

MITTEILUNGEN
DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN
INSTITUTES
IN FLORENZ



LVIII. BAND — 2016
HEFT 2



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HEFT 2

MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ

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Graphik | Progetto grafico
RovaiWeber design, Firenze

Produktion | Produzione
Centro Di edizioni, Firenze

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Centro Di edizioni, Lungarno Serristori 35
I-50125 Firenze, Tel. 055.2342666, Fax 055.2342667,
silvia@centrodi.it; www.centrodi.it.

Preis | Prezzo
Einzelheft | Fascicolo singolo:
€ 30 (plus Porto | più costi di spedizione)
Jahresabonnement | Abbonamento annuale:
€ 90 (Italia); € 120 (Ausland | estero)

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1 Taddeo di Bartolo,
Eve with her son
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with their firstborn
Cain and Abel*.
Siena, Cathedral,
left wall of the apse



TADDEO DI BARTOLO'S OLD TESTAMENT FRESCOES IN THE APSE OF SIENA CATHEDRAL

Gail E. Solberg

In the early Quattrocento a virtually unknown cycle of Old Testament frescoes wrapped most of the way around the chancel of the Siena cathedral. Taddeo di Bartolo (ca. 1362–1422) began the series in 1401 and completed it in 1405 with help from Paolo di Giovanni Fei (ca. 1345–1411). The murals were part of a prolonged campaign to decorate the high altar area of the church following its rebuilding, and the Old Testament subjects were meant to lend the presbytery the programmatic amplitude that typified the most important churches in the West.¹ At Siena the biblical series was to dovetail with the Christological episodes on Duccio's *Maestà* of 1308–1311, the iconic altarpiece

reinstalled as the visual fulcrum of the chancel after the new altar was constructed in 1366.² Another impetus for the Old Testament iconography was to substitute a biblical fresco cycle lost when rebuilding of the chancel of the church began about 1359.

Taddeo di Bartolo's cathedral frescoes are almost totally lost, which explains why they have received less scholarly attention than they deserve. Yet much more information can be deduced from the paltry remains than has been recognized, even though absolute certainty on most interpretive points is elusive. The chancel must have presented a comprehensive set of murals that opened with stories of Adam and Eve and their

¹ For a brief history of the rebuilding of the east end, begun in earnest after August 1357, see Walter Haas/Dethard von Winterfeld, "Baubeschreibung", in: *Der Dom S. Maria Assunta, Architektur*, Textband I, ed. by Peter Anselm Riedl/Max Seidel (*Die Kirchen von Siena*, 3.I.I.I.), Munich 2006, pp. 308–392, esp. pp. 353–356 and 471–478, and Andrea Giorgi/Stefano Moscardelli, *Costruire una cattedrale: l'opera di Santa Maria di Siena tra XII e XIV secolo*

(*Die Kirchen von Siena*, Beiheft 3), Munich 2005, pp. 91–105, esp. 102–105. A great aid in tracking the apse project is Monika Butzek, "Chronologie", in: *Der Dom S. Maria Assunta*, pp. 1–262, for relevant years.

² In 1366 Duccio's grand oculus was set back in place. His stupendous altarpiece was reinstalled in 1375 and set with a new baldachin or "chappello", suspended angels that could be lowered during mass, angelic candle-bearers,

sons. Events in the lives of select biblical protagonists probably followed. The material remains of Taddeo's paintings indicate two levels of scenes, while an iconographic issue suggests that there was a third zone above, in the lunettes. Extrapolating from the surviving fragments, the related documents, and from contemporary Old Testament cycles, this paper identifies the scenes and fleshes out the compositions in the first bay of the cycle, taking as a starting point the visible remains and an unpublished fragment now lost to view (Figs. 1, 2). The collected evidence permits a proposal regarding the arrangement of the scenes within the bay, which would have held for future sections of the project.

Documents chronicle progress on the murals in successive annual campaigns over four years, allow proposals about the scope of the program, and provide evidence of the Opera's and the painter's working procedures. Tantalizing questions remain unanswered due to loss of the frescoes themselves and to a lack of specificity in the documents, though what can be gathered from the surviving fragments and the documents enriches our visual sense of the heart of the cathedral prior to thorough-going changes. This paper also reveals the strength of tradition in pictorial programs in the church by relating Taddeo's cycle to the earlier set of Old Testament murals in the cathedral. Further, it aims to enhance Taddeo's reputation by providing a more detailed analysis of his first public works of note with examples of how he rethought his sources. The cathedral frescoes, which seem to have caught the

eye of Lorenzo Ghiberti, were the basis for Taddeo's future accomplishment as the commune's painter in a different venue, the Palazzo Pubblico.

Reconstruction and Models of the Cycle

Taddeo's frescoes survive in four small figural fragments probably from three narratives at the beginning of the series. The painted remains are located well above eye level in the first bay at the left side of the chancel and are divided by the casing (or *cassa*) for the pipes of a sixteenth century organ, an instrument that replaced one dating to the mid-Quattrocento, which itself had mostly obliterated the first section of Taddeo's paintings (Fig. 2).³ Decorative borders to the left of the organ box define two incomplete, superimposed frames in which small sections of two compositions are visible. At the right of the organ is part of another figure within a painted border. These three remnants and a fourth portion now invisible but recorded in a photograph correspond with a charge from the cathedral operaio Benedetto di Alessio to Taddeo di Bartolo on 10 June 1401 to paint six Old Testament stories with six figures ("sex storias cum sex figuris de Testamento veteri").⁴ On that occasion a board of counselors including the canon Francesco di Biagio dei Tolomei unanimously agreed with the operaio to annul a standing contract with Taddeo. It must have been the one stipulated four months earlier with a different operaio (Paolo di Ser Fuccio) directing the painter to execute a fresco in the nave

and a sculpted Annunciation group behind the altar. See Gaetano Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, Siena 1854–1856, I, no. 73, p. 274; Giorgi/Moscadelli (note 1), p. 104; Butzek (note 1), pp. 81f.

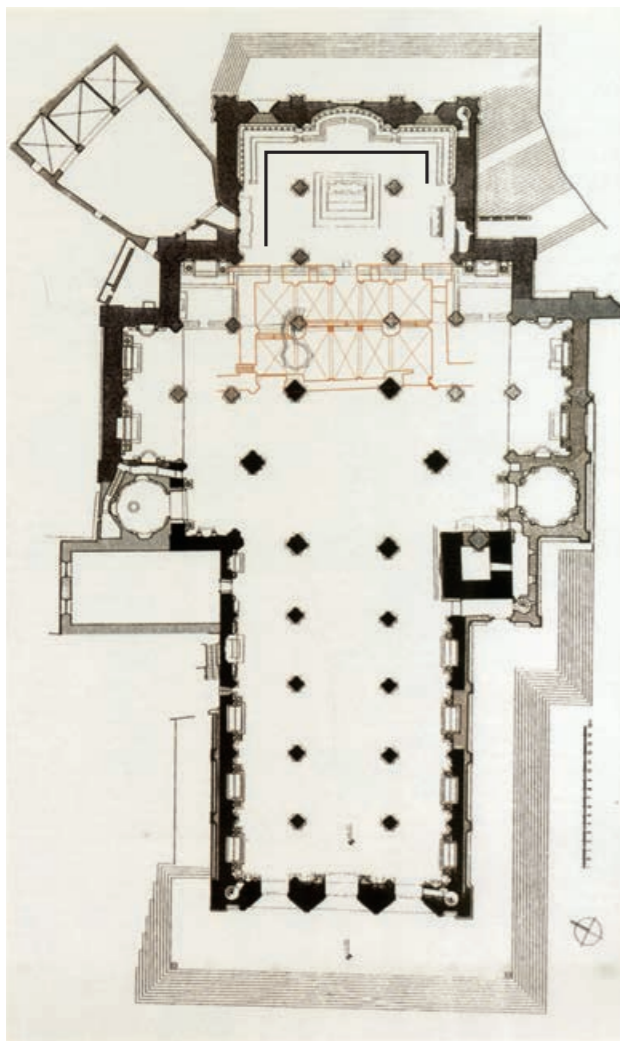
³ See for the organs Frank D'Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Chicago 1997, pp. 18–22; 19f.; Cesare Mancini, "Maestri d'organo: la scuola senese", in: *Un così bello e nobile strumento*, ed. by *idem*/Maria Mangiavacchi/Laura Martini, Siena 2008, pp. 11–36; 16; Pier Paolo Donati, "Siena e l'arte degli organi nel Quattrocento", *ibidem*, pp. 37–51; 38; Laura Martini, "Le casse d'organo del primo Cinquecento a Siena", *ibidem*, pp. 53–93; 54. The reason for the rapid substitutions of the Cathedral organs and the devastating consequences for

Taddeo's murals was a revolution in the building and consequently in the acoustics of organs during the Quattrocento.

⁴ ASS, Notarile Antecosimiano, 224, fol. 25r–v, *Rogiti di Ser Bartolomeo di Jacopo di Radicondoli (1400–1407)*, published by Milanesi (note 2), II, no. 2, pp. 6f. See also Peleo Bacci, "Documenti e commenti: Taddeo di Bartolo e le sei 'figure' del Testamento Vecchio del Duomo di Siena (1401)", in: *La Balzana*, n.s., I (1927), 5, pp. 225–227; Sibilla Symeonides, *Taddeo di Bartolo*, Siena 1965, p. 125, note 78; Gail E. Solberg, *Taddeo di Bartolo: His Life and Work*, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 144–148, 1240f.; Butzek (note 1), p. 104, at date; Gabriele Fattorini, "Una *mulier lactans* e un ciclo di Taddeo di Bartolo quasi perduto", in: *Le pitture del Duomo di Siena*, ed. by Mario Lorenzoni, Cinisello Balsamo



2 Siena, Cathedral, view of the first bay of the left side of the apse with remnants of Taddeo di Bartolo frescoes at the left and right



3 Plan of Siena Cathedral with location of Old Testament frescoes and indication of the lower church (based on Haas/Winterfeld [note 1], plan 4).

4 Siena, Cathedral, view of the Trecento choir stalls with inset intarsias and extant frescoes

of the church.⁵ In June the Opera had in mind a different area, described specifically as above the door to the sacristy, which then was behind the altar of Saint Ansanus, next to the pier, and therefore closer to the opening of the chancel than at present (Fig. 3).⁶

Benedetto di Alessio's new initiative with Taddeo was hardly a quixotic overriding of his predecessor's plan. Instead it was a natural follow-up to completion of an impressive series of choir stalls for the presbytery that had been in production for decades.⁷ When finally installed around the high altar in 1397, the stalls physically and to some degree programmatically conditioned what the authorities planned for the walls above, where Taddeo's paintings were to go. The new frescoes literally went up against the stalls running around the chancel and opening at five points to provide access to two rows of seats. The backboards rose to a considerable height and carried in their upper reaches an arcade of headboards with a heterogeneous group of carved half-length figures from King David to modern saints. Their visual effect can be gleaned only in part because after 1567 the stalls were reworked with intarsias brought from the Olivetan convent outside Siena's Porta Tufi though at the left and right of the chancel they preserve much of their original aspect (Fig. 4). Taddeo had polychromed many of the figural reliefs in his first cathedral commission as an emergent artist in the sec-

2008, pp. 122–125. The author's forthcoming monographic study of the painter dedicates a chapter to his cathedral commissions.

⁵ AOMS, 498 (705), fol. 178r. See also Milanese (note 2), II, no. I, pp. 5f.; Solberg 1991 (note 4), pp. 142–145, 1237–1239; Butzek (note 1), pp. 103f. at 4 February.

⁶ Thanks to Monika Butzek, who clarified this point. The existing sacristy was built from 1408/09 as an extension of the old one over a new arch that spanned the Via dei Fusari to the adjacent building (Haas/von Winterfeld [note 1], p. 478). In the ASS contract (note 4) the location is “in parieti muri super ostium sacristie”. In AOMS documents cited below, the location is denoted variously as “a la pasina de la chapella de l'altare maggiore”; “ne le pareti a capo al coro”; “a chapo l'altare maggiore di Duomo”, “dietro al'altare maggiore”.

