

MITTEILUNGEN  
DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN  
INSTITUTES  
IN FLORENZ



LXV. BAND — 2023  
HEFT I



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# MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ

## Inhalt | Contenuto

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*Vecchiatta, Auferstandener Christus* | *Cristo risorto*  
(Detail aus Abb. 18, S. 85 | particolare da fig. 18, p. 85)

– 2 –

Editorial | Editoriale

– Aufsätze | Saggi

– 7 – *Elon Danziger*

“Fiorenza figlia di Roma”: New Light on the Baptistery of San Giovanni and the Chronology of Florentine Romanesque Architecture

– 45 – *Jessica N. Richardson*

Natural Calamities, Litany, and Banners: The *Intercession of the Virgin and Christ* in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence

– 73 – *Giulio Dalvit*

Due estremi per il Vecchiatta intagliatore

– 103 – *Francesca Mari*

Il Tondo Riccardi del Vernaccia: un’opera riscoperta di Mariotto Albertinelli e il suo rapporto con Raffaello

– Miscellen | Appunti

– 125 – *Angelamaria Aceto*

Raphael’s Unexecuted *Resurrection of Christ* and Santa Maria della Pace





1 Florence, San Giovanni,  
inside view of eastern portal

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# “FIORENZA FIGLIA DI ROMA” NEW LIGHT ON THE BAPTISTERY OF SAN GIOVANNI AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF FLORENTINE ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE

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Elon Danziger

The baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence, considered by Brunelleschi a near-perfect building,<sup>1</sup> has for centuries inspired reverence and sparked curiosity: who built it, when, and why? The *Chronica de origine civitatis* from the first decades of the thirteenth century imagines it to have been among the churches constructed by Roman masters after the Ostrogoths' sixth-century destruction of Florence.<sup>2</sup> In the fourteenth century, Giovanni Villani offered a different account that quickly became canonical: before its con-

version to Christian use in the distant past, it was an ancient temple of Mars.<sup>3</sup> For Cosimo I and his circle two centuries later, the Roman origins of San Giovanni were important; the baptistery represented the continuity of the Florentine polity from antiquity to ducal Florence, as well as the city's inheritance as a 'daughter of Rome'. Harsh polemics greeted Girolamo Mei's suggestion that details like the mismatched monoliths flanking the eastern portal (Fig. 1) indicated instead a medieval construction incorporating *spolia*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the “solo errore [...] in detto edificio” (the attic entablature that turns corners to run vertically) see *Il libro di Antonio Billi*, ed. by Fabio Benedettucci, Rome 1991, pp. 33f. For an extended discussion of the importance of Florentine Romanesque architecture for Brunelleschi, see David Hemsoll, *Emulating Antiquity: Renaissance Buildings from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo*, New Haven, Conn., 2019, esp. pp. 31–41.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronica de origine civitatis florentiae*, ed. by Riccardo Chellini, Rome 2009, pp. 43f.

<sup>3</sup> See Gerhard Straehle, *Die Marstempelthese: Dante, Villani, Boccaccio, Vasari, Borghini*, Munich 2001. Straehle shows that Dante in *Inferno*, XIII, mentions

Mars as patron of Florence prior to the Baptist only in connection with the statue once on the Ponte Vecchio, not with the baptistery (pp. 13–50).

<sup>4</sup> See Zygmunt Ważbiński, “Le polemiche intorno al Battistero fiorentino nel Cinquecento”, in: *Filippo Brunelleschi: la sua opera e il suo tempo*, conference proceedings Florence 1977, Florence 1980, II, pp. 933–950. Further on Mei, see Straehle (note 3), pp. 183f. As to the mismatched columns, Vincenzo Borghini responded in his *Discorsi* (Florence 1584, III, p. 147) that “una sola Colonna, che varia dall’altre, che è la accanalata” constituted only a small anomaly easily explained by the idea, now debunked, that the fluted monolith replaced a smooth granite column removed from

In recent decades a medieval origin has become the overwhelming consensus,<sup>5</sup> locating San Giovanni among the masterpieces of Florentine Romanesque architecture together with San Miniato al Monte and Santi Apostoli, the latter said by Vasari to have inspired Brunelleschi's San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito.<sup>6</sup> While Santi Apostoli is first attested in 1075,<sup>7</sup> and Pope Gregory VII is known to have instigated an ecclesiastical trial in 1077 that resulted in an infusion of funding for the construction of San Miniato al Monte,<sup>8</sup> no early documentary evidence for San Giovanni survives. Scholars have therefore relied on the archival research of seventeenth-century historian Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore. In his *Firenze città nobilissima* (1684), Del Migliore offers a critical consideration of the pagan roots of San Giovanni. Seeming to prefer a paleo-Christian origin, he ultimately opts for Villani's tradition of a converted Roman temple, perhaps in adherence to grand-ducal orthodoxy. Nonetheless, from the late eighteenth century to the present day, historians have seized upon two details gleaned from his account: that Pope Nicholas II consecrated San Giovanni in 1059 and that the baptismal font in Santa Reparata was moved to San Giovanni in 1128. Building their chronologies on one or both of these reference points, some scholars, like Gabriele Morolli, have theorized a multigenerational evolution of San Giovanni beginning in the mid-eleventh century

or earlier, while others, led by Guido Tigler, prefer a short period of construction beginning in the 1110s.<sup>9</sup> An attentive study of Del Migliore's *zibaldoni* and the manuscript histories of his stated source, Senator Carlo Strozzi, strongly suggests, however, that both reference points are spurious.

Once freed of the constraints imposed by these two chronological anchors, we can reassess the development of Romanesque architecture in Florence from a new perspective. Focusing especially on the critical decade of the 1070s and reflecting on the allusions made to antiquity in general and, at San Giovanni, to the Pantheon in particular, we will see the origins of the baptistery and the entire group come into focus in a new way, linked for the first time with the ideals and patronage of Pope Gregory VII and his circle.

### Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore and the Historiography of San Giovanni

Del Migliore gained notoriety in the twentieth century when Isidoro Del Lungo determined that he had falsified not only the text of a supposedly lost epigraph in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, but even the personage the epigraph recorded. This was "Salvino degli Armati", the Florentine inventor of eyeglasses who would have preceded a rival Pisan candidate for the title.<sup>10</sup> In describ-

the baptistery to display Donatello's *Dovizia* (see Margaret Haines, "La colonna della Dovizia di Donatello", in: *Rivista d'Arte*, XXXVII [1984], pp. 347–359). The two columns remain a problem for the few modern authors who maintain an ancient dating for the baptistery: Piero Degl'Innocenti, *L'architettura del Battistero fiorentino di San Giovanni: progetto, appalto, costruzione, vicende*, Florence 2017, p. 84, tries to read in them a reference to the "passaggio dei raggi del sole nascente".

<sup>5</sup> Guido Tigler, *Toscana romanica*, Milan 2006, pp. 136–145; Timothy Verdon, "Il Battistero e San Miniato al Monte: i primi monumenti fiorentini", in: *Firenze prima di Arnolfo: retroterra di grandezza*, conference proceedings Florence 2014/15, ed. by *idem*, Florence 2016, pp. 7–33.

<sup>6</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori, nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. by Rosanna Bettarini/Paola Barocchi, Florence 1966–1997, II, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Florence, Archivio Diocesano, *Codice Bullettone*, fol. 171r.

<sup>8</sup> See Guido Tigler, "Il finanziamento del cantiere di San Miniato nell'XI secolo", in: *San Miniato al Monte in Firenze: mille anni di storia e di bellezza*, conference proceedings Florence 2019, ed. by Cristina Acidini/Renzo Manetti, Florence 2022, pp. 21–36: 30–34.

<sup>9</sup> Gabriele Morolli, "L'architettura del Battistero e 'l'ordine buono antico'", in: *Il Battistero di San Giovanni a Firenze*, ed. by Antonio Paolucci, Modena 1994, II, pp. 33–132; Guido Tigler, "Il battistero di Firenze, I", in: *Commentari d'arte*, XXI (2015), pp. 5–22. Tigler, presuming the 1059 consecration by Nicholas II has a firm basis, proposes associating it with the church of Santa Reparata and relying only on the 1128 datum for San Giovanni.

<sup>10</sup> Isidoro Del Lungo, "Le vicende di un'impostura erudita (Salvino degli Armati)", in: *Archivio Storico Italiano*, LXXVIII (1920), pp. 5–53.

ing work by Florentine *eruditi* to unravel medieval church history, Renato Piattoli judged Del Migliore a “[figura] di poco rilievo”.<sup>11</sup> Even in the eighteenth century, Giuseppe Richa noted, amidst praise for *Firenze città nobilissima*, that Florentine historians had found “alquanti sbagli” in it.<sup>12</sup> Richa’s own exhaustive account of San Giovanni in 1757 does not include a consecration by Pope Nicholas II in 1059 or a transfer of the baptismal font in 1128.<sup>13</sup> In 1782 Antonio Lumachi, a canon of the baptistery, followed Del Migliore on the baptismal font but did not mention Nicholas II.<sup>14</sup> Beginning with a 1794 publication by Domenico Moreni, a consecration by Pope Nicholas II has generally been considered a reliable reference point for the building history of San Giovanni.<sup>15</sup>

The idea of a relatively late papal consecration had no earlier root. When San Giovanni was thought to have originated as a pagan temple, its consecration as a Christian church was presumed to have occurred long before the second millennium.<sup>16</sup> A tapestry of the subject likely designed under the direction of the Medici advisor Vincenzo Borghini for Eleonora’s apartments (Fig. 2) is set in a non-specific past and has no clear religious protagonist, let alone a pope.<sup>17</sup> A contemporary record of the work refers to it simply as “quando si consacrò S(anct)o Giovanni”.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, for Del Migliore’s report to be credible, it must originate in a medieval record forgotten for centuries. Despite the importance such a discovery would have, Del Migliore delays sharing it for a full thirty pages of history and description of San Giovanni. As he turns to festivals associated with San Giovanni, he outlines first the feast day of Saint John the Baptist and then the “Festa della Sacra” celebrated on 6 November:<sup>19</sup>

Non è gran tempo, che ita in dissuetudine, per alcune centinaia d’Anni, la Festa della Sacra, la vi s’è ricominciata a celebrare ne’ 6. di Novembre; di che se ne deve dar lode al Sen. Carlo Strozzi, che fra le Scritture del Monast. di S. Felicità ve ne trovasse una, che mostrava esservi stata fatta tal funzione, per mano d’un Papa, il qual fù Niccolò II. [quelli, che era stato Vescovo di Firenze, sotto nome di Gherardo di Borgogna] nell’Anno secondo del suo Pontificato, che cade nel 1061. Notizia che fù gratissima alla Città, stante il considerarla questa, per l’undecima Chiesa, stata attualmente Consacrata in Firenze da’ Pontefici Romani, citati a’ lor luoghi, e per conseguenza memoria degna, l’inferì l’Abate Ughelli, nel Tomo III. dell’Italia Sacra.<sup>20</sup>

While the precise meaning of Del Migliore’s meandering prose is unclear and the year referenced

<sup>11</sup> Renato Piattoli, *Le carte della canonica della cattedrale di Firenze, 723–1149*, Rome 1938, p. xv.

<sup>12</sup> Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne’ suoi quartieri*, Florence 1754–1762, I, p. ii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, V, pp. iii–lxix.

<sup>14</sup> Antonio Lumachi, *Memorie storiche dell’antichissima basilica di S. Gio. Batista di Firenze*, Florence 1782, pp. 19f.

<sup>15</sup> Domenico Moreni, *Mores et consuetudines ecclesiae Florentinae, codex ms. ex archivo aedilium S. Mariae Floridae*, Florence 1794, p. 66.

<sup>16</sup> Eliana Carrara/Emanuela Ferretti, “Il Battistero di Firenze nella storiografia medicea tra Cosimo I e Francesco I”, in: *Romanesque Renaissance: Carolingian, Byzantine and Romanesque Buildings (800–1200) as a Source for New All’Antica Architecture in Early Modern Europe (1400–1700)*, conference proceedings Florence 2017, ed. by Konrad Ottenheim, Leiden 2021, pp. 243–262: 247–252.

<sup>17</sup> The key figure seems to be the young man bearing the *palio* of San

Giovanni on the left. On this work see Lucia Meoni, *Gli arazzi nei musei fiorentini: la collezione medicea. Catalogo completo, I: La manifattura da Cosimo I a Cosimo II (1545–1621)*, Florence 1998, p. 205, no. 42, and Henk Th. van Veen, *Cosimo I de’ Medici and His Self-Representation in Florentine Art and Culture*, New York 2006, pp. 44–48. The composition seems to derive from renditions of the mass of St. Gregory the Great, perhaps Dürer’s celebrated engraving.

<sup>18</sup> Florence, Archivio di Stato, Guardaroba Medicea, 48, fol. 129r; see Meoni (note 17).

<sup>19</sup> A manuscript probably from the last quarter of the twelfth century confirms that the dedication of San Giovanni was remembered every year on 6 November, without any indication of the year of the dedication: “In dedicatione ecclesiasticae sancti Iohannis Baptiste que occurrit octavo ydus novembris” (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 3005 [conventionally titled *Rubricae Ecclesiasticae*], fol. 96r–v).

<sup>20</sup> Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore, *Firenze città nobilissima*, Florence 1684, pp. IIIIf.





2 Benedetto Squilli after Friedrich Sustris,  
*The Consecration of the Florence Baptistery*,  
 1563/64. Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Palazzo  
 Pitti, Deposito Arazzi

is not 1059 but 1061, a sentence included in a four-page fascicle in one of his *zibaldoni*, surely seen by some later writers and published here in the appendix, corresponds exactly to the conventional interpretation: “Papa Niccolò consacrò la chiesa [di Santa Felicita] il giorno doppo che consacrò la chiesa di San Giovanni, e sono anni [left blank].”<sup>21</sup> A contemporary papal bull and a later medieval copy corroborate Pope Nicholas II’s consecration of Santa Felicita on Sunday, 7 November 1059.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Appendix, no. I.

<sup>22</sup> The original and the copy of the bull are in Florence, Archivio di Stato, Diplomatico, Santa Felicita (8 January 1059, *stile fiorentino*). A plaque erected by the prior of Santa Felicita in 1600, now immured in

The fascicle, headed *Memorie delle antichità delle monache di Santa Felicita* and clearly not of medieval origin, bears closer consideration. Luciana Mosiici and Francesca Fiorelli Malesci note it in passing as the work of Del Migliore, believing it to have been compiled sloppily from old documents.<sup>23</sup> A handwriting comparison, however, strongly suggests that the document is not by Del Migliore or Strozzi (Fig. 3), as does its content, which uses the first person nine times and discusses matters outside their usual inter-

the north walk of the first cloister, also records the consecration. See Francesca Fiorelli Malesci, *La Chiesa di Santa Felicita a Firenze*, Florence 1986, fig. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Luciana Mosiici, *Le carte del monastero di S. Felicita di Firenze*, Florence

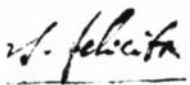
**Carlo Strozzi**

Florence, Archivio di Stato,  
Carte strozziane, serie terza,  
233, fol. 373r and 371v



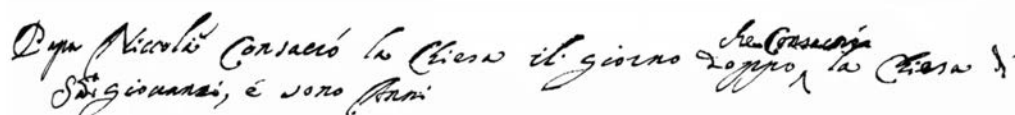
**F. L. Del Migliore**

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale  
Centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano,  
ms. XXV, 411, p. 251



**Unknown author of the *Memorie***

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale  
Centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano,  
ms. XV, 405, p. 54



Fondo Magliabechiano, ms. XV, 405, p. 54

3 Comparison of handwriting by Carlo Strozzi,  
Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore and the  
author of the *Memorie delle antichità delle  
monache di Santa Felicità*

ests (e.g., “le nipote di detto pontefice [...] stettero nel nostro monasterio tutto il giorno”). The document seems instead to be a seventeenth-century nun’s compilation of memories about her convent; and it seems plausible that these *Memorie*, rather than any lost medieval record, is the document that Del Migliore reports Strozzi as having found.

