished the two steps below the altar (which had been originally installed by Piero di Cosimo) in white marble and

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9 Tonini, 93, 298-99. Francesca Cipriani, “Paliotto dell’altare della cappella della Madonna,” in *Tesori*, 329-331. The inscription that runs along the top cornice of the paliotto reads: “VIRGINI DEIPARAE DICAVIT FERDINANDUS MEDICES MAGNUS DUX AETR. MDC.” As part of the votive offering, along with the donation of the paliotto, orations were to be said for the Medici in perpetuity by the Servites, just as they had prayed day and night for the health of the Medici Prince. The document records that the “PP. del Convento” are depicted in the panel, and “quali, giorno et notte, si nei sacri Uffizii, come nell’orazioni particolari, pregorno per detta sanità, come anco fanno sempre per la conservazione di questa Seren.ma Casa de’Medici, tanto benefattrice a questa Casa.” ASF Libro di Ricordanze C, a c.295. The document is transcribed in Tonini, 298.
porphyry, and he had the pavement within the tempietto replaced with one made of porphyry, serpentine, and other precious marbles. Ferdinand’s youngest son, Don Lorenzo, also presented several gifts: in 1618, the silver frame decorated with symbols of the Virgin that surrounds the fresco; a crown topped with a vase and lilies and flanked by angels, surmounting the centre of the frame, donated in 1624 (figs. 1.3, 1.4); and what is documented as a “paramento”, almost certainly a cover for the image, dated 1621 to 1622. This cover must have safeguarded a second


11 Tonini, 95-96. The crowning ornament for the frame was designed by Giulio Parigi and executed by Cosimo Merlini. The angels were removed during the Napoleonic era and replaced in 1871. The current cover over the image (as visible in fig. 1.3) also dates to the nineteenth century. See also Bemporad, 303. I am restricting my discussion to Medici activity within the tempietto chapel of the sacred image. Of further note is the foundation, under Cosimo I and with the involvement of the Servites, of the Cappella di San Luca in the chapter room off the large cloister, or Chiostro dei Morti, at the SS. Annunziata. It served as a chapel for the Florentine artists’ Accademia del Disegno and a communal tomb for those artists who could not arrange for their own burials. Karen Edis Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25-27, 196-99, 200-01. For Medici patronage at the SS. Annunziata as part of a larger urban strategy to establish the family’s presence northeast of the Duomo see, with further bibliography, Barzman, 25-26, 284 n. 13. Sometime in the 1580’s grand duke Francesco de’ Medici engaged the painter Alessandro Allori in the task of restoring the fresco. Francesco Bocchi, *Sopra l’immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata di Fiorenza : dove si narra come di quella è grande la maestà* (Florence: Sermatelli, 1592). I refer to the following edition: *Della Imagine Miracolosa della SS. Nunziata di Firenze: Opera di Messer Francesco Bocchi scrittore del Secolo XVI* (Florence: Barracchi, 1852), 67-68; and Eugenio Casalini, “La Santissima Annunziata nella storia e nella civiltà fiorentina,” in *Tesori*, 78. During the seventeenth century, the Medici also undertook a number of interventions directly outside the church, in the Piazza SS. Annunziata. These include the equestrian statue of Ferdinand I begun by Giambologna and completed by Pietro Tacca in 1608, as well as other Medici portraits placed in the loggia of the Ospedale degli Innocenti. See Gabriele Corsani, “Le sculture granducali in piazza dell’Annunziata a Firenze,” in *Storia della città*, 48 (Oct-Dec, 1988): 46-48;
“mantellina” under it, described in 1591 by Francesco Bocchi as “covering only the figure of the Virgin Mary with pure gilded silver all studded with precious jewels.”\(^1\)\(^2\) Other Medici offerings to the Nunziata dating to the early seicento include, from Christina of Lorraine, candlesticks, a necklace, and a jewel of gold and diamond positioned at the end of the largest ray emanating from the dove of the Holy Spirit in the fresco.\(^1\)\(^3\)

But another set of gifts are of particular interest here in that they give special attention to the practice of placing a portrait of Christ in proximity to the Nunziata. By at least 1439, some kind of Holy Face of Jesus was located on the altar below the fresco;\(^1\)\(^4\) and around 1515, a

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12 “Che la sola figura di Maria Vergine ricuopre pur d’argento dorato tempestata tutta di gioie di grandissimo pregio.” Bocchi-Cinelli, 435-36.

13 Tonini, 97-100. The date for the necklace and jewel is 1603; the candlesticks were offered in 1620. There are donations made by others during the early seventeenth century, including the noble Bardi family and the Servite friar, Padre Adriano Mannozzi, but these are few in comparison to those of the Medici. The grand ducal family’s gifts also continue throughout the seventeenth century, although they become less frequent after the 1620’s. Tonini, 98ff. For further on the Medici donations, see Bocchi – Cinelli, 434-37; and Bemporad, 299-305. During the time of Ferdinando I, the grand ducal mint also struck coins with the image of the Nunziata. In 1592, Ferdinando commissioned one in silver showing a profile of Christ on the recto and the annunciation on the verso, with his name inscribed on the taglio. Marcello Fantoni, La corte del granduca: forme e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento (Rome: Feltrinelli, 1994) 178-79. I. Orsini, Storia delle Monete dei Gran Duchi di Toscana della casa de’ Medici e di quelle augustissimo imperatore Francesco di Lorena come granduca di Toscana (Florence: P.G. Gaetano, 1756), 36, 43-64.

14 The Servite inventory dated May 16, 1439 refers to this painting as “uno volto sancto dipinto sta in su il dicto altare bello e divoto.” Eugenio Casalini, “Un volto sancto…bello e divoto,” in La SS. Annunziata, 18.3 (May-June 1998): 3-4; Holmes, 2004, 114; and Giulia Brunetti, “Una vacchetta segnata A,” in Scritti
painting of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* (47 x 27 cm) by Andrea del Sarto and probably commissioned by the Medici, was put on the altar in the coretto.\(^{15}\) (fig. 1.5) There is in fact a tradition of pairing images of the Annunciation with the Holy Face: the two appear, for instance, in an eleventh-century fresco in the Sakli Kilise at Göreme.\(^{16}\) (fig. 1.6) There is also Botticelli’s Cestello altarpiece (1489-90) in the Uffizi which, in the predella and directly below the Virgin and Gabriel, depicts an *Ecce Homo* showing Christ rising out of a tomb draped with a cloth showing a Holy Face. (fig. 1.7) With respect to the Byzantine examples, Herbert Kessler points out that the iconography of the Annunciation underlines the theology of the Incarnation that is represented by the miraculous imprinting of Christ’s likeness into matter.\(^{17}\) Nevertheless – and this point will be further considered below – given that the association of the Nunziata with the Holy Face was fundamental to the claim for the fresco’s thaumaturgic powers, the juxtaposition


\(^{17}\) Kessler, 2000, 75, n.15. That the primary significance of the Annunciation is the mystery of the Incarnation is directly stated in Luke’s gospel (“And the Word was made flesh”). The implication of Salvation in the Incarnation (that is, the making of the human into divine) thus explains the adoption of the Annunciation scene in early Byzantine icons and church portals. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: the Byzantine apologia for icons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 131-32.
of the Annunciate Virgin with the Holy Face can also be understood to enact a reciprocity: Christ lends his divine nature to the Madonna, just as she ensured his humanity.  

When it comes to Medici patronage at the SS. Annunziata during the seicento, Sarto’s *Salvator Mundi* is of particular interest for my argument. (fig. 1.5) The attentions it received and the central position it took up in a Medici family chapel, make it a counterpart to the above described *Volto Santo* that, around the same time, became the primary “relic” in Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena’s chapel in the Pitti. Nonetheless, the significances taken on by Sarto’s painting are also highly site specific. It received a succession of gifts that indicate it was intended to become a focal point in the Nunziata’s precinct. While the painting is now located on the wall of the adjacent coretto, at some time by 1584 it was moved into the tempietto space, on the altar below the fresco.  

(fig. 1.3) Furthermore, in 1618, after recovering from a serious illness dating to 1613, Don Lorenzo offered a new frame set on a high *gradino* for Andrea’s painting. This was designed by Matteo Nigetti and made of silver inlaid with precious stones. (fig. 1.8) The frame also served as a tabernacle; and a document indicates that it was accompanied in 1619 by a second silver and ruby encrusted tabernacle commissioned by Don Lorenzo’s mother, Christina

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18 Holmes also suggests that the heads of Christ on the Nunziata’s altars in the the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries must have served to legitimize the fresco’s cult by referring it to the type of the Holy Face. Holmes, 2004, 114.

19 See n.22 below.

20 Tonini, 94; Bemporad, 302; Elisabetta Nardinocchi, “Gradino e Tabernacolo con il Volto Santo,” in *Tesori*, 331-334. Along the top of the base is an inscription commemorating the gift. The painting can be removed to reveal the image of a throne in glory, worked in gold, and it can be replaced by a silver door ornamented with the name of Christ, to cover the host within.
of Lorraine. In 1620, Cosimo II de’Medici also donated the jeweled silver cross that was set on the top of the frame. What is more, at the centre of the gradino is a gold relief showing a head of Christ (fig.1.9), and this image glosses Andrea’s painting. In the latter, even as Christ’s eyes directly confront the viewer, his body is turned away in depth and off the central axis of the picture. These features, along with the sfumato shading of the left side of the face, result in an asymmetry and sense of motion. The gold relief checks this heavily stressed naturalism: it faces fully frontally and as such is pointedly reminiscent of the Mandylion and Veronica. (fig.1.1) Thus, at this time, there was to be no doubt that Andrea’s portrait was akin to these prototypical images that represented in equal shares the humanity and divinity of Christ.

The Nunziata’s tempietto had also become in the course of the sixteenth century one of the most important loci in the city for Medici ritual. Births, coronations, papal elections, military victories, and the recovery of family members from illness were regularly celebrated before the sacred image. The Grand Duke and others in his household would also process regularly to the tempietto to hear mass. The female Medici often figured prominently into these demonstrations of piety. The Medici moreover had exercised control over access to the Nunziata at least since

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21 A document records it as “fatto con tal proporzione da adornare completamente il Tabernacolo gia fatto sopra l’Altare della Nunziata dall’Eccl.mo Principe D. Lorenzo suo figliuolo.” ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppressa dal Governo Francese 119/54, Libro di Ricordanze (1603-1640), Septmeber 6, 1619, 201. See also Bemporad, 303.
22 ASF, Ricordanze (n.19), January 1620, 206v.
23 Raffaello Borghini, writing in 1584, admired the naturalism of Sarto’s painting: “The Head of Christ that is over the altar of the Annunziata is of his hand, so beautiful that it is held to be impossible to make one more alive and more charming.” Raffaello Borghini’s “Il Riposo”, transl. Llyod H. Ellis Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 208.
24 For a detailed exposition of how Medici ritual at the Nunziata served to “sacralize” the grand dukes, see Fantoni, 1999, 268-71; and Fantoni, 1994, 182-93 n.12. Alice Sanger details the many instances of
1558, when Cosimo I de Medici sent a letter to the prior of the Servite order, sternly stipulating that, because of the disorder resulting from the great mob that immediately gathered whenever the image was shown, only he would decide when it would be unveiled. At the same time, one key to the cover would be kept in his possession, while another stayed with the Servites.\textsuperscript{25}

Visiting \textit{gran signori} were subsequently honoured by the Medici by means of a viewing of the fresco, which, since the mid fifteenth century, was rarely uncovered.\textsuperscript{26} A document from the female Medici patronage and devotion related to the Nunziata. Sanger, 16-17, 53-54, 94-97, and passim. The Grand Duchess Christina of Lorraine especially favoured the Nunziata’s cult. Among the works commissioned by her was a passageway built in 1620 between the Santissima Annunziata and La Crocetta, the Domeican convent in the block next to the church. Princess Maria Maddalena, Christina’s daughter and sister of Cosimo II, lived in an apartment at the convent and was thus able to process to the church and view the nave through a grille installed at the end of the passage. Sanger, 96-98. For a life-size votive of a swaddled baby, offered by Francesco I after the birth of a son in 1577, see Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, \textit{The art and ritual of childbirth in Renaissance Italy} (Yale: Yale University Press, 1999), 146. Fantoni also notes that under Cosimo III in the latter part of the seicento, there was an unrealized plan to transfer the fresco to the principal chapel in the Pitti. Fantoni, 1994, 188. Around 1580, Francesco I had also consulted with architects and engineers, including Bernardo Buontalenti, about moving the sacred image to the high altar of the church, but potential damage to the fresco put an end to the idea. Del Migliore, 291-92.

\textsuperscript{25} The letter reads in part, “e conoscendo quanto importi al mantenimento della devozione, vi commettiamo che di qui innanzi, non la possiate mai più mostrare a persona senza nostra licenza espressa, e non d’altri, e se la mostrerete, che crediam di nò, vi dimostreremo quanto sia grande il conto, che la volontà nostra è che se ne tenga.” ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppressa dal Governo Francese 119/35 (Part D) c.117, May 4, 1558. The image had been kept covered since the fourteenth century, when it was decreed that the Signoria would grant permission for its unveiling. Del Migliore, 288-89. On the status bestowed on those who held the keys to the tabernacles of miraculous images, see Barbara Wisch, “Keys to Success: Propriety and Promotion of Miraculous Images by Roman Confraternities,” in: \textit{The Miraculous Image}, 161-84.

\textsuperscript{26} “The celebrated SS Annunziata, after the middle of the fifteenth century, could go for years without being unveiled.” Megan Holmes, “Miraculous Images in Renaissance Florence,” \textit{Art History} June (2011): 456. As Holmes points out, however, for the general populace, the accessibility of a copy of the Nunziata
Medici guardaroba titled, “Record of when the holy face was uncovered (Memorie di quando si è scoperto il volto santo),” and spanning the period 1530 to 1674, states that, “the image of the Santissima Nunziata is usually revealed for all the Signori Cardinals, highest Princes, Royal Ambassadors and Nuncios at their departure. To Extraordinary Nuncios it is never shown. It is shown to the Superior Generals of the Zoccolanti and Capuchins, and to Princes of Excellence or [persons of] similar [status], as they please.” In his biography of Benizi, Giani refers to Cosimo’s letter in a passage wherein he characterizes grand ducal patronage as custodianship. And both Bocchi and Giani repeat Cosimo’s contention that the Medici-imposed restrictions on the exposure of the image preserved decorum and proper devotion, given the crowds that quickly formed when the image was exposed.

On the entrance wall of the church of San Marco in Florence compensated to some degree for the limited access to the original. This copy also received substantial veneration, including votive offerings. Ibid., 455-56. For further on veiling rituals and sacred images, see Ibid., 440-41, 465, n.77.


With regards to the unveiling of the Nunziata, Francesco Bocchi also comments, “Per cagioni gravi si scuopre altrui, e di rado: nè senza ordine del Gran Duca, nè senza il suo volere ardirebbe alcuno di far questo, nè in tale affare di compiacere ad alcuno. Perchê allora, considerato il puro affetto e divoto di chi domanda, e la qualità della persona altresì, egli si concede cortesemente questa grazia: e altrimenti nutrisce con divozione la sua brama chi acceso da santo pensiero disidera di sodisfare a sua voglia.” Bocchi, (1592), 1852, 109-110.

“Ed’ è tanto il pensiero, e’l zelo che se ne prendono questi moderni Principi, che per ovviare a disordini della calca, e concorso de Popoli, che vi traggono per vederla, in altro non curano di mostrare loro antico padronaggio di quella Cappella, che in questo solo riservo, che la Nunziata (quasi lor principal tesoro contrasegnato di rela sigillo) non si scuopra già mai a qual si voglia senza particolar riscontro o di scritto, o di Anello, o di simil segno tra loro Altezze, e’l Priore del luogo: tutto per zelo di mantener con ogni
The conditions of grand ducal piety and prerogative that are made palpable in these interactions between the Medici and the Nunziata are together also conveyed by Giani when he has Cosimo uncover the face of Christ, which he identifies with that of the Nunziata. Giani invokes here St. Paul’s depiction of the union of the human with the divine (1 Corinthians: 13, 12): as Giani describes it, when the Grand Duke uncovers the “very clouded glass (vetro molto appanato)” and then breaks it, Cosimo literally “looks through a glass darkly” and then is privileged to see “face to face”. Indeed, the most venerated portraits of the Saviour were understood within the Christian tradition as perfect devotional works that rehearsed and made substantial Paul’s words. As Gerhard Wolf has put it, Innocent III, who in the early thirteenth century promoted the cult of the Veronica (and more so as an image rather than a relic) “defined the meeting of holy image and beholder as the spiritual wedding of human soul and Divine grace, as an anticipation of the eschatological face-to-face encounter.”

In La vita nuova (1293)

decoro, e grandezza in riguardevole divozione de Popoli quel mirabile, e venerando Volto.” Giani, 189. See also Bocchi, (1592), 1852, 76, 78.

Dante also draws on this doctrine: “Jesus Christ left behind evidence of his beautiful figura, which my lady Beatrice contemplates in Glory.”

1.3 The Nunziata’s costume, the Holy Face, and the countenance of the Grand Duke

Reciprocity between the Medici and the divine countenance of the Nunziata is also put forward in the most sustained commentary on the sacred image from the period, Francesco Bocchi’s *Sopra l’immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata di Fiorenza* of 1592. Bocchi repeatedly refers to the Nunziata as a “santissimo volto”, and the dominant theme that arises continually throughout *Sopra l’immagine* is that of the Nunziata’s “costume”, which is, put succinctly, the physiognomical expression of her inner virtue. The effect of the Nunziata’s costume is transformative, and the terms for this potency of the sacred image that Bocchi

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30 As quoted in Belting, 224.

31 No less than eleven texts about the Nunziata were published between 1589 and 1626, seven of these dating to the reign of Ferdinand I. Fantoni, 1989, 780-81. Bocchi was in Rome by the end of 1572 and was either close to or within the household of Cardinal and future grand duke, Ferdinand de’ Medici. Robert Williams, *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 187.

repeats throughout the text together form a kind of proto-theory of the sublime (and “sublime” in fact recurs in his descriptions of the Nunziata’s face). In a number of instances and with admirable rhetorical efficacy, Bocchi contrasts the “humilità” of the Virgin, expressed in the visual quality of her “santissimo volto”, “simple and without any ornament (semplice e senza niuno ornamento)”, and its capacity to give rise in the beholder to “terror (terrore)” “sweetness (dolcezza)”, “awe (maraviglia)” and “reverence (riverenza)”. Bocchi furthermore repeatedly contends that the costume of the Nunziata’s face “changes the feelings of whoever contemplates it (mutando gli affetti di chi il contempla)”. It impresses its virtú upon the human soul as if the latter is like wax. He thus defines the Nunziata’s costume as “the soul expressed vividly in the catharsis and contemporary homiletics. Steven Sowell argues that “the principle theme of Bocchi’s text is the image’s ability to effect religious compunction” or penitence. Bocchi’s writing integrates aesthetic and religious experience. Steven F.H. Sowell, The Spiritual Language of Art: Medieval Christian Themes in Writings on Art of the Italian Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 46, and for the full argument, see 34-70.

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33 Bocchi (1592) 1852, 25, 44, 47, and passim.
34 Bocchi also writes, “[n]el fare a noi mortali sì alto dono, volle la maestà divina collocare in questo miracoloso volto virtù potente, efficace vigore, e stimolare il cuore con dolci avvisi e peregrine, e col saggio delle celesti ricchezze sgridare da noi vizii, e al cielo in guise mirabilis alzarci.” And such is the power of the Nunziata’s face that the most hardened sinner will be spiritually reformed: “[u]n tale effetto opera il volto della Nunziata di Fiorenza, anzi il sovran sembiante, il divin costume e celeste: perocchè quando si scuopre egli non è uomo tanto difforme verso di sè, nè tanto viziooso, nè all’incontro di vita così santa, che tutto non si commuova, obliando la sua condizione, che dentro per disusata dolcezza non si perturbi e non si travagli, e che in un certo modo a divini pensieri non si senta rapire fuori di sè stesso.” Ibid., 24, 49, 18.
35 “L’animo adunque virtuoso nel volto stampa la sua forza, e altresì quello che è fornito di vizio: e siccome acconsente la cera quando è segnata da virtù più potente, e mostra tosto l’immagine onde è segnata da virtù più potente, e mostra tosto l’immagine onde è segnata, coi lanimo in su la carne si stampa, cioè il costume, e vi traluce il vizio e ancora la virtù, onde senza formar parole favella tacitamente, e di sua natura dà segnale manifesto.” Ibid., 35-36. The metaphor of the soul as wax, subject to the imprint of the
face. It has the force to move the viewer to devotion and to also create those thoughts that are evidenced in the countenance.”

Cosimo I is Bocchi’s chief example of those who are moved by the Nunziata’s costume: “when he happened to be in the company of the honoured signori to see this most holy face, he always cried, and with words demonstrated the impassioned thoughts from his heart.”

Yet divine, is a common conceit in religious discourse. For this tradition and the suggestion that this significance might have been carried by wax votive portraits, see Holmes, 2009, 161-62.

36 “[C]ioé l’animo nel volto espresso vivamente, hanno forza di muovere altrui a divozione, e di creare quei pensieri altresí, il quale nel sembiante ci dimostrano.” Bocchi (1592) 1852, 81. Bocchi’s ideas are consonant with those of the Bolognese Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, whose “Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane” (1582), was perhaps the most widely read post-Tridentine tract on images. Paleotti was the first to elaborate on the affective power of sacred images and, more specifically, their ability to incite imitation in the beholder. Giuseppe Scavizzi, The Controversy on Images from Calvin to Baronius (New York: P.Lang, 1992), 133-35. Paleotti was shown the Nunziata twice, on September 13, 1582 and again, in 1588, while passing through Florence on his way from Bologna to Rome. Both times the Cardinal said mass at the altar below the fresco. Agostino Lapini, Diario Fiorentino di Agostino Lapini dal 252 al 1596, ed. Giuseepe Odoardo Corazzini (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1900), 205, 218, 247. Another Servite text from the period that speaks at length of the Nunziata’s face in more conventional theological terms is Francesco Tignosi’s “Statua di Maria Vergine” dedicated to Margaret of Austria, Queen of Spain. Tignosi includes an extended discourse on the passage “Ostende mihi faciem tuam. Facies enim tua decora.” (Cant. 2) wherein God begs the Virgin to show him her face. He furthers the rapport between God and the Virgin: “mentre lo Sposo Iddio priega la belissima sua Sposa Maria Vergine, che mostrar le voglia la sua Faccia, dicendo; Ostende mihi FACIEM tuam, ch’egli desideroso si mostri, che iscoprir le voglia la sua rettissima intenzione?” Citing St. Bernard, Tignosi also associates the revelation of the Virgin’s countenance with her dispensation of favour: “[c]osi appunto con ogni affetto bramar dobbiamo noi ancora di vedere la vaga Faccia sua, per esser poscia fatti degni di ricevere li favori, e le gratie, ch’ella così largamente v’à dispenando a suoi divoti.” Fra Angel Francesco de’Tignosi, Statua di Maria Vergine. Fabricata dall’Humile Servo di Lei... (Milan: Agostino Tradate, 1605), 159-68.

37 “Quando gli avenne in compagnia di gran signori di vedere questo santissimo volto, lagrimó sempre, e con parole dimostró di suo cuore affettuoso pensiero.” Bocchi (1592) 1852, 81.
Bocchi’s theory of the imitative force of costume also allows him to grant in turn its power to Cosimo and as such to elide the conditions of imitation and resemblance. Early in Sopra l’Immagine, when he introduces the concept of costume, he gives the example of the face of the Prince (il volto del Principe),” which “when it is present, disposes the souls of his ministers, and when it shows itself to them, they are filled with conforming thoughts. Because, if his face were always present to those he commands, there would never arise any error in them. If they are governed by the force of the costume and guided by the correct will to become similar and to transform themselves into him, they would place their trust in him.38

He also later praises Grand Duke Cosimo I, “a man full of great virtue (uomo pieno di somma virtù)”, and the “impressive” power of his countenance, using the same terms that characterize the Nunziata’s own costume: “in the face of this man one found a costume and thought that was solemn and accompanied by forthright prudence. [And] since he was always worthy of honour, when he was presented to the eyes of others, they were moved to reverence and terror.”39

This identification of Cosimo with the divine, signified by means of both Bocchi’s equation of the effectivity and affectiveness of Cosimo’s costume with that of the Nunziata and

38 “Quando é presente, dispone gli animi de’suoi ministri e come in vista egli si mostra, così di pensieri conformi a sé stesso gli riempie. Perché, se sempre a quelli fosse presente la sua faccia a cui egli comanda, non nascerebbono in essi alcuni errori, che retti dal vigore del costume, e guidati da giusta voglia, di divenir simili, e di trasformarsi in quello porrebbono ogni sua cura.” Ibid., 13-14. For this point, see also Fantoni, 1989, 782.
39 “Nella faccia di questo uomo si conosceva un costume e un pensiero si grave, e accompagnato da diritta prudenza: perché, siccome era degno di onore, ogni volta, anche agli occhi altrui si presentava, così movea riverenza in coloro e terrore.” Bocchi (1592) 1852, 32.
Giani’s positioning of Cosimo as a reflection of a Holy Face, is consonant with political circumstances in Florence as they had developed by the later cinquecento. Through the second half of the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth, Florentines increasingly submitted to absolutism because of a desire for political stability and civic peace; and Cosimo’s sons, first Francesco and then Ferdinand, fully adopted the imagery of dynastic rule. After Cosimo I, moreover, the Medici are represented as sacralized sovereigns, as was the case with monarchies throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Divine sanction of rule was consistently asserted in the wake of the Reformation. As Marcello Fantoni points out, Italian princes were not anointed and so, with the exception of the pope, were not considered to be “sacred persons”; but they could be invested with various symbolic signs of sacrality. Practices at the Florentine court in this regard have been studied by Fantoni. Dining, for instance, imitated the performance of the Eucharist; and as noted above, from the mid-sixteenth century through the seventeenth, the shrine of the Nunziata figures regularly into Medici ceremonial.

It was furthermore precisely at the time of Giani’s text, under Ferdinand I, that the theory of the divine right of kings first entered Medici iconography, and Florentine political ideology of the period is permeated by a “rhetoric designed to endow the ruler with “divine’ attributes.”

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42 Marcello Fantoni, 1999, 268-271. And on night rituals performed by the Medici in 1685 and 1703 that involved the cleaning of the image, see Fantoni, 1989, 788; and Fantoni, 1994, 189.

43 Berner, 204.
of 1587 for Francesco I, for instance, Lorenzo Giacomini maintains that “it is possible to compare his rule to the celestial reign, where there are no conflicts or battles, and where eternal peace prevails.” Eulogies dedicated to Ferdinand I after his death in 1609 compared him to an oracle, as well as the ocean, stars, and the sun. These symbols equate rulership with a divinely ordered universe. It is especially significant here that they are also age-old symbols for the Virgin Mary and appear at the Nunziata’s shrine. Depictions of the sun, moon, and stella Maris are found, along with the lily and the rose, in five lavish pietre dure panels on the lower walls of the coretto. These were installed in 1671 under Cosimo de’Medici III, although a Servite document states that the project had been planned some forty years earlier under Ferdinand II. The panel located next to the entrance to the cloister of the convent (the Chiostro dei Morti) is of particular note, because it brings together the association of the Nunziata with both the Medici and the Holy Face: it shows the lily, which is simultaneously symbol of the Virgin, the Servite Order, the city of Florence, and the Medici (fig. 1.10). And inscribed within the patterning of the stone is a small face of Christ (fig. 1.11).


45 The appearance of the symbols in the Medici eulogies dates shortly before the reign of Louis XIV. Berner, 1970, 189.

1.4 Christ, the Nunziata, and Grand Ducal Power

The theory of divine right arose during the reign of Ferdinando I and was therefore new to Florentine political ideology. It nonetheless had profound civic and historical underpinnings in Florence in that it recollected an older concept that the state should be co-governed by Christ and the Virgin. In 1494, Savonarola had designated Jesus king and protector of Florence and its liberties. Savonarolanism persisted through the sixteenth century, and indeed, it was even proposed in the 1590’s that the grand duchy was the fulfillment of the Dominican preacher’s prophecy of happiness for the city of Florence –ironically so, given Savonarola’s well-known vehement anti-Medici sentiments. Savonarola’s declaration had also been renewed in 1528, when the Gonfalonier of Justice proposed a vote to make Jesus “governor and king of the city” and the Virgin Mary “queen”, with “their most holy names perpetually inscribed in gold letters

48 This was proposed by the Florentine Domenican, Serafino Razzi, who in the 1590’s produced a hagiographical biography of the Savonarola and a forceful rejoinder to Ambrogio Catarino Politi’s attack on Savonarola’s doctrine (Discorso contra la dottrina, e le Profezie di Fra Girolamo Savonarola, (Venice: Gabriel Giolito di Ferrarj,1548)). Razzi also equated Savonarola’s message with the aims of the Counter-Reformation. Stefano dall’Aglio, Savonarola and Savonarolism, transl. John Gagné (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 144-47. Dall’Aglio’s book details the vicissitudes and reinterpretations of Savonarola’s legacy in the centuries after his death. For further on Savonarolism during the sixteenth century and the changing attitudes of the Medici toward it, see Arnaldo d’Addario, Aspetti della controriforma a Firenze (Rome: Tipografia Giuntina in Firenze, 1972), 256-57, 265; D’Addario, 1980, 79-80; Giuseppe Schnitzer, Savonarola, trans. Ernesto Rutili (Milan: Treves, 1931) vol. 2, 491-92, 545-47; Henk van Theen, Cosimo I de’ Medici and his self-representation in Florentine art and culture, transl. Andrew P. McCormick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 162-64.
on the doors of the public palace [that is, the Palazzo della Signoria].”

There is also evidence that the Nunziata, which Savonarola admired, was directly figured into the Florentine concept of the dual reign of Mother and Son during this time. In his *Diario Fiorentino*, Agostino Lapini describes processions held under Savonarola. One on March 27, 1496, saw all the city crying “Hail Christ who is our King (*Viva Cristo ch’è ‘l nostro Re*).” Another at the time of Carnival, on February 16, 1495, that Lapini compares to Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, involved a procession proceeding from the “portico of the Innocenti on the Piazza [fronting the church of the SS. Annunziata], and everyone left from here and passed from the chapel of the Nunziata (*portico de’Nocenti e sulla Piazza*) e tutti si partirono di quivi e passorono pella cappella della Nunziata,” to San Marco, Santa Trinita, and Santa Maria del Fiore, this time with the populace calling, “Hail Christ and the Virgin Mary our queen (*Viva Cristo e la Vergine Maria nostra regina*).” These Florentine Republican ideals are therefore reprised in the rapport of Cosimo

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49 From the “Libri Fabarum”, the records of the meetings of the Florentine Council, as cited in Lauro Martines, *Lawyers and Statecraft in Renaissance Florence*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 190-91. Martines describes how lawyers were consulted about the constitutionality of appointing a spiritual king.

50 In Savonarola’s sermon of February 18, 1498, the Nunziata stands for moral rectitude. The preacher reprimands the Florentines for their sinful behaviour, which takes place under the eyes of the Virgin: “[q]uesta riformava il fanciulli, ma da poi ch’ella è cessata molti sono tornati alle lascivie. Questa reformava [sic] le donne e poi ch’ella è cessata el s’è atteso alle pompe e à balli e canti e feste e mille disonestà, che intendo che là, alla Nunziata, negli occhi della Vergine Maria, fra giovani e donne, nelle strette, si fanno cose disonestissime, proprio come dire quivi alla Vergine: - il fo per tuo dispetto. Ecco il frutto, o Firenze, che fa a levar via questa dottrina.” Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche sopra l’Esodo*, ed. Pier Giorgio Ricci (Rome: A. Belardetti, 1955-56), Vol.1, 52.

51 “Per modo tale, che in questo dì del Carnasiale, detto vespro, si ragunorono le schiere in quattro quartieri di Firenze, ogni quartiere ebbe la sua bandiera. La prima fu un Crocifisso, la seconda una Nostra Donna, e così l’altre; colle tronbe e co’pifferi di Palagio, co’mazzieri e ministri di Palago, cantando delle laude, sempre gridando: *Viva Cristo e la Vergine Maria nostra regina*; tutti con una ciocca d’ulivo in
and the divine—with the latter denoted by a portrait of Christ and the countenance of the Nunziata—that is featured in Giani’s and Bocchi’s texts.\(^{52}\) It must also be remembered that these texts were written at the time of Ferdinand I; therefore, the Cosimo represented in them is retroactively fashioned in the role of divinely-sanctioned Christian ruler favoured at the time of Ferdinand.

The play of mirroring, imitation, and resemblance that have so far discerned between the Medici and the Nunziata, and in turn, as Bocchi proposes, between the prince and his subjects, also manifests a central tenet of Counter-Reformation political theory, that of exemplarity. Florentine political commentators, such as Francesco de’ Vieri, writing in 1587, propose that divine right serves as a moral check on the behaviour of the Christian ruler in that it entails his responsibility to bring peace to his subjects: the ultimate aim for the prince is not tyranny, rather, “the public good is the end of the principato and the closer it approximates this the more it is divine.”\(^{53}\) To achieve such perfect civic order, the principal imperative for the sovereign is to be

\[\text{mano, che veramente pe’savi uomini e buoni lacrimavano teneramente dicendo: Veramente questa nuova commutazione è opera di Dio....E tutti e quartieri si raunorono a’ Servi, nel portico de’Nocenti e sulla Piazza, e tutti si partirono di quivi e passorono pella cappella della Nunziata, e poi per San Marco. Poi feciono la via che fanno le procissioni; passorono el Ponte a Santa Trinita e poi in Piazza. E poi in Santa Maria del Fiore feciono l’oferta, la quale era calcata d’uomini e di donne, divise, da l’un lato le donne e dall’altro gli uomini, con tanta divozione e lacrime di dolcezza di spirito, che non fu mai fatta tale. Fu stimata l’oferta parecchi centinaia di fiorini. Vedevasi dato loro ne’bacini molti fiorini d’oro, e la maggior parte grossi e arienti….pareva che ognuno volessi offrire a Cristo e alla sua Madre.”}

Lapini, 124-25, and 128.

\(^{52}\) As Samuel Berner has pointed out, by 1600, texts written about the Medici strove to blur any distinction between the periods of the republic and the Principato by means of narratives that smoothed over the rocky and controversial ascension of the family. Berner, 1971, 179-84.

\(^{53}\) Francesco de’ Vieri, Compendio della Civile et Potestà (Florence: G. Marescotti, 1587), 4, 21-2, as cited in Berner, 1970, 193, and see 192-93 for other Florentine texts on this point.
a moral paradigm for his people. Hence exemplarity was Pius IV’s directive to Cosimo I in a breve dated April 17, 1566, thus shortly after Pius had bestowed on Cosimo the title of Grand Duke. Pius’s letter exhorts Cosimo to promote morality and spiritual improvement among his subjects by serving as their model. The notion also appears in Roberto Bellarmine’s theorization of temporal power, De officio principis christiani libri tres (1619), where it is explicitly tied to divine right. Bellarmine, who was the foremost Catholic theologian of the period, had links to Florence. Between 1563 and 1564, he taught at the Jesuit College there and delivered numerous sermons in the Duomo and the Jesuit Church of San Giovannino. He was also made cardinal–priest of the Servite Church of Santa Maria della Via in Rome in 1599. And while in Rome, under Clement VIII, he was on good terms with Cardinal and Archbishop of Florence, Alessandro de’Medici, supporting Allessandro’s opposition to contemporary

54 “Proinde nobilitatem tuam hortamur in Dominio et summo studio petimus ut tecum cogitans quantopere tam gravia et detestanda vitia divinate oculos maiestatis offendant, […]consideransque quantopere decept christianos principes honoris et potestatis suae auctorem Deum et honorare ipsos et populos sibi subjectos ad eum timendum et colendum cum exemplo suo, tum etiam serveritate poenarum inducere, ad ipsas nostras literas promulgandas et exequandas episcopos ipsos eorumque vicarios et auctoritate tua iuvenes ipse, et […] civitatum ac […] locorum tuorum gubernatoribus reliquisque magistratibus mandes atque praecipias ut eis suum auxilium quotiescumque opus fuerit fideliter ac diligentem subministret. Quo nullum Deo gratius obsequium praestare poteris.” As cited in: La comunità cristiana fiorentina e toscana nella dialettica religiosa del cinquecento (Florence: Becocci, 1980), 79.


Savonarolanism in Florence.\textsuperscript{57} In the \textit{De officio principis christianii}, Bellarmine declares that “[t]he prince is not only leader and pastor, but in a certain way, God on earth, as the Holy Spirit states in the psalms, ‘I have said, you are both God and son of the Highest.’”\textsuperscript{58} Additionally, “the princes of the world are like mirrors and models to which all their subjects look and to which they are compelled to conform in their behavior.”\textsuperscript{59} And Bellarmine again cites the authority of scripture, stating that “princes must be to the greatest extent mirrors of each virtue for the people they govern. In fact, ‘all the earth configures itself after the example of the king, including the governors of the city and its inhabitants.’”\textsuperscript{60} In his text on the Nunziata, Bocchi employs the same language of rulership. For the Nunziata he claims, “with the most holy appearance of this miraculous face, as in a shining mirror, one sees at once his own vileness and the shame of his ugliness illuminated by the divine light. And so he takes the true path which he had lost, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Brodrick, 1950, Vol.I, 41 and vol 2, 354. Alessandro was the son of Ottaviano, second cousin of Cosimo I, and served Cosimo as an ambassador to Pius V for fifteen years. He was appointed Archbishop of Florence in 1574 and was elected Leo XI on April 1, 1605, although he died only twenty-six days later. Furio Diaz, \textit{Il Granducato di Toscana: I Medici} (Turin: U.T.E.T., 1976), 290. For a short time Bellarmine had also been in the running during the conclave that elected Alessandro as Leo X. See Brodrick for Bellarmine’s letter praising Alessandro, after the latter’s death, and for a letter dated May 24 1612, wherein Cosimo II de’ Medici asks Bellarmine to visit Florence. Brodrick, 1950, Vol.2, 114-115, 279-80.
\item \textsuperscript{59} “Praeterea, Principes in terres sunt quasi specula vel exemplaria, in qua subditi omnes respiciunt, seque eorum moribus accomodare satagunt.” \textit{Bellarmin}e (n.54), p. 108.
\item \textsuperscript{60} “[A]d Principes maxime pertineat exemplum virtutum omnium populis, quos regunt, praebere. \textit{Regis enim ad exemplum totus componitur orbis; et: Qualis est rector civitatis, tales et inhabitants in ea.”} Bellarmine here cites Sirach, 10,2. Ch.22, ll.287-90. Bellarmine, 234. For further on the prince as a mirror for his people, see Silvia Moretti, “Popolo e sovrano nella letteratura politica italiana della Controriforma,” \textit{Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica}, 2 (1988): 33.
\end{itemize}
purged of defects and errors, he conformes himself with humility to divine thoughts.\textsuperscript{61} And just as Bocchi compares the effective potency of the Nunziata with that of Cosimo, Bellarmine uses semantics to equate the prince and Christ in the same sense: “Christ the Lord is not only teacher and doctor, but also our king and emperor. For this reason, to imitate him [as do princes] is not something shameful, but beautiful.”\textsuperscript{62}

The contention that the \textit{costume} of the faces of the sovereign and the Nunziata impress their virtù upon the beholder and effect obedience and conversion therefore partakes of fundamental Counter-Reformation conceptions of the Christian prince. It is also pertinent that not long before Bocchi’s and Gaini’s texts were published, wrongful rulership was signified in Florence in terms of disrespect for the face of Christ. In a three hour sermon delivered in the Duomo on Good Friday, May 4 1585, and published in the same year, the Franciscan Marcellino Evangelista inveighed against the Medici, most likely in light of the scandalous adultery and subsequent marriage in 1578 of Francesco I and Bianca Cappello. Marcellino does not mention

\textsuperscript{61} “Per lo sembiate santissimo di questo miracoloso volto, come in lucente specchio, conosce tosto l’uomo la sua viltà, e punto di vergogna per sua bruttezza, da lume divino illuminato, prend il vero sentiero che avea smarrito, e purgati i difetti e gli errori, umilmente co’ pensieri divini e santi si conforma.” Bocchi (1592), 1852, 59. The long-standing imagery of the Virgin as a mirror of God is based on scripture: “she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness” (Wisdom of Solomon, 7:26). David Summers, \textit{Vision, Reflection, and Desire in Western Painting} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2007), 136.

\textsuperscript{62} “Certe Christus Dominus non solum Magister, et Doctor, sed etiam Rex noster et Imperator est; proinde eum imitari, non turpe, sed decorum nobis videri deberet.” Bellarmine (n.54), p. 216. In the same vein, Bellarmine justifies kingly magnificence as having a mediative function, because it fashions the ruler in the image of God. As a counterpart to this “impressive” power, nonetheless, Bellarmine also stresses that the prince is more susceptible to moral failing, because he is held to the highest standards, and the prince’s sins will be all the more grave than those of ordinary citizens. Bellarmine, 148-54, 234-36.
the grand duke directly, but it was clear against whom he was aiming his censure.\textsuperscript{63} He compares sinful princes to Pontius Pilate and accuses them repeatedly of offenses towards Christ’s face: “why you have beaten him, and especially in the face?”\textsuperscript{64} Marcellino subsequently encourages his audience to direct their devotion to the passion of Christ, which has been commemorated in the “Veil of Veronica (\textit{Velo della Veronica})”.\textsuperscript{65} Moreover, while there is no mention of the Nunziata in the published version of Marcellino’s sermon, there is evidence that Florentines associated his admonishments with the fresco and the Medici monopolization of its cult. Lapini refers to Marcellino’s sermon and observes that about a month after it, on June 15, a copy of the sacred image was placed on the clock tower in the Mercato Nuovo. The commissioning of this reproduction was led by the patrician “Niccolò di Giovanni Borgherini who dressed in the grey [habit]. The cost was assumed by him, but with the help of the third and fourth bankers, and

\textsuperscript{63} D’Addario, 1972, 308, n.103.

\textsuperscript{64} “Dimmi perchè l’hai percosso, e massimamente in faccia?... [M]à tu dirai di sì, atteso che i Principi, e grandi simili al tuo Pontefice non vogliono udir il vero, e dinanzi à loro non si debbe dire, non volendo eglino ascoltare se non bugie, se no adulazioni, se non lode eziam Dio ne peccati, \textit{Nam laudatur peccator in desiderijs animae sua, & iniquus beneditur}. Se così é, tu non mostri che risponder di Cristo sia male, mà mostri bene esser male il modo, che tiene il tuo Pontefice, e tutti quelli, che à lui son simili, dinanzi’ à quali veramente in faccia si percuote Cristo, poiche così alla scoperta si nega la verità e si perseguitano quelli, che la dicono, oh adulatori perche non considerate, che nel volto offendete Cristo?” Marcellino Evangelista, \textit{Predica del Venerdì Santo fatta nel Duomo di Fiorenza, l’Anno 1585. Dal molto R.P.F. Vangelista Marcellino de’Minori osservanti di San Francesco} (Florence: Marescotti, 1585), 45, and see pp. 44-46 for the full argument.

\textsuperscript{65} “Oh Fiorenza, e quando sia mai che incontriamo Cristo, e ci lasci la sua immagine? Non dico l’esterna, da te mille volte veduta, ma l’interna, forse non anco appieno considerata. Deh imprimasi una volta nella tua memoria, come in un velo, con tanta fermezza la passion di Cristo, che doppo mille, e mill’anni restando accesa à tutto il mondo, tu sia in ammirazione, onde si come dell’estreme parti della terra corrano i fidelì per vedere il Velo della Veronica, così all’esempio dell’impressione fattati da Cristo della sua passione à lui convertendosi i peccatori.” \textit{Marcellino Evangelista} (n.60), p. 117.
other shop owners and gentlemen of that market.” The image consequently prompted “the populace to kneel on the ground when they were compelled to sing the *Ave Maria*, both night and day.” Lapini then attributes the impetus for this copy to Marcellino, “who preached in Santa Maria del Fiore, and exhorted and begged the people to make this good work.”

1.5 The Medici and Portrait Copies of the Nunziata: the Dissemination of Privilege

The identification of Medicean power with the Nunziata’s *santissimo volto* was also engendered by visual means, with a particular type of copy after the fresco that the Medici began to commission around 1580. It can first be noted that copies of the whole composition had appeared in churches within and close to Florence already during the first half of the fourteenth century.

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66 “A ‘di 15 detto che fu il lunedí santo, fu posta e si messe quella Madonna di pittura sotto l’oriuolo di Mercato Nuovo di Firenze, quale rappresenta la devota e bella immagine e pittura della Annunziata di Firenze. Funne inventore Niccolò di Giovanni Borgherini che va vestito di bigio, ma la spesa sí la fece lui, ma con aiuto del terzo e quarto banchiere, et altri bottegai e gentil huomini di detto Mercato. E allora cominciò il populo a inginocchiarsi in piana terra quanto sentivano suonare l’*Ave Maria*, così la sera come la mattina. Funne causa il Marcellino frate di San Francesco, che predicò in Santa Maria del Fiore, ed esortò e pregò il populo a fare questa buon opera: e si va seguitando.” Lapini, 244. It is possible Borgherini’s grey habit was that of the confraternity of St. Job, whose church was located behind the SS. Annunziata. For this confraternity, see Barbara Wisch, “Incorporating Images: Some Themes and Tasks for Confraternity Studies and Early Modern Visual Culture,” in *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock (Aldershott: Ashgate, 2006) 245. In a note in this 1900 edition of Lapini’s diary, however, G. O. Corazzini says that Borgherini’s “vita manoscritta” is conserved at the Company of San Benedetto Bianco. Corazzini also states that the Mercato Nuovo copy of the Nunziata is still in situ. It has however since disappeared. Lapini, 244 n.1.
and while the production of such replicas diminished by the second half of the fifteenth century, it accelerated again in the last two decades of the sixteenth. A good number of seicento artists in Florence were engaged at some point in their careers in the task; the painters Alessandro Allori (fourteen documented copies) and Cristofano Allori (with around twenty), must have counted this activity as a distinct genre. Fantoni points out that the control exercised by the Medici over the viewing of the image goes hand in hand with the “inflation” in the number of its copies, which both increased the aura of the original and underlined Medici privilege. These full reproductions include street tabernacles and versions in other Florentine churches that served public devotion, given that access to the original remained so severely

67 For a summary of the history of copies after the fresco, see Casalini, 1987, 79-81. Casalini includes a list of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century copies, including versions by Agnolo Gaddi and Gentile da Fabriano, and a number sent to churches and courts in Spain and German centres, such as Innsbruck, Vienna, and Cologne. For further on Florentine copies, see Penny Howell Jolly, “Jan van Eyck’s Italian Pilgrimage: A Miraculous Florentine Annunciation and the Ghent Altarpiece,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 61, 3 (1998): 369-394. Jolly also argues that Jan van Eyck’s Ghent and Washington Annunciation scenes were modelled after the Nunziata and intended to retain its miracle working powers pertaining to childbirth and marriage.


restricted for the people of Florence, and numerous others, many of which were sent abroad, either to churches related to the Servites or to prominent individuals as gifts from the Medici.

My primary concern here, nonetheless, are what can be called portrait copies, which replicate the Nunziata in a bust format, and were sometimes accompanied by a similarly cropped pendant of the Archangel. As I will show, these portrait replicas were especially important to the propagation of the cult under the Medici, in that they confirmed the Nunziata’s power by fashioning her image according to the type of the Holy Face. Moreover, this format also carried with it a long-standing association of secular rulership with the divine; and it will be considered here how the Medici were eager to share this privileged relationship with elite persons outside of Florence.

A pattern for the significance of this type of painted copy is apparent in a survey of the documentation that remains for its production by Alessandro and Cristofano Allori, with respectively, ten (dated 1580-83) and three (1601 and 1617) commissions. While the precise circumstances for each of these works cannot be discerned from the terse documentary evidence, it is clear that they were given by the Medici to highly placed individuals. The first to be made, which will be discussed shortly, were obtained from Alessandro by Francesco I for Carlo Borromeo in 1580 (figs. 1.12, 1.13), and others followed immediately. The recipients included

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71 Casalini, 1987, 80; Wazbinski, 630-32. Recipients of copies by Cristofano Allori were Maria de Medici, Queen of France (1601 and 1610), Ferdinando Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1603), and Claudio Acquaviva, general of the Jesuit Order (1606). Others by Alessandro were sent to Philip III of Spain (1580), and Cardinal Carlo Borromeo (1580); the latter will be discussed below.
72 Bocchi writes that the face of the Archangel was also completed by divine means, although “dicono alcuni che fu finito l’Angelo da mano umana.” Bocchi, 25.
members of venerable Florentine families, such as Baccio Barbadori (1583), Raffaello Doni (1582), and Jacopo Salviati (1583), as well as Ulisse Bentivoglio, husband of Pellegrina Buonaventuri who was daughter of Bianca Cappello (1583), and Bongianni di Piero Gianfigliazzi (1582) who was Medici envoy to the Levant in 1578 and then ambassador to Spain from 1584 to 1587. Others were presented to honoured associates outside of Florence, such as Simone Fortuna of Urbino, secretary to Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere (1581); and in 1617, small copies of both heads were sent to Lorenzo Giustiniani who served the Venetian Republic as Savio di Terraferma (in 1608 and four other times), as Senator (in 1608), and in the Consiglio.

73 See the documentation in Ida B. Supino, I Ricordi di Alessandro Allori, (Florence: Tipografia Barbèra, 1908), 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21; Cristofano Allori 1577-1621: Firenze, Palazzo Pitti, Sala delle nicchie, luglio-ottobre 1984, ed. Miles L. Chappell (Florence: Centro Di, 1984), 114; and Claudio Pizzorusso, Ricerche su Cristofano Allori (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1982), 110-11. See also Chappell for what seem to be drawings after the hands of the Archangel and Nunziata, as well as the head of the Nunziata. Chappell, 34-35. I have cited here only those for which the documentation clearly states it is a head of the Nunziata or Archangel that is being commissioned. It should be noted that in a good number of cases, the documents do not specify as to whether a “ritratto” reproduces the whole fresco or is a portrait version, and of course there may be others for which any record is lost. The production of copies that do not closely follow the style of the original also complicates the task of identification. There is, for example, a bust length portrait of an angel, formerly at the Toledo Art Museum in Toledo, Ohio and sold by Christie’s in 1984, which, given its pose, must be a copy of the Nunziata’s Gabriel, but the style of the work is typical for Cristofano Allori. That some patrons seem to have particularly appreciated such interpretive copies is suggested by the fact that Acquaviva specifically requested that Cristofano execute his replica. For other discussion of such copies by Cristofano Allori and Carlo Dolci see Wazbinski, 631. A document dated July 10, 1583 states that Philip II showed interest in a copy of the Nunziata belonging to Gianfigliazzi, though the King refused the painting when the ambassador offered it to him. Gianfigliazzi then informed Francesco I that Philip would like his own. Subsequent letters between Gianfigliazzi and Francesco, dated Aug 1 and Nov 12 1583, repeat the request for the gift. ASF Vol.1546, fol.10; ASF Vol.5046, fols.13 and 20. For the recipients of the copies mentioned here, see the biographical information in the Medici Archive Project, www.medici.org/. On the career of Bongianni di Piero Gianfigliazzi, see Diaz, 250, 251, 258, 259.
dei Dieci (in 1614). In 1601, grand duchess Christina of Lorraine commissioned from Cristofano Allori a portrait of Cosimo II and small portrait copies of the Nunziata and archangel for Maria de Medici, Queen of France. In the same year, on the occasion of the birth of the Dauphin, Christina sent to Maria a small copy of the full fresco, also by Cristofano Allori.\textsuperscript{74}

The first set of such portrait copies to be made are especially of interest to this study. These were given by Francesco I to Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, in 1580. They were painted by Alessandro Allori, who in the same year also produced a copy of the entire painting for Borromeo. These replicas and Borromeo’s involvement with them provide particularly clear evidence of the manner by which such copies promoted both the Nunziata’s powers and the identification of the Medici with the latter. Borromeo’s uncle was Pius IV, who had been an important ally of Cosimo I, and in Rome, Borromeo had become close to Cosimo’s son, Cardinal Giovanni de’Medici, before Giovanni’s death in 1562.\textsuperscript{75} Borromeo was also one of the foremost Catholic figures of the period. His tenures in both Rome (between 1563 and 1565) and Milan (from 1565) were aimed at the elimination of clerical abuses, ecclesiastical discipline, and the education of both clergy and the laity. The Cardinal’s influence went well beyond these two major centres, furthermore: in 1565, he was named papal legate for all of Italy, and

\textsuperscript{74} For the related documents, see \textit{Cristofano Allori}, 114. The copy of the full fresco is recorded as being a quarter \textit{braccio} wide by an eighth tall. It was set on lapis by Giovanni Bilivert and ornamented with gold, agate, and pearls.

\textsuperscript{75} Pius IV, Gian Angelo de’Medici, belonged to a Milanese branch of the family, but Cosimo encouraged him to adopt the Medici coat of arms when he became Cardinal in 1548. In 1558, Cardinal Giovan Angelo de’Medici visited Florence, and after becoming Pope the following year, he made Cosimo’s sons Cardinals, first Giovanni (1560), and then Ferdinand (1563). Butters,181-82; Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, \textit{The history of the popes, from the close of the Middle Ages}, ed. Ralph Francis Kerr (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner), 1936-67, Vol. XVI, 64, 66-67, 344-45. Diaz also describes how a genial relationship was fostered between Cardinal Giovan Angelo and Cosimo by means of favours exchanged. Diaz, 186ff.
immediately after his death on November 3 1584, his piety and commitment to reform were held up by Rome for all those with authority to emulate.\(^76\) Borromeo also recognized the value of relic and image cults in the revitalization of the Church, and so it is no surprise he turned his attentions to the Nunziata. According to Lapini, the Cardinal celebrated mass at the altar before the fresco while visiting Florence in February, 1579 and June, 1582.\(^77\) Bocchi also says that during Borromeo’s 1579 sojourn, the Cardinal requested a copy of the full painting, “as close as possible to the original (\textit{quanto più simile si potesse})”,\(^78\) and the work was presented to him when he passed through the city again, on his way to Rome, in 1580.\(^79\)

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\(^76\) John B. Tomaro, “San Carlo Borromeo and the Implementation of the Council of Trent,” in \textit{San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century}, ed. John M. Headley and John B. Tomaro (Washington, London, and Toronto: Folger Books, 1988), 67-84. This article provides an overview of Borromeo’s deep involvement in the Council of Trent, the rigorous reforms he undertook afterward, and the resistance with which his actions were sometimes met by secular rulers, prelates, and the papacy. Tomaro stresses that after Borromeo’s death Catholic Reform became more centralized, with the papacy increasingly becoming more authoritarian.

\(^77\) Lapini also notes that the fresco was shown to the Cardinal during the 1582 visit and provides a lengthy entry praising the Archbishop’s piety and accomplishments after his death on November 3, 1584. Lapini, 205, 219-220, 237-38. For Borromeo’s advice to the Florentine Archbishop, Alessandro de’Medici, regarding the latter’s pastoral responsibilities, see \textit{La comunità cristiana fiorentina}, 82; and for Borromeo’s disapproval of Grand Duke Francesco’s affair with Bianca Cappello and the Cardinal’s preaching on the moral weakness of women at San Giovannino in Florence, see D’Addario, 1972, 310-11, 326.

\(^78\) Bocchi, 83-84.

accompanied the gift with a letter wherein he stressed the copy’s fidelity to the original – claiming disingenuously that it was the first to be “entirely similar (totalmente simile)” – thus emphasizing his compliance with Borromeo’s request and the specialness of this particular reproduction.  