⁷ The stall project, begun in 1378, consumed energies until 1397, and even after that date the figural decoration had not been completed. For the fullest study of the choir stalls, see Edith Struchholz, *Die Choranlagen und*



ond half of the 1380s, but none of the surviving examples (which can be glimpsed in Fig. 4) is recognized as his work.⁸ A baldachin, or *cielo*, served as an overhanging crown for the stalls and carried a serial row of small winged angels – a number of which Taddeo had also painted. Other decorations of the choir impinging visually and iconographically on what was going to be

painted on the walls above included larger and smaller figural sculptures, additional angels, gargoyles, heads, and life size saints in the round.⁹ Of particular importance to the interpretation of one of Taddeo's fresco fragments are carvings of the reclining Eve on the ends of the kneelers at the apertures to the stalls. Four of an original set of twelve figures remain *in situ* (Fig. 5).¹⁰

Chorgestühle des Sieneser Domes, Münster/New York 1995. For the figural decoration of the Trecento stalls, see Enzo Carli, “Le sculture del coro del Duomo di Siena”, in: *Antichità viva*, XVII (1978), I, pp. 25–39, and *idem*, *Il Duomo di Siena*, Genoa 1979, pp. 91–97; the 1978 publication still offers the best illustrations.

⁸ For Taddeo's 7 February 1386 contract, see AOMS, 25 (30), doc. 24 (also in Milanese [note 2], I, no. 99, pp. 312–315; Struchholz [note 7], pp. 127–133, 192, 243f., doc. 26, 195; Butzek [note 1], p. 90, at date). See also Solberg 1991 (note 4), pp. 1–5, 1232–1236, and forthcoming. None of the thirty-six surviving Trecento half-length figure reliefs is thought to belong to the group Taddeo polychromed. A drawing by Baldassarre Peruzzi (Albertina, Vienna, 96 [Sc.R.125]) gives a good idea of the effect of the Trecento stalls, showing them in a niche in the back wall of the cathedral apse; see, most

recently, Gabriele Fattorini, “Baldassarre Peruzzi e la tribuna del duomo di Siena: un cartone dimenticato e qualche precisazione sugli altri disegni”, in: *Bollettino d'arte*, XCV (2010), 7, pp. 5–22 (with further bibliography).

⁹ See document of 18 March 1389 (Struchholz [note 7], pp. 248f., doc. 39), with description of the various parts of the choir figuration, and a 1420 cathedral inventory that attests to the rich adornment (*Gli inventari della sagrestia della Cattedrale senese e degli altri beni sottoposti alla tutela dell'operaio del Duomo [1389–1546]*, ed. by Monika Butzek [*Die Kirchen von Siena*, Beiheft 4], Florence 2012, p. 74, no. 199). Like the crowning angels, these elements are lost.

¹⁰ Carli 1978 ([note 7], p. 29) and 1979 ([note 7], p. 93) attributes these boxwood figures to the équipe of Mariano D'Agnolo, but three are much cruder. See also Struchholz (note 7), p. 117, and her document 61 of 10 March–17 April 1397.

5 Siena, Cathedral, boxwood figure of Eve on the choir stalls



The Opera's 1401 contract with Taddeo for "sex storias cum sex figuris" of the Old Testament opens a wide panorama of association in the cathedral and leaves key questions open to interpretation. Did the agreement establish a plan for the first campaign of work, or for the long term, for a full Old Testament history focused on major biblical figures? If the former case held, the six figures of the first bay were conceivably God the Father, Adam, Eve, the Archangel, Cain, and Abel – the protagonists of the first part of Genesis. The charged nature of any cathedral choir – one at Siena characterized by a distinguished history and a rich pictorial tradition – theoretically mandated a comprehensive scheme, so however one interprets "sex storias cum sex figuris", an ample thematic program in a system that covered the chancel walls can be taken for granted.¹¹

The fact that Taddeo initiated the narratives at the corner of a side wall is a further indication that a

full sweep of frescoes was foreseen. Duccio's refit altarpiece and the elaborate choir stalls surrounding it exacerbated the raw state of the presbytery walls. They were occupied in part by an irregular set of altars with decorations, including some frescoes.¹² Additional testimony for the rich appointing of the space are other embellishments likewise in abeyance until the choir seats and their accompanying *apparati* were concluded: an elaborate intarsia pavement and decoration for another organ *cassa* at the right side of the chancel were commissioned in quick succession during the final stages of work on the murals. Taddeo was associated with at least one, and perhaps with both projects.¹³ Support for the hypothesis that the Old Testament frescoes were to be an encompassing cycle comes from the later repainting of the presbytery. After Duccio's Maestà was definitively removed in 1506, new frescoes to cover the walls with Old Testament subjects were

¹¹ Vittorio Lusini, *Il Duomo di Siena*, Siena 1911–1939, I, p. 233, assumed as much, writing of the continuation of Taddeo's commission in 1404, that the Opera was concerned with the decoration of the "intera parte absidale" by "[il] pittore più in voga a quel tempo".

¹² For a remnant of one of these, see Monika Butzek, *Il duomo di Siena al tempo di Alessandro VIII: carteggio e disegni (1658–1667)* (*Die Kirchen von Sie-*

na, Beiheft 2), Munich 1996, p. 311, no. 98, fig., and Fattorini (note 4), p. 125.

¹³ See below, p. 218, for details and bibliography.

¹⁴ For these paintings see Gabriele Fattorini, "Domenico Beccafumi e gli affreschi del 'nicchio' del duomo" and Michele Maccherini, "Ventura Salimbeni, Muzio Placidi e la decorazione del coro del duomo", both in: *Le*



6 Siena, Cathedral, lower church, fresco fragment of Cain killing Abel

planned by Baldassarre Peruzzi and finally realized by Domenico Beccafumi and Ventura Salimbeni.¹⁴

The biblical subjects in the chancel have roots in a mostly lost decoration in an area of uncertain function under the opening to the presbytery of the cathedral best designated as the lower church (Fig. 3). This recently rediscovered space had become inaccessible and was partially destroyed during rebuilding of the east end of the church from 1359. In 2001 the remains of a stupendous fresco cycle presenting a typological juxtaposition of Old Testament and New Testament scenes came to light (Fig. 6).¹⁵ Scholars date the paintings between 1250 and 1290, and Alessandro Bagnoli attributed them to a company of distinguished Sienese painters in the generation prior to Duccio, Dietisalvi di Speme, Guido di Grazia-

pitture del Duomo (note 4), pp. 71–81 and 88–97, respectively, and Fattorini (note 8). Narrative pavement panels expanded the repertoire of Old Testament histories with the sacrifice of Abel and the sacrifice of Melchisedec; see Stefano Moscadelli/Carla Zarrilli, in: "Domenico Beccafumi e altri artisti nelle fonti documentarie senesi del primo Cinquecento", in: *Domenico Beccafumi e il suo tempo*, exh. cat. Siena 1990, Milan 1990, pp. 679–714: 694.

¹⁵ See Alessandro Bagnoli, "Alle origini della pittura senese: prime osservazioni sul ciclo dei dipinti murali", in the essential volume on this crucial

no, and Guido da Siena. The Old Testament stories were disposed above Christological scenes and were mostly lost when rebuilding cut into the space. Twice therefore, the cathedral testifies to the ruination of an extensive Old Testament cycle. Taddeo's commission apparently substituted the loss with a number of the same subjects, but whether there was any formal correspondence is impossible to say. The space for the early frescoes was axially related to the new chancel, so effectively Taddeo moved biblical stories into the core of the church, where they were spatially related to the Christological cycle on Duccio's high altarpiece.¹⁶

The decoration of the chancel in the Orvieto cathedral is likely to have served as the basis for the general orchestration of the Siena chancel. A towering cycle of

discovery, *Sotto il duomo di Siena: scoperte archeologiche, architettoniche e figurative*, ed. by Roberto Guerrini/Max Seidel, Cinisello Balsamo 2003, pp. 107–147.

¹⁶ Authors propose that the space was a crypt (Kees van der Ploeg), an antechamber to the *confessio*, which contained three altars and housed the relics of Siena's patron saints, a space giving access by stairs to the area under the cupola of the cathedral (Max Seidel), a palatine chapel and cult space (Luca Giorgi, Pietro Matracchi, Giuseppe Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi), or the seat of a confraternity (Paola Boccardi Storoni). For a summary of the various arguments and bibliographical references, see *Sotto il duomo* (note 15), p. 74.

7 Orvieto, Cathedral, view of the apse with frescoes by Ugolino di Prete Ilario and choir stalls



frescoes for complete coverage of the walls with Marian, not Old Testament, themes was commissioned from Ugolino di Prete Ilario in the 1370s. Choir stalls similar to Siena's, indeed of Siennese design and workmanship, had been installed in the upper nave of the cathedral whereas a simpler set ran around the choir (Fig. 7).¹⁷ Surely the ensemble was the envy of the Siennese. In the 1380s, the Orvieto operaio provided for fictive stalls below Ugolino's work in entertaining trompe-l'oeil painting to serve until a chancel choir in wood could be provided. The imaginary seats (including some figures) rose to a painted crown, or fictive architectural cap with a row of half-length figures, so as to create a harmonious join with the narrative fresco cycle.¹⁸ The grand set of choir stalls now in the chancel was moved from the nave in 1536/37, yet at the beginning of the fifteenth century Orvieto nonetheless provided an example of

¹⁷ See the contribution by Giampaolo Ermini ("Il coro del Duomo di Orvieto: il cantiere, i maestri [1332–1356]", in: *Forme del legno: intaglio fra Gotico e Rinascimento*, Pisa 2013, pp. 45–80) for important discoveries on the nave stalls, and for older literature. I benefited from conversation with Ermini on the complicated situation with the painted stalls in the apse.

¹⁸ Cola di Petruccio is credited with painting the fictive stalls in 1380; now visible is only the cornice with a row of half-length figures (saints, bishops, patriarchs, and doctors of the church) in grisaille with gold ha-

general orchestration for the Siennese – a tight formal integration of choir stalls with a comprehensive fresco program.

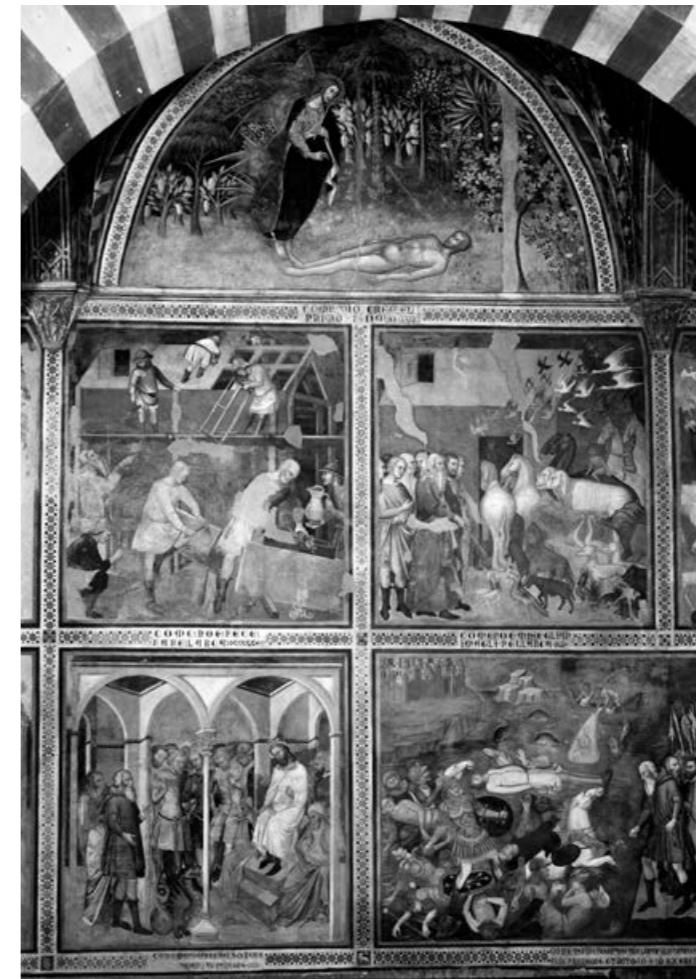
A program for Taddeo di Bartolo's frescoes would have been established at the inception of the project, but, as is typical of Siena cathedral contracts, specific subjects are not recorded. From the legal standpoint, fees, schedule, and materials were crucial factors, not story line. Taddeo would not have seen the fresco series from the last quarter of the Dugento in the lower church because it was sealed from view close to the time of his birth, yet his elders would have recalled it,¹⁹ and there were other visual sources on which Taddeo could draw. Whether an agreed plan was verbal or drawn is not known, but commissions for later phases of the project seem to reference it because they mention only more stories.²⁰ A canon who witnessed the

loes. See Corrado Fratini, "Pittura e miniatura ad Orvieto dal XIII al XIV secolo", in: *Storia di Orvieto, II: Medioevo*, ed. by Giuseppe M. Della Fina/Corrado Fratini, Orvieto 2007, pp. 457–498: 484, 493, figs. 49, 50.

¹⁹ For a list of subjects of the lost frescoes, derived from the inscriptions, see Bagnoli (note 15), pp. 143f.