The line cited above is so telegraphic that it is impossible to know its basis or veracity. One possibility is that it is a garbled version of the banal observation

that Santa Felicità was consecrated on 7 November, the calendar day after the feast for the baptistery (6 November), since Del Migliore seems to detect some connection to the “Festa della Sacra” in his very placement of the news.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the author was not a careful historian: the erection of the column in the piazza is dated to 1244, the year of the (probably apocryphal) battle it commemorates, rather than the year supported by archival records, 1381 (as another hand notes at the end of the fascicle).

1969, p. 23, note 3 (though classifying it as “Del Migliore spoglio”, she mentions it only briefly without transcribing it); Fiorelli Malesci (note 22), p. 87, note 5.

<sup>24</sup> The church he mentions as being “Consacrata” probably refers to

Santa Felicità, since the volume of Ughelli he cites describes Pope Nicholas’ consecration of Santa Felicità at length but is silent on San Giovanni (Ferdinando Ughelli, *Italia sacra* [...], Rome 1644–1662, III, pp. 92–94), as Walter Horn already noted in seeking out a reference to San Giovanni



But most damaging to the notion of a 1059 consecration is that in over seventy pages of narrative on San Giovanni and Santa Felicita, Strozzi, who evidently deemed the indication untrustworthy, never once draws any connection between Pope Nicholas II and San Giovanni.<sup>25</sup> That Strozzi did not write a later, now lost account of San Giovanni with new information is strongly suggested by Anton Francesco Gori's compilation of material on the baptistery, for which he had access to Strozzi's archives and copied what he evidently considered the definitive version of his history of San Giovanni (see appendix, no. 2). It passes from its foundation in antiquity to the placement of the lantern in 1150, supposes a transition around 1050 (as discussed below), and never mentions Pope Nicholas II.<sup>26</sup>

Not only does Strozzi not corroborate the idea of a consecration by the pope, *no one* does.<sup>27</sup> Despite the survival of numerous eleventh-century documents recording papal acts and consecrations of churches far less important than San Giovanni, no one in more than three centuries of study has found any indication prior to the *Memorie* manuscript that would support a consecration by Nicholas II.

Is it likely, then, that the scrupulous Strozzi found something other than this seventeenth-century fascicle – some credible medieval document with the very same provenance and subject matter – that he failed to preserve, transcribe, incorporate into his own account of San Giovanni, or share with distinguished

*eruditi*? Such a coincidence would be improbable to the point of absurdity.

Del Migliore and Strozzi knew, of course, that the church of Santa Reparata had been the cathedral of Florence before Santa Maria del Fiore replaced it and were greatly absorbed by the question of when Santa Reparata had taken that title from what they believed was the first cathedral of Florence, San Giovanni. A passage early in Del Migliore's *Firenze città nobilissima* details his approach: reviewing documents of the cathedral chapter, still extant in the Archivio Capitolare Fiorentino, he looked for the first mention of the “canonica” of Santa Reparata:

da un Contratto però rogato ne' tempi di Lottario nel 1128, il terzo dell'Imperio, pur' esistente nel medesimo Capitolo, si comprende, che in quell'Anno era tale, stante il leggersi le seguenti parole relative alla Canonica di S. Reparata, che suona l'istesso, che Chiesa Collegiata, e Cattedrale, *Ioannes Archipresbyter, et propositus Ecclesiae, & Canonicae S. Reparatae concedit in emphiteusim, etc.*<sup>28</sup>

The contract whose first words are cited in italics above is charter 178, of 4 July 1128, relating to a lease of property to two monasteries.<sup>29</sup> Even admitting his idiosyncratic criterion, his search was slapdash, since the “canonica” of Santa Reparata is referenced in eight earlier documents.<sup>30</sup>

(Walther Horn, “Das Florentiner Baptisterium”, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, V [1938], pp. 99–151: 112).

<sup>25</sup> Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 233, fol. 418r–431r (San Giovanni) and 370r–373v (Santa Felicita), and *ibidem*, 250, fol. 102r–120v (San Giovanni) and 164r–165v (Santa Felicita).

<sup>26</sup> Gori's copy is in Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Ms. A CXCI, I, fol. 32r, 43r.

<sup>27</sup> The closest anyone has come is Robert Davidsohn, who claimed to have seen an old note in the sacristy of the baptistery that recorded its consecration in 1059, as first reported in his *Geschichte von Florenz*, Berlin 1896, I, p. 218, note 3. When he later published an Italian edition of his history, however, Davidsohn added a sentence to the corresponding footnote indicating that “Del Migliore [...] dice che la notizia nella sagre-

stia di S. Giovanni ha origine da una comunicazione del senatore Carlo Strozzi” (*idem*, *Storia di Firenze*, Florence 1907, I, p. 326, note 1); that is, he judged the note to be dependent on Strozzi's supposed discovery, not corroborative of it.

<sup>28</sup> Del Migliore (note 20), p. 4 (italics in the original text). Del Migliore summarizes the charter in his *zibaldone* 25: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano, ms. XV, 401, p. 243.

<sup>29</sup> Piattoli (note 11), p. 427, includes the citation by Del Migliore and provides a modern transcription of the contract.

<sup>30</sup> See the following charters (with page references to Piattoli [note 11]): nos. 100 (p. 254), 109 (p. 272), 127 (p. 314), 131 (p. 322), 147 (p. 361), 158 (p. 384), 164 (p. 397), and 170 (p. 411). These are only the unambiguous references to the chapter of Santa Reparata. In any case, nomencla-

Nonetheless, Del Migliore's identification of 1128 as a year of transition for San Giovanni is critical context for the much-repeated 'news' of the movement of a baptismal font in 1128 that appears later in *Firenze città nobilissima*:

Come prima Chiesa [San Giovanni] fù Duomo [...]; del qual Titolo, e Dignità privata, che la ne fù dipoi, divenne Pieve, trasferitavi la Fonte del Battesimo da S. Reparata circa all'Anno 1128 [...].<sup>31</sup>

That is, Del Migliore's 'archival research' indicating that Santa Reparata was elevated from *pieve* to cathedral in 1128 suggested to him that, since the role of baptistery was being taken over by the newly demoted San Giovanni, the old font would have been transferred to it.

In the early Settecento Gori included in his compilation a contemporary history of San Giovanni by baptistery priest Pier Antonio Burgassi, in which Burgassi transcribed the second passage quoted here from Del Migliore word for word, underlining the year 1128, and on a subsequent page summarized the first passage, again underlining 1128 and citing the first few words of the contract, only without attributing it to the cathedral chapter archive or mentioning Del Migliore.<sup>32</sup>

When at the end of the century Lumachi gave credence to the movement of the font, he cited Gori – presumably referring to these two pages in Gori's compilation that prominently feature the key year<sup>33</sup> – and seems to have leapt to the conclusion that the significance of 1128 had become apparent through the famed Strozzi. Thereby he also trans-

formed the contract cited for supposedly containing the first mention of the "canonica" of Santa Reparata into one related to the baptismal font:

Sembra che confronti poi altresì un documento estratto da' Libri de' Consoli dei Mercatanti, dal celebre Senatore Carlo Strozzi, chiamato in que' tempi il padre dell'antichità, e riportato dal Gori, nel quale si legge che appunto nell'anno suddetto 1128. fu trasferito il Fonte Battesimale dalla Chiesa di S. Reparata in S. Giovanni.<sup>34</sup>

The strongest grounds for skepticism, however, come from Strozzi himself. Strozzi had conducted his own analogous research on the supposed shift of the bishop's seat from San Giovanni to Santa Reparata. Several drafts of his history of San Giovanni reveal efforts to organize and understand the chapter archives (efforts confirmed and appreciated by Piattoli in the introduction to his volume on the subject<sup>35</sup>). An early draft, published here in the appendix, uses the same logic as Del Migliore but, looking further back in the archives, suggests a transition lasting from 1085 to 1096:

[all'anno 1085] essendo la città di Firenze tanto cresciuta di numero d'anime, che di tante non era quella chiesa [San Giovanni] capace, né volendo per accrescerla guastare così bella fabbrica, si trasferirno i canonici a officiare in Santa Reparata quivi vicina che all'ora aveva titolo di pieve, *levando di quella all'incontro le fonte battesimali e ponendole in San Giovanni*, chiamandosi di poi canonici di Santa Reparata e di San Giovanni, lasciando fra poco tempo quest'ultimo, poiché l'anno

ture tells us little: since the very earliest documents, the *canonica*, *domus*, or *ecclesia* of Florence have been referred to interchangeably with the names of Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence, and Santa Reparata; see even the very first charter of 723 or 724: "infra plebe et episcopio Beati Ioannis uel Reparate martiris [...] ecclesia et canonica Beati Iohannis Baptiste" (*ibidem*, p. 4).

<sup>31</sup> Del Migliore (note 20), p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Ms. A CXCIX, I, fol. 68r, 70r.

<sup>33</sup> A thorough search of Gori's papers turned up no other references to a document from 1128.

<sup>34</sup> Lumachi (note 14), p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> Piattoli (note 11), pp. xv–xvii.

1096 si domandono solo di Santa Reparata, e così la chiesa di San Giovanni che già fu il duomo restò pieve in forma d'oratorio [...].<sup>36</sup>

Another pair of drafts, like the final version copied by Gori, date the transition around 1050, because, as Strozzi reasons elsewhere, San Giovanni would have been too small a cathedral for the city. He thought Florence had probably outgrown it when Pope Victor II visited the city in 1051, but he was sure Santa Reparata must have replaced it by the time of the Council of Florence in 1055. Consequently, he imagines around 1050 “le fonti baptismali levate di Santa Reparata e poste in questa”.<sup>37</sup>

It is obvious, then, that Del Migliore and Strozzi had no documentation on the movement of any baptismal fonts but only imagined that they must have been moved – around 1050, around 1085, around 1128 – as suggested by whatever criterion for dating the elevation of Santa Reparata to cathedral status seemed significant to them at the time.

These two pieces of spurious information – the alleged consecration in 1059 and the font transfer in 1128 – have muddled the thinking of generations of scholars seeking to reconstruct the building history of San Giovanni and the other classically inflected Florentine churches. Freed of the blinders of Del Migliore's misdirection, we can combine historical clues with

numerous twentieth- and twenty-first-century studies to derive a compelling new chronology. To do so, it is helpful to begin earlier in the century.

### **Bishop Gerard of Burgundy, the Cathedral, and Santa Felicita**

The venerable cathedral of Florence, then known not as Santa Reparata but as San Giovanni Battista after the city's patron saint, underwent a major reconstruction between 1036 and 1055. While it largely retained its early-fifth-century exterior walls, mighty pilasters took the place of interior columns to permit higher ceilings, new pavements were installed, small absidioles were added on either side of the old main apse, in which a crypt was built below a raised presbytery, and a northern chapel mirroring a southern one now freed from obstructions created a pseudo-transept.<sup>38</sup>

While Bishop Gerard of Burgundy, the future Pope Nicholas II, had nothing to do with the building of the baptistery, he was nonetheless a key figure for the growth of eleventh-century Florence.<sup>39</sup> Appointed in 1045 or earlier, he must have overseen some of the work on Santa Reparata, and in the 1050s he would sponsor construction at San Lorenzo, Santa Felicita, Santi Michele ed Eusebio, and perhaps also at Santa Trinita and San Pier Scheraggio, to mention only Florentine churches. The first four were located just

<sup>36</sup> Appendix, no. 3 (emphasis added); an earlier version is in Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 250, fol. 107r. Strozzi seems to have noticed the discrepancy between references to both Santa Reparata and San Giovanni in a number of charters beginning with 126 (dated 1087 by Piattoli [note II], pp. 311–314), and a reference only to “ecclesie et canonice Sancte Reparate” in charter 147 (dated 1097, *ibidem*, pp. 358–360).

<sup>37</sup> Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 233, fol. 429v. The other, probably earlier version of this analysis appears in serie terza, 250, fol. 119r. Strozzi's reasons for assuming a transition around 1050 are laid out in serie terza, 234, fol. 9v.

<sup>38</sup> For reconstructions of Santa Reparata in its various phases of development, see Domenico Cardini, “Ipotesi sulle fasi trasformative del Centro religioso dalla formazione della cinta difensiva carolingia alla sua sostituzione”, in: *Il Bel San Giovanni e Santa Maria del Fiore: il Centro Religioso di Firenze*

*dal Tardo Antico al Rinascimento*, ed. by *idem*, Florence 1996, pp. 129–157. See also Guido Tigler, “Architettura in Toscana al tempo di Leone IX: la ricostruzione e riconsacrazione della cattedrale dei Santi Giovanni e Reparata a Firenze, luogo di sepoltura di Stefano IX”, in: *La reliquia del sangue di Cristo: Mantova, l'Italia e l'Europa al tempo di Leone IX*, conference proceedings Mantua 2011, ed. by Glauco Maria Cantarella/Arturo Calzona, Verona 2012, pp. 455–477: 458f., and Aldo Favini, “Le cripte dei territori delle diocesi medievali di Firenze e Fiesole”, in: *Le cripte medievali della Toscana, 3: San Miniato al Monte*, conference proceedings, ed. by Guido Tigler, Torrita di Siena 2023, pp. 66–87: 73. On the dating of the early basilica, see Riccardo Chellini, “La basilica di Santa Reparata a Firenze: dati acquisiti e problemi irrisolti”, in: *Firenze prima di Arnolfo* (note 5), pp. 177–191: 179–182.

<sup>39</sup> On his life, see Annamaria Ambrosioni, “Niccolò II”, in: *Enciclopedia dei papi*, Rome 2008, II, pp. 172–178.

outside the city walls, and Gerard's patronage likely advanced the legitimacy and prosperity of the *borghi* through which the urban core was expanding.

As we have seen, after his election as pope Gerard consecrated Santa Felicita in 1059. While Piero Sanpaolesi thought this rebuilt church had been oriented perpendicularly to the present one on another site just south of the eponymous piazza,<sup>40</sup> by 1950 excavations by Guglielmo Maetzke demonstrated that it shared the same site as the present church and consisted of a nave with two narrow aisles.<sup>41</sup> Fiorelli Malesci later argued from the documentary record that Trecento interventions giving the church a Gothic character consisted only of minor renovations and additions to the Romanesque building.<sup>42</sup> Yet this work should not be underestimated, as it was likely at this time that the Romanesque columns and the clerestory walls they supported were removed to create the aisleless church still standing today.<sup>43</sup> Santa Felicita was also lengthened, as underground surveys made by two architecture students for a master's thesis in 1996 confirmed.<sup>44</sup>

Three columns in serpentinite or *verde di Prato*<sup>45</sup> now incorporated into former convent buildings south of Piazza Santa Felicita seemed to Sanpaolesi plausible for the 1050s, which led him to the incorrect

conclusion that Pope Nicholas' church had been sited there. To Walter Horn and Walter Paatz, too, a provenance from the building of 1059 seemed reasonable.<sup>46</sup> Fiorelli Malesci, however, felt that such imposing columns must have come from a larger church that was abandoned early in its construction.<sup>47</sup> Tigler, taking up this hypothesis, connected the columns to three papal decrees of 1124–1125 defending Santa Felicita from the construction of new churches nearby.<sup>48</sup> Yet the nuns are unlikely to have preserved fragments of an unwelcome church for long, let alone protected them through centuries of renovation and expansion. Moreover, no other remnants of an abandoned building have been discovered, as one might expect had construction advanced to the point of carved capitals, and signs of disassembly and reassembly as well as the more modern bases support the idea that the columns were relocated. The most economical and plausible hypothesis is that they were salvaged from Pope Nicholas' Santa Felicita.<sup>49</sup>

One of these capitals, which takes classical forms as the starting point for an original invention (Fig. 4), seems to have a crude cousin in the crypt of the basilica of Santa Maria all'Impruneta (Fig. 5), consecrated by a legate of Pope Nicholas in early 1060. Another capital is adorned with depictions of fantastical creatures

<sup>40</sup> Piero Sanpaolesi, "La Chiesa di S. Felicita in Firenze", in: *Rivista d'Arte*, 2<sup>a</sup> ser., XVI (1934), pp. 305–317.

<sup>41</sup> Guglielmo Maetzke, "Resti di una basilica paleocristiana in Firenze", in: *Bollettino d'arte*, 4<sup>a</sup> ser., XXXV (1950), 35, pp. 75–77.

<sup>42</sup> Fiorelli Malesci (note 22), pp. 48–56.