Borromeo’s use of this replica has a bearing on the significance of the portrait copies the Cardinal received soon after. Francesco seems to have wanted to restrict the full copy to Borromeo’s private enjoyment: “I hope and pray that Your Most Illustrious Lord will not reveal it to anyone, but will enjoy it for your devotion.” The Archbishop had other plans for Allori’s work, however, installing it on the altar of the Madonna dell’Albero, located in the north transept of the Duomo of Milan. This had been the primary altar in the ancient cathedral of Saint Tecla.

80 The original letter is in the Ambrosiana in Milan, but a transcription is in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, dated July 11, 1580. ASF, vol.254, fol. 67. The letter is also quoted in full in Gio. Battista dal Corno, Del primo ritratto totalmente simile della Santissima Annuntiata di Firenze: donato dal Serenissimo Gran Duca Francesco de Medici al San Carlo l’anno 1580, che con molta diuotione si honora nel Duomo di Milano nella Capella della Gloriosissima Vergine Maria Madre di Dio (Milan: Nella Stampa Archiepiscopale, 1648), 7-8. The claim of this title – that the copy was the first to be “totalmente simile” – must be inspired by Francesco’s letter. He also describes the copy as “cavato nel modo a punto, che stà senza scemare, ò accrescere cosa alcuna, anzi è della medesima grandezza, e credo che satisfaià à V.S. Illustrissima.” Bocchi nonetheless says that after obtaining the copy, Borromeo revisited Florence and, upon seeing the Nunziata once again, declared that even though Allori lacked “nè di industria nè di accuratezza” in making the replica, the latter still lacked the full effect of the divinely fashioned original. Bocchi, 84-85. I am leaving aside here the issue of the efficacy of copies in comparison to their originals. For seicento views on the matter, see Evonne Levy, “Reproduction in the ‘Cultic’ Era of Art: Pierre Legros’s Stanislas Kostka,” Representations, 58 (1997): 88-114. On the reproduction of miraculous images, see also Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, Spectacular Miracles. Transforming Images in Italy from the Renaissance to the Present (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), Chapter 5, 191-219.

81 “Desidero et prego V. S. Ill.ma à non lassare cavare da persona ma se la goda lei per sua devotione.” Dal Corno, 8.
and it was transferred to the Duomo in the fourteenth century, where it became the principal focus of Marian worship in the church. The chapel was established in the transept arm when Borromeo and his architect Pellegrino Pellegrini renovated the Cathedral in the 1570’s. Besides placing the copy of the Nunziata here with the wooden statue of the Madonna and Child surmounting a tree, Borromeo promoted the cult of the Virgin at this site in other ways: he ordered that the statue be carried in procession the first Sunday of every month and he designated the chapel the meeting place of the Compagnia del Rosario, which he himself founded. Attesting to the importance given to this full copy of the Nunziata is the existence of a text entirely devoted to it, *Il primo ritratto totalmente simile della Santissima Annuntiata di Firenza*. This is dated 1648 and was written by the priest and maestro del choro of the Duomo, Giovan Battista dal Corno. Dal Corno describes Francesco’s commission from Allori and transcribes the grand duke’s letter. He also stresses Borromeo’s intent to share the Nunziata’s cult with all of Milan. He points out that the altar of the Madonna dell’Albero and that of San Giovanni Buono

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83 Between 1582 and 1584, the statue also came to be known as the Madonna del Rosario. Maria Luisa Gatti Perer, “Per la definizione dell’iconografia della Vergine del Rosario,” *Carlo Borromeo e l’opera della "grande riforma": cultura, religione e arti del governo nella Milano del pieno Cinquecento*, ed. Franco Buzzi and Danilo Zardin (Milan: Silvana Editoriale,1997), 188-89.
in the opposite transept, “are now much venerated by the people (sono hora in molta venerazione appresso il popolo).” Borromeo also wished to honour the Virgin and “give an example to the people to do the same (dar esempio al Popolo di far il medesimo).” A Florentine Servite text of 1650 says that the Nunziata’s replica was met upon its arrival with a procession of 3,000 Milanese.

It is clear, then, that Ferdinand desired this full copy of the Nunziata to engender a privileged relationship between himself and Borromeo. This intention was nonetheless thwarted when Borromeo, staying true to his reformist principles, insisted on publically displaying the work. Nevertheless, a sense of exclusivity was restored with the portrait copies of the Nunziata that were gifted to Borromeo four years later. Only fifty-four centimeters high and certainly

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84 Dal Corno, 9-10. San Giovanni Buono was archbishop of Milan in the seventh century. The placement of the copy of the Nunziata in the Duomo is also discussed in Gio. Pietro Giussano, Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo. Prete Cardinale del titolo di Santa Prassede Arcivescovo di Milano. Scritta dal Dottore Gio. Pietro Giussano Nobile Milanese. Et dalla Congregazione delli Oblati di S. Ambrogio dedicata alla Santit`a di N.S. Papa Paolo Quinto (Rome: Camera Apostolica, 1610), 93, 529. Giussano is surely the source for dal Corno’s account which follows the earlier text almost verbatim.

85 Giussano, 14. The point is stressed by dal Corno: “[c]sortava il popolo à comunicarsi nelle sue feste principali, et ordinò fino à I soldati, che tenessero la sua effigie con essi loro, e recitassero ogni giorno il suo ufficio. Et à tutti i Collegij, Luoghi Pij, Congregazion, e Confraternità ch’egli fundava, dava per Avvocata particolare Maria Vergine, aggiungendoli, di recitare per divotione il suo Ufficio, et il Rosario.” He also reveals that Borromeo intended to use the image to promote the feast of the Annunciation in Milan: “il Santo procurasse tal dono non solamente per sua, ma anco per nostra divotione per la solennità grande, che si fà in Milano nella festa dell’Incarnazione del Signore, favorita l’anno 1559 il primo giorno di Marzo dà Papa Pio IV Zio del Santo con Indulgneza Plenaria perpetua.” Dal Corno, 14-15, 26.

86 Ferdinando Mancini, Restaurazione d’alcuni più segnalati miracoli della S.ma Nunzita di Fiorenza, manuscript, dated 1650. This text is transcribed and its illustrations reproduced, with notes by Iginia Dina, “Ex-voto d’argento all’Annunziata nel 1650,” in La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studi e documenti sulla chiesa e il convento (Florence: Convento della SS. Annunziata, 1978), 87 (page 7 of the ms). Mancini’s manuscript is currently located in the BNCF.
intended for private devotion, these remained in Borromeo’s possession until his death in 1584, when they were passed on to his nephew Federico, who donated them to the collection of the Ambrosiana in 1618. Like the other gifted portrait copies of the sacred image listed above, these must be understood as being situated within the category of European Baroque court production and practices belonging to the “politics of intimacy”, which functioned alongside more public expressions of absolutist power. Hence, the identification between ruler and the divine, represented by the Holy Face, is underscored and extended to others as a gesture of regard and affiliation. The connection of both status and virtue to the ability to discern and possess the countenance of Christ was certainly deeply embedded in the tradition of his acheropitae portraits. The sudarium, or Veronica, the predominant Holy Face in the West and purportedly made by contact with Christ’s visage during the Passion on the Mount of Olives, was in papal possession at St. Peter’s in Rome, and the most important Holy Face in the Christian East, that of Edessa, which eventually came to be called the Mandylion, appeared miraculously when Christ pressed his face to a cloth and sent it to King Abgar, who was healed and converted by it. This image-relic subsequently protected Abgar’s city from destruction and occupation, and a tenth-century account indicates that when the holy cloth was transferred from Edessa to

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87 Lecchini Giovannoni, cats. 81 and 82; and Galbiati, 123.
88 Adamson, 10, 33.
89 Mention of this image relic only first appears in the early thirteenth century, when its cult began to be fostered so as to surpass that of the Mandylion, and the legend linking it to the Passion develops around 1300.
Constantinople in 944 to become the palladium of the city, only the Emperor Constantine VII could apprehend the face of Christ in it, while his immoral step-brothers saw nothing.91

The commissioning of these cropped copies of the Nunziata was therefore based on the lineage of portraits of Christ and the highest prestige associated with the possession and circulation of the latter. All of this comes into play with another aspect of Giani’s story of the Holy Face and an actual exchange of images that very possibly was the basis for it. I refer here to Giani’s assertion that it was “a Bishop from the House of Orsini” who gave Cosimo I the collection of relics that included the serpentine stone upon which was painted the face of Christ. Giani must have had in mind Flavio Orsini. Orsini was made a Bishop in 1560, and then a Cardinal by Pius IV on May 15, 1565, the same year that Ferdinand de’Medici received his own red hat. Orsini was also a jurist and served as papal legate to France in 1572.92 His see of Spoleto is only some seventy kilometers east of Lake Bolsena, where Giani says the relics were

91 Herbert L. Kessler, “Configuring the Invisible by Copying the Holy Face,” in The Holy Face, 139. Later, several icons are claimed to be the Mandylion: a panel which, in the Middle Ages, belonged to the nuns of the Order of St. Clare at San Silvestro in Capite, in Rome, and which was later transferred to the Vatican; an icon in S. Bartoloemo degli Armeni in Genoa, that the Byzantine emperor John V gave to the captain of the Genoese colony on the Bosporus in the fourteenth century; and a holy cloth is recorded in the possession of the French monarchy in all the inventories taken at Ste. Chapelle between the mid-thirteenth and late eighteenth centuries. Belting, 208-10, 218-20, 541-42. For the histories of the Mandylion and the Veronica, see Ibid., Chapter 11, “The ‘Holy Face’: Legends and Images in Competition”, 208-224, and Ernst von Dobschütz, Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur Christlichen Legende (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1899), Chapters V and VI, 102-262. See also n. 96 below.

originally interred for hundreds of years. He was also present at the papal court at the same time as Cosimo’s Cardinal sons, Giovanni and Ferdinand, during the 1560’s. Orsini and the Medici furthermore together patronized at least two prominent musical composers of the period, and in 1565 Orsini attended in Florence the wedding of future Grand Duke, Francesco de Medici, and Joanna of Austria.\(^9\) Most importantly, there is an actual head of Christ that enters into Orsini’s relationship with the Medici: in 1569 – at the very time Giani says Orsini gave the relics to Cosimo and “the most Serene Cosimo was made Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pius V” – Orsini received from Ferdinand de Medici a porphyry relief profile of Christ set on an oval serpentine ground. Ferdinand commissioned this work from the virtuoso porphyry sculptor, Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda, and Suzanne Butters has proposed it might be the signed oval that was auctioned at Christie’s in 1975.\(^4\) (fig. 1.14)

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\(^9\) The Flemish composer, Philippe de Monte dedicated several books of motets to Flavio Orsini and books of madrigals to both Ferdinand de’Medici (for whom he also sang in 1566) and Ferdinand’s learned and gifted sister, Isabella. Monte perhaps also composed a madrigal in 1558 for Isabella’s marriage to Duke Paolo Giordano Orsini, who belonged to the Bracciano line of the family. Flavio Orsini came from the Gravina line. Another composer, Stefano Rossetti, was employed by Ferdinand de’Medici for several years during the mid 1560’s and performed music in Florence at the wedding of Francesco and Joanna of Austria in 1558. In a collection published in Rome in 1566, Rossetti dedicated his first piece to Joanna, the second to Isabella de’Medici, and the third to Flavio Orsini. Frank A. D’Accone, “Corteccia’s Motets for the Medici Marriages,” in Words on Music. Essays in Honor of Andrew Porter on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday, ed. David Rosen and Claire Brook (Hillsdale, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 2003), 47-49. On real estate dealings in Rome involving Ferdinand de’Medici and Flavio Orsini, see Suzanne B. Butters, “Le cardinal Ferdinando de Médicis,” in La Villa Medicis, ed. Andre Chastel and Philippe Morel (Rome: Academie de France e Ecole francaise, 1995), 178.

This gift very possibly played a part in Giani’s story. Porphyry was often featured in the building and sculptural projects of Cosimo I, and with his involvement the techniques to work the stone were rediscovered.\textsuperscript{95} Porphyry also carried ancient and imperial significances. The third-century legend of the Four Crowned Saints claimed that only tools tempered by Christ were able to work this exceptionally hard stone; and porphyry was also identified with the blood of the Saviour.\textsuperscript{96} The purpose of Tadda’s work given to Orsini as a status gift is further indicated in that it is one of five similar versions of such porphyry portraits of Christ on serpentine, all of which were executed by the sculptor between 1560 and 1593 and presented by the Medici to powerful associates. Ferdinand gave the one to Orsini and another, in 1593, to Cardinal Alfonso Gesualdo, in Rome; and in 1565, Ferdinand’s brother Francesco presented one to Emperor Maximilian II; while a pair dated 1561 and 1562 were almost certainly given by Cosimo I to Cardinal Michele Ghislieri, who was to become Pius V four years later. These last two face one another on either side of the high altar in the Dominican Church of Santa Croce, which Pius had built at Boscamarengo for his own burial. These medallions would have commemorated the political loyalty and friendship shared by the future pope and Cosimo,

\textsuperscript{95} For the plausibility that Cosimo directly contributed to the development of a new “temper” for steel tools that could cut porphyry, see Ibid., 241-266.

\textsuperscript{96} Pliny (\textit{Natural History}, XXXV.11) refers to the stone as “Imperial Porphyry”. Porphyry was also used extensively in Byzantine Imperial monuments, including the \textit{Porphyra}, which served as the birthing chamber for the Empress in the Great Palace of Constantinople, built under Leo III (717-41). Leo’s son, Constantine V, was thus designated the first \textit{porphyrogennetos} (“one born in the purple”). Next to this room Constantine V built the Pharos Chapel, which became the focus of the cult of the Virgin as Theotokos. The collection of relics housed here included the Mandyion, and the power of the Marian icon on the high altar was believed to ensure the birth of heirs to the throne. Bissera V. Pentcheva, \textit{Icons and Power: the Mother of God in Byzantium} (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State Univ Press, 2006), 28. Suzanne B. Butters, “Porphyry” in \textit{The Classical Tradition}, ed. Anthony Grafton, Glen W. Most, and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), 771.
while they also refer to Cosimo’s identity as a model Counter-Reformation prince: it was Pius V who elevated Cosimo I to Grand Duke in exchange for demonstrations of Cosimo’s fidelity to the Holy Church.97

It is therefore highly conceivable that these profiles set on serpentine inspired Giani’s episode of the gift of the holy face exchanged between Cosimo and the Orsini Bishop. And if this is the case, their oval shape can explain the enigmatic “squash rind (scorza di zucca)” which, according to Giani, was encased in the serpentine stone Bishop Orsini gave to Cosimo.98 At the least, Tadda’s works partake of the tradition wherein portraits of Christ were possessed and presented as signs of shared esteem and favour,99 and the framing and circulation of the Nunziata’s santissimo volto by the Medici draws on this custom. Indeed, Tadda also produced a porphyry portrait of the Virgin Mary, probably shortly before 1568, when it was given as a gift in Rome from Francesco de Medici to Cardinal Granvelle, one of the most powerful politicians of the period and perhaps the most active private collector of art during his time.100 While this

97 For Tadda’s porphyry profiles of Christ, see Butters, 1996, vol.1, 315-23, and Appendices VII-IX. Unsigned versions also remain in papier-maché and white marble; the latter is currently in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin, although its serpentine backing has been missing since 1945. Butters argues for Tadda himself as the author of the marble copy, given that it is almost the exact same dimensions as a profile portrait of Cosimo, executed in the same materials and signed by Tadda. Ibid., vol.1, 312, 317. For further on Pius V and Cosimo I, see d’Addario, 1972, 123,152, 154, 185.
98 I thank Andrea Gáldy for this observation.
99 Gerhard Wolf has suggested that the close copies of the Mandylion, dating from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, might have been intended as imperial gifts from the Byzantine Emperor. Wolf, 158. See also above in this Chapter for the 1618 gift of a “Volto Santo” to the Medici Grand Ducchess, Maria Maddalena of Austria, from Monsignor Pietro Strozzi iand for her reliquary chapel in the Pitti palace.
100 The carving was presented in Rome by a Florentine ambassador. Butters, 1996, vol. 1, 150, 245, 294, 300, 323-25; vol. 2, 428, 457. Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle was appointed minister to Philip II of Spain in 1556, and he became a Cardinal on February 26, 1561, after which he continued to serve Philip II as an
work is now lost, and it can only be assumed that it took a form similar to Tadda’s profiles of Christ, there is in fact an extant portrait copy of the Nunziata that clearly derives from Tadda’s model: carved in porphyry and set on a serpentine backing, it is signed by the sculptor’s grandson, Mattias Ferrucci, who also copied Tadda’s profiles of Christ.\textsuperscript{101} (fig. 1.15) These portraits of Christ and the Virgin can furthermore be grouped with another series of works by Tadda. This set was executed around 1560 to 1570 and is comprised of between ten and twelve portraits of the Medici, including two of Cosimo I (as duke and grand duke), and ones of Ferdinand I and his wife, Christina of Lorraine. These take the same format and materials as the medallions of Christ.\textsuperscript{102} (figs. 1.16-1.18) There is only one recorded instance wherein one of these Medici portraits was displayed with one of Tadda’s porphyries of Christ, in the grand ducal guardaroba;\textsuperscript{103} but it is entirely plausible that the Medici likenesses were readily connected in the minds of those who observed them in their courtly setting to the porphyries of the Saviour envoy in Rome. In 1565, he participated in the organization of the Holy League. Granvelle also managed the artistic affairs of Charles V and Philip II. Hugh Trevor Roper, \textit{Princes and Artists, Patronage and Ideology at Four Hapsburg Courts 1517-1633} (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 112.

\textsuperscript{101} The work, which is undocumented and was previously believed to depict a young Christ, has been identified as a copy of the Nunziata by Butters. Suzanne B. Butters, “Cat. 66,” in \textit{The Medici, Michelangelo, and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 202-203. On Ferrucci’s copy of Tadda’s profile of Christ, see Butters, 1996, vol.1, 317.

\textsuperscript{102} The subjects also included those commissioned by Cosimo I: Cosimo the Elder, Giovanni di Bicci, Piero di Cosimo, Lorenzo il Magnifico, Eleanora of Toledo, Leo X, and Clement VII. Cosimo also had Tadda carve his device, the Capricorn, in the same format and materials. Ferdinand I commissioned Tadda for his own portrait and that of his wife, Christina of Lorraine; these were smaller than the previous works and set on \textit{paragone} rather than serpentine, although Butters points out that, like serpentine, \textit{paragone} was a touchstone. Ibid., vol. 1, 306-315.

\textsuperscript{103} One of Tadda’s profiles of Christ and portraits by him of Duke Cosimo and Duchess Eleanora were together in the Medici \textit{guardaroba} for a brief time in 1561. The portrait of Christ was removed in the same year and sent to Rome. Ibid., vol.1, 182-83, vol.2, 485-86, and figs. 46, 47, 85, 87.
they resembled so closely, just as grand ducal privilege and divinely bestowed authority is conveyed by the mirroring, “face to face” encounter between the relic portrait of Christ and Cosimo I portrayed by Giani and Bocchi’s analogizing of the authority held by the Nunziata’s “santissimo volto” with that of the grand ducal countenance. Pius V, who received one of the porphyry heads of Christ, similarly represented his own *imitatio Christi* by means of portraiture: a medal dated 1571 bears a profile bust of Cardinal Ghislieri and, on the reverse, an image of Christ very much like Tadda’s reliefs, while a Latin inscription frames the latter, “DOMINE QUIS SIMILIS TIBI” (“O Lord, who is like you?”).104 (fig.1.19)

1.6 The Nunziata as a Holy Face and Counter-Reformation Strategies

My argument has thus far focused on the affiliation between the framing of the Nunziata as a Holy Face and Medici power. There are nevertheless aspects of Giani’s text that lie in another register – that is, within a larger extent of Counter-Reformation concerns. Certainly, what was outlined above regarding the conferring of the Nunziata’s image to elite persons outside of Florence demonstrates that the Medici were concerned with sharing their own privileged relation to the cult beyond Florence. It will now be further illuminated how the fashioning of the Nunziata as a Holy Face not only signified Medici prerogative; it also partook of the Counter-Reformation agendas of affirming the potency of sacred images and the cult of the Virgin. Hence portraits of Christ and the Virgin will continue to be a conspicuous part of my investigations.

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104 For the medal, see Ibid., vol.1, 318, and vol.2, fig. 116. Butters notes that as a young Dominican, Pius adopted the name “Michael”, which means “[one] who is like God”. She also suggests that Tadda’s facing profile medallions of Christ at Boscamarengo are perhaps ultimately a show of humility, “reply[ing] to the medal’s question, ‘Christ is unique, a mirror of himself alone.’” There is also a medal struck for this same pope that shows the profiles of Pius and Christ on either side. Ibid., vol. 1, 318; vol.2, fig.118.
It can first be considered how there are other manifestations of Catholic Reform attitudes at the church and convent of the SS. Annunziata during this period. In 1578, for instance, a new ciborium was commissioned for the high altar of the church which displays a crucifix by Giambologna that shows a *Cristo Vivo*, an iconography that conforms to the Tridentine cult of the Eucharist.\(^{105}\) The Servite Order also represented its own history on a grand scale by means of both Giani’s *Annales Sacri Ordinis Fratrum Servorum Beatae Mariae Virginis* (1618 and 1622) and a cycle of frescoes in the Chiostro dei Morti illustrating the story of the founders of the Order and executed between 1604 and 1612 by Bernardino Poccetti and others. These projects are part of a general impetus to codify and promote church history during the period: Giani’s *Annales* was inspired by Cesare Baronio’s monumental history of the Church, the *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588-1607).\(^{106}\) The Medici also took up the cause of the Catholic Reform, beginning with Cosimo I, who during the early years of his reign had been resistant to the authority of Rome. Beginning in 1559, however, as he more actively sought the title of grand


duke from Pius IV, Cosimo imposed Post-Tridentine principles on Florentine religious life, reviving feast days and renewing the activities of the confraternities. After gaining the crown, he worked towards enforcing the Inquisition in Florence and in 1570 established Jewish ghettos in Florence and Siena. Additionally, during the time of Cosimo and his successors, conformity with the aims of Rome was overseen, with full grand ducal support, by the Florentine Archbishops Antonio Altoviti (appointed 1548, died 1573) and Alessandro di Ottaviano de’Medici (1574 to 1605).

When it comes to more generally held Catholic aims of the period, it has already been shown how the integration of Medicean identity with that of the Nunziata cast the grand dukes as ideal Christian sovereigns. Other aspects of Giani’s tale that reflect Counter-Reformation principles are the precise dating of the portrait of Christ, which Giani is at pains to prove, and the act he has Cosimo perform –that is, the scraping away of a tartar over the image that had built up over the ages. These details together highlight the antiquity of the portrait, and accordingly, the oldest images in the history of the faith are also preeminent in Post-Tridentine writings, such as those of Cesare Baronio and Federico Borromeo. As is the case throughout his treatise on religious images, De Pictura Sacra (1624), the examples that Borromeo presents in his chapter

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107 Theen, 160-161, 227, n.1 with further bibliography; La comunità cristiana, 102-103, 137-47. Cosimo’s ghettos followed the foundation of the seraglio degli ebrei in Rome by Pius IV in 1555. A bull of April 19, 1566, stipulated that all Christian princes impose practices towards the Jews imitating those of the papacy. A thorough account of the history of the treatment of the Jews under Cosimo and Ferdinand I is found in Stefanie B. Siegmund, The Medici state and the ghetto of Florence: the construction of an early modern Jewish community (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), especially 51-61. Siegmund nonetheless argues that the Jewish ghettos in Florence and Siena had more to do with Medici strategies for state-building than conformity with Papal dictates.

108 D’Addario, 1972, 123; Theen, 149-50.
on portraits of Christ (Book 2, Chapter 2) are all ancient. He cites the late Byzantine historian Nicephorus and the Early Christian historian Eusebius who both write that St. Luke painted the Virgin and Christ, and he discusses the Edessa Mandyion.\textsuperscript{109} The Mandyion seems to have been paradigmatic for Christian images for Borromeo, because a copy of it stood at the head of his collection of portraits of famous persons, which included primarily depictions of saints and was displayed in the reading room of the Ambrosiana in Milan.\textsuperscript{110} Borromeo’s most lengthy discussions of images of Christ are furthermore those devoted to the symbols of the Saviour, such as the Good Shepherd and Orpheus, found in the early Christian catacombs of San Zeferino and Ostriano.\textsuperscript{111} After going to Rome in 1586, Borromeo accompanied Baronio on the latter’s visits to the ancient cemeteries, and Borromeo’s collection of artworks included copies after the catacomb paintings, which date to the third and fourth centuries.\textsuperscript{112} Borromeo was of course not the only Catholic apologist excited by these findings.


\textsuperscript{111} Borromeo, 42. These sites are now called Domitilla and Giordani.

\textsuperscript{112} Carlo Marcora, “Il Cardinal Federico Borromeo e l’archeologia cristiana,” in \textit{Mélanges Eugène Tisserant} (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1964), vol.V, 115-54; Barbara Agosti, \textit{Collezionismo e archeologia cristiana nel Seicento: Federico Borromeo e il Medioevo artistico tra Roma e Milano} (Milan: Jaca book, 1996). Agosti provides a detailed account of the formation of Borromeo’s interest in Early Christian and Medieval art that includes the contemporary culture of Christian antiquarianism in Rome to which Borromeo was exposed early in his career. Furthermore, at two points in
The discovery of the catacombs in Rome, which began in 1578 with those on the Via Salaria Nuova, was soon followed by a systematic recording of the images found within them by Alfonso Chacon, Antonio Bosio, and others. As Peter Burke has pointed out, these studies of the Counter-Reformation period mark the beginnings of a “visual turn” in antiquarianism, which had previously favoured textual evidence. Giani’s story, which aims to demonstrate that the Nunziata is a true likeness of the Virgin, therefore belongs to this larger tendency of the time in that it adds a new kind of proof to those which had traditionally served to authenticate the fresco’s thaumaturgic power—that is, the miracles attributed to it and the legend of its divine origins. Giani’s elaborate account of the attribution of the portrait of Christ to the time of Nero, which includes citing the opinions of esperti (such as the Florentine painter and Medici favourite, Jacopo Ligozzi) who rely on the style of the work, as well as the archeological act of excavation that he has Cosimo perform, therefore partake of the historically and visually oriented tactics of Post-Tridentine image defense.

time, Borromeo began work on texts specifically addressing Early Christian archeology, but both projects were left aside. Ibid., 5.


114 Cosimo’s scraping away of the tartar over the image recalls an episode found in Benvenuto Cellini’s Vita (written 1558-1566), wherein Cosimo helps the sculptor clean some antique statuettes that were found near Arezzo: “le quali erano coperte di terra e di ruggine…; il Duca pigliava piacere di ripulirle da per sé medesimo con certi cesellini da orefici. Gli avenne che mi occorse di parlare a Sua Eccellenza illustissima; et inmentre che io ragionavo seco mi porse un piccolo martellino, con el quale io percotevo quei cesellini che’il Duca teneva in mano, et in quel modo le ditte figurine si scoprivano da la terra et da la
Broader currents of the period are also apparent in other connections between the situation of the Nunziata and the interests of the Borromei. As noted above, Carlo Borromeo obtained his own versions of the Florentine image and sought to ally her cult with that of the Madonna dell’ Albero in the Duomo of Milan. Borromeo’s enthusiasm for Marian worship is also discernible in his commission from Antonio Fiammingo of a copy, which is now lost, of the most highly venerated Marian icon in the West and the one most replicated during the Counter-Reformation period, the Salus Populi Romani, which resides in Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome.  

It has been pointed out that the Salus Populi Romani, “thanks to the Jesuits, probably enjoyed wider currency than any other image on earth by the turn of the seventeenth century.” Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 8. See also D. Vázquez, Vida del p. Francisco de Borja, 1586, as cited in Pasquale M. D’Elia, “La prima diffusione nel mondo dell’immagine di Maria ‘Salus Populi Romani’,” Fede e Arte, 2 (October 1954): 306, 311 n.61. See also Jones, 122, 240-41. Borromeo was ordained in front of the S. Maria Maggiore icon, and a painting attributed to Carlo Procaccini, S. Carlo Borromeo Receiving the Viaticum.
The exact date of Fiammingo’s copy is not known, but the painter was active in Rome during the mid-1570’s, so if it was produced at that time it might have inspired the making of copies of the Nunziata for the Cardinal between 1579 and 1580. As can be recalled, the portrait replicas of the Nunziata sent to Borromeo seem to be the first of the type. Furthermore, as was the case with copies after the Nunziata, reproductions of the Roman icon made in the second half of the cinquecento were also sent as gifts to esteemed persons, such as Philip II of Spain, Elisabeth of Austria, and other sovereigns.116

(1602-03), shows Borromeo’s copy of the icon next to his bed. Steven F. Ostrow, Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 128-29. In 1569, Francis Borgia, the third General of the Jesuit Order from 1565 to 1572, asked permission to reproduce the icon of Sta. Maria Maggiore from Carlo Borromeo, who was the archpriest of the church. Borromeo gave his consent, but the canons of the church refused. Borgia persisted, and with the Pope Pius V on his side, the icon was then copied. These were certainly not the first copies of the icon to be made, but Borgia’s project to use them as tools in the missionary efforts of his Order are particular to this period, and seventeenth-century sources praise him as the first to disseminate the sacred image by means of replicas. Kirsten Noreen, “The icon of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome: an image and its afterlife,” Renaissance Studies, 19, 5, (2005): 552-664. Borromeo’s copy of the Sta. Maria Maggiore icon was passed on to Federico Borromeo between 1612 and 1617 and then displayed in the Ambrosiana Museum. A seventeenth-century portrait of Federico shows a Virgin and Child image which might be the copy. See Jones, 122. The phenomenon of the Nunziata copies is also comparable to the many versions of the Holy House of Loreto and the statue of the Virgin of Loreto that proliferated throughout Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Servites and the Medici must have had this famous shrine in mind as they developed the material and textual culture of the Nunziata’s cult. See L’iconografia della Vergine di Loreto nell’arte, ed. Floriano Grimaldi and Katy Sordi (Carilo, Cassa di risparmio di Loreto, 1995). On the devotion of the grand ducal family to the cult of Loreto, including donations made to the shrine during the period that interests us here, see Stefano Papetti, Devizioni lauretane della famiglia Medici (Florence: Arnaud, 1991).

116 D’Elia, 303. On Borromeo’s copy and others made for the Jesuits throughout Europe and their missions, see Noreen, 665-67.
Beginning in the later sixteenth century, too, the shrines of both the Nunziata and the Maggiore icon, like other Marian sites throughout the Catholic world, saw extensive renovations or additions that honoured these representations of the Holy Mother with greater conviction than ever.\footnote{Countless other image and relic shrines were renovated during this period. In Rome, several new Marian chapels were erected, most with miraculous images on their altars. The image of the Valicella Madonna, which had previously enjoyed a modest cult, became the centrepiece of a new church begun in 1580. Scavizzi, 237. Furthermore, in 1606, the Oratorians engaged Peter Paul Rubens to frame the old sacred image within a new painted altarpiece. For recent accounts of Rubens’s project, see Alba Costamagna, “La più bella et superb occasione di tutta Roma...”: Rubens per l’altare maggiore di S. Maria in Vallicella, in La regola e la fama. San Filippo Neri e l’arte (Milan: Electa, 1995), 150-73; and Ilse von Zur Muhlen, “S. Maria in Valicella zur Geschichte des Huptaltars,” Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana, 31 (1996): 245-72. Alessandro de’ Medici, who was a friend of Filipo Neri, the founder of the Oratorian congregation and a Florentine, blessed the cornerstone of the Chiesa Nuova in 1575. D’Addario, 1980, 80. Notably, too, while the Veronica in St. Peter’s was lost during the pillaging of Rome by Imperial troops in 1527, it reappeared in the seventeenth century and was one of four relics venerated at the crossing of St. Peter’s in a project led by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. See Irving Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing of St. Peter’s (New York: The College Art Association of America, 1968). On the chapel begun in 1605 under Paul V at Sta. Maria Maggiore to house the Salus Populi Romani, see Ostrow.} At the same time, there was a dramatic increase in texts that recounted the miracles attributed to sacred Marian images: between 1592 and 1619, for instance, four extensive compilations of the miracles of the Nunziata were published.\footnote{See Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, “Media, memory, and the ‘Miracoli della SS. Annuniziata’,” Word & Image 25, 3 (July-September, 2009): 272-91. Matthews-Grieco provides an extensive list of miracle books that were published in central Italy in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Ibid., 291, n.76. Around 1,200 Marian cult images found all over the world are listed in the Atlas Marianus, published in several volumes during the 1650’s by the Jesuit, Wilhelm von Gumppenberg. Freedberg, 113-15; and Trevor Johnson, “Mary in Early Modern Europe,” in Mary: The Complete Resource, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 370. Less well known today than than Gumppenberg’s Atlas, but earlier in date, is the encyclopaedia of Marian images also located world-wide, Don Felice Astolfi, Historia Universale delle Imagini Miracolose della Gran Madre di Dio reverite in
Nunziata’s re-framing as a holy face also evinces another highly important mode in which the
cult of the Madonna was upheld during the Counter-Reformation period: that is, there is the
integration of her identity with that of her son.

1.7 “She appears to be him, and he her”

With regards to this affiliation of Mary with Christ, it can first be noted that there are
further parallels between details of Giani’s story and the chapter on the earliest images of Christ
from Federico Borromeo’s *De Pictura Sacra*. In a passage from the latter there are resonances of
Giani’s description of the identical twin affinity between the Nunziata’s face and the portrait of
Christ that Cosimo uncovers and that dates to the era right after Christ’s death. To recall, Giani
says that Ligozzi judges the image to be an accurate likeness of the Saviour. Furthermore,
“putting the two Faces together, they appeared to be Brother and Sister, and if one put his beard
on the face of the Nunziata, she appeared to be him, and he her.” This trope of family
resemblance is also employed by Borromeo. In a section devoted to images of the Virgin and
Christ, he includes a reference to the thirty-second Canto of Dante’s *Paradiso*, when the poet,
accompanied by St. Bernard, finally encounters the Virgin:

And when painters go to paint the image of Christ and the Virgin, I would like them to be
mindful of that which was said by the writers, and what all the ancients believed, that the
face of the Saviour was very much similar to that of his mother, such that it could be said

*tutte le parti del Mondo: e delle cose maravigliose, operate da Dio Signor Nostro in gratia di lei, e a
favor de’divoti suoi* (Venice: Sessa, 1623). Astolfi gives extensive attention to the Nunziata and Medici
involvement in her cult, relying to a great extent on Bocchi’s *Sopra L’imagine miracolosa della
Santissima Nunziata di Fiorenza*. Astolfi, 283-85, 676, 744. For an overview of the use of miracles as
proof of the efficacy of sacred images and relics during this period by authors such as Onofrio Panvinio,
Simone Maioli, and Baronius, see Scavizzi, 177, 237.
many people could easily know who is the child of that mother, and who the mother of that child. And this great resemblance was even asserted by Dante, as the mother could be seen after Christ ascended to heaven with her. And so the poet says (in the Paradiso, canto 32):

“Now see the face that is most like Christ’s, since its brightness, and no other, is able to dispose you to see Christ.”119

Like Giani – who possibly also had Dante’s passage in mind, given the Servite interest in the tradition of great Florentine literature120 – Borromeo characterizes the visual kinship between Christ and the Madonna as a merging of identities. And this impetus to so closely correlate the

119 “E quando i pittori prendono a dipingere l’imagine di Cristo, e della Vergine, io vorrei che fossero raccordevoli di quello che hanno ditto I scrittori, e di quello che eredette tutta l’antichità, cioè che il volto del Salvatore era molto simigliante a quello della madre, quasi dir volessero che riguardando la madre, overo il figlio, si sarebbe potuto conoscere agevolmente fra molte persone che fosse il figliuolo di quella madre, e chi fosse la madre di quel figliuolo. E questa simiglianza grande volle dire ancora Dante, che ella si scorgeva eziandio doppo che Cristo fu salito in cielo con la sua madre. E dice cosí il poeta (nel Paradiso, canto 32): Riguarda omai ne la faccia, ch’a Cristo/ piú s’assomiglia, che la sua chiarezza/ sola ti puó disporre a veder Cristo.” Borromeo, 43. Borromeo’s passage is also noted in Jessica Winston, “Describing the Virgin,” Art History, 25, 3 (June 2002): 279. Winston traces how, by the end of the sixteenth century, descriptions of the Virgin’s physical appearance were consistently incorporated into both theological and devotional literature. Ibid., 276, 280ff. For further on the vital afterlife of Dante in Italian literature of the seventeenth-century, see Giuseppe Tavani, Dante nel Seicento: Saggi sul A. Guarini, N. Villani, L. Magalotti (Florence: Olschki, 1976).

Virgin with her Son was a key principle in Counter-Reformation thought, one that directly answered Protestant accusations of Mariolatry. Family resemblance reveals not only consanguinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation – that is, that Christ’s mother lent her human nature to him – it also conversely affirms that the Virgin partakes of her Son’s divinity and thus establishes her efficacy as mediatrix. These claims for the Madonna directly rebuffed the central mandate of the Protestant Reformers, which was to restore Christ, and Christ alone, to the centre of faith. While their views of Mary varied, Protestants did consistently argue that her cult had come to usurp what was due to her son. Hence they demanded that her status and authority be weakened. Luther, for instance, wrote, “[o]nce we said so many rosaries to Mary; now we are so sleepy in prayer to Christ that we do not pray even once in a whole year. God will surely punish this indifference to the Saviour. Is it not a shame once to have elevated the Mother so highly and now completely to forget the Son?” Philipp Melanchthon also complained, “[n]ow it is quite obvious that through false teaching Mary has been put in the place of Christ.”121 In the Catholic response that began in earnest in the last quarter of the sixteenth century,122 there is repeatedly the concession that Mary can only intercede and not grant Salvation; yet, at the same time, a principal strain of Catholic Mariology – and one that more so reflects the actualities of popular

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121 Luther’s statement is from a letter dated 25 March 1532; that of Melanchthon is from his Apologia Confessionis Augustanae (1531). Hilda Graef, Mary. A History of Doctrine and Devotion (New York: S&W, 1963 and 1965), Vol. 2, 12, 14-15. Graef provides an overview of views on Mary from individual leaders of the Reform as well as the rejection of Catholic veneration of Mary in the official Protestant Creeds. Ibid., 1-16. See also Thomas O’Meara, Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), 116-17, 120, 133.

122 The De Maria Virigine Incomparabili (Ingolstadt, 1577) by the Jesuit Peter Canisus’s was the first among many sustained discourses on Marian doctrine, while Francis Suarez included extensive Mariology in his De Mysteriis vitae Christi (Alcalá, 1592) which became highly influential on later texts. For these and other Catholic tracts on Mary after Trent see Graef, 17-67.
devotion – insists on her part in Redemption and her divinity, given her closeness with her Son and resemblance to him. For example, in the *Mariale*, the Capuchin Laurence of Brindisi (d.1619) employs the parallelism, “her kingdom and empire is no less than the Kingdom of God and the Empire of Christ.” Lawrence maintains that “the honour and cult given to her must be similar to the honour and cult of Christ,” and “Christ the Man (who, after all, cannot be separated from his Divinity) and the Virgin Mother of God are alike in nature, grace, virtue, dignity, and glory.”  

123 Jean-Jacques Olier also argues for an absolute commonality, stating that “it seems to me that Jesus and Mary are wholly consummated into one and are but one thing.” At Christ’s resurrection, he unites with his Mother “and becomes with her, one principle of divine generation for the whole body of the Church.”  

124 Christ and Mary are also paralleled in a Florentine Servite text of 1593, Luca Ferrini’s *Esposizione sopra la Salve Regina*, wherein the author promotes the use of “salve” in various greetings to the Virgin, saying “that she is called Saviour of the World, 

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123 Ibid., 29-30. For a summary of the history of Marian doctrine in the Byzantine tradition, see Pelikan, 121-151. Mary’s divinity – and specifically her unique status as humanity made divine before death – was specifically guaranteed by her designation as *Theotokos* (“the one who gave birth to the One who is God”). The latter was established officially at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and affirmed by the Syrian monk and Doctor of the Church, John of Damascus (c. 676 –749), who also stressed that Mary as *Theotokos* entailed Christ as both flesh and divine. Byzantine icons of Christ and Mary therefore must have been understood to represent their dual natures. Ibid., 134-35, 142-43.

124 From Lawrence’s “Vie intérieure de la très sainte Vièrge,” first published in Rome, 1866, but from manuscripts written in the first half of the seventeenth century, and as quoted in Graef, 38-39. Olier also writes, “for there has always been in the Mother and Son but one and the same interior life, one and the same spirit, which diffuses in both the same lights and the same sentiments.” Olier was the founder of the famous seminary and society of St. Sulpice, Paris and a prominent figure in the reform of Catholicism in France. Also see Ibid., 17-67, for other Catholic writings in this vein, including Bellarmine’s claim that Mary rules as Queen of Heaven alongside her Son. Ibid., 25.
just as her son is Saviour of the Universe.”¹²⁵ The Salve Regina and Ave Maria were targeted by Protestant critics as being particularly indicative of the undue reverence granted to Mary, and were thus also defended by other Catholic writers such as Peter Canisius.¹²⁶ The use of these prayers was furthermore renewed among the Servites in the early seventeenth century.¹²⁷

Especially pertinent to my argument here is a tradition wherein the intimacy and commonality of the Virgin and Christ are conveyed by means of paired portraits. From at least the early eighth to the mid-sixteenth century, on the feast of the Assumption, the Lateran Holy Face of Christ was carried during the night in solemn procession through the streets of Rome to Sta. Maria Maggiore, where it met the Salus Populi Romani, thus enacting the Virgin’s possession of her rightful place in heaven beside her Son.¹²⁸ A hymn sung during the ritual, recorded in a text of the late tenth to early eleventh centuries, imparts that the joining of the two countenances attests to the Virgin’s capacity as co-redemptress: “Holy Virgin, what is happening today? When you reach the heavenly regions, be merciful to your own people....The Creator is

¹²⁵ “Che l’è chiamata Salvatrice del Mondo, come il Figliuolo suo Salvatore dell’universo.” Luca Ferrini, Esposizione sopra la Salve Regina (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1593), 24.
¹²⁶ Graef, 11, 21.
¹²⁷ Besutti, 41, 47.
no longer far away….For behold the face [vultus] that the mother’s oracle seeks for the firstborn among men [the Romans]….The face of the Lord is there, to whom the earth is subject under the law.” Paired portraits of the Virgin and Christ moreover appear in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in both Florence and Milan. In 1587, Cardinal Ferdinand de’Medici had two small bronze heads of Christ and Mary gilded, and sometime before 1609, after he had become grand duke, he also possessed a small painting with the head of Christ on one side, and that of the Madonna on the other. In Milan, after receiving a bust length Madonna by Scipione Pulzone from Francesco Maria del Monte in 1596, Federico Borromeo commissioned a Head of an Ecce Homo by the artist and probably intended the works to be pendants. Moreover, the doctrine of family resemblance that is put forward by Giani and Borromeo and that evinces the shared natures of Christ and the Virgin is substantiated in other examples: mirror-image portraits by Il Sordo, dating to the early seicento, and owned and displayed by Borromeo in the Ambrosiana Museum (figs. 1.21, 1.22); and a marble medallion that has been attributed to Tadda or his workshop, wherein a profile of Mary is set behind and slightly lower than that of

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129 As translated in Belting, 499.

130 Butters, 1996, vol.1, 324. Butters notes other instances of paired portraits of Christ and the Virgin, including a small ornate box upon which Giulio Clovio had painted the heads of Jesus and his Mother, in the possession of Pius IV at the time of his death in 1572, and a lapis rosary pendant that was probably associated with Rudolf II, the son of Maximillian II, the emperor to whom Francesco de’Medici gave Tadda’s first porphyry head of Christ. See Ibid., vol.1, 324 n.280, and vol.2, figs. 123 and 124. The faces on the pendant are identical.

131 The pair is now lost. Jones, 125.

132 For discussion of these, see Ibid., 124-25; and Marco Rossi and Alessandro Rovetta, La pinacoteca Ambrosiana (Milan: Electa, 1997), 115. Jones points out that in commissioning II Sordo’s painting of Christ, Borromeo must have had in mind the most famous “Man of Sorrows” at the time, a mosaic icon of c.1300 and still housed at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, which was believed to be a miraculous and antique image.
Christ, but the two are also overlapped and closely juxtaposed. (fig. 1.23) This composition recalls double profile portraits found on antique imperial coins and medallions, but in this case, the Madonna’s features also exactly echo those of Christ.

It is apparent, then, that in making the Nunziata a holy face, the Servites and the Medici were also aware of the image’s role, and indeed their own participation, in a larger programme of contemporary Catholic attitudes and actions. Such extra-Florentine ambitions for the image’s status and fame coincide with Carlo Borromeo’s promotion of the Nunziata and other Marian images beyond their home shrines. The framing of the Nunziata as a Holy Face attests to how the cause of specific images was taken up during the Counter-Reformation period by the highest and most centralized authorities of the church, while previously such cults had been almost exclusively of local concern. The fashioning of the Nunziata as a holy portrait therefore not only confirmed the miraculous efficacy of the fresco under Medicean protection and located in the Servite church in Florence; it also definitively positioned this sacred image among the most precious instruments of the faith.

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133 See, for instance, the coin in the British Museum dating to the second half of the third century BC, showing Ptolemy II and his sister and queen, Arsinoe II, on the obverse, with Ptolemy I and queen Berenice I on the reverse. The latter were deified by Ptolemy II. Susan Walker and Peter Higgs, *Cleopatra of Egypt: from History to Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 68.

134 Belting, 485.
Chapter Two

Medici Votive Portraits and the Santissima Annunziata

2.1 Introduction

During the Renaissance period the Nunziata became renowned throughout Europe for her enormous collection of votives. A votive is “an offering of thanks acknowledging divine intervention during a crisis situation.”¹ These had been presented to the sacred image at the Santissima Annunziata in substantial numbers from the earliest years of its cult, and the church was quickly filled with them. The first archival reference to an offering dates to 1358, and already in 1384 a wall of the sanctuary had to be reinforced because of the weight of the votives attached to it.² By the late fourteenth century, they were also placed in the atrium entrance of the church (also called the chiostro dipinto or chiostro dei voti).³ (figs. 2.1, 2.2) Donations continued in great numbers after this. Even with the occasional culling and destruction of

² The document of 1358 refers to “immagini poste alla Nunziata”. In a letter Franco Sacchetti writes about the dangers posed by the weight of the votives: “se le mura della chiesa non fossero poco tempo fa state incatenate, a pericolo erano col tetto insieme di non dare a terra.” Sacchetti also refers to some of the Nunziata’s votives in his famous novelle. See Eugenio Casalini, “Le tele di ‘Memoria ex-voto,’” in *La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studie documenti sulla chiesa e il convento* (Florence: Convento della SS Annunzita, 1971), 52; idem., “La Santissima Annunziata nella storia e nella civiltà fiorentina,” in *Tesorì d’arte dell’Annunziata di Firenze*, ed. Eugenio Casalini et. al. (Florence: Alinari, 1987), 78; and Raffaele Taucci, “Il chiesa e il convento della SS. Annunziata di Firenze e i loro ampliamenti fino alla metà del secolo XV,” in *Studi Storici OSM*, IV, 1942, I, n.2, 112.
³ Roberta Panzanelli, “Compelling Presence: Wax Effigies in Renaissance Florence,” in *Ephemeral Bodies. Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, Roberta Panazelli ed. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute), 298, 34, n.36.
selections, by the early seventeenth century some three hundred years of accumulation meant that the interior of the church was encrusted with votives. My primary concern in this and the following chapter are portraits, especially those made of silver and wax, and in particular, the extensive changes to their display and significance that occurred during the seventeenth century. As I will show, the seicento projects that remade and rearranged the Nunziata’s votives were undertaken both to conform to decorative and iconographic trends of the Counter-Reformation period and to manifest the presence of the Medici at the shrine as Christian princes.

Before considering these projects, however, the full range of the types of offerings to the Nunziata first should be acknowledged. This larger context is needed to understand the particular meanings typically held by votive portraits. The vast majority of the votives of all varieties from the SS. Annunziata are now lost. The following survey will trace what remains of their history. It will account for the rich display that by the sixteenth century was laid out before the sacred image, filling the interior of the church. I will then examine at the end of this chapter and in the next the redisplay of the Nunziata’s offerings in the seicento and the resulting radical changes to the significances of the votive portraits.

2.2 The Nunziata’s Votives: Materials and Forms

Writing in 1650, the Servite father, Ferdinando Mancini, took stock of the Nunziata’s votives. His inventory gives us an overview of the types found at the shrine, and these conform to what was typical for other European sanctuaries. Mancini classifies the Nunziata’s votives into four categories according to form and material: life-size, highly naturalistic portrait statues made primarily of wax (these will be discussed at length in a separate section below), votives in silver,
painted panels, and votives made of papier maché. Mancini’s list corresponds to the primary kinds of votives that were found at shrines in Europe. Votives could nonetheless be made of any material and could be shaped into unique forms, reflecting the particular occasions for their vows. Such singular offerings were also a means of distinguishing their votaries from the mass of offerings at a shrine. The many Medici votives to the Nunziata were often of this kind, such as the monumental tempietto of Piero de Medici. The great majority of the time, however, votives took typical materials and forms.

The painted panels to which Mancini refers usually depicted miracles and individual acts of protection by the sacred image. By 1625, they numbered 3,600 at the SS. Annunziata and they covered every available vertical surface in the interior of the church, including the pilasters and doors, as well as the interior surfaces of the chiostro dipinto. At this time there were furthermore somewhere around 22,000 votives in papier maché (carta pesta or voti gialli).

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4 The first and last types are referred to, respectively, as “Voti grandi di rilievo al naturale et anco piú ch’al natruale, fatti di cera, e con altre mesture”, and “Voti Gialli fatti, et formati con carta pesta”. Ferdinando Mancini, “Restaurazione d’alcuni piu segnalati miracoli della S.ma Nunzita di Fiorenza,” ms, 1650, transcribed, with notes by Iginia Dina, “Ex-voto d’argento all’Annunziata nel 1650,” in La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studi e documenti sulla chiesa e il convento (Florence: Convento della SS. Annunziata, 1978), 109 (ms. p.39). Hereafter, references to this transcription of Mancini’s manuscript will cite both page numbers in this form: Dina/Mancini, 109/39. It should be remembered that the best artists were capable of highly compelling, naturalistic works with papier maché. For examples, see Vanessa Montigiani, “La ‘grande applicazione al naturale’ nei Crocifissi di Pietro Tacca,” in Pietro Tacca. Carrara, la Toscana, le Grandi Corti Europee, Franca Falletti ed. (Florence: Mandragora), 75-101.

5 “Ma parlando delle Tavolette dipinte: queste erano di si gran numero, che tutte le muraglie delleCappelle, ne erano parate et coperte; ingombravano tutti I Pilastri dà Capitelli in giù ne erano parimente foderate tutte le Porte delle Chiesa, per dentro e fuori; e nel Chiostro (eccettuato dove son le Storie di si eccellenti Pittori) tutto il restante era da quelle occupato, insino sopra I ferri , sopra le catene
Mancini describes their effect as “almost without end (quasi senza termine)”. They were hung at various locations on the walls of the church and draped in festoons and long garlands from the ceiling. They were also placed on the large cornice that ran along the nave on both sides.

Mancini does not describe individual voti gialli, but they no doubt took forms typical for this material, probably being primarily body parts and some small-scale full figures. Papier maché became more frequently used in the sixteenth century, while wax and wood were the primary materials for votives before that.6

When it came to precious metals, sometimes materials were combined (the silver equestrian portrait of Gattamelata at the SS. Annunziata which is considered below was set on a brass base), or gold and silver leaf could be laid over a wax or wood form.7 While votives in gold seem to have been relatively rare at the SS. Annunziata, the oldest documentation for silver votives appears in an inventory of the convent’s valuables dated to July 1, 1422. The list includes, among other objects, a crown, a lamp, and “a leg of silver with the arms of the

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7 Bulman, IV.12.
Marchess of Ferrara.” Such objects were typical donations at the SS. Annunziata and at other European sanctuaries from the Middle Ages on. Body parts of various sizes were a particularly popular form of offering. Another inventory from the SS. Annunziata of May 16, 1439 includes numerous eyes, ears, hands, feet, teeth, fingers, limbs and hearts. Alternatively, such body parts were made of wax or papier maché.

Silver crowns, jewelry and overlays (“mantelline”) were also given as wardrobe items to cult images. These were usually inlaid with precious stones and were meant to be placed atop the image. The Nunziata received numerous gifts of these types, including crowns of gold inlaid with precious stones and pearls: one was donated by Catherine de Medici, another by Count Carlo Bardi in 1605, and a third in 1622 by a group of Florentine nobility. Necklaces were offered, for instance, in 1605 by the Servite Padre Adriano Mannozzi, and another in 1687 by Vittoria della Rovere. In 1603 Grand Duchess Christina di Lorena gave the gift of a jewel of gold

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8 Casalini, 1971, 106. See also Dora Liscia Bemporad, “L’oreficeria,” in Tesori, 297-412, for a discussion of the ex-votos in general, and, more specifically, those in silver that were donated to the Nunziata over the centuries.


10 Giuseppe Richa, Notie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine (Florence,1754-62, 10 vols; reprinted (Florence: P. G. Viviani, 1989), V.8, 3. A document dated October 9, 1622, records the offering. ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal Governo Francese 119/54, Libro di Ricordanze (dal 1603 al 1640), 221.

11 Pellegrino Tonini, Guida Storico-Illustrativa. Il Santuario della SS. Annunziata di Firenze (Florence: M. Ricci, 1876), 98; Bemporad, 304. The document notes that Bardi’s crown replaced one that he asked to have in exchange for the donation: the contact that the old crown had with the fresco gave it spiritual value. Bardi’s crown was renovated in 1687 by the second Count Carlo Bardi, and renovated again in the mid-nineteenth century.
and diamond, which was prestigiously placed on the fresco, at the end of the largest ray emanating from the dove of the Holy Spirit to the Virgin. In his guidebook Le Bellezze della città di Firenze (1591) Bocchi refers to two “mantelline” — one made of silver that covered the entire image, and another, underneath it, gilded and richly jeweled, laid over only the body of the Madonna. Yet another that covered the entire image was donated by Don Lorenzo de Medici in 1622.

Lamps, candlesticks, and candelabra were votive offerings that were meant to be placed in proximity to the holy image as suitable for framing it and conveying its holiness. Bocchi attributes this purpose to two large candlesticks commissioned by Grand Duke Ferdinand from the silversmith Silvestro Castrucci, as he puns on the significances of the gift: “their beauty, whose artifice is so admirable, brings to light the greatness of the soul of their donor…[W]hile they enflame devotion, they also elucidate regal magnificence.” The SS. Annunziata, like other

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12 See Tonini for these and others. Tonini, 97-100.
13 “[C]uopre tutta la Santa Imagine una mantellina anch’essa d’argento di lunghezza di braccia cinque, e Quattro, e mezzo d’altezza…Sotto a questa mantellina un’altra ve n’è preziosa quanto mai dir si puote, che la sola igura di Maria Vergine ricuopre pur d’argento dorato tempestata tutta di gioie di grandissimo pregio.” I have used the version expanded by Cinelli in 1677. Francesco Bocchi and Giovanni Cinelli, Le Bellezze della città di Firenze (Bologna: Forni, 1974), 435-36.
14 For the document, see Bemporad, 303.
15 “[N]ella bellezza di cui, che per artifizio sono mirabili, riluce la grandezza dell’animo di chi ha donato, e nello splendore di dono il quale e di tanto pregio, mentre che l’uomo a divozione si accende, assai si fa chiara la regal magnificenza.” Bocchi, 1592, 104-105.
sanctuaries, was rich in such oblatory votives: these included chalices, patens, incense burners, and other objects of potential use during the mass.