²⁰ For architectural projects the use of drawings is broadly testified, whereas for painted compositions there is much less evidence.

8 Bartolo di Fredi, Old Testament frescoes. San Gimignano, Collegiata



contract, Francesco di Biagio dei Tolomei, might be credited with ideating the scheme, and Taddeo may have submitted designs.²¹

For the Siena Opera and Taddeo alike the most compelling modern model of an Old Testament cycle of grand scale was at San Gimignano. Its relevance owed to Siena's links to the outlying town, to the symbolic weight of the Collegiata site, and to the stature

²¹ When Ghiberti was to make Old Testament reliefs for the baptistery doors at Florence, Leonardo Bruni was asked to prepare a design, but it was discarded in favor of another in which Ambrogio Traversari may have had a voice. See Richard Krautheimer/Trude Krautheimer-Hess, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, Princeton³1982 [¹1956], pp. 169–171.

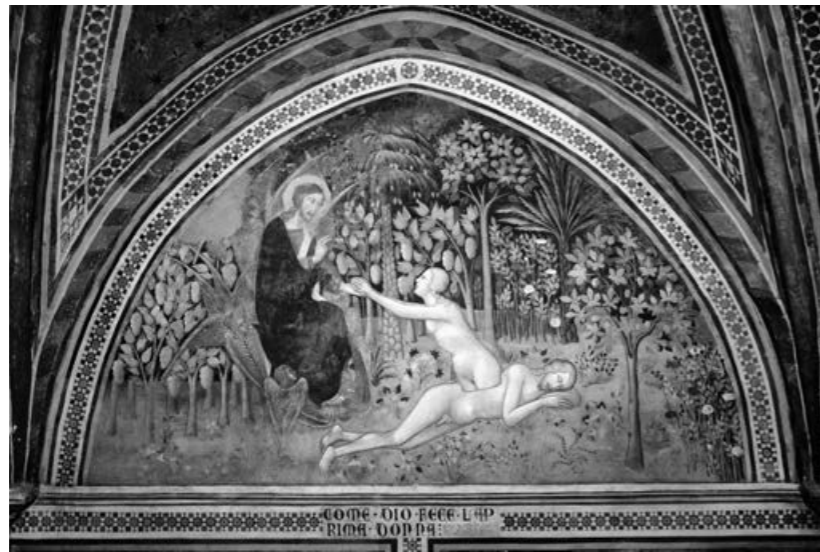
of the painter, a Siennese master. The series of thirty stories dated 1367 was by Bartolo di Fredi (ca. 1330–1410), a premier artist and one of Taddeo di Bartolo's mentors.²² Bartolo's cycle runs down one side of the nave in three tiers; an upper register of lunette shaped fields rises over two rows of square fields (Fig. 8). Taddeo would have known it well from his own association with San Gimignano in the later 1380s, when he may

²² See Gaudenz Freuler, *Bartolo di Fredi Cini: Ein Beitrag zur sienesischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Disentis 1994, pp. 50–92, 437–439, no. 7, with a fold-out photograph at the end of volume. Also Sabina Spannocchi, "Bartolo di Fredi", in: *La Collegiata di San Gimignano: l'architettura, i cicli pittorici murali e i loro restauri*, ed. by Alessandro Bagnoli, Siena 2009, pp. 459–467.

9 Bartolo di Fredi,
Creation of Adam.
San Gimignano,
Collegiata



10 Bartolo di Fredi,
Creation of Eve.
San Gimignano,
Collegiata

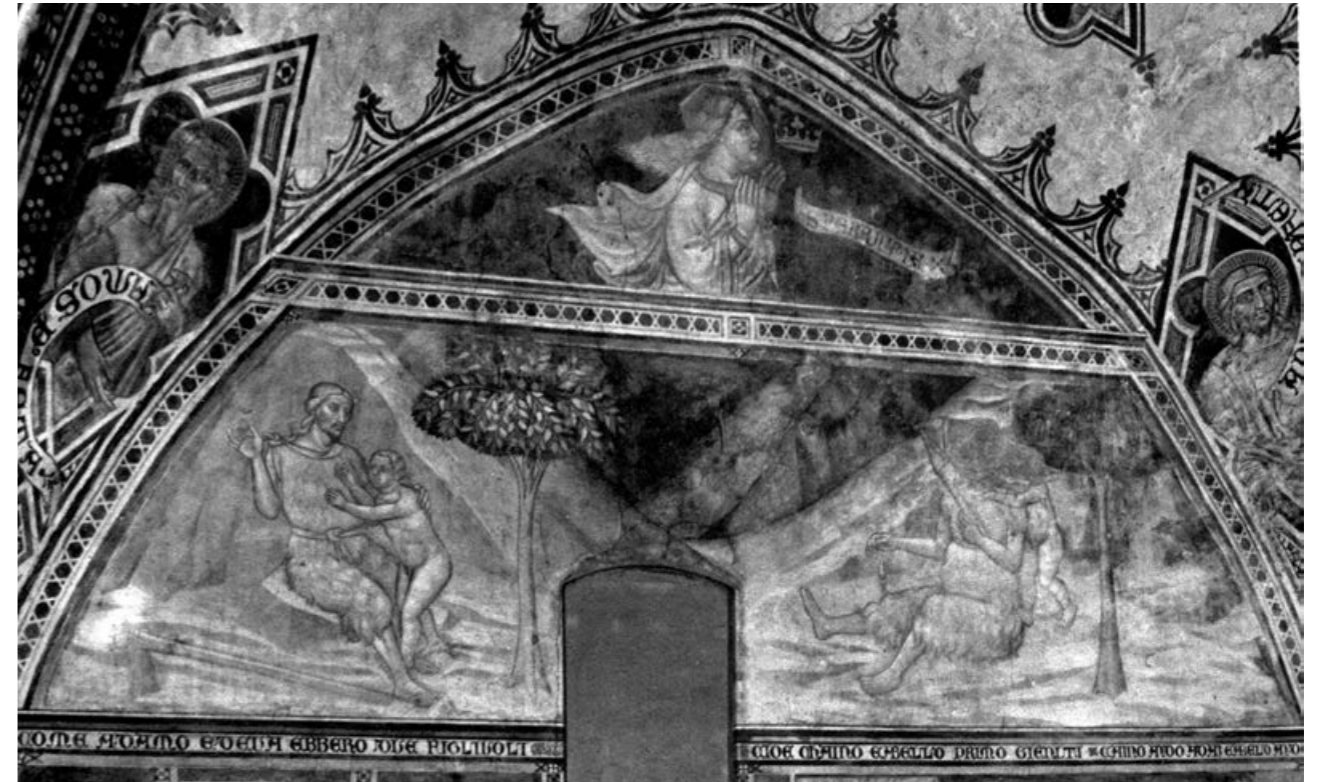


have been connected with the senior Bartolo, who was still producing paintings for the town in those years.²³ In the lunettes moving toward the high altar, Bartolo's stories narrate the Genesis from the creation of the world through Adam and Eve being admonished not to eat the fruit of the tree (Figs. 9, 10). The sequence begins again at the entrance end of the nave in a now

illegible scene of the Expulsion followed at this level and in the one below by episodes from the lives of Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Job. The series complements an earlier fresco program also of Siennese production on the opposite side of the nave. The corresponding Christological frescoes of the Passion are by Lippo Memmi, who looked at Duccio's

²³ A new document discovered by Wolfgang Loseries, generously signaled to me and soon to be published, ascertains that Taddeo had worked for

San Gimignano by 1388, in the period when Bartolo was consigning panel paintings for the town. Taddeo's dossier of Saint Geminianus holding a



11 Martino di Bartolomeo, *Adam and Eve with the firstborn Cain and Abel*. Cascina, Oratory of San Giovanni

prototypes on the *Maestà*, which emblemizes the cultural ties between Siena and the outlying town.²⁴ By aligning Old Law with New Law events, the San Gimignano program evoked the one in the lower church at Siena where stories of Adam and Eve and their sons were followed by episodes of the Flood, Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and Esau, behind which stood the grand schemes in historically important churches at Rome, Venice, and Assisi. When a decision was taken at Siena to wrap Old Testament frescoes around events from the life of Christ on the altarpiece, the aim was

to imitate important local and foreign models, albeit in different media – fresco and panel painting.

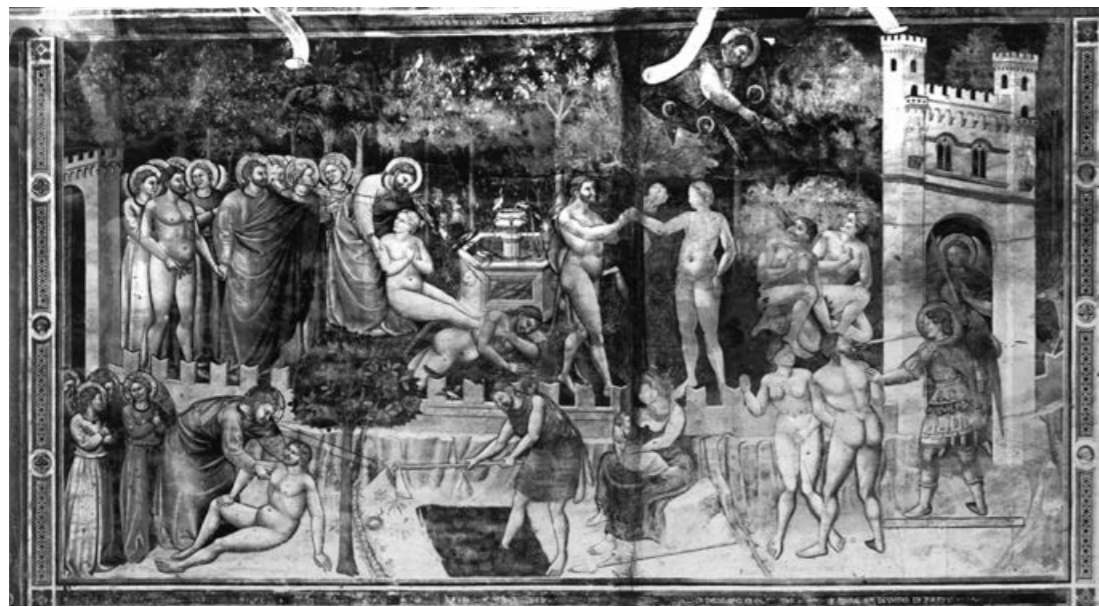
A replete series of Old Testament stories at Cascina, near Pisa, by another Siennese compatriot, Martino di Bartolomeo (active 1389–1434), might be only indirectly connected to Taddeo's cycle. Martino's thirty scenes covering the walls of the oratory of Saint John the Baptist, mostly in monochrome and now to varying degree damaged, range from the creation of matter through the Book of Genesis to the Judgment of Solomon.²⁵ An upper level of narratives in truncated lunette

topographically realistic model of the city (San Gimignano, Museo Civico, Pinacoteca), probably from the first half decade of the fifteenth century, suggests good knowledge of the town.

²⁴ For the Passion scenes painted from 1333 to 1343, see Sabina Spanocchi, "Lippo e Tederigo Memmi", in: *La Collegiata* (note 22), pp. 445–458;

452–458, and Gaudenz Freuler, "Lippo Memmi's New Testament Cycle in the Collegiata in San Gimignano", in: *Arte cristiana*, XXIV (1986), pp. 93–102.

²⁵ For images, see Maria Laura Cristiani Testi, *Affreschi biblici di Martino di Bartolomeo in San Giovanni Battista di Cascina*, Pisa 1978. For a digital panorama, see <http://www.comune.cascina.pi.it/oratoriosangianni/Home.htm>.



12 Piero di Puccio, *Stories of the Genesis*.
Pisa, Camposanto

fields is arranged in wrap-around fashion to recount the beginning of creation, the stories of Adam and Eve and of their first sons (Fig. 11) before shifting focus to Noah, Abraham and Lot, and Isaac – the same protagonists featured in the lower church at Siena. Until the recent re-dating of Martino's cycle from 1398 to 1409 the Cascina paintings seemed to be a model for Taddeo, but now they can be understood as indebted to the same, or to a similar source, perhaps a series of Siennese illuminations.²⁶ Certainly Taddeo and, probably, Martino studied the few Genesis episodes by the Orvietan Piero di Puccio in Pisa's Camposanto (Fig. 12), which ran through Noah's sacrifice. Piero di Puccio had just completed his paintings when Taddeo di Bartolo first

²⁶ The Cascina series is inscribed 1398, but Anthony Luttrell ("Martino di Bartolomeo's Frescoes at Cascina", in: *Iconographica*, XIII [2014], pp. 100–107: 105f.) shows that this must refer to the building of the church at Cascina, not to the decorative program, for which a date of 1409 is appropriate. Luttrell's argument treats the biography of the patron, Bartolomeo Palmieri of Cascina, who was a Hospitaller, and particularly two coats of arms depicted in the fresco scheme.

visited Pisa, probably around 1390.²⁷ The often-traveling Taddeo had wider experience of Old Testament schemes than Martino di Bartolomeo, which helps account for why he demonstrated more original pictorial thinking. Taddeo had been to Florence prior to 1393, where he would have seen the early mosaic cycles of Genesis and of Joseph in the baptistery. Good evidence that he went to Padua in the early 1390s implies that he had also seen Giusto de' Menabuoi's biblical stories in the baptistery dome.²⁸

About the time Taddeo was commissioned by the Siennese operaio in 1401, he concluded his own program of Old Testament scenes for the double-storied predella on his altarpiece for Montepulciano signed that year.