<sup>43</sup> Fiorelli Malesci downplays the significance of a 1362 document that mentions a gift used "per rifare la chiesa". It is not impossible that the 1333 inundation that destroyed the old Ponte Vecchio damaged Santa Felicita, then nearing three centuries in age – or at least gave an excuse for major renovation work. On the likelihood that the church was aisleless in the fourteenth century, see *ibidem*, p. 56.

<sup>44</sup> Giampiero Calcaterra/Marco Della Ratta, *L'ipogeo di Santa Felicita a Firenze: identificazione delle strutture conservate*, master's thesis, Florence 1996, pp. 44f.; summarized in "Sintesi di tesi di laurea: l'ipogeo di Santa Felicita a Firenze. Analisi delle strutture conservate", in: *Bollettino ingegneri*, XLIV (1997), 3, pp. 17f.

<sup>45</sup> All Florentine columns in serpentinite are, technically, pseudocol-

umns, because they are not stone monoliths, but rather stacked blocks or stone facings surrounding a rubble core. For the possible provenance of serpentinite not only from Prato but also Impruneta, see Rino Sartori, *Pietre e "marmi" di Firenze: notizie storiche, antiche cave, genesi e presenza nei monumenti*, Florence 2002, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> Sanpaolesi (note 40), p. 307; Horn (note 24), p. 114, and Walter Paatz, "Die Hauptströmungen in der Florentiner Baukunst des frühen und hohen Mittelalters und ihr geschichtlicher Hintergrund", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, VI (1940), 1/2, pp. 33–72: 54. The columns, nearly five meters tall, are shown forming a courtyard portico in a ca. 1810 plan in Florence, Archivio Storico Comunale, MF MSF 30.

<sup>47</sup> Fiorelli Malesci (note 22), p. 42.

<sup>48</sup> Tigler (note 5), p. 162.

<sup>49</sup> The survey drawings reproduced in Calcaterra/Della Ratta 1997 (note 44), show the remnants they detected of near-square supports with sides around sixty centimeters long, very close to the diameter of the columns.





4 Serpentine column capital, 1050s, incorporated into building near Piazza Santa Felicita, Florence (photograph ca. 1938)

5 Impruneta, Santa Maria, column capital in the crypt, 1050s



6 Serpentine column capital, 1050s, in courtyard near Piazza Santa Felicita, Florence (photograph ca. 1938)



7 Serpentine column capital, 1050s, in courtyard near Piazza Santa Felicita, Florence, detail (current state)



8 Fragment of serpentine column capital excavated at Santa Trinita, now lost, 1040s/1050s



9 Mosaic fragment from Santa Trinita, 1040s/1050s. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello

(Figs. 6, 7), demonstrating a taste for *varietas* that these capitals also share with those of the crypt at Impruneta.<sup>50</sup> The capital shows seven depictions of a winged sea-beast with two legs, a common iconographic type sometimes associated with Jonah, and one four-legged griffin (Fig. 7).<sup>51</sup> Winged sea-beasts with front legs were also depicted in Romanesque Santa Trinita – in a *verde di Prato* capital (Fig. 8) and a section of mosaic pavement (Fig. 9). The latter commonality also helps

affirm an eleventh-century origin for the Santa Felicità columns, since the mosaic fragment belongs to a group now generally accepted as produced in the same century, almost certainly before 1082.<sup>52</sup> The Santa Trinita fragments, plausibly dating to the mid-century construction,<sup>53</sup> would be contemporary with the Santa Felicità columns. The latter, at any rate, deserve further study and especially conservation, as they currently languish in a lamentable state of neglect.

<sup>50</sup> See Nicoletta Matteuzzi, “La cripta dell’Impruneta, una testimonianza dell’antica pieve di Santa Maria”, in: *Le cripte medievali* (note 38), pp. 120–134: 131–133. Stylistic comparisons to the foliate capital at Santa Felicità and its cousin at Impruneta include several Burgundian examples identified by Matteuzzi as well as capitals at San Sisto in Viterbo and Santi Vitale e Agricola in Bologna.

<sup>51</sup> Stefano Riccioni (“Dal *kētos* al *senmurv*? Mutazioni iconografiche e transizioni simboliche del *kētos* dall’antichità al medioevo (secolo XIII)”, in: *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, XXII [2016], pp. 130–144) has dispelled the myth that this hybrid creature, which appears in Roman art, depends on the Eastern *senmurv* or *simurgh* that can be recognized instead by its avian tail.

<sup>52</sup> An excellent review of the literature on this group, which also includes mosaic fragments at San Fabiano in Prato (first documented in 1082) and the old Arezzo cathedral, is provided by Nicoletta Matteuzzi, “Pavimenti

intarsiati fiorentini: riflessioni sugli esemplari musivi e su alcune particolarità iconografiche”, in: *Arte magistri: intarsio marmoreo in Toscana nel XII–XIII secolo*, conference proceedings Empoli 2015, ed. by *eadem*/Alessandro Naldi/Leonardo Giovanni Terreni, Empoli 2016, pp. 82–107: 83–85. Caterina Bellini (“La cripta tricora e la fase romanica della chiesa di Santa Trinita a Firenze”, in: *Le cripte medievali* [note 38], pp. 88–105: 101–103) accepts an eleventh-century dating for the mosaic fragment but postpones this phase of the church to the end of the century in accordance with Tigler’s late date for San Pier Scheraggio.

<sup>53</sup> A recent important study of Romanesque Santa Trinita is Emanuela Domenica Paglia, “Un passato romanico nella chiesa gotica di Santa Trinita a Firenze”, in: *Bollettino d’arte*, 7<sup>a</sup> ser., XXXI (2016), pp. 13–52. Paglia concludes that the extant crypt dates to the mid-eleventh century and was surmounted by a presbytery of similar shape, from which the mosaic



10 Florence, San Jacopo  
Sopr'Arno, portico

Another fragment of Romanesque Santa Felicità may stand just a short walk away. The portico of San Jacopo Sopr'Arno (Fig. 10) consists of bichrome geometric ornament over revetted arches, four *verde di Prato* columns, two mutilated granite monoliths, eight capitals, and other elements including a cornice and four protomes. All were brought to this site and assembled in 1575–1580, after an order of clerics dubbed the “Scopetini” retrieved them from beneath the soil of the hill now known as Bellosguardo, where their monastery at San Donato a Scopeto had once been. The monastery complex had been preventively

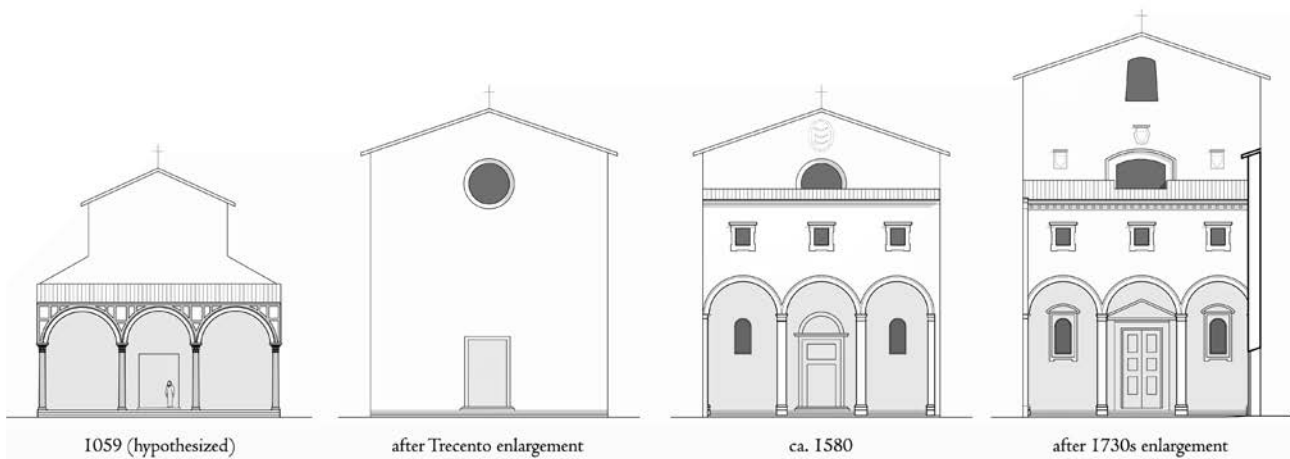
demolished nearly fifty years earlier in anticipation of the siege of Florence.<sup>54</sup>

But while the Scopetini were wealthy enough to commission altarpieces from Leonardo and Filippino Lippi, they had only formed in the Quattrocento, prior to which San Donato a Scopeto had been a minor parish church, first mentioned in 1064. No explanation has been offered, nor would any extant document explain, why such a peripheral church would have been given a rich exterior treatment. One possibility is that the elements from San Donato a Scopeto originated at another, more important church.

fragment derives. She has also advanced understanding of the development of the contemporary counter-façade (below the later oculus), which includes a lancet window with a painting of a peacock and a serpent that she reproduces.

<sup>54</sup> For a contemporary witness to the translation of the portico, see

Scipione Ammirato, *Delle famiglie nobili fiorentine*, Florence 1615, p. 81. For a useful overview of San Donato a Scopeto, see Marco Mochi, *Cosimo III e le “sinistre informazioni”*, Florence 2017, pp. 11–52. The extant records of the Scopetini (mostly income and expenditures) at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese*, 140, do not



11 Reconstructed elevation of Santa Felicita at four stages of its development

The dating of these elements is important. Mario Salmi assumed the capitals and late Romanesque protomes shared the same origin as the rest of the ensemble and therefore the whole represented “l’intristire di questa corrente” in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century,<sup>55</sup> an opinion Alberto Busignani and Raffaello Bencini followed.<sup>56</sup> But in a recent extensive study of Florentine Romanesque marble art, Nicoletta Matteuzzi reconsidered such a late date, noting the affinities between the ornamental partitions above the portico and the exterior of San Giovanni.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, considering the probability that the protomes and many of the capitals are later additions,<sup>58</sup> the halting

forms of the planar ornamentation would indicate not a late date, but an early one. This is also suggested by the small blocks of mostly dark *verde di Prato* of the columns, which resemble those used to compose the columns of Santa Felicita and Santi Apostoli. Larger blocks of a greener stone became available later, as seen on the façades of San Giovanni and San Miniato; and in the churches built at the turn of the century (Sant’Andrea in Empoli) or in the mid-twelfth century (Badia Fiesolana) columns are composed of just a few cylindrical pieces.<sup>59</sup>

If the date of the ornament, arches, and serpentinite columns is as early as the 1050s, their original location

appear to contain information on the project of reconstruction. Since the work was sponsored and likely organized by the grand-ducal court, a search of the Guardaroba Medicea or other Medicean archives might be fruitful.

<sup>55</sup> Mario Salmi, *L’architettura romanica in Toscana*, Milan/Rome 1926, pp. 10 and 38, note 23.

<sup>56</sup> Alberto Busignani/Raffaello Bencini, *Le chiese di Firenze: quartiere di Santo Spirito*, Florence 1974, p. 160.

<sup>57</sup> Nicoletta Matteuzzi, *Sacri simboli di luce: tarsie marmoree del periodo romanico a Firenze e in Toscana*, Empoli 2016, p. 122.

<sup>58</sup> The capitals at the four corners of the portico, which form a coherent group, appear to be medievalizing works made later – during the late sixteenth-century reconstruction or even the nineteenth-century intervention that included extensive painted decoration, attested by the pre-1891 Alinari

photo no. 2205. The corner capitals are in pristine condition, unlikely for medieval sculpture buried underground for a half-century. The outer capitals along the street have two acanthus crowns, apparently to make them harmonize with the capitals in between, which John Herrmann in a private communication of 2023 suggests may have come from the same medieval workshop, the one on the left more faithful to Roman sources than its companion. The modern capitals in the rear corners have a single acanthus crown to harmonize with the two in between, the one to the right probably medieval and the one to the left a beautiful late first-century capital. A very similar lyriiform capital is in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, as kindly indicated by Luigi Sperti: see Ulrich-Walter Gans, *Korinthisierende Kapitelle der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Cologne 1992, pp. 107–110, no. 209.

<sup>59</sup> For these buildings, see below, pp. 22–33.



could have been Santa Felicita before the portico was removed in the Trecento renovation (Fig. II).<sup>60</sup> Dimensional compatibility is not in itself significant, since a width of 15–16 meters was common in the period, as attested by the Romanesque plans of Santa Trinita or San Jacopo Sopr'Arno itself. More importantly, Santa Felicita received enough attention from Gerard to merit a papal bull, like the contemporary church of San Lorenzo, which is known from the Codex Rustici to have had a portico.<sup>61</sup> Further, Santa Felicita is closely associated with San Donato a Scopeto, near which it owned land in the medieval period; indeed the first mentions of San Donato come from the archives of Santa Felicita.<sup>62</sup> The nuns seem to have felt affection for their old church, to judge from their preservation of the columns discussed above, and could have transferred the portico to adorn San Donato after the Trecento modernization of Santa Felicita.

Busignani suggested that the columns of the San Jacopo portico had originally stood below the bichrome revetment on a generally planar façade reminiscent of San Miniato's, that the other elements had come from the church interior, and that the portico assembly might simply have been a convenience to accommodate a changed streetscape, perhaps in a historicizing imitation of the then-extant portico of San Bartolomeo.<sup>63</sup> What is most challenging to this theory is that the

serpentine columns are plainly not the half-columns one would expect in a planar façade.

Busignani could not see why San Donato would have been adorned with anything other than a flat portico motif, as seen at San Giovanni and San Miniato, which he thought San Donato postdated; but if the key elements instead *pre-date* those churches by several decades, they could represent a tradition of true porticoes to which the later façades allude. Besides San Lorenzo, Santa Maria Maggiore had a portico: a thirteenth-century document was signed “sub porticu dicte ecclesie”;<sup>64</sup> and an early Renaissance relief in the Museo del Tesoro at Impruneta suggests that the basilica of Santa Maria all'Impruneta, whose contemporaneity and kinship with Santa Felicita we have seen, may also have had a portico.<sup>65</sup> Archeological evidence indicates that San Pier Scheraggio, too, had a portico.<sup>66</sup>

The foregoing interpretations of Santa Felicita and Santa Trinita show that the three key churches of the Florentine Romanesque represent both continuity and contrast with the existing Florentine context. Bichrome ornament was already present on both horizontal (mosaic pavement) and vertical (portico) surfaces, which may have suggested the much more extensive wall revetment that would follow. The portico motif on San Giovanni and San Miniato likely reinterpreted a familiar church feature. But studied and disciplined

<sup>60</sup> In the figure, the Gothic elevation is based on the *Veduta della Catena*, the late-sixteenth-century elevation on Jacopo Zucchi's fresco at Palazzo Ruspoli, Rome.

<sup>61</sup> The portico likely dated to 1060. Pietro Ruschi (“San Lorenzo prima del Brunelleschi”, in: *San Lorenzo, l'architettura: 393–1993. Le vicende della fabbrica*, ed. by *idem*/Gabriele Morolli, Florence 1993, pp. 37–40: 38) notes that Romanesque San Lorenzo underwent few changes before its Quattrocento transformation.

<sup>62</sup> Giovanni Lami (*Sanctae Ecclesiae Florentinae Monumenta*, Florence 1758, II, pp. 1001f.) assembled a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century documents from the archives of Santa Felicita specifically related to land near San Donato a Scopeto.

<sup>63</sup> Alberto Busignani, “Ipotesi per la ricostruzione del Portico di San Donato a Scopeto”, in: *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Ugo Procacci*, ed. by Maria Grazia Ciardi Dupré Dal Poggetto/Paolo Dal Poggetto, Milan 1977, II, pp. 440f.

<sup>64</sup> Florence, Archivio del Capitolo Metropolitano Fiorentino, Fondo Diplomatico, 377/C13, 31 March 1226. This piece of evidence regarding the Romanesque church has been previously noted, for example in Alberto Busignani/Raffaello Bencini, *Le chiese di Firenze: quartiere di Santa Maria Novella*, Florence 1979, p. 108. The common notion that Santa Reparata was preceded by a portico, on the other hand, has been convincingly dispelled by Chellini (note 38), pp. 185–189.

<sup>65</sup> On the relief, which depicts the founding of the basilica and shows a portico with three arches, see Ulrich Middeldorf, “Filarete?”, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XVII (1973), pp. 75–83. In another parallel with Santa Felicita, the basilica at Impruneta was also enlarged and converted to an aisleless church in the late medieval period. Work in the Trecento and Quattrocento greatly expanded the basilica, and unlike at Santa Felicita, the façade moved significantly westward; as later depictions show, no portico survived when the relief was made (the current large portico was built in 1634), yet it seems

emulation of ancient architecture was something new, introduced to a visual culture that accepted architectural sculpture that only faintly recalled antique sources and included animals, real and imagined, similar to those found on the pages of medieval manuscripts.