The 1439 inventory furthermore mentions “a castle of silver” and “a large and beautiful ship”. These also were not unique to the SS. Annunziata: it was a widespread custom throughout Europe to offer ships and models of dwellings, or even whole cities, to cult images as thanks for deliverance from peril, protection from invasion, plague, or some other danger. Figures of various sizes, fashioned in gold or silver were also typical. Portraits of devotees will be discussed further below, but it can be noted at this point that images of babies, often depicted in swaddling bands, and either mass produced or unique, were common at shrines dedicated to the Virgin.

There are some surviving examples at the SS. Annunziata from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in pressed or moulded silver foil (fig.2.3). This popular association of the Virgin with childbirth also explains why the Medici habitually prayed for a safe birth or performed ritual thanks to the Nunziata on the occasion of the birth of a family member.

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16 For oblatory and other categories of votives, see Hugo van der Velden, The donor's image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 213-20.
19 Ibid., 355.
20 For example, a life-size votive of a swaddled baby was offered by Francesco I after the birth of his son Filippo in 1577. Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, The art and ritual of childbirth in Renaissance Italy (Yale: Yale University Press, 1999), 146. In another instance, a document dated May 12, 1590 and titled “Nativita del ser.mo Gran Principe di Toschana” describes Grand Duke Ferdinand I prays in gratitude
Silver votives that were representations of specific persons, divine or mortal, were unique and often costly donations, and they appear in great numbers at European shrines. Statues in silver were typical and by the fifteenth century they could be as tall as three braccia (around 1.8 meters). At Loreto and Notre Dame de Liesse, silver replicas of the venerated image were often donated. It was also common to offer images of saints that were identified with the donor. These were full or bust length and could be accompanied by a portrait of the donor him or herself, often shown kneeling.

An account dating from the first decade of the sixteenth century refers to the interior of the SS. Annunziata being “full of devotion and beautiful, with many vases and statues of gold and silver, with votives and many statues of wax, made by the best...
artists.” Writing in 1677, Cinelli also notes of the tempietto: “[m]any silver votives hang at every part, among them ten full length statues of notable size.” Unfortunately, he does not identify the subjects of these works. However, there is some evidence for the identities of a number of silver portraits at the SS. Annunziata. Predating those that were a part of Mancini’s scheme of 1650 and noted above, there were twelve apostles donated by the Republic. A document of February 5, 1441 also records a silver equestrian portrait offered by Erasmo da Narni, the celebrated condottiero known as Gattamelata. There were furthermore portraits of Lorenzo de’ Medici and his mother, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, commissioned by Lorenzo’s father, Piero di Cosimo. Lorenzo had numerous silver votive portraits at various sites in and outside of Florence, including one, offered at Loreto, that was a braccio high and depicted its subject kneeling.

2.3 The Preciousness of Silver

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23 The Italian reads: “devotissima e bella, con molti vasi e statue d’oro et d’argento con voti e molte statue di cera, facte per mano di optimi artisti.” Memoriale di Francesco Albertini, as quoted in Bemporad, 86, and see 94, n.91.


25 Bemporad, 98.


27 Lowe suggests that this might have been put in place in 1488 during the war with Naples. For this and other ex-voto portraits of Lorenzo see Kate Lowe, “Lorenzo’s ‘Presence’ at Churches, Convents and Shrines, in and outside Florence,” in Lorenzo the Magnificent. Culture and Politics, ed. Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1996), 29-33. For an inventory listing the portraits commissioned by Piero di Cosimo and the portrait of Gattamelata, see Parronchi, 60.
As the above typological survey begins to indicate, unique votives made of precious materials were most often prestige gifts from high status donors. Thus while the wax statues have been, generally speaking, of greatest interest to those who have studied the Nunziata’s votives, and while these were usually prestige offerings as well (as will be discussed below), it must be stressed that those in precious metals would have been generally understood during the Renaissance and Baroque periods to be the most valuable.\(^{28}\) The materiality and display of these silver votives were highly important to the Servites, as will be presently seen with respect to projects before and during the seicento. As a general rule, the expense of the material out of which a votive was made was integral to the value of the votive as a gift. Precious metals or stones had an intrinsic richness and monetary value. Gold and silver, as well as wax, nevertheless also made votives “consumptive gifts” – that is, the materials themselves had potential utility in the rituals associated with the shrine. Wax could, for instance, be used for the manufacture of candles (indeed, the wax workers (ceraiuoli) who produced wax portraits also made candles),\(^ {29}\) and so, offerings of both lumps of wax and shaped wax, including statues, had such consumptive value. It was also common for silver votives to be melted down periodically and the material either sold or refashioned into objects that were needed at a sanctuary.\(^ {30}\)


\(^{30}\) Van der Velden, 2000, Chapter Nine, “The Meaning of Matter”, 247ff, and especially the discussion, with further references, of wax production in Florence, 248, n.9. In Northern Europe, votives were almost without exception made of valuable materials. On the melting down of gold and silver votives see also Lightbown, 353-355 passim. At Loreto in 1673, the overcrowded walls were divested of all “useless
Mancini says that the silver at the SS. Annunziata was melted down and objects such as candlesticks, chalices, vases, and lamps would be made. Or, the silver could be sold for the purchase of oil or candles, “so as to supply the vast needs of this famous church”. Almost all the silver votives were confiscated a number of times, most notably by the Republic in 1527 and 1529 while Florence was under siege by Imperial troops and, again by the state, in 1798, during the period of Napoleonic occupation. In these cases, some objects deemed essential to cult practices—such as lamps, chalices, and candlesticks—were spared. In the first instance, however, thirty lamps that had been donated by Piero di Cosimo de’Medici, as well as another thirty offered by the King of Portugal, were seized and presumably melted down. Piero’s lamps hung on a metal rod that ran around the entablature of the tempietto. Such a ring of lights around the cult object was a common feature of Florentine Renaissance shrines. Bocchi attests that these monuments and superfluous testimonies to the holiness of the place” and “converted those made of gold and silver plates and sheets to more useful purpose.” In O. Torsellino [H. Tursellinus]: Laurentanae historiae libri quinque, Venice, 1727, p.387. See also Lightbown, p.353, n.1.

31 Dina/Mancini, 112/ 44. The full account is as follows: “Si struggevano dunque, e con quell’Argento, o pure col di lui prezzo, se n’è fabbricato Candellieri, Calici, Vasi, Lampade, et altro: secondo l’occorrenze, et il bisogno etc. Molti ancora si son venduti, con licenza, e partito de R.R. P.P. Discreti del Convento, per sodisfare alle fatture de nostril Orefici; et ancora per tramutare il prezo di detto Argento, in Compra di olio, o’ di cera lavorata, cioè, candele di Venetia di diverse sorti; per poter’ sovvenire et supplier al vasto consumo di questa famosa Chiesa.” The whiteness of Venetian wax was highly valued for candles. See Dina, 119, n.110. Some of the silver was also melted down by the Servites in 1418. See Richa, V.8, 7, and Bemporad, 98.

32 Dina/ Mancini, 112/ 44. For the appropriation of the silver in both 1529 and during the Napoleonic period, see Bemporad, 98.

lost lamps at the SS. Annunziata were later refashioned by Grand Duke Cosimo I, and it seems they were rehung in the same location (“under the frieze”) so as to demonstrate the persistent desire of the House of the Medici to add splendour to the Nunziata’s precinct.\textsuperscript{34} Yet, in 1647, as will be described below, the silver votives were removed and destroyed again.

At the SS. Annunziata, as at other European sanctuaries, silver (and sometimes gold) were the materials of the most precious votives. Indeed, from 1447 on, the Servites carefully maintained a list of all the votives in this material offered to the Nunziata.\textsuperscript{35} They would also demonstrate their pride in the richness of the Nunziata’s silver holdings by displaying them during public processions. Each frain would hold an object, and the heavier ones would be carried on decorated litters or wagons.\textsuperscript{36} Between 1450 and 1464 an armadio was constructed to hold the most valuable silver votives, almost certainly to protect them from theft. Located in the oratory added by Piero di Cosimo de Medici (the corretto contiguous with the tempietto of the Nunziata) and built into the exterior wall that was shared with the Chiostro Grande of the convent, the armadio was shuttered with a large panel which was divided into thirty-five scenes.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{34} “Con ordine del medesimo Piero de’ Medici furono fatte 30 lampane d’argento: le quali, perchè quando era Fiorenza assediata dall’esercito imperiale furono disfatte, dal Granduca Cosimo de’ Medici sono state poscia con somma cura rifatte,come oggi si veggon o e per la nobile vista danno splendore al luogo, e fanno parimente della Casa de’Medici chiaro testimonio quanto di adornare questo santo ricetto sia stata desiderosa tuttavia.” Bocchi, 1592, 29. See also Bocchi-Cinelli, 1974, 434.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Casalini, 1971, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{36} “[I]l Tempio della Nunziata prevaleva a tutti per la quantità e per la preziosità degli argenti, che erano tali da potere nei maggiori bisogni venire a soccorso della patria. A detta del Giani negli andati tempi I Religiosi non comparivano mai nelle pubbliche e liete processioni senza pomosa mostra di simili offerte, portando ciascun frate un pezzo d’argento in mano, ed i più pesanti sopra barelle o carri ornate secondo uso di quell’età.” Ottavio Andreucci, \textit{Il Fiorentino istruito nella Chiesa della Nunziata di Firenze} (Florence: M. Cinelli, 1858), 251.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
narrating the life of Christ. Although sixteenth-century sources attribute the whole cycle to Fra Angelico, it is now known that he painted only nine of the scenes before his departure for Rome in 1453. The rest are now attributed to Alessio Baldovinetti and others. This armadio shutter seems to have become a showpiece of the convent: a letter from the period describes the crowds that came to see it after its completion.\footnote{The armadio probably also had some kind of small door in it that opened to the corretto, so that liturgical objects would be readily accessible for the celebration of mass in the Nunziata’s precinct. For a description of the armadio and its history see Eugenio Casalini, “Armadio degli Argenti,” in Tesori, 99-102; and idem., Il Beato Angelico e l’Armadio degli Argenti della SS. Annunziata di Firenze (Florence: Convento della SS. Annunziata di Firenze, 2007). The work is now in the Museum of San Marco, Florence.}

Much of the Nunziata’s silver nonetheless always remained visible to the general public, a fact that is significant to the history of the visual “framing” of the sacred image and the seicento projects I will discuss below. In the detailed account of the Nunziata’s tempietto found in Bocchi and Cinelli’s Bellezze di Firenze, almost all of the objects described are silver. Additionally, the most prominent Medici offerings of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were silver and were placed within the tempietto enclosure in close proximity to the fresco. Among the dozens of elaborately ornamented lamps, vases, and candelabra donated by various persons and listed in the Bellezze are the above-mentioned thirty lamps donated by Piero di Cosimo that had been refashioned by Cosimo I. There was also the altar frontal or paliotto offered by Ferdinand I in 1600, as well as the frame for the fresco, a cover for the image, and the stepped base (gradino) and frame for Andrea del Sarto’s Redentore, all offered by Don Lorenzo de’Medici. (figs.1.3, 1.4, 1.8) Six candlesticks and a cross were later placed on the gradino, a gift.
of Maria Maddalena of Austria, wife of Grand Duke Cosimo II. It must be remembered, however, that even though precious metals are associated with the most prestigious donors, a more humble supplicant might also offer a small silver object, a representation of a heart or limb, or a full figure kneeling in profile, for instance. Such votives were most often generic in form and they certainly appear in large numbers at the SS. Annunziata, as at other European shrines. Certainly, they must have also been viewed as particularly generous donations, in being commensurate with the means of their votaries.

3.4 Votive Portraits, with a Focus on Wax

My focus in this and the following chapter is how votive portraits were displayed and arranged at various points in the history of the shrine of the Nunziata. I am especially interested in the fate of these portraits in the seventeenth century, an issue that has been addressed only cursorily in the existing scholarly literature. It should however first be noted briefly how portraits were typical forms of votive offerings during the Renaissance and then how wax portraits were also particular to Florentine votive production. This outline of their history at the shrine is necessary in order to understand the general significance of the votive portrait as both a religious offering and a portrait type. As will be seen presently, in both regards, there is no scholarly consensus as to how exactly the votive portrait functioned.

38 A particularly large gilded lamp, five braccia long and two and a half braccia high, was also offered by Maria Maddalena. See Richa, V.8, 4-5. See also Chapter One and Chapter Three, wherein I outline Mancini’s seicento scheme to cover all the pillars of the nave with silver votives. His design gives particular prominence to Medici portraits.
Votive portraits are found in European shrines, including the SS. Annunziata, in great numbers between the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, coincident with the rise of portraiture in general. While most portraits bore a likeness of the devotee, other persons, such as saints, might be the subject. Such examples at the SS. Annunziata include the seven founders of the Servite order, the Madonna, San Sebastiano, and literary greats such as Dante.\textsuperscript{39} With regards to the SS. Annunziata, there was a seeming attempt to either reduce the number of gifts or limit votive portraits to those of higher social status in 1401, when the Priori and the Gonfaloniere di Giustizia of Florence issued a provision stating that “those who are not citizens of the Republic and members of a major guild cannot offer votive portraits.” This dictate does not appear to have been successful, nevertheless, because likenesses dedicated by donors from all strata of society continued to accumulate in great numbers.\textsuperscript{40}

As an offering at the SS. Annunziata and elsewhere, wax could take the form of unshaped masses or be made into candles, body parts, animals, and other objects. It was also fashioned into portrait busts and, most famously at the SS. Annunziata, used in the full size (or even larger) figures to which Mancini dedicates an entire category in his inventory of votives. Figures in wax

\textsuperscript{39} Bulman, IV 13.

\textsuperscript{40} I thank Megan Holmes for pointing out that the original source citing this statute is del Migliore, who nonetheless did not date it. Giuseppe Richa, who had access to del Migliore’s notes, places it in 1401. “Non poteva, alzato, chef’ù quest’ossequio dalla fama, metter Voto alla Nunziata in figura, chi non er’ Uomo di Repubblica, abile a’ tre maggiori, nel modo che per un simil Decreto pubblico, era stato più nell’antico ordinate nelli Stendardi e pennon in Orsanmichele, come diremo a suo luogo.” Ferdinand del Migliore, Firenze città nobilissima illustrata. Opera di Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore (Bologna: Forni, 1968; reprint of original publication, Florence: Stamperia della Stella, 1684), 285. Richa’s account reads, “Per legge ancora prescritta da’Priori e Gonfaloniere di Giustizia de’20 Gennaio del 1401, non poteva alcuno mettervi Voto in figura, che non fosse Uomo di Repubblica, e abile alle Arti maggiori.” Richa, vol.8, 12.
and papier maché – kneeling, standing, or on horseback – were dedicated at sanctuaries throughout Northern Europe and in Northern Italy. Life-size votive figures tended to be made entirely of wood in Italian shrines outside of Florence, such as Sta. Maria delle Grazie, just outside Mantua, and Sta. Maria delle Carceri in Prato. The latter became an important Marian sanctuary in 1484 after a miraculous appearance of the Virgin there. The Prato votive statues are now lost and the SS. Annunziata examples were destroyed in 1785, but those at Sta. Maria delle Grazie are preserved and have recently been restored. (fig. 2.4) As these illustrate, votive statues could be embellished with either real or painted hair and clothing that was actual or, in less costly examples, simulated by cheaper means, such as painted and varnished canvas. Lorenzo de’ Medici’s wax effigy, offered to the miraculous crucifix at the church of the Augustinian nuns of Chiarito on Via San Gallo, was dressed in his bloodstained and torn clothes

41 See, for instance, van der Velden, for wax votive portraits dedicated by Louis XI (there is evidence for at least three, including one depicting his daughter Ann) and by Charles the Bold. The latter also dedicated a wax statue at the SS. Annunziata in Florence. Van der Velden suggests that Tomaso Portinari may have commissioned it. Portinari was in Bruges as the banking representative of the Medici and he did business with Charles. Van der Velden, 2000, 251, 253, & 273. For wax votives in Italy outside of Florence, see Bulman, IV 2-4. For theories on the possible metaphorical significances for wax, see the further discussion of the material below.


43 A full account of the “massacre,” as described at the time by a Servite friar, is found in Casalini, 1971, 64-65.

from the assassination attempt of April 26 1478. For those votives in military dress, the armour was usually real. (Sometimes armour alone would be offered to the deity, a votive tradition rooted in pagan antiquity.) Figures with faces and hands made of wax, with a wooden armature for the rest of the body, were a Florentine specialty. Thus the wax portraits found at Prato, which included those of the Medici popes, Leo X and Clement VII (dedicated in 1515 and 1524, respectively), as well as those of Cosimo I and Eleanor of Toledo (both dedicated in 1545), were of Florentine manufacture.

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45 This was one of the three wax statues of Lorenzo de Medici that were fashioned by Orsino Benintendi, and that Vasari claims were co-authored by Verocchio, “è con quell’abito appunto che aveva Lorenzo, quando, ferito nella gola e fasciato, si fece alle finestre di casa sua, per esser veduto dal popolo che là era corso per vedere se fusse vivo, come desiderava, o se pur morto per farne vendetta.” Giorgio Vasari, Le vite de’più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori, ed. G. Milanesi, III Florence, 1878, 373-4. See also Panzanelli, 13. The work was offered at the church of Santa Maria Regina Coeli, called il Chiarito and attached to the convent of the Augustinian nuns in Via di San Gallo. The collection of votives here was the second largest in Florence, after those of the Nunziata. See Lowe, 31. The three wax effigies of Lorenzo will be further discussed below.

46 Viccari, 59. Antonio Benintendi, son of Orsino made the papal statues. Those of Cosimo and Eleanor were commissioned by the grand-ducal secretary. While wax was the material of choice for full-size Florentine votive statues, there is documentation dating to the end of the seventeenth century for the refashioning of some of the wax votive statues at the Nunziata in wood. As we will see below, the tendency of the wax votives to fall into disrepair had become a recurring problem at the Nunziata, so it is most likely that this transformation into wood was undertaken to make the votives more permanent. The document reads: “11 statue di legname massicce e pesanti, rappresentanti 7 Papi e 4 Cardinali…e dipinte coi suoi abiti Pontificali e Cardinalizi furono lavorate dal Galestruzzi intagliatore fiorentino…e si rifecero molte alter statue per mano del Fortini statuario fiorentino, rivestendole di canovaccio ingessato e colorito.” As quoted in Eugenio Casalini, “Note d’arte e d’archivio,” in 2. La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studi e documenti sulla chiesa e il convento, 1978, 287. For the production of wax portraits, votive and otherwise, in Florence, see Panzanelli, 13-39.
Although, as just noted, representations of a particular person were offered at the Nunziata’s shrine as early as 1260, the first mention of wax as a material for votive portraits does not appear in the statutes of the Florentine Arte Medici e Speziali (the guild to which the ceraiuoli, or wax workers, belonged) until 1349. Fourteenth-century sources nonetheless date the practice of offering one’s image in wax earlier. Dino Compagni, writing in 1304, mentions the presence of “many wax images” offered to the Virgin at Orsanmichele. Thus when wax statues began to appear in Florence they were probably first dedicated at this shrine, the most popular in the city during the Trecento, and shortly thereafter were offered at the SS. Annunziata. Franco Sacchetti, writing in the last decade of the fourteenth century and bemoaning the tendency of his fellow Florentines to repeatedly abandon one Marian shrine for a new one, reports that the Nunziata’s cult had recently superseded that of the Madonna at the Orsanmichele. The production of wax statues in Florence peaks around 1480, and they continued to be produced in significant numbers until the later sixteenth century.

Besides being made as votive offerings, wax effigies could be used in other religious contexts. In ceremonies dating to the first part of the fourteenth century, subject states of the Republic presented wax images of their patron saints, which were carried in procession through the streets of Florence and displayed in the Baptistery. Furthermore, early in the fifteenth century, at least two the laudesi companies of the city commissioned ceri of their saints for their

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47 Bulman, IV.14. Bulman provides a detailed account of the activities of the ceraiuoli and their relations with the SS. Annunziata. IV 14-23. See also Masi, 125-42.
48 In the Decameron (c.1350-53), Giovanni Boccaccio also mentions the practice of offering wax effigies. Novel 1, First day, l.39. As cited in Panzanelli, 14.
49 On the votives at the Orsanmichele, see del Migliore, 535.
festivals.\textsuperscript{51} Nonetheless, such was the importance of the production of votives to the wax workers of Florence that their workshops were located on streets close to both the SS. Annunziata and the Orsanmichele, on the Via dei Servi (leading northwest to the Piazza Santissima Annunziata) and the Corso Adimari (in the area south of the Duomo).\textsuperscript{52} The most prominent among the many ceraiuoli was the Benintendi family, who opened numerous workshops on the Via dei Servi and passed on the art through several generations. From the time of the foundation of the Servite monastery in the thirteenth century, the Benintendi had close ties to the order, such that one of them became a Servite brother, and in 1496 a familial tomb was established in the church of the SS. Annunziata.\textsuperscript{53} Contacts between the wax makers and the Servites were especially intense during the period of 1480 to 1510, the height of production of the statues, and documentary evidence indicates that the Servites kept close control over the activities. A wax shop had also been established within the Servite convent at the SS. Annunziata in 1451 for the repair of portraits and the production of candles and smaller mass produced wax votives.\textsuperscript{54}

Votive Portraits and their Purposes: Knowns and Unknowns


\textsuperscript{52} Masi, 124; Bulman has noted that the Servites controlled the settlement of the ceraiuoli in the area. Bulman, IV 16.

\textsuperscript{53} Masi, 125, 132; Bulman, IV. 17-19. Bulman also outlines further relations between the Order and the Benintendi.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., IV 16-23. It is likely that the wax was recycled in the manufacture of these kinds of mass produced votives.
While my primary concern is how significance for the votive portraits was generated by their display, the issue of the verism of the wax portraits must first be addressed, because it has largely been the focus in how their function has been understood by art historians. (The wax effigies from the Nunzaita are now lost. I include here an illustration of Benvenuto Cellini’s relief portrait of the French King, Francis I, for reference. (fig.2.5)) The fleshly realism made possible by painted wax was indeed highly appreciated during the Early Modern period. Vasari says that it was two of the Benintendi, Iacopo and his nephew, Orsino, who brought the practice of wax portraiture into Verrocchio’s workshop and, under the guidance of the master, full realism in the art was attained. Together Orsino and Verrocchio made three wax votive statues of Lorenzo il Magnifico that Vasari describes at some length. As he recounts, one of these went to the SS. Annunziata, where it was placed on a pedestal over the bench where candles were sold, which was in the chiostro dei voti, next to the entrance to the church that Lorenzo’s father, Piero di Cosimo, had built. Vasari’s claim that Verrocchio’s expertise was the reason for the perfecting of wax portraiture is surely false, given that the art had been practiced for at least half a century before Verrocchio’s time. Vasari’s intent was no doubt to include wax portraiture within the mainstream of his history of the development of naturalism in Florentine art.

Vasari says that Lorenzo de’ Medici’s wax portraits were “lifelike and so well executed that they represent not mere wax men but actual live ones.” Baldinucci, in his biography of

55 Vasari emphasizes Verrocchio’s interest in naturalism, pointing out that the artist was also one of the first to use facial casts in his work. Vasari-Milanesi, V.3, 373-375.
56 For further analysis of Vasari’s passage see Lowe, 31, and Van der Velden, 1998, 128-29.
57 “Le teste, poi, mani e piedi, fece di cera più grossa, ma vuote dentro, e ritratte dal vivo e dipinte a olio con quelli ornamenti di cappelli et alter cose second che bisognava, naturali e tanto ben fatti, che rappresentavano non più uomini di cera, ma vivissimi, come si può vedere in ciascuna delle dette tre.” Vasari-Milanesi, 373.
Pietro Tacca, also stresses both the pleasure that artist took in the mimetic nature of wax portraits and its potential affectiveness on beholders. To underline the latter, he asserts the power of the material to revivify the dead:

Tacca took delight in making portraits out of coloured wax, and one among those he made in lifelike and life-size form was the bust of Grand Duke Cosimo II, with a lily, real hair and beard, and eyes of crystal that were variegated such that they looked like his own. It appeared to be real and alive rather than an artificial person. Such was the case for Christina of Lorena, mother of that Prince. After his death, whenever she passed in that quarter on her way to her devotions, she would stop at the house of Tacca for her amusement (to look at his works), and she would first order that he hide the portrait. Her heart could not stand to believe her son, who had already fallen prey to death, was alive in what was in fact a mute statue.\textsuperscript{58}

Modern scholars have seized on this uncanny verism afforded by wax, and most especially on the possibility that it might have been believed to engender a magical bond

between donor and holy patron. It has been variously proposed that the realism of the effigies was thought to be some sort of vehicle for the potency of magic, that it had no bearing at all on the devotional efficacy of the offering, or that it was a non-magical but still effective quality, giving witness to the fully preserved or “saved body” of the supplicant. Other, recent studies


61 See in particular David Freedberg, The Power of Images (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 156-60, 225-236. For Freedberg, the votives manifest the “need to represent the saved body in its full wholeness and soundness. The only means of testifying to its deliverance from danger or illness, or of having attempted to secure such deliverance is by presenting it thus.” Ibid., 227. See all of Chapter 9 for the efficacy of verisimilitude and 155-60 on verisimilitude in votives. All three positions are also summarized by Van der Velden, 2000, Chapter 8, “The Significance of Likeness”; and Idem, 1998, 126-29. With regards to his own approach, Freedberg would likely take issue with van der Velden’s characterization of it as “romantic”, “primitivist,” and resting heavily on “the presupposition of a primary response in images.” Van der Velden, 2000, 230-32. Freedberg has stressed that, throughout The Power of Images, response is clearly characterized as being conditioned by context. See Freedberg’s response to David Nash’s review of his book in Art History, 15, n.2 (June 1992): 275-76,
have investigated other significances, many of which broach on fundamental aesthetic questions. Georges Didi-Huberman takes up Julius von Schlosser’s view that the recurrence of wax portraiture—with its essentially style-less high naturalism—in the history of European culture from antiquity on must be seen as a “complex temporality of survivals”. As such, wax portraiture challenges the primacy of disegno-based art and the conception of art history as progress that, Didi-Huberman argues, have held sway since Vasari. In terms of devotional significance, Didi-Huberman furthermore proposes that wax lends its forms a “suspended” quality—that is, both extremes of life and inanimation (the body given a second life, but not yet fully saved), which together signify the ultimate desire to approach God. Megan Holmes has also linked the verisimilitude afforded by wax to Renaissance commentaries on the superstitious and idolatrous nature of votive offerings. Wax is associated in religious discourses of the period with “the receptivity of a devout person in a sacred or divine encounter”. In his study of a late sixteenth-century treatise on wax relief sculpture by the Italian priest and lawyer Giacomo Vivio, Maarten Delbeke shows that Vivio offers a conception of wax relief that reflects broader theoretical and practical notions of the time. Vivio exalts the material as a meta-art that unifies religious and

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artistic associations: it offers “an insight into the very laws of Nature herself” as well as into the creative process of art making in general.65

This thesis proposes no new hypotheses regarding the possibility or function of supernatural properties for votives. In terms of the significance of wax as a medium, there is a possible meaning that has not been suggested in the existing scholarly literature, one that is particularly appropriate in the context of wax votives offered at Marian shrines. Wax and bees are elaborated as symbols for the Virgin in the Exultet, a Medieval prayer used to bless the Paschal candle throughout Southern Italy. The imagery appears in both the earlier Beneventan text and that which gradually replaced it in the the eleventh-century, the Franco-Roman version. I cite here the latter, where the conceits are even more directly stated than in the Beneventan text. In the prayer, the bee is declared to be that which “surpasses all the other living things that are subject to man”. “She” is praised for her “prodigious knowledge” and associated with both the production of wax and virgin birth. The prayer presents a bucolic scene of springtime, wherein some bees build the hive, while others press together the flowing honey;

others turn flowers into wax;

65 The full title of Vivio’s treatise is Discorso sopra il Mirabil Opera di Basso Rilievo di Cera Stucatta con Colori Scolpita in Pietra Negra (Rome: Fracesco Coattino, 1590). It was dedicated to Pope Sixtus V and his nephew, Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto. Delbeke also analyzes an elaborate engraving signed by Ambrogio Brambilla that accompanies the text. It shows a relief that Vivio claims to have fashioned himself, although no trace of such a work remains today. The relief was engraved in three sections (1588, 1589, 1590). Maarten Delbeke, “Matter Without Qualities? Wax in Giacomo Vivio’s Discorso of 1590,” in Revival and Invention. Sculpture through its Material Histories, Sébastien Clerbois and Martina Droth eds., (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), 101 and passim.
others mold the newborn with the mouth;

others seal up the nectar collected from flowers.

O truly marvelous bee, whose sex is not violated by the male,

Nor shattered by childbearing, neither do children destroy her chastity.

Just as holy Mary conceived as a virgin,

Gave birth as a virgin and remained a virgin.  

I will also shortly take up the issue of mimetic “likeness”, which is associated with the medium of wax when used for portraits. This concern must be situated within the broader issue of the function of votives, which has found no scholarly consensus either. The points I argue in this thesis are nonetheless in agreement with the most recent studies that stress the situational and relational nature of votives. Robert Maniura, Fredrika Jacobs, Chris Wood, and Megan Holmes investigate votives in terms of the complete act by which a devotee makes an offering of thanks to a divine being. Generally speaking, this votive act includes the vow, the saintly intercessor’s miraculous action, and the making and placement of the votive. They also consider votives as they are sited within their sanctuaries and in relation to other elements there – most commonly,

66 As translated from the Latin in Thomas Forrest Kelly, The Exultet in Southern Italy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 38-39. For the relevant Beneventan passages, see 33-34. I thank Jill Caskey for this reference. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, bee imagery is also featured in the piazza of the Santissima Annunziata, on the base of the early seventeenth-century equestrian monument of Grand Duke Ferdinand I. I related this work thematically to the Nuniziata and her cult.
other votives and the holy image or relic, as well as to the thaumaturge. The particular and full operational scope of votives lies in this relational nature and thus in their complete spatial and temporal dimensions.\(^67\) My own concern at the church of the SS. Annunziata is the significance votive portraits took on as a group and with respect to other votives and objects within and contiguous with the church, as well as to the Nunziata as both image and holy patron. I will also address how changes to the votives’ display radically altered their temporal aspect and hence, function.

It must be acknowledged that this emphasis on siting and display does not, however, necessarily resolve the question of “magic” as a votive function, and indeed, most recent authors do not directly address it.\(^68\) I would argue, nonetheless, that what seems most likely is that, at any one time, votives could mean different things to different people. One’s outlook on the matter does not seem to have been conditioned by one’s social rank either. For sure, in the last decades of the fourteenth century, Franco Sacchetti was able to ridicule the superstitious attitudes attached by others to votive offerings.\(^69\) And in 1517, a former Benedictine monk, Teofilo


\(^68\) Maniura is an exception in openly rejecting magic. He argues that the entire exchange (involving the votary’s vow, the favour granted by the patron, and the making and placement or enactment of the votive) is a strictly ritual act. It is a fiction that exists solely within in its own realm, while nonetheless mimicking social relations that take place in the outside world. Maniura, 2009.

\(^69\) Sacchetti writes about the offering of figurative votives to the Nunziata and the Madonna at Orsanmichele—which, he claims, included wax likenesses of a cask of wine and a lost cat—as “piú tosto una idolatria che fede cristiana.” The cat is mentioned in Sachetti’s story of a woman who appeals to the Nunziata in the hopes that her husband will magically forget about a cask of precious wine that he has asked her to guard and which she has subsequently given to her Servite confessor. (It is the Servite who
Folengo, wrote a tract attacking pilgrimage and votive acts. He mocked both the clergy who benefited financially and the common people who were duped by these practices. On the other hand, a Milanese ambassador, writing in 1462 to Duke Francesco Sforza, suggested that magical powers could be attributed to a wax votive bust of Francesco’s father, Muzio Attendolo da Cotingnola, located at the SS. Annunziata. Certainly, too, by the Counter-Reformation period, attitudes towards votives were not universally positive. Like many other church officials at the time, Carlo Borromeo was wary of naïve and potentially idolatrous practices. He acknowledged that votives were an ancient tradition in the Church and accepted them, but his warning that they were too often motivated by an undesirable, “false” superstition indicates that the significance of votives was a contentious issue.

On the issue of superstition, and further suggesting a variety of

suggests she make the offering.) The vow is a success, and a wax cask is offered, but Sacchetti comments derisively on its absurdity: “Di questi boti e di simili ogni di si fanno, li quail son piú tosto una idolatria che fede cristiana. E io scrittore vidi già uno ch’avea perduto una gatta botarsi, ve la ritrovasse, amndarla di cera a nosta Donna d’Orto San Michele, e cosé fece. O non è questa non mancanza di fede, ma uno gabbamento [joke] di Dio e di nostra Donna e di tutt’ I suoi Santi? E’ vuole il cuore e la mente nostra; non va caendo immagini di cera, né queste borie e vanité.” Franco Sacchetti, Il Trecentonovelle, a cura di Valerio Marucci (Roma: Salerno, 1996), Novella CIX, 330-31. There is also a humorous account of a man tricked into believing that black magic had been played upon him. He consequently has a wax statue made at Orsanmichele, and it is offered to the Nunziata. Sacchetti, Novella CLXXV, 621-625. For further on satirical assessments of image cults during the Renaissance, see Megan Holmes, “Miraculous Images in Renaissance Florence,” Art History 34, n.3 (June, 2011): 453-56.

Merlino Cocajo (Teofilo Folengo) Baldus (first edition, 1517). Folengo nonetheless removed the passage from the 1521 edition of his book, when he was attempting to rejoin the order. Jacobs, 65.


“Votorum item tabulae, donaria, ex cera fusiles imagines, et eiusmodi alica, quae ad memoriam vel recuperatae valetudinis, vel periculi depulsi, vel beneficii divinitus mirabiliterque accepti in ecclesiis ex antiquo more instituoque suspendi solent, cum saepe falso, indecore, turpiter, superstitioneque
attitudes, Fredrika Jacobs points out that Gabriele Paleotti, in his Post-Tridentine text, the *Discorso intorno alle immagini* (1582), recognized that a viewer’s perception played a role as much as the nature of the representation in determining the significance and efficacy of a work. I would moreover argue that, as a ritual and common social practice, it is entirely possible that for some (if not many) votaries, the exact functioning of the offering was only vaguely defined. Certainly, accepting a multivalent functionality can allow for the inclusion of ephemeral or immaterial votives – such as the saying of masses or pilgrimage -- which often cannot fit into more strictly defined conceptions.

Whether votive portraits have qualities or a function apart from other kinds of votives has been considered in recent studies. Chris Wood, for instance, takes up Michele Bacci’s point that portrait votives are “a phenomenon of the late Middle Ages related to the increasing involvement of the individual in public religion.” Wood nonetheless proposes that all votives are portraits, even if they are of the mass-produced or generic variety, because they represent the person who

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effingantur; in iis ipsis exprimendis cautio sit supra praescripta.” As quoted in Eugenio Battisti, “Fenomenologia dell’ex-voto,” in *Ex-voto tra storia e antropologia* (Seminari e convegni del Museo Nazionale delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari e dall’Associazione Italiana di Studi Storico-Antropoligici, n.1, Roma 15-16 April, 1983) ed. Emilia de Simoni (Rome: De Luca, 1986), 47. Gabriele Paleotti, in the *Discorso Intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (1582) also lists a third chapter for the unwritten fifth book of the treatise as “Di voti che si offeriscono nelle chiese, e quello che intorno a ciò su dovria servare.” For further on Counter-Reformation views regarding votives and superstition, see Jacobs, 158-169; and Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles. Transforming Images in Italy from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 51. The issue is also addressed further below in this Chapter.

73 Paleotti furthermore identified different types of viewers, including the *idioti*, who are “more prone to see with the eyes of the body rather than the more perspicacious eyes of the soul”. Jacobs, 193-94.

74 Wood, 224, n.82. Michele Bacci, “*Pro remedio animae*”: *immagini sacre e pratiche devozionali in Italia centrale (secoli XIII e XIV)* (Pisa: ETS, 2000), 147–226.
offered them – they refer to the act of offering which is always individualized and unique.

Furthermore, a votive presents a “scenario” onto which anyone who views it can “map” his or her own experience – past, present, or future. One must therefore tread carefully when attributing any kind of special votive function to portraits per se. It seems certain that all votive objects – portraits or otherwise – were believed to afford their donors some kind of perpetual presence (magical, ritual, commemorative, or otherwise) before the holy patron, who had guaranteed the safe-keeping of the body of the devotee. In this vein Hugo van der Velden has argued for “the limits of likeness”. He notes that Renaissance sources do not privilege wax portraits above other types of votives, and so realism was not crucial to the devotional effectiveness of an offering. That is, the votive function of a lamp, for instance, was no different than that of a portrait.

Individualization is, nonetheless, something of a matter of degree. Portraits do establish for their donors a presence and bond with the holy patron in a way that no candle could. They are therefore “iconic substitutes” for the persons represented. It must also be remembered that the

Wood, 223, 226-27. See also Jacobs for the personalized nature of votive narrative panels, even given the fact that they typically conform to types. Nevertheless, throughout her book she considers how the individual miracle also joins others to testify collectively to the powers of the thaumaturge: votives always take on meaning within a complex of objects. Jacobs, 15, 47-49, and passim.

Van der Velden, 1998, 133.

Ibid., 131-36. Van der Velden uses the examples of three votive portraits of Lorenzo de’Medici (including the one dedicated at the Nunziata), comparing their significances which varied according to their iconography and destination. And see Van der Velden, 2000, Chapter 8, “The Significance of Likeness.”, 222-246. A succinct statement of his thesis is also found on p. 238: “This capacity to generate fiction – which depends on visual correspondence and not on magical analogy –is inherent in every use of representational imagery and clearly expresses the votive image’s potential as an iconic substitute. The question of this particular characteristic of the votive portrait thus becomes in many ways that of the
rise of votive portraits in all media starting in the fifteenth century is coincident with the rise of portraiture in general in Europe. Van der Velden thus proposes that veristic votive portraits should be categorized with secular portraiture during the Renaissance, and so can be included in any history of Renaissance art. Votives therefore have a stylistic history. This historicising of votive effigies counters the essentialist, primitivist view of votives held by some early historians of the votives, such as Warburg (who hypothesized the persistence of votives as a “pagan” practice). It also to a great extent calls into question more recent, largely theoretical accounts having to do with the significances and visual effects of wax, such as those of Didi Huberman. Indeed, as has just been noted, Vasari gives wax portraits a place in his story of naturalism as the engine that drives the development of Renaissance art.

It should be noted that to carry a sense of personalization, a votive portrait only required a “rhetoric of physiognomic realism” – that is, actual resemblance to the votary was not necessary. Verism alone, by virtue of being an individualizing form of expression, would have signified the essence of the portrait, of the visual arts, and even of the image in general, and this question will not of course be answered here.” Robert Maniura takes issue with the use of the term “presence” in describing votive function. Maniura, 2009, 425. See also n.68 above.

78 Van der Velden’s approach is close to Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck’s arguments that all votives are arbitrary signs that refer to the votive act, although Van der Velden says that this view is not sufficient in accounting for the significance of the realism of votive portraits. See Van der Velden, 2000, 227-29.

privilege of distinction.\textsuperscript{80} Portraits would have thus been set apart from other votive forms, most of which were generic, in that they were “vehicles of distinction”, lending their subjects a strong individualized presence and thus prominence before the divine patron. Concomitant with this status function was that the most talented artists could be associated with their production.\textsuperscript{81} As noted above, Verrocchio was involved in the making of such statues, and Vasari praises a statue of Duke Alessandro, made around 1533 by Montorsoli, who had become a Servite in 1530. Montorsoli’s work showed Alessandro kneeling and in armor.\textsuperscript{82} The question remains, nevertheless, as to whether the verism offered by wax enhanced the value or prominence of a votive portrait. Given what has been argued here, it could, but it was not the only manner of

\textsuperscript{80}For a quattrocento wax bust of Muzio Attendolo da Cotingnola, father of Francesco Sforza of Milan, at the Nunziata, which was reported by Francesco’s ambassador to not resemble its sitter at all but was still valued as a votive, see Welch, 235-36. The term “rhetoric of physiognomic realism” is used by Wood. Wood, 224. The self-flattery inherent in commissioning votive portraits of oneself is evident in that they were subject to burlesque and accusations of vanity in Florentine literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See Casalini, 1971, 56 and n.19. And Guido Mazzoni, \textit{I Bòti della ss. Annunziata in Firenze: curiosità storica} (Florence: Le Monnier, 1923), n.p.

\textsuperscript{81}Van der Velden, 2000, 231-33, 236-37.

\textsuperscript{82}Vasari discusses how Montorsoli was to go to Rome to help Michelangelo with the tomb of Julius II. He then says, “il quale non andò a Roma altrimenti prima che avesse finita del tutto l’immagine del duca Alessandro nella Nunziata, la quale condusse fuor dell’uso dell’altre e bellissima, in quel modo che esso signore si vede armato e ginocchioni sopra un elmo alla borgognona e con una mano al petto in atto di raccomandarsi a quella Madonna. Fornita adunque questa immagine et andato a Roma, fu di grande aiuto a Michelangnolo nell’opera della già detta sepoltura di Giulio Secondo.” Vasari-Milanesi, VI, 635. Vasari also says that Montorsoli studied the works of Andrea del Sarto at the Nunziata, and that he repaired statues of Popes Leo X and Clement VII. The latter are discussed below. On the statue of Duke Alessandro, See also Birgit Laschke, \textit{Fra Giovan Angelo da Montorsoli: ein Florentiner Bildhauer des 16. Jahrhunderts} (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1993), 34. Notably, Del Migliore also claims that Benvenuto Cellini made a votive statue of Duke Alessandro de’ Medici for the Nunziata, but he must be confusing this with Montorsoli’s work. Del Migliore, 286.
doing so. If the primary function of the votive was to embody a sense of *presence* before the holy patron (and, again, whether this presence was believed to be magical, rhetorical, or fictional, the point still holds), verism certainly facilitated this. However, a precious material for a votive portrait (such as silver) could also increase its prominence and hence presence, albeit in a different manner than that of the realism of wax. Votives comprise complementary or competing systems of meaning: the significance of the votive can be generated by means of its material, form, style, and sitting.  

Taking this basic principle – that portraiture, as a form for a votive, gave the offering an individualized presence and hence distinction – my focus will be a dimension of significance that was intimately bound up with the religious function of votive portraits, and yet also of a different nature. This concern is the social prestige they carried and their potential political meaning. In pursuing this aspect, I am concentrating on the display of the votive portraits at the SS. Annunziata and their relationship to one another, to other portraits in the vicinity, and to the thaumaturge and her image. My line of inquiry concurs with other recent scholarship that has stressed that the significance of votives is only fully realized in their relational and situational qualities. There is no clearer case of this than the Medici votives at the SS. Annunziata, as I will show in the following chapter of this study. For now, I will turn to the history of the display of all the votives in the church, in order to begin to discern how Medici offerings eventually take preeminent positions in the votive collection when it is also given a radically new order and coherence in the first half of the seicento.

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83 In Chapter Three I will discuss how the formal composition of the Medici votive paliotto (dated 1600) engenders the presence of Prince Cosimo, who is depicted on it.
3.6 Changes to the display of the votives: chronology

From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, projects were planned, some realized and others not, to re-display the votives. The statues as a group were culled, restored, or rearranged on numerous occasions, and other votives were also moved or destroyed. These changes in display are documented in both manuscript and published sources from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries, and although these are sometimes not entirely clear as to what actions were involved, a fairly firm history of the changes to the votives at the SS. Annunziata emerges when the evidence is collated. Previous studies have addressed early arrangements of the votives at different points in the cult’s history. 84 I will first bring together and briefly summarize these while also drawing further on the documentary evidence, in order to illuminate how changes in display could be undertaken for practical purposes or to give new meaning to the votives. I will then describe in detail in this and the next chapter what is most pertinent to my argument, that is, projects dating to the first half of the seventeenth century.

By the mid-fifteenth century the votive portrait statues were lined up along the right of the nave of the church (looking towards the altar) and along the left of the tribune. Because this accumulation blocked the view into the chapels in both these areas, those families to whom the chapels belonged – including the Falconieri who were closely tied to the Servite Order from its foundation 85 – had the statues moved out of the tribune, and in 1447 two scaffolds (palchi) were

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84 See especially Bulman for a detailed account of the situation of the votive statues in the fifteenth century. IV 7-11. Other studies will also be cited below.

85 Chiarissimo Falconieri was one of the seven Florentine founders of the Order. He bequeathed the chapel to the family who had it constructed in 1350 by Neri di Fioravanti. Buried in the chapel is Saint Giuliana Falconieri (1270-1341) who founded the Ordine delle Serve di Maria delle Mantellate. The present decoration of the chapel dates primarily from the eighteenth century. On the Falconieri funerary
built by Michelozzo on either side of the nave to accommodate all of the statues. These supports thus must have been raised to a height that would free up the view into the chapels.86 The sanctuary of Sta. Maria della Grazie in Mantua, which still displays votive statues, must give us some sense of how the statues on the SS. Annunziata’s scaffolds looked: at Mantua, votive statues are placed in two stacked rows of niches set against the upper walls of the nave (the eighty niches were built in 1517 and fifty-three statues still remain). (fig. 2.6) A document from the SS. Annunziata dated 1447 tells us that those effigies on horseback were all placed on the left, and that the space before the Falconieri chapel (in the right transept) was left empty, ostensibly because some architectural ornament could not be disturbed by the scaffolding, and no doubt so as to not impinge at all on that powerful family’s presence in the church.87

Sometime after the scaffolds were added in 1447, it eventually came to be that the portraits of “the most illustrious Florentines (i Cittadini più illustri di Firenze)” were placed on the right, and those of foreigners on the left. The latter group included kings, cardinals, six popes, and a Turkish Pasha who had passed through the city in 1471. Those offered by military men,

monument that was constructed in the original Annunziata church, in Cafaggio (and is now located in the large cloister of the present convent), with reliefs that suggest the family were the dominant patrons of the church, see Casalini, 1987, 82. A large version of the Falconieri coat of arms is located on the door leading from the atrium to the interior of the current Nunziata church.

86 Warburg, 137-38.
87 The Servite writer also complains about the resulting asymmetry of the arrangement: “Onde in questi tempi medesimi furno [sic] fatti palchi per tenervi sopra homini ill[ustrissi]mi a cavallo tutti devoti di questa gran’madre. Erano dua palchi uno alla destra, l’altro alla sinistra avanti alla tribuna. Ma nuovamente havendo uno fatto un poco di frontispitio d’orpello avanti la capella de’Falconieri, non gli parendo fussi veduto a suo modo, persuase alcuni padri che g’l’era buono levar quell palco e metter que’ cavalli tutti dall’altra parte; così rimase quella parte spogliata, e senza proporzione dell’altra. Idio gli perdoni.” As quoted in Warburg, 138.
dressed in armour and accompanied by family crests and coats of arms, were grouped together. Those devotees most elevated in status had their likenesses placed closest to the shrine. The

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88 “[N]on sapemmo se in altra parte d’Europa ad Imagine sacra o a Reliquia insigne, ne fosse un’altro [apparato di Voti] molto più considerato l’ordine e con quanto giudizio v’era stato accomodato e disposto, tutta la Nobilità antica di Firenze, collocata da una parte, tempo per tempo, con Lucchi e Vesti talari addosso alla Civile, dall’altra i Forestieri Signori d’ogni grado, e dignità, sei Pontefici Romani figurati con ricchi Piviali e Regni in capo, Cardinali con le lor Porpore, Imperatori e Rè, fra’quali v’erano Federigo III che ve lo lasciò nel passarsene per Firenze alla volta di Roma nel 1451, e similmente nel [14]74 Cristerno Re di Dacia, e’l Rè di Aragona. Da una banda erano i Capitani, Condottieri, Soldati e gente d’Arme la più famosa ch’avesse avuto quell’età, sù Destrieri, armata con Morinoi e Targhe, e in esse l’Argieti o Cimiero a pennone, nelle quali di basso rilievo, o di pittura, si vedovon l’Imprese e l’Armi delle Case loro, e fra questi, Giovanni Hunniade padre di Mattias Corvino Rè di Ungheria, superato, che egli ebbe l’esercito Turchesco. Pietro dal Verme inclitus Dux Loctaringhus, era scritto nella base che il sosteneva, e similmente Pippo Spano degli Scolari tutto armato avea le striscie nere nella Corazza, Impresa dell’Arme sua. S’incitava a prima giunta la devozione in chi v’enerava alla vista di que Voti schierati e messi giù più giù per ordine, e con essa, stima e reverenza grande d’un luogo, così altamente venerato dalla pietà Cristiana, etiam da’Turchi, passato, che fù per Firenze nel 1471 un Bascià principale, il quale per condursi se licemente ne’ suoi Paesi disse, offrirvi per aver propizia in quel viaggio lungo la Vergine Maria.” Del Migliore, 286-87. See also Tozzi (1770) in Dina, 120.

89 Bulman, IV 9. Isabella d’Este, who commissioned a wax effigy in 1507, stipulated that it be placed “in bel loco nanti la Nuntiata.” A collection of portraits of other Gonzaga family members, including that of Ludovico in silver, was located at the time in the tribune of the church. Bulman, IV 1. The Gonzaga had been important patrons at the Nunziata since the fifteenth century, when, upon his death in 1444, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga bequeathed 200 ducats for the construction of the tribune, designed by Michelozzo. His son, Ludovico, followed suit with further funds, although this donation was at least a part a strategy for obtaining a military stipend owed to him by Florence. For Gonzaga patronage of the tribune, see Beverly Louise Brown, “The Patronage and Building History of the Tribuna of SS. Annunziata in Florence: A Reappraisal in Light of New Documentation,” Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 25, n.1 (1981): 62-64. There is also ample evidence that Gonzaga devotion to the Nunziata continued into the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In October of 1607, the Duke of Manuta, Vincenzo I Gonzaga, wrote to Ferdinand I de’ Medici that his wife, Eleanora de’ Medici, planned to make votive visits to both the shrine of Loreto and the Nunziata because of her
ordering of the statues would have made clear both that the Nunziata’s cult was a locus of civic piety and that it was honoured by prestigious foreigners, although the great mass of the remaining votives in other forms seem to have been given no logical arrangement. Sheer profusion in itself was nonetheless a suitable visual record of the Nunziata’s power.90

On various occasions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Servites took action to manage the proliferation of votives. Because of the number of statues, it was decided in 1448 to hang some of them from the ceiling by ropes,91 a practice not uncommon in sanctuaries that attracted large numbers of offerings. At the SS. Annunziata, the weight of the hung votives must have been substantial, because sometime between 1478 and 1482 the upper portion of the nave walls was strengthened and the roof raised eight meters.92 Some kind of remodelling of the scaffolds also occurred in 1480. This was overseen by the architect Giuliano da Sangallo. This

illness. Medici Archive, ASF, October 1607, Vol.2944, Fol..370, Database Entry No 5077. And in 1609, Eleanora herself wrote to Belisario Vinta, gran cancelliere of the Order of San Stefano, asking that the “Padri della Nunziata...cantino Avanti quella S.ta imagine una essa per la salute del Principe mio Figlio [Francesco IV Gonzaga]...spero che la M.ta Div.a sia per liberarlo affatto con l’intercessione della gloriosissima Verg.e.” Medici Archive, ASF, July 22, 1609, Vol.2944, Folio No.699, Data base entry no.5121. In 1621, Grand Duchess Maria Maddalena de’Medici informed the Duchess of Mantua, Caterina de’ Medici that Caterina’s husband, Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga, was planning to go to Florence, “per soddisfare il suo voto all Santissima Annunziata”. Medici Archive, ASF, Florence, September 13, 1621, Vol.6108, Fol. No.74, Data base entry no.6193.

90 Megan Holmes has characterized the arrangement of votives at the Nunziata by the early fifteenth century as being shaped by simultaneous and competing aims – an “aesthetic of accumulation, of amassing” and an “aesthetic of legibility and order”. The first “proclaimed the power of the image or relic”, while the latter allowed “individual offerings [to] be scrutinized for visual evidence of the miraculous intervention, the identity of the votary, and the magnificence of the votive object.” Holmes, 2009, 178ff.

91 Ibid.

92 Bulman IV 9.
period saw the major flourishing of the art of wax portrait statues in Florence, and so the number of offerings of this type presumably increased dramatically at this time.\textsuperscript{93} In the second half of the fifteenth century effigies were also placed in the entrance atrium of the church. As noted above, one of the three votive portraits of Lorenzo de’Medici commissioned after the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478 had been located here next to the entrance built by his father,\textsuperscript{94} while that of Antonio Pucci was probably placed at the opening to the family chapel he erected in 1452 and dedicated to San Sebastiano.

By the sixteenth century the atrium, or “painted cloister (chiostro dipinto)”, was also known as the “votive cloister (chiostro dei voti)”, and the portraits were grouped according to emperors and kings, popes and ecclesiastics, and knights and counsellors.\textsuperscript{95} The wax statues were also frequently restored by the Servites: hands and faces would be remade and clothing repainted or cleaned.\textsuperscript{96} But despite these sporadic arrangements of certain groups of votives, the overall impression of the votive display within the church seems to have been one of chaos. A description of 1588, written by a Dutch visitor, Arnout van Buchell, is often cited in modern

\textsuperscript{93} Casalini, 1971, 52.

\textsuperscript{94} According to Vasari, another went to the church of the convent of Chiarito in Florence which housed a miraculous crucifix. While the latter was dressed in the blood-stained clothes worn at the time of the assassination attempt, the Nunziata votive portrait was dressed in the lucco worn by the most affluent Florentines. The third votive portrait was sent to the Basilica of Santa Maria degli’Angeli in Assisi. Panzanelli, 13. Lowe, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{95} Bulman, IV 10. For their chapel altarpiece the Pucci commissioned Pollaiuolo’s \textit{Martyrdom of St. Sebastian} (1475), which is currently in the National Gallery, but remained in situ until the mid-nineteenth century. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Pucci redecorated the interior of their chapel and oversaw the renovation of the portico of the church. Francesca Petrucci, \textit{Santissma Annunziata} (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1992), 12-13.

\textsuperscript{96} See Holmes, “Ex-votos”, 178, with further bibliography in n.50.
studies on the SS. Annunziata for its evocation of the uncanny impression made by the collection of wax statues. It also vividly conveys a scene of clutter and disarray:

There is such an infinitude of votive statues and paintings that when you first enter the church you would think that you were entering a field of cadavers. For there are the statues and effigies (with which the church is over-full), life-like and life-size, of wood, of stone and of wax. There one sees the suspended statues of Leo and Clement in their pontifical habits, and of several kings and princes, and around them other statues of armed soldiers, horsemen and infantry…. [H]ere hang almost completely rusted swords, there helmets, lances, bows, arrows, indeed every kind of armour. In another part we see the wounded, the hanged, the tortured, the shipwrecked, the imprisoned, the sick, the pregnant lying in bed, all represented by statues. 97

2.7 The Renewal of the Votive Culture c.1600

As a foreigner stepping into the Nunziata’s sanctuary for the first time, Buchell was perhaps more disoriented than a Florentine of the time would have been. An overwhelming impression of chaos would have been particularly acute for him. But there is no doubt that despite any partial organization and culling that might have been imposed on them over the years, the collection of votives always remained a teeming mass of objects that took all manner of forms, materials, and sizes. As will be outlined shortly, this proliferation that characterized the Nunziata’s votive display from its earliest years on seems to have become problematic by the seventeenth century, when drastic measures were taken to reduce and bring the votive display

97 As translated in Freedberg, 229.
under much stricter control. In order to understand general attitudes towards votives around 1600, it can also be noted that there is some evidence that the popularity of votives was diminishing by that time. Vasari relates that the art of wax portraits had already begun to fall into decline during his own time, although he is unsure as to exactly why: “this art, even though it has remained active up until our time, is nonetheless more so in decline than otherwise, either because of a lack of religious impetus, or for some other reason.” And while Vasari had once included votives in his master narrative of the flourishing of Renaissance art, when Baldinucci writes of votives in the second half of the seventeenth century, it is to report that the early seicento Florentine painter Ludovico Cigoli believed they offended his art-making intelligence: the painter went out of his way to avoid the votive shops that lined the Via de’Servi leading to the SS. Annunziata. Certainly, too, in 1665 all the wax statues were moved out of the nave and to the entrance atrium, or “painted cloister (chiostro dipinto).” Finally, by 1785, when the wax

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98 “Quest’arte, anchorché si sia mantenuta viva insino a’ tempi nostri, è nondimeno piuttosto in declinazione che altrimenti, o perché sia mancata la divozione, o per altra cagione che sia.” Vasari-Milanesi, 1906, Vol. III, 374.