²⁷ Taddeo arguably returned to Pisa in mid-1394 and worked there at least through 1398. For Taddeo at Pisa, see Gail E. Solberg, "Taddeo di Bartolo's Altarpiece for at S. Francesco in Pisa: New Discoveries and a Reconstruction", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CLII (2010), pp. 144–151; *eadem*, "The Painter and the Widow: Taddeo di Bartolo, Datuccia Sardi-Da Campiglia, and the Sacristy Chapel in S. Francesco, Pisa", in: *Gesta*, XLIX (2010), I, pp. 53–74; *eadem*, "The Count and the Clares:



13 Niccolò di Tommaso, *Eve with Cain and Abel and Adam in prayer*. Pistoia, Church of the Tau

Though far smaller in number and in scale than either Bartolo di Fredi's or Martino di Bartolomeo's series, Taddeo's was of somewhat wider narrative scope.²⁹ He narrated the Genesis with scenes of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Isaac, and Joseph, and concluded with an episode each from the lives of Moses, David, and Solomon (Figs. 14, 15). The Montepulciano narratives interlace with his slightly later cathedral frescoes, and even though the small dimensions of the single scenes on panel (approximately 12 × 15.5 cm) and their quatrefoil-shaped fields are hardly akin to the murals, there are points of correspondence. Presumably Taddeo's overlapping Old Testament cycles focused his thinking about depiction of the Old Testament events.

Taddeo di Bartolo, His Shop, and Paintings for S. Martino-Sta. Chiara Novella at Pisa", in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LXXIII (2010), pp. 449–486.

²⁸ For Taddeo's travels prior to 1393 including visits to Florence and Padua, see the author's forthcoming monograph. For the Paduan Old Testament frescoes, see Claudio Bellinati, "Iconografia e teologia negli affreschi del Battistero", in: *Giusto de' Menabuoi nel Battistero di Padova*, ed. by Anna Maria

Despite broad loss to Taddeo's cathedral scenes, a general pattern of repetition in composing Old Testament stories, specifically in the work of Taddeo's Siennese compatriots and in other series he would have known, makes it possible to derive from the scant remains of his cathedral work identities for the figures he painted and to propose subjects for the scenes to which they belonged. Repetitive patterns in biblical narratives can be attributed to two circumstances: that churchmen who designed the programs appealed to revered models and that replication helped viewers identify stories lacking the currency of events in Christ's, Mary's, or frequently-depicted saints' lives.³⁰ Symptomatically, borders for the scenes in the low-

Spiazzi, Trieste 1989, pp. 41–82; Anna Maria Spiazzi, "Giusto a Padova: la decorazione del Battistero", *ibidem*, pp. 83–160.

²⁹ In Medieval Italy there was much fluidity in Old Testament programs; typically the narrative is not continuous but selective in emphasis, with different cycles stressing various parts of the Bible. Creation was "always treated at length" (Krautheimer/Krautheimer-Hess [note 21], p. 169).

³⁰ Illustrated Bibles, though rare in the later Trecento, and devotional texts



14 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Creation of Adam*, detail of the Montepulciano altarpiece. Montepulciano, Cathedral



15 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Sacrifice of Abel and Cain*, detail of the Montepulciano altarpiece. Montepulciano, Cathedral

er church at Siena are inscribed with titles, a practice adopted in both the cycles by Bartolo di Fredi and Martino di Bartolomeo; for Taddeo's Siena paintings the same system was applied and it greatly facilitates the reconstruction of his program.³¹

An interpretation of Taddeo's isolated figural fragments is also facilitated by their location, at the left of the chancel, where his contract directed that he start work. The earliest stories from the beginning of Genesis would be expected at this side of the opening to the space. The largest remnant of Taddeo's frescoes at the left edge of the bay (and of the organ box), in the lower of two superimposed frames presents the better

part of a two-figure unit of a mother and child against a gold ground (Figs. 1, 16). The unusually clad figures are the basis for attributing the fragments to Taddeo di Bartolo, for associating them with the work he was contracted to produce in June 1401, and for confirming that early Genesis events were his theme.³² The female, seated and viewed from the side, is in every aspect consonant with Taddeo's autograph work, as shown by a comparison with his Archangel Gabriel, likewise in profile, from his 1397 frescoes at Pisa (Fig. 17), or with the slightly later Madonna in his *Coronation* at Tucson, Arizona (Fig. 18).³³ The frescoed figure in the cathedral sits on the ground in the foreground of her

like the *Speculum humanae salvationis* or the less popular *Biblia pauperum*, both based on typological systems, are likely to have been the ultimate source for the compositions, as Taddeo's diminutive scenes for Montepulciano suggest. For the *Speculum*, see Adrian Wilson/Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror: Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324–1500*, Berkeley 1985. Freuler (note 22), pp. 69–80, found parallels for Bartolo di Fredi's San Gimignano compositions in, for example, an early fifteenth-century French Bible (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 9).

³¹ The inscriptions in Taddeo's frescoes however are in Latin whereas those in the decorations of his compatriots are written in the vernacular.

³² In 1965 Michael Mallory, *Paolo di Giovanni Fei*, Ph.D. Diss. Columbia University, 1965, Ann Arbor 1973, pp. 221f., first attributed the fragments to Taddeo: "traces of frescoes over the present entrance to the sacristy [...] appear to be the remains of Taddeo di Bartolo's work". Carli 1979 (note 7), pp. 84f., assigned them to Gregorio di Cecco excluding Taddeo, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, and Spinello Aretino, before the current author reassigned them to Taddeo (Solberg 1991 [note 4], pp. 169, 866–868), followed by Fattorini (note 4), p. 122.

³³ Tucson, University of Arizona Museum of Art, 61.13 II (Kress 1292); Solberg 1991 (note 4), pp. 1109–1112. The border pattern is also an in-



16 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Eve with her son Abel*, fresco fragment of *Adam and Eve with their firstborn Cain and Abel*, detail. Siena, Cathedral, left wall of the apse



17 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Archangel Gabriel*, detail. Pisa, San Francesco, Sardi-Da Campiglia Chapel



18 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Coronation of the Virgin*, detail. Tucson, University of Arizona Museum of Art



19 Martino di Bartolomeo, *Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Paradise of delights*. Cascina, Oratory of San Giovanni

field against its left edge and cradles a nursing infant dressed only in a transparent undergarment. She must be the banished Eve with her child.³⁴ The inscription band below confirms the identification although it is incomplete: *QUALITER EV[a. . .]*.

The iconography of the female shows that Taddeo followed his models yet also rethought them, working in the same inventive spirit that characterizes his Old Testament series for Montepulciano and his other works. His exiled Eve conforms to the type known in Siense

art from the time of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, whose Eve in the *Maestà* at Monte Siepi has the same long blonde braid as Taddeo's figure.³⁵ The truly distinguishing feature of Taddeo's female is her rough fur robe, the "garment of skin", traditionally of goat or sheep, made for Eve (as for Adam) by the Creator after their fall.³⁶ At Cascina Martino di Bartolomeo depicted Eve, her hair cinched but unbraided, wearing such a robe in the scenes following the Expulsion, but her garment covers her chest and shoulders (Figs. 11, 19), whereas Tad-

deo, identified the female figure as Eve, and connected the fragments with the 1401 commission for Old Testament frescoes (Solberg 1991 [note 4], pp. 169, 866–868, 1243).

³⁵ On the iconography of Eve, see Krautheimer/Krautheimer-Hess 1956 (note 21), p. 172, and Gerhard Wolf, "Die Frau in Weiss: Visuelle Strategien und künstlerische Argumentation in Ambrogio Lorenzettis Fresken in der Sala dei Nove", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, LV (2013), pp. 27–53: 52f., who comments on the appearance of the Eve under the Madonna in Ambrogio's Montesiepi *Maestà*, linking her with a series of other 'women in white'.

³⁶ Gen. 3,21 [King James]: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

indicator of authorship: the repeated design with a rosette of six white petals and a blue center set in a red ground within a white hexagon is identical to borders Taddeo painted in his Palazzo Pubblico chapel frescoes.

³⁴ Carli 1979 ([note 7], p. 84) noted that the seated figure was not the Madonna, whereas Fattorini ([note 4], p. 124) identified her as an Israelite mother awaiting Moses' return from Sinai, interpreting the gold background as the effect of the blinding light from Sinai at the appearance of the tablets. Gold, however, was applied throughout the cycle, as payment documents and remnants suggest, as it was in other cathedral frescoes from the period and in the murals Taddeo would paint in the Palazzo Pubblico. Fattorini erroneously claimed (p. 123) that I had not acknowledged the frescoes, whereas in the 1991 publication he cites I assigned them to Tad-

deo's tunic for Eve leaves one leg, one shoulder, and part of her breast bare.³⁷ Martino showed Eve in the family group sitting directly on the ground, like Taddeo's figure, but his Eve is busy at her spinning, and in one of two scenes her child embraces her from behind. Taddeo looked to Piero di Puccio's Eve in the Camposanto (Fig. 12), who also holds a child in her arms, but neither did he copy this figure, since she sits on a hillock instead of the flat ground and wears a low-cut medieval gown.³⁸ Unusually, Taddeo depicted Eve as a nursing mother. Conceivably, he knew a figure of her in the vault of the church of the Tau at Pistoia (Fig. 13), painted in the early 1370s by Niccolò di Tommaso, which anticipates Taddeo's *lactans* formula.³⁹

By the distinctive presentation of Eve as a *nutrice*, Taddeo responded to the imagery of the cathedral site and to new iconographic developments. His fresco echoes the small carvings of Eve on the terminal elements of the choir stalls below his frescoes, where she is also dressed in animal skins and sits on the ground on leaves and fruits, from which, in some examples, a serpent slithers (Fig. 5). Three of the four surviving carvings show Eve with one infant held tight, if not properly at her breast, while in another she takes both Cain and Abel in her arms.⁴⁰ When Eve is shown without Adam, as repeatedly happens in the choir sculptures, she is a prefiguration of Mary, her redeemer, particularly when she holds only one son. By depicting Eve as a mother *lactans*, Taddeo went farther in establishing her as an antetype for

³⁷ Martino painted Eve in a number of scenes; in the crucial episode of Adam and Eve with their firstborn (Fig. 11) her figure is damaged. In the Camposanto Piero di Puccio painted a shorter series, but likewise showed the creation of both Adam and Eve, the Expulsion, and the two parents at work, Eve spinning and Adam tilling. See Cristiani Testi (note 25), figs. 5–20, esp. 18–20.

³⁸ Water damage to the Camposanto fresco makes the figure of Eve difficult to read, but the contour of her gown over her breast indicates that she merely held her child.

³⁹ The Genesis frescoes at Pistoia include, in addition to Eve nursing her son, the birth of Cain and Abel and Adam in prayer with his sons; see Ugo Feraci/Laura Fenelli, "Gli affreschi di Niccolò di Tommaso nella chiesa del



20 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Madonna of Humility*. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum

the Virgin – a solution particularly appropriate for the chancel of a church dedicated to the mother of God.⁴¹ Earlier in the Trecento Siense painters had introduced the Madonna of Humility, a version of the Madonna *lactans* seated on the ground. The iconography was applied most often in works for personal devotion, and Taddeo appears to have been the Siense painter responsible for transposing the novel theme to an altarpiece, namely in a work produced at Pisa in 1395 (Fig. 20).⁴² Taddeo's formulation of the

Tau: una rilettura iconografica", in: *Il museo e la città: vicende artistiche pistoiesi del Trecento*, Pistoia 2012, pp. 81–119.

⁴⁰ Carli 1978 (note 7), pp. 29f., fig. 1.