### Pietro Mezzabarba and San Pier Scheraggio

In 1061 Pope Nicholas II died, having guided the Florentine church for more than a decade and a half. Many turbulent years would follow, not only in Florence: tensions between the reformist tendencies he represented and imperial power centers erupted in a crisis of succession, as German bishops rejected the elevation of Bishop Anselm of Lucca to Pope Alexander II in favor of the Parman Bishop Cadalus. A few years later the momentous decision was made to have the Pavian Pietro Mezzabarba lead the Florentine church, probably at a reconciliatory council between papacy and empire held in Mantua in 1064.<sup>67</sup> Although supported by the margraves Godfrey and Beatrice of Tuscany, Mezzabarba was strongly disliked by Florentine church reformers, whose movement centered around Giovanni Gualberto and the Vallombrosan order he founded.<sup>68</sup>

During his episcopacy Mezzabarba notably supported the foundation of a Benedictine convent at the old church of San Pier Maggiore. The convent owed

its existence to an aristocratic matron named Gisla, who made a large donation in February 1067. Mezzabarba, perceiving the power a monastic institution with large land holdings could have, fully supported the initiative, had the façade of the church renovated, and elicited a confirmation of the new convent from the now universally accepted Pope Alexander, duly received in May of that year.<sup>69</sup> This apparent attempt at positive public relations came about the same time as a notorious attack that Mezzabarba and the margrave orchestrated on the Vallombrosan monastery of San Salvi; troops sent to capture Giovanni Gualberto found him absent and turned to vandalism and plunder.<sup>70</sup> But a year later, humiliated by the Vallombrosans' famous trial by fire, Mezzabarba would be expelled from office at a spring synod in Rome.

Enmeshed in this period is the complex construction history of the large church of San Pier Scheraggio, of great civic importance in the early communal period but through gradual disuse now reduced to an archeological site within the Uffizi.<sup>71</sup> Many of its features, such as a large transverse arch and a very high nave in relation to its width, show a kinship with San Miniato, built in the last decades of the century. Thus the idea that it was completed by December 1068, as implied by a dedication recorded on a wooden panel located inside the church,<sup>72</sup> now lost, is so

unlikely that the sculptor would have shown the original basilica with a portico out of pure fantasy. See also Renato Stopani, "Santa Maria Impruneta: una pieve fortificata del basso Medioevo", in: *Impruneta: una pieve, un paese. Cultura parrocchia e società nella campagna toscana*, Florence 1983, pp. 111–121: 118.

<sup>66</sup> See Howard Saalman, "Florence: Santa Trinita I and II, and the 'Crypts' under Santa Reparata and San Pier Scheraggio", in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXII (1962), pp. 179–187: 186. The acceptance Saalman's then-controversial view has gained is evinced for example by Massimo Tosi's reconstruction in Monica Salvini, "Le tavole ricostruttive", in: *San Pier Scheraggio: gli scavi archeologici nell'ala di Levante degli Uffizi*, ed. by eadem, Florence 2005, pp. 48–56: 55.

<sup>67</sup> See Mauro Ronzani, "Pietro Mezzabarba e i suoi confratelli: il reclutamento dei vescovi della 'Tuscia' fra la morte di Enrico III e i primi anni del pontificato di Gregorio VII (1056–1078)", in: *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica nel tempo di san Guido: istituzioni e territorio nel secolo XI*, conference

proceedings Acqui Terme 2004, ed. by Simone Balossino/Gian Battista Garbarino, Acqui Terme 2007, pp. 139–186: 150–155.

<sup>68</sup> Ronzani, *ibidem*, pp. 158f., suggests that Hildebrand of Sovana, the future Pope Gregory VII, may have encouraged the Vallombrosans' hatred of Mezzabarba as a way of undermining the position of his supporters, i.e. the margraves and Bishop Anno of Cologne.

<sup>69</sup> Maureen C. Miller/Kathryn L. Jasper, "The Foundation of the Monastery of San Pier Maggiore in Florence", in: *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, LXIV (2010), pp. 381–396: 389.

<sup>70</sup> Enrico Faini, *Firenze nell'età romanica (1000–1211): l'espansione urbana, lo sviluppo istituzionale, il rapporto col territorio*, Florence 2010, p. 240, suggests the attack may have occurred in January 1067.

<sup>71</sup> On this church see Cinzia Nenci, "San Pier Scheraggio: le fonti documentarie e iconografiche, le ricerche e gli studi", in: *San Pier Scheraggio* (note 66), pp. 29–47; Tigler (note 5), pp. 146–153.

<sup>72</sup> The text, naming "Sancti Petri Scheradij", was transcribed in the

difficult to explain that Tigler has suggested the text must instead refer to San Pier Maggiore.<sup>73</sup>

Friedrich Oswald's close observation of San Pier Scheraggio led him to a proposal that would square the circle.<sup>74</sup> He concluded that around 1050 a project to build a new, larger church of San Pier Scheraggio around its pre-Romanesque predecessor was begun, similar in conception to an older church like the Badia a Settimo. In the mid-1060s, work not having proceeded much beyond the apse, someone conceived a radical modernization of the project.

The construction then took place in two campaigns, as an inspection of church vestiges on Via della Ninna shows. Oswald notes, for example, that the capitals of the three eastern bays – coincidentally, those to the left of the retaining wall of the Vasari Corridor – have simple discs for volutes, while the volutes in the four western bays feature spiral motifs. And in the arch just left of the wall a sudden change in the size of the voussoirs is evident. Oswald argued that the pause that must have occurred between the two campaigns correlated with the 1068 consecration, which would have brought the three eastern bays into service and allowed the pre-Romanesque structure to be demolished, the remainder of the new church being completed later, in the 1070s. The unusual shaped-brick capitals seem

to imitate in form and materiality a second-century example in Ostia, evidencing an interest in evoking antiquity not otherwise seen in the building.<sup>75</sup>

### The 1070s: The Foundation of San Giovanni

In 1068 Alexander sent Bishop Rodolfo of Todi, a former canon of Santa Reparata who was closely linked to Nicholas II,<sup>76</sup> back to Florence as a special administrator to help the church recover from Mezzabarba's chaotic episcopacy.<sup>77</sup> Seven years later, in 1075, Santi Apostoli was far enough along to be mentioned in a document; being such a small and simple church, with no crypt, its construction could have been started in the intervening years, towards the beginning of Rodolfo's tenure.<sup>78</sup> The dedication to the apostles would have been appropriate to fostering a new spirit of brotherhood in a fractious chapter. With its svelte nave and beautiful classicizing capitals, it was the first church that from its origins abandoned features of the northern Italian Romanesque style seen at Santa Felicita or Santa Trinita – massive (or bundled) columns, varied capitals unconstrained by classical canons, figurative surface adornment. It is possible that this new sensibility was due to the intervention of an architect who had been in Rome and had a deep knowledge of antique architecture, perhaps a member of Alexander's entourage.<sup>79</sup> Much larger

seventeenth century by Stefano di Francesco Rosselli in his *Sepoluario fiorentino* (ed. by Michelina Di Stasi, *Stefano di Francesco Rosselli: antiquario fiorentino del XVII sec. e il suo sepoluario*, Florence 2014, fol. 646) and Carlo Strozzi (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 233, fol. 179v) and published by Luca Giuseppe Cerracchini, *Cronologia sacra de' vescovi e arcivescovi di Firenze*, Florence 1716, pp. 53f. The panel included two inscriptions, giving rise to the notion that San Pier Scheraggio was consecrated twice; instead, the second text transcribed the dedicatory plaque of San Gregorio della Pace from 1279, still extant in the lapidarium of the Museo di San Marco and discussed in Maria Sframeli, *Il centro di Firenze restituito*, Florence 1989, p. 505, no. 635.

<sup>73</sup> Tigler (note 5), p. 148. It seems unlikely, however, that the dedication would then make no mention of the nuns or of Saint Benedict, naming only Mary and the apostles Peter, Andrew, and James.

<sup>74</sup> Friedrich Oswald, "Über San Pier Scheraggio und sein Verhältnis zur Florentiner Inkrustationsarchitektur", in: *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft*, XLIV (1990), pp. 67–75.

<sup>75</sup> First noticed by John Herrmann, the similarity of the capitals is

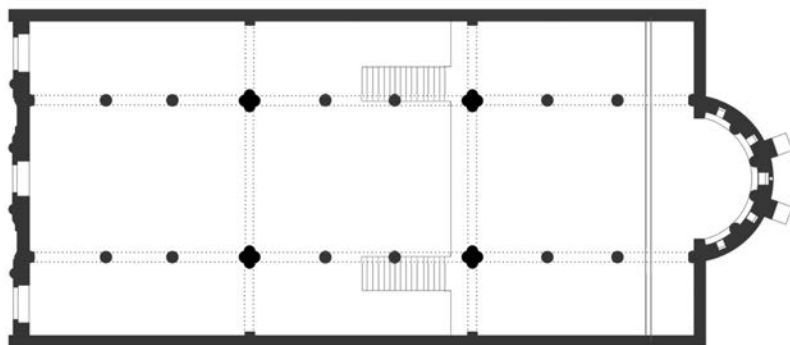
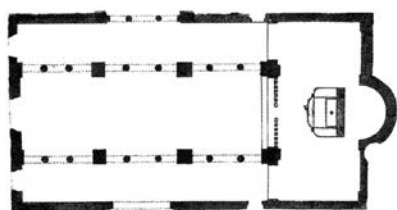
discussed by Gianluigi Viscione, "Forme di riuso dell'antico nelle cripte della Toscana: reimpieghi dell'antichità romana, spolia altomedievali ed elementi di spoglio protoromanici", in: *Le cripte medievali* (note 38), pp. 48–65: 54f.

<sup>76</sup> Nicolangelo D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza: Papato, Impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Naples 2007, p. 141.

<sup>77</sup> Although in mid-December 1068 the cathedral chapter had been wary of the arrival of an outside bishop (Ronzani [note 67], pp. 164–166), the dedication of San Pier Scheraggio at the end of the month suggests they were very pleased with Bishop Rodolfo, who proved pliable to the wishes of Giovanni Gualberto.

<sup>78</sup> Eric Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture: The First Style of the European Age*, New Haven 2014, p. 207, offers documented examples that dispel the myth that medieval church building was regularly an enterprise of centuries or even many decades, noting, for example, that the great cathedral at Speyer was completed in about thirty years.

<sup>79</sup> That individual architects led building projects in this era is attested



12 Comparison of the plans of Santa Maria in Portico, Rome, as recorded in a ca. 1657 plan in the Vatican Library (ms. Chigi P. VIII, 10, fol. 101v-102r), and San Miniato al Monte, Florence

projects were ahead: the same mind likely also designed San Giovanni and San Miniato al Monte, to take up Tigler's perceptive suggestion.<sup>80</sup>

The idea of an architect traveling from Rome to Florence gains support from the heretofore unnoticed similarity between the plan (not entirely unproblematic) of a demolished Roman church, Santa Maria in Portico, and that of San Miniato (Fig. 12).<sup>81</sup> Santa Maria in Portico, begun by Alexander or the Pierleone family and consecrated by Gregory VII in 1073, seems to prefigure San Miniato, started in earnest after the resolution of financial disagreements in 1077. In both churches alternations of columns and piers

divide the nave into three units, with the transept obviated in Florence. This concept of geometric organization at a higher level than the individual bay is absent in the earlier Florentine churches, thus marking another point of discontinuity with the Florentine past.

Could the foundation of San Giovanni also date to this crucial decade, the 1070s? The historical context dovetails remarkably well. Baptism had become a controversial issue under Mezzabarba. By canon law, it was to be performed only on Holy Saturday, with chrism consecrated by the bishop, but a letter by Pier Damiani records that three *pievi* had been baptizing

not only by Buscheto in Pisa, but also by Maginardo in Arezzo and Lanfranco in Modena. See further Fernie (note 78), pp. 205f.

<sup>80</sup> Tigler (note 5), pp. 163, 291.

<sup>81</sup> The essential studies on Santa Maria in Portico (demolished 1662) are Joan Barclay Lloyd, "The Medieval Church of S. Maria in Portico in Rome", in: *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, LXXVI (1981), pp. 95–107, and Peter Cornelius Claussen, "Santa Maria del Portico", in: *Die Kirchen der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter, 1050–1300*, IV, ed. by *idem*/Daniela Mondini/Carola Jäggi, Stuttgart 2020, pp. 381–402. The problematic aspect of the ca. 1657 plan of the Roman church is

that the piers are surprisingly large, to the point that Joachim Poeschke ("Der römische Kirchenbau des 12. Jahrhunderts und das Datum der Fresken von Castel S. Elia", in: *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, XXIII/XXIV [1988], pp. 2–28: 6) suggested they were later additions around columns as in Santa Prassede. Yet as Barclay Lloyd, p. 100, had shown, if originally only columns had been present, they would have been spaced with an improbable level of irregularity, a problem Poeschke does not address. Claussen, pp. 384–387, wrestles with the question and arrives at the compromise idea that the forms seen in the plan could reflect late additions around originally smaller, but still noncolumnar supports.



catechumens without chrism because the bishop was so deeply despised.<sup>82</sup> Mauro Ronzani has deduced that the letter refers to Easter 1066,<sup>83</sup> and given that relations with the bishop did not improve before his removal at the 1068 Easter synod, it seems probable that for three years baptism in Florence was not, as it was meant to be, a collective rite performed under auspices of the bishop in the religious center. Between July 1071 and July 1072 Alexander appointed the otherwise unknown Ranieri as the new bishop, following Rodolfo's term of assistance to the diocese.<sup>84</sup> As the pope and his entourage sought to restore order to the Florentine church through Rodolfo and Ranieri, a capacious baptistery near Santa Reparata would have been an appropriate symbolic undertaking.<sup>85</sup>

Physical evidence in the building fabric supports this chronology. In the 1930s Walter Horn undertook a detailed study of the masonry of Florentine Romanesque churches, identifying technical refinements that help establish their internal and relative chronologies.<sup>86</sup> His analysis found that the masonry of San Giovanni was closest to Santi Apostoli and to the later parts of San Pier Scheraggio – constructions that, as we have seen, are plausibly datable to the first half of the 1070s. Horn also noted that below the attic level San Giovanni lacks the disciplined alternation of thick and thin runs of masonry character-

istic of those parts of San Miniato that are datable towards the end of the century.<sup>87</sup>

A foundation in the 1070s could also explain the existence of two pits used for lime preparation or lime slaking beneath the piazza between San Giovanni and the cathedral. They have till now been associated with construction at Santa Reparata, but could instead have served the worksite at San Giovanni: radiocarbon dating of extracted charcoal gave a range of 1044 to 1102, that is a period centered on the first half of the 1070s.<sup>88</sup>

### San Giovanni: The Inner Octagon, the Pantheon, and the Design Synthesis

The foundations of San Giovanni include two octagons. Besides the one supporting the architectural envelope, an inner octagon with walls 1.3 meters thick, their masonry of inconsistent quality, stands below the innermost section of the interior pavement. The thickness of these walls is far in excess of what would have been needed to support the low enclosure for the cubic baptismal font known in the late medieval and early modern periods. Inside the walls is a square block, about three meters on each side. Carla Pietramellara believed that the octagon delimited a full-immersion basin, which would have been comparable in size to the highly unusual pool originally at the center of the Lateran baptistery in

<sup>82</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, ed. by Kurt Reindel, Munich 1983–1993 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit, 4), III, p. 535, no. 146: “compulerint in tribus plebibus sine conspersione crismatis catecuminos baptizari”.

<sup>83</sup> Ronzani (note 67), pp. 154f.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 166.

<sup>85</sup> Another suggestive historical circumstance is the increasing emphasis on the cult of the Baptist at this time, as detected by George Dameron, *Episcopal Power and Florentine Society, 1000–1320*, Cambridge 1991, p. 67, in the first associations of Saint John's feast day with payments by rural lineages to the cathedral chapter. Dameron's references trace back to charter 114 of 1084 in the cathedral chapter archives (Piatoli [note II], p. 285). However, the feast day of the Baptist is also associated with payments to the cathedral chapter in charter 96 of 1078 (*ibidem*, p. 244) and charter 108 of 1083 (*ibidem*, p. 271).