99 “Quale sia stato il Cigoli nell’arte sua, non occorre che da noi si racconti, giacché oltre a quanto ne dice la fama, a bastanza lo palesano l’opere sue, le quali lo mostrano ora una stessa cosa col grande de Antonio da Coreggio, ed ora similissimo a Tiziano, come ben riconoscono tutti gli’intelligenti dell’arte, di cui egli forse piu d’ogni altro pittore de’ suoi tempi posèdè l’ottimo gusto, del quale fu si geloso, che raccontano di lui che nell’andare, che é faceva alla Santissima Nunziata di Firenze, non passava mai per la via de’Servi, ma voltava al canto ditto del Castellaccio, solamente per non vedere la quantità de’boti di cartone, che in essa via stanno esposti in su le botteghe alla vendita, perché diceva, che il solo vedere quelle goffe e sconcertate parti del corpo umano, come teste, braccia, gambe, ed altre simili, gli alteravano l’idee, e confondevangli la fantasia.” Baldinucci-Rinalli, III, 276.

100 Tozzi, 120. This removal of the statues is further considered in Chapter Three.
statues that remained were finally destroyed by the order of grand duke Leopold, they were
deemed to “embarrass” the paintings there.\textsuperscript{101}

But before this eventual dismantling of the votive display at the SS. Annunziata, and
alongside any waning of votive culture, there were in the first half of the seventeenth century
great efforts to preserve, transform, and elaborate on what was there. Indeed, the seventeenth
century saw a final flourishing of the votive display at the SS. Annunziata. As seen in Chapter
One with regards to numerous Medici offerings, prestige votives continued to be offered well
into the seventeenth century. Furthermore, towards the end of the seicento, del Migliore writes at
length that he cannot understand how the Servites would have wanted to despoil the votives from
the church and he claims that the Florentine populace was saddened at the dismantling of such a
vivid expression of devotion and the “beautiful commemoration” signified by the votives.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{101} The order from the court of Grand duke Leopold to Padre Raimondo Adami on September 9, 1785
states in part: “Rev.mo Padre. Sua A. R. gradirebbe che fossero tolti dal primo atrio della Chiesa della
Nunziata tutti I voti che imbarazzano le belle pitture che vi sono, e che servono di nido alla polvere dalla
quale vengono guastate.” For the full document, see Casalini, 1971, 64.

\textsuperscript{102} “[N]on sapemmo il concetto, nè qual fosse l’animo di quei’ Padri, in spogliar la Chiesa d’un arredo
tanto ricco di Voti, a risico di diminuirvi, e rendervi fiacca la devozione, che s’aumenta, e mirabilmente
s’ingagliardisce per si fatto modo , ci giova credere, che il Popolo sagace similmente non intendendo i lor
fini modesti, alla gagliarda ne mormorasse e massime i maligni, ch’anno come s’usa dir’ a Firenze, tutto
il cervello nella lingua: e in vero apprò lorro sussiste un’articolo di ragione vivissimo, perche, non
potendo lo’ntelletto nostro arrivare così facilmente a concoscere le cause alla produzione degli effectti;
d’un efficacissimo mezzo son le cose apparenti di Boti, di Pitture, ed altre materie simili esteriori,
sufficienti ad ogn’idiota per concepirne maggior avumento di spirito, di speranza, e di fede più viva alla
intercessione de’Santi: onde non è gran fatto, che’l Popolo se ne dolesse, e stimasse privata la Chiesa
d’una bellissima memoria, commemorata da tanti, e dalla Repubblica altamente lodando essa Chiesa in
lettere scritte, una nel 1444, a Niccolò da Perugia il XVII, Generale de’ Servi, che principia Quanta
Del Migliore’s point of view had also informed the fate of the Nunziata’s votives at the end of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century. Already in 1593, the Servite Luca Ferrini, in his *Corona di Sessantatre Miracoli della Nunziata di Firenze* (fig. 2.7), called for a restoration of the Nunziata’s votive culture. In the dedication to the Prior General of the Order, Ferrini requests that new votives be fashioned for those miracles described in his book whose corresponding votives are lost. And his argument sets the tone for the projects that follow in the seicento: the votives are “worthy of preserving, not only for the sake of memory, but to impress and affect whoever looks at them in the present.” ¹⁰³ Thus the projects of the seventeenth century were intended to preserve aspects of the votive collection at the SS. Annunziata, but there were also extensive efforts to renew its effects and significances. To the latter end, there was the redisplay and refashioning of existing votives and their integration with new elements in and around the Nunziata’s shrine. The fortunes of the votives at the shrine of the Nunziata are a particularly rich instance of the Counter-Reformation tendency to draw on the inherent power of the history of devotion to sacred images, while nonetheless also reshaping and revitalizing that tradition by means of new decorative schemes for the framing of the holy image or relic. The rest of this chapter will address how the seicento schemes were more radical and all-encompassing than any previous at the church in terms of bringing order and legibility to the display of votives

¹⁰³ The votives should be treated “come cose degne di memoria non solo appresso i posteri, ma di gran stupore e frutto, a chiunque l’ammirerà dei presenti.” Fr. Luca Ferrini, O.S.M., *Corona di Sessanta tre miracoli della Nunziata di Firenze* (Florence: G. Marescotti, 1593). Ferrini was also author of *Esposizione della Salve Regina* (Marescotti, 1593). As Casalini also points out, Ferrini repeats the request after a number of his individual chapters: “Fece l’immagine sua grande, la quale e per l’antichità, e per la malignità de’ tempi, s’è consumata ne per anco rifatta da Reverenci Padri.” Casalini, 1971, 5.
at the SS. Annunziata. And this systematization of the votives is consonant with Counter-Reformation ideals for church interiors. What will follow in Chapter Three is a consideration of how this ordering also involved the fashioning of the Medici in the image of the ideal Christian prince.

2.8 Mancini’s Schemes in the Seventeenth Century: Radical Culling and Creation

A number of renovations of the votives that date to the first half of the seventeenth century are recorded in a Servite text, Ferdinando Mancini’s *Restauratione d’alcuni più segnalati miracoli della Santissima Nunziata di Firenza* (1650), a forty-six page, bound manuscript, now in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence.104 (Fig. 2.8) (This is the same book that was cited above and that provides an inventory of the Nunziata’s votives.) The text explains that many of them had fallen into disorder and disrepair, and Mancini says he was thus commissioned four times by his superiors to renovate them. Restorations or even the removal and destruction of votives were not unusual. For instance, in 1498 the statue of the King of Hungary and Navarre was remade.105 Vasari also reports that after the Medici were exiled and returned to power in 1530, Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (Servite and an assistant to Michelangelo on the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo),106 remade the effigies of the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII as well as others,107 and another group of statues was renovated in 1695.108 Mancini furthermore points out

104 See this chapter, n. 4 above. Mancini’s text is also briefly discussed in Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, “Media, memory and the *Miracoli della SS. Annunziata,*” *Word and Image,* 25, n.3 (2009): 278-79.
105 “[N]ell Anno 1498 leggesi all’uscita del Camarlingo, c.254, essere state rifatte le immagini del Re di Ungheriae di Navarra.” Tozzi, 120.
106 Laschke, 34.
107 Vasari-Milanesi, V.6, 632. The votives of Leo X and Clement VII were destroyed by political enemies. This occurrence is discussed further in Chapter Three.
that at the time of the siege of 1529 to 1530, the Florentine Republic confiscated the silver votives from the SS. Annunziata, along with other silver furnishings. The collection of votives in silver must have nonetheless been built up again because, as will be discussed below, Mancini recounts how they were removed and replaced twice between 1630 and 1650. The scale of the renovation of the votives proposed in Mancini’s projects (which includes the transformation of many of them into a different material) was, however, unprecedented at the SS. Annunziata. I can furthermore find no comparable examples elsewhere. The very existence of Mancini’s text and the length at which he describes the renovations speaks of the significance of the votives to the Servites, who were certainly aware that the fame of the shrine rested largely on the impressiveness of the collection. Mancini in fact says that his book is meant to be shown to foreign visitors or anyone else with “devout curiosity” regarding the honour garnered by the Virgin.

The first renovation Mancini discusses dates to 1625, and it involved moving “some of the armed men” into the *chiostrino dipinto* or *chiostro dei voti*. (figs. 2.1, 2.2) The statues, Mancini says, were set atop the capitals of each column, where there were also placed military paraphernalia in the form of trophies and festoons along the arches between the columns. At

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108 The project is discussed below.
109 Dina/ Mancini, 112/ 44.
110 “[P]ossono allmeno i RR. PP. Sagrestanij del Banco, o altri de nostri Padri, con questo Libretto darne breve ragguaglio a’ Forestieri, e ad altri, che con devote curiosità bramassero una tale sadisfattione, ad honor di Maria.” Dina/Mancini, 83/1.
111 “Le Tavolette dipinte, ove si rappresentano le grazie ricevute da questo divino Volto, si levorno [sic] di Chiesa, l’anno 1625, con alcuni Huomini armati, che confusamente stavano per le Cappelle et in altri luoghi della muraglia: quail nel miglior’modo che si poté s’aggiustorno (come si vede ad ogn’ora) nel
the same time, the process was begun to make the interior of the nave something of a blank slate. Mancini was ordered to remove all the painted votive panels in the nave, an act that would have drastically altered the appearance of that space. As can be recalled, these panels had covered every available surface in the interior of the church as well as the atrium or *chiostrino dipinto*. At some point it seems that some of them were possibly redisplayed in the atrium, because in the mid-eighteenth century, Richa describes it as containing about a hundred or so *tavole* of different sizes. The newly divested walls of the nave were to be painted white: Mancini says that those who owned the chapels wanted to ornament their exteriors with marbles and paintings.113

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112 Casalini reports that many were destroyed, while others were stored in rooms above the chiostrino. Casalini, 1971, 61. But Richa describes the atrium as having both the statues and about one hundred votive panels of various sizes: “entreremo nel Cortile, o sia Chiostro detto de’ Voti, perché in esso alle pareti si veggono a centinaia le tavole grandi, e piccole, che rappresentano le miracolose grazie fatte dalla SS. Nunziata, e sopra del Colonnato sonovi pure le figure intere di Pontefici, di Cardinali, diVescovi, di Princici, e d’altri Personaggi Ecclesiastici, e Secolari, Civili, e Guerieri, ed altresì di Matrone nobilissime, e se lacere dal tempo sono le loro sopraavvesti, de’volti, e delle mani però lavorati da eccellenti Artefici è la maggior parte illesa, e sembran vivi.” Richa: Vol.8 p.58 At least some of the panels to which Richa refers might be the “memorie” votive panels that were made beginning in the first decade of the seventeenth century, as is described below.

113 “Ma perché radunavano (come s’è detto) troppa polvere et altro; et anco perché era necessario imbiancar tutta la Chiesa, et essendosi di piú passata parola da alcuni Benefattori di voler con Marmj e Pitture abbellire, et a quasi rinnovare le Cappelle, fu però ordinato, che dette Tavolette si levassero. Le quail furono condotte, come in deposito nel Vano che è sopra la Loggia de Signori Pucci; quivi ammassate (se non tutte) almeno la maggior parte. E credo che per anco vi si trovino. E poi, non si vede alla giornata, che tante, e tante ne sono offerte, che bisognerà di nuovo riempire non solo il chiostrino, ma una gran’ parte della Chiesa? Oltre all’innumerabilj, che per il gran spazio di Anni, posson’essersi rotte, et andate male?” Mancini then goes on to justify the destruction of those votives that were very decrepit. Dina/ Mancini, 111/ 42.
This 1625 arrangement of the armed statues with military paraphernalia in the atrium or *chiostrino dipinto* had in itself an obvious thematic unity. It is also followed in 1630 by the organization of the votive statues that remained in the nave.\(^{114}\) To some extent, this latter action can be attributed to a crisis of the same year that affected all of Florence. The city was under quarantine because of the plague, and the Nunziata figured extensively into a civic-wide response. Collective acts of piety were directed towards the Nunziata in an attempt to obtain her intercession for deliverance. Archbishop Alessandro de’Medici decreed that, in accordance with the wishes of the Grand Duke, the entire populace of Florence was to fast one morning a week for a year as an offering to the Virgin of the Nunziata. Furthermore, on the occasion of the Feast of the Assumption, there was to be a procession from the Duomo to the altar before the sacred image of the Nunziata “with the presence of the clergy and magistrates of our city”. Afterwards, within the space of a week, each person in the city, after a preparation of taking Communion and giving Confession, was to visit the image.\(^{115}\)

\(^{114}\) Mancini does not give a date for these actions, but Dina cites a document that refers to the new palchi (ASF, 119, vol.54, f.311).75, n.29.

\(^{115}\) The stated objective was “che niuno resti escluso da cooperare alla salute publica.” The entire decree is reprinted in Dina as Appendix 2, 121-124. For the plague of 1630-31 in Florence see Carlo M. Cipolla, *Cristofano and the Plague: A Study in the History of Public Health in the Age of Galileo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Idem., *Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany*, transl. Mural Kittel (New York: Norton, 1979); and Giulia Calvi, *Histories of a Plague Year: the Social and the Imaginary in Baroque Florence*, transl. Dario Biocca and Bryant T. Ragan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). Notably, Calvi documents throughout her book how methods of state control were enacted rigorously, because the contagion resulted in widespread social upheaval and disorder, “the debasement of what was human, and the chaotic acceleration of life and death.” Calvi, 199, and passim. I will examine the notion of the Counter-Reformation ruler as a force for order in Chapter Three, when I consider further the implications of the redisplay of Medici votive portraits at the Nunziata.
The interior of the church was dramatically altered at this time, no doubt to make it safe for the crowds who were visiting to fulfill the civic vow. Specifically, Mancini was charged with removing even more of the votives that remained in the nave. As just noted, a good number of statues and the painted panels here had been taken away in 1625. Sometime before 1630, the number of scaffolds holding the statues in the nave had increased to six, and Mancini says that they extended up to the transept. On the large cornice that ran all around the nave were found votives in papier maché and, here and there, some statues. Mancini then goes on to describe in detail that in 1630 many of the votives—and it is clear that he is speaking of the wax statues as well as the votives in papier maché, because he refers to the inner wooden armature of the former—were “broken, worm-eaten, chewed by animals, collapsed in on themselves, and in sum, fallen apart,” to the point of being unsalvageable. The age of some meant that “the frames inside were worm-eaten, and the skeleton of wood out of which they were made therefore fell.” He considers it miraculous that no one was killed by the falling pieces and reports that some 20,000 votives in papier maché were either burned or given to artists who worked in that medium.\textsuperscript{116}

Moreover, 124 of the statues were destroyed.\textsuperscript{117} Mancini’s rather lengthy account of their decrepitude must have served to justify this highly unusual act of mass destruction.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{116} “[R]otti, tarlati, rosi da Animali, piegati in se stessi, et in somma molti disfatti,” and “tarlato il fusto di dentro, et l’ossatura di legno à ci erano stati effigiati, quindi cadevano.” “Di quei Voti Gialli, se ne diede al fuoco piú di tre Terzij; il restante l’hebbero gli Artisti, che lavorano di carta pesta.” Dina/Mancini, 109-110/40-41, 111-112/43. The fate of the papier maché votives, as described by Mancini, will be discussed further in the next chapter of the thesis.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 110/41. In “Applausi di Firenze per la canonizzazione di S. Filippo Benizi,” Firenze, 1672, the Servite Fra Prospero Bernardi writes: “l’anno del contagio 1630, nell’adattarsi in miglior forma l’Imagini de’voti appesi per la Chiesa, si numerarano 3600 Tavolette, tutte dipinte di grazie e favori ottenuti dalla Vergine Annunziata: ventiduemila voti di carta pesta; delle figure intere di varia grandezza, e
renovation of 1630 also involved the reduction of the six scaffolds to four—two on each side—and these were also raised. (The previous scaffolds were at the height of the capitals of the pilasters and, as such, they extended across the arched openings and blocked the view into the upper part of the chapels.) For this alteration of the scaffolds, Mancini was advised by his friend, the architect and Medici favourite, Matteo Nigetti.\footnote{Nigetti’s involvement is cited in A.S.F., 119, vol.54, f.311v. See also Dina, 79, n.35.} Thus the reduced number of “Voti maggiori” (i.e. statues) were repositioned on the new scaffolds; according to a contemporary document, “the distinguished votives of our Princes [Serenissimi] were placed on the blocks, at the top of the capitals of the pilasters.”\footnote{See above for del Migliore’s account of the widespread criticism that was directed toward the removal of the votive statues to the atrium in 1665.} As this statement tells us, these remaining statues featured the Medici, a situation that will be investigated in the following chapter: as I will show, the Medici were depicted as agents of civic order, a role that was especially crucial because of the social chaos brought about by the Plague. For now, my focus will be Mancini’s fourth project, dated 1650, which involved the large collection of votives in silver. It also confirms that the motivations for the renovation of the Nunziata’s votives certainly extended beyond merely clearing space for the devotions necessitated by the plague of 1630.

By 1630, then, all the painted panels and paper maché votives had been removed from the nave, and only a selection of statues remained. When it comes to the silver votives, however, the Servites seem to have been determined to preserve their presence in the nave, no doubt because these were traditionally deemed to be the most precious of the offerings to the Nunziata. Mancini refers to two projects in which he was involved that aimed to renovate the silver votives. Firstly,
he says that, from the time of the plague in 1630 and by order of his superiors, he and others had been placing silver votives on the eleven pillars of the nave of the church. There were eventually so many (over 5,000) that the pillars appeared to be made of solid silver. Nevertheless, in 1647 these were all removed again. Mancini refers to the act enigmatically as being “by a sacrilegious hand (da mano piú tosto sagrilega)” and as causing “great scandal in the city, and extremely sad for all of us (grandissima scandolo della Città, et estremo cordoglio di tutti Noi).” While it seems that a Servite father or small group of individuals acting independently was likely responsible in this instance, the motivation remain unclear. In any case, Mancini was re-commissioned by his superiors to replace the silver votives, and he was called upon to create an entirely new scheme in silver for the pillars. While I can find no evidence that this project for eleven pillars in the nave was realized even in part, it must have held considerable importance for the Servites, because Mancini describes it in elaborate detail and includes drawings of each of the pillars, showing the layout of the votives on them. (figs. 2.9, 2.10) The scheme is also of interest in that, considered within the context of the European votive tradition, it is a radical treatment of votives. At the same time, nonetheless, the design of the project is also in significant respects entirely characteristic of Counter-Reformation renovations of shrines of sacred images.

Rather than recreate votives that had been lost, which was typical at the SS. Annunziata and other shrines, Mancini’s task was to select subjects drawn from votives made of various

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121 “Che pur’io, dal contagio in quà, per ordine de’miei Superiori, ne havevo disposti, et aggiustati negl’Assiti degl’Undici Pilastri, così gran numero che tutti insieme sembravano una piastra massiccia d’argento; oltre a’ molti altri, che di mano in mano, vi son stati aggiunti dà R.R. P.P. Sagrestani del Banco, e da loro Compagni, che pur io nel conficcarli, ne contai piú di cinque mila.” Dina/Mancini, 113/45.

122 Dina/Mancini, 113/45. Using documentary evidence, Iginia Dina proposes the likely culprit to be the Servite Padre Giacinto Maria Poggi, who was made Provinciale of Tuscany in 1647. See, Dina, 67-75.
materials that had been offered to the Nunziata over the years. As the subtitle of his manuscript states, the chosen offerings were to be “remade and renewed in silver (refatta, et renovate in Argento)”.

Mancini describes the eighty-one new votives and locates them on the diagrams of the pillars, numbering each to correspond to its description in the text. Most of his descriptions involve a brief account of the miracle and to whom it was granted, as well as the date. All of the votives were to be made of silver and finished for optimum readability and richness in niello: Mancini says that they were to be “coloured with black and gilded”. There would also be “plaques written in gold letters, under each votive”.

Mancini’s project aimed towards a degree of preservation but more so renewal. Firstly, it must be seen as a concerted attempt to re-invoke the richness of the Nunziata’s silver votive cache that had been destroyed in 1647. The dazzling outlay of silver he planned would have recreated to a great extent the old visual effect of the votives that had accumulated over the centuries and that had stood as a graphic testimony to the devotional fervor inspired by the sacred image and the wealth that accumulated in the Nunziata’s name. Mancini directly invokes this striking appearance of the church interior. He recalls that, during his youth, he heard the old padre of the convent say that all the walls of the church could have been covered several times.

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over, from floor to ceiling, with all the silver that had been offered to the Nunziata. At the same time, Mancini’s refashioning of a number of votives into silver was a scaling up of their original value. This is of great interest because of its novelty. The notion of remaking a mass of old votives of various kinds into a single precious material seems to be unprecedented in the tradition of European votive culture. In some instances, votives would be remade in new materials, but the known cases involve a scaling down in the material value (gold replaced by silver, silver replaced by wooden models, and so on — so that the original, precious material could be used for other purposes. Furthermore, these examples do not aim to create a comprehensive decorative scheme in the way Mancini’s project does.

But if the treatment of the votives proposed by this project is notable for its unusualness, a larger purpose for which it was intended is also entirely characteristic of Counter-Reformation church renovations: that is to say, Mancini’s scheme clearly aimed to give the church interior a greater sense of legibility and unity. Both the form and iconography of Mancini’s projects

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126 I thank Hugo van der Velden for his insights regarding this issue. See also Van der Velden 2000, 172-76.

127 Among the earliest of the renovations to the interiors of Catholic churches in Italy that met this goal had been the projects of the 1560’s at S. Croce and S. Maria Novella, undertaken by Vasari, with the patronage of Cosimo I. Marcia B. Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in Sta Maria Novella and Sta Croce, 1565-1577* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For other examples, see Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Steven Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-
furthermore coincided with others that were realized at the SS. Annunziata in the seventeenth century in the same spirit of presenting a coherent testimony to the Nunziata’s powers. Firstly, in the first decade of the seicento, a series of thirty paintings on canvas depicting various miracles of the Nunziata were commissioned by the Servites from Antonio Tempesta and other prominent Florentine painters of the period to replace votives that had been lost. These were all around 120 X 80 cm in size, and displayed together in the Chiostro Grande (or Chiostro dei Morti) on special feast days, including those related to the Virgin. (figs. 2.1, 2.11) Other paintings were added to the series in the course of the seicento. Moreover, shortly after 1665, when all the wax statues that remained in the nave were moved to the atrium, the nave began to take on its present appearance. (fig.2.12) The architect Pier Francesco Silvani oversaw the systematization of the

128 A few more panels were produced in the eighteenth century. About thirty of them remain. The displays of the votive paintings in the Chiostro Grande are of significance to the history of art exhibitions. The earliest of them are precursors to the exhibitions of works loaned from Florentine families by the Accademia del Disegno and also shown in the same space in 1674 and 1681. As we can recall, the chapel of the Accademia devoted to San Luca is located off the Chiostro. For the documents related to the votive paintings exhibitions, see Casalini, 1971, 59, ns. 24 & 25. See also Casalini, 1971, 57 and passim; Casalini, “La Santissima Annunziata nella storia”, 1987, 18; and Matthews-Grieco, 279-80.
architectural ornament in the clerestory of the nave, and by 1671 a series of paintings depicting miracles of the Nunziata and painted for the most part by Cosimo Ulivelli were completed for this clerestory level. Between 1684 and 1703 the walls below the large cornice were divested of the various marbles, stuccoes, and paintings that had been installed over time. These were replaced with a consistent decoration of polychrome marbles and white and gilded stucco. More paintings showing miracles of the Nunziata were added in the tondi that were created over the arches of the nave arcade, these executed by Pier Dandini, Tommaso Redi, and Alessandro Gherardini. Ferdinand Tacca’s engraving of 1672 (fig. 2.13) shows painted scenes on the clerestory as well as on arches, and although the latter are over the piers rather than at the

129 Silvani also worked on the renovation of the interior of San Marco in Florence, a project to be addressed in Chapter Four.

130 The painting immediately above the tempietto shows the miracle of the Nunziata’s face being painted by an angel. These paintings were paid for by various patrons of the church. Also, on the arch of the tribune Ulivelli painted two female figures representing the city of Florence, and the Servite Religion. Tonini, 51-53; Petrucci, 23-24; Giovanni Leoncini, “Il Seicento e la trasformazione dell’Annunziata,” in Santissima Annunziata, ed. Timothy Verdon (Firenze : Centro Di, 2005), 126. See Leoncini, 121-144, for an overview of the various sculpted and painted works executed for the interior of the Nunziata’s church at this time. Given the associations between Milan and the Nunziata discussed at different points in this thesis, it is notable that two series of monumental paintings (quadroni) were made to line the nave of the Duomo in Milan in the first decade of the seventeenth century. The first series of twenty-eight (begun in 1602) shows scenes from the life of Carlo Borromeo. The second series, consisting of twenty-four works, was produced between 1609 and 1610, but not displayed before Carlo’s canonization on November 1, 1610. It depicts the miracles attributed to him.

131 Petrucci, 25; Leoncini, 126; and Klaus Lankheit, Florentinische Barockplastik. Di Kunst am hofe der Letzen Medici 1670-1743 (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1972), 225 & 271. Other significant interventions at this time include Volteranno’s Assumption (1664-69), placed at the centre of the newly carved and gilded ceiling in the nave. By the same artist, and executed with the help of Ulivelli, is the cupola fresco showing the Acceptance of the Virgin into Paradise (1680-83). Leoncini, 125, 134-35; Mina Gregori, “Il Volteranno” in Il Seicento Fiorentino. Arte a Firenze da Ferdinando I a Cosimo III. Vol.2: Biografie (Palazzo Strozzi, 21 dicembre 1986-4 maggio 1987), (Firenze: Cantini, 1986), 188-93, 192.
centre of the arch and are not in the tondi form, this view suggests that a cycle of paintings was planned for the arches well before the tondi were begun.

These three schemes of the seicento – Mancini’s plans for the new silver votives on the pillars, the new “memorie”, miracle paintings exhibited in the Chiostro Grande, and the paintings framed by ornamentation in the nave clerestory – are related in several respects. Firstly, it is significant that they are presaged by Grand Duke Francesco I’s idea of around 1580 to relocate the sacred image of the Nunziata to the high altar of the church. This project, like those of the seicento, no doubt aimed to bring visual clarity to the cult. As noted in Chapter One of this study, the Grand Duke consulted with the architect, Bernardo Buontalenti, as to how to detach the fresco and move it to the high altar, with the intention of also adorning it further.  

Francesco’s aims certainly belong to a larger trend of the period. The central principle of Carlo Borromeo’s stipulations for the design and ornamentation of churches was put forward in both his treatise, the Instructiones fabricate et supellectilis ecclesiasticae (1577) and the renovations he oversaw at the Duomo in Milan. He prescribed that sacred or consecrated objects – be they the sacrament, relics, or holy images – were to be properly exalted. They must be treated with decorum, but moreover, their mystical power and divine presence had to be made palpable: this, along with the precedent of God’s instructions to the Jews for the temple of Solomon, is the authority justifying material sumptuousness. Borromeo also particularly stressed that there be a focus on the tabernacle at the high altar. The “directionality and finalization of every part” that

he proposed for designs to this end are found in neither Medieval nor Renaissance churches, and are particularly Baroque in character. As discussed in Chapter One, Borromeo had twice honoured the Nunziata’s cult by celebrating mass at the altar in her tempietto, in 1579 and 1582, and he had requested a copy of the image, which he received in 1580. It is therefore possible that he had some direct influence on Grand Duke’s Ferdinand’s proposal. Ferdinand’s plans also precede what was done at the Vallicella in Rome in 1607, when the old sacred fresco there was given greater focus and prominence as it was moved from the entrance wall to the high altar and framed by Rubens’s paintings of worshipping saints and angels. It is entirely plausible that, in a similar manner, Ferdinand would have seen to a programme of ornamentation to frame and fully glorify the Nunziata’s fresco, if he had been able to realize its translation to the high altar.

In the *Instructiones*, Borromeo furthermore repeatedly insists that sacred objects and their spaces be kept hygienic and ordered. Along with a clear, uncluttered ornamentation that focuses attention on sacred objects, he is often concerned about neglect and decay. Given that it occurs right at the time Borromeo demonstrates his favour of the Nunziata’s cult, it seems possible that his attitudes gave impetus to the cleaning of the sacred fresco that occurred sometime in the 1580’s. For this restoration Grand duke Francesco I engaged the painter

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133 Scavizzi, 121-32, 247.
134 See Chapter One for this project and relevant bibliography. There was also a degree of coherence given to the series of paintings produced for the interior of the Vallicella between the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, their iconography corresponding to themes that appear in an Oratorian manuscript, *Libri dei sermoni dell’Oratorio* (1570’s). Alessandro Zuccari, “Immagini e sermoni dell’Oratorio nei dipinti della Chiesa Nuova,” in *La Congregazione dell’Oratorio di San Filippo neri nelle Marche del ’600* (Fiesole: Nardini, 1996), 171-97.
135 See Scavizzi, 128.
Alesandro Allori, whom the Medici also employed in 1580 to copy the image – both in full and as the first ever painted pendant portraits of the Virgin and Gabriel – for Borromeo.

The seventeenth-century initiatives at the SS. Annunziata are also consonant with Borromeo’s directives. As noted above, Mancini elaborated at length on the disrepair of the votives that necessitated their culling. Moreover, visual clarity and coherence was a chief motivating factor in his schemes and the painting projects described above. The silver on the pillars in the nave would have been visually tied to the tempietto shrine of the sacred image, which, as described in Chapter One, was embellished with silver votives donated by the Medici, most of which date from the first decades of the seventeenth century. Mancini’s account of the wax statues also indicates that their numbers were thinned out, and in Chapter Three it will be demonstrated how their redisplay corresponds to a new thematic significance.

2.9 Didacticism and Temporality in the Counter-Reformation Interior

Mancini’s projects of the seicento, as well as other actions that preceded them at the SS. Annunziata, are therefore completely in accord with general Counter-Reformation strategies for church interiors. As Borromeo demanded, churches needed to be cohesive and impeccable in

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136 Bocchi relates that Allori undertook the necessary spiritual preparation, which gave him the confidence to complete the job: “Dal gran Duca Franceso (perocché e’ pareva che la lungheeza del tempo avesse oscurata alquanto questa pittura) egli non ha molto che fu dato ordine, perchè con diligenza da polvere si nettasse. Per questo Alessandro Allori che di ciò ebbe commissione, senza fidarsi di suo sapere, il quale è grande molto, prima che si mettesse all’opera, si confessò, e appresso si comunicò, acciocchè nella santa impresa, e nella presenza di tanta maestà fosse l’animo più fermo e più costante.” Bocchi, 67-68; and Eugenio Casalini, “La Santissima Annunziata nella storia,” 1987, 78, n.6.

137 See Chapter One of this thesis for the copies produced by Allori for Borromeo.
In order to honour sufficiently the sacred objects and images they housed. As I will argue in this section, nonetheless, the new schemes at the SS. Annunziata are a particularly interesting instance of the making of a Counter-Reformation decorative interior because they adhere to a text and they are constituted by a merging of princely and religious motivations. Moreover, while they aimed to remake the votive culture at the shrine in a more decorous and modern manner that befitted the glorification of the Nunziata, this was nonetheless significantly detrimental to the original devotional function of the offerings. As such, the renovation schemes of the seicento demonstrate the potential tensions that could arise in making traditional expressions of piety conform to new ones.

To begin, it can be noted that the seicento projects described above were designed according to a similar intention in terms of their content: each aimed to be a coherent discursive proof of the Nunziata’s powers. In this regard, it is significant that Mancini’s silver votives scheme adheres closely to a text. For all but twelve of the votives he describes, Mancini also cites the corresponding chapter in Padre Giovanni Angelo Lottini’s *Scelta di alcuni miracoli e grazia della Santissima Annunziata di Firenze*, completed in 1612 and published in 1619. This book included full-page copperplate engravings that illustrated forty of the miracles, and these were executed by Jacques Callot, beginning in 1614.¹³⁸ (fig. 2.14) It was the last of four

¹³⁸ Giovanni Angelo Lottini, *Esposizione del R.P.F. Gio. Agnolo Lottini dell’Ordine de’ Servi Intorno alla Canzone del Petrarca Verg. Bella dove per molti nuovi, e con eleganza distesi Concetti possono gli Studiosi havere di scelte Intelligenze non poco lume, e diletto* (Venice: Presso F. di Franceschi, 1595). Casalini suggests that the other eight engravings were Callot’s own designs. Casalini, 1971,57. See also Matthews-Grieco for a detailed account of Callot’s connections to the Medici, and in particular his affinity with Grand Duchess Christina who, like the artist, was from Lorraine. Matthews-Grieco, 280-86. Lottini’s book was reissued in 1636 and 1727, at the latter date with the addition of twenty more miracles. The twelve votive subjects not found in Lottini are discussed in my next chapter. Lottini’s other
compilations of the Nunziata’s miracles published between 1592 and 1619. Unlike previous collections, Lottini’s version was a luxury product aimed at an audience that was international, rather than local and largely uneducated. It was also an influential text: Mancini uses sixty-nine of Lottini’s own selection of eighty miracles, and he briefly describes the remaining eleven, saying that representations of those will be placed on the pillars later.

139 The others are Bocchi’s descriptions of ten miracles towards the end of the Sopra l’imagine, Bocchi, 86-101; Luca Ferrini, Corona di sessanta tre miracoli dellla Nunziata di Firenze (Florence: Giorgio Marescotti, 1593); and Pagolo Baroni, La corona della Vergine Fatta di sessantatre Miracoli più celebri della Santissima Nunziata di Firenze....tradotta di prosa in ottava rima (Florence: Francesco Tosi, 1614, and subsequent editions, the last being 1619). For an extensive discussion of these texts and a compilation of some one hundred stories found in the manuscript De Origine Ordinis Servorum, dated 1511 and written by Cosimo Favilla, see Matthews-Grieco, 272-92. See Matthews-Grieco on the Lottini-Collot collaboration as a high-end product that was intended to promote the miracles of the Nunziata well beyond Tuscany. It was of the same quality as texts produced throughout Europe that commemorated court and civic cermonials and extravaganzas. As such, it marked an important change in the strategy of representing the miracles of the sacred image. In contrast, Baroni’s La corona della Vergine was a chapbook, while Ferrini’s text included simple, half-page woodcut illustrations. Notably, too, Baroni recounts the miracles in verse form, reflecting how these narratives originated as popular songs that could be heard in the streets of Florence. Ibid., 276, 280-86. Matthews-Grieco also notes that this new international promotion of the miracles of the Nunziata must be distinguished from the disemmination of the cult of the sacred image by means of copies of it: the latter were distributed abroad well before 1600.

140 “Fin’ qui ci siamo serviti degli altri di numero 69 accomodati in varij luoghi de Pilastri della nostra Chiesa; si che per compire detto numero di 80 ne restano ancora Undici, de quail ci serviremo con altra occasione.” He then goes on to summarize the remaining eleven miracles. Dina/ Mancini, 105-108/ 33-37. I cannot perceive any reason for Mancini’s selections, and it is possible that there is some degree of arbitrariness, especially considering that he seems to have planned to include the remaining miracles at a later time. Mancini does explain, however, the exclusion of the votive of Innocent VIII, offered when he was cured of a fever by the Nunziata in 1486. Mancini says “Fece fare la sua statue con manto pontificio,
The paintings depicting miracles that were commissioned in the early seventeenth century and exhibited in the Chiostro Grande were also conceived as a coherent “text”. They were themselves the basis for thirty-two of Callot’s forty engravings and Lottini’s book. As Casalini astutely notes, these works must thus be seen as a kind of publically displayed catechism in narrative form, and their goal was edification and instruction. This purpose was also that of the illustrated miracle books, one of which, as just considered here, corresponds to both these paintings and Mancini’s silver scheme of 1650 for the votives. Mancini’s silver project and the miracle paintings, along with the painted cycles showing the miracles of the Nunziata that eventually lined the walls of the church, were therefore conceived as components of a decorative and didactic campaign. Such didacticism was typical for Counter-Reformation church interiors. Post-Tridentine decoration was often supervised by theologians, with an emphasis on the conveyance of dogma. At Loreto, for instance, where the Jesuits had taken over pastoral

quale fino al dì oggi con altri pontefici si mira nella nostra chiesa nella facciata di dentro.” Mancini points out that this pope favoured the Servites: “Con tale occasione la Regina del del Cielo gli inspirò a far ricca di privilegij, la Religione de suoi Servij, onde da lui le fú concessa una Bolla, gravida di facultà e privilegij, che Mare Magnum si appellò.” The Bull was dated May 27, 1487. Dina, 119, n.99.

141 Matthews-Grieco, 281.
142 Ferrini explains the didactic purpose that compelled him to compile the miracles: “con distendersi, secondo I propositi in varie cose, sì per maggior lezione del libro, come per facilitare molti dubbi, et I bassi ingegni instruire in quelle cose, che in forse con let menti loro haverbbon’ potuto andare vagando, meditando I modi delle stupende grazie di Maria.” 56. See Casalini for further discussion of the miracle tradition of the Nunziata during the Counter-Reformation period, Casalini, 1971, 55-56, and esp. n.17. And see Matthews-Grieco, as in n.103 above.
143 See the examples cited in Scavizzi, 253.
care of the shrine in 1554, the history of the Holy House was translated into eight languages and inscribed on tablets that were hung in the Church.\textsuperscript{144}

The seicento decorative schemes at the SS. Annunziata, like the written compendia of miracles of the period, thus codified the powers of the sacred image into a coherent discursive proof of her powers. And as has been shown, these projects – specifically, the paintings for the Chiostro Grande and Mancini’s silver votives for the piers of the nave – involved remaking existing votives. Interestingly, when it comes to the Chiostro Grande paintings, Casalini insists that no devotional function for the votives would have been lost by their refashioning into the paintings. Nonetheless, as he himself puts it, the new panels did transform devotional objects into “memorie” images and an “external description of the glory of the sanctuary.” It is clear, then, that there was some significant diminishment of the presence (and hence devotional function) of each votive. The new projects operated on a different temporal register than the old ad hoc accumulation of votives.\textsuperscript{145} Despite some instances where order was introduced to various parts of the pre-seicento display, it had always been an organic form that preserved the temporal specificity – and hence, individuality – of each votive. The act of placing a votive was fundamental to its material being and meaning.\textsuperscript{146} The votive object was the trace or index of the

\textsuperscript{144} Torsellino, Ch2, 436.

\textsuperscript{145} In support of my argument here, Matthews-Grieco points out that, as a group, the memorie paintings would have functioned as a “disciplined” counterpoint to the “visual chaos” of the votives in the church itself at the time. They thus took part in the Servites’ larger goal to create a didactic representation of the Nunziata’s miracles. Matthews-Grieco does not, however, take into account that Mancini’s schemes, although slightly later than the series of paintings, also aimed to order the votives with a similar intent.

\textsuperscript{146} Fredrika Jacobs presents a similar argument with regards to the acts of offering of votive panel paintings: these “are objects functionally situated within a series of actions informed by expectations and prescribed acts that are themselves rooted in the conventions of pietistic practices. Things and actions are
entire votive exchange between devotee and patron and, as such, a share of – and not just a commemoration – of that encounter. Losing all this was the price of the subsumption of each historically defined offering into a single unified visual discourse.

Besides the motivation to creation a more visually unified interior, another, coincident impetus that is also typical for the period was very likely behind the reworking of the votives and the reduction of their traditional function. As Fredrika Jacobs has put it, votives “teetered precariously on the dividing line between the virtues of ‘lawful and obligatory’ practices and the vices of ‘religion’s opposite.’” This was always the case, but the Counter-Reformation church in Italy was especially keen to quash any superstition and idolatrous beliefs that underlaid votive practices. Thus by around 1600 in Italy “common votives” were less valued by Church custodians than in the past. The activity at shrines was moreover scrutinized with the objective of controlling popular devotionalism. In one instance, in 1596, the shrine of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Naples was almost completely shut down by the vicar-general (only religious services were allowed), and all ex-votos offered at the image of the Madonna there were removed. The investigation into the cult was nonetheless suspended after angry public protests.

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inseparable.” She draws on Richard Trexler’s characterization of votives as “‘secondary relics’ that participate in ‘the sacrality of the holy objects themselves’.” Jacobs, 49.

147 Jacobs, 187. 39-40.

148 At this time, the methods used to verify miracles remained more or less the same as previously, but they did become more legalistic and, as such, took longer and involved greater scrutiny by officials. Ibid., 112, with further bibliography on this point. Jacobs also provides an excellent overview of Counter-Reformation attitudes towards votives and the issue of superstition. She argues that the relative dearth of religious commentaries that directly address votives can be seen as pointing to the anxiety that surrounded them. Ibid., 163-169.

149 For this and other instances of attempts to curtail popular cult activity, see Ibid., 158-59.
A similar intent to tame the potential unruliness of votives, due to the fact they were offered by individuals, any of whom might entertain unorthodox beliefs, might thus have given further impetus to projects at the SS. Annunziata that integrated the offerings in a single scheme. Jacobs rightly warns that Counter-Reformation phenomena should not be reduced to simple “top-down” causal structures. As the above case at Santa Maria delle Grazie indicates, compromise, or “reciprocity within inequality” was often the dynamic between authority and popular piety. Church officials recognized that allowance for “the popular voice” strengthened representations of the power and sanctity of thaumaturges and their images.150 Certainly, Mancini’s scheme includes a range of offerings from votaries who belonged to all strata of society. It cannot be denied, however, that these were ultimately subsumed within a homogenizing scheme that diminished the individualized content of each votive.

Along with the loss of devotional function for the Nunziata’s votives, it is thus clear that the Servites’ intentions towards the votives shifted significantly in the seicento. The materiality of the church’s interior was nevertheless still used to glorify the Nunziata. The intent to create a more lavish and fine display furthermore continued what had already happened in the Nunziata’s tempietto in the early decades of the seicento, specifically by means of the many Medici donations of silver, precious stones, and marble. The whole interior – the nave and the tempietto within it – was made akin to a Kunstkammer. There are contemporary parallels in sacred settings, such as the nave decorations of St. Peter’s in Rome, which were completed in the Jubilee year of 1650, and which have been described as “a kind of Christian curiosity cabinet”.151

150 Ibid., 113-14, with further bibliography on this point.
The scheme highlights the six major relics of the church in sumptuous multi-media ensembles that amount to colossal reliquaries: the throne of St. Peter’s in the apse; the relics in the four piers of the crossing; and the the tomb of St. Peter’s at the centre of the latter. The east end of the church is therefore like a massively scaled church treasury. This comparison to St. Peter’s will gain further weight in Chapter Three, which will elaborate how Medici portraits in the nave and elsewhere at the SS. Annunziata dominated the seventeenth-century decorative schemes there. At St. Peter’s the nave also includes portraits of the popes and of the founders of the Catholic orders. The early pontiffs are depicted in relief medallions that cover the piers supporting the arches in the nave. (fig. 2.15) A contemporary description conveys the magnificent effect of the whole, referring to the interior as a “tesoro delle Virtù”.152

The aesthetic quality and dynastic content at the SS. Annunziata and St. Peter’s can be likened to the Cappella dei Principi, the second Medici funerary chapel at the church of San Lorenzo. (fig. 2.16) This was begun in 1604 under Ferdinand I and designed by Matteo Nigetti along with Ferdinand’s stepbrother, Don Giovanni de’ Medici. The interior is covered with hardstone revetments (the grand ducal workshop, the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, was founded

the interior of St. Peter’s, see Louise Rice, The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter’s: Outfitting the Basilica, 1621-1666 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

152 “Imagine Saint Peter’s as a kind of Christian curiosity cabinet populated by members of communities of the historical Church. At its center are the relics of Peter; its walls are hung top to bottom with medallions of the early popes; and in the pockets in between, are the tombs of the more recent popes surrounded by their virtues. Niches carved into the walls of the tesoro burst forth with the founders of the Catholic orders and above them, in the spandrels of the arches, is the anonymous community that is within us all, the Christian virtues. Carlo Fontana, architect of St. Peter’s after Bernini, collected epithets about St. Peter’s and one in particular captures the spatial and conceptual unity that these virtues impart to the basilica. Someone, either a pope or one of the unnamed ‘scrittori sagri’ cited by Fontana, termed St. Peter’s a ‘tesoro delle Virtù’ ([Carlo] Fontana [Il Tempio Vaticano.] 1694, II, p.406).”
because of this project) and the chapel contains marble tombs and portraits of the grand dukes. If Ferdinand had had his way, the chapel would have also displayed one of the most important relics in all of Christendom, the tomb of the Holy Sepulchre. Also comparable is the Spada Chapel in San Girolamo della Carità, in Rome. (fig. 2.17) This had been a family chapel since 1575, when it was awarded to Orazio Spada, and it was refurbished under the patronage of Bernardino and Virgilio Spada in 1654-57. The latter was a close friend of the architect Francesco Borromini, and it seems most likely that the two collaborated on the lavish design of the chapel. Among the ornaments is a bold pattern resembling damask fabric covering the walls, fashioned in polychromed stone. The gallery of family portraits includes reclining statues atop the tombs on the side walls and large marble medallions lining the walls and flanking the image of the Virgin and Child over the altar.

These richly appointed sacred and dynastic spaces, like the Nunziata’s tempietto precinct and the planned nave, are thus reminiscent of both princely kunstkammers and the treasuries of churches. Indeed, these types also come together in the phenomenon of private reliquary chapels, not least in the Medici’s own at the Pitti Palace, consecrated in 1616. It was sumptuously

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153 Ferdinand hoped to transport this relic from Jerusalem. When this plan was not surprisingly foiled, he instead sent several gifts to the site of the Holy Sepulchre, including a set of six reliefs showing scenes from the Passion, designed by Giambologna and executed by Portigiani. These were intended to be the primary components of an ornamento, or reliquary container for the Holy Sepulchre itself, but were used instead for the altar of the Crucifixion in the Calvary Chapel in the church of the Holy Sepulchre. See with further bibliography, Avraham Rohen, “Portigiani’s Bronze ‘Ornamento’ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem,” Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts In Florenz, IV (December, 1970): 415-442; and Shannon N. Pritchard, “Giambologna’s Bronze Pictures: The Narrative Reliefs for Ferdinando I de’ Medici and the Post-Tridentine ‘Paragone’,” (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2010).

decorated and housed one of the most impressive relic collections in Europe. All of these comparisons nevertheless also throw into relief the uniqueness of the situation at the SS. Annunziata. As this thesis shows, the SS. Annunziata—and I can find no other example like it in this regard— involves the merging of the princely and sacred kunstkammer types, but also their transposition into the public space of a popular cult. As outlined in Chapter One, the tempietto and its adjacent corretto had taken on the nature of a palatine chapel in the early seventeenth century. The visual, thematic, and spatial connections of the tempietto and corretto with the nave consolidated the private and public. This assimilation is consonant with the image of the Medici as custodians of the cult and pious leaders of the Florentine people. Yet the imposition of Counter-Reformation ideals of order and the appropriation of a popular cult so fully to Medici identity involved the eradication of the full meaning of the votives—and specifically the loss of their indexicality to individual identity. The accumulation of thousands of miraculous acts represented by the mass of votives was the true testimony to the Virgin’s bestowing her grace on all her faithful in perpetuity.

As the next chapter will further demonstrate, there were other changes to the votive display that correspond to the new didactic decorative programs celebrating the Nunziata’s powers. Specifically, Medici votive statues in the nave take on a new prominence. They demonstrate the continuity of votive portraits at the SS. Annunziata as markers of the social and political status of their subjects. These effigies in the church, along with others in the convent of

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155 The Pitti Chapel was the subject of a recent exhibition that gathered together a substantial number of the relics from the collection, which had been dismantled and dispersed in 1785 under the Duchy of Lorraine. *Sacri splendori. Il tesoro della cappella delle reliquie in Palazzo Pitti. Catalogo della mostra* (Firenze, 10 giugno-2 novembre 2014), R. Gennaioli and M. Sframeli eds. (Livorno: Sillabe, 2014). See also Chapter One of this thesis for inventories of the collection, dated 1616 and 1635.
the SS. Annunziata and directly outside in the piazza, were designed to embody the Medici as agents of the sacred image who also served the most crucial causes of the Catholic Church.
Chapter 3

Medici Portraits at the Santissima Annunziata

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter concluded with an account of Mancini’s renovations of the seicento that brought order and coherence to the Nunziata’s votives, an undertaking that reflected general tendencies in Counter-Reformation church decoration. This chapter will continue to investigate these projects, and in particular, it will consider how Medici votive portraits in silver and wax became the dominant presence at the SS. Annunziata. It will then demonstrate how these effigies in the nave of the church are related to a number of other Medici portraits, both painted and sculpted, and produced in the seicento, to form an exceptionally elaborate and thematically unified set of portrait displays. These are located at two sites contiguous with the interior of the church. I will first consider the piazza SS. Annunziata, wherein are found a set of Medici busts, frescoes, and the equestrian portrait of Ferdinand I. (fig.3.1) Then I will turn to Medici-related portraits located outside of and within the sacristy that serves the tempietto-chapel housing the sacred image. (fig.3.1) All of these images play a part in the reciprocal relationship between the promotion of the Nunziata’s cult and the formation of Medici identity. Their siting and iconography fashion the image of the Medici as ideal Christian princes who are both models of exemplary piety (a theme that was already central to Chapter One of this thesis) and forces for civic order. As I have already begun to stress in this study, nonetheless, what is also crucial to both the cult of the Nunziata and Medici identity, as they are developed during this period, is the assertion of their vital role in the broader strategies of the Catholic Church. To this end, featured
in these Florentine Medici portrait projects are patent references to prominent persons and actions associated with the authority of Rome and the Counter-Reformation movement.

3.1 Power and Presence in Votives and Publically Displayed Portraits

Before turning to the various sets of Medici portraits at the SS. Annunziata that are the focus of this chapter, it is useful to make note of two broad contexts that are relevant to the particular examples that will be examined here -- firstly, the political significance traditionally carried by votive portraits in Florence, and secondly, Counter-Reformation views regarding publically displayed portraits of those in power.

The donation and display of one’s votive portrait could always be more than a simple expression of piety. This much was made clear in 1401, when the Priori and Gonfaloniere di Giustizia issued a decree restricting the privilege to only those of a certain status. However, given the great number and variety of votive portraits that accumulated at the SS. Annunziata, it is unlikely that this provision was able to stop persons of any social category from

1 “Non poteva, alzato, che non fù quest’ossequio dalla fama, metter Voto alla Nunzita in figura, chi non er’uomo di Repubblica, abile a’ tre maggiori, nel modo che per un simil Decreto pubblico, era stato più nell’antico ordinate nelli Stendardi e pennoni in Orsanmichele, come diremo a suo luogo: richiedendosi questa specie d’onore, che fu in alta stima appresso a’Romani, a’ Principi o vero a gli Uomini alzati in titolo di graduate ebenermeri della Patria, inter beneficia principaliia [attesta l’egpingeo de jure Insignium] ad postulationem civitatum, errant statue, & imagines.” The document is cited in Andreucci, 86. See also Eugenio Casalini, “Le tele di ‘Memoria ex-voto,’” in La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studie documenti sulla chiesa e il conventom (Florence: Convento della SS Annunzita, 1971), 52, and Del Migliore, 285.
commissioning them. Furthermore, even though the presence of many prestigious foreigners among the SS. Annunziata’s portraits was a source of pride for Florentines, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Nunziata was foremost a popular civic cult and this made it by default a theatre of Florentine politics. In this light, modern scholars have noted that the story of Medici and Medici-related votive portraits at the SS. Annunziata during the sixteenth century is “an extraordinarily turbulent one, unprecedented in the history of Renaissance portraiture.”

In 1504


3 See for instance Del Migliore for a partial list, including the statue donated in 1471 by a Turkish Pasha, offered to ask the Virgin for a safe voyage home. Ferdinando del Migliore, Firenze città nobilissima illustrata. Opera di Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore (Bologna: Forni, 1968); reprint of original publication (Florence: Stamperia della Stella, 1684), 286-87.

4 Hugo Van der Velden thoroughly documents this history, citing the sources from the period, which include Vasari, Varchi, and others. Hugo van der Velden, “Medici Votive Images and the Scope and Limits of Likeness,” in The Image of the Individual: Portraits in the Renaissance, ed. Luke Syson and Nicholas Mann (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 135. See also Megan Holmes, “Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult,” in The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World, ed. Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 178, n.49. Silver votive portraits of Lorenzo il Magnifico were also removed from the baptistry of San Giovanni and from the altar of the female Benedictine Convent of Le Murate, on the Via Ghibellina. The former was melted down and reused as a tempietto to hold a reliquary, while Soderini saw to it that the Murate portrait was replaced with a painting of the Virgin Mary. Kate Lowe, “Lorenzo’s ‘Presence’ at Churches, Convents and Shrines, in and outside Florence,” in Lorenzo the Magnificent. Culture and Politics, Michael Mallett and Nicholas Mann eds. (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1996), 32-33.
an effigy of the exiled head of the Medici family, Giuliano (Duke of Nemours), was refused by the Republic, under the Gonfaloniere, Piero Soderini. The Medici nonetheless retaliated in 1512, removing Soderini’s statue from the Nunziata’s shrine. With the subsequent reinstatement of the Republic, in May, 1527, Medici portraits were again banished from the church and destroyed. Along with the melting down of silver effigies, there was the removal of the statues of Leo X, Clement VII, Lorenzo the Magnificent, and that of the latter’s son, Giuliano (this having been dedicated in 1513, along with the image of his brother, Pope Leo). Not long after the family regained power in 1530, the Medici popes were remade by the Servite sculptor, Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli. 5 Montorsoli furthermore produced a kneeling wax portrait for Duke Alessandro de’ Medici at this time. It is possible that others were fashioned as well. 6

Del Migliore no doubt has this history in mind when he explains that, in Florence, statues could be removed under political circumstances, in some cases to protect the work. Yet he also relates the fate of the votive statue of Piero Soderini, saying it was taken from the SS. Annunziata in 1512 because of the offences that its subject was deemed to have committed against the state. Del Migliore then makes clear that he does not approve of such an intrusion of


6 The presence of other Medici votive statues in the nave during the seventeenth century will be discussed below.
politics into the realm of piety. He assesses the removal of Soderini’s effigy: “in my opinion, (and, I should add, for good reason I condemn it) it is a human action, undertaken in the interests of politics.”

It should be noted that, while modern scholars of the Nunziata’s votives have commented on this incident, as far as I can determine it is never mentioned that the statue was probably eventually replaced: Mancini, following Lottini, includes a portrait of Soderini in his silver votives scheme of 1650 and, in doing so, refers to an existing votive, which must be a full size wax statue that was made in 1590.