⁴¹ Fattorini (note 4), p. 124, failed to interpret Taddeo's fresco figure as Eve but he noted the similarity of her child to Ambrogio's *Madonna del Latte* in the Diocesan Museum at Siena.

⁴² The Madonna from the 1395 pentaptych for Datuccia Sardi is at Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. 53.500; see Solberg 2010, "Taddeo di Bartolo's altarpiece" (note 27). For the Siense origins of the Humility iconography, see Dóra Sallay, "The Avignon Type of the Virgin of Humility: Examples in Siena", in: *Geest en Gratie: Essays Presented to Ildikó Ember on Her Seventieth Birthday*, Budapest 2012, pp. 104–111.



21 Lorenzo Ghiberti, Paradise Door, panel with Stories of Cain and Abel, detail. Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

Humility Mary was appropriate for Eve in the Siena cathedral, where it created a link to the proximate figures in carved wood. Impelled by them and banking on his Pisan iconographies, Taddeo is likely to have arrived at his novel presentation of Eve independently, adding the Humility motif to the elements derived

from Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Piero di Puccio, and possibly Niccolò di Tommaso.

There appear to be two possibilities for what Taddeo intended as Eve's setting, most of which is lost. The options are a peaked, rock-cut cave or a beehive hut.⁴³ Either one of them speaks to the influence his frescoes would have. At Florence, in the baptistery mosaic of Adam and Eve at work, Eve is seated before a conical rock that rises above her, a setting like the one Martino di Bartolomeo painted in his Cascina fresco.⁴⁴ Taddeo's novelty was to paint an aperture so as to suggest a dwelling.⁴⁵ At Florence sometime after 1426, Lorenzo Ghiberti designed a thatched hut for the second panel of his Door of Paradise in the episode showing Adam and Eve with Cain and Abel (Fig. 21).⁴⁶ Ghiberti's habitation is a backdrop for the parents seated in profile with their two sons, and its roots may be in Taddeo's solution, an apparently constructed abode with a planed opening, probably of rock. The Florentine, an admirer of Siennese art, would have inspected Taddeo's chancel frescoes when he visited Siena in 1416/17 as a collaborator on the Siena baptistery font, although in his *Commentaries* he mentions only Duccio's altarpiece and paintings by Simone Martini among the artworks in the cathedral.⁴⁷

A second of Taddeo's fresco fragments is no longer visible but must be in the same frame with his figure of Eve (Fig. 22). It presents parts of two intertwined figures, one a nude child standing in torsion to look over his shoulder to the right as he twists to the left, apparently to hold something. Taddeo positioned the boy behind the nude lower leg of a seated adult who is

the rock registers hardly at all in black and white, and badly in color. It is best evident on site.

⁴³ Fattorini (note 4), p. 124, saw a tent here, which he interpreted as one in the Hebrews' camp; Carli 1979 (note 7), p. 146, read it as a tent backed up to a mountain. The photo in the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut (inv. 29 871) mentioned in note 48 shows the structure better than Fig. 1.

⁴⁴ See Miklós Boskovits, *The Mosaics of the Baptistery of Florence (A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting)*, ed. by Richard Offner/Klara Steinweg, I, II, Florence 2007, pl. LXIX.

⁴⁵ The articulation of the aperture in a distinctive color from the rest of

⁴⁶ Lorenzo Ghiberti, *I Commentarii*, ed. by Ottavio Morisani, Naples 1947, p. 45 (Second Commentary): "Nel secondo quadro è come Adamo ed Eva anno Caino ed Abel creati piccoli fanciulli."

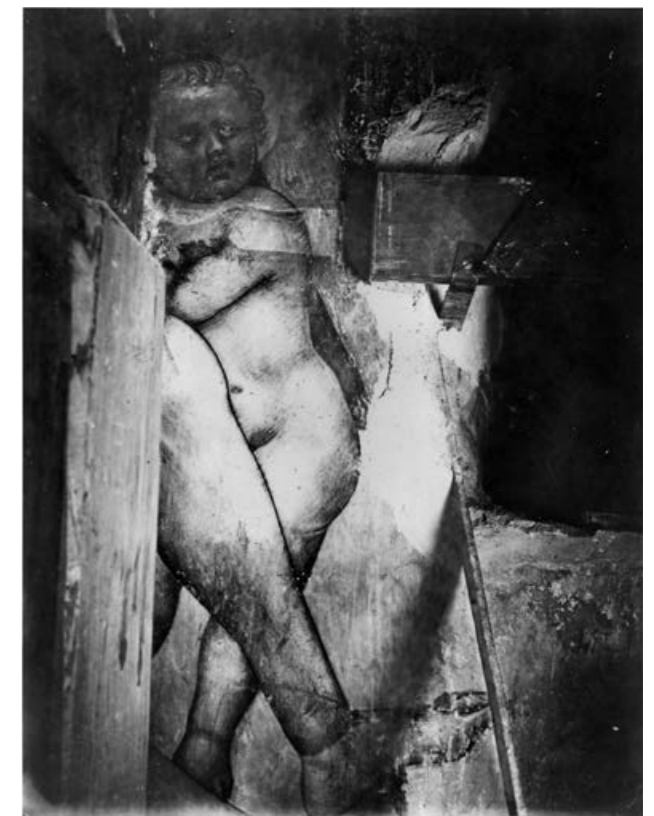
⁴⁷ Ghiberti visited Siena when the apse frescoes were relatively new, and when Taddeo's slightly later works in the town hall chapel and antechapel (1406–1408 and 1413/14) made him the preeminent painter in the city.

lost in all but this detail of anatomy. The figural forms and particularly the child's head are consonant with Taddeo's handling. They are known through a rare, unpublished photograph that does not indicate their precise location, which is somewhere behind the organ casing because the image shows wood beams locked into the wall.⁴⁸

The iconographic tradition for Adam and Cain corresponds with the figures in the photograph because of their nudity, arrangement, and context. In Martino's composition at Cascina (Fig. 11) Eve sits at one side of the field balanced at the other side by the seated Adam together with a nude boy, both posed like Taddeo's adult with a youth at his leg. While Martino's youth reaches for a piece of fruit (an apple?) held out by his father, loss makes it impossible to know what Taddeo's boy was meant to be doing. The Cascina scene is inscribed *COME ADAMO ED EVA EBBERO DUE FIGLIUOLI CIOE CHAINO E ABELLO PRIMO GIENITI. CAINO ANDÒ AD ADAMO E ABELO ANDÒ A EVA*" ("Adam and Eve had two sons, that is Cain and Abel their firstborns. Cain went to Adam and Abel went to Eve").⁴⁹ This is almost certainly the subject Taddeo painted, though his Eve, as we have seen, is shown differently. Extrapolating from the composition and inscription at Cascina one can reconstruct Taddeo's

For Ghiberti's relation to Siennese art see Krautheimer/Krautheimer-Hess (note 21), pp. 214f., 217f., 221–223, who observed (pp. 191f.) that the Florentine cited only the most important artists whether at Siena or Florence; one can add that in Siena this excluded his contemporaries. Ghiberti knew Bartolo di Fredi's Old Testament scenes in San Gimignano because he praised them in the *Commentaries*, but that cycle does not include a scene of the first family.

⁴⁸ The photograph is a unique item whose date can be defined only as sometime before 1926 (the year it was inventoried at the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence as no. 30 889). The stamp on the reverse indicates the source as the archive of the Stabilimento Fotografico Lombardi of Cav. Paolo Lombardi at Siena. Lombardi's archive passed partly to private hands and partly to the Istituto LUCE, now Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione at Rome (where portions may have perished in a fire). The image reproduced here was made from the Lombardi photograph in the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut. Study of



22 Taddeo di Bartolo, fresco fragment of an adult with a child. Siena, Cathedral, apse

the inventories for Alinari, Anderson, and Brogi from the late 1920s and 30s suggests that the Lombardi photo is the only extant record of the fragment, which is unsurprising since the wall seems to have been in view only briefly when the organ was dismantled. The inventory of the Photo Library registers the Lombardi print as coming from Pineider, and identifies it as "Taddeo di Bartolo, Putto, Siena, Dom". This note constitutes the first attribution to Taddeo. Lombardi catalogues of the images made in Siena Cathedral dating from 1849 to 1928 contain no photo identifiable as of the cathedral fragment. Another Lombardi photograph of Taddeo's figure of Eve in the same Photo Library was also inventoried by 1926 (as no. 29 871). The photo, with no title but bearing the number 2081 (which does not correspond to any Lombardi archive identification), is recorded as a gift of Heinrich Bodmer. My sincere thanks to Grazia Visintainer of the Photo Library for generous help in researching the history of the Lombardi images.

⁴⁹ Gen. 4,1–2 (King James): "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she

scene: Eve nurses Abel and the hidden fragment nearby represents Adam with Cain (Figs. 1, 16, 22). Such a re-composition is viable because Taddeo's Eve sits at the left edge of an otherwise obliterated field.

The evidence from the Door of Paradise supports the proposal that Taddeo depicted the primeval family group, each parent with one of their first two offspring, and Adam with his firstborn. In Ghiberti's vignette of the family before their hut, Adam and his son correspond to Taddeo's figures in the photograph (Figs. 21, 22). Ghiberti's nude child twists in the same way at Adam's legs and grasps the handle of a hoe, which confirms that he is Cain, who tilled like his father. Conjecturally, Taddeo's boy held the same tool. If Ghiberti borrowed this detail from Taddeo, he rethought the figure of Eve, just as Taddeo had. Ghiberti showed the second son, who must be Abel, resting his head in Eve's lap as she works. The fact that Bartolo di Fredi did not portray the primordial family at San Gimignano is added reason for supposing that the Siena cathedral fresco was a source for the Florentine sculptor. Taddeo, differently from both Ghiberti and Martino di Bartolomeo, placed Eve left of Adam. In this way, in the Siena choir the woman understood to be redeemed by Mary is purposefully at the edge of the field in the register closest to viewers approaching from the nave, and Abel in her arms is a forerunner of Christ.

On the level above where Eve and Abel appear, Taddeo almost certainly depicted the preceding event of Eve's creation (Figs. 2, 23). The identification is based on the arrangement of the surviving fragments of two figures in the upper field, on models, and on the remains of the inscription: QUALIT[er] DE[us] CREA[vit...]. Just above the lower border of the field, a pair of unshod feet turned sideways is all that sur-

vives of a prone body lying on its flank.⁵⁰ When Bartolo di Fredi and Martino di Bartolomeo depicted the creation of Adam, both portrayed the inanimate man lying on his back, toes pointing skyward (Fig. 9). At Montepulciano, Taddeo conformed to the example of his predecessors, but in his small quatrefoil Adam's feet disappear under the picture frame and God's mantle (Fig. 14). In scenes of Eve's creation by Taddeo's compatriots, Adam lies on his side so that God might pull Eve from his rib. Adam's feet are therefore turned sideways, like those in Taddeo's fragment (Figs. 10, 23).⁵¹ The conclusion that Taddeo painted the creation of Eve is substantiated by the form hovering above and to the left of the turned feet. Here an airborne figure wrapped in a patterned azure fabric emits rays of light. Now shadowy and incomplete, the suspended figure must have been God, who is shown in a similar position in Bartolo di Fredi's lunettes at San Gimignano (Figs. 9, 10). Martino di Bartolomeo's figure of God at Cascina instead stands on the earth to create Adam (whereas his figure is illegible in the creation of Eve), while at Montepulciano Taddeo's God appears to have just alighted to bring Adam to life.⁵²

These identifications of Taddeo's scenes at the left side of the bay suggest that the narrative progressed in top-down sequence and probably began in the lunette (Fig. 2). The creation of Eve can hardly have initiated Taddeo's story, so one is compelled to posit that he also painted the creation of Adam. The question is, where? It is highly unlikely that Taddeo included the creation of man in the same frame with Eve's creation because the latter episode was positioned at the far left of the field, where a narrative naturally commences. Thus, the better programmatic and formal proposal is an independent scene of Adam's creation that could have been placed only at the top of the wall, in the lu-

again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground."

⁵⁰ Fattorini (note 4), p. 124, also believed some creation scene, either of Adam or Eve, was shown here.

⁵¹ Taddeo did not include the episode on his 1401 predella in Montepulciano.

⁵² For images of Martino di Bartolomeo's scenes see Cristiani Testi (note 25), figs. 5, 7.