<sup>86</sup> Horn (note 24) and *idem*, “Romanesque Churches in Florence: A Study in Their Chronology and Stylistic Development”, in: *The Art Bulletin*, XXV (1943), pp. 112–131.

<sup>87</sup> Horn (note 24), p. 142.

<sup>88</sup> Franklin Toker, *Archaeological Campaigns below the Florence Duomo and Baptistery, 1895–1980*, London/Turnhout 2013, pp. 37, 426f. See also Cinzia Nenci, “Gli scavi nella piazza e all'interno del Battistero e del Duomo”, in: *S. Maria del Fiore: rilievi, documenti, indagini strumentali, interpretazioni. Piazza, Battistero, Campanile*, ed. by Giuseppe Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi, Florence 1996, pp. 15–26: 22. More recent radiocarbon analysis of mortar extracted from the baptistery was mostly unsuccessful. Although one sample did suggest a possible range of 1050–1080, it seems insufficient to be adduced as evidence. See Carlo Alberto Garzonio *et al.*, “I materiali costitutivi del Battistero”, in: *Il Battistero di San Giovanni: conoscenza, diagnostica, conservazione*, ed. by Francesco Gurrieri, Florence 2017, pp. 179–191.

Rome.<sup>89</sup> In 1976 Franklin Toker proposed instead that the inner octagon had supported the walls of an earlier, smaller baptistery at the same site.<sup>90</sup> The feasibility of such a small building relies on the large block at the center post-dating it, although Toker himself noted that it might have been not merely a support, but itself an early baptismal font.<sup>91</sup> Further, in the 1990s Luigi Marino led a study that noted that the drainage channel near the base of the square block seems closely connected with the wall of the octagon it runs through, suggesting to the authors that the inner octagon had always surrounded a font rather than constituting the foundations of an earlier building and that its thick walls could reflect their origin as the “sostegno di una copertura”.<sup>92</sup>

Marco Frati recently made the same suggestion on other grounds, focusing on the remains of two twelfth-century baptisteries in the Val d’Elsa and the Val di Pesa with freestanding columns around a baptismal font, presumably once covered by a dome. Their dependence on the bishop of Florence makes it plausible that they would have imitated San Giovanni on a smaller scale.<sup>93</sup> The roofing solution would have been similar to that of the early twelfth-century church of Santo Sepolcro in Pisa, where lofty piers, surmounting octagonal foundation walls, give an exhilarating sense of height (Fig. 13).<sup>94</sup>

Morolli hypothesized a succession of stages of design and construction across generations, starting with the building structure and the revetment of the first order of the interior, followed later by the lower two orders of the exterior and the matroneum.<sup>95</sup>



13 Pisa, Santo Sepolcro, interior

While the idea of a staged project involving multiple designers had the appeal of reconciling with an apparently protracted campaign of construction, such a timeline fails to comport with the architecture itself. Horn and more recently Tigler have marshaled compelling arguments in favor of a single design, mostly executed in a single generation, that included the structure as well as the architectural elements and

<sup>89</sup> Carla Pietramellara, *Battistero di S. Giovanni a Firenze: rilievo e studio critico*, Florence 1973, p. 30. Pietramellara’s architectural drawings and analyses are invaluable but her conclusions in favor of a late antique date for San Giovanni are difficult to accept. On the Lateran baptistery, see Olof Brandt, “Il Battistero lateranense: nuove interpretazioni delle fasi strutturali”, in: *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, LXXXIV (2008), pp. 189–282.

<sup>90</sup> Franklin Toker, “A Baptistery below the Baptistery of Florence”, in: *The Art Bulletin*, LVIII (1976), pp. 157–167.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 162, note 28.

<sup>92</sup> Luigi Marino *et al.*, “L’ipogeo del Battistero di Firenze”, in: *S. Maria del Fiore* (note 88), pp. 69–72: 70.

<sup>93</sup> Marco Frati, “Battisteri o cappelle palatine? Nuovi studi sulle grandi chiese battesimali dell’XI secolo: Arezzo, Lucca e Firenze”, in: *Studi e ricerche di storia dell’architettura*, III (2019), 6, pp. 22–37: 33–35.

<sup>94</sup> On the foundations excavated around 1970, see Tigler (note 5), p. 224.

<sup>95</sup> Morolli (note 9) illustrates two stages in the hypothesized evolution in his figs. 65–68.



14 Rome, Pantheon, interior



15 Florence, San Giovanni, interior

the revetment of at least the lower interior order and the lower two exterior orders.<sup>96</sup>

Observations of similarities between the baptistery and the Pantheon go as far back as Villani.<sup>97</sup> By Villani's time the space was unobstructed and centrally lit as at the Pantheon but, as we have seen, this may not always have been the case. Other parallels are more reliably original. The interior of the Panthe-

on itself can be divided into eight sections, with the cardinal points occupied by exedrae and the entry, while rectilinear alcoves terminate the intercardinal axes (Fig. 14). The shallow alcoves at San Giovanni very closely parallel them (Fig. 15). The aedicules on the intermediate surfaces in the Pantheon (Fig. 16) are reinterpreted as window frames on the exterior of the baptistery (Fig. 17).<sup>98</sup> It is telling that the par-

<sup>96</sup> Horn (note 24), p. 151, and Tigler (note 5), p. 142. Rodolfo Sabatini and Mario Salmi observed during restoration work that the interior incrustation penetrates deeply into the building structure and must be contemporary with it (Rodolfo Sabatini, "Rilievi e osservazioni su alcuni rifacimenti del Battistero di Firenze", in: *Palladio*, VI [1942], pp. 196–199; Mario Salmi, *Lezioni di storia dell'arte medievale: il Battistero di Firenze*, Rome 1950, p. 37).

<sup>97</sup> Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, Parma

1990/91, I, p. 90 (II, XXIII). See also Guido Tigler, "Il Battistero e il Pantheon", in: *Firenze prima di Arnolfo* (note 5), pp. 35–53. Among other comparisons, on pp. 42–44, he draws compelling parallels between the ornament of the baptistery and that of the Pantheon, particularly the attic prior to its disfigurement in the eighteenth century.

<sup>98</sup> On the history of the Pantheon aedicules and their many restorations, see Arnold Nesselrath, "Impressions of the Pantheon in the Renaissance", in: *The Pantheon: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. by Tod A. Marder/Mark





16 Rome, Pantheon, interior (detail)



17 Florence, San Giovanni, exterior (detail)

allels are visible inside as well as outside. Had the first builders left the exterior a blank slate, is it likely that a new architect, decades later, would show the same interest and ability in emulating the Pantheon evinced on the interior, rather than turning to the more modern fashion of decorating with figures and stories in stone? As Horn concluded his magisterial study, San Giovanni appears to be “aus einem Guß

und das Ergebnis eines einmaligen schöpferischen Aktes”, both regarding the overall project (“gedanklichen Gesamtentwurf”) and the design of the single details.<sup>99</sup> It therefore seems plausible that after less than two decades, that is by the late 1080s<sup>100</sup> or early 1090s, San Giovanni was built to the top of the *matroneum* level and ornamented at least on the first story, and, with the roofing solution outlined above,

Wilson Jones, New York 2015, pp. 255–295. The motif of rectangular windows with triangular pediments flanking a rounded-headed window, seen on four façades of the baptistery, is unknown at the Pantheon. It is, however, prominent on the façade of San Salvatore in Spoleto. For a possible echo of the same church at San Miniato, see Tigler (note 8), p. 26.

<sup>99</sup> Horn (note 24), p. 151.

<sup>100</sup> If one is willing to follow Strozzi and Del Migliore in attaching importance to divergent wording in archival references, two documents of

1087 show an intriguing change from a standard formulation: the church and chapter of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Reparata, traditionally taken as a singular entity, are set in the plural, as though a scribe were thinking of a religious center that now encompassed two churches. Charter 124 includes the phrase “in ecclesia et canonica Sancti Iohannes batista et Sancte Reparate uirinis [Virginis], que sunt posite in ciuitate Florentiia” (Piatoli [note 11], p. 308) and charter 126 the phrase “archipresbitero et prepositus de ecclesie et canonica Sancte Reparate et Sancti Iohannes

ready for use, even if work on higher levels would continue for decades.<sup>101</sup>

Reviewing the foregoing chronology in graphical form (Fig. 18),<sup>102</sup> we can see fairly conventional Romanesque church plans suddenly give way to the extraordinarily ordered and ingenious plans of San Giovanni and San Miniato.

Pisa cathedral, inaugurated in 1063 by the reform-aligned Bishop Guido from Pavia, may have been an influence on San Giovanni. For more than forty years the architect Buscheto oversaw the construction of the church, conceived on a scale to rival the emperor's new cathedral in Speyer. San Giovanni and Pisa cathedral share extensive cladding in precious stones, incorporation of *spolia* (including massive monoliths), some interest in *spolia* with a Roman provenance,<sup>103</sup> and (as we will see later) intarsia ornament. The emplacement of the monoliths in San Giovanni may even have depended on Buscheto's techniques, for which he was celebrated in his epitaph.<sup>104</sup>

battista, que sunt posite in ciuitate Florentia" (*ibidem*, p. 312). However, thereafter the singular again recurs ("qui est posita" or simply "sita"), presumably following the long-established formula.

<sup>101</sup> Some may object that the chronology here is incompatible with the arrival of two porphyry columns from Pisa in 1117 (attested by Villani), which to Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst*, Stuttgart 1859, II, pp. 58–61, suggested an active construction site. Tigler (note 9), p. 8, also considers the arrival of the columns significant because their height (as we see from their current placement on the east façade) seems compatible with incorporation into the building. That at least the lower level of San Giovanni was not being built in these years, however, is apparent from the fact that a few years earlier existing architectural elements had had to be cut into to accommodate Bishop Ranieri's tomb (see below, p. 30). The porphyry columns were not incorporated into the building, but placed in the piazza, where they stood until toppled in a storm of 1424; a few years later they were reassembled in their present location; see Morolli (note 9), pp. 44–46.

<sup>102</sup> In the figure, the Santa Reparata plan is based on Franklin Toker, *On Holy Ground: Liturgy, Architecture and Urbanism in the Cathedral and the Streets of Medieval Florence*, London/Turnhout 2009, p. 41. The plans of San Pier Scheraggio, Santi Apostoli, and San Miniato are adapted from Horn (note 86). The San Lorenzo plan is based on figures in Marvin Trachtenberg, "Building and Writing S. Lorenzo in Florence: Architect, Biographer, Patron, and Prior", in: *The Art Bulletin*, XCVII (2015), pp. 140–172, and analysis in Jack Wasserman, "Mons sancti Laurentii: Problems in

Yet the architectural sensibilities the two churches embody differ widely, as Walter Horn noted.<sup>105</sup> In Pisa the use of colored stone on the exterior is pictorial, indifferent to the pilasters and their varied cadences, whereas in Florence strongly contrasting color patterns either emphasize architectural elements or underline the flatness of the surfaces between them. This treatment, distinct from both classical and medieval practice, led Paatz to conclude that the total effect of the baptistery has no parallels at all.<sup>106</sup> Or, in Horn's summary: "Here in a balanced and final form appears for the first time a synthesis [of classical and medieval] which will emerge again in the architecture of Filippo Brunelleschi."<sup>107</sup>

### San Miniato and San Giovanni into the Twelfth Century

In 1077, at a monastery halfway between Canossa and Rome, Pope Gregory, the Tuscan margravine Matilda, and Bishop Ranieri were present for the resolution of a financial dispute that had long prevent-

the Construction of the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence", in: *San Lorenzo: A Florentine Church*, ed. by Robert W. Gaston/Louis A. Waldman, Florence 2017, pp. 257–278. The plan of Santa Felicita is based on Calcaterra/Della Ratta 1997 (note 44) with added portico, that of Santa Trinita adapted from Paglia (note 53). The plan of San Giovanni is modified from plans in *Il Bel San Giovanni* (note 38).

<sup>103</sup> For at least one piece of *spolia* in the baptistery that has a definite Ostian provenance, see Viscione (note 75), p. 54. In Pisa, a provenance for *spolia* from Rome and its environs was preferred even before the cathedral: see Maria Cecilia Parra, "Rimeditando sul reimpiego: Modena e Pisa viste in parallelo", in: *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, XIII (1983), pp. 453–483. For a more recent synthesis regarding Pisan *spolia*, see Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean*, Leiden 2009, pp. 411–419.

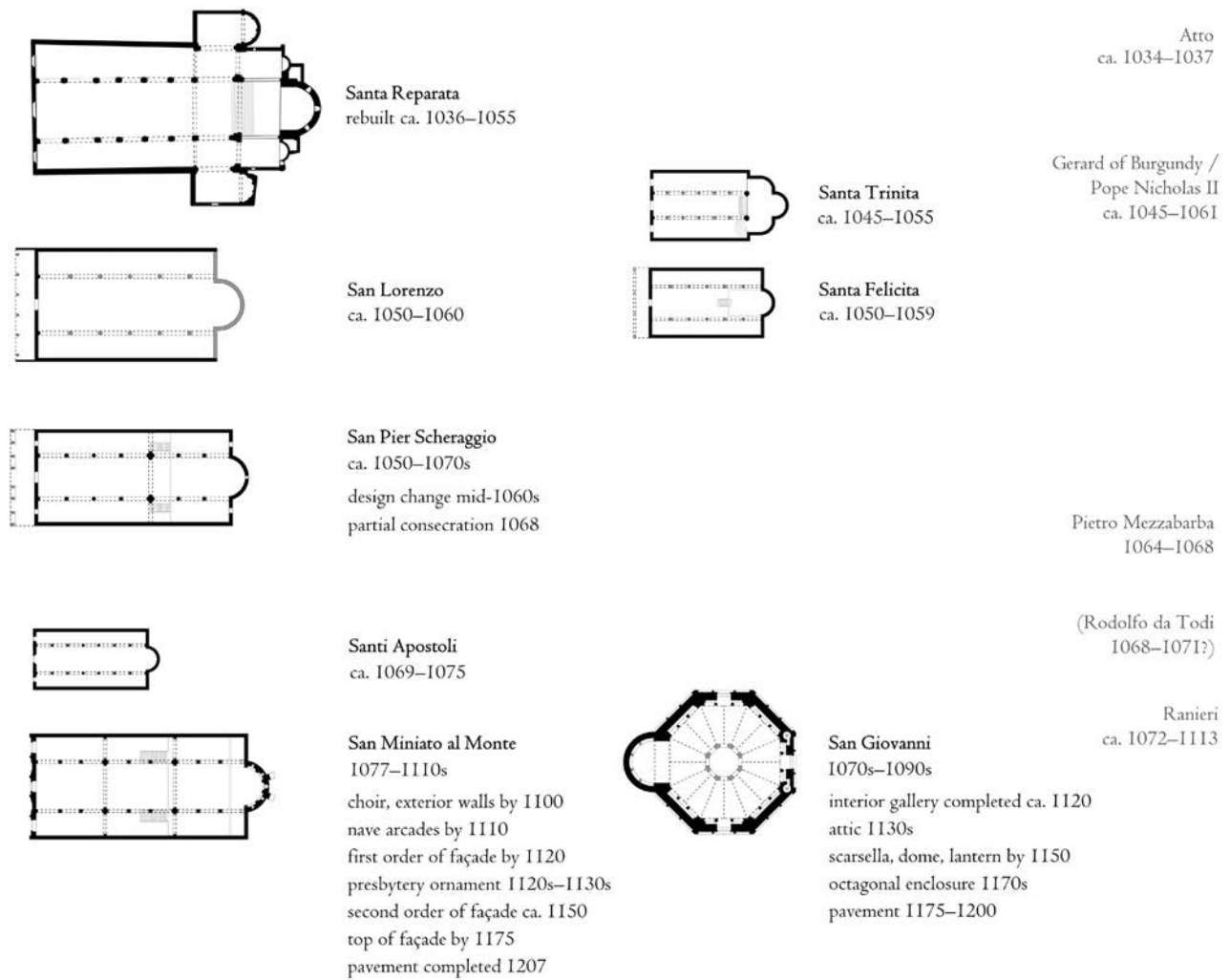
<sup>104</sup> His tomb monument of circa 1110 on the cathedral façade twice includes a Latin text (on which see Ottavio Banti, *Monumenta epigraphica pisana saeculi XV antiquiora*, Pisa 2000, pp. 46f., nos. 48f.) that translates as: "That which a thousand yoked bulls could barely move / And that which a ship could barely transport by sea / Thanks to the efforts of Buscheto, which was remarkable to see, / This burden a group of ten girls could lift" (my translation).