Mancini’s description of the votive explains how Soderini was cured from what doctors believed to be a fatal illness. He also refers to the former Gonfaloniere of the Republic as

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7 “Un’ azione per mio giudizio e con molta ragione biasimata, soggiunge, perche l’operazioni umane, in ordine a gl’interessi politici.” On this issue, Del Migliore furthermore relates: “In Firenze s’uso talvolta aggiungere per mezzo di essi, pena a’delinquenti famosi, levando con strapazzo I lor Voti di Chiesa, come indegni di quell’onore, che ricercava conversazione d’Uomini giusti, ed non di chi tocco da sinderesi di coscienza; aborrendo la virtù se ne rende incapace, coi fu fatto ad uno che fallito nel più nesando e doloso modo che seguir possa, fu ditto in Consiglio che gli si levasse dalla Nunziata il Voto suo di notte, prima, che l’Popolo vi corresse per farne strapazzo: à che s’addolci per questo mezzo dice l’Autore, considerata la qualità de’congiunti di quell tale, Nobili a quell tempo ed oggi molto più qualificati, il perche c’astenemmo nominarlo, scopo principale in noi non dir cosa che offenda la buona fama nè la qualità di nessuno. Il Varchi ragiona dell’Imagine di Pier Soderini levata di lì per si fatto modo nel 1512 con taccia che essendo egli Gonfaloniere a vita non avesse retti, ne ben governati gl’interessi della Repubblica a pericolo della libertà. Non posson derogare a li atti di pieta, che deprimono, o levino in verun conto quelchè puo esser di aumento alla venerazionne delle cose sacre, come una fra l’altre sono I Voti, e in effetto si vedde di lì a poco coretto questo discordine, come veramente meritava, dagli Uomini savi, ricollocatevi le Statue con onore e decoro, le quali vi si veggono ancor’oggi.” Del Migliore, 285-86.

8 A reference to a portrait of Soderini also appears in a document dated around 1770, where it is listed among a group of wax statues that had been removed to the atrium in 1665 and repaired in 1695. Filippo Tozzi. OSM, “Memorie della Chiesa e del Convento della Nunziata,” ms., c. 1770, 233-34. The passage on the statues is transcribed by Dina, 1978, 120-124. For Soderini’s statue, see 121.
“hindered by great personal defect” and yet also “esteemed by the Medici”. His assessment reflects the complex political dynamic that adhered between the Medici and Florentine republicanism and, more specifically, the Medici and Soderini families. Jacopo Pitti, one of the Florentine historiographers who was tasked with glorifying the regime of Cosimo I and Florentine Republican history so as to associate the two, praises Piero Soderini as “a radiant sun, whose virtù and whose goodness to the Republic shone, shines, and will shine more than ever in the memory of those to come and of those who place a greater value on the good of others than their own, than on life itself.”

The Soderini family had a history of active defiance of the Medici: in the late sixteenth century, Giovanvettorio di Tomasso Soderini repeatedly expressed republican and anti-Medicean views while nonetheless still serving the grand ducal family. As Berner points out, this is the only recorded case of publically voiced opposition to the Medici in the late sixteenth century, a fact that can explain the renewed attention given to Piero

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10 As translated and quoted in Henk van Theen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and his self-representation in Florentine art and culture*, transl. Andrew P. McCormick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 153. As Theen notes, in the *Istoria fiorentina* (1574), Pitti made a distinction between good Medici and those members of the family who did not protect the *popolo*. “Cosimo il Vecchio was therefore praised to the skies while Piero di Lorenzo was vilified.” Silvano Razzi, in his *Vita di Piero Soderini, gonfaloniere perpetuo della repubblica fiorentina*, praises Soderini even further. Theen, 225, n.40. Razzi was a Camaldolese monk, playwright, and historian. He also wrote biographies of artists that were published by his friend, Giorgio Vasari. The Soderini biography was published in 1737, but would have been written in the second half of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

Soderini’s votive presence at the SS. Annunziata at that time and shortly after. The inclusion of the votive can be understood as a strategy of taming the rebelliousness represented by the Soderini, concomitant with the downplaying of the history of dissent to Medici rule in political writings during the grand duchy.

A second broad context entirely relevant to the Medici statues and busts (votive and otherwise) that dominated the spaces within and around the sanctuary of the SS. Annunziata encompasses Counter-Reformation ideas about the legitimacy and usefulness of publically situated ruler portraiture. In post-Tridentine thought, the theoretical justification for publically displayed princely portraits lies in how they are perceived to inspire discipline and civic good. In his Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane (Bologna, 1582), Gabriele Paleotti includes two chapters on the subject. He addresses possible criticisms of this type of image, saying that no prince during his time is “foolish (sciocco)” enough to believe that personal glory and vanity are acceptable reasons for erecting monuments to oneself. Rather, such statues embody not so much the individual, but the office of the principate.12 Thus appealing to the most central Counter-

essequie del serenissimo d. Francesco Medici II Gran Duca di Toscana (1587). After Francesco’s death, nevertheless, he wrote a letter to his friend Silvio Piccolomini denigrating Francesco, and this missive was published. Because of this and other acts of ongoing criticism of the grand ducal family, he was arrested and sentenced to death in 1588, but pardoned by Ferdinand I and spent the rest of his life in Volterra where he died in 1597.

12 “[I]l motivo per cui è il popolo ad erigere la statua [of a prince] e diverso da quello del principe che la erige a se stesso: il suddito lo fa per onorare la persona del principe, il principe non lo fa per onorare se stesso, ma il principato, che è la vera ragione per cui si deve rendere onore ai poteri e alla loro dignità.” Gabriele Paleotti, Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane (1582), ed. Stefano della Torre, transl. Gian Franco Freguglia (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), 147. See Book 2, Chs XVII and XVIII. The first chapter deals with statues erected to honour the prince by his Christian subjects, the second with those erected by the prince himself.
Reformation theories of Christian rulership and drawing on the long-standing concept of the ruler’s “two bodies”, Paleotti stresses that the prince is God’s representative on earth, whose purpose is the maintenance of religion and civic order:

It is well known that Christian princes, placed by God in office as if they were animate and instruments of divine justice and wisdom so as to govern the people, have two persons: one public and one private. To the public person pertains all aspects that have to do with its elevation to the level it occupies: the government of the people, the exercise of justice, the preservation of religion, peace and discipline of behaviour for the common good.\footnote{“È noto che i principi cristiani, posti da Dio in carica quasi fossero leggi animate e strumenti della sapienza e giustizia divina per governare i popoli, hanno due persone: una pubblica e una privata. Alla persona pubblica pertengono tutti gli aspetti che hanno a che fare con l’elevatezza del grado occupato: il governo dei popoli, l’esercizio della giustizia, la conservazione della religione, della pace e della disciplina dei costumi per il bene commune.” Ibid., 144-45. Paleotti stresses the venerability of this attitude elsewhere: “Al tempo dei cristiani i fedeli non abbandonarono l’antica usanza di onorare i principi con le statue, anzi la praticarono ancora di più, mossi dalla nobile causa secondo cui i principi erano stati posti in questo mondo da Dio come suoi lugotenenti, per eseguire le sue santissime leggi per quanto toccava alla loro giurisdizione, per difendere e sostenere la religione, per introdurre la disciplina, la purezza e la vera carità tra I popoli, per attenderne sempre al bene commune e alla salvezza di tutti, per imitare quanto più possibile la divina provvidenza, che si mostra generosa e munificente verso le sue creature.” Ibid., 142. The canonical study of the dual, embodied nature of the ruler is Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).}

Paleotti’s attitude here reflects a concern that colours his writings in general – that of the “moral efficacy” of images.\footnote{Paola Barocchi, Trattati d’Arte del Cinquecento: fra manierismo e Controriforma, (Bari: G. Laterza, 1961), vol.2, 625.} Maintaining the distinction between the “public and private” prince, he argues that statues inspire in the prince’s subjects “the desire to honour and obey the
prince” and, more specifically, to honour the “virtue” represented by the office of the principate.\textsuperscript{15} Thus Paleotti believes that princely portraits possess the power to operate as agents of order. By the same token, Bocchi states outright at the outset of his treatise on the Nunziata:

The end of painting consists in depicting figures such that they are similar to those that are alive. In this way they bring ornament to the city, equally giving use and delight to the people, who are nurtured to have civic virtue. And as such, all the arts are subject to politics.\textsuperscript{16}

Bocchi is here referring to the Nunziata as impressing her “costume”, or virtù, as manifested specifically in her physiognomy, on her Florentine subjects. But, in so far as he goes on to figure parallels between the power of the Nunziata’s face and that of the Grand Duke,\textsuperscript{17} it is clear his words also speak of the Medici portraits that inhabited the Nunziata’s shrine. It will now be

\textsuperscript{15}He adds, “even in the case where the person is, in himself, of little merit[!]” “Da tutto ciò si può evincere che la statua di un principe, non solo per la sua caratteristica insegna regale che rappresenta la suprema maestà, ma anche per l’esercizio del dovere regale, produce nei sudditi un effetto simile a quello che le immagini producono negli animi, rinnovando il ricordo dell’autorità regia e risvegliando il desiderio di onorare e obbedire al principe…E se qualcuno replicasse che l’onore deve essere attribuito solo alla virtù, S. Tomasso dice che questo può accadere tanto nel caso di virtù propria come in quello di virtù altrui e partecipata (\textit{Summa}, 2.2 q.63 a.3), come per le cariche pubbliche che rappresentano il potere di Dio, o la Repubblica, cose che risplendono di quella eccellenza che viene loro comunicata anche nel caso in cui le persone siano di per sé poco meritevoli.” Paleotti,146-47.


\textsuperscript{17}See Chapter One of this dissertation.
shown how the principle of the Prince as a force for order is integral to the design of the Medici
dynastic groupings that dominated the spaces of the SS. Annunziata – in the nave and convent, as
well as in the public piazza immediately outside the church.

3.3 Medici Silver Votives: Creating a Dominant Presence

As outlined in the previous chapter, Mancini’s schemes of the first half of the seicento for
the renovation of the votives of the SS. Annunziata involved culling and re-displaying wax
statues, as well as covering the eleven piers of the nave with votives in silver. With regards to the
silver votives, the project of 1630 used ones from the cache that had built up over the centuries,
but that of 1650 entailed refashioning existing votives made of a variety of materials as new
versions in the precious metal. It was also noted how all but twelve of the 1650 selection
corresponded to Giovanni Angelo Lottini’s *Scelta di alcuni miracoli e grazia della Santissima
Annunziata di Firenze*, a compendium of miracles completed in 1612 and published in 1619.
This text not only codified the proof of the Nunziata’s power, but, as a high-end publication, it
was also intended to disseminate the legitimacy of the image’s cult internationally. While
Chapter Two also considered the way that Mancini’s projects were consonant with general
principles of Counter-Reformation church renovation that sought to bring order and clarity to the
interior space, I will now turn to how these schemes also firmly established the Medici as the
dominating presence in the nave.

I will not list all of the silver votives that make up Mancini’s 1650 scheme for the piers
of the nave. Rather, my primary interest is the group of twelve that are not found in Lottini.
These twelve are scattered among the Lottini-derived votives and appear on various piers. (I
refer the reader to figure 3.2 for the locations of the most significant of these votives.) One of these is Mancini’s own offering, placed on the sixth pilaster on the right and next to the old organ. Of the other eleven votives of the extra-Lottini group, three have no inscription, and thus the subjects are not named. Mancini says this anonymity demonstrates the dedicatee’s humility. Of the rest, two are related to the Salviati family, patrician Florentines who had a history of inter-marriage with the Medici. One of these was a “a small standing monk made of silver plate, given as a votive to the Santissima Nunziata for the grace received by the house of Salviati.” The second depicted “a child of the illustrious house of Salviati, dressed as a monk and kneeling, made of silver plate.” Another figure of cast silver had been dedicated by Cosimo of the noble

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18 In his description of the votive, Mancini suggests that the nave project itself is a votive. He claims the project was granted to him, via his Superiors, by the Nunziata: “Nunziata con Angelo d’argento, legata in Ornamento d’Ebano da Agnus Deo, fu oferta (con Licenza de suoi Superiori) da f. Ferdinando Mancini fiorentino servita. L’ann. 1650…Per essere liverato cinque volte in vita sua a’pestie epidemic, et anco per esser restato libero da ogni male; quando nel tempo del Contagio, gli diedero ordine I suoi Superiori, che tramutasse tutti iVoti, e statue della nostra Chiesa; come prontamente esequí per spazio di 46 giorni. Ringratiandola ancora, ch’habbia inspirato I suoi Superiori a’darli carica di nuovo in questa sua grave età, di rinnovare in Argento alcuni piú segnalati Miracoli di questo Divino Volto, per tanti e tanti anni caduti, spezzatesi, e quasi andati in oblivione; havendo per guida il Libro de Miracoli della S.ma N.ta, stampato dal Ven. P.F. Gio. Angelo Lottini, l’anno 1619, alle Stelle Medicee etc.” Dina/Macini, 95/19.

19 These were respectively offered by a “Matrona nobilissima fiorentina,” a “principalissima Signora facendo sapere al R.P. Sagrestano,” and a “Nobil Persona.” The first is described only as “Testa d’argento once 7 sopra velluto verde in un Quadretto vagamente corniciato” ; the second as “Voto I piastra d’argento in un’quadro in ottangolo; and the third as “La S.ma Trinità che incorona Maria V. e contenuta in un Ovato col suo pie’ d’argento.” Ibid., 88/9; 93/16; 104/31.

20 “Fratino in piedi di piastra d’argento votato all S.ma N.ta per grazia ricevuta dalla Ill.ma Casa Salviati,” and “[u]n altro fanciullo dalla Ill.ma Casa Salviati vestito da frate in ginocchioni, d’argento di piastra. Per gratia ricevuta, etc.” Ibid., 92/14, and 100/26. Jacopo Salviati married Lucrezia, the daughter of Lorenzo il Magnifico in 1486. Maria Salviati was the mother of Cosimo I de’Medici and wife of Giovanni dale
Antella family, who served as Vicario Generale of Florence in the later sixteenth and early
seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{21} Yet another silver statue showed a Monsignor Caccia, Bishop of
Pistoia.\textsuperscript{22}

Most notably, the remaining four of this non-Lottini group are Medici and they are
clearly the most prominent. (fig. 3.2) According to Mancini’s diagrams, they are the largest and
located at the center of four of the pillars. They include a votive offered by Maria de’Medici,
mother of Louis XIV.\textsuperscript{23} Maria de Medici had indeed maintained some level of devotion to the
Nunziata after going to France, for there were at least three small copies of the Nunziata sent to
her there in the early seventeenth century, all commissioned from Cristofano Allori. At least one
of them was made on the occasion of a specific illness.\textsuperscript{24} Mancini also refers to a votive for “the

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Band Nere. By “piastra d’argento” (silver plate), Mancini is referring to the method of covering a
wooden armature with precious metal.

\textsuperscript{21} “Giovanetta della nobilissima casa dell’Antella (d’argento di getto) (per gratie ricevute, et da riceversi),
fu offerta dall’Illmo Cosimo dell’ Antella.” Cosimo dell’Antella died in 1607. Ibid., 88/9, and see Dina,
115, n.12.

\textsuperscript{22} “Monsignor Caccia Vescovo di Pistoia visse anni circa 89, et anni 48 di vescovado; offerse se stesso in
questa statua d’argento di piastra alla S.ma N.ta, per haver’ dà essa (come egli diceva) ricevuto gratie in
gran numero.” Dina/Mancini, 101-02/28.

\textsuperscript{23} “Maria Principessa figlia di SS.mi Francesco F.do Gran Duca di Toscana e della Giovanna d’Austria,
quelle fu’ poi maritata, dal Fran Ferdinando suo zio, al Re cristianissimo di Francia, Enrico il Grande, et
Madre fu’ del Re Luigi il Giusto.” Ibid., 88/10.

\textsuperscript{24} One was sent in 1601 with a portrait of Cosimo II, both of them small ovals set in gold. Another, of the
same date, was painted on lapis and set in gold with agate and pearls by Bilivert. It was a gift from the
Grand Ducchess, Christina di Lorena on the occasion of the birth of the Dauphin, Louis XIII. The third
was sent by Cosimo II and his wife, Maria Maddalena of Austira in 1610, and. The document specifies
that Maria had an illness related to her eye. The documents are cited in Miles L. Chappell, \textit{Cristofano
Allori 1577-1621: Firenze, Palazzo Pitti, Sala delle nicchie, luglio-ottobre 1984} (Florence: Centro Di,
1984), 19, 84, 114.
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first-born of the most Serene Francesco, Duke of Tuscany and Joanna of Austria, his first wife.” This would have been Filippo (named after his grandfather, Philip II of Spain) who was born in 1577 and died only five years later (fig. 3.3).25 Mancini does not provide a specific reason for the votive, but it might have been dedicated on the occasion of Filippo’s birth: to celebrate the safe birth of a family member, the Medici regularly processed to the SS. Annunziata and heard mass before the image. Devotion related to childbirth was a primary feature of sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin. At the SS. Annunziata, the Medici traditionally dominated this aspect of the cult.26

Mancini identifies the third non-Lottini, Medici votive as that of “Leopold of Austria, who is first-born of the most serene Claudia Medici and is today husband of Princess Anna, sister of the most Serene Ferdinand, Grand Duke of Tuscany.” Mancini is confused here, although he is correct that the votive belongs with the Medici family: he is certainly referring to Archduke Leopold who had married the daughter of Ferdinand I de’Medici, Claudia, in 1626.27 Notably, too, a smaller votive on this same pier, and one whose miracle is recorded in Lottini’s

26 See Chapter One, 31-32, 51.
27 “Leopoldo d’Austria primogenito della serinissima Claudia Medici, oggi Marito della Principess’Anna sorella del serinissimo Ferdinando Gran Duca di Toscana Regnante.” Dina, Mancini, 98/ 24. Claudia’s son from her first marriage to Federico della Rovere (1620-22) was Carlo Ferdinand, who in 1646 married Anna de’Medici, daughter of Cosimo II; and, as Mancini states correctly, Anna was the sister of Ferdinand II. It is Dina who clarifies Leopold’s identity, 117, n.66. Claudia ruled the Tyrol independently and successfully after Leopold’s death in 1632, until her son, Ferdinand II, came of age fourteen years later. See Lorenzo Grottanelli, Claudia de’ Medici e i suoi tempi (Firenze: Ufficio della Rassegna Nazionale, 1896) and Sabine Weiss, Claudia de’ Medici. Eine italienische Prinzessin als Landesfürstin von Tirol (1604 – 1648), (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2004).
book, is that of Pietro de’ Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent.28 Finally, positioned at the centre of the first pillar on the left of the nave, immediately next to the chapel, was the votive of Eleanora of Toledo, wife of Cosimo I, “who had received many favours from the Nunziata. She offered this life-size bust made of silver and of great weight.”29 (fig. 3.4) Mancini furthermore includes on this pier the votive of another Medici included in Lottini’s book – that of Lucretia Tornabuoni, wife of Piero de’ Medici, who commissioned the Nunziata’s tempietto in the fifteenth century.30

Mancini does not specify the forms of all of these votives, yet many of them, including that of Eleanora of Toledo, are described as statues or portrait busts. The other Medici silver votives just noted, as well as others, also must have been portraits, given that this had become the votive type of choice for persons of status. It can also be recalled that at the time Mancini was designing this project for the pilasters, the tempietto of the Nunziata had been recently filled with Medici offerings in silver.31 Not least among these was the paliotto donated by Ferdinand I de’ Medici in 1600, placed on the altar directly below the Nunziata’s image. (figs. 1.2, 3.2) This antependium features a relief portrait of his son and the future grand duke, Cosimo II, kneeling

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29 “Leonora, figlia di Don Toledo, vice Re di Napoli, moglie del Ser.mo Cosimo Medicj, primo Gran Duca di Toscana, havendo riceueto molte grazie dalla S.ma N.ta, offerse questa testa fino al busto d’argento al naturale, di buon peso.” Ibid., 97/ 22.


31 See Chapters One and Two for discussions of these.
before the Nunziata’s image. It was no doubt the most expensive votive in the church at the time (at a cost of 13,000 scudi) and it was certainly in the most coveted position in relation to the sacred fresco. Mancini’s silver scheme therefore created a visual and thematic complement to this most prominent of Medici portrait votives.

3.4 Medici Wax Statues: Creating a Dominant Presence

Even before Mancini had designed his silver votives for the pillars of the nave, there were other Medici portraits that had taken pride of place in there. These were the votive statues of wax, and they had been positioned either in or before 1625. They are mentioned in a contemporary document which comments on the scaffolds for the wax statues that were built in 1630: “the distinguished votives of our Princes [Serenissimi] were placed on the blocks, at the top of the capitals of the pilasters.” When Mancini outlines the 1650 scheme for the silver votives in the nave, he also notes these statues that surmounted the pillars. He names nine of them. Five are Medici, and one other is a relative by marriage. The two remaining are of an importance to the Medici and to Counter-Reformation Florence that will also be illuminated here. (fig. 3.2)

On the right, Mancini identifies: “Alessandro, first Medici Duke of Florence”. This was no doubt the kneeling and armed statue described by Vasari and made around 1533 by Montorsoli. There is also “the armed statue offered by Giovanni Medici, father of the most

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32 This work will be addressed in greater detail below.
33 “I voti insigni dei nostri Serenissimi si mettessino in su la base sopra I capitelli de’ Pilastri.” Ibid. The construction of the scaffolds was described in Chapter Two.
34 See Chapter 2, 109.
Serene Cosimo, first Grand Duke of Tuscany.” And on the left, from the pilaster closest to the tabernacle, Mancini names firstly, “a great prince of Lorraine and father of the most Serene Grand Duchess of Tuscany, ‘Federicus Vadimontius Dux Lotharingiae’.” (fig. 3.5). As Iginia Dina has shown, documents indicate this to be a representation of François, count of Faudemont, duke of Lorraine, and grandfather of the once Grand Duchess of Florence, Christina of Lorraine. Mancini thus must be mistaken with the first name of the statue’s subject.35 On the three remaining pilasters there are figures that further represent the long history of Medici power: “Don Giovanni Medici, son of the most Serene Cosimo, first Grand Duke of Tuscany;” “the statue of the Magnificent Cosimo de’Medici, Pater Patriae;” and “the most Serene Francesco, second Grand Duke of Tuscany.”36 According to a document in the Archivio di Stato in Florence, this last statue was made by Montorsoli and placed in the church in March, 1579, after Francesco’s illness.37


37 The document is dated March, 1579 and reads: “Ricordo come addi. 22 di detto si messe in chiesa l’immagine de S. gran Duca [F]rancesco gran Duca di Toschana fatta da fra gio: Angelo p[er] una grave infirmita…” ASF, Corporazioni religiose sopresse dal Governo Francese 119/53, Libro di Ricordanze (dal 1560 al1602). Langedijk also lists a wax voto of Francesco planned for the Nunziata, dated to 1580. The statue is discussed in some detail in correspondence between the Servite Padre Biffoli and Vincenzo Borghini. Biffoli asks whether the Grand Duke should be dressed in armour, like the statue of Alessandro,
These portraits that Mancini names possibly comprise only a partial list of all the statues that would have been found in the nave in 1650. Other Medici statues that we know of are not mentioned, including those of Popes Clement VII and Leo X that were repaired by Montorsoli in 1532. These might have been included in the gallery of Medici portraits that Mancini was creating in the nave, placed in the spaces between the pillars and therefore not named in Mancini’s description of the silver votives that were planned for the pillars. It is most likely, however, that they, along with other papal votive statues, were no longer in the nave: at one point in his text, Mancini refers in passing to the statues of popes that had been dedicated to the Nunziata and says they had been removed to the walls inside the entrance atrium. Nonetheless, other Medici statues possibly still accompanied the ones that Mancini lists, including those of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Giuliano de Medici, which had, like the statues of Leo X and Clement VII, been restored under Cosimo I. In any case, Mancini’s text makes it clear that the Medici votives dominated the nave, likely by 1625 and certainly by 1650. The projects for the silver and wax votives therefore not only reduced the clutter of the nave; they made the Medici

or in grand-ducal robes with a crown. Borghini recommends that he be depicted either in his robes, kneeling and with his crown beside him on the floor, or in armour, and the crown on top of a sallet or helmet. The artist for the commission is not named. Carla Langedijk, *The portraits of the Medici: 15th-18th centuries* (Florence: Studio per edizioni Scelte, 1981-1983), V.2, 905, cat.155.

See Chapter 2.

Mancini refers to the papal statues in a list of eleven votives that he plans to add to the scheme on another occasion. On the votive statue of Innocent VII, he says, “[f]ece far la sua statua con manto pontificio, quale fino al di oggi con altri pontefici si mira nella nostra chiesa nella facciata di dentro.” Dina/Mancini, 106/ 35. Further evidence for this location for the papal statues is provided by Tozzi. He states that the statues of seven popes and four cardinals were remade in 1695 “e poste di facciata all’ingresso nel Chiostro dalla piazza.” Tozzi also provides a list of statues that were in the atrium at this time, which includes those of the popes and cardinals, and the Medici popes Clement VII and Leo X appear on the list. Tozzi, 234.
the overwhelming presence there, their votives constituting no less than a dynastic portrait
gallery.

This family gallery — as well as that formed by the busts in the loggia of the Innocenti
on the piazza, which will be considered shortly — are of additional interest in that they mark a
bold turn in Medici dynastic art. Before 1569, Medici portrait groups tended to be stored or
displayed only in private, rather than public contexts, as is the case, for instance, with the various
series of ancestral portraits made under Cosimo I for the Palazzo Vecchio and the Palazzo Pitti. The more public situation of the Medici statues in the nave of the SS. Annunziata can be
compared to another family portrait gallery of the period, this one outside of Italy but for a
patron who had strong ties to the Medici. In the Hofkirche in Innsbruck there is a series of
twenty-eight larger than life sized bronze statues lining the nave of the palace chapel. This
project was begun under Maximilian I in 1508 and not completed until 1584. (fig. 3.6) It is
likely that the Medici were aware of the similarities between their portrait group at the SS.
Annunziata and the Hofkirche statues, given that the latter was one of the most magnificent

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40 Fifteen small Medici portraits sculpted by Cristofano dell’Altissimo between 1562 and 1565 were
installed in the central salon of the Palazzo Pitti, along with likenesses of Pope Gregory XIII and the
emperors Charles V and Maximilian. See Theen, 131-32.

41 Along with these statues are thirty-four busts of Roman Emperors and twenty-three small statues of
patron saints, located in the north gallery of the church. A magnificent empty tomb monument, topped
with a statue of the kneeling Maximilian, sits at the centre of the nave. The church itself was built
between 1553 and 1563 by Maximilian’s grandson, Frederic I. When considering parallels between this
Hapsburg monument and the Medici portrait groups, however, it should be remembered that, as historians
have stressed, throughout the centuries of their rule, and even after Cosimo I gained the title of grand
duke and thus the highest princely status in Italy, the Medici were careful to maintain some semblance of
republican values. Thus the public expression of their power could never fully match the richness of that
of the rulers of the Northern courts. See page 39 below, with citations.
Imperial portrait monuments in Europe of the time and that relations were close between Florence and Innsbruck. Although Cosimo I had to bring Florence out from Hapsburg domination to make it an independent duchy, and Maximilian II stubbornly refused to recognize the Medici title of grand duke until 1576, several marriages to Hapsburg royalty during Cosimo’s reign and after strengthened Medici claims for equal and associated status. One was the match of 1626 between Ferdinand I’s daughter, Claudia, and the Hapsburg duke Leopold V. As noted above, a silver effigy of Leopold V was among the Medici votive portraits that Mancini positioned at the centre of the pillars of the nave of the SS. Annunziata. Aby Warburg did compare the Hapsburg Hofkirche portraits to the votive statues at the SS. Annunziata, but he had in mind the great mass of the latter that had accumulated up to the sixteenth century. Warburg felt the visual effects must have been similar, although he also noted that, whereas “Maximilian and his counselor, Konrad Peutinger, were engaged in a deliberate reproduction of the Roman ancestor cult…what happened in Florence was a spontaneous reversion to a popular pagan custom legitimized by the Church.” Mancini’s project for the Medici statues is, however, even closer to the Innsbruck example than is the old mass accumulation of votives, and in precisely the way that Warburg describes the latter.

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42 Pastor, XVIII, 268ff.

43 See n.27 above. Other marriages include that of Francesco, son of Cosimo I and future grand duke, Francesco, to Joanna of Austria in 1565, and in 1608, Cosimo II with the Archduchess Maria Maddalena of Austria.

44 Aby Warburg, “The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie: Appendix I: Votive Statues in Wax ” (1902); reprinted in Aby Warburg. The Revival of Pagan Antiquity, transl. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 207. Warburg’s interest was specifically the persistence of “pagan” practices in Christian Renaissance culture.
Also comparable to the Medici portrait group and itself based on the Hofkirche are the twenty-seven bronze statues placed at the high altar of the Capilla Mayor of the Royal Basilica of San Lorenzo at the Escorial near Madrid, sculpted for Philip II of Spain by Leone Leoni and his son Pompeo, and completed in 1591. (figs. 3.7, 3.8) These depict saints but also members of the families of Philip II and his father, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, shown kneeling and positioned along the sides of the tribune in perpetual adoration of the Holy Sacrament. Given the close ties between the Medici and Spanish courts, including those fostered by the copies of the Nunziata sent to the latter, the Escorial dynastic group might have also served as a direct model for the Medici portraits at the SS. Annunziata. At the least, this example and that at the Hofkirche partake of a trend of the period, in which a collection of princely effigies were integrated into a sacred site. Three other instances of this pattern were noted at the end of the previous chapter and were part of richly decorative, Kunstkammer-type schemes realized in church settings in the seventeenth century -- those in the second Medici Sacristy at San Lorenzo in Florence, in the Spada Chapel at San Giorlamo della Carità in Rome, and the portraits of the popes that lined the nave of St. Peter’s in Rome. The case of the SS. Annunziata stands apart, nonetheless, in that the new scheme entails the redesign and appropriation of a space that had been filled with the material manifestations of a popular cult.

45 See Carmen García-Frías Checa, La basílica del real monasterio de San Lorenzo de el Escorial. Cuadernos de restauración de Iberdrola, Vol. XIV (Madrid: Fundación Iberdrola, 2010), 22-33, especially 31-33.

46 A forthcoming article by Megan Holmes examines copies painted by Alessandro Allori, including those for Philip II of Spain. See also Susanne Kubersky-Piredda, “… et sia ritratto nella forma medesima'. Das Florentiner Gnadenbild der SS. Annunziata und seine Repliken,” in Multiples in Pre-modern Art, ed. Walter Cupperi (Münich, Diaphanes, 2014), 201-228.
3.5 The Scope of Significance: Florence and Rome

The seicento projects to curate the silver and wax votives at the SS. Annunziata therefore established dynastic portrait groups that dominated the interior of the church. These manifested the privileged relationship the Medici enjoyed with the Nunziata. When it comes to the wax statue gallery, nonetheless, its full significance is more complex, being dependant on two other portraits that were included with those of the Medici. As noted above, Mancini names seven statues that were placed atop the pillars of the nave and five of these are Medici-related. The remaining two are not Medici, but these representations nevertheless added an important further dimension to the identity of the ruling family. The two portraits represent persons closely associated with the Counter Reformation in Florence and Rome, and their presence would have articulated Medici commitment to Counter-Reformation principles that had begun with Cosimo I, around 1559, and continued into the seventeenth century. As such they refer to the grand ducal family as a significant player within the contemporary church, and in particular, in the policies of papal Rome.

Mancini names these two statues as “the most Eminent Cardinal Alessandrino, nephew of Pius V” and “the most Illustrious Archbishop Altoviti”.47 (figs. 3.2, 3.9) As he indicates, Michel Bonelli, known as Cardinal Alessandrino, would have been identified with his grand-uncle Pius V, whom he served as ambassador to Spain, Portugal, and Paris during Pius’s attempts to consolidate the Holy League. It was Pius V who recognized Medici dominion over Siena and who elevated Cosimo I to Grand Duke, in exchange for demonstrations of Cosimo’s fidelity to

Although the papacy was also dependant on Medici money, it was Cosimo’s piety alone that was held to justify his coronation by the pope. This act made Cosimo the highest-ranking secular prince in Italy and it was protested by both Philip II of Spain and Maximilian II. They, like the Curia, had not been consulted beforehand, as was the custom. Before 1559, Cosimo had been antagonistic to the authority of Rome, but around this time, and under first Pius IV and then Pius V, he more actively sought the grand ducal crown. He thus began to impose reforms on Florentine religious life – for instance, reviving feast days and renewing the activities of the confraternities -- in accordance with Counter-Reformation principles. After becoming grand duke, Cosimo stepped up efforts to enforce the Inquisition in

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48 The Bull dated August 27 1569 that announced Cosimo’s title cited Cosimo’s assistance to the Catholics of France and the founding of the Order of San Stefano. Pastor, XVIII, 271. And Piero Vettori indicates in 1574, in a funerary oration for Cosimo, that Florence’s leader obtained the grand ducal crown from a good and holy pope because of “the good will that he showed and had always shown toward the Church of God, and on account of the nobility and the greatness of such a flourishing and honored city.” Piero Vettori, Orazione recitata nell’esequie del Sereniss. Cosimo de’ Medici, Gran Duca di Toscana, Florence, 1574 (transl. of Oratio habita in funere Cosmi medicis, Florence, 1574) c.22r, as cited in Theen, 188 and 236, n.27. See also Pastor, XVII, 302-04, for the affair of Pietro Carnesecchi, the protégé whom Cosimo at first protected, but then handed over to the Inquisition, resulting in Carnesecchi’s beheading and burning in 1567. For further on Pius V and Cosimo I, see Arnaldo d’Addario, Aspetti della controriforma a Firenze (Rome: Miniistero dell’interno publicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, LXXVII, 1972), 123,152, 154, 185.

49 Philip II, who also needed Medici money, nonetheless accepted Cosimo’s new title almost immediately, but Maximilian of Austria did not acquiesce until 1576. The Medici grand dukes had previously depended on Spain for their titles: Charles V had conferred the title of duke on Alessandro de’Medici in 1531, and Philip II had granted authority over Siena, Elba, and Maremma to Cosimo in 1557. Eve Borsook, “Art and Politics at the Medici Court I: The Funeral of Cosimo I De’ Medici,” Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 12, 1-2 (1965): 35-36.

50 See Pastor, vol. VI; and Theen, 160- 161 and 227, n.1 with further bibliography. On August 2, 1560, Pius IV instituted a Nunziatura Apostolica with the duke of Florence and Siena, one of only four among
Florence, while nonetheless also limiting its independence.\textsuperscript{51} And despite a history of enlightened (if largely self-interested) treatment of the Jews,\textsuperscript{52} he began a series of oppressive measures, including restricting legal habitation to two new ghettos in Florence and Siena that were established by a decree of Sept 26, 1570. This followed the foundation of the \textit{seraglio degli ebrei} in Rome by Pius IV in 1555.\textsuperscript{53} Before Cosimo obtained his grand ducal status, both his agent in Rome, Ludovico Ceresola, and his son, Ferdinando de Medici (who had been made cardinal in 1563 by Pius IV), had worked to raise the profile of the Medici at the papal court. During that time, Ferdinando became good friends with Cardinal Alessandrino.\textsuperscript{54} It was Alessandrino himself who came to Florence in 1569 with the papal bull announcing Cosimo’s

\textsuperscript{51} For documents and discussion, as well as further bibliography related to the Florentine Inquisition during the 1550’s and 60’s and its relationship with Rome, see Ibid., 137-47.

\textsuperscript{52} Most notably, Cosimo, and later, Ferdinando I, actively sought to settle wealthy and skilled Jews from all over Europe in Florence, Pisa, and Livorno. In Livorno, Jews were granted special freedoms during the period of general oppression, and the city became a highly successful mercantile and commercial centre. See especially Roberto Salvadori, \textit{Breve storia degli ebrei toscani: IX-XX secolo} (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), 45-56.

\textsuperscript{53} Kenneth R. Stow, “The Consciousness of Closure: Roman Jewry and Its Ghet” in \textit{Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy}, ed. David B. Ruderman (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 386-400. For Rome as setting the model for other Italian centres in terms of the treatment of the Jews see Brian Pullan, “The Conversion of the Jews: The Style of Italy,” in \textit{Poverty and Charity: Europe, Italy, Venice, 1400-1700} (Aldershott: Variorum, 1994), 63. Stefanie Siegmund contends, however, that the Tuscan ghettos were formed primarily for reasons related to domestic policy --that is, as part of a program of state building--rather than in imitation of the Roman \textit{seraglio}. I will address her arguments in more detail below.

title, which was read on December 12, 1569 at the Palazzo Vecchio. Alessandrino was in Florence at least three times between 1570 and 1585, and it is likely that he dedicated the statue sometime during the 1580’s. At that time, after a near fatal illness and at the urging of his uncle Pius, he also made an offering to the Madonna of Loreto.

The inclusion of Antonio Altoviti, named by Mancini for the other non-Medici wax portrait, also made apparent the allegiance of the Medici to the aims of the Counter-Reformation papacy. Altoviti presided over the mass in Rome on December 13, 1569 that celebrated Cosimo’s new status as Grand Duke. He had been appointed Archbishop of Florence in 1548 by Paul III. However, the animosity of both this pope and Antonio’s father, Bindo, towards Cosimo meant that Cosimo initially refused to welcome the new Archbishop to Florence. Nonetheless, after Bindo died in 1558, and with appeals from both Pius IV (who was on excellent terms with Cosimo) and then Pius V, as well as from Antonio himself, Cosimo finally relented. Antonio made his solemn entry into Florence on May 15, 1567, the city

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56 O. Torsellino [H. Tursellinus], *Lauretanae historiae libri quinque* (Venice: A. Poletti, 1727), Bk 4, Ch.XVI, 302.

57 See Lapini for a long description of the mass, 165.

58 Addario, 1972, 123. Giovanni Angelo Medici became Pius IV on December 26, 1559 and died December 9, 1565. Being from Milan, he did not become close with the Florentine Medici until after his election, although Cosimo had helped to bring it about. Pius made two of Cosimo’s sons cardinal: Giovanni, in 1560; and after the latter’s death in 1562, Cosimo’s third son, Ferdinand, in January 1563. Cosimo received from Pius the right of patronage for the archbishoprics of Florence, Siena, and Pisa, as well as six other bishoprics, and concessions for the founding of the Order of San Stefano. Pastor, vol.XVI, 344-45. Pius also made a number of gifts of antique statues to Cosimo, including, the column that now stands in the Piazza San Trinità in Florence. The column is described by Vasari in the *Vite* and was capped with a statue of Justitià. Pastor, XVI, 345; and see Theen, 113-14, with further bibliography.
demonstrating its loyalty to the new archbishop and to its own history with a particularly lavish entry.\textsuperscript{59} This event “signaled Cosimo’s willingness to allow the Roman Church to establish its powerful presence in Florence.”\textsuperscript{60} Altoviti subsequently initiated a long and intense period of religious restaurazione in Florence, with Medici support. He systematically applied reforms that conformed to Tridentine norms and profoundly affected Florentine liturgical practices, the behaviour of the clergy, and popular religious sentiment in general. After his death in 1567, his work was continued by his successor, Cardinal Alessandro Ottaviano de’Medici.\textsuperscript{61}

The inclusion of the statues of Archbishop Altoviti and Cardinal Alessandrino among those of the Medici was thus a crucial factor in the representation of the Medici as Counter-Reformation princes. These subjects embodied papal authority and the most important, ongoing religious-political relations between Florence and Rome. As outlined already in this thesis, the claim that the Medici were selected by God to be his representatives on earth, and the theory of divine right as it appeared in Florentine political theory—particularly during the rule of

\textsuperscript{59} Addario, 1972, 123. Theen, 149-50. Altoviti had previously served as papal legate to Spain and Portugal, so as to seek their assistance in encouraging the Emperor and the King of France to join the league against the Turks. Pastor, XVIII, 419-10, n.3.


\textsuperscript{61} See d’Addario, 1972, 121-124, 179ff, 195, 506. And for the intense activity during this period related to the making of religious art and the renovation of sacred buildings, see Ibid., 190-194. Correspondence from Rome, between Altoviti and other ambassadors to the Medici court, attests to Cosimo’s keenness to gain the favour of the pontificate and to institute reforms that would bring order to Florence. For documents dating between 1561 and 1563, with commentary, see Addario, 1980, 61-77. Addario includes a breve from Pius IV, dated Aug 3, 1561, which encourages Cosimo to have the bishops and archbishops in his subject cities and towns participate at Trent. Cosimo responded on August 17 that he wrote to all the bishops as per Pius’s request. Ibid., 62-63. See below for more regarding Alessandro.
Ferdinand I — were important facets of grand ducal identity. But, at the same time, and as indicated just above and throughout this thesis, Cosimo I and Ferdinand I had sought to insinuate themselves in the enactment of Papal policies. And during the later decades of the first half of the seicento — so, during the time that Mancini undertook the projects to renovate the Nunziata’s votives -- the Medici intensified their connections with Rome.

For instance, at the same time Mancini was conceiving his renovation projects, religious *bigottismo* intensified at the Florentine court. There is considerable correspondence which indicates an on-going reciprocation of favours, recommendations, and influence between the Medici and representatives of the Church, an exchange “that surpassed the typical level of good rapport.”62 Throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, too, the Medici continued to be prominent players in Rome and succeeded in maintaining mutually favourable relations with a succession of popes. Carlo de Medici, son of Ferdinand I and brother of Cosimo II, was made a cardinal by Paul V on December 2, 1615. He participated at the papal conclaves of 1621 (Gregory XV) and 1623 (Urban VIII) and was Cardinal protodeacon at the conclave of Innocent X in 1644.63 He was elected dean at the College of Cardinals in 1652, and also presided over the election of Alexander VII in 1655. Furthermore, in 1644, the younger brother of Ferdinand II de Medici, Giovanni Carlo, was made a cardinal by the Pamphili Pope, Innocent X, in gratitude for Carlo and Ferdinannd’s support of parties hostile to the Barberini. After the death of Urban VIII

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63 As Cardinal protodeacon, he was the senior ranking cardinal deacon and made the traditional *Habemus Papam* announcement from the central balcony at St. Peter’s. In 1615, Carlo undertook renovations to the neglected Villa Medici at Careggi, and around 1645 he was appointed by Philip IV as a Cardinal Protector of Spain.
(Maffeo Barberini) and Innocent’s election, the Barberini faced persecution by the new pope and thus fled to France. The two Medici cardinals subsequently reinforced their family’s influence at the Sacred College: after Innocent’s death in 1655, and while under pressure from France who sought the papal crown for a Barberini favorite and Medici adversary, cardinal Giulio Cesare Sacchetti, the Medici and their allies prevailed with the election of a compromise candidate, Fabio Chigi (Alexander VII). Chigi was from Siena, a Tuscan subject city, and a friend of the Medici.64 The inclusion of Altoviti’s and Alessandrino’s statues therefore visually affirmed the intimate religious-political rapport between Florence and Rome that had been fostered throughout grand ducal history.

3.6 The New Votive Scheme and the Medici as Counter-Reformation Rulers: the Prince as Instrument of Civic Order

It has thus been established that the votive statues, as redisplayed in Mancini’s project, directly referred to Medici alliance with Counter-Reformation Rome. But it must also be remembered that even as the Medici came to be the most distinguished presence in the nave of the SS. Annunziata, the full range of votives that Mancini selected to remain there still represented a microcosm of the city. As Mancini himself puts it in his description of the proposed renovations, the miracles he chose demonstrated how the favour of the Nunziata was

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64 Diaz, 380-81; and Lorenzo Cardello, *Memorie Storiche de’ cardinali della Santa Romana Chiesa*, 9 vols (Rome: Pagliarini, 1793), VI, 182. Medici prominence in Rome continued in the seicento, as the younger brother of Ferdinand II and Cardinal Giancarlo, Leopold, was made a cardinal in 1667.
bestowed upon “infinite men and women, especially the poor.”

That the Nunziata was still meant to be perceived as a civic cult during the seventeenth century is evident in the commissioning of Cosimo Ulivelli in 1671 to paint figures representing Florence and the Servite Order on the arch of the tribune of the church. Thus, in the seventeenth century, the interior décor of the SS. Annunziata, including the array of votives, was meant to attest to the piety of the city. As will be demonstrated below with regard to not only the votives within the church, but also with Medici portraits in contiguous spaces, grand ducal portraits dominated these spaces so as to represent the Medici as forces of social stability. The idea that the Prince is an agent of order informs a number of Medici portrait groups. This pervasiveness evidences its centrality in the discourses and policies of the Counter-Reformation Prince.

Indeed, before considering the portraits themselves, it can first be acknowledged how the idea of the ruler as a force for order was a fundamental tenet in Italian—and more specifically, Florentine--political-religious thought and practice of the period. For instance, from 1569 on, the Archbishop Alessandro de Medici instituted a number of reforms in Florence that were largely inspired by Trent and methods undertaken by the foremost reforming archbishops of the period, Gabriele Paleotti in Bologna, and Carlo and Federico Borromeo in Milan, all of whom were

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65 “Infiniti Huomini e Donne, massime poveri.” Dina/ Manicni, 113/ 46. “Forestieri” were also still represented: a Prince of Baveria and a Cypriot Princess appear in both Lottini’s text and Mancini’s votive programme.

involved with the cult of the Nunziata and Florentine religiosity in general. As historians have recently stressed, the Counter-Reformation movement programmatically developed methods of religious-social discipline, particularly in Milan under the Borromei. One of Alessandro’s chief initiatives in this regard was the development of systematic religious instruction of both the Florentine clergy and laity and the organization of the latter into compagine. The formation and perfection of scuole and compagnie di Dottrina Christiana was also undertaken by Carlo Borromeo and Paleotti in practically every town and village in their dioceses. Religious instruction was also one of the key activities of the new Orders of the period working in Florence -- the Jesuits, Barnabites, and Scolopi.

67 Archbishop Alessandro was born Alessandro Ottaviano de’ Medici and belonged to the branch of the family descending from Cosimo il Vecchio, while the grand dukes were descended from Cosimo’s brother, Lorenzo. His great grand father was Lorenzo il Magnifico. He was ordained by Antiono Altoviti on the 22 July 1567 and was created cardinal in 1583. He became Pope Leo XI in April 1605, at a conclave attended by Cesare Baronius and Roberto Bellarmine, but died within a month. Alessandro served as ambassador in Rome for Cosimo I and was friendly with both Pius V and Gregory XIII. A close friend of Filippo Neri, he blessed the cornerstone of the Valicella in 1575. After becoming an archbishop in 1575, he remained in Rome as an ambassador representing Francesco I until 1584 and later worked for Popes Gregroy XIV (in 1591) and Clement VIII (in 1596) as an envoy in France. Addario, La comunità cristiana, 1980, 80. For other sources and documents regarding the pastoral responsibilities of Alessandro and his predecessor, Altoviti, as Archbishop of Florence, see Ibid., 82ff. These include letters from Carlo Borromeo chastising Alessandro for non-residency and demanding that Alessandro consult the Milanese Archbishop often.


The Counter-Reformation Prince as an agent of civic order is a fundamental concept celebrated by political theorists of the period, including Giovanni Botero. Botero was appointed secretary to Carlo Borromeo in 1582, and then later councillor to Federico Borromeo. In the *Ragion di Stato* (1589), he asserts that “Religion is the foundation of all princely rule” and it has the potential for absolute control:

> of all the laws, there is none more favorable to a Prince than the Christian, because to this his subjects submit not only their bodies and minds, as is good, but their hearts and even consciences. And this binds not only their hands, but even their feelings and thoughts, and makes the unruly obey the Prince, as well as those who are already under control and whoever will suffer in any way so as to not disturb the peace.\(^{70}\)

The need for a strongman who would impose stability on a volatile society was a key concept in European political theory of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including that written in Florence. A central notion in the latter is that Medici rule was destined to cease finally the perpetual conflict and instability that had afflicted Florence under republican government. The

\(^{70}\)“Ma, tra tutte le leggi, non ve n’è alcuna più favorevole a’ Prencipi che la cristiana, perché a questa sottomette loro non solamente i corpi e la facoltà de’ sudditi, dove conviene, ma gli animi ancora e le consienze, e lega non solamente le mani, ma gli affetti ancora e i pensieri, e vuole che si obedisca a’ Prencipi discoli, nonché a’ moderati, e che si patisca ogni cosa per non perturbar la pace.” Giovanni Botero, *Della ragion di Stato* (first edition pub. 1589) (Rome: Donzelli, 1977), Bk.2, 76. Botero repeats these ideas in his *Relationi universali* (Venice, 1595), also pointing out that Aristotle “counselled the tyrant to at least pretend to be religious”. He delves further into the mass psychological effect of religion on the ruler’s subjects: it “makes them obedient and tractable not only to reasonable and moderate princes but also to insolent and knavish ones, not so much through fear of punishment as through obligation of conscience.” As translated in William James Bouwsma, *Venice and Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter-Reformation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1968), 302.
proponents of this claim thus blurred the distinction between the periods of the republic and the
principate by making the latter the inevitable end of the former. They simultaneously asserted
that the Medici had fulfilled their own historic mission as well as that of Florence, by bestowing
peace and order.\footnote{For instance, in 1594, Paolo Mini writes: “la Serenissima Casa de’Medici era quella famiglia alla quale (riprovati tutti gli altri) doppo un lungo volger d’anni il governo della nobilissima Repubblica Fiorentina era destinato.” Paolo Mini, Avvertimenti e digressioni sopra a’l discorso della nobilità du Firenze e de’Fiorentini (Florence: D. Manzani, 1594), 4.} The theory of divine right that especially came to be stressed during the reign of Ferdinand I also came into play in this conception of the Medici as peace makers. Along with the notion that the Medici principate was ordained by God, rebellion became akin to sin.\footnote{According to Samuel Berner, the notion that any action against Medici rule amounted to an offense against God was implicit in most Florentine political literature of the period. Samuel Berner, “Florentine Political Thought in the Late Cinquecento,” Il Pensiero Politico, III, 2, (1970): 192, n.55. Filippo Cavriana also stated it explicitly. “Ne meno è lecito a un suddito, per grave e noioso che ‘l suo Principe sia….forze ò insidie contra lui levarsi…Per cio che essendo stati I Principi da Dio el mondo per suoi ministri e vicarii ordinati….” Filippo Cavriana, Discorsi…sopra i cinque libri di Cornelio Tacito (Florence: Filippo Giunti, 1597), 28, and for a reiteration of the point, Ibid., 30. This text was republished in 1600.} Giambattista Guarini, the author of one of the most famous literary works of the period, the
*Pastor Fido*, declared in his *Trattato della politica libertà* (which was written for Ferdinand I in 1599, although not published until 1818, in Venice) that God chose the Medici to be his
instruments to alleviate the suffering of Florentines and to bring tranquility to a state beset by
battling factions.\footnote{Guarini addresses Florence: “[P]er te solo, città felice, per tuo bene, per tua salute operò al provvidenza di Dio. Questa fe’ grande Cosimo primo…questa salvò miracolosamente Lorenzo dalla congiura de’Pazzi…questa fe’Guiliano suo figliuolo e Giulio suo nipote…ambiduo cardinali e con prosperità incredibile I medesimi ancor pontefici.” The encomium then arrives at the reign of Cosimo I: “ed a lui questa sola infuse sopra l’etàte animo grande, costanza, intrepidezza e senno da principe, quale appunto a
There was some truth to Guarini’s claims; but as is often enough the case when it comes to political writings and monuments of this period, the assertions also largely compensated for an opposite reality. The Medici did definitively consolidate their dominance of Florentine politics by 1600. As Berner puts it, Florentines submitted to the increasing absolutism of Medici rule, because of a desire for stability: “[t]he Florentine Republic had been characterized, above all, by incessant conflict—conflict between classes, within classes and, indeed, even within families. It was this that had been primarily responsible for the rise of the Principato. An exhausted populace had acquiesced to the rule of one house…in the hope that political acquiescence would lead to social peace.”  

However, the notion that the Medici brought tranquility to Florence hardly reflected the actualities of life there. Hunger, disease, and brigandry, as well as other forms of violence, remained persistent problems throughout the principate. Moreover, the prosperity that had flourished under the reigns of Cosimo I and Ferdinand I ended by around 1620. By the mid seventeenth century, the financial and social health of the Tuscan state had also deteriorated significantly. The grand duchy after Ferdinand I moreover brought a

colui ch’era il vaso di elezione si conveniva, per stabilire i veri fondamenti di sì gran principato. Questa levò le forze all’esercito congiurato e lo ingegno a’ suoi condottieri, questa domò i ribelli, scoperse le congiure, vinse i nemici.” Guarini then moves on to a praise of Ferdinand I as a worthy successor to Cosimo I, and as “veramente dono di Dio per governare i popoli di Toscana con quella natia prudenza ch’egli redò dal padre e con quella santa ch’egli apparò nel santissimo Vaticano…le quali supra umane prosperità chi non vede che tute sono misteriose grazie di Dio versate tutte a man piene sopra quella famiglia degna di reggere il suo diletto e caro paese?” As cited in Givoanni Gipriani, “Nota al ‘Trattato della politica libertà’ di Battista Guarini,” Pensiero politico, 12:3 (1979): 441-42. Similar ideas are expressed by the French humanist and diplomat, Maurice Bressieu, in Epithalamios oratio ad nuptias Serenissimorum Ferdinandi Medicei et Christernae Lotharingiae Magnorum Hetruriae Ducum (Florence: Marescotti) 1589, 5. See Gipriani, 440.

74 Berner, 1971, 231.

75 Ibid., 211-221. At the mid cinquecento, Tuscany was the most prosperous state in the Italian peninsula.
detrimental increase in the prestige and privilege of the nobility. This refouidalization of Florentine society resulted in greater inefficiency and corruption in the state bureaucracy (as favoritism trumped merit), while at the same time it became more and more difficult to assist the growing numbers of the poor.\textsuperscript{76} This social state of affairs is furthermore directly tied to the religiosity of Medici rulership: Furio Diaz has noted that it was precisely the ever-growing religiosity at the grand ducal court during and after the reign of Ferdinand I, and the concomitant attention given to the concerns of the Church and Rome, that diverted the principate from matters at home and thus contributed to the degeneration of the state.\textsuperscript{77}

Consequently, social order was perceived to be a pressing issue throughout the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Medici remained fearful of threats to their rule that they believed could arise from a disaffected popolo or even from those closest to the grand duke. The Pucci conspiracy of 1575 and the above-noted 1588 arrest and sentencing of Tommasso Soderini were recent incidents of dangerous opposition close at hand. Tight security, if not near paranoia, therefore characterized Medici rule. A Venetian ambassador wrote in 1561 of the prisons called “secrete”, in which a person could be jailed without reason. Many spies roamed the city, so that no one dared utter anything unfavourable about the prince. This elaborate and expensive surveillance system was continued under subsequent Medici grand dukes.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{76} Diaz outlines these dire conditions in detail. Diaz, 382-422.

\textsuperscript{77} “[L]’esasperato interesse per le vicende della Chiesa di Roma e per l’rapport del granducato con essa condusse spesso a sacrificare a questo filone energie e capacità che sarebbero state più utili in altri campi.” Diaz then argues that, for instance, when prince Leopold seeks and subsequently succeeds in 1666 to become cardinal, the consequence is the near extinction of the activity of the Accademia del Cimento, which was under his guidance. Ibid., 382.

\textsuperscript{78} The ambassador further relates: “this terror of spies has reaches such a state that everyone fears that everyone else is a spy.” See Berner, 1971, 239-41. Berner points out that the relatively small size of
with Cosimo I and continuing into the eighteenth century, the Grand Duke tightly controlled the administration and the decision making of the state, eliminating the need for a Council. The Ambassador from Lucca noted in 1600, for example, that Ferdinand I confided only his minister, Carlo Antonio Pozzo, Archbishop of Pisa.\textsuperscript{79} Cavriana wrote that “the multitude generate disorder (\textit{il moltitudine genera confusione})” and he compared it to the many headed Hydra that Hercules battled and quelled. The \textit{popolo} are subject to a lack of reason that can only be constrained by a prince, aided by prudent and wise ministers.\textsuperscript{80} Strict control was thus imposed in a real sense by the Medici, but within an atmosphere of fear that chaos was always imminent.