23 Taddeo di Bartolo, fresco fragment of *Creation of Eve*. Siena, Cathedral, apse



24 Taddeo di Bartolo, fresco fragment of a kneeling figure (*Sacrifice of Cain and Abel?*). Siena, Cathedral, apse



25 Bartolo di Fredi,
Sacrifice of Noah.
San Gimignano, Collegiata

nette. The frame with the creation of Eve is now about half its former height, for originally it would have been as tall as the field below with the nursing Eve (Fig. 2). When projected to its original height, the upper register would reach as high as the capitals of the clustered colonnettes surmounting the column that defines the bay. Above the colonnette capitals there is sufficient height for another register of frescoes in a lunette field conforming to the arched contour of the wall. If, as it seems, the Siena Opera thought to organize the Old Testament frescoes in three tiers, as at San Gimignano, they indeed foresaw the expansive coverage typical of the Orvieto chancel (Fig. 7).⁵³ Therefore, it was possi-

⁵³ Ideally murals would not overlies the marble cladding, but this must have been the case. Lusini (note 11), I, p. 233, notes a *risiga* which marks the dado level of marble cladding and that the surface above was designed for frescoes up to a lunette level. Lunette scenes would have been interrupted by windows further into the apse as are the apse frescoes of later centuries.

ble for Taddeo to initiate his cycle with the creation of Adam and even to precede it with the creation of matter, because the broad lunette would allow for more than one episode.⁵⁴

The third field containing a figural fragment carried the narrative sequence forward at the right side of the bay. On the same lower level as the nursing Eve but at the other side of the organ *cassa*, the right-most part of an incomplete gold-ground field contains the least decipherable of the four fresco fragments (Figs. 2, 24). Near the edge of the frame is a small portion of folded blue drapery from which emerge the shod feet of a kneeling figure turned into the composition.⁵⁵ The remnant brings to mind a number of figures on their knees in Old Testament scenes, for example Noah being instructed by God to build the Ark or Moses kneeling to receive the commandments, both shown on Taddeo's Montepulciano predella. However, a scene of sacrifice focused on a central altar is a better option for the cathedral episode because a centralized composition would more readily accommodate a figure turned inward from the edge of its field.

A sacrifice from an early biblical story would be appropriate for a bay whose narrative opens with the earliest events of Genesis. Either of two scenes from the cycles at San Gimignano and Cascina that bore most directly on Taddeo's cycle is plausible – Cain and Abel's sacrifice or that of Noah. The former of these is more likely to be what Taddeo painted, given his own precedent at Montepulciano (Fig. 15). At San Gimignano Bartolo di Fredi showed Noah's family kneeling around an altar with a female enveloped in a mantle abutting the right edge of the field (Fig. 25) in a way that conforms to the Siena cathedral fragment, but the exposed feet at Siena probably signify a male figure.

⁵⁴ Martino di Bartolomeo recounted two episodes in his lunettes (see Fig. 11, though it is not the best example): Bartolo di Fredi opted for a different solution (Figs. 8–10).

⁵⁵ Perhaps the blue pigment for the drapery was lapis, which must have been painted *a secco*; this would explain its partial loss.

Kneeling males in long robes also appear at the foot of an altar in Piero di Puccio's *Sacrifice of Noah* at Pisa and in the scene by Martino di Bartolomeo at Cascina – in both cases at the right side of their field.⁵⁶ Taddeo's fragment could belong to a portrayal of Noah's sacrifice, yet Noah's story would rush the narrative flow of the bay because the other series suggest that scenes of building the ark and/or of the flood probably preceded the thanksgiving.⁵⁷

Novelties in Taddeo's depiction of Cain and Abel's sacrifice at Montepulciano make that subject the likely identification for the Siena fresco, and an almost illegible portion of painting in the fresco field would confirm it. Typically Cain and Abel before an altar wear short tunics of animal skin, as testified by the scenes of their sacrifice at San Gimignano, Pisa, and Cascina, not the abundant robes of Noah's group at sacrifice in those series, or in the fragment in the Siena cathedral.⁵⁸ By contrast, on the Montepulciano predella, Taddeo robed Cain and Abel in garments atypical of the models, but matching what remains at Siena, for he depicted them as medieval burghers in robes so long they appear to cover their feet (Fig. 15). In fact, the figure surviving in a small fragment can probably be identified as Cain thanks to a section of fresco paint in the gold ground above him near the upper border of the field. It shows tapered bands of red rising at a rightward angle, which, by analogy with the Montepulciano quatrefoil of the brothers' sacrifice, are the flames of Cain's offering, burning away because God "had not respect" for his sacrifice. In contrast, the fire of Abel's offering, for which God instead "had respect", blazes directly heavenward.⁵⁹ Martino

⁵⁶ See Cristiani Testi (note 25), fig. 32.

⁵⁷ Fattorini (note 4), p. 125, sees in this frame Moses descending from Sinai or in the act of destroying the tablets – a sequel to the mother waiting for Moses to return at the left of the bay.

⁵⁸ Bartolo di Fredi's damaged Cain and Abel before an altar are not fully legible. In Martino di Bartolomeo's scene only one brother kneels; his feet and lower legs are bare.

⁵⁹ Gen. 3,4–5 [King James]: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings

di Bartolomeo's rendition of the sacrifice at Cascina is a good formal parallel for in the scene he inscribed COME CAIN E ABEL FANNO SACRIFICIO D'AGNELI ADDIO a fire on the left side of the altar burns upward whereas the flames at the right are deflected decidedly to the right.⁶⁰ Four surviving letters of the inscription below Taddeo's scene read with difficulty may come from a misspelled [sa]CRIR[ficium].⁶¹ Most probably Taddeo depicted here Adam's and Eve's sons at sacrifice; they would appear on the same level as the scene of their infancy to the left of the organ (Fig. 2).

The key to any hypothesis on the subject of the last fragment and to a broader understanding of the cycle turns on Taddeo's organization of the bay. This issue raises fundamental questions as to whether the commission for "sex storias cum sex figuris de Testamento veteri" was meant to fill the first bay or instead referred to the choir campaign as it evolved in sequential annual stages. A related question is how much of the first bay Taddeo painted in his initial working period that ended in August 1401. Judging from the surviving evidence and from Bartolo di Fredi's example at San Gimignano, six stories would appear to fit within a bay of the Siena presbytery, two at lunette level and two on each of the registers where the remnants survive (Figs. 2, 8).⁶²

Deductions about the subjects and the arrangement of the scenes in the first bay at Siena suggest that the architectural unit was treated as a narrative continuum – in other words, Siena adopted something other than the latitudinal narrative flow of the cycles at San Gimignano and Cascina. Taddeo's sequence conjecturally began with the creation of matter and the creation

of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."

⁶⁰ For an illustration Cristiani Testi (note 25), fig. 21.

⁶¹ Taddeo was not the only artist to stumble over the word: at Cascina the inscription for Noah's sacrifice reads: COME NOÈ CACCIÒ FUORI LE BESTIE DELL'ARCA E FECE SRACRIFITIO [sic] ADDIO.

⁶² Here one recalls the soaring series of frescoes in the chancel of Orvieto

of Adam at lunette level and moved across the middle register from the creation of Eve to narrate the temptation and the expulsion from Paradise. For theological reasons and hence by pictorial tradition, inclusion of the Expulsion is mandated, as is the creation of Adam presumably in the lunette. Taddeo depicted both stories at Montepulciano and they appear in every other cycle mentioned. The cathedral narrative would have progressed to the lower register with representations of the consequences of sin close to viewers – the primeval parents in reduced state followed by Cain and Abel, their sacrifice at the right side and perhaps the killing of Abel in the background. At the narrative end of the first bay, a long history remained to be recounted. If the “six figures” stipulated in Taddeo di Bartolo’s contract meant that the cathedral scheme was to focus on six biblical protagonists, the cycles within experiential range offered a broad choice of heroes – Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Isaac, Moses, David, Solomon, and Job.⁶³

The Progress of Work and Technique

Taddeo’s Old Testament frescoes evolved in stages to physically enfold the chancel and the new choir stalls (Fig. 3). From the left corner the project proceeded clockwise down the two bays (or *passine*) of the side wall, across the back (at that time a rectilinear wall), logically to continue on the right side. However, the program may not have reached the front right corner because in that section of the wall a suspended organ had been installed in 1372/73.⁶⁴ The choir stalls de-

scribed in a cathedral inventory ended “at the feet of the organs”; presumably the frescoes matched the range of the stalls.⁶⁵ The commissions for successive phases of fresco painting speak only of more stories, vaguely referencing a plan. The opening of a niche in the back wall and repainting in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries led to the loss of all of Taddeo’s future works and of those by Paolo di Giovanni Fei, who was responsible as executant in the second phase of the project.

When Taddeo initiated the cycle in June 1401 he labored at a sustained pace to present new works for Siena’s great annual feast of the Assumption of the Virgin on 15 August.⁶⁶ Subsequent installments of the project seem to have been organized according to the same general calendar. Recurrently the premier Marian holiday, an occasion for days of city-wide celebrations, catalyzed Sieneze energies and prompted Opera commissions for a fresh dressing-up of the church. Quickening of the pace in fresco work from spring to summer, testified by Taddeo’s contract of 10 June 1401 to begin the presbytery campaign, is explained by the climate as well as by the liturgical cycle. Mural painting lends itself best to the months between March and September-October.⁶⁷ When the *operai* unveiled new embellishments at the Assumption, permanent media lent particular luster to festivities that included processions, music, and abundant ephemeral decorations.⁶⁸

Taddeo threw himself headlong into completing his job in the summer of 1401; understandably he aimed to impress. The cathedral frescoes were his first public

commission since his recent return to Siena following a decade as an itinerant master. A cathedral ledger profiles Taddeo’s industriousness, giving evidence that he dedicated all his time to his work over seven weeks, despite a contract that permitted flexibility regarding his deadline.⁶⁹ The Opera foresaw a working period of two months, yet allowed for completion of the campaign either before or after that term. If Taddeo were to finish work in the choir early, he would be set to other tasks, if late, his pay would be adjusted. The contractual stipulations established his monthly stipend at twelve and a half florins for a year’s employment. Moreover, the opera paid for an assistant (Giusaffà di Filippo) and took responsibility for laying the first plaster (or *arriccio*) and for preparing the intonaco,⁷⁰ Taddeo had only to bring his brushes to his task.

After the 10 June agreement, it seems Taddeo took time to organize until 21 June when he began work in the church. The delay could be a sign of other obligations (the Montepulciano altarpiece signed in 1401?) or might signal a period for designing compositions. Once Taddeo started painting, his application to his task increased over time and from 27 June he never labored less than five days per week, and often six when he added a half-day on Saturday. The statutes of the painters’ guild prohibited labor on the vigil of the Sunday feast.⁷¹ After thirty-five and two-thirds work days, Taddeo paused for five days around 15 August, so he seems to have completed some part of his commission for the *Assunta* celebrations. Starting on 17 August, he labored for three more days, which suggests that painting basically complete for the Assumption feast was actually concluded on 19 August. Probably the final days were dedicated to touching-up frescoed stories with *a secco* details.

Taddeo’s acquisitions, as recorded in another cathedral ledger, are further evidence of the rhythm of his work, his procedures, and the pictorial richness of his scenes. Periodically he acquired quantities of eggs to prepare tempera paint (“*chuova per fare colori*”), evidently for applying details to finished compositions in *buon fresco* technique.⁷² The pattern on God’s gown in the *Creation of Eve* fragment (Fig. 23) and the gold grounds are examples of such additions. The dates when the eggs are recorded allow observations on the pace of his painting. He obtained a first batch, eight eggs, after three weeks of work, on 11 July. Some segment (the lunette?) was apparently ready for final tempera details and perhaps a scaffold was to be moved. At the end of another three weeks, on Saturday 30 July, Taddeo procured more eggs, logically for underlying scenes. He also bought glue and two pieces of tin, the latter probably for affixed decorative elements, probably to be gilt. If one presumes a scaffold successively lowered, these materials attest that scenes closer to viewers received extra decoration. In the last eight days prior to the *Assunta* celebrations, between Wednesday, 3 August, and Friday, 12 August, Taddeo acquired thirteen more eggs, nine of them on his last two working days, 11 and 12 August. This timing, keyed to painting in *a secco* technique, is the indication that he concluded his work in time for the holiday, and the great quantity of eggs argues that the lowermost works were the richest in tempera detail. At the same late phase Taddeo bought a pound of “ground black” (“*nero macinato*”), which may have served to make ink for the inscription borders.

Taddeo’s hurried labor through the middle of that month meant that in 1401 the authorities honored the Virgin, her church, and her Sieneze citizenry for the *Assunta* festivities with walls newly frescoed only in

cathedral. Fattorini (note 4), p. 124, posited three registers including lunettes for Siena.

⁶³ The later decoration of the Siena apse offers other options; see, for example, *idem* (note 8).