<sup>105</sup> Horn (note 86), pp. 130f.

<sup>106</sup> Paatz (note 46), p. 43: "Sie lässt sich im Grunde mit gar nichts vergleichen."

<sup>107</sup> See Horn (note 86), pp. 130f.





18 Chronological diagram of eleventh-century Florentine church plans.  
Lighter hatching indicates uncertain elements

ed the monks at San Miniato from rebuilding their church.<sup>108</sup> Shortly after that, a new building began to rise around the outdated, pre-Romanesque church it would replace. By analyzing the masonry record, Horn judged the lower portion of the façade structure to have been built first, followed by the choir over the pre-existing crypt and then the exterior walls. Because differences in masonry imply the clere-

story of the nave was built considerably later, Horn suspected a delay in razing the old church, possibly linked to constrained resources for the completion of the building.<sup>109</sup> If that was the case, the shortfall was managed very artfully. Once the old church was demolished, the builders used the ubiquitous *pietraforte* for the twelve columns (now covered in scagliola), reserving serpentinite for the piers that delimit the

<sup>108</sup> Tigler (note 8), pp. 30–34.

<sup>109</sup> Horn (note 86), pp. 122f.



19 Tomb of Bishop Ranieri, ca. 1113.  
Florence, San Giovanni



20 Florence, San Miniato al Monte,  
façade (detail)

three modules of the plan. Thus the rhythmic use of a less expensive material helps underscore the tripartite division of the church. Horn also points out the use of a classical device, an entablature, to unite the arcades and piers,<sup>110</sup> which has no precedent at San Pier Scheraggio. Whereas most of the capitals are *spolia*, some are in molded brick like those at San Pier Scheraggio: this choice could have been a savings while also alluding to ancient Roman models. Gianluigi Viscione makes the interesting suggestion that the extensive use of *spolia*, some demonstrably from Rome, served to link San Miniato to venerable Roman basilicas and legitimize its relics.<sup>111</sup>

The ornamentation of the earliest parts of San Giovanni consists mostly of incrustation, that is, slabs of white marble and dark serpentinite placed next to each other. Only in a few cases do we find intarsia,

in which pieces of serpentinite are fit into an incised ground of white marble.<sup>112</sup> Intarsia ornament that is denser, more plentiful, and more elaborate likely dates to the twelfth century, when it had been brought into vogue by its use on the exterior of Pisa cathedral, consecrated in 1118. Matteuzzi illustrates the dependence of numerous examples of Florentine intarsia on designs from Buscheto's cathedral.<sup>113</sup> These derivatives are all in later parts of the two major buildings of Florentine Romanesque architecture: the ornamentation of the matroneum, attic, and altar of the baptistery, and that of the choir, crypt altar, and façade of San Miniato.

This later stage likely postdates the death of Bishop Ranieri in 1113, whose tomb (Fig. 19) has a prominent position in San Giovanni that could only be accommodated by cutting into pre-existing architectural elements.<sup>114</sup> Though harmonious with the interior of

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 125.

<sup>111</sup> Viscione (note 75), p. 65.

<sup>112</sup> On techniques of cutting and assembling marble ornament, see Matteuzzi (note 57), p. 9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 20f.

<sup>114</sup> Ornamentation closely resembling that on the plinth below Ranieri's tomb is seen in an archeological fragment from the San Pier Scheraggio churchyard, visible beside a lower-level staircase in the Uffizi. Though ac-





21 Florence,  
San Miniato al Monte,  
presbytery

San Giovanni, it has an even closer kinship with the formal language of the first level of the façades of San Miniato and Sant'Andrea in Empoli. In all three cases, thin white moldings seem to be superimposed on thick serpentinite rectangles, and at San Miniato many-layered moldings also create blind portals (Fig. 20). These choices are very different from those made at the baptistery, where relief does not contaminate surfaces unless it has architectural purpose, and underscore their separation in time. Still, the designs are undoubtedly related, suggesting perhaps that the façades of San Miniato and Sant'Andrea are twelfth-century elaborations on an eleventh-century design.<sup>115</sup>

During the episcopacy of Bishop Gottifredo degli Alberti (1113–1142), San Giovanni and San Miniato continued to take shape, in a sequence we can trace thanks to observations by Horn regarding masonry characteristics and a series of lyre-motif pilaster capitals and by Matteuzzi regarding intarsia orna-

ment.<sup>116</sup> The matroneum of the baptistery was likely completed around 1120, and the triumphal arch at San Miniato shortly after. The attic of the baptistery followed in the 1130s. The 1120s or 1130s saw Florentine intarsia ornament reach its most riotous in the presbytery of San Miniato (Fig. 21), its crypt altar, and its high altar.

### The Mid-Twelfth Century and Beyond

Scholars have long accepted the usually reliable Richa's claim that the baptistery's rectilinear *scarsella* was begun in 1202, presuming it replaced the semi-circular apse whose foundations were seen in early twentieth-century excavations. Miklós Boskovits, however, perceived strong grounds for skepticism about Richa's claim.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, he pointed out that the installation of the lantern, which Villani reliably dates to 1150,<sup>118</sup> implies the existence of a broad dome, which is unlikely to have survived the

knowledging the similarity to Ranieri's tomb, Cinzia Nenci, "Rivestimento marmoreo bicromo di un muro del chiostro e iscrizione sepolcrale", in: *San Pier Scheraggio* (note 66), pp. 249f., suggests a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date. Influential to the dating is the hypothesis that San Pier Scheraggio had a cloister and that the losange ornament and a colonnette above are remnants associated with a knee wall similar to that seen in the cloister of Prato cathedral built before 1163. But the stratum in which other remains of the supposed cloister have been discerned, "fase 7", is assigned to the latter half of the fourteenth century, a dating absolutely incompatible with the marble fragment (Paolo Lelli, "Nota preliminare sulle indagini archeologiche nell'ala di levante degli Uffizi", *ibidem*, pp. 87–143: 123–127, and Susanna Bianchi/Luisa Galetti, "La datazione delle unità stratigrafiche: catalogo dei reperti", *ibidem*, pp. 145–214: 176). The colonnette, the losange ornament, and an adjoining inscription might instead form part of a twelfth-century funerary monument. Tommaso Gramigni in a 2022 private communication supports a twelfth-century dating for the inscription, which he reads as S MM/SERA/FINI, i.e., "Sepulchrum magistri Serafini", the tomb of Magister Serafinus.

<sup>115</sup> The façade of Sant'Andrea, which appears to be derivative of San Miniato, bears an inscription recording that either the church or the façade was begun in 1093. That the more likely reference is the church itself, with the façade coming significantly later, is argued, among others, by Guido Tigler, "Questioni della facciata della Collegiata di Empoli", in: *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa*, CXXXVII (2021), pp. 3–60, which includes interesting reconstructions. In his related article, "Il problema della datazione della facciata della pieve di Sant'Andrea, riesaminato nel contesto della storia di

Empoli fra la dominazione dei Guidi e quella del Comune di Firenze", in: *Empoli, novecento anni: nascita e formazione di un grande castello medievale (1119–2019)*, conference proceedings Empoli 2019, ed. by Francesco Salvestrini, Florence 2020, pp. 153–180: 180, Tigler suggests the façade was begun circa 1158. Matteuzzi (note 57), p. 120, prefers the 1120s or 1130s.

<sup>116</sup> Horn (note 86), p. 121f., and Matteuzzi (note 57), pp. 57–64.

<sup>117</sup> Richa (note 12), V, pp. xxxiii–xxxiv, reports a number of facts about the *scarsella* gleaned from Strozzi's transcriptions of old record books of the merchants' guild. One of these is that "Fra Iacopo di Turrita" worked on the mosaics of the *scarsella* in 1225; yet as Miklós Boskovits, *The Mosaics of the Baptistery in Florence*, Florence 2007 (A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, I.2), p. 18, demonstrates, this is an incorrect inference from an anachronistic inscription in the *scarsella* rather than a revelation from a document. Three of Strozzi's books of transcriptions still exist (Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie seconda, 51), and within a rubric related to the "ornamenti" of San Giovanni and other early churches (vol. II, fol. 125v), items about later events like Baldovinetti's 1483 repair of a mosaic match Richa's text word for word. Earlier items, however, find no match. The extant books appear to reproduce in more organized form a lost volume of transcriptions, over 500 pages long, whose existence is hinted at by an index at the end of volume III with similar subject matter but incompatible page references. Presumably Richa had access to this lost volume of 'raw' transcriptions. Nonetheless, the volumes appear to reference no source earlier than 1297. Boskovits seems correct that Richa commingled his own gleanings or assumptions with Strozzi's transcriptions of old documents.

<sup>118</sup> Villani (note 97), I, p. 90. Boskovits (note 117), p. 15, cites epigraphic

removal of a semicircular apse from beneath it. He thus argues for the construction of the *scarsella* shortly before 1150 and suggests that if the 1202 reference holds any validity at all, it records a campaign of stabilization and repair around that time.<sup>119</sup> The mid-twelfth century probably also saw the second level of San Miniato's façade executed, possibly still based on an old design.<sup>120</sup>

By the 1170s any octagonal structure within San Giovanni was gone, as in this decade the low, coextensive enclosure that exists today in fragmentary state was constructed. Matteuzzi's careful study of this *recinto* led her to a date in this decade, based on formal analogies to the pulpits of San Miniato al Monte and Sant'Agata di Mugello, the latter securely dated.<sup>121</sup>

If Santi Apostoli, San Giovanni, and San Miniato were the masterpieces of a classicizing movement indigenous to Florence, one would expect it to have produced more than just three church buildings all started around the same time. Instead, the only others that can be said to stand in their lineage are two churches outside Florence, Sant'Andrea in Empoli and the Badia Fiesolana, and the small San Salvatore al Vescovo, with a marble-and-serpentinite façade befitting its context near the baptistery.<sup>122</sup>

In the last quarter of the century, the old Florentine interest in fantastic creatures reasserted itself in the very sanctums of San Giovanni and San Miniato, where one might have expected only geometric pave-



—  
22 Florence, Baptistery,  
pavement (detail)

ments of the kind favored in medieval Rome. On the pavement of San Giovanni we once again find, below similar creatures with talons, winged sea-beasts with canine faces and paws (Fig. 22),<sup>123</sup> and the pavement in San Miniato, completed in 1207, is also full of animals, real and imaginary.<sup>124</sup>

### Gregory VII, Matilda of Canossa, and the Florence Baptistery

So far we have treated the taste for ancient *spolia* and emulation of the antique as though it were a phenomenon limited to Pisa and Florence. In fact, it extended to the highest levels of the church in the second half of the eleventh century. As the papacy assert-

and paleographic analyses of an inscription on the lantern that support a mid-twelfth-century date. While noting stylistic affinities with mid-twelfth-century Pisan works, Tigler (note 9), p. 12, gives weight to a lost inscription that included the year 1178, which Boskovits instead connects to repairs after an 1177 fire known to have reached the area.

<sup>119</sup> Boskovits (note 117), pp. 17–19. For the intriguing suggestion that the *scarsella* was originally open on its short sides to create a “portico di servizio”, see Giuseppe Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi, “Lo svolgimento della fabbrica”, in: *S. Maria del Fiore* (note 88), pp. 27–67: 39.

<sup>120</sup> Horn (note 86), p. 123, and Tigler (note 5), pp. 162f., prefer a date before mid-century; Horn notes similarities to capitals of the lantern, while Tigler compares it to the attic of the baptistery. Matteuzzi (note 57), p. 56, connects the intarsia motifs to ornament at Pisa cathedral of the 1140s to 1160s.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 32, 37, 64f., 101–106.

<sup>122</sup> On their dating see for example Tigler (note 5), pp. 292f., and Matteuzzi (note 57), pp. 122–125. No demolished churches of comparable importance are recorded either. A lost church that is intriguing, however, is the predecessor of Santa Maria Novella consecrated by Ranieri in 1096. On its vestiges, see Simonetta Fiamminghi, “Santa Maria Novella: indagini sulle murature del nucleo originario”, in: *S. Maria del Fiore e le chiese fiorentine del Duecento e del Trecento nella città delle fabbriche arnolfiane*, ed. by Giuseppe Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi, Florence 2004, pp. 233–242.

<sup>123</sup> Anna Maria Giusti, “Il pavimento del Battistero”, in: *Il Battistero di San Giovanni* (note 9), II, pp. 373–393, suggests that the purely geometrical parts precede the figurative ones; Matteuzzi (note 57), pp. 41–52.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 73f.





23 Lucca, Sant'Alessandro, nave,  
eleventh-century capital



24 Lucca, Sant'Alessandro,  
nave, spolia capital

ed itself against secular interference, it drew attention to a fourth-century imperial decree – not yet known to be a forgery – according to which Constantine transferred his earthly authority to the pontificate, presenting not a crown but a *phrygium* to Pope Sylvester I. Papal Rome could be seen as the inheritor of imperial Rome and the pope's rightful power superior even to that of the German emperor.<sup>125</sup>

Hélène Toubert and Richard Krautheimer famously sought to elucidate the manifestations in art of this renewed, ideologically motivated attention to early Christian Rome.<sup>126</sup> If scholars today are skeptical that the 'Gregorian reform' had as uniform and wide-ranging effects on art as perceived by that generation,<sup>127</sup> the framework remains useful for in-

terpreting the culture of the very highest echelons of the church in Rome and Montecassino. A well-known manifestation is a late eleventh-century depiction from Montecassino of a pope wearing a *phrygium* and seated on a throne with two lion heads, which Francesco Gandolfo linked to Pope Gregory VII's *cathedra* in Salerno, a medieval reworking of ancient sculpture.<sup>128</sup> Several monks at Montecassino extolled ancient Rome broadly and made contemporary comparisons, one writing that Gregory was with his words more powerful than Marius and Caesar. Meanwhile Pier Damiani saw cardinals as the 'spiritual senators' of the universal church, which he believed should imitate the ancient court of the Romans ("antiquam [...] curiam Romanorum").<sup>129</sup> Gregory himself thought in

<sup>125</sup> See, for example, H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085*, Oxford 1998, pp. 20f.

<sup>126</sup> Hélène Toubert, *Un art dirigé: réforme grégorienne et iconographie*, Paris 1990; Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308*, Princeton 1980, pp. 161–202.

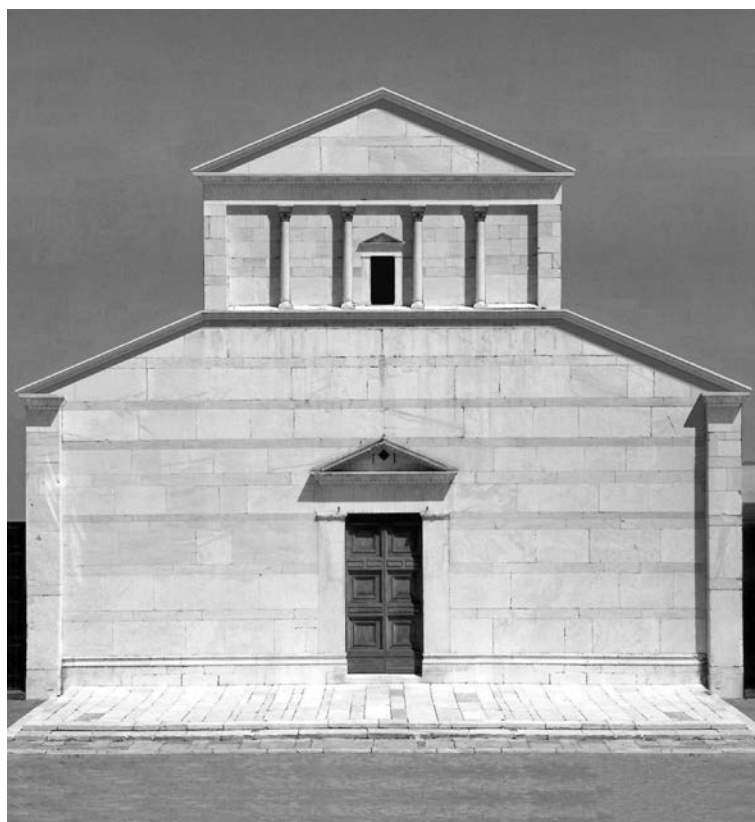
<sup>127</sup> Dale Kinney, "Rewriting the *Renouveau*", in: *Urban Developments in Late*

*Antique and Medieval Rome: Revising the Narrative of Renewal*, ed. by Gregor Kalas/Ann van Dijk, Amsterdam 2021, pp. 237–276.