Perceived threats to stability seem to have also existed in the religious sphere, specifically with the persistence of the political-religious tradition of Savonarolism and Medici attitudes towards it. It is of note that in the 1540’s, Cosimo I actively suppressed Savonarolism in Florence, but then, in the 1560’s, allowed and even promoted it. Archbishop Altoviti gave impetus to this policy, because he was an enthusiastic Savonarolan, like his friend in Rome, Filippo Neri. Altoviti thus saw that old devotions like the Corpus Domini procession were

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\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 242-45.
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\textsuperscript{80} Cavriana, 1600, 413-14. In his discourse on princely rule, Lionello Salviati writes: “The popolo is like a ferocious beast, not perhaps of many heads but rather without a head. However, it can easily adapt itself to any leader. The people act like dogs. They always throw themselves in the direction of noise, and be it friend or enemy they run after he that flees.” Lionello Salviati, \textit{Discorso sopra le prime parole di Cornelio Tacito}, in Giorgrio Dati, \textit{Gli Annali di Cornelio Tacito}, Venice, 1582, no pagination. Salviati also refers to the Ciompi revolt of 1378 as an instance wherein the popolo were an unruly force, one that would persist as long as social and economic unrest continued in Florence. See Berner, 1970, 195.
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revivified in Florence. But Medici attitudes towards the *piagnoni* proved to be mutable. In 1583, Cardinal Alessandro de’Medici, who had become archbishop of Florence in 1574, wrote two long letters to grand duke Francesco I, warning that dangerous Savonarolan attitudes were still present in Florence, specifically in liturgical practices and monastic life observed at San Marco and at the convent of San Vincenzio. At the latter, Savonarola was honoured as a martyr with divine offices, and his relics were inappropriately treated as those of a saint. Alessandro describes how he decisively censored visual and written depictions of Savonarola there, instilling in the friars a “salutary terror”(!). Certainly, the ascetic piety of Savonarolism was consonant

81 Addario, 1980, 79-80. Theen, 162-64. Theen’s stress is that Cosimo even personally embraced Savonarolan practices, so as to present himself as fulfilling the Savonarolan political ideal of the pious head of state and to signal his dedication to Florentine tradition. Notable in particular to Chapter One of this thesis and my focus on portraiture in general, Cosimo obtained Giovanni delle Corniole’s gem, engraved with the profile of Savonarola in 1656. And as Theen also points out, Cosimo was in this regard modeling himself after his forefathers, Popes Leo X and Clement VII, who also identified themselves with Savonarolan ideals.

82 Archbishop Alessandro describes how at San Marco, “la gioventù si [facevano] cose presuntuosissime, recitando in onore del Savonarola uffizi divini come a martire, e conservandone reliquie come se stato fusi, insieme a quello stilo dove fu appiccato,… li habiti, i cappucci, le ossa che avanzarono al fuocho, le ceneri, il cilicio.” “[C]onservano vino benedettoda lui, lo danno alli infermi, ne contano miracoli, le sue imagini fanno in bronzo, in oro, in canmei, in stampa; et, quello che è peggio, li fanno inscrizioni di martire, profeta, et vergine et dottore.” As quoted in Addario, 1980, 80, 24-25. For further on Alessandro’s attitudes and the opposition of Pius V to Savonarolism, see Ibid., 23-36 and Idem., 1972, 256-57 and 265.

83 “Io ho compiuto il mio dovere per il passato, oppenendomi a moltissimi di tali abusi. Ho fatto spezzare a San Marco le lastre di una incisione ed espellere l’incisore, un certo P. Bernardo da Castiglione che è stato mandato a Viterbo, dove è morto; ho impedito che se ne dipingesse il ritratto fra i santi dell’ordine nel chiostrino di Santa Maria Novella e che si stampasse il compendio della sua vita e dei suoi miracoli; ho infuso nei frati un salutare terrore, e li ho fatti ammonire, riprendere e punire dai loro superior.” From a letter dated August 26, 1583. As quoted in Giuseppe Schnitzer, *Savonarola* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1931), vol. 2, 490-91. The actions of Cardinal Alessandro were nonetheless mitigated after the election of
with some Catholic reform ideals, but it was the potential for equally Savonarolan anti-authoritarianism that was problematic.\footnote{84}

This prevailing anxiety about civil chaos and dissent was exacerbated during the plague of 1630-31. Throughout her study of that epidemic, Giulia Calvi stresses that state control was exerted in order to counter the threat of social disarray posed by the plague. The boundaries of the city were strictly guarded, with traffic through the walls under close surveillance. “[D]isease and death were…spread by…exchanges, which involved, of course, theft, barter, and the spoliation of dead bodies.”\footnote{85} As outlined in Chapter Two, it was at this time that a major culling and redisplay of the votives at the SS. Annunziata was undertaken. Perhaps then, to at least some minds, this hygienic action of cleaning up and ordering the mass of decrepit “bodies” was

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Clement VIII in 1592. The Aldobrandini pope came from a Florentine noble family who had remained devoted followers of Savonarola. Clement however stopped short of canonizing Savonarola, despite a forceful campaign by his followers from Rome, Florence and Ferrara, in part because of the opposition of archbishop Alessandro and cardinal Bellarmine, who had great influence on the pope. The Florentine Domenican Serafino Razzi composed an extensive three part biography of Savonarola, including accounts of related miracles, between 1590 and 1594. Schnitzer points out that Clement would have likely agreed to publish Razzi’s text, as well as to remove the writings of Savonarola from the Index, if not for the intervention of Alessandro de’Medici who was also backed by Bellarmine. Ibid., vol. 2, 491-92, 545-47.

\footnote{84} In one of his letters, the Medici Archbishop describes the piagnoni: “si alienano dalla Sede Apostolica, et se non diventano heretici non hanno buona opinione del clero seculare et de’prelati; et gli obediscono mal volentieri.” As quoted in Addario, 1980, 25-26. It seems too that the social-religious problem of Savonarolism came from all strata of society. In a letter, Alessandro writes that “queste sorte di huomini che hanno questi capricci non sono de i primi della città, ma de’mezzani, più presto persone deboli che altro.” Yet in his\footnote{85} Memorie fiorentine, written at the time of Cosimo I, Francesco Settimanni also records the names of numerous Florentine aristocrats who were followers of Savonarola and also opposed to the Principate. Ibid.

resonant with the actions taken against the plague. Moreover, during the epidemic, a number of collective acts of piety that marshalled all Florentines and that were located at the SS. Annunziata were overseen by the Archbishop Alessandro de’Medici, by the orders of Grand Duke Ferdinand II. As Calvi points out, Ferdinand had reached his age of majority only in 1628, and “[t]he great epidemic was the first test of political responsibility which the young grand duke underwent, and the need to prove himself compelled him to return to Florence as soon as he heard about the contagion.”

The supreme importance given to social control and stability during the Counter-Reformation period, and in Florence in particular, is thus reflected in the way that Medici portraits presided over the newly organized votives within the nave of the SS. Annunziata. The systematization of the interior decoration of the church gave visual expression to the image of the grand dukes as princes who brought political order and religious discipline to the city, the latter represented by the full array of social strata that had always characterized the Nunziata’s collection of votives and that Mancini was so careful to preserve with his renovation projects.

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86 See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for Mancini’s description of the decrepitude of the votives that were to be destroyed.
87 Calvi, 15.
88 Bocchi also indicated that the Nunziata favoured the most humble of her devotees. His longest miracle account has to do with a servant who is wrongly accused of stealing and is freed after he prays to the Nunziata. Bocchi, 1592, 96-100. After recounting the miracles, he notes that there are many more, and he points out the social range of those the Nunziata has aided. His stress is nonetheless on the upper end: “Ovunque si volge l’occhio in questo sacrato ricetto, tosto si conosce, e la fede di chi prega, e alle miserie il tostano rimedio. Ci si veggono uomini di bassa condizione, che armati di umiltà, a pieno, come hanno domandato, sono stati consolati: in gran copia è la gente di nobil sangue, che alla fine sollevata da carità ha ottenuto la sua voglia. Non ci mancano gran signori, che a questa santissima Madonna sono ricorsi, e disperati, di ogni ajuto, ne’ suoi maggior bisogni han provato l’ajuto del cielo. Però che e il Duca
And if the Medici votive portraits embodied the exercise of civic discipline in a broad sense, it was also enacted more particularly at the SS. Annunziata. Bocchi comments that the entire city would rush to the church to see the sacred fresco whenever word spread that it was to be uncovered for an honoured visitor, and “confusion” would ensue.\(^8\) There were also occasions when military guards were used to quell the throngs of faithful who crowded the shrine. The restriction of access to the Nunziata on the part of the Medici was therefore argued to be justified, at least in part, by the need for public security.\(^9\)

While the dynastic gallery of Medici votive statues in the nave did not survive beyond the mid seicento, the Medici nevertheless still remained the dominant presence at the church after that time. As Filippo Tozzi wrote around 1770, the removal of the wax statues to the atrium sometime before 1665 was initiated by Prince Mattias de’Medici and was a controversial act among the city’s populace. There were fears that the statues would be damaged in the open air.

Alessandro de’Medici, e il GranDuca Francesco de’Medici altresì, ci si veggono con molti re di corona, e con molti prelate di somma dignità: ma molti sommi Pontefici, oltra Innocenzo VIII, Alessandro VI, Leone X, Clemente VII, e Giulio III in abito pontificale con le loro imagini, che a questa miracolosa Vergine ha fatti I loro voti, apertamente fanno fede, quanto è degno di riverenza questo santissimo sembiante, e quanto con gran ragione si dee apprezzare.” Ibid., 101-102.

\(^8\) Ibid., 76.

\(^9\) See Marcello Fantoni for this point and instances of mass disorder and control. Marcello Fantoni, “Il culto dell’Annunziata e la sacralità del poetere mediceo,” in Archivio storico italiano, 147 (1989): 190. A contemporary source relates the incident of April 1577, during which Francesco I accidently struck his groom because of the jostling crowds that had gathered at the SS. Annunziata. The Grand Duke had brought a guest to the church, cardinal Andreas, who was the nephew of Giovanna of Austria. The Grand Duke was criticized for the violence, and the church had to be reconsecrated. For a full description, see Alice Sanger, *Art, Gender and Religious Devotion in Grand Ducal Tuscany* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 17.
space, but Tozzi also insists that the votives were an essential “ornament” of the church, and so the Servites saw to the restoration of the statues in the atrium. It was explained in Chapter Two that no other votives remained in the nave by this time, and a painted cycle depicting miracles related to the Virgin was installed in the clerestory of the nave in the last decades of the seventeenth century. This new scheme certainly provided a modern form of unity and coherence to the interior of the church. Nonetheless, the question still arises as to why, as Tozzi indicates, a Medici would have instigated the removal of the votive statues that comprised a dynastic portrait gallery. The reason is not clear, but, even after the dismantling of the latter, another Medici portrait remained as the most prominent votive at the Nunziata’s shrine—the paliotto, or altar frontal, that had been commissioned in 1600 and that is located directly below the sacred image. This work, along with a group of Medici portraits located in the convent, just off the Chiostro dei Morti, will be discussed below in this chapter and in the next. And again, the representation of Medici power both within Florence and with respect to its relations with Rome will come into play. Firstly, however, these contexts for a group of Medici portraits located in the piazza immediately outside of the shrine must first be considered.

91 “Il trasporto di questi Voti nel Chiostro seguí l’Anno 1665…a persuasione del Principe Mattias de’Medici, non senza biasimo della Città, che mal volentieri sopportava esporsi all’Aria questi monumenti della pieta de’suoi antemoria, e colla memoria la devozione alla Miracolosa imagine della Nunziata.” Tozzi, 120. Tozzi also says that “Le armature e Trofei furono messe nel Chiostro de’Morti, d’onde poi furono rimosse, e collocate nel Chiostro della Nunziata anch’esse nel 1698.” Del Migliore’s comments on the removal of the statues to the atrium is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

92 “La quale pareva necessaria nell’abbellimento della Chiesa, egli è certo.” Tozzi, 121. Thus the statues that Tozzi names as being in the atrium in 1695 comprise only a partial list of all the ones there. Tozzi refers to them as “[l]e Statue accommodate in tale Anno”. “Accommodate” can mean that the statues were either rearranged or repaired at the time. The latter seems most likely, given that just before the list Tozzi discusses the repair of other votive statues. See also Giuseppe Richa, Notie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine (Florence, 1754-62), 10 vols; reprinted (Florence: P. G. Viviani, 1989), V.8, 58.
The works to be examined in this section and the following fall under the broad and rich category of Medici public portraiture. The latter has been the topic of a good number of scholarly studies, some of which have included the works in question here—the portraits in the Piazza SS. Annunziata. There has nonetheless been little attention paid to their connections to the Medici effigies (votive and otherwise) inside the church and convent of the SS. Annunziata. As will be shown, these various portrait groups demonstrate a remarkable iconographic and formal coherence around the intertwined themes of the civic power of the Counter-Reformation prince and his collaboration in the larger agendas of the Church.

In the Piazza of the SS. Annunziata, four marble busts representing the grand dukes were placed in the loggia of the Ospedale degli Innocenti which runs along the east side of the piazza. Three were sculpted by Giovanni Battista Sermei, a pupil of Giambologna, and are all still in place— that of Cosimo I (1605), over the main entrance, flanked by those depicting Francesco I (1602, or 1602 and 1605) and Ferdinand I (1605) above the entrances to the left and right, respectively. The fourth is a bust of Cosimo II by Giovan Battista Caccini (dated 1612 and also still in sitù) added to the façade of the loggia, above the arch in front of the main entrance.\textsuperscript{93} (figs.3.1, 3.10–3.12) This portrait group belongs to a much larger programme by which the Medici dominated the physical spaces of the city. As Giorgio Spini and others have stressed, from the time of Cosimo I, and especially under Ferdinand I, the Medici systematically placed

\textsuperscript{93} For the busts, see Langedijk, with bibliography and documents. Vol.I, 482, cat.27,141; Vol.II, 886, cat.42,81; Vol.II, 754, cat.37, 84; Vol.I, 558, cat.28,76. Also see Marcello Fantoni, \textit{La corte del granduca: forme e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento} (Rome: Bulzoni,1994), 177.
standing statues and busts on the facades of palaces, institutions, and religious buildings throughout Florence such that, by 1600 over twenty likenesses of Cosimo I, Francesco I, and Ferdinand I inhabited the public spaces of Florence. Others were also erected in Florentine possessions such as Arezzo, Livorno and Pisa. At the Innocenti, the Medici portraits marked their control over the city’s largest charitable institution in the city, as is stated by the inscription on the bust of Cosimo I over the main entrance, “Pater et benefactor Hospitalis Innocentium.” The inscription and the busts remind us how during the second half of the sixteenth century Cosimo, and Francesco after him, gradually but surely assumed patronage of almost every institution and public project in Florence.

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94 Giorgio Spini, *Architettura e politica da Cosimo I a Ferdinando I* (Florence: Olsckhi, 1976), 65-66, and see especially n.84 for an extensive list of such public portraits. During Ferdinand’s reign, seven busts and one standing statue of Ferdinand, as well as a statue of Cosimo I, were also erected in Pisa. Mary Weitzel Gibbons, “Cosimo’s *Cavallo*: a Study in Imperial Imagery,” in *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici*, ed., Konrad Eisenbichler, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 87. Another bust of Cosimo II by Caccini (dated 1620) was palced on the façade of the Ospedale di S. Maria Nuova. Langedijk, Vol I, 558, cat.28, 77. In terms of Medici dynastic groupings of the period, a particular set of temporary portraits is also of note. These were erected along a processional route on the occasion of Ferdinand’s marriage to Christine of Lorraine in May 1589 and included statues of Augustus, Charlemagne, Cosimo de Medici Pater Patriae, and Cosimo I. They were set up at the four corners of the Ponte Santa Trinità, as part of the elaborate entry decorations for the bride’s entry into the city. Eve Borsook sees this “manufactured tradition” as a clumsy attempt on the part of the Medici to place themselves among European royalty. Eve Borsook, *The Companion guide to Florence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 206.

95 Philip Gavitt, “Charity and State Building in Ciquecento Florence: Vincenzio Borghini as Administrator of the Ospedale degli Innocenti,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 69 (June 1997): 265 and passim. Gavitt also points out that Post-Tridentine charity entailed an obligation on the part of the poor to undertake conversion to a reformed life, so the programmes established at the Innocenti for its inhabitants included service to the state, such as working in the galleys or the in-house tapestry workshop which had been established by Francesco I. State charity meant mutual obligation between a prince and his
The subject matter of this portrait programme nonetheless also carries resonances that extend beyond grand ducal involvement at the Innocenti. Surmounting each of the three busts in the loggia are lunettes and aediculae frescoed by Bernardino Poccetti, who also painted the Chiostro dei Morti of the convent of the SS. Annunziata between 1604 and 1612. The Innocenti loggia bears emblems and allegorical figures associated with the virtues of the grand dukes, and above the bust of Cosimo I, Poccetti placed the grand ducal stemma and a tondo divided into four segments, each showing one of Cosimo’s chief accomplishments: the founding of the Accademia del Disegno in 1563; the coronation of Cosimo in 1569 by Pius V, with the motto “Attingit solium Jovis et coelestia tentat [Jove arrives at the throne and proves heavenly]”; the institution of the Order of San Stefano in 1561, also presided over by Pius V and Cosimo I, with the motto beneath, “Dux iter ad superos religione paravit [Commander who provides the path to the highest religion]”; and the foundation of Cosmopoli (renamed Portoferraio in 1738) on the Island of Elba. This city was developed by Cosimo as a military base and home for the naval beneficiaries. Institutions like the Innocenti also provided funds for military and artistic undertakings by the Medici regime. However, the grand dukes and others also used charities as savings banks, extracting exorbitant interest on their “investments” in the process. As a result, grand ducal “assistance” eventually led to crushing debt at the Innocenti by the late 1570’s. Gavitt, 261-64. On Cosimo I’s use of charitable institutions for political purposes, see Arnaldo d’Addario, in *La comunità cristiana fiorentina e toscana nella dialettica religiosa del cinquecento* (Florence: Becocci, 1980), 166 and 170-78.

96 The fresco cycle in the cloister shows the history of the Servite order. Poccetti and Ventura Salimbeni produced fourteen of twenty-five lunettes. The project was completed by Fra Arsenio Mascagni (1608-14) and Matteo Rosselli after Poccetti’s death in 1612. Gauvin Alexander Baily, “Catholic Reform and Bernardino Poccetti’s Chiostro dei Morti at the church of SS. Annunziata in Florence,” *Apollo*, 158, n.499 (September, 2003): 23-31.
operations of the Order of San Stefano. These subjects reiterate and complement themes found in works located in the piazza, monastery, and church of the SS. Annunziata. They also make further assertions for the pious rulership of the Medici.

Firstly, there is the Cappella di San Luca situated off the large cloister, or Chiostro dei Morti, at the SS. Annunziata. (fig. 2.1) This was the chapel of the Accademia del Disegno and a communal tomb for those artists who could not arrange for their own burials. The decoration of the space was undertaken in earnest shortly after the Accademia was founded in 1563, beginning in 1565, and it includes paintings and sculptures by various members of the Accademia. Ten larger than life statues crouch in niches and represent four Old Testament heroes, five apostles, and Cosimo I. The latter, finished in 1570 by Zanobi Lastricati but primarily sculpted by Vincenzo Danti, is to the right of the high altar, over which is Vasari’s fresco of St. Luke Painting the Madonna (1565). (figs. 3.14) The statue thus honours Cosimo’s patronage of the Accademia, but it furthermore presents him in the guise of Joshua. Joshua led the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan and was thus the ruler to whom God had entrusted the Promised Land, just as Cosimo, who in the statue wears armour and holds a baton, was granted dominion over

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97 For the statutes related to the founding of the Order of San Stefano and further discussion, see Addario in La comunità christiana, 1980, 135-36. For further description of the busts and frescoes see Spini, 74-75.

98 Before the Accademia took over the chapel, the Servite sculptor, Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli produced statues of Moses and St. Paul for the space, which were installed in 1535. In 1560 he began planning a more complete decorative campaign, but it did not get far due to his death in 1563. The members of the Academia thus took up the project, incorporating Montorsoli’s works. David Summers, “The Sculptural Program of the Cappella di San Luca in the Santissima Annunziata,” Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 14, n.1 (June 1969): 67-68.
the territories of Tuscany. The figures of David and Solomon are also included in the statue group. The first was finished in 1575 and made by Giovan Angelo Lottini, the Servite historian, sculptor, and playwright who also authored the Nunziata’s miracle compilation discussed earlier in this study, while the Solomon has been attributed to Giambologna, although it has been heavily reworked, probably in the nineteenth century. Solomon is also featured in Santi di Tito’s *Construction of Solomon’s Temple*, one of the other large frescoes within the chapel. Both of these great Old Testament kings were types for Medici rulership, appearing in iconography honouring Cosimo I and Francesco I.

Also associated with both the Innocenti loggia portraits and the sacred image of the Nunziata, is yet another Medici portrait, this one located at the centre of the piazza – the bronze equestrian statue of Ferdinand I, begun in 1601 by Giambologna, completed by Pietro Tacca, and erected in 1608. (figs. 3.1, 3.15, 3.16) I want to examine this monument in some detail, but firstly, the numerous ways Medici imagery hold sway over the spaces surrounding it should be

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99 Summers, 82-83; Langedijk, 476-77, cat. no.131; Theen, 135-36.

100 For the attributions of these two statues, see Summers, 84-88. Summers identified the David currently in situ as a late seventeenth-century version of Lottini’s statue, which fell from the niche and had to be replaced. Casalini, however, attributes it to the Servite Giuseppe Salvetti, with a date of 1719. Eugenio M. Casalini, *La Santissima Annunziata di Firenze. Guida Storico-Artistica* (Genoa: B.N. Marconi, 2008), 67.

101 Cosimo I is represented as David in the decorations for the marriage of Francesco I and Giovanna of Austria, in 1565. He appears as Solomon in his apartments in the Palazzo Vecchio. Summers, 83, n.41. See also Luciano Berti, *Il principe dello Studiolo: Francesco I dei Medici e la fine del Rinascimento fiorentino* (Florence: Edam, 1967), 68-71. Spini suggests that the scene above Solomon, showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, might allude to Francesco’s wife, Giovanna of Austria. Spini, 76-77.

102 It is not certain to what extent Tacca contributed to the design of the statue. For an outline of various opinions on the matter from the seventeenth century to the present, including the author’s own assertion that it was substantial, see Marcello Tommasi, *Pietro Tacca* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 1995), 38-40.
considered. Ferdinand’s statue is directly aligned with the entrance of the church. It was also clearly conceived to echo the equestrian of Cosimo I that Ferdinand had commissioned from Giambologna and placed in the Piazza della Signoria in 1603. Both stand on axis with the Duomo and together proclaim Medici possession of what are among the most important civic spaces within the city. The via dei Servi, connected the piazza of the SS. Annunziata with the Duomo, was regularly included in the most important civic processions.\textsuperscript{103} The architecture of the piazza also enacts the alliance of the Servites and the Medici, as well as the solidarity of the Florentine nobility with the latter. It can first be noted that between 1516 and 1525, the Servites had Antonio da Sangallo and Baccio d’Agnolo complete the west side of the piazza, opposite the Innocenti, with a mirror-image loggia. The swaddled babies of the Innocenti tondi are replaced with the Servite emblem of the “S” intertwined with three lilies, and the lily is also a Florentine and Medici family symbol. (figs. 3.1, 3.17, 3.18)

Adjacent, on the north end, is the portico of the church of the SS. Annunziata. Its central arch was built in the quattrocento by Antonio Manetti and surmounted by a sculpted stemma commissioned by the Medici pope Leo X from Antonio da Sangallo on the occasion of his entry into the city in 1515.\textsuperscript{104} This porch was enlarged between 1599 and 1601 to seven bays by Giovan Battista Caccini, the sculptor of the bust of Cosimo II for the Innocenti loggia. (fig. 3.16) The project was financed by the brothers Alessandro and Lorenzo Pucci, whose patronage is commemorated with an inscription and the large family stemma at the right corner of the portico.

\textsuperscript{103} Gabriele Corsani, “Le sculture granducali in piazza dell’Annunziata a Firenze,” Storia della città, 48 (Oct-Dec, 1988): 46-48; Fantoni, 1989, 775-777. See also Spini, 74. For further on the significance of the equestrian statues see Ibid., 65-68, and with further bibliography, Weitzel Gibbons, 77-95.

\textsuperscript{104} The stemma was sculpted by Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini (1477–c.1548) and it is flanked by figures of Faith and Charity, painted by Pontormo between 1513 and 1514. Francesca Petrucci, Santissima Annunziata (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1992), 11; Spini, 74; Corsani, 45.
The palazzi of the Pucci, Almeni, and other Florentine elites of the second half of the sixteenth century were furthermore situated on the piazza of the SS. Annunziata and on streets leading to it, with a number of their façades bearing Medici coats of arms and emblems. That of the Palazzo Grifoni, for instance, has on the façade and over the doorway on the via dei Servi, two crossed anchors, the astrological Capricorn with its stars, and the tortoise with a sail on its back, all three being emblems of Cosimo I. (fig. 3.1, 3.19) These motifs also appear both in Poccetti’s frescoes in the Innocenti loggia and among other painted symbols of Cosimo I and Francesco I on the walls of the Chapel of St. Luke. On its piazza side, the palazzo is decorated with the three lilies of the Servites. These palaces and their symbolic ornament visually realize how Cosimo and his successors saw to it that the Florentine nobility were dependant on Medici favour and were employed in Medici-controlled state building, a relationship also evident in the palaces that lined the processional route between the Duomo and the Pitti by 1632.

3.8 The Equestrian Monument of Ferdinand I: Bees, Mise-en-abyme, and Significance Beyond Florence

Ferdinand’s equestrian statue is a particularly impressive portrayal of a Medici in the role of Counter-Reformation prince. This is of course appropriate, given what has been just noted with regard to Medici imagery in the piazza of the SS. Annunziata. The statue’s location at the

105 Spini, 72-73, 77. Corsani, 45-48. The two fountains in the north end of the piazza were installed under Ferdinand II in 1643. These had been executed by Tacca in 1629 and were originally intended for Livorno. Ibid., 49; del Migliore, 268. For sustained interpretations of these fountains as signifying the munificence of Ferdinand II in supplying water to the city, see Jessica Mack-Andrick, Pietro Tacca. Hofbilderhuer der Medici (1577-1640), (Weimar: VDG, 2005), 167-86.

106 On the palaces between the Duomo and the Pitti, see Siegmund, 24.
very centre of this public place meant it stood as the fulcrum for various expressions of the integrated secular and religious control held by the grand dukes. As I will show, the monument elaborates further on key themes this thesis has already identified with the Counter-Reformation prince—that is, his role as a force of civic order and his participation in the most vital causes of the Catholic Church.

It can first be noted how Ferdinand’s statue embellishes the association that existed since antiquity of the equestrian motif with the imposition of order and tranquility, as the rider pacifies his horse. This long-standing meaning for a horse and rider grouping is however underlined in a particularly inventive manner on the white marble base, on the side facing the church of the SS. Annunziata. Here there is affixed a bronze relief by Tacca dating to 1640 and thus installed under Ferdinand II. (figs. 3.20, 3.21) The inscription, the motto of Ferdinand I, “Maiestate tantum (majesty alone),” is set above his emblem of the king bee (the apian ruler was believed to be male during the period) surrounded by a swarm of drones.\(^{107}\) This relief has been discussed by scholars in rather general terms, as symbolizing power. I want to take full account of its iconography as well as how its design is so skillfully integrated with the siting of the monument as a whole.

Ferdinand was not the first Medici to adopt a king bee surrounded by his subjects as a personal emblem. It appears on the back of Botticelli’s posthumous portrait of Giuliano de’Medici (1478 or 1480, now in the National Gallery in Washington).\(^{108}\) Nonetheless, the king bee comes to the fore under Ferdinand. He had it placed on the reverse of a medal made for him

\(^{107}\) Corsani, 46.

by Michele Mazzafirri in 1588.\(^{109}\) (fig. 3.22) Poccetti also included the king bee above Ferdinand’s bust, in the fresco decoration in the Innocenti loggia on the Piazza SS. Annunziata. A bee impresa for Ferdinand is furthermore found in Silvestro Pietrasanta’s *De symbolis heroicis*, published in 1634, and illustrated by Peter Paul Rubens. (fig. 3.23) The motto “Maiestate tantum” (majesty alone) is explained in the accompanying epigram, which refers to the Ancient conceit that the king has no stinger and no use for one. He is able to rule without wrath or violence; his grandeur suffices.\(^{110}\) The epigram designates the ruler as “Dux”, which in Medieval Latin may be translated as general, commander, duke, or bee. Also rooted in Antiquity is the symbolism of the geometrically perfect hive as the ideal state, a notion reinterpreted in the base of Ferdinand’s statue, as each individual takes his place within a strictly ordered

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\(^{109}\) The inventor of the design was the Sienese writer, Scipione Bargagli, whose most famous work was *Delle Imprese* (Siena, 1578). In his account of the Ferdinand’s equestrian statue, Del Migliore elaborates at length on the impresa on the base and notes both Bargagli as its inventor and the precedent of the medal made for Ferdinand. Del Migliore, 267-68.

Notably, too, Ferdinand’s bees predate the now better known examples that alight on monuments throughout the papal states dedicated to Maffeo Barberini, who became Urban VIII. Barberini’s adoption of the emblem may in fact have been directly inspired by the Medici examples. His principal bee impresa refers to Florence: it shows an apian swarm alighting on the branches of a laurel tree with the legend *Hic domus*, symbolizing the relocation of his family from Florence to Rome, and hence his destiny to become pope.\(^{112}\)

\(^{111}\) Lavin, 1000. Given the militaristic iconography of Ferdinand’s equestrian monument, it is of note that in *Georgic 4*, Virgil figures war as a means to peace and order and warriors who “rally around their king” as a swarm of bees. Christopher Hollingsworth explains that for Virgil, “even the bees think of the State. There is no question that the natural order...is to be tamed and situated within one greater and more abstract.” Virgil also casts Caesar’s reign as a “peaceful Hive”, “a perfect social order sanctioned by Zeus”. Christopher Hollingsworth, *Poetics of the Hive: Insect Metaphor in Literature* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2005), 44, 49. The social order of the hive is also praised in the Beneventan version of the *Exultet*, the Southern Italian, Medieval prayer dedicated to the Paschal candle: “O admirable ardor of the bees!/ For their common task they gather as a peaceful throng,/ and though many are working a single substance is increased.” Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 38. This text is also cited in Chapter Two, 25-26, in relation to the bee as a symbol of the Virgin.

\(^{112}\) Lavin, 998 (fig.47), 1010-1011. See also Giovanni Ferro, *Teatro d’Imprese*, 2 vols. (Venice: G. Sarzina, 1623). This book is dedicated to Cardinal Maffeo Barberini. A cardinal’s hat and three bees surmount the frontispiece illustration showing various emblems, and further, along with illustrations of bee impresi, Ferro refers to that of Ferdinand de’Medici designed by Scipione Bargali: “Simile à questa è quella dell’ Ape Rè in mezzo la sua schiera, & è del Gran Duca di Toscana Ferdinando de’ Medici, fatta dal Bargagli col titolo Maiestate tantum, parole di Plinio, che dice Maiestate tantum armatus. S’avverrisca qui, che se fosse fatta dal Duca sarebbe lodevole, perche mostrerebbe con essa la sua modestia, e verrebbe ad attribuire à suditti la sua propria Potenza, segno di grande animo e modo usato da Prencipi, e Capitani gentili per farsi à soldati, e à soggetti amichevole, e grato: Ma sendogli fatta da altri (come si riferisce) se egli non havesse comandato esplicarsi un tal concetto, campeggierebbe solo all’età fanciullesca, e non più, per la parola Tantum, la quale esclude da lui ogni altra perfettione, ed honore all’huomo.” Ferro, vol.2, 67-68.
The base of Ferdinand’s equestrian monument bears even further consideration. Specifically, the composition of the bee emblem on it, with its attendant iconography of the ordering power of the Dux, is a wholly site-specific design. That is, it is a mise-en-abyme of the statue situated at the centre of the piazza, which was a primary site for the ordering of bodies in civic processions as well as a place of everyday public gathering. Indeed, an etching by Jacques Callot from the *Capricci di Varie Figure* (commissioned by Ferdinand’s son, Don Lorenzo de’Medici, and first published in 1617) accentuates this idea. The etching shows a beggar looking onto an all-encompassing view of the piazza of the Santissima Annunziata. At the centre, Callot exaggerates the actual size of Ferdinand’s statue, so as to make claims for the true magnitude of its presence. (fig. 3.24) It moreover is shown looming over crowds mingling in the piazza, including a cluster of persons around its base that is reminiscent of the subordinate bees in Ferdinand’s bee imprese, including that of the bronze relief.\(^{113}\) The relief is also itself a vivid expression of the force of Ferdinand’s rule, being strictly symmetrical but also enlivened in its execution in the bronze. There is a marked dynamism as the rings of bees grow smaller and move closer together in approaching their still centre, the dominating king. An op-art-like radiating, pulsating effect is generated by this abstract arrangement, while the variegated patina of the metal gives each bee its own expanding aura. (fig. 3.21)

Ferdinand’s equestrian statue conveys other themes that have already been discerned on the Innocenti façade and in the church. On the strap that encircles the chest of Ferdinand’s horse are the words, “De’Mettali rapiti al fiero Trace.” The monument thus calls up the achievements of the Order of San Stefano and particularly the role of Ferdinand as its Gran Maestro. The order

\(^{113}\) Jacques Callot, *Capricci di varie Figure di Iacopo Callo. All’ Ill.mo e Ecc.mo S. Principe Don Lorenzo Medici* (Florence, 1617), pl.44.
was modelled after that of St. John of Jerusalem and the Hapsburg Order of the Golden Fleece. It united the Tuscan elites under Medici rule, which provides another possible significance for the bee relief on the base of the statue. Nonetheless, the primary purpose of the Order of San Stefano was to place Tuscany among the leading states of Catholic Europe. The Order distinguished itself by joining forces with other European powers in the Catholic struggle against Islam in the Mediterranean. The inscription therefore refers to how the monument was made with booty, the bronze of Ottoman cannons from the siege of Bona in Algeria. This attack was undertaken by the Tuscan order alongside the Cavalieri of St. John. Del Migliore describes the bronze as standing for “one might say, the barbaric enemy power, pulled down and made subject to the Christian princes.”

Cosimo and his descendents considered the founding of the order and its successes to be a major achievement of their reign, one that affirmed their inclusion among the superpowers of Europe. The inscription on the base of Giambologna’s equestrian statue of Cosimo I in the Piazza della Signoria includes “promoter of the Holy War [SACRAE MILITIAE]” among the list of Cosimo’s virtues. In the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Order was

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114 “Cioè, calcata, e sottoposta, dir si volle, à Principi Cristiani la potenza Barbara, e nemica.” Del Migliore, 267. See also Richa, who attributes the inscription to Giovanni Villifranchi. Richa, vol. 8, 49-50; and Spini, 72. In the attack on Bona, the Order of San Stefano was led by the Tuscan admiral, Jacopo Inghirimi. Poccetti also commemoreated it with a series of frescoes in the Sala di Bona of the Palazzo Pitti. On the Order as an instrument for defining nobility, see Franco Angiolini, “La nobilità ‘imperfetta’: cavalieri e commende di S. Stefano nella Toscana moderna,” _Quaderni Storici_, 26, n.3 (1991): 875-99.

115 Weitzel Gibbons, 79. And during the funeral of Cosimo I the litter was carried by fifty young nobles who were member of the Order, while the decoration of the baldachin included the Cross of the Order and an inscription. Borsook, 1965, 38, 44. When it came to his own commissions, however, Cosimo preferred references to his membership in the Hapsburg Order of the Golden Fleece.
frequently referenced in permanent and ceremonial Medici iconography, particularly that of
Ferdinand I. 116

The Nunziata was also intimately affiliated with the exploits of the order and the “holy
war” against the Turks in general. During battle, the Order of San Stefano placed itself under the
protection of the Nunziata. 117 At least two miracles attributed to the Nunziata and related to the
“barbarism” of the Turks are highlighted in texts during the Counter-Reformation period. Bocchi
describes at length how, in 1410 and 1506, those who were captured by the Turks to be sold into

116 Around 1621, for instance, Cardinal Carlo de’ Medici, uncle of Ferdinand II and one of the family
Cardinals discussed above who maintained Medici influence in Rome during the seventeenth century,
commissioned a fresco cycle for his house, the Casino Medici, from a team of artists including Francesco
Furini and Matteo Rosselli. Individual rooms were dedicated to the chief achievements of the grand dukes
Cosimo I, Francesco I, and Ferdinand I, with two commemorating those of Cosimo II. The rooms of the
latter three include scenes showing Florentine forces battling the Turks. Francesco is portrayed in the
regalia of a knight of San Stefano, while the Order’s galleons are seen in action at Lepanto. Anna Rosa
Masetti, “Il Casino Mediceo e la pittura fiorentina del seicento,” Critica de Arte, 40 (1962): 1-27,
especially 4 and 25, ns.28-30. Such imagery also figured prominently in the lavish Medici marriage
celebrations, wherein Cavalieri participated in spectacles that commemorated victories of the order.
Naumachiae were staged on the Arno and in the flooded courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti. In 1598 Ferdinand
I married Christina of Lorraine, while their son Cosimo II was united with the Hapsburg princess, Maria
Maddalena of Austria in 1608. The 1589 naumachia took place at the Pitti, and showed Christian ships
battling the Turks. For this celebration, there was also a naumachia in Pisa, the headquarters of the Order
of San Stefano. The 1608 performance on the Arno was the capture of the Golden Fleece, with Cosimo II
as captain of the Argo. The subject referred to both the Hapsburg Order of the Golden Fleece and the
victories of the Cavalieri of San Stefano, as well as Ferdinand’s attempt to bring the Holy Sepulchre from
Jerusalem to Florence. For detailed descriptions, see Katharine Poole, “Christian Crusade as Spectacle:
The Cavalieri di Santo Stefano and the Audiences for the Medici Weddings of 1589 and 1608,” in Push
Me, Pull You: Physical and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art, ed. Sarah Blick

117 Fantoni, 1989, 776-777; Fantoni, 1994, 176-77. Also see Addario, La comunità cristiana, 1980, 135-
36, who includes the statutes issued by Pius IV for the establishment of the Order.
slavery and tortured were freed by the Nunziata.\textsuperscript{118} These miracles also appear in Lottini’s \textit{Scelta di alcuni miracoli e grazia della Santissima Annunziata di Firenze}, published in 1619 and are included in Mancini’s scheme of silver votives for the pillars of the nave of the SS. Annunziata.\textsuperscript{119} The diary of Cesare Tinghi, \textit{aiutante di camera} at the Medici court, furthermore makes several reference to ceremonies at the church related to military activities and the Order of San Stefano: these include the christening of a galleon in 1602, and in 1604 the reciting of the \textit{quarantore} to ask for divine aid as the navy undertook a mission against the Turks.\textsuperscript{120} It thus makes sense that invocations of the Order appear in the piazza adjacent to the shrine of the sacred image. In Tacca’s statue, along with the inscription on the strap, Ferdinand wears the cross of the Order around his neck (fig. 3.25), just as he frequently does in his portraits, including his bust portrait in the adjacent loggia of the Innocenti. And as just noted, the

\textsuperscript{118} Bocchi, 1592, 88-92.

\textsuperscript{119} To go on the fourth pillar on the right, below the statue of Antonio Altoviti and with the silver votive of Isabella d’Este, Mancini describes a votive dedicated by “Niccolò dà Lanciano, rattenuto in Turchia in diabolico Ferro col collo, mani e piedi per trenta mesi.” Lanciano brought the irons from Constantinople and offered them to the Nunziata “per Trofeo di Maria”. And on the first pillar on the left, under the statue of the Prince of Lorraine, there is the votive of “Ruberto di Sforzo da Pescia in Toscana, fatto preda de Turchi…sarebbe venuto da qui Paesi ad adorare la sua Liberatrice, con offerirgli un’simil Legno da Mare fatto d’argento.” For these, Mancini refers to Lottini, Chapters 27 and 2, respectively.

Dina/Mancini, 14, 23.

\textsuperscript{120} Cesare Tinghi, \textit{Diario e Cerimoniale della Corte Medicea, tenuto da Cesare Tinghi, aiutante di camera del Granduca Ferdinando I (dal 11 luglio 1600 al 12 Settembre 1615)} Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, mss. Gino Capponi, 261, 2 vols., vol.I, 87v, 93. In an entry dating to March or April of 1612, Tinghi also lists a number of Medici commissions, including “una galena et una nave d’argento alla nutiata”. He also notes on March 25, 1614, the feast of the Annunciation, that Paul V granted “indulgenzia alla chiesa de Cavalieri di Santo Stefano in Pisa” on the occasion of a holy procession. Tinghi, 381v, 561. For further on Tinghi’s 1604 entry and Grand Duchess Chirstina of Lorraine’s role in the \textit{Quarantore} celebrations at the Santissima Annunziata, see Sanger, 53-54.
foundation of the Order, as granted to Cosimo I by Pius IV in 1565, is also illustrated in Poccetti’s fresco above the bust of Cosimo.\footnote{Giorgio Spini has also noted that full length statues of Cosimo I and Ferdinand I, depicted in armour and placed in the piazzas of Pisa, Arezzo, and Livorno, are similar in form to that of Giovanni d’Austria, sculpted by Andrea Calamech in 1572 and erected in Messina. The latter famously led the Christian forces that conquered the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, a battle in which the galleons of the Order of San Stefano also took part. Spini, 71. Cosimo I had located the Order’s naval base in his newly founded town of Cosmopoli on the island of Elba. Ferdinand I later moved the Order’s operations to Livorno, in his campaign to develop the latter as a military base as well as a mercantile port. His projects included the building of shipyards for the construction of galleys.} Ferdinand’s equestrian statue, then, in its iconography, inscription, material, and siting — that is, at the centre of the Piazza SS. Annunziata and in relation to other imagery nearby – sought to embody the grand duke as a consummate Counter-Reformation prince. He is both the source of Florentine security and a knight who, under the protection of the Nunziata, was counted among the chief defenders of the Christian faith.

3.9 The Paliotto of Ferdinand I: Exemplarity, Imitation, and Order

Returning to the interior of church, I want to examine another, particularly prominent Medici votive portrait, the silver paliotto, or altar frontal, placed directly below the sacred image. This was dedicated by Ferdinand I in 1600 after his son, the future grand duke Cosimo II, recovered from an illness, and it shows Cosimo kneeling in gratitude before the Nunziata. (fig. 3.26) This work replaced a marble altar that had been donated by Piero de’Medici in 1460.\footnote{The pilasters of the altar donated by Piero were reused in the small chapels that open onto the nave, underneath the organ. A large marble urn with an image of the Trinity, which likely also supported the altar table, was moved to various locations throughout the church until it was acquired in the late}
is still in situ and thus remained after 1665 – that is, after the votives were cleared out of the nave of the church, including the Medici statues. In Chapter One, I began to investigate the complex imagery of the paliotto in light of the privileged relationship of the Medici with the sacred image and the motifs of the Holy Face and resemblance utilized in the creation of an iconography of Counter-Reformation rulership. To expand on these considerations, I will now look at how the singular form of this work in the context of the shrine would have distinguished it from the mass of other votives there, silver and otherwise. Before considering these unique aspects of the paliotto, however, it should first be stressed that in some significant respects this work would have also been recognized during the seicento as a typical votive.

As noted in Chapter Two, votives in precious metals that were representations of specific divine or mortal persons were individualized and typically costly donations that were produced in fairly large numbers for European shrines, including the SS. Annunziata. Indeed, in 1465 Piero de’ Medici had donated a magnificent silver effigy of his son Giuliano, weighing over two kilos and decorated with niello inlay and diamonds. This votive was reminiscent of the paliotto of 1600 which shows the young Cosimo: Giuliano was also depicted kneeling, and the offering was made after an illness, with his recovery attributed to the Nunziata.123 As a relief tablet, the paliotto of Ferdinand I furthermore belongs to a category of silver votive that appears at other sanctuaries. At the end of the sixteenth century, there were more than sixty such silver tablets hanging on the walls at Loreto. These usually show a multi-figured scene and they could be used as antependia,124 as is the case with that of Ferdinand. There might have been other silver relief

nineteenth century by the art collector Stefano Bardini. Petrucci, 29. See also Chapter One for other sources on the paliotto.

123 For Giuliano’s votive, see Holmes, 2009, 166-67.
124 For this form of votive, see Lightbown, 356.
panels at the SS. Annunziata; however, besides the fact that Mancini probably planned to refashion some older painted panels into silver as part of the nave scheme, I have found no mention of any others. Some of those from other sanctuaries that remain or for which there is evidence are also like the Nunziata paliotto in that they show portraits of noble persons in prayer.  

But beyond its typical qualities, the Nunziata paliotto is also a unique offering with site specific meaning. At a cost of around 13,000 scudi, it was by far the most expensive votive at the Nunziata’s shrine at the time of its creation, and the novelty of its composition in the realm of Florentine silver production has been stressed by scholars of that art.  

The inscription that runs along the top cornice refers to the Nunziata as the healing force behind Cosimo’s recovery. As part of the votive, along with the donation of the paliotto, orations were to be said for the Medici in perpetuity by the Servites, just as they had prayed day and night for the health of the Medici Prince. This kind of stipulation was a common accompaniment to elite offerings, and it

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125 Ibid. Torsellino describes a number of such prestige portraits on silver and gold relief tablets at Loreto, including, from the 1580’s, one of Federigo Tomacelli, Son of the Duke of Parma, Ranuccio Farnese, and “Alfonso Visconti, Milanesi, l’imagine sua orante à la Madre di Dio, in una piasta d’oro rappresentata.” Bk. 4, Ch.XIV, 376.  


127 The inscription reads: “VIRGINI DEIPARAE DICAVIT FERDINANDUS MEDICES MAGNUS DUX AETR. MDC.”  

128 The document records that the “PP. del Convento” are depicted in the panel, and “quali, gioro et notte, si nei sacri Uffizii, come nell’orazioni particolari, pregorno per detta sanità, come anco fanno sempre per la conservazione di questa Seren.ma Casa de’Medici, tanto benefattrice a questa Casa.” ASF Libro di Ricordanze C, a c.295. The document is transcribed in Tonini, LVII, 298.
reflects the general nature of votives as on-going expressions of thanksgiving and supplication.\textsuperscript{129}

While seventeenth-century sources variously attribute the manufacture of the paliotto to Giambologna or Matteo Nigetti, it was in fact made by Egidio Leggi.\textsuperscript{130} Its designer is not certain. Nonetheless, although it would have been unusual for designer and craftsman to be the same person, given the fact that no other artist is mentioned in the documents, Leggi might also have also been responsible for the paliotto’s intriguing composition.\textsuperscript{131} The latter is comprised of five panels: two with the arms of the Medici and Lorena that are set back from the central three; and two with cherub’s heads that mark the sacrality of the figurative panel at the very centre. It is the latter that is of greatest interest here. (fig. 3.27) This central panel of the paliotto shows the young Cosimo in profile, kneeling before the fresco. While he is in the middle ground of the depicted space, he is also at the centre of the composition, as is underscored by the construction of the architecture of the scene. There are also two gatherings of figures in the foreground of the image that frame him symmetrically. In terms of the representation of the historical event, these groups appear to be within the space of the coretto that adjoins the tempietto in actuality and that is thus part of the precinct of the sacred image. They are also identified in the document of 1600: on the left are male members of the Medici court and opposite, frati of the Servite convent. Two more persons stand behind Cosimo on the left of the composition, half hidden by the arched

\textsuperscript{129} See Chapter Two for this point.
\textsuperscript{130} See the document in Tonini, LVII, 298. It states that Leggi received materials for the work on May 11, 1600 and was paid on May 14, 1602.
\textsuperscript{131} The point is argued by Cipriani, 330-31.
opening between the coretto and the tempietto. These two are not mentioned in the document, but it seems most likely that they are especially esteemed persons, perhaps even other Medici.\footnote{Tonini, 93.}

The one-point perspective view of this scene recalls quattrocento reliefs,\footnote{Ibid., 331.} just as the staid symmetry and restrained ornament of the paliotto as a whole also harks back to the early Florentine Renaissance. These aspects of the design of the paliotto might be deliberately meant to complement in spirit the proto-Renaissance style of the image. Certainly, in his \textit{Sopra l'immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata} of 1592 Bocchi had praised the fresco’s “simplicity (\textit{semplicità})” and “archaic sweetness (\textit{dolcezza disusata})”\footnote{Bocchi, 1592, 64. Bocchi’s deep appreciation of early Renaissance art is displayed in his \textit{Eccellenza Della Statua Del San Giorgio Di Donatello Scultore Fiorentino, posta nella facciata di fuori d'Orsan Michele} (Florence: Marescotti, 1584). In this publication, widely considered to be the first sustained text on a single work of art, Bocchi introduces his conception of \textit{costume}. \textit{Costume} is discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation as a key term in Bocchi’s book on the Nunziata. Wazbinski also links the celebration of the Nunziata during the Counter-Reformation period to the value placed on “primitive” simplicity. Zygmunt Wazbinski, “\textit{Il modus semplice}: un dibatto sull’ \textit{ars sacra} fiorentina intorno al 1600,” in \textit{Studi su Raffaello, Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi. (Urbino-Florence 6-14 April 1984)}, Micaela Sambucco Hamoud and Maria Letizia Strocchi eds., (Urbino: Quattro Venti, 1987), 634.} The centralized composition was, however, also conceived so as to enact the privileged relationship that the grand ducal family enjoyed with the sacred fresco. As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, from the sixteenth century on, the Medici succeeded in controlling to a great degree the unveiling and viewing of the image. The paliotto also brings to mind Giani’s story of 1604 describing Cosimo’s discovery of the Volto Santo of Christ that perfectly resembled the Nunziata: Giani, it can be recalled, had Cosimo uncover and see the divine “face to face.” In the paliotto relief, the
future Grand Duke is clearly set apart from others while being in closest contact with the
Nunziata’s *santissimo volto*.

Furthermore, while the beholder of the paliotto sees the sacred image only obliquely, Cosimo’s view is frontal. In this regard, too, the mise-en-abyme position of the paliotto within the larger space the church is also of significance: it was placed conspicuously at the head of the array of votives laid out before the sacred image along the length of the nave and, while those votives were still in place (so until around 1665) the paliotto was distinguished as the offering in nearest proximity to the Nunziata. Votives that were situated close to the cult image were understood to be “in the sight of the Mother of God”, even though the Nunziata’s image was almost always covered. At the same time, the groups of *cortegiani* and *frati* in the paliotto are positioned in relation to the Prince analogously to the rows of votive portraits that were ranged before the Nunziata in the actual space of the church. (In this regard, it must be remembered that when the paliotto was mounted, in 1600, the culling of the votives in the nave was not to begin for another thirty years.) The significances of the relationships represented here are made unmistakable by the two dogs in the foreground, positioned below Cosimo and between the two groups: these are surely meant to stand for fidelity and submission --that of the Grand Duke to the holy patron and, in turn, the courtiers and friars to the Medici Prince. The play of such an identification between the prince and the Nunziata, as well as the concept of imitation (themes that were also examined at length in the first chapter of this thesis) are even further elaborated in the image: there is the large figure of a kneeling *frate* in the right foreground, who turns toward

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135 A manuscript description of the Nunziata’s shrine, dated 1511, refers to the life-size wax votives “*in conspectus divine genitricis*”. Cosimo Favilla, *Virginis Annuntiatae Miracula*, 1511, Ms.C.I.1458, c.64v, Biblioteca Nazionale Florence. Cited in Holmes, 2009, 166.

136 Cipriani, 330. The document does not name the individuals shown in the groups of cortegiani and frati.
and gazes at Cosimo: he thus echoes Cosimo’s own attitude before the sacred fresco. The inclusion of the cortegiani also very possibly had pointed political resonances. In the Reason of State, Giovanni Botero, wrote that of the three strata of society – gli opulent, i mezzani, and i miser – the first and third groups (that is, not just the most disenfranchised, but also, at the other end, the nobility) are the most difficult to govern, the opulenti because their influential position makes them too proud to suffer subordination. Florentine writers like Scipione Ammirato and Filippo Cavriana, both writing commentaries on Tacitus at the end of the sixteenth century, also drew attention to the need for the Prince to keep an eye on the elites. Cavriana warned the Prince to keep secrets to himself: not even his ministers could be trusted.

The notion that imitation establishes hierarchical relations even further informs the paliotto. I refer here to how the kneeling Cosimo takes the same form as the traditional and highly common type of silver votive that depicted a kneeling figure. There are unique examples of

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137 “In ogni Stato sono tre sorti di persone: gli opulent, i miser, e i mezzani tra l’uno e l’altro estremo di queste tre sorti. I mezzani sono ordinariament i più quieti e più facile a governare, e gli estremi i più difficili, perché i potenti, per la commodità che le ricchezze apportano seco, difficilmente s’astengono dal male; i miser, per le necessità nelle quail si trovano, similmente sogliono esser molto viziosi…Oltre di ciò, quelli i quali abbondano di ricchezze e fioriscono di nobilità, di parentadi e di clientele, né star sotto altri per la delicatezza della loro educazione, né vi vogliano stare per l’alterezza dell’animo.” Botero continues by explaining how the poor are more apt to follow “cose disoneste”. Botero, Bk.4, 93-94.

138 Scipione Ammirato, Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito (Brescia: Filippo II Giunta, 1594). For Cavriana’s text of 1597, see n. 72 above.

139 As Samuel Berner has pointed out, Cavriana’s point of view was no doubt informed by his time at the French Court, where social mobility created an atmosphere of uncertainty and uneasy volatility. In his view, that “many men rose suddenly to great dignity and station” brought about “the ruin of this [French] kingdom.” He warned about the mixing of social classes and the need to appease and maintain the status of the elites. Berner, 1970, 194-96. Francesco I banned gatherings of his upper class political opponents. Siegmund, 25, n.80.
such figures, some of which were statues, but others were small and generic in design, taking the form of a profile relief figure. This latter type in silver appears at the SS. Annunziata at least as early as the sixteenth century, but it is especially common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a flourishing perhaps due to the influence of Cosmino’s depiction in the paliotto. (fig. 2.3) In the paliotto, then, Cosimo clearly took his place as a first among many, assuming the role of exemplar.

Such exemplarity was a crucial aspect of the identity of the Counter-Reformation ruler. If, according to political theory of the period, the ideal Christian prince provided order to his realm, his power could not be secured without his virtue. The claim of divine right served as a moral check on his behaviour in that it entailed his responsibility to his subjects. The ultimate aim for the prince was not tyranny, but the good of his state, and so, while Botero makes it clear that the security of the state lies in the obedience of its subjects, he also warns that they will only submit to the prince’s rule if he is perceived to be morally exemplary:

The principle foundation of every state is the obedience of its subjects to their superior, and this is founded on the eminence of the virtue of the Prince....[T]he people willingly submit to a Prince from whom shines some pre-eminence of virtue, because they will not stand to obey and stay under whomever is superior to them, unless they are inferior or even equal.  

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141 Berner, 1970, 192-93.
142 “Il fondamento principale d’ogni Stato si è l’obbedienza de’sedditi al suo superiore, e questa si fonda sull’eminenza della virtù del Prencipe, perché, si come gli elementi e i corpi che di essi si compongono ubidiscono senza contrasto a’movimenti delle sfere celesti per la nobilità della natura loro, e tra i cieli gl’inferiori seguono il moto de’superiori, così i popoli si sottomettono volentieri al Prencipe in cui
In Chapter One of this thesis it was noted how the imperative of exemplarity was also promoted by the foremost theologian of the period, Roberto Bellarmine. Bellarmine asserted that “the princes of the world are like mirrors and models to which all their subjects look and to which they are compelled to conform in their behavior.” Shortly after bestowing the grand ducal crown on Cosimo I and in a breve of April 17, 1566, Pius IV had also exhorted Cosimo to be a model of piety to his subjects. The idea resonates, too, in Bocchi’s equation of the costume of the prince with that of the Nunziata herself. As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, in his text of 1592 Bocchi describes the affective power emanating from the faces of the prince and the Nunziata. He claims they both impress their own virtù upon the beholder-worshipper and bring about his or her obedience and conversion.