⁶⁴ Monika Butzek noted (verbally) that documents indicate an instrument suspended on the wall in a *palcò* designed when the organ was built. The instrument now in place dates much later.

⁶⁵ The extent of the stalls is described thus: “[...] principia sul canto dela chiesa a lato ala porta della sagrestia et circunda insino sul canto della chiesa a piei gl’organi [...]” (Butzek [note 1], p. 152, no. 417). The instrument at the right of the apse was a double organ, hence “organi”.

⁶⁶ The contract is in ASS, Notarile Antecosimiano, 224, fol. 2r–v (note 4).

⁶⁷ Successive years of cathedral documents between November and February from the end of the Trecento and the early Quattrocento typically regard the choir stalls, sometimes work in glass for windows, and occasionally panel paintings. In fact, Taddeo’s 1404 contract on or before 26 May (AOMS, 498 [705], fol. 195v; see also Milanese [note 2], II, no. 9, pp. 15f.; Butzek [note 1], p. 106, at date) for the continuation of the apse project admonishes, “non debba lavorare nel decto lavoro dell’uopera per tempi gattivi, o ghiacciati, ne’ quali tenpi non si facesse buono lavoro”.

⁶⁸ For the importance of the feast, see Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State*, London 1999, pp. 1–4.

⁶⁹ AOMS, I044 (912), fol. 7r; transcribed by Bacci (note 4), p. 226, and Symeonides (note 4). Taddeo may have aimed to limit physical encumbrance in the core of the church for as briefly as possible.

⁷⁰ These were also the terms proposed for Taddeo’s aborted work in the St Anthony chapel.

⁷¹ For the statutes, see Hayden B. J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Sieneze Painter, with a Translation of the Breve dell’arte dei pittori senesi*, University Park, Pa., 2001, pp. 199–224, 212.

⁷² See AOMS, I045 (913), fol. 4r–7r at dates from 21 June to 12 August; see also Bacci (note 4), p. 226. Acquisitions of seasonal foodstuffs are

small part. When Taddeo initiated the project in June he had reason to anticipate that the series would occupy him over a long period, as logic about the nature of chancel decor attests, and as the provision for a yearly salary sustains. The prospect would explain Taddeo's concerted efforts in the face of a contract that permitted leeway in the calendar of work. Siena could not offer a more prominent work site for a painter unless it was in the civic palace, where Taddeo was introduced in this same period.⁷³ At the time of the Assumption feast in 1401, Taddeo presumably had great expectations about his future in the cathedral, and Opera authorities were equally committed to continued progress in the chancel, not for the immediate moment as it seems, but for the following spring when fresco campaigns would begin anew.

Taddeo was paid twenty-five gold florins on 20 August,⁷⁴ an amount corresponding to two months' work at his annual pay-rate – in fact the amount of time he had dedicated to the job. In October he seems to have been making adjustments to his scenes because on the 14th he was paid nine lire (registered as two florins, one lira and 4 soldi), for four days of work on “sue figure cha dipense ala pasina dela chapela del altar maggiore”.⁷⁵ Giusaffà di Filippo, who had been contracted separately and simultaneously, received five florins per month for his work and for materials.⁷⁶

The Campaign of 1402 and Paolo di Giovanni Fei

In June 1402 work on the Old Testament series continued, but without Taddeo di Bartolo, who returned to the project only in spring 1404, three years

after initiating the project. Explanation for why another painter, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, was engaged for the second phase of the campaign seems to be that Taddeo was unavailable. Hardly would Taddeo have turned down continued engagement with the prestigious endeavor in 1402 had he been able to accept it. And, it is unlikely that the operaio was dissatisfied with him because he later returned to the project and went on to other commissions in the cathedral. Furthermore, Fei seems to have been a less esteemed painter than Taddeo because he was paid less, i.e. twelve florins per month. On a yearly basis, Taddeo would earn almost an extra half-month's stipend, or six additional florins. Apparently the younger painter had surpassed Fei in the operaio's judgment from the time he won the privilege of starting the presbytery scenes.⁷⁷

Fei appears to have been less Taddeo's collaborator than his substitute. Production partnerships were common in the period, but two master executors in a single scheme were not an ideal solution. What Fei undertook in June 1402 for the operaio Benedetto di Alessio was clearly the follow-up phase of the project Taddeo had begun in the same month of the preceding year.⁷⁸ As the new installment of painting got underway, the work already concluded was referenced in a passage in the commission directing Fei to paint two *passine* “[...] chon quelle storie che seghuiranno a la passina chominciata sopra l'entrata de la sagrestia e chome a lui saranno date affare [...]” (“those stories that will follow on the/in the/from the bay begun above the entrance to the sacristy and as they will be given to him to do”). The terms apparently obligate the new executant to adhere to a plan, presumably a

pre-established one. The stories that Fei “[was to] be given to do” may have been based on existing designs, conceivably by Taddeo, and in any event they were to proceed from what Taddeo had painted in the first bay.

Fei's new drive to further embellish the chancel for the Assumption started in July, and he was to earn 52 gold florins for each *passina*. The terms of his contract make it impossible to tell how long he was engaged but clearly he worked past 21 August, during which month a work station in front of the stories that were being painted (“dinanti ale storie che nuovamente si dipingho[no] sopra 'l coro di duomo”) was enclosed by six large straw mats.⁷⁹ Not until April 1403 was Fei paid 104 florins, the appropriate sum for two complete bays at 52 florins per bay.⁸⁰ It would be unusual had Fei painted through the winter months, so the monies he received in April may have been a late payment, yet the amount corresponds, at 12 florins per month, to just under nine months' work – by then the amount of time elapsed since the commission had been assigned to him in June.⁸¹ Fei's contribution was clearly substantial; it suggests a dilation of the work through the year and would explain salaries stipulated at yearly rates for a set monthly fee.

Both Fei's remuneration and mention in his contract of the “passina chominciata” – and thus, possibly not finished – open questions about how much

painting Taddeo had completed in 1401. By rights, if Fei received fifty-two florins for each of his two bays, Taddeo's payment of twenty-five florins in August 1401 would suggest that he painted only half a bay. However, the fact that the operaio commissioned two entire *passine* to Fei (neither one and a half nor two and a half) would signify that Taddeo painted a full bay. While it would be anomalous to leave an empty half bay as the project moved forward, the possibility cannot be excluded. The language of Fei's 1402 contract, of course focused on the work he was to do, is accordingly unclear about Taddeo's contribution in 1401. Two reasonable explanations for Taddeo's low pay are that he was expected to return to finish the first *passina* at a later stage or, alternatively, that another payment record for painting that bay is missing – perhaps the more likely deduction.⁸² Whereas the available documents and the paucity of the material remains leave some questions unanswerable, logic would suggest that Taddeo completed the first bay before Fei went on the paint the next two. In this case, the words “passina chominciata” could be interpreted as shorthand for “the bay that initiated the project”. Taddeo indeed returned to the campaign in 1404 but neither is his new contract fully descriptive about what he was to do or what he had done.

In 1403 there is no evidence of a new campaign in the Old Testament project. An ongoing break in

interspersed with materials specified as for “Tadeio depentore” or “Maestro Tadeio”.

⁷³ See Keith Christiansen, “Simone Martini's Altar-Piece for the Comune of Siena”, in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXVI (1994), pp. 148–160; 151, and Solberg forthcoming (note 4), for Taddeo's role in the commission of a new predella for Simone's Palazzo Pubblico altarpiece.

⁷⁴ AOMS, 229 (379), fol. 56r; see also Butzek (note 1), p. 105, note 1363. The calculation is based on roughly 20 work days per month.

⁷⁵ AOMS, 229 (379), fol. 57v; see also Milanese (note 2), II, p. 7, and Butzek (note 1), p. 105, note 1363.

⁷⁶ AOMS, 233 (383), fol. 71r; see also Butzek (note 1), p. 105, note 1363.

⁷⁷ Fei had worked in the Saint Anthony chapel before Taddeo was assigned frescoes there; they seem to have been in some way associated.

⁷⁸ His contract states “Esso debba chominciare a dipingniare el deto laborio in chalende luglio prossimo avenire infino che sarà tratto affine con buoni et perfecti cholori e noi li dobbiamo far fare e' ponti e disfare a le

spese de l'uopera [...]” (AOMS, 498 [705], fol. 185v); see also Milanese (note 2), II, no. 8, pp. 14f.; Mallory (note 32), p. 221; Butzek (note 1), p. 104. And a note of 1403 in AOMS, 230 (380), fol. 35v, specifies that Fei continued the work Taddeo had started: “le due passine tolse a fare nela chapella maggiore di duomo quelli che seghuono a quella dipinse Tadeo dipintore.”

⁷⁹ AOMS, 230 (380), fol. 31v; see also Butzek (note 1), p. 105, note 1373 (p. 106). Perhaps this was to make the work site presentable during festivities. My thanks to Monika Butzek who clarified the purpose of the straw mats.

⁸⁰ A note added at unspecified date to the commission document (AOMS, 498 [705], fol. 185v) by the same hand reports that Fei received 104 florins for painting the said two *passine*. The payment is also recorded in AOMS, 230 (380), fol. 35v, for 23 April 1403 (the notice itself is undated but falls between two other notices of that day). Another payment records that Fei

also painted a frieze (probably a border pattern) for the vaults of the *capella maggiore* for 1 florin (AOMS, 230 [380], fol. 37r). Fei contracted to pay for some materials, although the Opera agreed to foot the greatest outlays by supplying gold and blue and erecting and dismantling the scaffolding, as per standard practice. On 10 June 1402 Fei received from the Opera twenty seven small glazed bowls for his colors: “Maestro Pavolo di Giovanni Fei dipintore de' dare a di 10 giugno 27 schudelini vetriati di cholori” (AOMS, 1044 [912], fol. 31r; see also Mallory [note 32], pp. 221f.).

⁸¹ Fei may have worked into the spring months that year, but the April 1403 record of his payment (AOMS, 230 [380], fol. 35r) adopts the past tense, as if he was paid for works previously concluded, “[...] e' quali a avuti chontanti per dipentura le due passine, tolse a fare nella chapella maggiore di duomo quelle che seghuono a quella dipinse Tadeio dipintore”.

⁸² A similar lack of systematic payment records holds for the fresco project

Taddeo's activity in the choir that year may be explained by his two altarpieces for Perugia, both dated 1403, one of them the mammoth, double-sided polyptych for the Franciscan community.⁸³ Already in 1402 he was probably dedicating time to these Umbrian commissions which would have been realized in Siena, though in all likelihood they occasioned consultation trips.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Taddeo's Perugian paintings were not his only obligations in the period, as his 1404 altarpiece for the Servite church in Siena shows.⁸⁵ Siene notices of 1404 to be discussed below provide added evidence that affairs at Perugia were an obstacle to Taddeo's cathedral work in this period. The break in progress could be explained by political circumstances that led to a coup against Siena's governors in November 1403, conceivably disrupting normal activities over the preceding months and thwarting new commissions. Furthermore, in March 1403, when attention might otherwise have turned to a new installment of the frescoes, the operaio was occupied with other projects. He was concerned with an iron gate to enclose a projected marble pulpit and further biting into his funds was a campaign for baldachins and frescoes for the altars of the patron saints near the chancel.⁸⁶

Taddeo's Second and Later Chancel Campaigns, 1404/05

Taddeo returned to the chancel project on 26 May 1404 and his new contract contained admonitions substantiating the theory that he was unavailable for

the 1402 phase of painting.⁸⁷ The language is largely formulaic and the terms compare with directives of 1401 against dilatory behavior and ineffective work, but there are new commands. The Opera obligated Taddeo to avoid any other commitments, either openly or on the sly, and directed that he proceed without delay ("senza niuna fraude e senza mettere niuno tempo in mezzo"). This seems to betray prior irritation with him over conflicting obligations. The contract includes a new clause entitling Taddeo to a furlough of two months to work for himself ("di poter lavorare per sé"). Apparently the provision reflects on his 1402/03 absence from the choir, amounting to a recognition of other demands on him that probably had grown over time as he juggled clients at home and abroad. The cathedral board clearly wanted to employ him and now sought to retain control over any absence by stipulating that the schedule for his leave be decided by the operaio.