<sup>128</sup> Francesco Gandolfo, "Simbolismo antiquario e potere papale", in: *Studi romani*, XXIX (1981), pp. 9–28. On the *cathedra* see Paola Mathis, in: *Rilavorazione dell'antico nel Medioevo*, ed. by Mario D'Onofrio, Rome 2003, p. 53, no. 17.

<sup>129</sup> See H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy,*





25 Reconstruction of façade of Sant'Alessandro, Lucca, by Giampaolo Carrai

these terms, writing to the Danish king that the law of the Roman pope now had a wider reach than the law of the Roman emperor ever had.<sup>130</sup>

Pope Alexander II, Gregory's predecessor, also showed interest in antiquity. Having obtained relics of the martyred pope Alexander I for Sant'Alessandro Maggiore in Lucca when he was the bishop of the city, as pope he almost certainly sponsored a rebuilding of that church, including extraordinary capitals (Fig. 23)

that closely imitate *spolia* (Fig. 24) and a marble-clad façade that is striking today, but may have been even more 'Roman' according to Giampaolo Carrai's recent reconstruction (Fig. 25).<sup>131</sup>

Gregory's *cathedra* is not the only evidence of his interest in imperial Roman objects: notably, an altar he dedicated in July 1073 in the aforementioned church of Santa Maria in Portico is a modified first-century Roman *ara* (Fig. 26). Ancient inscriptions and images

and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries, Oxford 1996 (1983), pp. 49f. (quoting Pier Damiani), 75–78.

<sup>130</sup> On this remark ("Plus enim terrarum lex Romanorum pontificum quam imperatorum obtinuit") and Gregory's imperial pretensions more broadly, see Raphaël Guérin, "Translatio imperii: l'usage de la Donation de Constantin dans le discours des papes grégoriens (XI<sup>e</sup> s.–XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)", in: *Construire la légitimité politique de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, conference proceedings Paris 2016, ed. by Paul Cormier/Xavier Gilly/Michaël Girardin, Paris 2021, pp. 109–123: 119.

<sup>131</sup> For a thorough and incisive analysis of Sant'Alessandro, convincingly

dating much of the church (including most of the extant façade and the nave capitals) to the tenure of Bishop Anselm, later Pope Alexander, see Carlotta Taddei, *Lucca tra XI e XII secolo: territorio, architetture, città*, Parma 2005, pp. 119–156. Though speculative and published only on Wikimedia Commons, Carrai's 2012 reconstruction is rooted in close analysis of the existing façade masonry published in his *Tradizione tardoantica e derive medievali nella chiesa di Sant'Alessandro a Lucca*, Lucca 2002: the shape of the earlier, smaller façade can still be discerned, and what appear to be the bases of four engaged pilasters in the upper story remain.

of pagan ritual vessels have been effaced and substituted with inscriptions describing the altar's dedication and the relics deposited within it.<sup>132</sup> The lettering has a kinship with that of several Giant ('Atlantic') Bibles that began to be produced in this period and use a classicizing script.<sup>133</sup>

As these examples demonstrate, elite church interest in ancient Rome was not limited to Constan-



26 Altar from Santa Maria in Portico, 1073. Rome, Santa Galla

<sup>132</sup> On the altar, see Stefano Riccioni, "Rewriting Antiquity, Renewing Rome: The Identity of the Eternal City through Visual Art, Monumental Inscriptions and the *Mirabilia*", in: *Rome Re-imagined: Twelfth-Century Jews, Christians and Muslims Encounter the Eternal City*, ed. by *idem*/Louis I. Hamilton, Leiden *et al.* 2011, pp. 439–463: 445–448, and Claussen (note 81), pp. 381–390. Gregory was buried in a second-century sarcophagus, on which see Silvia Tomei, in: *Rilavorazione dell'antico nel Medioevo* (note 128), p. 60, no. 19.

<sup>133</sup> See Riccioni (note 132), pp. 447f.

<sup>134</sup> For a synthesis of Florentine practices, which closely followed old Roman rite, see Gilberto Aranci, "Firenze cristiana nel XII secolo: le chiese della città e i riti del battesimo a Firenze tra XII e XIII secolo", in: *Firenze prima di Arnolfo* (note 5), pp. 55–71: 63–69. Baptisms may also have been performed on Pentecost. On the idea of confirmation in the semicircular

tine's time but extended broadly to the imperial era. The emulation of classical form in Florence and Pisa coincides with, and should be considered in context of, the revival of antiquity driven by church leaders.

The baptistery was built, as we have seen, for liturgical use on just one feast day. On Holy Saturday, following weeks of parental or godparental prayer and preparation,<sup>134</sup> Florentines would bring infants to be baptized in its font and then confirmed by the bishop. A thoughtful program for a building in which the Christian community would unite and expand during the holiest time of the year would demand extraordinary scenographic and symbolic qualities.<sup>135</sup> Seen in this light, the Pantheon – or rather Santa Maria Rotonda – was an excellent architectural model for a baptistery, one especially salient to the pope and his circle. For in the eleventh century Santa Maria Rotonda was not a place of regular worship, but one of a small number of historic stational churches at which the pope celebrated Mass on the most sacred holidays.<sup>136</sup> With no priests or monks associated with it before the twelfth century,<sup>137</sup> it was presumably managed by the curia, who may not have left it accessible in the months between papal celebrations.

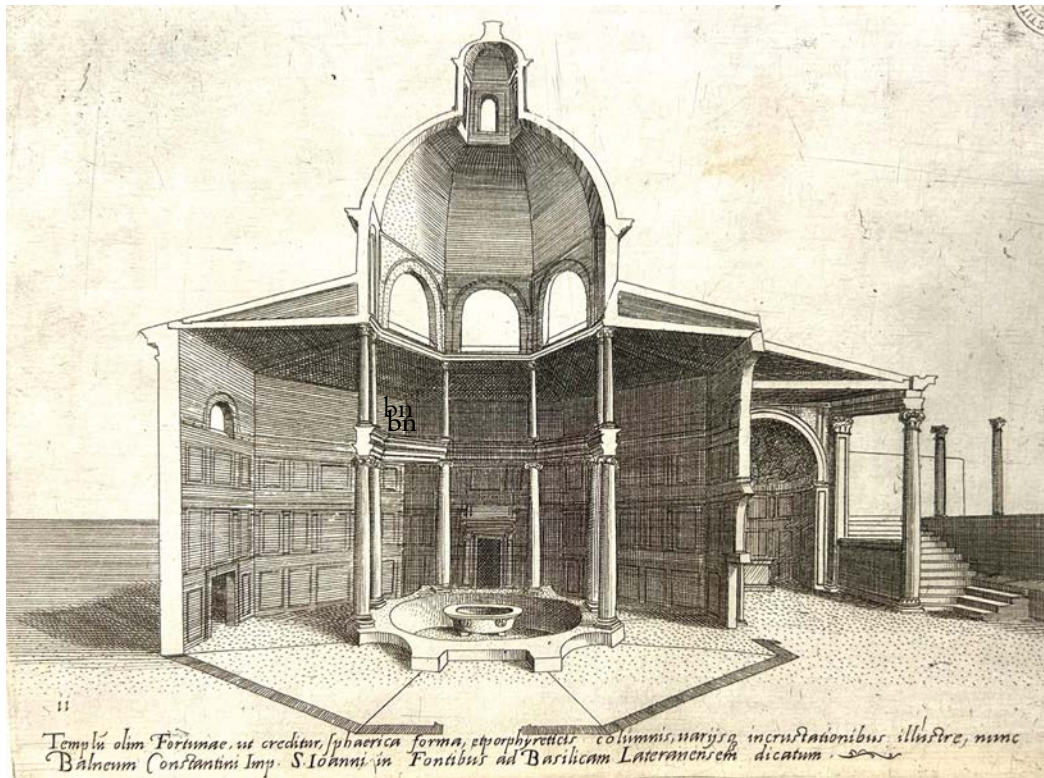
Another obvious point of reference for San Giovanni is the Lateran baptistery, and not only does it have clear papal associations, it was associated with Constantine himself, the lodestar of the reformers. It may have helped suggest the very idea of constructing a

apse and for more details, including the subsequent procession eastward to the cathedral, see Lamberto Crociani, "La liturgia battesimale", in: *Il Bel San Giovanni* (note 38), pp. 49–61.

<sup>135</sup> By the time the *scarsella* was built, around 1150, the Holy Saturday lighting of torches that would eventually become the *Scoppio del Carro* had probably arrived from Jerusalem. The growing role of the baptistery in civic and religious life may have motivated the construction of the *scarsella*. On the origins of the *Scoppio del Carro*, see Roberto Gulino, *Il rito dello Scoppio del Carro della chiesa fiorentina nella solennità di Pasqua*, Florence 2018.

<sup>136</sup> See Erik Thuno, "The Pantheon in the Middle Ages", in: *The Pantheon* (note 98), pp. 231–254: 253f.

<sup>137</sup> Sible de Blaauw, "Das Pantheon als christlicher Tempel", in: *Boreas*, XVII (1994), pp. 13–26: 15.



27 Giovanni Battista Cavalieri after Giovanni Antonio Dosio, section of Lateran baptistery, in: *Urbis Romae aedificiorum illustrium quae supersunt reliquiae*, Rome 1569, pl. 11

baptistery. We have seen its possible connections to the interior structure of San Giovanni, and its late antique interior ornament, now lost, seems to have featured marble incrustation with simple rectilinear geometry (Fig. 27)<sup>138</sup> similar to that of its Tuscan counterpart.

Thus it is difficult to imagine San Giovanni being conceived and designed *without* the involvement of a pope or close associate. Alexander might be a candidate, but his devotion to Lucca makes him unlikely

to have initiated the project. Gregory, on the other hand, had a special relationship with Florence. He was close with the Florentine Gualberto and the Valmombrosan order he founded,<sup>139</sup> and in late 1058 he had spent time in the city helping engineer Gerard's election to the pontifical throne; a year later he visited the city with the new pope.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, Florence would become increasingly important to him as the supportive capital of the March of Tuscany, which

<sup>138</sup> Although the engraving may be in part a reconstruction, ample evidence exists for the wall cladding. See Brandt (note 89). The resemblance of the ornament to that of San Giovanni may be more immediately striking from graphic representations than it was in life, since the marbles employed in Rome appear to have been pavonazzo and porphyry rather than the

plain Carrara marble and *verde di Prato* seen in Florence. The chromatic balance in the Pantheon, with its *verde antico*, is in fact closer to San Giovanni.

<sup>139</sup> Cowdrey (note 125), pp. 66f.

<sup>140</sup> Davidsohn 1907 (note 27), I, pp. 313–317, and Cowdrey (note 125), pp. 48f.

was essential in his struggles to sustain papal power against the pretensions of Emperor Henry IV. Paatz intuited the hand of Gregory behind the building of the baptistery, offering as another motivation the creation of a monument to rival the imperial cathedral in Speyer.<sup>141</sup>

Bishop Ranieri likely also had an important role in the project, at the least overseeing construction during his more than four decades in the office. He must have been closely associated with San Giovanni, to judge from his burial within its walls.<sup>142</sup> No correspondence between Alexander and Ranieri survives, but Hildebrand apparently knew and trusted Ranieri. As Davidsohn underscores, his first opinion on ecclesiastic matters as pope was addressed to Ranieri.<sup>143</sup>

The great resources of the margravate, which Gregory would rely on throughout his pontificate, would almost certainly have been necessary to realize a vision as ambitious as San Giovanni. Thus a Tuscan ruler – in the 1070s, Beatrice or Matilda, or both – would have participated in the project. Matilda was more closely aligned with Gregory and with Florence than her mother. Pisa, in fact, was so important to Beatrice and her late husband that a Benedictine chronicler visiting from the abbey of Saint-Hubert thought of it as the margravate's capital. Matilda, on the other hand, rarely if ever visited Pisa after her mother's death in 1076.<sup>144</sup> Nor would

Matilda's involvement demand dating the foundation of San Giovanni after that moment, for she had not been a secondary figure in the preceding years. The same chronicler, observing the pair at a splendid Easter celebration in 1074, noted both were honored as powerful rulers.<sup>145</sup>

Some other evidence may also support the thesis of Matilda's role in the project. Beatrice's entombment in a late second-century sarcophagus seems an indication that both women valued ancient art, and the record of a donation made by Matilda to Pisa cathedral in 1100 hints at some sensitivity to architecture in her recollection that the cathedral was begun with "miris tabularum lapideis ornamentis".<sup>146</sup>

Why would Florentines themselves welcome an overtly Roman monument in the religious heart of the city? One common view is that, in tandem with the possible evocation of Saint Peter's by San Miniato, San Giovanni asserts Florence as a "new Rome".<sup>147</sup> But Florence, though a prosperous capital, could hardly claim the mantle of the *caput mundi*. Indeed, around 1059 Pier Damiani composed a short poem that includes a comparison of the two cities, wherein Florence receives the epithet "parva".<sup>148</sup>

A more likely explanation is that Florentines were proud of their ties to Rome. Besides supporting the church reformers in power there, Florence in the 1070s was singularly loyal to its margravine, Matilda, who was Gregory's closest ally.<sup>149</sup> The city had de-

<sup>141</sup> Paatz (note 46), p. 71.

<sup>142</sup> Tigler (note 5), p. 138, already intuited that Ranieri was buried in the baptistery "in quanto committente, o meglio in quanto presule in carica durante l'inizio della costruzione". Roza, the long-serving archpresbyter and later also prepositus of the chapter, is frequently cited in diocesan documents and may also have had a role in the construction. See Enrico Faini, "I vescovi dimenticati: memoria e oblio dei vescovi fiorentini e fiesolani dell'età pre-gregoriana", in: *Annali di storia di Firenze*, VIII (2013), pp. 11–49: 23.

<sup>143</sup> Davidsohn 1907 (note 27), I, p. 368.

<sup>144</sup> Mauro Ronzani, *Chiesa e "civitas" di Pisa nella seconda metà del secolo XI: dall'avvento del vescovo Guido all'elezione di Daiberto a metropolita di Corsica (1060–1092)*, Pisa 1997, pp. 23f.

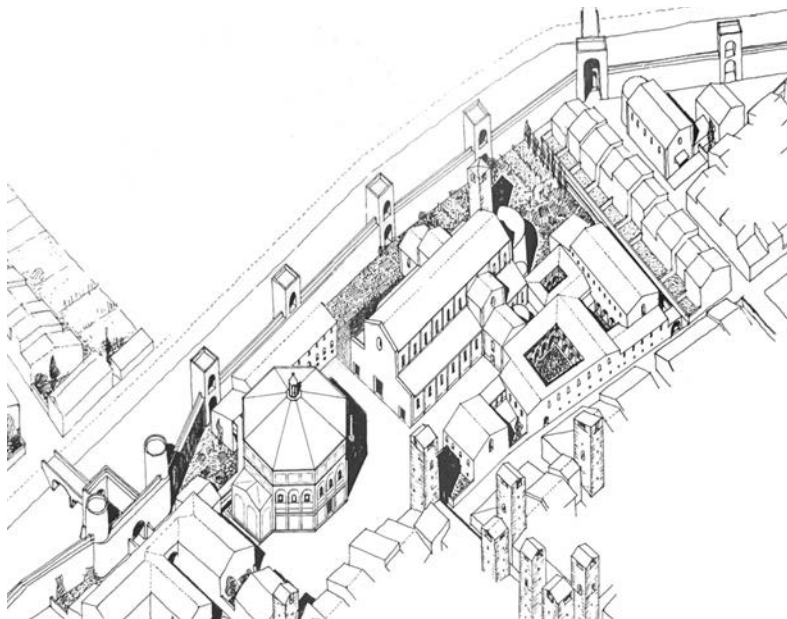
<sup>145</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 133f.

<sup>146</sup> Elke Goez/Werner Goez, *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, Hannover 1998, pp. 190–192, no. 63.

<sup>147</sup> See for example Guido Tigler, "Sguardo d'insieme sulle cattedrali romaniche toscane: i modelli architettonici", in: *idem*/Renato Stopani, *Cattedrali romaniche e circolazione della cultura architettonica in Toscana*, Florence 2016 (= *De strata francigena*, XIV [2016], I), pp. 31–52: 40.