The Nunziata’s paliotto, with the kneeling Cosimo, thus figures the Christian prince as a divine instrument whose purpose is to effect social order and personal piety. I will return to this particular votive and the theme of exemplarity in the final chapter of this thesis, wherein I also discuss its composition as an instance of a type of image that is particular to the art of the Counter-Reformation. To conclude this current chapter, I want to now turn to a final group of Medici portraits at the SS. Annunziata that were significantly related to those examined above.

risplende qualche preminenza di virtù, perché niuno si sdegna d’ubidire e di star sotto a chi li è superiore, ma bene a chi gli è inferiore o anche pari.” Botero, Bk. 1, 20.

143 See Chapter One. Exemplarity was a prime pastoral responsibility for the clergy, according to Carlo Borromeo and other Counter-Reformation reformers. For this imperative—and specifically, that the clergy are to be paternal figures, modelling their role after that of Chist ---as a key aspect of the Diocesan Synod convened in 1569 by the Florentine bishop, Antonio Altoviti, see Addario, *La comunità Cristiana*, 1980, 105-06.
3.10 The Portraits of Vitale and Alessandro de’Medici, and the Sacristy of the Nunziata as a Votive

There is a final group of portraits that is among the complex of Medici representations in and contiguous with the church of the SS. Annunziata. These works have been noted only very briefly in the existing literature on the SS. Annunziata, and their physical and thematic relationship to the sacred image has never been acknowledged. I will show that these portraits commemorate a high profile event in Florentine religious history of the period. They are furthermore another instance of Medici-related monuments at this site that represent the participation of Florence in the most important Counter-Reformation policies coming from Rome. In the latter regard, they are also significant with respect to the situation of the Jews in Counter-Reformation Italy.

The marble bust portraits of Vitale de’Medici and his son Alessandro are still in their original location, in the entrance corridor leading from the piazza SS. Annunziata to the Chiostro Grande of the convent that adjoins the church. (fig.2.1) The busts were executed by Francesco Mochi, a sculptor active in the restoration of antique marbles in the Medici collection during the 1640’s and 50’s, but about whom little is otherwise known. (He should not be confused with the more famous Francesco Mochi who was active in Rome and the author of the Veronica statue (1629-40) stituated at the crossing of St. Peter’s.) The busts are part of the funerary monuments of Vitale (who died sometime before 1635) and Alessandro. (figs. 3.28 – 3.30) These were erected respectively in 1645 and 1646 by one of Vitale’s other sons, Antonio. The ornamented niches containing the busts are positioned on either side of the door leading to the Sacristy of the
Madonna. The rebuilding of the sacristy had also been commissioned by Alessandro and Antonio sometime around August of 1632. At the time they were made, the portraits would certainly have been identified as Medici, but Vitale and Alessandro were not in fact Medici born. Vitale’s original name has been identified by historians as being either Rabbi Yehiel (or Jochel) di Pesero, or Vitale di Salamone da Cascia. He had been a learned and wealthy rabbi and doctor, and if he was Vitale di Salamone, he was also one of four governors in the Florentine ghetto between 1580 and 1582.

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144 Bocchi-Cinelli, 456; Del Migliore, 293. Del Migliore erroneously identifies the sculptor as Orazio Mochi, the father of Francesco. The family was best known for its work in pietre dure. Besides the restoration of antique sculpture, Francesco (1603-49) also made models for statues to be executed in pietre dure. The busts being discussed here and two reliefs with the stemma of the Colloredo family, produced for the decoration of their chapel in the church of the Nunziata, are Francesco’s only known original marbles. For Francesco, as well as his father Orazio, see Claudio Pizzorusso and Anthea Brook, “Francesco Mochi,” in Il Seicento Fiorentino. Arte a Firenze da Ferdinand I a Cosimo III, exhib cat. Palazzo Strozzi, 21 dicembre 1986- 4 maggio 1987 (Florence: Cantini, 1986), Vol. 2 (Biografie), 127-129; and Giovanni Pratesi, Repertorio della scultura fiorentina del seicento e settecento, Turin: U. Allemand, 1993, vol. 1, 52. Francesco was admired by Matteo Nigetti, who oversaw the decoration of the Colloredo chapel and might have recommended him for the Nunziata sacristy project. As discussed below, Nigetti designed the sacristy. Notably, too, Orazio designed the parts in relief of an ex-voto in pietre dure that imitates the silver paliotto of Ferdinand I at the Nunziata. It shows Cosimo II kneeling in profile. This was the paliotto intended for the altar of Carlo Borromeo in Milan Cathedral, part of which is now in the Museo degli Argenti in Florence. Annamaria Giusti, in The Medici, Michelangelo, and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence, exhib. cat. March 16 –Jun 8, 2003, The Detroit Institute of Arts (New Haven and London, Yale University Press and Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 2002), cats. 115 & 116, 258-59. See also Maria Sframeli, cat. 5.9, in Il Seicento Fiorentino, 1986, Vol.1, 476-77. The pietre dure relief destined for Milan is discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.


146 He was born in Pesaro sometime before 1559 and was in Florence with his family by the 1580’s. The erudite Yehiel (or Vitale) was a doctor of philosophy and medicine, renowned for his knowledge of the
What is certain is that the man who became Vitale Medici was baptised in 1583, and his padrino for this was none other than Cardinal and future Grand Duke, Ferdinand de’Medici.\textsuperscript{147} Vitale’s four sons also converted shortly after their father and they, too, took on the Medici name. Throughout Italy, those converts who came from the most distinguished Jewish families, like that of Vitale, were given the names of their patrons.\textsuperscript{148} While historians are not fully certain of the status of converts in relation to their namesakes during this period, the monuments considered here offer evidence that Vitale and his sons assumed some degree of identification with the grand ducal family: the Medici coat of arms, with six palle, is located over the door of the Sacristy of the Madonna and directly above the inscription that records the date of the project as 1635 along with the family’s patronage and their names: “ANGELORUM REGINA SACRARIUM/ DICARUNT/ALEXANDER ET ANTONIUS MEDICES VITALIS FILII/ AN DOMINI MDCXXXV.” (fig. 3.32) Del Migliore’s description of the door a half a century later attests that Vitale adopted the Medici family name: “on the front is the coat of arms with the palle. He received this along with the Medici family name (casato) in the act of baptism, which sacred scriptures and languages, which included Syriac, Chaldean, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Lisa Saracco, “Medici, Vitale,” Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, accessed online http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vitale-medici_(Dizionario-Biografico)/

\textsuperscript{147} Roberto Salvadori, Breve storia degli ebrei toscani: IX-XX secolo (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), 70. In a text of 1701, Vitale is described as “ebreo dottissimo, versato nella Filosofia, Medicina e studi degli Ebrei, ricco di Facultà, e primo tra I Rabbini del suo secolo. Avendo udite alcune prediche in Firenze del Padre Dionisio Castacciaro Inquisitore, mosso da interno impulse, lasciò l’ebraica superstizione, ed abbracciò la fede di Cristo, nell’anno 1582.” Paolo Sebastiano Medici, Catalogo dei neofiti illustri (Florence: Vincenzio Vangelisti, 1701), 59-60, 324.

\textsuperscript{148} For the conversion of Vitale’s four sons, see Saracco, n.p.
was given to him with great praise in the name of Ferdinand I." The same six *palle* stemma moreover crowns each of the aediculae holding the two portrait busts (figs. 3.28, 3.30). The inscription beneath the bust of Alessandro refers to his role as tutor to the son of Ferdinand I, the future grand duke Cosimo II, and his employment as librarian of the Medici at the Laurentiana between 1604 and 1642. Antonio, who commissioned this funerary project, became wealthy working as a doctor at the Medici court. Such was his distinction that, in 1630, he was one of five physicians asked to judge, and the first to present testimony on, the miraculously uncorrupted condition of the exhumed body of Domenica da Paradiso (1473-1553). Domenica was a Florentine mystic and founder of the Domenican Convent of Santa Croce. Her cult was vigorously promoted by the Medici, particularly at the time of the plague of 1630-31.

The sacristy and the portraits located there will be discussed shortly in the context of the treatment of the Jews in Florence during this period. I will also explain how this particular conversion and the presence of Vitale and his sons at the SS. Annunziata further consolidated the close ties between the Medici and Counter-Reformation Rome. Firstly, however, I want to

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149 “In fronte l’Arme di Palle, ricevuta insieme co’l Casato de’Medici, nell’atto del Battesimo, che si dette loro a nome di Ferdinando I con lode grandissima.” Del Migiliore, 293.

150 Saracco, np.

151 “[H]er tomb, far from the city, became a haven that contrasted with the barbarism of the mass burials. The sepulcher at Crocetta served as a precious nucleus around which gathered the court, the highest ecclesiastical officials, senators, and important guild members.” Calvi, 199. See 199-253 for the full account of the social and political significance of the figure of Domenica, including her support of the Medici during her lifetime; and for Antonio Medici’s involvement in the exhumation, see Ibid., 221-222. Pietro Tacca and Michelangelo Buonarotti the Younger were also asked to verify the likeness of the corpse’s face against a plaster mask of the saint. Ibid., 217-19. See also Meghan Callahan, “Suor Domenica da Paradiso as alter Christus: Portraits of a Renaissance Mystic,” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 43, 2 (2012): 323-50.
address how these monuments very possibly comprised a votive ensemble offered to the Nunziata. Documents indicate that permission to rebuild the Sacristy of the Madonna was granted to Alessandro by the Servites in 1632, and it was built by 1635 according to a design by the Medici favourite, Matteo Nigetti, and at the substantial expense of around 4,000 scudi. The space had traditionally been an oratory dedicated to the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Angels. As the inscription indicates, this dedication was maintained, even as the space also served in the cult of the Nunziata. The sacristy was intended specifically to house vestments, liturgical cloths, silver, and other precious objects used in the rituals that took place before the sacred image and within the Nunziata’s precinct. Throughout the history of the cult, the Medici were among the most active donors of such objects. Honour was also paid by Vitale’s family to the Virgin at the SS. Annunziata through other means. Around the same time that Nigetti was engaged for the sacristy, Antonio and Alessandro commissioned from Jacopo Vignali an altarpiece for the interior, showing the Assumption of Mary with saints. (figs.3.33, 3.34) Although the two

152 Pagliarulo, 1994, 184, 186.

153 See Carlo Gamba, “Un affresco ignoto del Botticelli,” Rivista d’arte, 16 (1934): 187-89. For the sacristy, see also Casalini, La SS. Annunziata di Firenze. Studi e documenti sulla chiesa e il convent (Florence: Convento del SS. Annunziata) 1978, 286, and Tonini, 228. Nigetti’s design relocated the entrance and altar. The tomb of the lawyer Biagio Curini remained in the new sacristy. It included a marble bust of Curini, executed in 1585 by Giovan Battista Caccini, who designed the facade of the Nunziata’s church in 1601 and later sculpted the bust of Cosimo II for the facade of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, as noted above. Biagio Curini was furthermore appointed president of the Order of San Stefano in 1569. Bocchi-Cinelli, 456.

154 Casalini, 1978, 286. He cites the document transcribed in Tonini, 228ff. Two times in his text on the Nunziata, Bocchi discusses the precious “veste sacre” and cloths—fashioned in silk and brocade, and some embroidered in gold and silver-- as important contributions to the splendour of the sanctuary. Both times he mentions those donated by Lucrezia Tornabuoni, wife of Piero de’Medici. Bocchi, 1592, 29, 103.
kneeling male saints cannot be identified with absolute certainty, Richa, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, does name them as Saints Vitale and Alessandro. In 1655 Antonio also commissioned a large silver ciborium costing 7,000 scudi, designed by Alfosso Parigi the Younger and executed by master silversmiths Giovan Battista and Marc’Antonio Merliri. This sumptuous gift was placed on the high altar of the church. A document indicates that Antonio dedicated it to the memory of his dead brother, Alessandro, and the donation stipulated that it must always remain at this most prestigious location. Among the figures depicted on the ciborium with the Madonna and Child are Saints Vitale and Alessandro. (figs. 3.35, 3.36)

There is no available evidence that states explicitly that the bust portraits of Vitale and Alessandro, as well as the sacristy, were meant to comprise a votive complex offered to the Nunziata. Yet there are a number of indications that they were. Firstly, in the documentation regarding the sacristy commission, Alessandro is recorded as “always having a particular

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155 Richa, 61, and Petrucci, 71. Mastropierro identifies them as Saints Agnese, Gregorio, Stefano, and the most famous Servite saint, Filippo Benizzi. Franca Mastropierro, Jacopo Vignali pittore nella Firenze del Seicento (Milan: La Rete, 1973), 73. See also Giovanni Pagliariulo, “Jacopo Vignali” in Il Seicento Fiorentino, 1986, Vol.2, 186. Pagliariulo argues that the altarpiece might have been commissioned to thank the Virgin specifically for liberation from the plague of 1630-31, which also recurred in 1633. Pagliariulo, 1994, 184-87.

156 The document is undated and transcribed in Tonini, 288. See also Bemporad, 306; and Richa, 38. The inscription on the Ciborium records the commission as a familial one: ALEX. ET. ANT. FR. MEDICEI. VITALIS F. F. FLOR. ARGENTUM. HOC. DEO. TRIBVNAL. ELMENTIAE. SYBOLVM. AC. VOTVM MORITVRI. C.C.CIC.IC.C.LV. Antonio Medici also donated a substantial sum to the Jesuit seminary in Florence (where many of the elite youth of the city were educated) specifically for the study of mathematics. Addario, La comunità Cristiana, 1980, 130. Alessandro and Antonio were furthermore patrons for the remaking of the façade of the church of the Ognissanti in Florence in 1637. Saracco, np.
devotion to the image of the Santissima Annunziata.” Furthermore, the sacristy and busts fulfill the criteria for votives in a number of ways. All votive gifts are constituted by three aspects that have to do with the relation between the dedicator and the holy patron: 1) the vow made by the votary asking the holy patron for favour or thanks; 2) an action on the part of the holy patron, granting the favor; and 3) a gift from the votary to the patron. The vow can either proceed or follow the holy patron’s action, so Vitale and his sons would have turned as votaries to the Nunziata in thanks well after their Christianization, recognizing her power in retrospect. That the Nunziata’s countenance had such a potency to convert and transform the soul was indeed repeatedly claimed by Francesco Bocchi in Sopra l’immagine della Nunziata. Certainly, too, a claim for the Nunziata’s agency would have affiliated Vitale’s family, their busts, and the sacristy even more closely with the Medici, given the latter’s rich history of patronage and votives at the SS. Annunziata. Vitale’s conversion and the portraits, along with the sacristy, would thus correspond to the first and third criteria; and if the Nunziata was deemed to have effected Vitale’s conversion, the second was also met.

There are other indications that the sacristy and portraits were a votive offered after the occasion of the Christianization of Vitale and his family. Most striking is a fresco over three meters high on the right interior wall of the sacristy, commissioned from Cecco Bravo and dated

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158 I follow here the conditions outlined by Hugo van der Velden, The donor’s image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 193ff.

159 See for instance, the conversion after the Nunziata saves a man who had been captured and tortured by the Turks. Bocchi, 1592, 93; See also Ibid., 40, 54-55, and 81-82.
around 1635-38. 160 (fig. 3.37) This image shows San Vitale, flanked by his two sons, Saints Gervaso and Protasio, on the left and right. 161 Above them is the sacred host surrounded by angels; below sits an angel who looks down towards the marble Medici stemme on the altar. 162 Gamba suggests these saints resemble the sepulchral busts just outside the sacristy and that Saints Vitale and Gervaso are portraits of Vitale and Alessandro. 163 Resemblance or not, there is no doubt that Vitale’s name saint and his sons were meant to be identified with the patrons of the chapel and their father. As told in the Golden Legend, saint Vitale was originally a Roman from a consular family, living at the time of Nero, and was inspired to convert after witnessing the torture and death of a Christian. 164 In Cecco Bravo’s fresco, Vitale stands with arms open and gazing upward towards the glorified host. Given the funerary monuments on the exterior of the

160 The fresco has been dated primarily on stylistic grounds. Anna Rosa Masetti, Cecco Bravo, pittore toscano del Seicento (Venice: Neri Pozza, 1962), 25. Cecco (Francesco Montelatici) was also among a number of artists commissioned at various points in time to paint frescoes in the Chiostro Grande (or Chiostro dei Morti). His contributions are representations of Charity and Hope.

161 Below Vitale and Protasio are the inscriptions, respectively, “S. VITALs” and “S.PROTs.” Ibid., Cat. 10, 84.

162 A document of October 12, 1637 notes Alessandro’s commission for the altar, and another dated March 1, 1639 records the special indulgences granted by Urban VIII to Alessandro and Antonio, allowing them to make profits during the feasts of the Annunciation and Assumption. See Anna Barsanti and Roberto Contini, Cecco Bravo : pittore senza regola. Firenze 1601-Innsbruck 1661, exhib. cat. Florence, Casa Buonarotti, June 23-September 1999 (Milan: Electa, 1999), 30 and 35, ns.82 and 83; Pagliarulo, 1994, 184-86.

163 Gamba, 189.

164 In Ravenna, Vitale encounters a Christian doctor, Ursicino, who has been tortured. Presumably impressed by the man’s fortitude, Vitale urges him to not take his own life (and thus be condemned to eternal death) but to bear his suffering until God grants him death and the martyr’s palm and crown. Ursicino is strengthened by Vitale’s words and suffers unto death. Vitale buries him with honor and then refuses to return to his employ in the Roman judicial service. He is subsequently buried alive. Iacopo da Varazze, Legenda Aurea, ed. Alessandro and Lucetta Tiale Brovarone (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 342-43.
sacristy, the image might refer to the salvation Vitale received in death. More plausibly, however — or perhaps simultaneously — the action in the altarpiece dramatizes the moment when Vitale embraced the Christian faith. That this is the iconography of the image is further indicated by del Migliore’s confusion of its subject with the most important moment of conversion in Christian history: he misidentifies it as “the conversion of St. Paul (il ratto di San Paolo)”.

Other evidence supports the identification of the sacristy as a votive. There is at least one precedent of a votive in the form of a sepulchre with a portrait: in 1585 the lavish votive tomb of Nicolò Caetano Cardinal of Sermoneta was constructed at the sanctuary of Loreto, positioned in proximity to the Santa Casa and featuring a bronze statue of the Cardinal. Furthermore, while it was rare for the votives of highly placed persons in Northern Europe not to be made of valuable materials, prestige votives in Italy were regularly fashioned in relatively inexpensive media. Mantegna’s altarpiece of Sta. Maria della Vittoria (1496), which shows Francesco Gonzaga kneeling before the Virgin, and Piero della Francesco’s fresco of Sigismondo Malatesta kneeling before S. Sigismondo in Rimini (1451) are well known examples. There is also Raphael’s portrait of Julius II (1511-12) which was displayed as a votive on feast days in the Church of Sta. Maria del Popolo. The fact that the portraits of Vitale and

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165 Del Migliore, 293. The mistake is repeated by Richa, V.8, 61. The subject was correctly identified by Gamba, 187.
166 Torsellino describes this particular votive at great length and comments on its unusualness. Torsellino, Book 4, Ch. VIII, 361-62,
167 Ibid., 261 & 283. See Van der Velden on the Italian tendency to not use precious materials for votives. Van der Velden, 2000, 81 and 282-84.
168 Bram Kempers, “The Pope’s Two Bodies. Julius II, Raphael and Saint Luke’s Virgin of Santa Maria del Popolo,” in The Miraculous Image, 139-159, especially 156ff. Kempers argues that the painting is
Alessandro are not made of more precious materials thus does not rule out the possibility they were votive gifts.

3.11 Jewish Conversion, the Medici, and Rome

Besides the fact that it was dedicated to the Nunziata, the sacristy and its portraits are also tied to the Medici votive effigies within the church, in that they too make manifest Medici relations with Rome and the participation of the grand dukes in the most vital agendas of the Counter-Reformation. In this regard, there are two contexts that inform the significance of the commissions undertaken by Vitale and his sons, and both of these have to do with the issue of Jewish conversion during this period: firstly, the circumstances under which Vitale delivered public sermons in Florence will be addressed; secondly, there is the event of Vitale’s baptism.

Shortly after becoming Christian Vitale delivered public sermons in Florence. To discern the significance of this and how it informs the commissions undertaken by his sons, it is essential to understand the ambivalence with which Jewish converts were regarded during this period. In fact, a general suspicion of converted Jews directly informed the reception of the offerings of Vitale and his sons at the SS. Annunziata. Del Migliore opens his account of the sacristy indicating that it was a controversial commission. He introduces the bust portraits in the niches as those of Vitale and Alessandro “who, with his brother Antonio, became most pious Christians [and were] detested for having been Jewish, along with their father.”169 The reason behind the

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169 “In due altre Nicchie pur di marmo sono i Ritratti al naturale…di M. Vitale de’ Medici, e di Alessandro suo figliuolo, il quale con Antonio suo fratello, divenuti pijssimi Cristiani, detestato, che gl’ebbero l’Ebraismo insime co’l Padre, fecero quivi una bella Cappella.” Del Migliore, 276.
objections to the ciborium are more difficult to discern. Del Migliore suggests they arose because the existing primary tabernacle, made of gilded wood and carved by Giuliano di Baccio D’Angolo in the sixteenth century and surmounted by a carved crucifix by Giambologna, was already an honourable and treasured work of art. Support for his account is suggested by the fact that Antonio, who received the old wooden ciborium in exchange for the new one, donated the former to the Cappella degli Uomini in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. He thus assured it was still publicly displayed. Richa’s assessment of the removal of the old ciborium, however, suggests that Vitale and his sons had still not shaken their Jewish identity. They were thus hardly suitable for such a high profile act of patronage: “this matter [(that is, the removal)] happened on September 17, 1655, not without some condemnation from Florentines, given that Alexander and Antonio de 'Medici, sons of the Jew Vitale who became Christian, were permitted to raise a silver ciborium on the altar.”

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170 Ibid. See also Bemporad, 306. Del Migliore mistakenly attributes the crucifix to Giuliano da Sangalo. For Giambologna as the artist, see Antonio Paolucci, “L’Arredamento ecclesiale nell’età della Riforma,” in Arte e religione nella Firenze de’ Medici (Florence: Città di Vita, 1980), 92. Paolucci discusses the importance of ciboria during the Counter-Reformation period, with reference to Carlo Borromeo’s directive that the sacrament be visible to all and with a focus on the tabernacle for the high altar of Sta. Croce in Florence. The latter was designed by Giorgio Vasari and financed by Cosimo I de’ Medici. Paolucci also notes that Gaimbologna designed his crucifix for the Nunziata’s earlier ciborium in consultation with a Servite monk, making certain that it showed Jesus alive on the cross so as to assert the Catholic doctrine of Christ’s real presence in the sacrament. Paolucci thus argues that the Servites and Cosimo I were highly conscious of producing properly Counter-Reformation works of art. Ibid., 92-110.

171 Bemporad, 306.

172 “Tale vicenda addivenne ne’17 di Settembre del 1655, non senza qualche biasimo dato da i Fiorentini, essendosi permesso ad Alessandro, ed Antonio de’ Medici, figliuoli di Vitale Ebreo fatto Cristiano, che inalzassero sull’Altar maggiore…un Ciborio d’argento.” Richa, V.8, 38. See also Del Migliore, 293.
What Richa reports reflects a widespread mistrust of converted Jews in Italy. Carlo Borromeo and others were concerned that converts could easily slip into apostasy, especially if they continued contact with family members or others who remained Jewish. There was also a fear that conversions could be insincere or fraudulent, prompted only by personal gain, especially given the poverty that befell most Jews, in large part because of fines levied for underpayment of taxes or usury. For these reasons, converts were typically isolated from their previous communities. Indeed, shortly after baptism, Vitale’s whole family moved to a home on the Via de’Servi, next to the church of S. Michele Visdomini (a short distance from the church of the SS. Annunziata), where later, in 1636, there was officially established a house for catechumens. In the specific case of Vitale and his sons, furthermore, the devotion of a former Jewish family to the Nunziata was likely problematic to many contemporary minds, given the religious-literary tradition of antimony between Christian images and Jews. Stories telling of how Jews demonstrated disrespect towards sacred images constituted a long-standing topos by this period and, in many cases, their purported actions provoke a punishment meted out by the image itself.

Given this unstable status for Jewish converts, Vitale thus very plausibly made efforts to prove his sincerity as a Christian by becoming a preacher. His initiative in this regard moreover

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174 Saracco, np.

involved direct communication with Rome. In 1583, and so shortly after his conversion, Vitale wrote to Guglielmo Sirleto, Cardinal protector of the Jewish converts in Rome. He described with pride two proselytizing homilies he had just delivered to the Jews of Florence, who had been gathered at St. Croce on the feast of the Pentecost and the Sunday after the feast of the Epiphany. These homilies were also soon published, in 1585, along with a prayer and five other sermons, all by Vitale. (fig. 3.40) They are the only forced sermons to the Jews published during the period. Vitale’s themes include baptism, “divine sacrifice”, the last

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177 Vitale Medici, Omelie fatte alli Ebrei di Firenze nella Chiesa di Santa Croce e sermoni fatti in più compagnie della detta città del Magnif. et Eccellente M. Vitale Medici, Dottor Fisico. Novamente date in luce (Florence: Stamperia Giunti, 1585). One of Vitale’s non-conversion efforts, a sermon dated September 8, 1584 and delivered to the Company of San Bendetto Bianco in Florence, possibly refers to the Nunziata. The subject of the discourse is the birth of the Virgin. Vitale elaborates at length on her uncorrupted nature and he includes not only a discussion of the Annunciation, but also speaks of the Virgin’s face in terms that readily recall Bocchi’s descriptions of the Nunziata’s countenance: “Fu grandemente tenera, & amorevole del suo popolo, per lo quale, se non impetro’almeno con le sua divote orazioni, affretto’ la Incarnazione del Salvator del mondo....E quale allegrezza maggiore si poteva vedere, anzi qual più mirabile stupor mirar si poteva che guardar nella splendida faccia di questa graziosissima Vergine? Nella quale appariva uno splendore, una luce, non humana, ma divina talmente che quell’ gran’ Diogini Ariopagita contemplando le bellezze della sua faccia, fu forzato di prorompere in queste parole. Si divinis litteris eruditus non essem, & fidem non haberem, aliud lumen non crederem praeter eius splendorem.” V. Medici, 79.

178 Shulamit Furstenberg-Levi, “The Sermons of a Rabbi Converted to Christianity: Between Synagogue and Church,” in The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature, ed. Lieke Stelling, Harald Hendrix, and Todd Richardson (Boston: Brill, 2012), 283-84. As Furstenberg-Levi notes, forced conversion was problematic for the church, so sermons were understood to be“indirect” force. Furstenberg-Levi also explains the erudition demonstrated by Vitale’s homilies and
supper, the conversion of St. Paul, and the birth of the Virgin Mary. In these discourses, Vitale refers repeatedly to his own conversion. For the most part, he attempts to sway his audience with an oratorical style that can only be described as haranguing, while he reminds them of their poverty, of the constriction of the Florentine ghetto, the shame of the *segno* (the identification badge the Florentine authorities imposed on the Jews), and the threat of damnation. Their misery is proof that God has abandoned them; deliverance will come only in the embrace of Christianity.\(^{179}\)

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\(^{179}\) Ibid., 281-98.

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"[D]ico fratelli che havete troppo gran bisogno, perché, perché voi state sempre in peccato mortale, o col pensiero, o col parlare, o col operare, o con tutti insieme, perché stando voi in questa estrema miseria, nella quale vi trovate tanto immerse, poveri, mendichi, perseguitati in questo Regno, discacciati da quell altro, ristretti in quel picciol luogo, per tutto il Mondo segnati, o nel capo, o nel petto, e quel che vi pare forse peggio, non havete da vivere da sostentare le vostre famiglie, e governare vostri figliuolini, però sete sforzati a pensare sempre, a travagliare, a parlare, & operare, e trovare modo di guadagnare per *fas & nefas*, o lecito, o illecito che il gaudagno sia, eccovi sempre immerse nella offesa del prossimo, con tenere la sua roba, contra alla buona coscienza, e così’ voi non vi potete salvare, ancora che la vostra, or inutil legge fusse buona, e vera, e no vi pensate che sia altramente, e che vi sia licito fraudare la roba, & inganare il Cristiano, che non e’ così, non e’ così; sapete bene quante volte ve ne avvertivo quando vi leggevo nella vostra Sinagoga, e vi mostravo tanto efficacemente che è più peccato ingannare un Cristiano che un Ebreo, e pure, e pure voi non ve ne volete astenere, e pare che siete sforzati, anzi violentati a farlo...echo per questo gran peccato voi non vi potete salvare, ne men potete far penitenza, che non vale, non restituite quella roba mal acquistata, e questo (considerato il vostro stato) e’impossibile, dunque quella povera anima aggravate, e pesante di peccati, se ne va’ nel più profondo abisso dell’Inferno." V. Medici, 6-7. Also: “Dispregiati, oppressi, vilipesi, conculcati, che se loro facessero resistenza al falso, ad onor massime di dio, come mostran di fare, di ragione dovrebbe succedere tutto il contrario, perché mentre gli Ebrei erano popolo di Dio, erano talmente sotto la sua protezione, che chi toccava loro, era come toccar la papilla de gl’occhi del grande Iddio, tanta gran demonstrazione ne faceva, e si vedeva quasi subito. Ora vedete tutto il contrario fratelli, considerate in quanta miseria sete, durata già 1583 anni, deve pur conoscere, chi non è al tutto insensate, che voi non sete più il popolo
Vitale’s sermons, along with the report on them he sent to Sirleto in Rome, evidence how conversion efforts were a central Counter-Reformation policy. When it came to the Jews, the Christianization of them all was the goal of the Post-Tridentine church.\footnote{Thus in contrast to the Medieval and Renaissance periods in Italy when hostility was the primary sentiment toward the Jews, the sixteenth century saw greatly intensified efforts to convert them. Segre, 1986, 126. There are, however, conflicting accounts regarding the number of conversions during the Counter-Reformation period. Pastor cites the Bishop of Ferrara, who writes in 1582 that baptisms regularly occurred after Gregory XIII began the regular program of sermons for the Jews. Pastor, vol. 19, 310. This could nonetheless be an exaggeration. Sir Edwin Sandys (\textit{A Relation of the State of Religion in Europe}, 1605) claims that there were few conversions. Pullan, 65. Certainly, recent research indicates that only around two to three percent of the Jewish population was Christianized between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Salvadori, 66-67. Segre points out that the number of conversions lessened considerably after the end of the sixteenth century. Still, it is difficult to determine how many conversions took place in Italy during this period, because the documentary evidence is so dispersed. See, with further bibliography, Segre, 1986, 127, n.25; 138. The old practice of kidnapping Jewish babies so as}{\textit{eletto di Dio; deh fratelli movetevi una volta a conoscere Dio, e riconoscerlo, e questo con creder al suo unico figliuolo, al vero Messia, il quale ardeva di desiderio, di salvar noi piú che l’altrè genti, e non resto’ mai di predicargli, di fargli tanti segni, prodigij, miracoli, accioche gli credessero, e si salvassero.” Ibid., 67. See also Salvadori, 70, and Umberto Cassuto, \textit{Gli Ebrei a Firenze nell’Eta del Rinascimento} (Firenze: Olschki, 1918 (reprinted 1965)), 208. Parente points out that these were the first sermons to the Jews in Italy to be published. Fausto Parente, “Il confronto ideologico tra l’Ebraismo e la Chiesa in Italia,” \textit{Italia Judaica. Atti del I Convegno internazionale, Bari 18-22 maggio 1981} (Rome: Ministero per I beni culturali e ambientali, pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato) Saggi 2, 1983, 324. According to Lapini, however, despite the grand ducal directive few Jews actually attended Vitale’s sermons: “A’di 30 di ditto maggio, che fu il lunedí della Pasqua dello Spirto Santo, a ore 12, predicò in Santa croce di Firenze uno ebreo fatto cristiano, chamato maestro Vitale; qale si portò si bene, chew fe’ maravigliare ognuno che lo sentí. E lo scopo suo fu per indurre al santissimo battesimo tutti gli ebrei, non tanto quelli che erano lì presenti, che vi furno poco manco che tutti quelli che abitano qui in nostra città, ma ogni altro; con tanta e si bella persuasione e grazia, che fe’maravigliare ognuno; fa oggi qui in Firenze professione di medico fisico.” Lapini, 222.} The forcing of Jews to
attend sermons had been implemented in Rome during the early 1580’s. Before this time, and since the thirteenth century, conversionist sermons had occurred only occasionally. On September 1, 1584, Gregory XIII (who, as just noted, baptized Vitale the year before) issued a Bull stipulating that all bishops and prelates establish weekly, compulsory sermons for the Jews, with enforced quotas for attendance; the practice thus soon spread from Rome to other parts of Italy. A source from the period claims that Vitale’s own conversion had occurred in 1582, after he attended homilies in Florence delivered by Dionisio Costacciaro, the Inquisitor with whom he later corresponded. In his Roma Sancta of 1581, Gregory Martin notes that the Church was especially keen to have converted rabbis become preachers, as was the case with Vitale, given their authority and well practiced oratorical skills. No doubt, their knowledge of the scripture also made them suitable. While Florence had no policy of forced regular attendance of sermons like that in Rome, and the efforts to convert were not, on the whole, as systematic to baptize them continued during this period. Salvadori, 55. See Pullan for a discussion of how many Jews who converted subsequently faced hardships in making lives for themselves, and so some reverted. Pullan, 65-70.

181 Roth, 315.
182 Pastor, vol.19, 310.
183 Parente, 324.
184 As cited in Pullan, 64. To have apostates deliver these sermons, as was common practice, was viewed with particular distaste by the Jews. The Hebrew community was also typically given the burden of covering the expenses of these sermons, including the preacher’s fee. Roth, 315-16. Indeed, Vitale’s published sermons attest to the zealotry of a freshly minted convert, and in his letter to Sirleto, Vitale also stresses his own enthusiasm: “[q]uesti miei ragionamenti, persuaso, anzi violentato dagli amici, l’ho messi fuora alla stampa per pubblica utilità.” Vitale alludes here to the literally violent reaction on the part of Jews to his efforts. Another report from the period says that after his Holy Thursday sermon of 1583, delivered at San Bendetto, Vitale was attacked and wounded in the neck. The source is a letter from Valerio Montemarte dei Conti della Corgara, an apostolic Nunzio in Florence at the time, sent to cardinal Tolomeo Gallio, dated November 6, 1583. Segre, 1986, 131, n.42.
and intense in Florence as they were in Rome, attention to conversion did continue into the seventeenth century with the building of the Casa Pia by the Jesuits in 1636. Its mission was to continue to educate catechumens and prevent “relapse”.\(^{185}\)

Further significance for the sacristy and portraits of Vitale and his family at the SS. Annunziata lies within the inter-related contexts of Medici ties to Rome and their attitudes towards the Jews of Tuscany. Medici policy towards the Jews underwent a radical change under Cosimo I in the 1550’s. Reversing a long-standing attitude of relative tolerance,\(^ {186}\) Cosimo ordered the burning of the Talmud in 1553. He also passed an edict in May 1567 forcing the Jews of Tuscany to wear the *segno* on their clothing, a policy that had been previously enforced only intermittently throughout Italy since it was first established during the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. In 1569, furthermore, Cosimo closed Jewish banks and ordered the expulsion of the Jews from Tuscany’s towns with their resettlement into ghettos in Florence and Siena. Modern historians have typically seen these actions as aspects of Cosimo’s campaign to obtain the grand ducal crown from the papacy, because they closely followed measures undertaken in Rome. In 1555, Paul IV issued the bull that announced the formation of ghettoes in the Papal States and recommended that princes outside the papal territories should force Jews to wear an identifying sign. He also imposed restrictions on interactions between Jews and Christians. After

\(^{185}\) Siegmund, 65-66.

\(^{186}\) During the first thirty years of his rule, Cosimo took no actions against the Jews and in some cases contracted Jews to settle in Tuscany because of their banking and mercantile expertise. A summary of the history of the treatment of the Jews under Cosimo and Ferdinand I is found in Siegmund, especially 51-61. At the end of the sixteenth century, there were about 700 Jews in Tuscany, comprising one to two per cent of the population. Siegmund, 30. For the Counter-Reformation period as a time of particular oppression for the Jews in Florence and Tuscany in general (with Livorno as something of an exception) see especially Salvadori, 62-80.
a relaxation of some of these courses of action under Pius IV, Pius V reinstated harsher ones for the Jews: for instance, a bull of 1569 ordered the expulsion of all Jews in the papal states, except for those living in the ghettos of Rome and Ancona. Another dated April 19, 1566 demanded that all Christian princes implement policies regarding the Jews imitating those of the papacy.\textsuperscript{187} Notably, too, while the severity of such actions lessened to some extent under Gregory XIII (who, for instance, took some measures to protect the ghetto from attacks and re-legitimize money lending), the latter nonetheless also renewed the prohibition against Jewish doctors attending to Christian patients in a brief dated February 28, 1581, and three years later the statement was printed and disseminated so as to actively enforce the ban. The fact that formerly Jewish doctors could resume such practice after conversion certainly would have been incentive for them to embrace the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{188} That this was the case for Vitale is suggested by the inscription under his bust portrait at the SS. Annunziata, which refers to his “uninterrupted” practice as a doctor.

The notion that Cosimo’s treatment of the Jews was a crucial aspect of his efforts to obtain the grand ducal title from Pius V has been challenged recently by Stefanie Siegmund, who

\textsuperscript{187} Siegmund provides an overview of papal actions regarding the Jews, 52-58. See also Stow, 1992. For Rome as setting the model for other Italian centres in terms of the treatment of the Jews see Pullan, XI, 63.

\textsuperscript{188} Pastor Vol.19, 310. A fruitless attempt to defend the right of Jewish doctors to practice was published by David de’Pomi of Venice, and dedicated to the duke of Urbino. The preface was written by Aldo Manuzio, the illustrious Venetian editor and printer, and a copy presented to the Venetian doge and senate. For this, and for Gregory’s actions as marking the end of the golden age of Jewish medicine in Italy, see Cecil Roth, \textit{The History of the Jews in Italy} (Westmead, England: Gregg International, 1969), 316-317. Pullan also discusses Edwin Sandys opinion in his \textit{A Relation of the State of Religion in Europe} (1605, 1629) that Jewish physicians were most likely to convert, because Jews who were money-lenders could no longer work after becoming Christian. Pullan, 65-66.
argues that the chief intent behind the actions taken by Cosimo, as well as the harsher policies of his son, Francesco I, was not to maintain strict conformity with Rome. Rather, the segregation of the Jews within a ghetto and by other means was primarily conceived as one aspect of the larger project of Medici state-building that aimed to create strict social organization and bureaucratic order in Tuscany.\footnote{She argues, for instance, that civic organization centred on the parish structure, which excluded Jews and thus forced them into their own spaces. Siegmund, 39 and passim. Furthermore, Cosimo, and especially Ferdinand I (with a decree of June 10, 1593) actively sought to settle wealthy and skilled Jews from all over Europe in Florence, Pisa, and Livorno. In Livorno, Jews were granted special freedoms during the period of general oppression (they were not, for instance, required to wear the segno) and the city became a highly successful mercantile and commercial centre. See especially Salvadori, 45-56. Renzo Toaff, La Nazione Ebreo a Livorno e Pisa (1591-1700) (Florence: Olschki, 1990); Bernard Dov Cooperman, Trade and Settlement: The Establishment of the Jewish Communities of Leghorn and Pisa (dissertation, Cambridge: Harvard University), 1976. In support of my own point here, see Coooperman’s review of Siegnumd’s book. Bernard D. Cooperman, Review of Stefanie B. Siegmund, The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence, in Renaissance Quarterly, 60, n.4 (Winter, 2007) :1327-28.} Nonetheless, even if the Medici were not entirely in lockstep with Rome when it came to the Jews, it is clear that their actions were motivated at least in part by the broader Counter-Reformation agenda that emanated from Rome. For instance, it is of note that Cosimo’s decree prescribing the wearing of the segno was put into effect a few days before the entry of Antonio Altoviti into Florence from Rome on May 15 1567.\footnote{Seigmund, 67.} As can be recalled, Altoviti’s effigy was included with the gallery of Medici votive statues set up in the nave of the SS. Annunziata in the seicento.

Moreover, the conversion of Vitale and his sons--and hence their presence at the SS. Annunziata and among the Medici -- directly referred to Florentine-Roman relations, because Vitale’s Christianization was in fact a very Roman event. Firstly, it can be noted that on March 189
28, 1583, the Florentine Inquisitor, Dionigi Sammattei di Costacciaro, wrote to the Cardinal Protector of the Jewish converts in Rome, Guglielmo Sirleto, discussing Vitale’s baptism and the removal of Vitale’s immediate family from the ghetto of Florence, with the intention of persuading them also to convert. Subsequent correspondence between Sirleto and Costacciaro describes the efforts of the Inquisition with Vitale’s family, including the recalcitrance of his wife and two daughters. The grand ducal government collaborated fully with this action. The central authority of Rome was thus directly involved, and all the efforts undertaken for these conversions reflect the official policies of the Church at this time.

Even more revealing of the close rapport between the Medici and the papacy, however, is the fact that Vitale’s baptism in the spring of 1583 took place in Rome. It was performed by Gregory XIII, with Vitale’s patron, Cardinal Ferdinand de Medici, present. Prestigious persons — ecclesiastical, diplomatic, and noble — typically participated in conversion baptisms. And in his role of padrino for the neophyte, Ferdinand joined many other prominent Counter-Reformation cardinals and princes, such as Michele Ghislieri (the future pope Pius V), Guglielmo Sirleto, Cristoforo Madruzzo, Carlo Borromeo, and princes Francesco Maria and Guidobaldo della Rovere, all of whom are recorded as having sponsored Jews who were baptized between the 1560’s and 1580’s. In August of 1566, furthermore, Cardinal Alessandrino baptized a group of

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191 Costacciaro relates that “il diavolo” was eventually defeated, and Vitale’s two daughters converted after many months during which they were sequestered separately, in a private home and at a convent. The youngest daughter was baptized with the name Grazia and eventually married. It seems that Vitale’s wife continued to resist: Costacciaro complained that she persisted in her “perfida ostinatione”. On the treatment of Vitale’s family and the on-going correspondence between Costaciaro and Sirletto, see Segre, 1986, 130-132; also Saracco, np.

192 Segre, 1986, 127-28. There were in fact neophytes who took on the full name of these sponsers, as listed by Segre, including one who became “Ferdinand de’ Medici”. Ibid., 128, n.27. For other examples,
twenty-five Jews at Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.\textsuperscript{193} As described above, it was Alessandrino’s votive portrait that, along with that of Archbishop Altoviti, accompanied those of the Medici dynastic group in the nave of the SS. Annunziata to signal grand ducal compliance with papal Rome. It is clear, then, that the presence and patronage of Vitale and his sons at the sacristy and high altar would have been understood in the seicento to be directly connected to the votive portraits in the church. And the constellation of all the Medici portraits at the SS. Annunziata surveyed in this chapter – within the church and covent, and in the piazza – figured the grand dukes as preeminent participants in upholding the supremacy of the Church.

\textsuperscript{193} Segre, 1986, 128-29.
Chapter 4

The Paliotto of Ferdinand I de’Medici and a Counter-Reformation Image Type in Florence

4.1 Introduction

The silver paliotto of the Nunziata was dedicated by Ferdinand I in 1600, after the recovery from an illness of his son, Cosimo. (figs. 4.1, 4.2) At a cost of 13,000 scudi, it was almost certainly the most lavish offering ever made at the shrine. It is thus appropriate that it took the most prestigious position among all votives in the church, being placed on the altar directly below the sacred image. The paliotto has already been considered in this study in terms of its features, both typical and unique, as a silver votive panel. I have also examined its relation to the other Medici votives in the nave during the seicento as well as the manner by which its imagery conveys the power of the Christian prince as a moral model. The present argument will now further explore how this representation of Cosimo II articulated the special bond the Florentine grand dukes held with their holy patron. I will first identify the paliotto as an instance of a type of Counter-Reformation image, one that enacts devotion by featuring an exemplary person honouring a sacred image or object. With respect to the latter, the depiction of kneeling will be a focus: kneeling signified the socialization of the body; but, to the Early Modern eye it could also be the outward manifestation of true religious experience. The paliotto will then be placed among other Florentine works of the period that are particularly complex examples of this image type that enacts devotion.

4.2 A Counter-Reformation Image Type and Significances of Kneeling
The paliotto belongs within a category of Counter-Reformation image that depicts an exemplary person in a devotional attitude before an image or other sacred object. Klaus Krüger has discussed an array of Italian examples of such works, including a number showing the statue of the Madonna of Loreto with devotees.1 (figs. 4.3, 4.4) As Krüger argues, these works are paradoxical in that they show an experience of the divine on the part of the depicted person (usually a saint), yet they also represent the image-object within the work as the agent of the vision. Typically, too, the viewer is invited to emulate and join in devotion by means of linking gestures on the part of the saint(s) or a frontal presentation of the image-object. A further duality of this category of image is that it refers to both the function of religious images as medial—as threshold and membrane—and the “productive play of the imagination”, which invokes the presence of the divine.2 That is, such images represent the ability of the devout viewer to meet the divine via the image, “not only the what, but also the how”.3

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2 Krüger, especially 60-61.
3 Ibid., 66-67. The embedding of images within images, and the representation of worship that indexes the object-ness of these images-within, places the type that Krüger discusses within the rubric of what Victor Stoichita has described as the rise of the “self-aware” image in art during the Baroque period. By means of a pan-European array of examples, Stoichita has demonstrated that there is a tendency in painting of the period to self-consciously refer to the means by which s work of art is made or seen. Drawing on Hans Belting’s schema of the later Renaissance as the beginning of the modern era of art (which supplants the era of the icon), Stoichita moreover ties such “métapeinture” to the way that art of the period is in general informed increasingly by purely secular concerns. Victor I. Stoichita, L’instauration du tableau: Métapeinture à l’aube des temps modernes” (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1999). Nonetheless, as the works discussed by Krüger and in this chapter demonstrate, self-conscious commentaries about images are also employed in religious works of the same period. In these, besides the inclusion of images within images,
The dynamic that Krüger sees reflected in this category of image (as a convenient shorthand, I will refer to it as an image that “enacts devotion”) is a reconciliation between two seemingly polar phenomena: it brings together the actuality of material image-objects with transcendent, visionary experience. In conjunction with Krüger’s arguments, I would like to investigate the significance of kneeling and other bodily displays of devotional experience in such works, including the Medici paliotto. In doing so, I believe, Krüger’s approach (which is especially concerned with Counter-Reformation views regarding the ontological status of religious works) can be supplemented by further taking into account the significance of the ritual and bodily constitution of the power of images.

Bodily religious expression was at the heart of the contention over images between Protestant Reformers and Catholics. While the former were divided on whether images had any place at all in religious settings,⁴ they did almost universally condone acts of veneration before images. Emblematic of the polemic regarding reverential acts before images is Michael Ostendorfer’s woodcut showing pilgrims at the shrine of the Beautiful Virgin of Regensburg (c.1520). (fig. 4.5) This cult had been established only in 1519, on the site of a thirteenth-century Jewish synagogue that was destroyed at the time. It nonetheless came under particular attack by Protestant reformers not long after the print was issued. Albrecht Dürer, after becoming a

follower of Luther, inscribed his copy with the date 1523 and a caption that includes the lament, “God help us that we do not dishonour the worthy mother of Christ in this way but [honour] her in His name.” The image depicts a crowd of pilgrims who embrace the statue, kneel, or lie prone before it, with clasped or raised hands. A later German Protestant print is an even more sharp indictment. The engraving *Satire of the Catholic Church* (1605) shows a church interior with a crowd gathered around a robed and crowned statue of the Virgin and Child. The actors, some of them pointedly grotesque in appearance, include worshippers and priests performing rituals before the image. Notably, above the statue hang votives, and it is flanked by what appear to be full-sized sculpted patron saints and kneeling suppliants. (fig. 4.6)

The Protestant analysis and denunciation of such acts is most forcefully and extensively made by Calvin, although earlier Reformers also addressed the issue. As Luther puts it, “the worshipping is forbidden, not the making.” Andreas Karlstadt, who initiated the Protestant reform of images with their removal in Wittenberg, directly condemns “the image maker [who] makes an image and bends double before it…praying that it might redeem him.” Calvin, in “On

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6 The image is engraved in three sheets. Fredrika H. Jacobs, *Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 63-64.

7 After being opposed by Luther in 1522, Karlstadt went to Switzerland, where he influenced the iconoclasm that took hold there. For a summary of Karlstadt’s thought and activity, as well as Luther’s acceptance of images, see Mangrum and Seavizzi, “Introduction”, 3, 6-13.

Shunning the Unlawful Rites,” recognizes the psychological pull of images, acknowledging it is exactly humanity’s love of ceremony and ritual, as well as the seduction of material beauty, that leads to the error of idolatry.⁹ He dismisses any attempt to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate acts of worship according to the intentions of the worshipper.¹⁰ He also contends the Catholic reverence shown towards images and relics is misdirected worship by citing scripture, including Isaiah 54:23: “‘Every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall swear by my name.’ Here it is obviously implied that an Image receives the worship due to God when reverence for it is expressed by any bodily gesture.” Calvin appeals to the second commandment, saying,

The Lord...by this interdict, does not simply prohibit his people from standing in stupid amazement like the Gentiles before wood or stone, but forbids any imitation of their profane solidity in any form, by prostrating themselves before Images for the purpose of paying honour to them, or giving any other indication of religious reverence, such as we are accustomed to give by uncovering the head or bending the knee. ¹¹

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⁹ Eire, War against the idols: the reformation of worship from Erasmus to Calvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 212-228.

¹⁰ Eire, 219.

¹¹ Calvin, 369. Calvin goes on to praise Old Testament heroes, such as Daniel, Abraham, and Isaac, who resisted the pagan practice of the worship of graven images. He then analyzes at length the Catholic mass as a form of idolatry, including “the iniquity of bending the knee before a little bit of Bread.” 370 ff, 391.
In his tract on relics, Calvin also condemns those who demonstrate physical reverence toward them: “[for] they have prostrated themselves and bent the knee before relics as before God, lighting torches and tapers as a sign of homage, putting confidence in them, and running to them as if they possessed a divine power and grace. If idolatry is just to transfer the honor of God to others, can we deny that this is idolatry?”

Clearly, then, the plethora of Catholic images that are enactments of devotion affirmed the rightness of devotional acts. To Krüger’s extensive sample there can be added works such as Annibale Carracci’s numerous depictions of Saint Francis, dating from the mid 1580’s, in which objects of contemplation are prominently featured along with the highly intense devotion

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12 From John Calvin, *The Inventory of Relics*, CR 6.411, and quoted in Eire, 215. Notable here, too, is a directive given by the Swiss Reform leader Huldreich Zwingli: “[If a parish wishes to leave its images in the church, it should no longer burn candles before them or light incense before them.” Quoted in Belting, Appendix 39 C, 547. Furthermore, there are the recommendations that emerged from the Colloquium of Poissy, a meeting of Catholics and Protestants convened in the summer of 1561 by the French queen Catherine de’Medici in an attempt to reconcile the two sides. As the French theologian Theodore Beza recounts, the Colloquium discussed the elimination of excessive ceremony and superstition. Within the guidelines regarding the reform of images it was recommended that kneeling, lying on the ground, raising the arms, and other acts of worship were unacceptable. See Giuseppe Scavizzi, *The Controversy on Images from Calvin to Baronius* (New York: P.Lang, 1992), 70-71.

13 There are some pre-Tridentine examples of this type of image. Titan’s Vendramin portrait (1543-47) is one instance, wherein the male members of the family are gathered before the relic of the Holy Cross. Another is *The Apparition of the Virgin to a Dominican Community*, by Pedro Berugette (end of fifteenth century) which shows both material icon and prototype. Nonetheless, the latter – the Virgin herself, looming large over her icon and the kneeling monks whose praying has invoked her presence — clearly takes precedence in the representation, as she receives the gaze of the monks in the foreground and to the extreme right and left. The numbers of the type do, however, increase dramatically beginning in the later decades of the sixteenth century.
performed by the saint.\textsuperscript{14} (figs. 4.7, 4.8) Italian works by Peter Paul Rubens, one of the consummate painters of the Counter-Reformation, also emphasize the performance of object devotion. Rubens’s central panel of the triptych for the high altar of the Jesuit church of SS. Trinità in Mantua, the \textit{Apparition of the Trinity to Dukes Vincenzo and Guglielmo Gonzaga} (1604-05), shows the Mantuan dukes with their consorts, all kneeling in reverence below the Holy Trinity.\textsuperscript{15} (fig. 4.9) The representation of the Trinity in this painting has a quality also found in other, specifically Florentine, works to be discussed below. There is a skillfully calculated ambivalence in Rubens’s painting that purposely creates a dilemma of identity for the object of veneration. The realism of the depiction suggests that the holy persons are present to their devotees; but, once the eye travels outwards from the Trinity at the centre of the image, it becomes evident that these divine beings are also placed within a tapestry. The object of devotion thus vacillates between vision and material representation. This work is furthermore followed by Rubens’s Valicella projects, begun in December 1606. At this Oratorian shrine of the Chiesa Nuova (Sta. Maria in Valicella) in Rome, the painter offered to produce a new altarpiece to frame the sacred fresco of the Madonna and Child. This trecento fresco had been a cult object since 1537, and in 1606 it was moved from a side chapel to a newly constructed high

\textsuperscript{14} There were probably more versions than the three that are extant today. Donald Posner, \textit{Annibale Carracci. A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting around 1590} (London: Phaidon, 1971), vol. I, 42-43, and the catalogue entries in Vol. II, 11, 14-15, and pls. 20, 28, and 29. In one instance, Francis bends over a crucifix propped up on a skull, while in another blatantly demonstrative version, he turns to the viewer as he gestures towards the cross. Annibale’s first two printmaking ventures also show saints in prayer. In these works, St. Francis clutches a cross while he gazes at a skull, and St. Jerome looks up from his prayer book to the crucifix before him. Ibid., Vol. II, 12, pls. 22 and 23a.

\textsuperscript{15} The work is now subdivided into fragments found in Mantua, Vienna, Parma, London, and Farnham-Surrey.
Rubens was engaged twice in this commission. A first scheme (dated 1606) involved a single painting which was rejected for reasons that are not clear, and the second version (1607-08) is a triptych that is still in situ. (figs 4.10, 4.11) In both projects, Rubens’s painting covers the old fresco, but is inset with a modern copy of the sacred image, and this surrogate can be lowered to reveal the original behind it. The new painting-- and, therefore, also the sacred fresco -- are enclosed within a frame, while saints and angels are posed in devotional attitudes directed towards them. In the second project, the lower register of the central panel is occupied by kneeling angels who gaze in adoration at the sacred image.

The viewers of such images that enact devotion are meant to respond to both the image-object and the persons within the representation. And it is obvious that the former is meant to be honoured in a manner that emulates the latter. As argued in Chapter Two, the image of the kneeling prince Cosimo on the Nunziata paliotto was positioned in relation to the other votives in

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16 The Oratorians occupied the church of the Vallicella after the congregation was recognized by Pope Gregory XIII in 1575. Between 1575 or 1576 and 1580, the fresco was located in the first chapel on the right, and it was then moved to the first left chapel. The decision to set it at the high altar in 1606 was one aspect of the scheme that systematized the decoration of the interior of the church. For this activity at the Vallicella and a recent account of Rubens’s projects for the altarpiece, with further bibliography, see Alba Costamagna, “‘La più bella et superba occasione di tutta Roma...’: Rubens per l’altar maggiore di S. Maria in Vallicella,” in La regola e la fama. San Filippo Neri e l’arte (Milan: Electa, 1995), 150-73. On the recent restoration of Rubens’s altarpieces, see Alba Costamagna, La festa del colore. Rubens alla Chiesa Nuova (Roma: De Luca, 2005). See also Ilse von Zur Muhlen, “S. Maria in Vallicella zur Geschichte des Huptaltars,” Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana, 31 (1996): 245-72. Further discussion of this project is also found in Chapter One of this thesis. Alessandro de’ Medici, who was a friend of Filippo Neri, the founder of the Oratorian congregation and a Florentine, blessed the cornerstone of the Chiesa Nuova in 1575. Arnaldo d’Addario, La comunità cristiana fiorentina e toscana nella dialettica religiosa del cinquecento (Florence: Becocci, 1980), 80.