At the time of the new campaign, slightly less than three years since Taddeo had begun the Old Testament cycle, the cathedral had a new operaio in Caterino Corsino, the greatest overseer of works in the period.⁸⁸ Corsino was facilitated by a life appointment different from his predecessors' annual terms, and continuous tenure contributed to long-range, even ambitious planning. When he contracted with Taddeo for a year's work on 26 May, the calendar alone suggests his eagerness to move ahead, because the date anticipates earlier starts by about a month – 20 June in 1401 and July in 1402. In fact, Taddeo

may already have begun the new campaign, or at least prepared for it, since on 24 May he acquired quantities of pigment.⁸⁹ He paid for eleven pounds of *bianco secho* that day, and four days later, on 30 May, he bought six pounds of ultramarine. Eight more pounds of color supplied at the end of May were not paid for until 18 August. The materials were at Opera expense, so Taddeo had only to provide the labor of his brush ("la sua fadiga del pennello"). Giusaffà di Filippo was again his assistant. Corsino hired Giusaffà on the same day as Taddeo (26 May), at four and a half florins a month, or thirty-six per cent of Taddeo's rate.⁹⁰ The discrepancy between salaries for masters and assistants, even the experienced Giusaffà, was great. Giusaffà's final remuneration (thirty-three florins, three lire, and sixteen soldi), indicates that he was employed for seven months, that is, through November. The operaio's employment of a second hand on a steady basis can be taken as a measure of the importance lent to Taddeo's project.

Other terms of the May 1404 contract supply only a generic indication of the work to be done, and this in itself speaks for an existing plan. Taddeo was to go forward on what he had begun in 1401 and Fei had continued in 1402 by working on "le passine et chappelle e mura, le quali sono di sopra a le graticole del ferro intorno a l'altare maggiore [...]". His progress to the mid-August Marian feast fits a long-standing calendar, but is documented less well than his 1401 campaign or than the subsequent phase of work in the presbytery in 1405.⁹¹ Returning to the cathedral

project Taddeo stood on a rather different footing. His stature had grown in the interim and he benefited from established relations with personnel in the cathedral opera. Though the new contract insists on his diligence it makes no reference to quality control; for example, there is no mention of the plaster.

Apparently Taddeo applied himself as the operaio expected, and when he completed what was his second round of spring-summer work on the Old Testament scenes in mid-August 1404, he left almost immediately for Perugia to deal with certain affairs ("certis suis negotiis").⁹² The trip cements the proposal that commitments for paintings destined for that city were interwoven with the chancel frescoes. On 20 August Taddeo received permission from Siene officials to make the trip, evidently on the basis of his previous request. An explanation for the communal authorization was Taddeo's July election to a six-month term as an officer of the Gabella, or tax board, an appointment that obligated him to clear his departure with city authorities.⁹³ The terms of his permission to depart state that his salary would not be docked, so probably he was not to be absent long. Corsino, it will be recalled, had set a two-month limit on Taddeo's absence in his May contract.

Corsino's momentum may explain why on 6 March 1405, well ahead of the normal spring-summer schedule, Taddeo received partial payment for a month and a half of work "a dipegniare a chapo l'altare maggiore di Duomo".⁹⁴ The 1405 phase of the choir project was prolonged, apparently a push to complete it, because on an unspecified day in September 1405 the operaio

of 1409–1412 in the cathedral sacristy, for which see Wolfgang Loseries, "Gli affreschi di Benedetto di Bindo nella sagrestia del Duomo", in: *Le pitture del Duomo* (note 4), pp. 98–107: 98.

⁸³ See Gail E. Solberg, "A Reconstruction of Taddeo di Bartolo's Altarpiece for S. Francesco a Prato, Perugia", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXIV (1992), pp. 646–656.

⁸⁴ A 1398 document indicates that by that year Taddeo had been to Perugia, which might suggest that by 1402/03 Perugian patrons were pressing claims with him. See Solberg forthcoming (note 4), on Perugia.

⁸⁵ For this painting see Gianluca Amato, in: *Da Jacopo della Quercia a Donatello*

lo: le arti a Siena nel primo Rinascimento, exh. cat. Siena 2010, ed. by Max Seidel, Milan 2010, pp. 120–123, no. A.41.

⁸⁶ By a 12 March contract the metal worker (Giacomo di Giovanni) was obligated to deliver a gate "buono e perfetto e bene lavorato" (AOMS, 498 [705], fol. 189r; see also Milanese [note 2], II, no. 7, pp. 13f. and Butzek [note 1], p. 105 for 12 March 1403); for the baldachins, Butzek, *ibidem*, for 1403/04; for the frescoes, *ibidem*, p. 107, for 20 August 1404 and later.

⁸⁷ As cited in note 67; AOMS, 498 (705), fol. 195v.

⁸⁸ Corsino was appointed by 19 April (not, as usual, on 1 May); Butzek (note 1), p. 106, at date. For Corsino see Bernardina Sani, "Artisti e commit-

tenti a Siena nella prima metà del Quattrocento", in: *I ceti dirigenti nella Toscana del Quattrocento*, conference proceedings Florence 1982 and 1983, Florence 1987, pp. 485–507, esp. 500–504.

⁸⁹ For materials, AOMS, 523 (643), fol. 4v; see also Butzek (note 1), p. 107, note 1389.

⁹⁰ AOMS, 498 (705), fol. 196r; see also Milanese (note 2), I, p. 36, for a biography and his hire with Taddeo for a year; Butzek (note 1), p. 106, note 1390 (p. 107).

⁹¹ The 26 May contract is the one including the instruction that he not work in bad or icy weather (see note 67).

⁹² ASS, Concistoro, 233, fol. 23v. Milanese (Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architetti*, ed. by Gaetano Milanese, Florence 1878–1885 [facsimile reprint 1906], II, p. 46) took "negotiis" to mean shops. Presumably these affairs were the conclusion to his two Perugian paintings dated 1403.

⁹³ For Taddeo's appointment as *Esecutore di Gabella*, see Ettore Romagnoli, *Biografia cronologica de' bellartisti senesi, 1200–1800: opera manoscritta in tredici volumi*, Florence 1976, III, p. 464.

⁹⁴ The date was still in 1404 by the Siene calendar. Taddeo was paid 10 florins "per parte di pagamento d'uno mese e mezzo"; see AOMS, 523 (643), fol. 43v; see also Milanese (note 2), II, p. 8.

and his counselors decided that Taddeo, recorded as presently busy in the cathedral, was owed thirty florins for four “istorie” that he had begun on 19 June and completed by 14 August.⁹⁵ Corsino seems to have been paying for more finished paintings while Taddeo worked on others. Post-payment was common, particularly around the Assumption feast when outlays were great.⁹⁶ A note at the bottom of the September entry indicates Taddeo’s fee was paid into his hand still later, on 21 October.⁹⁷ The painter’s continuing work on “istorie” through September 1405 and perhaps later may be seen as another installment in the Old Testament cycle at a new rhythm, a sign of Corsino’s ongoing commitment to the prolonged effort.

Taddeo’s third campaign, or fourth if the work paid in March that year is considered separately, appears to have completed the project because there is no further mention of choir frescoes. His latest interventions are unsupported by formal contracts; this lack of documentation could reflect familiarity with him, a long established plan, and a fixed pay rate. In the chancel decor ten scenes can be accounted for by Taddeo’s hand (probably six in 1401 and four in 1405), but they may have been only half of the whole. Neither Fei’s two *passine* of 1402, nor Taddeo’s contribution of May–August 1404 are factored because what either produced is not specified in numbers of scenes. As commissions in the next years for frescoes around the polyptychs on the altars to the four city saints indicate, full coverage was the goal. Gail Aronow hypothesized that the last murals were positioned at the back of the chancel, behind the altar, where a niche was opened later for Beccafumi’s frescoes.⁹⁸ Her view, which ne-

glects the right chancel wall, would imply a peculiar visual imbalance and is therefore questionable.

Conclusion

The chancel cycle, achieved by degrees over four years from 1401 through 1405, was an impressive surround for the high altar carrying Duccio’s masterpiece. Brought back to the attention they once garnered, Taddeo’s murals, realized with Paolo di Giovanni’s Fei sizable contribution, prove to have had a temporal and iconographical logic. Soon after the new choir stalls were completed at the end of the 1390s, efforts to provide complements to the spectacular new furniture were underway. The first was an extensive series of frescoes that lent to the walls above the choir seats the glimmer of color and gold consonant with Duccio’s window, his altarpiece, and those parts of the stalls themselves that had been colored and gilt. The program was a significant aspect of the mural initiative because it extended the replete Marian and Christological narratives on the high altarpiece, thereby recalling the juxtaposition of Old and New Testament stories in the late Dugento frescoes in the lower church lost to rebuilding. Soon other additions to the presbytery followed, including an *Assumption of the Virgin* to decorate the suspended organ at the right side, presumably where the frescoes ended, and figures of virtues for the intarsia pavement. Taddeo probably had a hand in designing the virtues, and he painted the curtain for the organ with the *Assumption* and also the wings of the *cassa*.⁹⁹ With these elements, the chancel of the early Quattrocento must have been a visually symphonic place in whose realization Taddeo

di Bartolo played a conspicuous part. His work there was an early sign that he was en route to being Siena’s premier painter. The fresco commissions he soon won in the Palazzo Pubblico, results of his work in the cathedral, survive to trumpet his accomplishments, as Vasari’s account of the Marian mural cycle also does. Taddeo’s altarpieces of 1401 for Montepulciano and of 1403 for Perugia proved, meanwhile, that he had no rivals in Siense polyptych painting. For posterity, when Taddeo’s cathedral frescoes were obliterated, the legacy that began to chart his rise to fame in Siena was canceled together with the evidence of the city’s early effort at the programmatic amplitude that characterized the later redecoration of the chancel. Only for the short time that the cathedral choir frescoes were visible did Taddeo’s prominence rest on murals in both of Siena’s most renowned sites.

I would like to thank Monika Butzek for useful comments on an early version of this material. For its final form I am pleased to acknowledge Wolfgang Loseries of the Kirchen von Siena project, Samuel Vitali, editor of this journal, and Ortensia Martinez Fucini, editorial assistant: each of them has contributed in substantial ways to sharpening my argument.

CXXXIX [1997], pp. 372–386, 382f.) proposed Domenico di Niccolò dei Cori. See also Marilena Caciorgna, “Il presbiterio e il coro”, in: *Il Pavimento del Duomo di Siena: l’arte della tarsia marmorea dal XIV al XIX secolo, fonti e simbologia*, ed. by eadem/Roberto Guerrini, Cinisello Balsamo 2004, pp. 147–168. As for the embellishment of the organ, there were sizable payments in December 1405 and January 1406 for two sets of wings and for a curtain (“per dipentura del panno de l’Assunzione de la Nostra Donna la quale està ne la finestra deli orghani”). See AOMS, 233 (383), fol. 72v, and also AOMS, 499 (707), fol. 186v, 188v; see also Milanesi (note 2), II, p. 8, at dates in September and 19 December 1405 and January 1406.

Abbreviations

AOMS	Archivio dell’Opera Metropolitana di Siena
ASS	Archivio di Stato di Siena

Abstract

Taddeo di Bartolo’s lost fresco cycle of the Old Testament in the Siena cathedral apse is reconstructed from scant remains and documents. The scheme was commissioned in June 1401 and evolved until 1405 with a sizable contribution from Paolo di Giovanni Fei. Taddeo worked assiduously in the first bay at the left of the choir for the 1401 Assumption feast, painting the Genesis probably through the sacrifice of Cain and Abel. Fei substituted in 1402 and Taddeo returned to the project in 1404 after a 1403 hiatus in the annual campaigns. By 1405 the series, probably encircling the choir to the right side, was complete. This study of Taddeo’s first major commission in Siena aims to redress how early loss of the frescoes diminished his legacy.

Photo Credits

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⁹⁵ AOMS, 498 (705), fol. 186v; see also Milanesi (note 2), II, p. 8, for a day on or before 22 September, when the next notice dates.

⁹⁶ The pattern of delayed payment may bear on the lack of clarity over Taddeo’s remuneration for work in the first bay of the chancel.

⁹⁷ AOMS, 499 (707), fol. 186v: “Annone auti adi XXI d’ottobre fior. trenta sanesi contia[n]ti li demo i’ sua mano [...]”. See also Butzek (note 1), pp. 106f., note 1391.

⁹⁸ Gail Schwarz Aronow, *A Documentary History of the Pavement Decoration in Si-*

ena Cathedral, 1362 through 1506, Ph.D. Diss., New York, Columbia University 1985, Ann Arbor 1989, p. 67.

⁹⁹ The intarsia figures correspond to the personifications of the same virtues (Fortitude, Justice, and Prudence) that Taddeo would paint a decade later in the lunettes in the Palazzo Pubblico antechapel. Aronow (note 98), pp. 67–69, proposed Taddeo as designer, Carli 1979 (note 7), p. 146, suggested Martino di Bartolomeo, whereas Keith Christiansen (“Mattia di Nanni’s Intarsia Bench for the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena”, in: *The Burlington Magazine*,