<sup>148</sup> "Parva virum viduae debet Florentia Romae" (*L'opera poetica di S. Pier Damiani* [...]), ed. by Margarete Lokrantz, Uppsala 1964, p. 69, no. LXXXVI, "De Florentia in qua Papa Stephanus obiit, et Nicolaus Papa ex eadem processit"). Glauco Maria Cantarella, *Gregorio VII: il papa che in soli dodici anni rivoluzionò la Chiesa e il mondo occidentale*, Rome 2018, pp. 29–33, paints a vivid portrait of the enduring majesty of Rome in the eleventh century.

<sup>149</sup> Florence was one of a few cities of modern Tuscany that stayed faith-



28 Reconstruction of San Giovanni with Santa Reparata, ca. 1150

veloped a symbiotic relationship with the margravate that helped it compete with commercial rivals like Pisa and Lucca, as well as with rural aristocrats who generally sided with the emperor rather than with the margrave and the leading families that would later constitute the commune.<sup>150</sup> Further, Florentines, still living amidst the ruins of ancient Florentia, would likely have seen themselves as heirs of Roman civilization and therefore have readily accepted an architecture that emulated that of ancient Rome. The earliest histories of Florence celebrate the foundation of the city by ancient Romans;<sup>151</sup> in Dante's formulation, Florence was the "figlia di Roma".<sup>152</sup>

San Giovanni did not take form in some misty historical context. Eleventh-century Florence is a milieu well enough known to have filled hundreds of pages of Davidsohn's *magnum opus* and thousands

more of subsequent scholarship, and eleventh-century sources recording even minor Florentine churches have survived in original form or medieval copies. Within this context San Giovanni is such an anomalous and astonishing creation as to support, perhaps even to demand, the assumption that truly extraordinary people like Gregory and Matilda were involved in its construction.

Another virtue of the account outlined here is that it could explain some of the mythos around San Giovanni. With Florence fractured between Guelphs and Ghibellines, any memory that San Giovanni was born from an alliance of an insubordinate margravine with a notoriously anti-imperial pope might have threatened its status as a unifying civic symbol, even its very existence. The notion of a church built in the aftermath of Ostrogoth devas-

ful to Matilda in the 1070s. By the early 1080s, when Henry descended into Italy with his army, Florence alone stood with Matilda. See Davidsohn 1907 (note 27), I, pp. 390–400.

<sup>150</sup> Dameron (note 85), pp. 65–67.

<sup>151</sup> See Charles T. Davis, "Topographical and Historical Propaganda

in Early Florentine Chronicles and in Villani", in: *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, II (1998), pp. 33–51, according to whom "No other Italian town [...] made so much out of her Roman connections as the aggressive Tuscan metropolis of Florence" (*ibidem*, p. 33).

<sup>152</sup> Dante, *Convivio*, I, iii, 4.

tation or Villani's tale of an ancient Roman temple converted to Christian use could have originated as protective stories, putting San Giovanni outside the contests of late medieval Florentines. The success of these legends would have been helped by the clearly exceptional nature of San Giovanni, even in its scale: a reconstruction suggests how it outshone even the cathedral (Fig. 28).<sup>153</sup>

In the Seicento the veil of the temple of Mars tradition would be replaced with a new one, woven out of errors committed to print by the bumbling Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore. Dispelling those, however, would not have been sufficient to develop the new history of the baptistery offered here. For that endeavor the exceptional acuity of Walter Horn in his

1938 study<sup>154</sup> and the investigations of many tireless historians and architectural historians in the decades since have proved indispensable.

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<sup>153</sup> The figure is based on the reconstruction by Domenico Cardini published in *Il Bel San Giovanni* (note 38), p. 165, fig. 3, but has been modified according to the findings of this study.

<sup>154</sup> Horn (note 24).



**1. Unknown author, Memorie delle antichità delle monache di Santa Felicità, inserted into a zibaldone of Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore**

*Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Fondo Magliabechiano, ms. XV, 405, pp. 54–57.*

[p. 54]

Monache di Santa Felicità, vestano l'abito nero di san Benedetto del primo ordine, quale passa più di mille anni che sono in detto luogo, ànno molti privilegi da' sommi pontefici e sono in carta pegora nelle nostre scritture, e non c'è nortiza chiara della loro fondatione per essere ite male molte scritture antiche. Ebbero molte donne venerabili et in fra queste la beata Berta de illustrissima famiglia de Conte Bardi, e riformò il monastero di Caviglia e mostrò molti segni di santità et in quello morì.

Ànno devotione e protettore del loro monasterio, dal principio del convento, l'angel Raffaello, e ne ànno riceute moltissime gratie e ne ricevano di continovo, et è in grande aiuto del monasterio; e ne' secolari, et ogoni [sic] giorno recitano comunemente il salmo Celi enarranti, Sepe espugnaverant e De profundis [sic] con l'antifona et oratione di detto angelo, e da' secolari continuamente ne vengo[no] richieste di detta devotione quali dicano ricevano grazie.

Papa Niccolò consacrò la chiesa il giorno doppo che consacrò la chiesa di San Giovanni, e sono anni [left blank].

Ànno una testa del undici mila vergine coll'instrumento autentico e ne fanno l'ufizio e celebrano messe il giorno di sant'Orsola.

Ànno la testa di san Felice Martire con lo strumento autentico e ne celebrano messe e ufizzio il dì 3 di settembre.

Ànno 2 croci con legnio della Santa Croce della quale ànno aiuti particolari.

[p. 55]

In questa chiesa è sepolto il corpo del Eminentissimo Luigi de' Rossi prete e cardinale.

In su la piazza è la colonna sopra la quale è San Pier Martire posta nel 1244 in memoria della vettoria, auta contro li eretici da' catolici, ne' quali ne fu capitano uno della famiglia costituito dal prefato san Pier Martire.

Ànno l'altare privilegiato perpetuo concessoli da Papa Urbano 8.

Ànno indulgentia plenaria perpetua concesselli [sic] dal sopradetto pontefice, il giorno del titolo della chiesa, il dì primo d'agosto già de' Machabei.

Ànno un paliotto ricamato con figure de' Santi Machabei e [de' Santi Quattro] Coronati, e della Santissima Vergine nel mezzo, con moltissime perle e stima valuta di due mila scudi e non ci è notitia di quando sia fatto, e si crede fussi ricamato da chi fondò il monastero che furono 12 contesse, donne illustre, e si tiene così traditione antiche e memorie, non ci essendo scritture autentiche per essere come si è detto ite molte male.

La chiesa della Madonna della Pace era del monasterio e si concesse all'altezza l'anno [left blank] con riconizione di una cera l'anno e sopra detta chiesa è la nostra arme di Santa Felicità.

Ànno argenterie: cinque paia di vasi, 5 paia candelieri, 3 campane grande per l'altare maggiore e una piccola, 2 croce grande, bacino miscela [?] et molte altre argenterie minute.

[p. 56]

Si fece in chiesa nostra il capitolo de' Cavalieri, per ordine del Serenissimo Gran Duca Cosimo, l'anno 1619, dove si ritrovorno tutti i cavalieri e fecero l'oratione, con bellissimo apparato della chiesa, e le monache veddero il tutto e fu bellissima funtione, e per essere il Serenissimo Gran Duca Cosimo amato non poté andare a Pisa; volse si facesse in chiesa dove lui stesse nelle stanze sopra alla capella de' Capponi, non essendo possuto venire in chiesa per la malattia, conforme haveva ordinato, e rizzato la residentia.

In detto monasterio ci fu la veneranda Madre Suor Lucrezia Barbadori, zia di Papa Urbano 8, la quale, mentre che visse, ricevè lettere di detto pontefice e si conservano per memoria fra le nostre scritture; era visitata dal Alteze continuamente e da moltissimi prelati.

Fu visitata l'anno [left blank] da le nipote di detto pontefice, la Madre Suor Maria Grazia e la Madre Suor Innocenzia Barberini, quando uscirono del monasterio di Cestello e vennero in questo di Santa Maria de gli Angeli, e stettero nel nostro monasterio tutto il giorno; e la sera la Serenissima venne per loro, non sciendo di carrozza ma solo la principessa, e la accompagnorno a Santa Maria de gli Angeli.

La Madre Sor Lucrezia sopradetta morse l'anno 1631 a dì 6 di febbraio, con havere hauto la benedizione papale e participato di indulgentie pienissima [sic]; si fece il funerale il dì 8 di detto mese, fu parata la chiesa tutta di fascie [?] nere, arme de' Barbadori e Barberini con motti, e fu messa sopra grande cata-

falco con libbre [?] 1300 di cera; intervenne il clero e' canonici di Santa Maria del Fiore e cantò la messa Monsignor Nunzio, e si celebrò in detta mattina 1000 messe per diverse chiese non potendosi dire tutte in chiesa nostra detta mattina; e la spesa la fece i Barberini, e furno scudi seicento.

[p. 57]

L'anno 1638 l'Illustrissimo Monsignor Orazio Capponi, vescovo di Carpentras, lasciò al nostro monasterio che ogni anno dessimo una dote a nostro beneplacito a una fanciula che sia nata nel nostro popolo e stata in detto popolo fino che ha d'accomodarsi, e che si dispensi lire quattro a' poveri quali dispensa il signore la mattina che si celebra la messa cantata con messa 30, dove si ritrovano la Compagnia del Tempio e detti Signori si dà la polizza della fanciula che deve avere la dote, la quale non può ricevere fino che non è accomodata o maritata o monachata, e la somma del danaro è al presente scudi 8 in circa, e quando fece il lascio erano scudi [?] 30 e le limosine erano lire 12, ma per la diminuzione de' monti è ridotta a detta somma, e si dia ogni anno fatto la Nunziata quando si fa l'ufizzio e che detti Signori ordinarono.

[in a different hand:]

L'anno 1272 una delle monache di Santa Felicità fu fatta abbadessa del monastero di *San Piero Maggiore*, come si cava da un breve di Gregorio X del medesimo anno, che le monache hanno appresso di loro, e fu l'anno secondo del suo pontificato sotto dì 27 di giugno.

Martino Papa IV conferma al monastero di Santa Felicità tutti i privilegi e lo piglia in protezione, come apparisce per dua sua brevi dati in Viterbo a dì 24 maggio l'anno 1283 e secondo del suo pontificato, esistenti fra le scritture del detto monastero.

L'anno 1381 le monache a loro spese fecero erigere la colonna della loro piazza e vi spesero fiorini 12 essendo abbatessa suor Piera Ridolfi come è notato al libro detto *Memoriale* del medesimo monasterio.

## 2. Carlo Strozzi, *History of San Giovanni*

Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 233, fol. 418r–431r (selections).

[fol. 418r]

Di tutte l'antiche e magnifiche fabbriche che già furono nella città di Firenze solo resta in piedi il tempio dello dio Marte preservato sino a questi tempi dalla religione poichè dopo che questa città, lasciato la vana e superstiziosa fede de' gentili, alla vera venne di Christo fu dedicato al precursore suo san Giovanni Batista. Fu questo tempio secondo l'opinione d'alcuni fon-

dato da' coloni romani, secondo altri da Augusto; né dell'uno né dell'altro però ci è certezza, ma chiaro è che fabbrica è antica romana, e disegno, vogliono molti, dello stesso architetto del Pantheon di Roma per la similitudine che in molte cose è fra di loro; fu già scoperto nel mezzo come quello, ma l'anno 1150 li fu fatto di marmo la lanterna e nello stesso tempo come vuole Monsignor Borghini e altri, li fu mutato l'entrata, la quale già era conforme l'uso de' tempi posta a ponente e l'altare ad oriente, e scambievolmente fu messo l'uno nel luogo dell'altra e così il vestibulo, che veniva su la strada che andava a porta di Duomo, fu serrato facendovi l'altare principale e l'entrata all'opposito fu fatta, dirimpetto a Santa Reparata. Ebbero opinione gl'antichi che egli fusse fondato in così buon punto e sotto tale ascendente che egli fusse per stare in piedi quanto il mondo durasse. Credano ogni uno di questo, quello li piace. Questo loro pensiero fu espresso nel pavimento intarsiato di varij marmi, ancor egli fatto per quanto si può giudicare nel 1150 [...].

[fol. 429v]

Fu ne' tempi più antichi (come si è detto quando si è parlato della chiesa di Santa Maria del Fiore) questa chiesa il titolo del Vescovado di Firenze, chiamandosi i più antichi vescovi de' quali si trova memoria, senza nominare la città di Firenze, semplicemente vescovi di San Giovanni. Per molto tempo si costumò che tanto in questa chiesa quanto in quella di Santa Reparata i nuovi vescovi nella loro prima venuta fussero intronizzati e in questa dicevano la prima loro messa; fu ancora il duomo, ma ritiratisi circa l'anno 1050 (per le cause che si sono dette altrove) i canonici ad officiare in Santa Reparata, e trasportate le fonti baptismali da quella in questa chiesa si acquistò nome di pieve ancorché per molti anni ritenesse ancora quello di duomo e così l'anno 1343 e 1345 viene nominata da Giovanni Villani nelle sue Storie. Le fonti baptismali levate di Santa Reparata e poste in questa rimasero nel principio a cura del proposto de' canonici, di poi data ne fu la cura all'arciprete, dal quale l'anno 1466 per procaccio di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici fu ceduto il jus delle dette fonti a' consoli di Calimala o Mercatanti, per la cura delle quali eressero una nuova dignità con titolo di proposto o primicerio.

## 3. Carlo Strozzi, *Draft History of San Giovanni*

Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte strozziane, serie terza, 250, fol. 104r.

Fu ne' primi tempi la chiesa di San Giovanni Battista il titolo del vescovado di Firenze chiamandosi i più antichi vescovi de' quali si trova memoria vescovi di San Giovanni senza nominare la città, e di qui forse nasceva che ne' tempi fin'adesso i vescovi fiorentini nella loro prima entrata erano intronizzati in San Giovanni come in Santa Reparata e quivi dicevano la loro

prima messa. Fu ancora il duomo, e quelli hoggi canonici si chiamano di Santa Maria del Fiore di San Giovanni si dissono sino all'anno 1085 e sotto nome di San Giovanni hanno i più antichi privilegi e beni, ma essendo solito in quei tempi andarsi agli officij divini quasi per tutti del duomo, et essendo la città di Firenze tanto cresciuta di numero d'anime, che di tante non era quella chiesa capace, né volendo per accrescerla guastare così bella fabbrica, si trasferirno i canonici a offziare in Santa Reparata quivi vicina che all'ora haveva titolo di pieve, levando di quella all'incontro le fonte battesimali e ponendole in San Giovanni, chiamandosi di poi canonici di Santa Reparata e di San Giovanni, lasciando fra poco tempo quest'ultimo, poichè l'anno 1096 si domandono solo di Santa Reparata, e così la chiesa di San Giovanni che già fu il duomo restò pieve in forma d'oratorio, restando la cura del battesimo all'arciprete fiorentino, et il governo de' beni dell'Opera e la cura della fabbrica fu data a' consoli dell'Arte de' Mercatanti, a' quali l'anno 1466 per procaccio di Piero di Cosimo de' Medici fu ceduto ancora dall'arciprete il jus delle fonti battesimali erigendo eglino la dignità d'un proposto o primicerio per la cura e della chiesa e di quello [...].

## Abstract

Since the late eighteenth century, studies of the baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence have built their chronologies around one or both of two well-known reference points: a consecration by Pope Nicholas II in 1059 and the transfer of the baptismal font from Santa Reparata to San Giovanni in 1128. Both originate in a 1684 history of Florence by Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore. A close examination of manuscript sources reveals both to be spurious. Freed of these constraints, we find multiple lines of evidence to support dating the origin of the project to the 1070s and the completion of its most important elements by the 1090s. Consequently, it is possible to propose a new perspective on the development of early Romanesque architecture in Florence. Santi Apostoli, San Giovanni, and San Miniato, likely all works of the same architect, seem to represent not an organic development but an extrinsic current introduced into a visual culture for which the antique had been only one of many formal sources. The similarity in plan between San Miniato and the Roman church of Santa Maria in Portico consecrated by Pope Gregory VII and the extraordinary reference San Giovanni makes to the Pantheon, then reserved for papal masses, are among the pieces of evidence adduced for the involvement of Roman church reformers in Florentine architecture. The article furthermore explores the support of the Tuscan margravine and the role of Bishop Ranieri in the conception and realization of the baptistery.

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