17 For a discussion of the differences between the two versions of the project, see Costamagna, 1995.
the church so as to present the future grand duke as a paradigm of piety. This thesis has also considered how exemplarity was understood to be a defining characteristic of the ideal Counter-Reformation prince. When it comes to works that represent acts of devotion before sacred images, Krüger notes that the estimable persons in these are indicative of the broader Counter-Reformation belief in the instrumentality of images and their use in social discipline. The “exercise of the imagination” provoked by these works in the viewer is personally felt. It is nonetheless also an affirmation of one’s submission to the authority of the image and its cult, which involves a self-positioning hierarchically in relation to the saints depicted with the work.18

One obvious instance of this hierarchization is Il Cerano’s (Giovan Battista Crespi) *La Madonna di San Celso venerate dai santi Francesco e Carlo* (c. 1610), showing Carlo Borromeo (who was canonized the same year as this work) and St. Francis kneeling on either side of the statue of the Madonna. (fig. 4.12) The piety demonstrated here promotes the newly minted cult of Annibale Fontana’s *Madonna Assunta*, a marble statue that was made in 1586 and placed on an altar in the church of S. Maria presso San Celso. This work took on the sacrality of an old miraculous image, a fresco of the Madonna and Child, which was covered by the new altar and visible only by means of a pair of bronze doors. In the late sixteenth century, then, the veneration of the old fresco was expanded to include the new statue.19 As noted previously in this dissertation with regards to the association fostered by the Medici and Carlo Borromeo between the Nunziata and the Madonna dell’Albero in the Duomo of Milan, Borromeo took a special interest in the promotion of Marian cults. Certainly, he oversaw the renovations to the shrine of the Madonna

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18 Krüger, 48, 53.

19 Legend dates the fresco to the early Christian era, but it is actually a work of the early fifteenth century. Krüger provides an extensive analysis of this example, Ibid., 53-61. A painted copy of the fresco also was produced and placed above the altar mensa. Ibid., 55-56.
of San Celso. Furthermore, Borromeo’s influential policies particularly stipulated the need for exemplary leadership within the Church, with the archbishop actively fashioning himself as such a model of piety. Fontana’s painting is not the only work of art that reflects this aspect of Borromeo’s persona. Representations of the Archbishop proliferated after his death in 1584, and many of these were intended to contribute to claims for his saintly status by depicting his visionary encounters with, for instance, the dead Christ or the Virgin and Child.\(^{20}\) A number of other images, on the other hand, promote Borromeo’s example by featuring his veneration of sacred objects. These include several depictions wherein he carries the Sacro Chiodo in procession and others that commemorate his special devotion to the crucifix.\(^{21}\) (figs. 4.13, 4.14) Among the latter are the central scenes in widely disseminated prints showing the life and miracles of Borromeo or the religious institutions he founded. (fig. 4.15)

The paradigmatic function of the figures of Borromeo and other saints in such pictures that enact devotion reflects strategies of social ordering, and in particular the disciplining of the body that has been identified with Borromean Catholic reform ideals related to ritual practices.\(^{22}\) Taking a broader view, nonetheless, the sociologist Marcel Mauss sees such conditioning as a typical, universal form of socialization. Bodily acts seem to be natural, but they are in fact

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\(^{20}\)In this mode there is also Orazio Borgianni’s well known *San Carlo Adoring the Holy Trinity* in the church of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome.

\(^{21}\) On Borromeo and the crucifix in the context of the Counter Reformation defense and promotion of this devotion in the face of Protestant criticism, see Franco Buzzi, “Il tema della croce nella spiritualità di Carlo Borromeo. Rivisitazione teologica e confront con la prospettiva luterana,” in *Carlo Borromeo e l’opera della ”grande riforma”: cultura, religione e arti del governo nella Milano del pieno Cinquecento*, ed. Franco Buzzi and Danilo Zardin (Milan: Silvana Editoriale,1997), 47-58; and Scavizzi, Ch. 5. 205-224.

learned. They are, more specifically, modelled after their performance by figures of authority. As such, biology and psychology together shape and govern physical “habits”:

The notion of education could be superimposed on that of imitation…..What takes place is a prestigious imitation. The child, the adult, imitates actions that have succeeded, which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him. The action is imposed from without, from above, even if it is an exclusively biological action, involving his body. The individual borrows the series of movements of which he is composed from the action executed in front of him, or with him, by others.

It is precisely this notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorized, tested action vis-à-vis the imitating individual that contains all the social element. The imitative action that follows contains the psychological element and the biological element.

The whole, the ensemble, though, is conditioned by the three elements indissolubly mixed together.\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” in *Incorporations*, Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter eds. (Zone Books, 1992), 459. Mauss also stresses the social construction of what he means by bodily “habit”: “Hence, I have had this notion of the social nature of the body for many years. Please note that I use the Latin word – it should be understood in France – *habitus*. The word translates infinitely better than “habitude” (habit or custom), the “exis”, the “acquired ability” and “faculty” of Aristotle (who was a psychologist). These “habits” do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, types of prestige. In them, we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties.” Ibid., 458.
What Mauss describes informs the works discussed here, with their display of pious postures such as kneeling. The same notion also appears in the arguments against images set forth by Pier Paolo Vergerio the Younger (1498-1565), son of the illustrious humanist educator of the same name and one of the most prolific Italian Protestant propagandists of his time. In the pamphlet *Delle statue et imagini*, dated 1553 -- and written after he had fled to Switzerland in 1549, upon begin officially accused of heresy by the Venetian Inquisition -- Vergerio presents a particularly elaborate and forceful invective against the dangerous example set by priests and clergy who kneel before images. As he maintains, such spectacles are reprehensible, not only because they constitute idolatry, but also because they incite the faithful to follow suit:

> I cried out many times against the idolatries (as is always my habit) and particularly against the priests and the monks. They place themselves close to and in front of their crosses, statues, or images, bowing, lighting up the lamps and the incense reverently. They adore them and in them recognize the graces. They display their paintings, lights, and masses, as rewards for beneficence received. And so the priests behave and are praised as good Catholics. And here I said, that in their doing this, they more so offend

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Vergerio initially served as papal nuncio and envoy to Germany at various points during the 1530’s and 40’s, during which time he met Martin Luther. By 1544, he was being investigated by the Venetian Inquisition and he had begun publishing texts that became increasingly more critical of the Church. In May 1549 he left Italy for Switzerland and then Germany. In the same year he was convicted of heresy. The introduction to this pamphlet is written by Guido Zonca, another influential Italian Reformer and Protestant propagandist who went into exile in Switzerland. On the life of Vergerio and his influence, especially in Northern Italy, see Robert A. Pierce, *Pier Paolo Vergerio the Propagandist* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003); the collection of essays in *Pier Paolo Vergerio il Giovane, un polemista attraverso l’Europa del Cinquecento*, Convegno internazionale di studi cividale del Friuli, 15-16 October 1998, ed. Ugo Rozzo (Udine: Forum, 2000); and Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio. The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva: Droz, 1977).
and dishonour God than if they were to commit murder….But I want to get to the point even more strongly, referring to the bonds [made by] the very words and ceremonies of your priests. With the pontificate they are taught, among other impieties, to bless and consecrate the crosses, the statues, and the paintings. And once the Bishop has bowed and implored well before them, he is compelled to bow and worship before them firstly in order to give example to others.²⁵

²⁵“[I]o gridai molto contra la idolatrie (come soglio sempre) et particolarmente contra i preti et frati, e quali appressandosi davanti le loro croci, statue o imagini s’inchinano, v’accendono le lumi, le incenesano riverentemente, le adorano, e che da esse riconoscono le gratie, e presentano loro delle tavolette, di lumi, e delle messe, come in premio di ricevuti beificij, e essi preti il comportano, e gli lodano come buoni catholic. Et qui dissi, che cio facendo essi, piu offendevano e dishonoravano Iddio, che se commettesero un homicidio…Con essa si isprime l’atto d’inchinarsi, & di piegare i ginocchi: & gli Hebrei ne hanno una voce con la quale tutto quell’atto del corpo si dinota, perciò nel libro di Re nel cap.5. dice il testo, che Naaman Siro disse ad Elia queste parole: Quando il Re sara entrato nel tempio Rimmon, quivi dovendo esso inchinarsi, si sar’ a appoggiato sopra la mano mia se anche io me [in]chinero dico che quel inchinarsi che fa[c]eva il RE, è propria adoratione, & tutta la scrittura n’è piena. Adunque i preti & frati, propriamente adorano le croci & le statue, quando inchinano davanti di esse il capo, & i ginocchi, & di piu, quando con quegli tanti inchini, & tante riverentie le incensantio, & le illuminano. Ma vi voglio stringere anchora piu forte, usando le catene delle istesse parole, & cerimonie di essi vostri preti. Nel pontificale tralle altre impietà s’insegna a benedire & consacrare le croci, le statue & le dipinture: & dopo che il Vescovo ha ben cianzato[sic] addosso di esse, & le ha scongiurate, egli è obbligato ad inchinarsi gli davanti prima esso, & di adorarle per dar esempio altrui.” P.P. Vergerio, Delle statue et imagini, 1553 (Pamphlet, BNF, Giucc. 2.5.67), 5-6. Vergerio goes on to equate kneeling and other worship before images with similar gestures of reverence—or idolatry, as he would have it -- towards the pope, thus eliding his critique of images with anti-papist blame: “Et non solo i legni si adorano nel papesmo, ma si adorano anche i papi, perciò che ognuno conosce che essi vanno in cappella, i Cardinali et i prelati si inchinano col capo e con ginocchi, e vanno a bacciar chi le mani, chi i ginocchi, chi i piedi di quell idolo…Adunque ho provato che i preti adorano i legni et statue, et anche i pape, et che invitano let persone a fare le medesime adorationi.” Pier Paolo Vergerio, Delle statue et imagini (1553), pamphlet, BNCF, 8-9. There were also other Italians producing arguments written in a Calvinist vein against the veneration of images.
Kneeling and other gestures displayed in Catholic ritual were therefore acts of conditioning, and this is consonant with what has been argued previously with respect to the paliotto and the prince as agent of social order. It also agrees with recent scholarship that sees a number of examples of Counter-Reformation art and architecture as tools of social habituation. But, it is important to acknowledge another meaning that kneeling held for Early Modern people, one that insists on authentic spiritual experience before religious images. Evidence for this point of view is found in Francesco Bocchi’s *Sopra l’immagine miracolosa della Santissima Nunziata* of 1592, and specifically, when Michelangelo Buonarotti encounters the Nunziata. Duke Alessandro de’ Medici unveils the fresco for the great Renaissance artist and asks him his opinion of it. Michelangelo is overcome at the sight of the image and cannot speak nor move: “whether such was the stupor that filled his senses at the sight of the divine face, or his soul was overcome by fear of the divine beauty, Buonarotti did not say a word.” The Duke asks him again, and finally Michelangelo responds that the image could not have been made by human hands: the artist was God or His angels. Soon after, when Michelangelo returns to the church with a companion so as to worship the Sacrament (presumably, at the high altar of the church), the artist is compelled to visit the holy image and moved to worship in front of it: “firstly, Buonarotti went before the altar of the Nunziata, and with humility he began to pray.”

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They include Pietro Martire Vermigli, who was originally from Florence and lived in England and elsewhere in Protestant Europe after 1547. Images are treated systematically in his *Loci Communnes* (1576 and an edition in English, published 1583). See Scavizzi, 29-30.

26 “In questo, o fosse lo stupor che nella vista del divin volto gli avea i sensi occupati, o soprapreso l’animo da timore di divina bellezza, altrimenti non fece motto il Buonarroto.” “Ora, poichè al Sacramento n’andò, primamente se n’andò il Buonarroto dinanzi all’altare della Nunziata, e con umilità si mise a fare orazione.” When Michelangelo’s companion asks him why he is drawn to the Nunziata, the artist recounts his first viewing and again affirms that the face of the Virgin is not by human hands.
intended to bolster the Nunziata’s stature by means of a judgment conferred by the greatest Florentine artist of the Renaissance period, and he also cleverly conjoins Michelangelo’s aesthetic assessment with a religious experience on the part of the artist that befits a sacred image. His story nonetheless has further significance. Megan Holmes has pointed out that Bocchi’s account of Michelangelo’s response conveys that “the holy face is inscrutable, irreducible; it resists reductive or even metaphoric readings. Michelangelo, in the end, is without words to describe the divin sembiante and can only assume a devotional posture before the image.”

Bocchi’s story can thus be understood as a rejoinder to a central platform of the Protestant reform – the emphasis on the Word. Yet, even more to the point here, it also asserts that the act of kneeling arises out of true devotional feeling. Language fails, and bodily response takes its place as the sign of a more profound experience. The latter is affectively and internally realized but, as such, its outward manifestation is the spontaneous act of falling to one’s knees. Kneeling is therefore not so much assumed before the image as a preparatory antecedent or supplement to prayer: it is rather an effect of devotion, generated by the divinity via her image and within the beholder-devotee.

Bocchi, 1592, 82-83. As pointed out previously in this thesis, throughout this text Bocchi repeatedly stresses the affective power of the Nunziata over her beholders: she is constantly moving them to “stupor” or fear, while Grand Duke Cosimo I “lagrimò sempre”. Ibid., 81 and passim.

Holmes, 2011, 446. Holmes has noted that if the story is historically grounded, it would have taken place between 1530, when Alessandro became Grand Duke, and Michelangelo’s departure for Rome in 1534. She points out other significances for the anecdote. It stresses the strictly limited access to the image and its control by the Medici (Michelangelo tells a friend, “I was allowed, in the company of those noblemen”). Bocchi also evidences that the physical appearance of the image was an issue by this time: Michelangelo affirms twice that it was made by divine hands rather than human. Holmes, 2011, 444-45.
In the early cinquecento, Leonardo recognized that gestures, like kneeling, were the expression of religious emotion generated by images. He writes of images believed to be sacred that were typically covered. Their unveiling would cause “the great multitude of people who have gathered there immediately to throw themselves to the ground, worshipping and praying to the deity who is represented in the picture, for the repairing of their lost health and for their external salvation, exactly as if this goddess were there as a living presence.”28 Counter-Reformation writers were unequivocal that such gestures were rooted in true spiritual experience and could be furthermore attributed to the nature of religious images as thresholds or conduits to the divine. Catholic apologists for images routinely made the connection between this quality of the sacred image and devotional gestures. A number of writers, including the Bolognese cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, in his influential treatise on images of 1582, reiterated Aquinas’s venerable arguments in the Summa, claiming that when one kneels before images of Christ or the Virgin, the gesture is “generated” not by the image, but by the sacred person him or herself. And reciprocally, the image is an ambassador, and honour shown to it is directly conveyed to its “prince”.29 As can be recalled, too, in his tract on the Nunziata, Bocchi repeatedly refers to the

29 “Quindi, adorando le sacre immagini di Cristo, della Vergine e dei santi, noi adoriamo Cristo, la Vergine e I santi rappresentati nelle immagini; e quando ci inginocchiamo davanti alle loro immagini, è come se ci inginocchiasassimo davanti a essi stessi, in quanto questo gesto è generato in noi non dall’immagine, ma dalla realtà che essa rappresenta, proprio come quando rendiamo onore a legati e ambasciatori in quanto essi rappresentano i loro principi, essendo in qualche modo la persona del loro principe rappresentata dai suoi inviati. Ne possiamo concludere che il culto che si deve a ciò che è immaginato, lo si deve proporzionalmente anche alle immagini che lo raffigurano (Summa, III q.25 a.3-4).” Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane (1582)*, ed. Stefano della Torre, transl. Gian Franco Freguglia (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), Cap.XXXII, 98. See
eloquence of the Nunziata, to her affective powers to move viewers to stupor or tears. Bocchi’s stress on the ability of the image to induce the encounter of the beholder with the divine is in accordance with Paleotti. The latter says that images are “instruments to unite men with God (istrumenti per unire gli uomini con Dio)”; they have the ability “to move men to the obedience and subjugation due to God (muovere gli uomini alla debita obbedienza e soggezione a Dio)”.

The invocation of rhetoric contained in Paleotti’s use of “muovere” is significant, in that it suggests that the image is both self-conscious of its purpose, yet its ultimate aim is to reach beyond “words” to the soul of the beholder and create true feeling there. Returning to the Nunziata’s paliotto then, at its centre and closest to the Nunziata (depicted within the relief) is the kneeling prince Cosimo, who is emulated by the kneeling friars in the foreground. In turn, there are all those who kneel at the shrine of the Nunziata before the altar, in both votive form (as silver, painted, or wax bodies) and in actual body. A hierarchical arrangement of imitative behaviour and submission to the divine is thus plainly represented and engendered by the altar in situ. At the same time, however, it should be acknowledged that for Early Modern viewers this

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Scavizzi, 68ff for other Counter-Reformation writers who also use Aquinas’s analogy. The decrees of the Council of Trent furthermore stress the importance of outward signs of devotion, including kneeling: “because the honour showed to them [(that is, sacred images)] is referred to the original which they represent; thus, through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads and go down on our knees, we give adoration to [adoremus] Christ and veneration to the saints, whose likeness they bear.” “The Council of Trent on the Veneration of Saints and the Honoring of Images (1563),” as translated in Belting, Appendix 43, 554-55.

chain of devotional gestures evidenced the primary feeling of deep piety, if not true communion with the Virgin.

4.3 The Enactment of Devotion as an Image Type in Florentine Art c.1600

The Nunziata’s paliotto is not the only example of an image that enacts devotion found in Florentine Counter-Reformation art. Krüger provides a substantial analysis of Santi di Tito’s *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma*, dated 1593 and commissioned by Sebastiano del Turco for his family chapel in the church of San Marco in Florence. (fig. 4.16) The painting shows the miraculous vision of Thomas Aquinas that arose when he prayed before the crucifix, seeking God’s confirmation of the truth of his writings. During this encounter, the crucifix transformed into a living tableau with Christ speaking to him. The dichotomy that makes this work an example of the type discussed by Krüger lies in that

[t]he ‘being-with-Christ’ of Thomas Aquinas is realized as an *inner* experience of the imagination, yet is dramatized in theatrical fashion in the painting as an *external* event. The representation, hence, fulfils a dual function: first, it attests to the transformative powers of the imagination, insofar as the painted crucifixion comes to life under Thomas’s eyes. Second, it permits the beholder to participate suggestively in the exercise of this imaginative power. Suggestively above all because, as with a picture puzzle, he is simultaneously shown *two* subjects: the ‘Vision of Thomas Aquinas’ and the ‘Crucifixion
of Christ with saints’, meaning Mary and John, as well as Catherine, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas.  

Krüger points out that the contemporary clothing of Thomas and Catherine of Alexandria, their closeness to the picture plane, and the life-size scale of the figures (the canvas is 3.6 metres high) all work to further “actualize” the representation for the beholder. Consequently this viewer is encouraged to emulate the saintly exemplars and, by means of his or her own imaginative will, attain the same unity with God.  

There is more that can be said about this work with regards to the skill by which Santi develops the image type and the place it has within the context of Florentine art of the period. This San Marco painting was not his first version of the subject and it also takes liberties with the legend in a productive manner. An earlier picture was produced around 1570 as an altarpiece for the oratory of the congregation of San Tomaso d’Aquino in Florence. (fig. 4.17) This 1570 work holds interest in how it combines the grounded, material object of the crucifix with a mystically levitating St. Thomas. Comparing it to the San Marco painting, nonetheless, it becomes apparent that Santi further heightened the confounding of the beholder’s perceptions in the later, San Marco picture. He achieved this by substituting a painting of the Crucifixion for the crucifix that appears in the legend. This painting within a painting configuration thus allows for a more blurred and ambiguous transition between material object and vision: in the top third of this

31 Ibid., 66.
32 Ibid., 65-66.
33 The congregation had been founded in Florence in 1566, reflecting the renewed interest in this saint during the Counter-Reformation period. Santi was accepted into the congregation in 1568 and was elected Maggiore in 1573. Marco Collareta, cat. entry, in Il Seicento fiorentino : arte a Firenze da Ferdinando I a Cosimo III. Palazzo Strozzi, 21 dicembre 1986-4 maggio 1987 (Florence: Cantini, 1986), vol. I, 82.
picture, the Crucifixion scene is bordered by a frame, so that it is clearly a material image, while at the bottom of the painting, this frame is no longer visible, and what is presented is a fully three-dimensional and seemingly fleshly experience. Scanning top to bottom and then upwards, and back, the beholder vacillates between seeing the material object of the Crucifixion painting and witnessing its transformation into spiritual experience. Santi is generally understood by modern historians to have been in the vanguard of a direct, highly simplified approach that fulfilled a Post-Tridentine demand for clarity in art, and as such, he led an anti-Mannerist “reform” of religious art in Florence.34 These St. Thomas pictures, however, while executed in the stripped down and high realist style that he introduced to Florence after returning from Rome, are also cerebral and artful in their visual effects.

It is also significant that the *St. Thomas* is not the only work in the church of San Marco that dates to c.1600 and conforms to the enactment of devotion image type. Two other instances are in fact found in chapels adjacent to the Cappella di Turco where Santi’s painting resides. Firstly, in 1609, a portion of narrative mosaic, dated 705-07 CE and showing the Virgin in an orans pose, was brought from the oratory of Pope John VII at St. Peter’s in Rome and placed above the altar in the Cappella de’Ricci.35 It was enclosed in a simple rectilinear mosaic frame


and enlarged on either side with depictions of cherubim and Domenican saints, painted in a rather strange, hybrid manner – that is, in both a modern, naturalistic style, but also as if fashioned in mosaic. Saint Dominic and the recently canonized Dominican, Saint Raymond, kneel towards the framed mosaic of the Virgin. Then, in the chapel next to this and closest towards the high altar, there is yet another early seventeenth-century example of a reframed icon-like image. This work was likely commissioned by the Martini family who owned the chapel, which was dedicated to Dominic. It involves a fifteenth-century painting of the saint, framed and set within a new work painted by Matteo Rosselli. The old portrait of the saint is surrounded by angels while the Virgin rests her hands on its upper edge, and two other saints kneel in adoration. (fig. 4.19) This is an example of the widespread Counter-Reformation Bildtabernakel -- that is, a work wherein an old, sacred image is set within and thus framed by a modern one. Rubens’s Valicella project, discussed above, is another instance. In so far as the

of San Marco was extensively remodelled at this time. The work was begun in 1580 by Giambologna. The inscription at the bottom of the new altarpiece records the transfer of the mosaic from Rome. As Richa points out, citing del Migliore, the inscription names the relevant eighth century pontiff as John VII, but it was Pope John VIII who reigned in 703. Richa also transcribes the inscription. Giuseppe Richa, Notie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine (Florence,1754-62)(reprinted (Florence: P. G. Viviani, 1989), vol.VII, 138-39. In its original state, the mosaic showed Pope John VIII approaching the Virgin in adoration along with the title “Servant of the Holy Mother of God (Sanctae Dei Genitricis Servus)”. Belting, 127. Notably, then, this scene had a narrative structure, and as such represented the Virgin as mystically present to the Bishop of Rome. In the reframing at San Marco, she becomes more so an icon-like image. The oratory of John VIII was demolished in the early seventeenth century. For further on the mosaics in it, including drawings dating from the early seventeenth century by Giacomo Grimaldi that show the San Marco fragment in its original place in the oratory, see Ann van Dijk, “The Angelic Salutation in Early Byzantine and Medieval Annunciation Imagery,” The Art Bulletin, 81, n.3 (September 1999): 424; 425, fig.5; and 426, fig.7.

36 Raymond died in 1275 and was canonized by Clement VIII in 1601.

new, tabernacle-picture typically depicts persons in attitudes of adoration directed toward the old image, such *Bildtabernakeln* comprise a subset of the enactment of devotion image type.\(^{38}\)

As a group, these San Marco examples begin to suggest that there was a general interest in exploring the possibilities of the enactment of devotion image type in Post-Tridentine Florence. Other works bear out this proposition. The invention evident in Santi’s work very possibly inspired Ludovico Cigoli, who employs the same duality of visionary experience and object of worship in *Sts. Louis IX, King of France, and Chiara adoring a painting of St. Francis* (1602). (fig.4.20) In this extraordinary composition, a highly naturalistic depiction of St. Francis in ecstasy covers almost the entire surface of the painting. But, in contemplating the work and scanning to its outer edges, the viewer also becomes aware that this scene is another painting within the larger painting: the lower edge of the St. Francis scene is an illusionistically painted frame. (And this St. Francis painting is in fact a reproduction of one of Cigoli’s own works, dated 1596. (fig. 4.21))\(^{39}\) There is a small strip below and directly in front of this illusionistic

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\(^{38}\) Krüger discusses two of these: Francesco Vanni’s *Saints with the Madonna dei Mantellini* in the church of Santa Maria del Carmini, Siena (1595); and a statue of the crucified Christ set within a painting of adoring saints and angels, by Giovanni di Pietro and Giovanni Tedesco, dating to the early sixteenth century. Krüger, 62. For Rubens’s Vallicella altarpiece as a *Bildtabernakel*, see Martin Warnke, “Italienische Bildtabernakel bis zum Frübarock,” *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3, 19 (1968): 77-90. Another well known example is in the sumptuous Cappella Paolina at Sta. Maria Maggiore in Rome, built by Paul V to house the famous icon of the Virgin. In 1613, the image was set in a frame and surrounded by a host of bronze angels who appear to carry it down from heaven. This new “narrative” frame was itself set within a larger tabernacle shrine. Belting, 486-87; Steven F. Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: the Sistine and Pauline chapels in S. Maria Maggiore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

\(^{39}\) The St. Francis painting was produced for the convent of Sant’Onofrio di Fuligno in Florence and was a highly successful work for Cigoli: it was praised by Baldinucci. Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno, da Cimabue in qua. Con nuove annotazioni per cura di F. Ranalli* (Florence: S.P.E.S. 1975),
frame, and in front of this represented painting Cigoli positions St. Louis, along with Sta. Chiara and other faithful congregated on the right. Louis kneels before the painting of St. Francis and looks out at the viewer, encouraging him or her to imitate his piety. The shifting spatial aspects of the work nonetheless also create a meaningful ambiguity: the area occupied by the foreground figures is so shallow and crowded that the resulting effect for the beholder of the image is that the painting of St. Francis is at once immediately present as an object of devotion for her or him. At the same time, however, and as the viewer scans to the right, the painting becomes once removed from her or him, in that it is a focus of devotion for others. Cigoli’s representation paradoxically provides two experiences that are made visually integral to one another: a devotional object immediately present for the viewer, and a spectacle of piety that testifies to the rightness of worship before sacred images.


40 Louis IX is one of the Medieval rulers whom Roberto Bellarmine presents as exemplary in the third book of the *De officio principis christiani*. 
for the high altar of the church at the Jesuit convent of San Giovannino degli Scolopi.\textsuperscript{41} (fig. 4.22) A physically and spiritually overwhelmed St. Jerome is supported by an angel as he collapses in ecstasy. In front and next to him are his usual objects of devotion, the open book, skull, and crucifix. The crucifix has the same double effect found in Santi di Tito’s work: it is an object presented in a non-iconic manner: that is, it is shown obliquely and it is an accoutrement of the narrative action. At the same time, nevertheless, Ligozzi has given the figure of the crucified Christ a warm fleshiness, so that it seems the viewer of the work witnesses the exact moment of mystical communion between God and saint.\textsuperscript{42} Ligozzi has moreover added another intriguing element, a print of the Virgin and Child, which is even more unequivocally represented as an image-object. Ligozzi has shown it as being suspended from a nail or wooden peg. (fig. 4.23) The lower edge of its frame is depicted in perspective, but he also further reifies the print within the painting in another, startling way: it is presented frontally and flat so that it also becomes an icon-like image that seems to rest on the surface of the canvas. This spatial disjunction between the print and the narrative scene in which it also resides is also heightened in a temporal manner, given that it resembles late quattrocento Florentine religious prints.\textsuperscript{43} The print is thus presented as an image embedded within an image, and the whole representation is

\textsuperscript{41} Mina Bacci, cat. entry in \textit{Il Seicento fiorentino}, vol.2, cat.1.8, 93. The Church was given to the Order of the Scolopi (or Piarists) in 1775, upon the suppression of the Jesuit Order.

\textsuperscript{42} The choice to show a living Christ on the cross can possibly also be understood to be a reaffirmation of the cult of the Eucharist, as put forward by the Council of Trent. A similar life-like Crucified Christ appears, for instance, on Giambologna’s version for the old wood ciborium on the high altar of the Nunziata discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. Antonio Paolucci, “L’Arredamento ecclesiiale nell’età della Riforma,” in \textit{Arte e religione nella Firenze de’ Medici} (Florence: Città di Vita, Basilica di S. Croce, 1980), 95-97.

\textsuperscript{43} See \textit{Il Seicento fiorentino}, vol.2, 93, for the dating of the print. The inscription on it reads: “Fammi che puoi della tua grazia degno.”
reminiscent of a *Bildtabernakel*, with the print an object of worship for both Jerome and the viewer of the painting.

4.4 The Medici Paliotto: the Image Type as a Votive Relief

As I have pointed out previously in this dissertation, the central image of the Medici paliotto is akin to conventional narrative votive panel paintings, particularly the type that shows the votary kneeling in profile. Yet it also differs from the latter, in which the thaumaturge is typically an apparition before the devotee. (fig. 4.24) Unlike the painted panel type, the paliotto relief features an unusually detailed and concretely depicted setting, which is the tempietto in which the miraculous fresco of the Nunziata resides. (figs. 4.1, 4.2) This central panel of the Medici paliotto therefore shares aspects with the paintings just examined above. It depicts an act of worship before an image by an exemplary person, the young Cosimo de’Medici as a model Counter-Reformation prince. At first glance, this composition might seem fairly staid and deliberately straightforward, as befits its intent to clearly convey its politicized and didactic content. The work, however, is akin to the paintings considered in this chapter in that it has a semiotic complexity that befits the depiction of worship. This complexity is nonetheless of a kind particular to the paliotto, given that it stems largely from its materiality as a silver relief panel and its function as a votive. In this regard, it is instructive to consider this work in terms of Jacques Derrida’s arguments in the essay “Parergon”. Derrida questions Kant’s notion that art and aesthetic judgment are disinterested and, more specifically, that art (the *ergon*) is distinct
both from its frame (parergon) and, by means of the frame, from its milieu.\footnote{44} These separations designate a work as art and thus make aesthetic judgment possible: “every analytic of aesthetic judgment presupposes that we can rigorously distinguish between the intrinsic and the extrinsic.”\footnote{45} Derrida refutes Kant with reference to not only works of visual art and architecture; he also shows that Kant’s own discourse, taken as a work of art, relies on an untenable distinction between aesthetic and cognitive judgements, the first being illogical and the second logical. The implication is that, as a philosopher whose arguments must be couched in language, Kant is always bound to the latter. In other words, the ergon of the aesthetic is inextricable from the parergon of language.\footnote{46}

Derrida means that, for every work of art, it is necessary to move beyond its immediate framing and back, in order to discern the work’s full meaning. The Medici silver paliotto is nonetheless a work that especially exploits the signifying potential of this dynamic. We can begin with the central panel as a discreet image: it is a narrative, an episode from the story of the

\footnote{44} “Parerga have a thickness, a surface which separates them not only, as Kant would have it, from the body of the ergon itself, but also from the outside, from the wall on which the painting is hung, the space in which the statue or column stands, as well as from the entire historic, economic, and political field of inscription….No ‘theory’, no ‘practice’, no ‘theoretical practice’ can be effective here if it does not rest on the frame, the invisible limit of (between) the interiority of meaning (protected by the entire hermeneutic, semiotic, phenomenological, and formalist tradition) and (of) all the extrinsic empiricals which, blind and illiterate, dodge the question.” Jacques Derrida, “The Parergon,” transl. Craig Owens, \textit{October}, 9 (Summer, 1979), 24 and passim.

\footnote{45} He continues: “Aesthetic judgment must concern intrinsic beauty, and not the around and about. It is therefore necessary to know – this is the fundamental presupposition, the foundation – how to define the intrinsic, the framed, and what to exclude as frame and beyond the frame.” Ibid., 26.

\footnote{46} “[A] logical frame has been transposed and forced upon a nonlogical structure, a structure which does not essentially concern a relation to the object as an object of cognition. Aesthetic judgment, Kant insists, is not cognitive judgment.” Ibid., 30, and see 28ff for the full argument.
healing of the young Medici prince. And we look through an Albertian window frame upon a scene ordered and articulated by means of perspectival construction. But it can also be remembered that this panel is a mise-en-abyme composition.\(^47\) That is, while the paliotto represents the *historia* of Cosimo’s recovery, it nonetheless also depicts its situation within the tempietto where it resides, directly below the fresco of the Nunziata, while it shows the young Cosimo kneeling before that sacred image in intimate communion with it. Visually speaking, this effect depends on contradictory and simultaneous movements: we are pulled into the illusionistic space of the panel, yet in doing so, we are also brought outside it, to the architectural space of the actual tempietto in which it is positioned. This rapport between the image and its setting furthermore amplifies the most essential significance of the central panel. It creates a particularly forceful sense of the perpetual presence of the Prince in the most privileged devotional position before the sacred image.

This embedding of the image and its milieu within one another is also enhanced by the materiality of the altar. Despite the illusion of the space or “picture” that is the central panel, the latter, by virtue of being silver and a relief, is also continuous with its surrounding frame, which is the altar as a whole. The altar, in its turn, was linked materially to the silver lamps and votives, as well as the silver frame and cover around and over the sacred fresco, all located within the tempietto. Finally, the altar is of course the locus of the ritual purpose of the entire space defined by the tempietto. The panel’s composition can furthermore be understood in terms of the

\[^47\] The “mise-en-abyme, as a means by which the work turns back on itself, appears to be a kind of reflexion.” Furthermore, the “essential property” of mise-en-abyme, is that “it brings out the meaning and form of the work”. Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, transl. Jeremey Whitely (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 8. These principles are evident in what I am here discerning in the paliotto.
reciprocity and merging of *ergon* and *parergon* we have discerned here: the figure of the young Cosimo is echoed symbolically — and thus by means of a change in the mode of signification -- in the framing cherub’s heads and Medici and Lorena stemme that flank the central panel. And this symbiosis between the narrative central panel and the symbolic elements framing it is reinforced formally, in that the columns of the tempietto depicted in the image repeat the upright moldings that frame the other figurative elements of the paliotto.

It is evident, then, that if we keep the narrative image and its *parergon* distinct -- with the latter as extrinsic, as mere ornament and supplement -- we overlook how forcefully and completely the paliotto embodies the inter-related notions of sacrality and civic order as characteristics of Medici rule. And we can take this analysis a step further, by returning to Derrida’s rejection of Kant’s notion of the autonomy of art. Within the realm of the history of art, metalwork typically resides in the marginalized realm of the “decorative”. I would argue that, while maintaining that this medium is still distinct from painting in that it usually lacks the illusionism and scale usually afforded to the latter, the silver Medici paliotto at the SS. Annunziata nonetheless can be grouped with the pictures by Santi di Tito, Cigoli, and Ligozzi discussed above. On its own material terms, but like the other works, its visual and conceptual richness attests to both the engagement of Florentine artists with the most important trends of the period and the vitality of art production in Counter-Reformation Florence.

It is no wonder, then, that this work was soon imitated for two other votive paliotti that were commissioned for Cosimo II. It is significant, too, that these were destined for sites of the highest honour in Counter-Reformation Italy. One was designed by Giulio Parigi in 1617 and took a group of craftsmen working in the Medici workshops no less than seven years to complete. It was six feet long and made of chiseled gold, with a central panel of *pietre dure,*
gems, and enamel. This panel shows Cosimo II in full royal regalia, kneeling in profile, and with a view of the Duomo of Florence through a window behind him.\(^{48}\) (fig. 4.25) The gold antependium was likely melted down in the eighteenth century, but the sumptuous figural scene still exists in Florence in its final form, and as two copies in highly finished paper maché and polychromed plaster. (fig. 4.26) For some reason (perhaps having to do with the death of Cosimo three years before it was completed in 1624) the work never reached its intended destination, the Church of San Carlo Borromeo in Milan.\(^{49}\) Borromeo had been canonized on November 1 1610, and so the paliotto indicates that this advocate of the Nunziata’s cult was the healing power behind at least one instance of Cosimo’s recovery from his recurring illnesses.

A second seventeenth-century replica after the Nunziata paliotto was commissioned by Cosimo’s mother, Christina of Lorraine, sometime between 1620 and 1640. It was destined for the shrine of Loreto, no doubt after Cosimo was healed once again. As noted in Chapter One, Loreto was the most prominent Marian sanctuary in Italy during this period, and the Medici displayed their pious dedication to the Madonna there by means of pilgrimage and votive offerings. The silver ex-voto paliotto commissioned by Christina no longer exists, but a pen and watercolour sketch, attributed to Giulio Parigi, shows the composition of the whole.\(^{50}\) (fig. 4.27)

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\(^{48}\) The parts in relief in the central panel were sculpted by Orazio Mocchi, the father of Francesco, who sculpted the busts of Vitale and Medici discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter 3, 68, n.144; and Maria Sframeli, in *Il seicento fiorentino*, vol. 2, cat. 5.9, 476-77. For the Milan Medici paliotto, including its identification as an ex-voto, see Annamaria Giusti, in *The Medici, Michelangelo, and the Art of Late Renaissance Florence*, exhib. cat. March 16 –Jun 8, 2003, The Detroit Institute of Arts (New Haven and London, Yale University Press and Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 2002), cats. 115 & 116, 258-59.

\(^{49}\) The paper maché and plaster replicas were almost certainly intended to be records of the original. Ibid.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., Cat.117, 260. Sanger emphasizes the role played by Christina in this commission. Alice Sanger, *Art, Gender and Religious Devotion in Grand Ducal Tuscany* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 109-10.
As with the Nunziata model, Medici and Lorena coats of arms flank the central scene, which depicts Cosimo kneeling before an altar surmounted by a crucifix.

The exact location intended for the Loreto paliotto is not certain. It is nevertheless notable that the figurative scene depicts the sanctuary within itself. Behind Cosimo is a masonry building that resembles the Holy House. This structure contains the archaic cult statue of the Madonna and Child and, according to legend, it is the original home of Jesus and Mary that was miraculously transported from Nazareth in the thirteenth century. The work thus adopts the mise-en-abyme conceit of its model at the SS. Annunziata and to the same effect: it forcefully asserts the Medici prince’s “presence” before the patron who so favoured him. It is possible that with these imitations after the Nunziata paliotto, the Medici consciously aimed to establish a network of associations between the SS. Annunziata and cult sites identified with the most important authorities in Italy at the time. Certainly these copies attest to the perceived success of the original Medici paliotto -- as an ex-voto and a decorative sculptural relief -- in staking out the votary’s special rapport with his holy patron.

51 A third paliotto “copy” dates to the eighteenth century and was offered by Cosimo III at the Tuscan sanctuary of the Madonna of Impruneta, a favourite Florentine and Medici cult image for centuries. The copy was made of precious stones, bronze and silver, and showed the Grand Duke kneeling at the altar of the Madonna. The designer was Giovan Battista Foggini, and the work was executed by Cosimo Merlini the younger and Bernardo Holzmann. See Rosanna Caterina Proto Pisani, in Museo del Tesoro di Santa Maria dell’Impruneta, Guida alla visita del museo e alla scoperta del territorio, ed. Caterina Caneva (Florence: Polistampa, 2005).
Conclusion

The Nunziata’s cult was one of the most richly elaborated in Italy during the Counter-Reformation period. When undertaking this study, I investigated various aspects of the material culture of the SS. Annunziata, but a central issue soon presented itself — the role of portraiture in figuring both the Nunziata as a powerful miracle-working image and the Medici family as her most privileged devotees. This dissertation has thus considered a number of phenomena that contributed to the “framing” of the Nunziata: copies made after the image, texts related to it, its votives, as well alterations and additions to its shrine. These elements have, however, not been considered discreetly. Rather, they have been situated in relation to one another and with regards to the importance of portraiture in articulating the intertwined authority of the Nunziata and the Medici.

The starting point for this thesis was therefore how copies after the image, additions to the shrine, and texts of various kinds (including miracle compendia, and Bocchi’s and Giani’s discourses on the Nunziata) together constructed the concept of the Nunziata as a Holy Face. An intricate play of kinship and resemblance was established between Christ (as a Holy Face), the Virgin Mary (as the Nunziata, and in particular, her miracle-working countenance), and Grand ducal effigies. The power of the Grand Duke and his role as pious exemplar was expressed in contemporary political theory in terms of the Christian prince as a mirror of Christ, with earthly and heavenly sovereigns placed “face to face”, and as a mirror for his subjects. And these notions were engendered by means of the formal and material likeness between Medici portraits and portraits of Christ and the Virgin, as well as the circulation of these effigies within elite gift exchange.
Chapters Two and Three examined a constellation of effigies – votive and otherwise, and at different locations at the shrine and its immediate environs – whose thematic and physical situation with respect to one another manifested the prerogative of the Medici and their roles as ideal Counter-Reformation princes. It was shown how complex the meaning generated by the display of portraits could be. The renovation projects for the votive portraits in the nave of the SS. Annunziata aimed to fashion a dynastic monument for the Medici. Together with the lavish additions the Medici made to the tempietto chapel of the sacred image in the early seventeenth century, the projects for the nave aimed to create a kind of hybrid princely and sacred kunstkammer within a public cult space – an ambitious undertaking for which I can find no parallel in the Early Modern period. The nave projects of the seicento also conformed to Counter-Reformation demands for didactic and unified interior church decoration. Yet these renovations and the appropriation of a popular cult so fully to Medici identity came at the price of the eradication of the original devotional function of the votives.

The familial and religious-political meanings carried by the Medici votives in the church’s interior were magnified by their affiliation with Medici portraits in the piazza immediately outside. The significance of all these Medici effigies was moreover revealed to extend even beyond dynastic and civic concerns, given their positioning in relation to other, non-grand ducal portraits. These included the votive statues of Antonio Altoviti and Cardinal Alessandrino in the nave, as well as the portraits of the converted Jews, Vitale Medici and his sons, at the Sacristy of the Nunziata. These other works expanded the scope of Medici identity to include their association with the authority of Rome and the most important agendas of the Counter-Reformation movement.
Chapter Four examined how grand ducal identity was especially adeptly represented by means of a single votive which was the most costly and prominently placed portrait ever offered to the Nunziata. The paliotto of Ferdinand I and Cosimo II de’Medici was considered in terms of its materiality, formal qualities, iconography, and siting. The work was shown to be both an example of a Counter-Reformation image type and an instance of the inventiveness of Florentine religious art of the period. It was also an especially effective votive, in the way that its design so forcefully establishes the privileged rapport of the Medici with their holy patron. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, portraiture is, in itself, an art almost exclusively for elite patrons. Votive portraits make this especially clear, given that in comparison to other votive forms they were commissioned by patrons of higher status. But if all votives are in effect portraits of their donors (as Christopher Wood has put it) in so far as their fundamental purpose is to embody the donor’s perpetual presence before the thaumaturge, actual portraits are signs of prestige in that they make this objective particularly evident. Yet the paliotto, in the manner by which it embeds the representation of the Medici prince within the sacred precinct and in closest rapport with the sacred image and within the Nunziata’s special precinct, is an exceptionally self aware expression of the desire for such presence.

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1 As I argued in Chapter 2, it makes no difference to my essential point if this presence is established by means of ritual, magic, commemoration, or some other means. Indeed, it is possible that all these processes held value for individuals at any one moment in time. Alexander Nagel has argued for a fundamental identification of portraits with presence (portraits being a substitute for one who is absent) during the Renaissance. This sense of embodiment moreover rests on the way that images of Christ which were deemed to be authentic were understood to be the model for all secular portraiture. Alexander Nagel, “Icons and Early Modern Portraits,” in *El retrato del Renacimiento*, Miguel Falomir ed. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2008), 421-425.
As the above synopsis indicates, in every chapter I have shown how various material aspects of the Nunziata’s cult reflected and had a bearing on the most fundamental Counter-Reformation policies and ideals whose compass extended beyond Florence. Such a widened scope is essential for understanding Italian religious art of the period. It must also be stressed that throughout this thesis I have used the term “participation” deliberately. The actions of the Medici and various manifestations of the cult of the Nunziata did not merely conform to dictates emanating from Milan and Rome. Rather, they must be seen as actively contributing to the Catholic cause. This point is clear, for instance, in the study of the portraits of Vitale Medici and his sons at the SS. Annunziata found in Chapter Three. I outlined the complex interactions between Rome and Florence, with Ferdinand de’Medici and Vitale himself actively partaking in acts of conversion. The latter was the primary Catholic policy towards the Jews during the Counter-Reformation period throughout Catholic Italy. My approach here is akin to that of recent scholarship that argues against a simple “top-down” relationship between the highest Catholic authorities of the period in Rome and local sites. Instead, a conception of the dynamic in terms of negotiation or “reciprocity within inequality” allows for a more complete understanding of how individual cults were shaped and experienced.²

² The influential term “reciprocity within inequality” is coined by William Taylor. See Simon Ditchfield, “Tridentine Worship and the Cult of Saints”, in The Cambridge History of Christianity. Volume 6. Reform and Expansion, R. Po-Chia Hsia ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 206-07; and with further bibliography Fredrika H. Jacobs, Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Renaissance Italy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 113. See also Jacobs’s arguments that votives gave form to the “popular voice” in justifying the cults of images and relics, as opposed to official processes of verification, as undertaken by church authorities during the Counter-Reformation period. Ibid., 107-25. David Gentilcuore calls for a view of relations between church authorities and lay populations in terms of “negotiation” when it comes to such situations as cult formation and practices. David Gentilcuore,
The inclusion of wider, extra-Florentine concerns should be applied to the study of other aspects of the Nunziata’s cult — and their attendant material culture — during the Counter-Reformation period. I was able to address some of these only briefly. What is needed is further investigation of the relations between the Servites and the Medici. I have also not looked in any depth at liturgical practices that were related to the sacred image. The issue of popular devotion deserves more attention. This thesis did come across some interesting instances. There were, for example, the extensive communal devotions that took place during the plague of 1630-31. There was also the copy of the Nunziata commissioned at the end of the cinquecento by a group of wealthy Florentine merchants and displayed in the Mercato Nuovo. This incident suggested that there was some impetus to challenge Medici hegemony over the Nunziata’s cult. Indeed, the authority of the Medici as it was fashioned in relation to the sacred image rested on the continued importance of the Nunziata to the lives of the people of Florence. More study is therefore needed regarding how the Nunziata remained a force in the lives of the clergy and the lay populace. Whatever part they played in shaping the material culture of her cult during the Counter-Reformation period must moreover be understood within the broader ambit of the Catholic world.

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FIGURES

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Introduction

Figure 0.1 Annunciation, fresco, church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence

Figure 0.2 Tabernacle Shrine (or Tempietto) of the Santissima Annunziata, church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence

Figure 0.3 Michelozzo Michelozzi, Tempietto of the Santissima Annunziata, commissioned by Piero di Cosimo de’Medici, 1448, church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence

Figure 0.4 Detail, Annunciation, fresco, church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence

Figure 0.5 Jacques Callot, engraving, illustration from Giovanni’s Angelo Lottini, Scelta d’alcuni miracoli e grazie della Santissima Nunziata di Firenze, 1619, p.20

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1 Mandylion from S. Silvestro in Capite, 6thC, Capella S. Matilda, Rome, Vatican
http://www.learn.columbia.edu/treasuresofheaven/relics/Mandylion.php

Figure 1.2 Egidio Leggi, Silver altar frontal, 1600, Tempietto of the SS. Annunziata, church of the SS. Annunziata, Florence.

Figure 1.3 View of the altar in the Tempietto of the SS. Annunziata, showing the silver frame (1618), donated by Don Lorenzo de’Medici
https://www.flickr.com/photos/24364447@N05/6060244092/

Figure 1.4 Detail of Frame of the SS. Annunziata (1618) and additional silver ornament over the frame (1624), both donated by Don Lorenzo de’ Medici. (The original angels were replaced in 1871 with those shown here.)
Figure 1.5  Andrea del Sarto, *Salvator Mundi*, c.1515; painting is 47 x 27 cm., Church of SS. Annunziata
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Andrea_del_Sarto_-_Christ_the_Redeemer_-_WGA00379.jpg

Figure 1.6  Fresco of the Annunciation, with the Holy Face between the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel, at Sakli Kilise at Göreme, eleventh century

Figure 1.7  Sandro Botticelli, *Annunciation* (The Cestello altarpiece), with an *Ecce Homo* and *Holy Face* in the predella, 1489-90, Uffizi Gallery, Florence
http://www.museumsinflorence.com/uffizi/15/15.html

Figure 1.8  Matteo Nigetti, Tabernacle Frame for Andrea del Sarto’s *Salvator Mundi*, silver inlaid with precious stones, 1618

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Figure 1.11  Detail of Figure 1.10

Figures 1.12 & 1.13  Alessandro Allori, Copies after the heads of the Archangel and Virgin from the fresco of the SS. Annunziata, 1580, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan
http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/photo/announcing-angel-by-alessandro-allori-oil-high-res-stock-photography/109268302

1.14 Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda, Profile of Christ, Porphyry and Serpentine stone, 1569, Private Collection

1.15 Mattias Ferrucci, Head of SS. Annunziata, Prophyry on serpentine stone, after 1653, Detroit, Private Collection
1.16 Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda, Head of Cosimo I de’Medici, Porphyry on serpentine, 1560-70, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O130477/portrait-of-cosimo-i-de-relief-ferrucci-francesco-di/

1.17 Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda, Head of Ferdinand I de’Medici, Porphyry on serpentine, 1609
http://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/photo/image-of-ferdinando-i-de-medici-cardinal-high-res-stock-photography/188076352?Language=en-GB

1.18 Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda, Head of Christina of Lorraine, Porphyry on serpentine, c.1609

1.19 Medal of Pius V, 1571
https://www.ricardo.ch/usability/ch/viewitem.aspx?articlenr=756050912&rewrite=0

1.20 The Salus Populi Romani, on the altar of the Cappella Paolina, Sta. Maria Maggiore, Rome

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1.23 Francesco Ferrucci del Tadda or workshop(?), Christ and the Madonna, Marble, 1560-70

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http://www.planetware.com/florence/church-of-the-annunciation-i-to-fsan.htm

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http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santissima_Annunziata#/media/File:Ss_annunziata,_chiostrino_dei_voti_.2.JPG

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http://mefrim.revues.org/1988
2.5 Benvenuto Cellini, Wax portrait relief of Francis I, Bargello, Florence, 1494-1547
http://www.kunstkopie.nl/a/cellini-benvenuto/portrait-relief-of-franci.html

2.6 Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Mantua, showing the display of votive statues.
http://mefrim.revues.org/1988

2.7 Luca Ferrini, *Corona di Sessantatre Miracoli della Nunziata di Firenze*, 1593, frontispiece and title page

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2.9 Ferdinando Mancini, *Restauratione d’alcuni più segnalati miracoli della Santissima Nunziata di Firenza* (1650), np, Diagram for the silver votives on a pier in the nave of the church

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http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ss_annunziata,_chiostro_grande_1.JPG

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http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basilica_della_santissima_annunziata_interno.JPG

2.13 Ferdinando Tacca, View of the nave of the Nunziata, on the occasion of the canonization of Filippo Benizi, 1672, engraving

https://archive.org/details/sceltadalcnimir00lott

2.15 View of nave and pilasters, St. Peter’s basilica, Rome
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica#/media/File:Giovanni_Paolo_Panini_-_Interior_of_St._Peter%27s,_Rome.jpg
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http://openbuildings.com/buildings/hofkirche-innsbruck-profile-26846

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http://www.palaciosdeeuropa.com/escorial/index.htm
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http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loggia_dei_Servi_di_Maria#/media/File:Loggiato_dei_Servi_di_Maria.JPG

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3.20 Pietro Tacca, Bee emblem of Ferdinand I, bronze, 1640, on the base of Equestrian statue of Ferdinand I
http://www.weekendinitalia.it/the-hidden-gems-of-florence-the-bees/

3.21 Pietro Tacca, Bee emblem of Ferdinand I, bronze, 1640, on the base of Equestrian statue of Ferdinand I

3.21 Michele Mazzafirri, Reverse of Medal of Ferdinand I de’Medici, 1588

3.23 Peter Paul Rubens, *Bee impresa of Ferdinand I*, from Silvestro Pietrasanta, *De symbolis heroicis*, 1634

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4.1 Egidio Leggi, Silver altar frontal (paliotto), tempietto of the SS. Annunziata, silver, 1600
http://www.alinariarchives.it/it/search?isPostBack=1&panelAdvSearch=opened&artista=Nigetti,%20Matteo

4.2 Detail of the paliotto, middle section

4.3 Avanzino Nucci (attr.), *The Madonna of Loreto and Angels*, c.1600, Pinacoteca diocesana, Senigallia

4.4 Il Guercino, *The Virgin of Loreto and Saints*, Pinacoteca civica, Cento
http://www.arteovunque.info/tag/guercino/

4.5 Michael Ostendorfer, *The Shrine of the Beautiful Virgin of Regensberg*, woodcut, c.1520
http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7e/Michael_Ostendorfer_-_The_Pilgrimage_to_the_%22Fair_Virgin%22_in_Regensburg_-_WGA16769.jpg


4.7 Annibale Carracci, *St. Francis Adoring the Crucifix*, c.1585, Capitoline, Rome
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4.10 Peter Paul Rubens, *Vallicella Altarpiece*, c.1608, Chiesa Nuova, Rome; centre: *Madonna of Vallicella adored by Angels*

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4.12 Il Cerano (Giovan Battista Crespi), *The Madonna of San Celso worshipped by Saints Francis and Carlo Borromeo*, c. 1610, Turin, Pinacoteca Sabauda

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4.14 Orazio Borgianni, *San Carlo Borromeo*, 1610-16, Hermitage, St. Petersburg

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4.17 Santi di Tito, *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma*, c.1570, altarpiece for the Oratory of the Congregation of San Tomaso d’Aquino, Florence

4.18 Altarpiece in the Cappella de’Ricci, Church of San Marco, Florence, 1609; with Roman mosaic dated 705-07 CE
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Matteo_rosselli_madonna_del_rosario_e_angeli_che_portano_in_cielo_s.domenico._1640_.01.JPG


4.21 Ludovico Cigoli, *The Stigmata of Saint Francis*, 1596, Uffizi, Florence

4.22 Jacopo Ligozzi, *St. Jerome and the Angel*, 1593, for the high altar of the church at the Jesuit convent of San Giovannino in Florence

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4.25 Giulio Parigi (design), Medici workshop (execution), Central panel of a Votive Paliotto showing Cosimo II de’Medici, 1617-1624, intended for the Church of San Carlo Borromeo, Milan, *pietre dure*, gems, and enamel, Museo degli Argenti, Florence

4.26 Copy of Giulio Parigi (design), Medici workshop (execution), Central panel of a Votive Paliotto showing Cosimo II de’Medici, 1617-1624, papier maché and polychromed plaster, Museo dell’Opificio delle Pietre Dure
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O68819/cosimo-ii-de-medici-before-relief-mochi-orazio/

4.27 Drawing for a paliotto showing Cosimo II de’Medici at the shrine of the Madonna of Loreto, for the Shrine of the Madonna of Loreto, commissioned by Christina of Lorraine sometime between 1620 and 1640, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence