

MITTEILUNGEN
DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN
INSTITUTES
IN FLORENZ



LXV. BAND — 2023
HEFT 2/3



LXV. BAND — 2023

HEFT 2/3

MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ

Inhalt | Contenuto

Redaktionskomitee | Comitato di redazione
Alessandro Nova, Gerhard Wolf, Samuel Vitali

Redakteur | Redattore
Samuel Vitali

Redaktionsassistent, Editing und Herstellung |
Assistenza di redazione, editing e impaginazione
Ortensia Martinez Fucini, Giada Policicchio

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz
Max-Planck-Institut
Via G. Giusti 44, I-50121 Firenze
Tel. 055.2491147, Fax 055.2491155
s.vitali@khi.fi.it – martinez@khi.fi.it
www.khi.fi.it/publikationen/mitteilungen

Graphik | Progetto grafico
RovaiWeber design, Firenze

Produktion | Produzione
Centro Di edizioni, Firenze

Die *Mitteilungen* erscheinen jährlich in drei Heften und können im Abonnement oder in Einzelheften bezogen werden durch | Le *Mitteilungen* escono con cadenza quadrimestrale e possono essere ordinate in abbonamento o singolarmente presso:
Centro Di edizioni, Via dei Renai 20r
I-50125 Firenze, Tel. 055.2342666,
edizioni@centrodi.it; www.centrodi.it.

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

Die Mitglieder des Vereins zur Förderung des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz (Max-Planck-Institut) e. V. erhalten die Zeitschrift kostenlos. I membri del Verein zur Förderung des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz (Max-Planck-Institut) e. V. ricevono la rivista gratuitamente.

Adresse des Vereins | Indirizzo del Verein:
c/o Schuhmann Rechtsanwälte
Ludwigstraße 8
D-80539 München
foerderverein@khi.fi.it; www.khi.fi.it/foerderverein

Die alten Jahrgänge der *Mitteilungen* sind für Subskribenten online abrufbar über JSTOR (www.jstor.org).
Le precedenti annate delle *Mitteilungen* sono accessibili online su JSTOR (www.jstor.org) per gli abbonati al servizio.

_ Aufsätze _ Saggi

_ 139 _ *Alison Wright*
Compelling radiance: Fra Angelico's Shine

_ 173 _ *Jack Wasserman*
Brunelleschi and Michelozzo: The Chapel of Cosmas and Damian and the Old Sacristy in the Church of San Lorenzo, Florence

_ 203 _ *Maddalena Spagnolo*
L'abside della discordia: Parmigianino, Giulio Romano e Anselmi alla Steccata

_ 235 _ *Lunarita Sterpetti*
Ottaviano de' Medici e la sua collezione: arte e politica tra repubblica e ducato

_ 271 _ *Francesco Saracino*
Cristo fonte di vita. Un'invenzione 'spirituale' di Baccio Bandinelli

_ 295 _ *Rafael Japón, Silvio Balloni*
I Ginori in Spagna e Portogallo tra XVII e XVIII secolo: commercio globale, diplomazia artistica e collezionismo tra Italia e Penisola Iberica

_ Miszellen _ Appunti

_ 321 _ *Marco Scansani*
Una conferma per Pietro Lombardo a Bologna

_ 331 _ *Christa Gardner von Teuffel*
Botticelli, Ugolino di Nerio and a Sassetti Memorial Portrait: A New Proposal

_ Nachrufe _ Necrologi

_ 341 _ *Peter Tigler*
Wolfgang Wolters



1 Florence, San Lorenzo, southern transept wall

BRUNELLESCHI AND MICHELOZZO

THE CHAPEL OF COSMAS AND DAMIAN AND THE OLD SACRISTY IN THE CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO, FLORENCE

Jack Wasserman

To no avail do we seek dedicated studies of the two-bay Chapel of Cosmas and Damian in the southwest corner of the church of San Lorenzo in Florence (Figs. 1, 2).¹ The chapel is mentioned on occasion, to be sure, but chiefly to point out that its elevation is an archetype for the elevation of the transept, even of the entire church.² However, as built after a design by Filippo Brunelleschi and with the financial sponsorship of Giovanni de' Medici, we might expect the chapel to be more closely scrutinized. If the chapel has not inspired such scholarship, it is perhaps because its architecture, in its original form, is simple and austere compared to the splendid architecture of its direct neighbor, the Old Sacristy. Furthermore, the chapel's

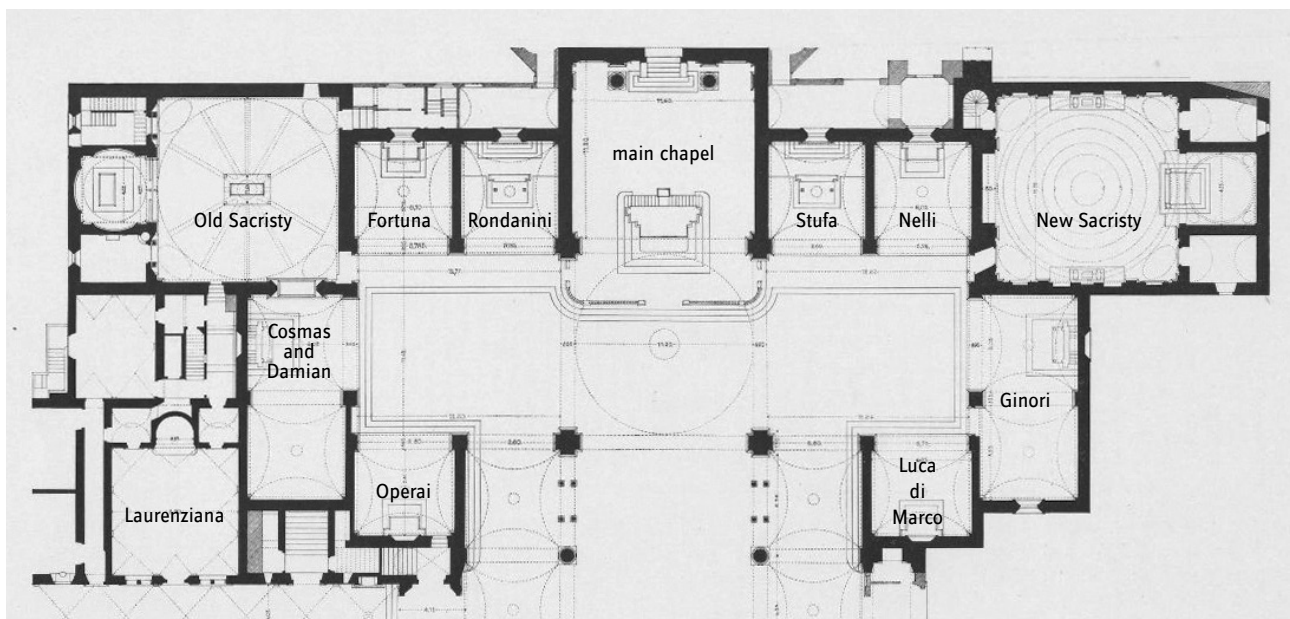
two-bay ground plan is echoed in the Ginori Chapel, on the opposite end of the transept crossing (Fig. 2), and its elevation (Figs. 3, 4) is duplicated in the other chapels on the periphery of the transept. So, the thinking may go, why investigate the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian for its own sake? The present study demonstrates its importance, with an examination of its complicated chronology, construction, authorship, and patronage, as well as of the high status it attained in the transept as its construction advanced.

The Old Sacristy, on the other hand, remains to this day the focus of intense inquiry, because of its creative architecture and the formidable problems it generates. However, notwithstanding the amount of scholarship

¹ The primary documents on San Lorenzo and the Florentine cathedral mentioned in this study were published by Pier Nolasco Cianfogni, *Memorie istoriche dell'Ambrosiana R. Basilica di S. Lorenzo di Firenze* [...], ed. by Domenico Moreni, Florence ²2005 (¹1804); Domenico Moreni, *Continuazione delle memorie istoriche dell'Ambrosiana Imperial Basilica di S. Lorenzo di Firenze* [...],

Florence ²2007 (¹1816/17); Howard Saalman, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore*, London 1980.

² For example Matthew A. Cohen, *Beyond Beauty: Reexamining Architectural Proportions through the Basilicas of San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito in Florence*, Venice 2013, pp. 109–111.



2 Plan of the transept of San Lorenzo, Florence (after Stegmann/Geymüller), with patrons of the chapels in the late 1430s

that has been dedicated to this structure, two questions remain outstanding. One of these was actually inquired into, but fleetingly: the awkward placement of the entrance in a corner inside the sacristy, thereby cutting away the lower part of the folded angular pilaster (Fig. 5).³ The second question has escaped inquiry altogether. It concerns the portal at the entrance to the sacristy (Fig. 1). No one has taken the trouble to investigate its authorship, nor when it was built, nor how it came to have a form for which there are no antecedents – a tympanum decorated with a scallop shell and set on pilasters that flank the entrance. With this distinct form, the portal impinges upon the iconography of the sacristy; and when it is duplicated at the entrance to the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, it lifts the chapel into

prominence; and when it is replicated on the opposite end of the transept, the lateral elevations, as Filippo Brunelleschi had probably designed them, are altered significantly. The several hypotheses introduced in this introduction will be verified with the aid of published documents, with passages from Antonio Manetti's biography of Brunelleschi of the 1480s,⁴ judiciously evaluated, and with close examination of segments of the Old Sacristy, the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, and other parts of the transept.⁵ As Sherlock Holmes might say, small details render fundamental deductions.

The Chapel of Cosmas and Damian

The Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, dedicated to the Medici's patron saints, is a component of a build-

³ Riccardo Pacciani, *Problemi brunelleschiani: Sagrestia Vecchia e San Lorenzo*, Rome 1977, n. p.

⁴ Antonio di Tuccio Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, ed. by Howard Saalman, University Park/London 1970, pp. 104–108.

⁵ This study was stimulated by Marvin Trachtenberg, "Some Issues of Materiality and Facture in San Lorenzo, Brunelleschi, and Early Renaissance Architecture", in: *San Lorenzo: A Florentine Church*, ed. by Robert W. Gaston/Louis A. Waldman, Florence 2017, pp. 293–319.



3 Florence,
San Lorenzo, Chapel
of Cosmas and Damian,
view towards west

ing that was attached to the western end of the medieval church of San Lorenzo in the fifteenth century.⁶ The procedure of joining them began, for all practical purposes, in 1418. In December of that year, the Signoria, the governing body of Florence, approved a petition submitted by the prior of the church, Matteo Dolfini, that requested permission to enlarge the old church and, to this end, tear down several private

houses behind the apse.⁷ The petition specified that the new building would include a sacristy, chapels arranged in a line with the sacristy, and other suitable (“opportuni”) parts, presumably a transept and additional chapels. It further specified that the building would measure longitudinally 65 braccia (38.779 m) and latitudinally 110 braccia (65.626 m). Three years later, on 10 August 1421, a groundbreaking ceremony

⁶ See Riccardo Pacciani, “Testimonianze per l’edificazione della basilica di San Lorenzo a Firenze, 1421–1442”, in: *Prospettiva*, 75/76 (1994/1995), pp. 85–99. For a view of the medieval church and the new building in the process of construction, see Marvin Trachtenberg, “Building and Writing

S. Lorenzo in Florence: Architect, Biographer, and Prior”, in: *The Art Bulletin*, XCVII (2015), pp. 140–172: 143, Fig. 4. For an analysis of the proportions employed in constructing the church, see Cohen (note 2), pp. 109–111.

⁷ See Cianfogni (note 1), p. 228, doc. XXV, for the Latin text of the

4 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Chapel of Cosmas
and Damian, view
towards east



5 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Old Sacristy, eastern wall

took place behind the bell tower of the old church, for which Brunelleschi probably supplied a ground plan.⁸ He began to construct the transept with the Old Sacristy, which was also to serve as Giovanni de' Medici's burial chamber, soon after 1 October 1422, when the first of the intrusive private houses was torn down.⁹

The Chapel of Cosmas and Damian was built as a companion to the Old Sacristy, but not concur-

rently, as historians believe.¹⁰ Their constructions meshed somewhat later. Manetti supplies the details. He writes that Giovanni planned to build a "sagrestia bella e grande e ornata e [...] una capella", which is normally thought to be the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian.¹¹ He does not name the chapel, nor offer a starting date for its construction in this passage. Yet in a subsequent passage, he states that "la sagrestia si

petition. For an English translation see Eugenio Battisti, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Complete Work*, London 1981, p. 367, note 8.

⁸ A date of late 1421 or early 1422 for Brunelleschi's plan was advanced by Pietro Ruschi, "Una collaborazione interrotta: Brunelleschi e Donatello nella Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo", in: *Donatello-Studien*, ed. by

Monika Cämmerer, Munich 1989, pp. 68–87: 68. Trachtenberg (note 6), p. 161, associates Brunelleschi's plan with the 1418 petition, citing Volker Herzner, "Zur Baugeschichte von San Lorenzo in Florenz", in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, XXXVII (1974), pp. 89–115: 108.

⁹ For documents, see Pacciani (note 6), pp. 94f., docs. 3–15.



tiro innanzi auanti a ogni altra cosa”;¹² we can deduce from this that the chapel was begun when work on the sacristy was already in progress.

The construction of the chapel, briefly summarized (the hypotheses introduced in this summary will be substantiated later in this study), took place in two consecutive stages, not as a single uninterrupted operation. Brunelleschi initiated the first stage

with the plan for a two-bay chapel with only one entrance.¹³ He began to construct the chapel with the wall it shares with the Old Sacristy, as it was already rising (Figs. 3, 5). From scratch, he built the two exterior masonry walls (Figs. 7, 8); the southern wall, at which the altar was to be placed, was pierced by a window, which is no longer to be seen (Fig. 17). On the transept side of the chapel, Brunelleschi began

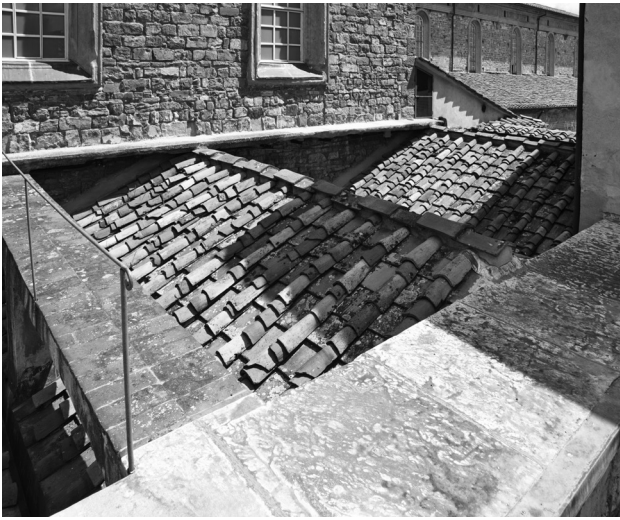
¹⁰ For example Piero Roselli/Orietta Superchi, *L'edificazione della Basilica di San Lorenzo*, Florence 1980, p. 18, and Pacciani (note 6), p. 91.

¹¹ Manetti (note 4), p. 105.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 107.

¹³ Brunelleschi's design of a double-bay chapel with a single entrance

was anticipated by chapels in the church of Santa Croce, Florence, as has been pointed out by Marvin Trachtenberg, “On Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy as Model for Early Renaissance Church Architecture”, in: *L'église dans l'architecture de la Renaissance*, ed. by Jean Guillaume, Paris 1995, pp. 9–39: 12f.



6 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Chapel of Cosmas and
Damian, view of the
pitched roofs

to build a brick wall articulated with a pilaster on the left and a pier on the right, at the entrance to the chapel (Fig. 1). The brick wall, the articulating pilaster, and the pier had reached a little more than half the height of the present wooden door when stage one in the construction of the chapel ended – as did Brunelleschi's role as *capomaestro* of the enterprise and Giovanni de' Medici's role as its sponsor.

The second stage in the construction of the chapel was initiated in 1428 by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo, under the auspices of Cosimo de' Medici. Michelozzo set the construction in motion with the demolition

of the partially built brick wall. He replaced it with an entrance to the chapel's second bay (closed centuries later by the present false wooden door) and recast the pilaster and pier into components of the portal crowned by a scallop shell. This work done, the pier, the pilaster, and a new wall rose, with the corresponding wall of the sacristy, to the base line of the entrance arch. Then the walls advanced upward to the base line of the clearstory (built in the 1440s and 1450s), were punctured with two niches,¹⁴ and were bundled with the broad arch over the entrance, the vaults of the chapel, and the pendentives of the sacristy.

The finishing touches followed: the entrance arch was garnished with an elaborate molding;¹⁵ at the base line of the arch, the wall was highlighted with a cornice and an architrave to form an entablature (a second entablature was formed when the clearstory was built in the 1440s or so); and the interior of the chapel was fitted with a pilaster and the edges of pilasters in the corners. Of the three windows in the southern wall of the Old Sacristy (Fig. 5), two would open partly or entirely onto the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian. However, it is unlikely that Brunelleschi wanted them to be visible from the chapel, as they would have interfered with the entablature (Fig. 3), and indeed later, probably during the second stage in the construction of the chapel, they were covered with plaster on the chapel side.¹⁶

Finally, the double-bay chapel received two pitched tile roofs (Fig. 6),¹⁷ their open ends sealed with masonry blocks on the church side and, on the

¹⁴ Howard Saalman, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Buildings*, London 1993, p. 175, also attributes the two niches to Michelozzo, considering them "almost a Michelozzo trademark". However, he dates the niches in the 1440s and 1450s, like the niches in the comparable wall on the opposite side of the transept. Saalman (p. 175, note 173) also claims that Michelozzo may have intended to fill the niches with plaster saints as "probably part of the carefully orchestrated iconographic 'tomb environment' made possible by Cosimo's acquisition of patronage rights over the transept in 1442". This is not credible, because in my investigation it turns out that, in the fifteenth century, niches that included statuary in-

variably included scallop shells in the curves behind the heads of figures; however, such scallop shells are absent from the San Lorenzo niches.

¹⁵ The garland accords with Brunelleschi's garland above the entrance arch of the *scarsella*, and both are different from the garlands on post-1442 arches above the entrances to the other chapels in the transept, according to Gabriele Morolli, "L'ordine brunelleschiano: morfologia e proporzioni", in *San Lorenzo 393–1993: l'architettura. Le vicende della fabbrica*, exh. cat., ed. by Gabriele Morolli/Pietro Ruschi, Florence 1993, pp. 81–94: 88 and 91.

¹⁶ The wall between the Old Sacristy and the Fortuna Chapel also had three windows, two of which were covered on the chapel side by the

other sides, with an attic composed of layers of bricks that are set slightly back to form a shallow ledge (Figs. 7, 8). A painted terracotta frieze was arranged along the brick wall and set on the ledge, whose reliefs, however, are partly lost. They represent a succession of paired cherubs facing a gridiron, the instrument of the martyrdom of San Lorenzo. The attic and the frieze course together through an opening in the wall of the sixteenth-century Laurentian Library (indicated with an arrow on upper right in Figure 7) to the eastern wall of the chapel (Fig. 8). In the opposite di-

rection, they continue along the eastern and southern walls of the Old Sacristy, and no further.¹⁸

Despite the intimate physical relationship between the attic and the frieze, they have, in fact, different chronologies. The attic was placed on top of the chapel at the conclusion of its construction in 1428/29. The terracotta frieze was inserted into the attic in the 1440s or 1450s, with the resumption of the transept's construction. The key to this dating is the heads of the cherubs, which derive, particularly in the handling of the cheeks, from the qualitatively superior heads of



7 Florence, San Lorenzo, Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, exterior view from south

corresponding entablature. See the windowless wall of the Fortuna Chapel in Pacciani (note 6), pl. 92, Fig. 5.

¹⁷ For the structure of the tile roofs, see Riccardo Pacciani, "Investigation of the Chapel Roofs", in: Battisti (note 7), pp. 195f.

¹⁸ Historians believe that the frieze was intended to unite the sacristy and the chapel or the entire church. See Gabriele Morolli, "Le fasi del San Lorenzo", in: *idem*/Franco Borsi/Francesco Quinterio, *Brunelleschiani: Francesco della Luna, Andrea di Lazzaro Cavalcanti detto il Buggiano, Antonio Manetti Ciaccheri, Giovanni di Domenico da Gaiole, Betto d'Antonio, Antonio di Betto, Giovanni di Piero del Ticcia, Cecchino di Giaggio, Salvi d'Andrea, Maso di Bartolomeo*, Rome

1979, pp. 77–149: 103; Battisti (note 7), p. 82, legend to Fig. 63; Carlo Sisi, "Due interventi di restauro sulle decorazioni di terracotta della Sagrestia Vecchia", in: *Donatello e la Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo: temi, studi e proposte di un cantiere di restauro*, exh. cat., ed. by Cristina Dante/Isabella Lapi Ballerini, Florence 1986, pp. 86–90: 86. That the attic with the frieze does not continue beyond the southern wall of the sacristy is perhaps due to a temporary interruption of work on the entire transept in 1429. A new attic was built on the western wall entirely with bricks (illustrated in Pacciani [note 6], p. 93, Fig. 9), probably when Cosimo resumed construction of the transept in 1442. This attic advances to seal the ends of the pitched



8 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Chapel of Cosmas and Damian,
exterior view from east

the cherubs and seraphim of the frieze in the interior of the sacristy (Fig. 5). This frieze probably dates to the late 1430s.¹⁹ Because of this chronological discrepancy we must assume that a terracotta frieze, perhaps with the same subject matter, was programmed for the attic already in 1428/29.

When completely built, the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian and the Old Sacristy stood on a raised platform, reached with provisional wooden steps that ascended from the bare earth below. A windowless two-story structure was added to the eastern end of

the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian in the late fifteenth century. It is seen included in a schematic sixteenth-century plan showing the southern half of the church (Fig. 9). The structure measures in plan approximately six by two meters, rises to just below the circular window of the chapel (Fig. 8), and extends forward to a common plane with the wall of the Chapel of the Operai. The new structure was probably accessed through a door inside the chapel that is now blocked by a huge eighteenth-century altar (Fig. 4). The second story did not have an indepen-

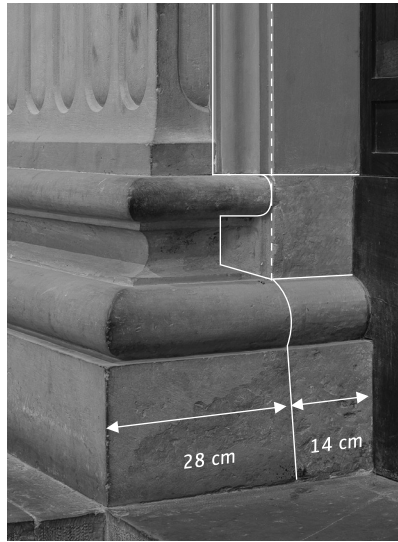
tile roofs of four chapels, two on either side of the apse, that were built in the 1440s. In the 1480s, when the present nave replaced the old church, the brick attic encircled the entire building and ended on the wall of the Chapel of the Operai, where it meets the original attic with the terracotta frieze on the adjacent wall of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian (Fig. 7).

¹⁹ A cherub from the chapel frieze and a cherub from the sacristy frieze

are illustrated in Pacciani (note 6), p. 90, Fig. 11, and p. 88, Fig. 4. For the dating of the sacristy frieze and its attribution to Luca della Robbia, see Pietro Ruschi, "La Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo", in: *La Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo: il restauro delle tarsie lignee del Quattrocento. Presentazione del restauro*, exh. cat., ed. by Vania Rossi, Florence 1998, pp. 4–19: 13f. Saalman (note 14), p. 189, dates the frieze before 1428.



10 Florence, San Lorenzo,
southern transept, base of the
wall pilaster at the entrance to
the Operai Chapel (left side)



11 Florence, San Lorenzo,
southern transept, base of the wall
pilaster base at the entrance to
the Operai Chapel (right side)



12 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Ginori Chapel, detail
of the pier to the right
of the portal

long before it became fashionable to produce such plans.²² Nevertheless, the prior existence of the wall can be demonstrated by observing the base of its articulating pilaster (Fig. 10). On the left side, the base measures 28 cm from the edge to the wall. On the right side, it had the same dimension before it was lengthened an additional 14 cm, for a total of 42 cm (Fig. 11), obviously in conjunction with the removal of the wall for the entrance. The lengthened base continues behind the wooden door along a short corridor into the chapel, where its extremity was removed at a later date.

The Ginori Chapel, which was erected as a twin of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, offers additional proof for this reconstruction (Fig. 2). Here, too, a partially built wall was demolished, as is shown

by the rough area on the pier to which it has been attached, to a height of about 1,5 m (Fig. 12).²³ In this case, however, the entrance that replaced the wall remained in function, and we can surmise that the corresponding one to the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian was comparable in structure.

A second hypothesis, of importance for what will come later in this study, is that the pier and pilaster were recast into members of a portal during the second stage in the chapel's construction. This reshaping was interrelated with the construction of an identical portal at the existing entrance to the Old Sacristy.

The sacristy portal, first. Its construction was a continuous operation from start to finish. It opens between two pilasters built with blocks of stone that

²² Historians generally believe that a full-size wall still exists behind the false door and that it was part of Brunelleschi's design of the chapel. See for example Trachtenberg (note 13), pp. 12f.

²³ As an aside, the capital of the pilaster that marks the entrance to the chapel is a lion's head, which is featured in the coat of arms on the vault of the Luca di Marco chapel.



13 Florence,
San Lorenzo, southern
transept, portal to
the Old Sacristy with
indication of the joints
between the blocks

14 Florence,
San Lorenzo, southern
transept, detail of the
pilaster to the left
of the portal to the
Old Sacristy

are 2.5 cm wider than the pilasters' native 85.5 cm (Fig. 13). The 2.5-cm portions of the blocks are flat on the inner side and moulded on the outer side, to create the impression that they are independent strips that rise from the base and partially overlap the sides of the pilaster shafts (Fig. 14). And as the strips rise, their flat sides become, with the lintel of the tympanum, a surround for the door, and the molded sides become an uninterrupted surround for the door and for both the lintel and the tympanum.

The portal of the chapel, on the other hand, shows a change in the way it was assembled (Fig. 15). In its lower part, two independent strips of stone (the lower strips are later replacements), which are identical to the integrated strips of stone blocks of the sac-

risty portal, were aligned along the inner sides of the partially assembled pilaster and pier. As construction progressed, stone blocks widened with 2.5 cm strips, identical with those of the sacristy portal, were placed directly onto pilaster and pier. The two independent stone strips line up with integrated strips to create a surround for the door and the tympanum, identical to that of the sacristy portal.

The corresponding portal of the Ginori Chapel features the same structural change (Fig. 16). The pier, together with the original wall attached to it, rose to the height of the second horizontal red line in Figure 16. Then, after the removal of the wall, a stone strip was aligned along the pier's inner side and the upper part of the pier was equally built with blocks of



15 Florence, San Lorenzo, southern transept, portal to the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian with indication of the joints between the blocks



16 Florence, San Lorenzo, northern transept, portal to the Ginori Chapel with indication of the joints between the blocks.



17 Florence, San Lorenzo, southern transept with Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, reconstruction of its appearance as planned by Brunelleschi

stone widened with 2.5 cm strips. The pilaster, on the other side, had reached a greater height than the pier when the partial wall was torn down; therefore, three stone strips of varying length were placed along the entire inner side of the pilaster. The different material evidence of the three portals allows the deduction that the sacristy portal was begun first and formed the model for the two chapel entrances, which were adapted to it only in a second stage, after the removal of the brick walls.

The former existence of a window in the wall above the altar informs the third hypothesis (Fig. 17). The window is now blocked on both sides: by a late seventeenth-century altarpiece in the interior of the chapel (Fig. 1) and by an early-nineteenth-century building on the exterior (Fig. 7). Nevertheless, its former presence is upheld with these considerations: all the chapels at the perimeter of the transept have identical windows above the altars,²⁴ and the remains of a window of the Ginori Chapel, though suppressed on

²⁴ The windows in the Fortuna and the Rondanini Chapels (the latter a modern replacement) are illustrated in Pacciani (note 6), p. 86, Fig. 2.

Illustrations of the Stufa and Nelli Chapels, on the contrary, are regrettably not available.

the inside the chapel, survives, enclosed with stone, on its exterior side (Fig. 18), in a location that is comparable to the window in the Medici Chapel.

The Chapel of Cosmas and Damian is today a far cry from its condition when completed in 1429. In 1612, a painting by Bernardino Poccetti representing Saint Ambrose, founder of the church in 393, and an unidentified saint was placed on the wall above the second entrance (Fig. 1).²⁵ In the interior of the chapel, the simplicity and introspection Brunelleschi had fashioned was eclipsed by an ostentatious accumulation of furnishings (Figs. 3, 4): in the first bay with Verrocchio's richly ornamented Medici tomb monument (1472) and an elaborately framed altarpiece by Francesco Conti above a rebuilt altar (1714),²⁶ in the second bay with a huge reliquary altar and two reliquary cabinets set into the lateral walls (1779–1780).²⁷ The floor, which no doubt was originally paved with orange-toned tiles, like the floors in the other chapels of the transept, was repaved in the nineteenth century with the present, visually intrusive black and white tiles.²⁸ There were other losses. A round window in the southern wall of the second bay was covered with plaster. Moreover, the second entrance to the chapel was blocked at the inside by an extension of the left wall into which one of the reliquary cabinets had been inserted (Fig. 4) and at the outside with the false wooden door, whose

purpose was to hide the rear of the extended wall and the remains of the entrance corridor. The forms of the false door were replicated in the functional doors at the second entrance to the Ginori Chapel (Fig. 16) and at the entrance to the Ginori corridor discussed below (Fig. 25).

The final hypothesis is that Michelozzo was the architect of the second stage in the construction of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, and that Cosimo was its sponsor. Favoring this hypothesis, at least to the extent that the architect was other than Brunelleschi, are the consoles in the second bay of the chapel. They are tightly stylized and differ notably from Brunelleschi's ample and organically carved consoles in the interior of the Old Sacristy.²⁹ Additional evidence for the hypothesis points directly to Michelozzo and to Cosimo: the scallop shells on the tympanums of the chapel and sacristy portals (Figs. 13, 15). Like real scallop shells, they curve inward and outward to upturned ends flanked by lateral appendages.³⁰ But unlike in actual shells, the ribs on the surfaces of the tympanum shells are configured into undulating flower petals that spread out gracefully and fan-like from the upturned ends. This stylized form of scallop shells appeared for the first time on Roman sarcophagi (Fig. 26). It was introduced into Florentine art by Lorenzo Ghiberti in his relief *Christ among the Doctors* on

²⁵ At the same time, a companion piece, also by Poccetti and representing Cosmas and Damian, was installed above the entrance to the sacristy.

²⁶ The altarpiece represents *Saints Lawrence, Ambrose, and Zanobius Adoring the Holy Family* (see Moreni [note 1], I, pp. 132f.). The *Holy Family* is a small medieval painting that was transferred from the Ginori Chapel in 1677 and framed by Conti's altarpiece with the renewal of the altar in 1714 (*ibidem*). The existence of a door in the wall behind the altar and under the altarpiece (an illustration is not available in print) has not previously been recognized. It may have been introduced in 1475, when an exit from the chapel is documented as being built. The document is published by Andrew Butterfield/Caroline Elam, "Desiderio da Settignano's Tabernacle of the Sacrament", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XLIII (1999), pp. 333–357: 354, doc. I, fol. 50r: "a di 30 [October] al manovale che aiutò a Domenicho Chalvegli murare l'uscio della cappella

del corpo di Christo". The authors of the article do not mention the door behind the altar.

²⁷ See Maria Siponta De Salvia, "Gli arredi sacri", in: *San Lorenzo: la basilica, le sagrestie, le cappelle, la biblioteca*, ed. by Umberto Baldini/Bruno Nardini, Florence 1984, pp. 321–325, for a discussion of the altar and the cabinets. The doors of the cabinets and of the altar open to reveal the many relics the Medici had donated to the church (illustrated *ibidem*, p. 321).

²⁸ Pietro Ruschi supplied me with this information.

²⁹ The two consoles are reproduced graphically by Gabriele Aroni, *Gli ordini architettonici di San Lorenzo a Firenze, 1420–1490: analisi morfologica e proporzionale tramite fotoraddrizzamento*, Milan/Udine 2016, p. 51.

³⁰ For an illustration of a scallop shell, see Maria Bratschkova, "Die Muschel in der antiken Kunst", in: *Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Bulgare*, XII (1938), pp. 1–131: 15, Fig. 7.



18 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Ginori Chapel, exterior
view from north

the northern bronze doors of the baptistery begun in 1403 and, more prominently, on the tabernacle that houses his bronze statue of *Saint Matthew*, whose execution began in 1419.³¹ It was subsequently employed in all media throughout the Quattrocento. Not by Brunelleschi, however. He was surely familiar with the classical type of scallop shell, but he was not faithful to it in the two buildings in which he is certain to have employed the motive, in some form:

the Barbadori Chapel in Santa Felicita and the loggia of the Ospedale degli Innocenti (both begun in 1419). For the scallop shells in the Barbadori Chapel, he extracted the undulating floral pattern from the classical shells and reshaped it into circular ornaments for the spandrels.³² In the Innocenti loggia, he chose to represent the *outer* sides of scallop shells and restyled them into ornaments for the capital consoles of the vaulting (Fig. 19). Never again would

³¹ For a discussion and illustration of Ghiberti's *Saint Matthew* and *Christ among the Doctors*, yet without mention of the scallop shell, see Richard Krautheimer/Trude Hess, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, Princeton 1970, I, pp. 2, 86–100, 124f., and II, pl. 6, 30. For Ghiberti's interest in Roman antiquity, again with no mention of scallop shells, see Richard Krautheimer, "Ghiberti and the Antique", in: *Renaissance News*, VI (1953), 2,

pp. 24–26, and, more recently, Doris Carl, "An Inventory of Lorenzo Ghiberti's Collection of Antiquities", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CLXI (2019), pp. 274–299.

³² Illustrated and referred to as "shell tondo" by Howard Saalman, "Form and Meaning at the Barbadori-Capponi Chapel in S. Felicita", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI (1989), pp. 532–539: 533 and Fig. 20.



19 Florence, Ospedale degli Innocenti, detail of console in the loggia

Brunelleschi employ scallop shells, in whatever form, although they do appear in buildings he had personally designed: the chapel (*scarsella*) in the Old Sacristy (completed in 1429), the *tribune morte* (begun in 1439) adjacent to the dome of the cathedral of Florence, and the lantern (begun in 1436) that mounts the same dome.

Roberto Gargiani, evidently communicating common opinion, designates Brunelleschi as the sculptor of the painted stucco scallop shells on the pendentives in the *scarsella* (Fig. 20).³³ He implies, thereby, that the

shells were introduced during the construction of the sacristy, between 1422 and 1429.³⁴ However, Gargiani's attribution and implied dating are unacceptable, if we imagine the architecture of the sacristy as Brunelleschi is understood to have built it. Heinrich Klotz expresses it succinctly as "empty [wall] expanses constituting a background against which only the architecture could stand out".³⁵ That is, white walls trimmed with grey-toned *pietra serena* architectural forms (Fig. 5). In this chromatically neutral setting, and on pendentives that are in proximity to a still whitewashed semi-circular vault (painted only later), the stucco scallop shells – painted a deep blue and with gold ribs – would, in 1429, have stood out as misplaced splashes of color. Yet the shells became well suited to their environment when Donatello decorated the main area of the sacristy with painted stucco narratives on the pendentives and with individual figures on the lunettes and, more decisively, when the semi-circular vault was painted also a deep blue with gold lines to represent a celestial sphere. The astronomical ceiling, which shows the constellations on 4 July 1442, and the shells on the pendentives coalesce chromatically, possibly iconographically, and certainly chronologically.³⁶

Brunelleschi's authorship of the scallop shells on the *tribune morte* is also to be discounted. For one thing, he had given up interest in the motive after 1419. They are absent, for example, in a structure he designed that is contemporary with the *tribune*: the niches at the base of the spire of the lantern. As they are from the wooden model he designed for the *tribune*, if

³³ Roberto Gargiani, *Principi e costruzione nell'architettura italiana del Quattrocento*, Rome 2003, p. 74.

³⁴ Gargiani (*ibidem*) believes that Brunelleschi introduced the scallop shell motive in Florence with the shells in the Innocenti loggia and in the Barbadori Chapel. He makes no mention of Ghiberti.

³⁵ Heinrich Klotz, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Early Works and the Medieval Tradition*, New York 1990, pp. 46f.

³⁶ For the iconography of the celestial painting, the more recent publications are: Dieter Blume, "Astrologia come scienza politica: il cielo

notturmo della Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo", in: *L'art de la Renaissance entre science et magie*, conference proceedings Paris 2002, ed. by Philippe Morel, Paris/Rome 2006, pp. 149–164; Jack Wasserman, "The Astronomical Painting in the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence", in: *Götterhimmel und Künstlerwerkstatt: Perspektiven auf die Kunst der italienischen Renaissance*, conference proceedings Leipzig 2016, ed. by Julia Dellith/Nadja Horsch/Daniela Roberts, Leipzig 2019, pp. 17–32. See also Irving Lavin, "Donatello's Kanzeln in S. Lorenzo und das Wiederaufleben frühchristlicher Gebräuche: Ein Nachwort", in: *Donatello-Studien*, XVI



20 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Old Sacristy, domes of
main space and chapel

we are to believe Manetti. The biographer states that Brunelleschi, contrary to his approach in all his earlier models, was forced to work out his model for the lantern with “copia d’ornamento”.³⁷ Conversely, we can conclude from this that Brunelleschi’s model for the *tribune* must have been free of such details – and therefore of scallop shells. Moreover, it was discarded soon after his death in 1446 and replaced with a new model, which probably included the scallop shells eventually realized.³⁸

Nor is it plausible to attribute the scallop shells on the lantern (Fig. 21) to Brunelleschi, although its model did contain ornamental details, no doubt architectural in nature. Yet they are of the classical type, never employed by Brunelleschi before. On the other hand, the shells can be attributed to Michelozzo. This is deduced from a review of a series of published documents. A payment dated 27 June 1449 indicates that three models were being made for a “choperta” (covering) to be placed over the passages between the piers of the lantern³⁹ – that is, a lintel, a semi-circular stone block, and a scroll that join the large and small piers into a buttress. Another document shows that work on the three models continued into 4 September 1450, when a woodworker was paid for a model for a “sprone” (the semi-circular block) of the lantern.⁴⁰ From the dates of the two documents we can conclude that it was Michelozzo who designed the three wooden models, because at the time he was *capomaestro* of the Opera del Duomo, a position he had obtained in August 1446.⁴¹ Days after the three models were com-

pleted, in late September 1450, Michelozzo went to the quarry of Carrara, where he supervised the carving of the first *sprone* and scroll (“viticcio”).⁴² Furthermore, a document dated 18 August 1451 stipulates that the stone blocks “qui dicuntur sproni”, which had been ordered as single pieces, for many reasons (“e multis de causis”) should instead be delivered in two pieces.⁴³ The deliberation was taken the month Michelozzo had returned to Florence, but it implies that the operation took place in the past, that is, when he was in Carrara. Regrettably, he is not named in the document, but it must have been Michelozzo who supervised the operation, because the single blocks of the *sproni* were dependent on the one he had designed for the portal of the Old Sacristy. The inference that Michelozzo devised the three members of the “choperta” is also supported by direct observation of the lantern. Here, the lintel and the semi-circular block are an imperfect match with Brunelleschi’s piers, because their concave curves are shallower than those of the piers. To have properly synchronized them, as Brunelleschi would surely have intended to do, would have made the lintel too weak to sustain itself. Even the lintels that were used to form eight buttresses broke in two over time and were rejoined with metal braces or replaced entirely with new lintels.⁴⁴

The classical type of scallop shell, while of no interest to Brunelleschi, was a constant in Michelozzo’s artistic experiences since early in his career. He already encountered it in 1419, as Ghiberti’s assistant in casting and chasing the bronze statue of *Saint Matthew*,

(1989), pp. 155–169: 165, who, however, does not mention the relationship between the dome painting and the scallop shells on the pendentives.

³⁷ Manetti (note 4), p. 117.

³⁸ Saalman (note 1), p. 281, docs. 316.2–4.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 280, doc. 311.2: “3 modeglj per choperta deglj uscj de pilastri della lanterna”.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, doc. 311.4.

⁴¹ For Michelozzo’s appointment as *capomaestro*, see Saalman (note 1), p. 205.

⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 143 and 284f., doc. 323.3. The volute required additional carving by a stone carver (*ibidem*, docs. 338.15f.).

⁴³ The document is transcribed in Cesare Guasti, *La cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore, illustrata con i documenti dell’archivio dell’Opera Secolare*, Florence 1857, p. 105, doc 306. The two parts of the “lapides”, the lintel and the semi-circular stone block, are supported separately; see Ferdinando Rossi, “La lanterna della cupola di Santa Maria del Fiore e i suoi restauri”, in *Bollettino d’Arte*, 4th s., XLI (1956), pp. 128–143: 137, Fig. 21.

⁴⁴ See *ibidem*, p. 137, Figs. 20 and 21. See also the disgruntled assessment of the lintels and sproni *in situ* by Manetti (note 4), p. 117.



21 Florence, cathedral,
lantern, detail of buttress

and probably again in 1423, when he seems to have collaborated with Donatello in casting and chasing the bronze statue of *Saint Louis of Toulouse*, whose original tabernacle in Orsanmichele also displays a scallop shell.⁴⁵ Subsequently, Michelozzo employed the motive himself, on the tomb monument of Baldassarre Coscia in the Florentine baptistery (1423–1425) and, marginally, on that of Rinaldo Brancaccio in

the church of Sant'Angelo a Nilo in Naples (1426–1428).⁴⁶ In 1439, when he was already involved with the lantern, Michelozzo placed classical scallop shells behind the heads of male busts in two niches that were situated above doors in the Novitiate Chapel in the church of Santa Croce in Florence.⁴⁷

We may conclude that Michelozzo's continuous association with the classical shell motive qualifies

⁴⁵ See Krautheimer/Hess (note 31), p. 87, for a discussion of Michelozzo's association with Ghiberti in producing the *Saint Matthew* and his passage to Donatello for the *Saint Louis*.

⁴⁶ For illustrations of the Coscia and Brancaccio monuments, see, respectively, Horst W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton 1957, pl. 26, and Tanja Michalsky, "Tombs and the Ornamentation of Chapels", in: *Naples*,

ed by Marcia B. Hall/Thomas Willette, New York/Cambridge 2017 (Artistic Centers of the Italian Renaissance), pp. 233–298: 252, Fig. 5.14.

⁴⁷ See Saalman (note 14), p. 273, for the date of the completion of the chapel. The niches are illustrated in Ludwig H. Heydenreich, "Gedanken über Michelozzo di Bartolomeo", in: *Festschrift Wilhelm Pinder zum sechzigsten Geburtstage: überreicht von Freunden und Schülern*, Leipzig 1938, pp. 264–290:



22 Florence,
San Lorenzo, Old
Sacristy, interior
view of the
entrance portal

him as the designer of the lantern tympanums and, by extension, the entrance portals at San Lorenzo; consequently, of the second stage in the construction of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian. It should be pointed out that Cosimo also had a penchant for the classical scallop shell motive. Under his patronage, they appeared in the Old Sacristy on the pendentives of the *scarsella*, on the desk of Donatello's *Saint Mark* on a lunette in the main space, and, in large number, on the marble transenna that sections off the *scarsella* from the main space.⁴⁸

The Old Sacristy

It was noted in the introduction to this study that historians have shortchanged two of several problems the Old Sacristy generates. One problem was addressed for the first time by Riccardo Pacciani, in a pamphlet he published in 1977. He pointed out that the entrance to the sacristy reaches awkwardly into a corner inside the building and that it cuts away a portion of the folded pilaster (Fig. 22).⁴⁹ Pacciani might have added that the entrance is off-axis with the door of the room to the left of the *scarsella*; that the amputated pilaster is off-key with the full-length folded pilasters in the other three corners; and that the odd appearance of the entrance is reinforced by an overbearing portal, probably of nineteenth-century origin.⁵⁰ All this at the expense of Brunelleschi's measured wall design. But the anomaly Pacciani did decry was sufficient for him to characterize the current entrance to the sacristy an afterthought and to suggest that the original access was through the archway that is now blocked by Andrea del Verrocchio's Medici tomb monument (Fig. 3). In support of his premise, he called attention to a door directly under

279, Fig. 8, but have since been removed. The male busts in the niches probably represented Saints Cosmas and Damian, to whom the chapel is dedicated.

⁴⁸ For the *Saint Mark*, see Janson (note 46), pl. 58b. For the *transenna*, see Pietro Ruschi, "Rimeditando sulle fonti brunelleschiane: dall'auctoritas"

romana alla rinascenza fiorentina", in: *San Lorenzo* (note 5), pp. 279–292: 288, Fig. 12.8.

⁴⁹ Pacciani (note 3), n. p.

⁵⁰ Gargiani (note 33), p. 74, is alone commenting on the portal. He attributes it to Brunelleschi, implying a date for its installation prior to the



23 Florence, San Lorenzo,
Old Sacristy, ceiling of the
entrance corridor

Verrocchio's monument, in the subterranean area of the church, that permits passage between two rooms of similar disposition to those of the sacristy and the chapel.⁵¹ Oddly, the problem Pacciani formulated so many decades ago was referred to rarely and in passing: by Howard Burns in 1979, in a footnote, by Eugenio Battisti in 1981, in a single paragraph and a caption to an illustration, and by Roberto Gargiani in 2003, on a single page.⁵² Then, silence.

It is a given that Giovanni de' Medici would have welcomed a communicating door between his family chapel and his burial chamber. But he surely would not have condoned having the chapel turned into a vestibule through which the canons would enter the sacristy to prepare for their daily offices at the high altar. Therefore, we can be assured that the sacristy had two entrances, for the conveniences of both parties, when it was completed in 1429. The primary entrance, *pace* Pacciani, is the one that extends from the transept into the space of the sacristy. Yet its current appearance, which is violating Brunelleschi's architectural principles, can hardly be attributed to him.

The reason for the awkward entrance solution lies in the prerequisite that sacristies are to have doors, to protect the liturgical objects they contain. In the case of the Old Sacristy, a door would have to be approximately 175 cm wide, the distance between the two pilasters of the portal (Fig. 13). At this dimension, the door would be two-winged, with each wing 87.5 cm wide and hinged to the rears of the pilasters of the portal or turned on brackets in the pavement. And were wings to turn backward into the entrance corridor, as normally they do, the space of the sacristy would be breached 27.5 cm beyond the 60 cm of the wall into which the door is inserted.⁵³

Brunelleschi's way out from this dilemma, it is maintained here, was to contemplate a door for the sacristy whose wings turn *forward* into the transept, with these positive results for his methodical approach to architectural design: First, the entrance is contained within the limits of the 60 cm thickness of the wall, which leaves the folded pilaster at full length; second, the entrance is aligned with the door to the left of the *scarsella*, thus preserving the harmony

completion of the sacristy in 1429. However, with its massive dark grey blocks of stone the portal is in sharp contrast with Brunelleschi's finer dimensioned pearl grey *pietra serena* architectural trim.

⁵¹ Pacciani (note 3), n.p. For a plan of the subterranean area of the church, see Gabriele Morolli, "Non solo Brunelleschi: San Lorenzo nel

Quattrocento", in: *Alla riscoperta delle chiese di Firenze*, 5: *San Lorenzo*, ed. by Timothy Verdon, Florence 2007, pp. 59–110: 69, Fig. 50.

⁵² Burns (note 20), p. 153, note 10; Battisti (note 7), p. 83 and Fig. 68; Gargiani (note 33), p. 27.

⁵³ The 60 cm thickness of the wall is calculated as follows: the pilasters

of his wall design. Apt in this regard is the two-wing door, with the right wing fixed in place and left wing turning into the transept, that was placed at the entrance to Michelangelo's New Sacristy, probably in the nineteenth century (Fig. 25).⁵⁴

Cosimo de' Medici is to blame for the transgression Brunelleschi would have avoided, with the present two-wing door, possibly designed by a woodworker, he had installed at the Old Sacristy's entrance (Figs. 13, 23) about the time the building was to assume its function as a sacristy, in anticipation of the consecration of the main chapel in 1461. Contrary to what Brunelleschi must have planned, its wings turn into the entrance corridor. Moreover, the door measures 197 cm in overall width, so each wing is 98.5 cm wide. Since the wall is only 60 cm thick, these dimensions would force the two wings to intrude the space of the sacristy 38.5 cm, thereby encumbering the corridor. This unwanted situation was resolved by widening the lateral walls by 10 cm on each side and by deepening the entrance corridor, which entailed the mutilation of the angular pilaster.

With the Old Sacristy finally assuming its function as a preparation room for the canons to perform their duties at the high altar, an elevated tile pathway was paved, which was reached from the floor of the transept and stretches from the sacristy to the main chapel and beyond to the Ginori corridor, a lateral entrance to the transept built later in the century

(Figs. 24, 25).⁵⁵ No doubt Brunelleschi had included a comparable pathway in his 1421 plan for the transept; otherwise, the canons would find it cumbersome to proceed in procession from the sacristy to the main chapel. But what was the end point of his pathway, before the existence of the Ginori corridor? Certainly not a blank wall. Was it, then, an entrance to a second sacristy, which occasionally historians believed Brunelleschi had planned but did not build?⁵⁶ This seems unlikely: apart from redundancy and significant cost to Giovanni, Brunelleschi would have been restrained from contemplating a duplicate sacristy because San Lorenzo was not yet a Medici church. It attained that status only when Cosimo de' Medici financed the construction of the transept, beginning in 1442, and the old church was replaced by the present nave, beginning in the 1460s. Therefore, the end point of Brunelleschi's pathway must have been a lateral entrance to the transept, which was enlarged into the Ginori corridor and clad with a portal that replicates, in appearance *and* in fabrication, the portal of the Old Sacristy. Michelangelo retained this entrance for the New Sacristy.

The second problem is the unprecedented portal Michelozzo placed at the entrance to the Old Sacristy (Fig. 13). In all likelihood, Brunelleschi simply intended to place a lintel above the entrance flanked by pilasters. Michelozzo, instead, devised a semi-circular tympanum, decorated with a scallop shell, surely with the sacristy as Giovanni's mausoleum in mind.

on the walls in the transept area are uniformly 90 cm wide and are protruding 15 cm from of the wall, for a total of 30 cm.

⁵⁴ The surface design of this door replicates the design of the false door at the entrance to the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian and the functioning door at the second entrance to the Ginori Chapel (Figs. 15, 16), although it is slightly shorter to accommodate the higher level of the floor. A two-wing glazed door was placed at the interior of the entrance of the New Sacristy in the nineteenth century (on stylistic grounds). The door is illustrated in Andrew Morrogh, "The Magnifici Tomb: A Key Project in Michelangelo's Architectural Career", in: *The Art Bulletin*, LXXIV (1992), pp. 567–598: 569, Fig. 3.

⁵⁵ The walkway and the corridor are included in a plan that is illustrated in Burns (note 20), p. 145, Fig. 1. Caroline Elam, "The Site and

Early Building History of Michelangelo's New Sacristy", in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXIII (1979), pp. 155–186: 161, 165–170, 184, dates the beginning of work on the corridor to 1449. For a further study of the Ginori corridor, see Sheryl E. Reiss, "The Ginori Corridor of San Lorenzo and the Building History of the New Sacristy", in: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, LII (1993), pp. 339–343.

⁵⁶ Elam (note 55), p. 162: "Until the early fifteenth century building history of S. Lorenzo becomes clearer, it would be rash to state categorically that there was no original intention to build a second sacristy." *Ibidem*, p. 174, note 28, Elam brings up Giuliano da Sangallo's plan of San Lorenzo, which includes two sacristies, interpreting it as a "critical reworking of Brunelleschi's project". More plausibly, Howard Saalman, "Early Italian Architecture", in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXX (1978),



24, 25 Florence, San Lorenzo,
pathway from Old Sacristy (left)
to New Sacristy (right)

A scallop shell in the context of a tomb monument was not new to Michelozzo. As we have seen, he had employed the motive earlier on the Coscia and Brancaccio commemorative monuments. However, at the moment he began to design the sacristy portal, he fused two distinct models that are directly associated with burial chambers. One is the portal at the short end of the so called Rapolla or Melfi Sarcophagus (Fig. 26).⁵⁷ Here, a scallop shell edges

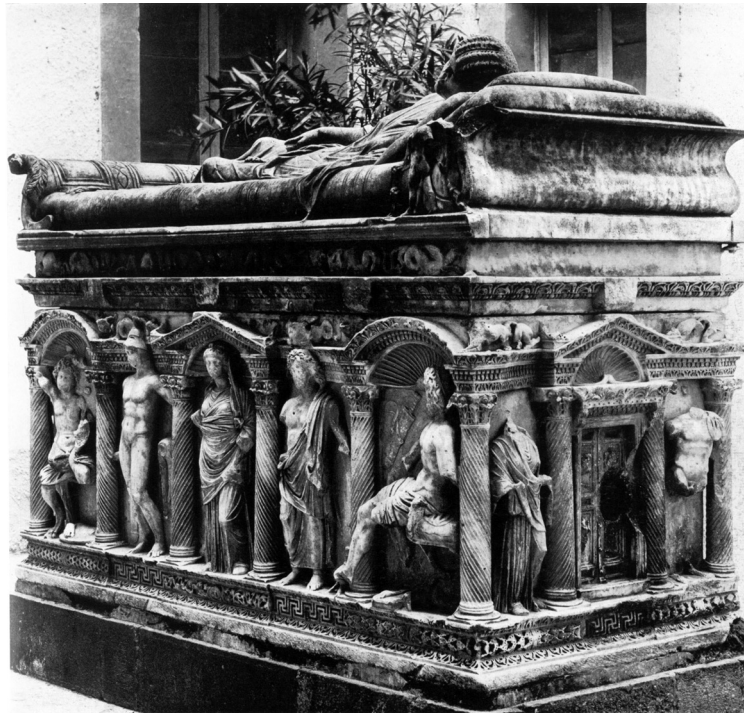
into a triangular pediment directly above a fictitious door, flanked by columns, to establish ‘access’ to the chamber in which the deceased is entombed. Admittedly, the Melfi sarcophagus, as well as another surviving sarcophagus with this composition, now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, was never present in Florence.⁵⁸ Yet Michelozzo’s portal is so close in form and function to the ones on these sarcophagi as to encourage the belief that he had

pp. 27–31: 31, relates Sangallo’s plan to a mausoleum that was contemplated in 1491 to house the remains of Lorenzo the Magnifico and his brother Giuliano.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the Melfi Sarcophagus, see Richard Delbrueck,

“Der Römische Sarkophag in Melfi”, in: *Jahrbuch des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, XXVIII (1913), pp. 277–308.

⁵⁸ For an illustration of the Vienna sarcophagus, see Bratschkova (note 30), p. 41, Fig. 27.



26 Rapolla Sarcophagus,
ca. 165–170 AD. Melfi,
Museo Archeologico
Nazionale del Melfese
"Massimo Pallottino"

encountered a similar sarcophagus in Florence or elsewhere.

The second model was a portal to the sacristy in the church of Santa Trinita. Its construction was begun by Onofrio di Palla Strozzi before his death in 1418, to assume the double function of sacristy and mausoleum,⁵⁹ and continued by his son Palla, who reinforced the mausoleum aspect with a coffin that commemorates Onofrio's death,⁶⁰ and, by 1423, had realized the entrance portal. Today, the portal is in

a considerably reduced condition, but its original aspect is documented in a sixteenth-century fresco by Domenico Cresti, Il Passignano, also in Santa Trinita (Fig. 27).⁶¹ The fresco shows that it was equipped with a semi-circular tympanum containing the bust of a male figure, which has been identified as the Eternal Father but may also be Onofrio's patron saint,⁶² and with a triangular pediment enclosing a tondo with a dome-shaped object that has been identified as the remains of Onofrio's coat of arms.⁶³ If so, the

⁵⁹ For the date of the Strozzi Sacristy, see Roger Jones, "Palla Strozzi e la Sagrestia di Santa Trinita", in: *Rivista d'Arte*, XXXVII (1984), pp. 9–106: 32–35. For an illustration of the portal in its present state, see *ibidem*, p. 14, Fig. 2.

⁶⁰ Howard Saalman, "Strozzi Tombs in the Sacristy of Santa Trinita",

in: *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3rd s., XXXVIII (1987), pp. 149–160: 152, Fig. 4.

⁶¹ The fresco is illustrated in Jones (note 59), p. 15, Fig. 3.

⁶² See *ibidem*, p. 33, for the identification as Eternal Father. Francesco Quinterio, "La sagrestia di Santa Trinita", in: *Lorenzo Ghiberti: materia e ra-*



27 Domenico Cresti called Il Passignano, *Traslazione della mascella di san Giovanni Gualberto in Santa Trinita* (detail). Firenze, Santa Trinita, Cappella delle reliquie di san Giovanni Gualberto

male figure and the coat of arms endow the portal with the spiritual and personal significance of a gateway to Onofrio's mausoleum.

Howard Saalman attributes the portal to the Ghiberti workshop,⁶⁴ of which Michelozzo was a member. Perhaps, then, it is he who designed the portal. This speculation apart, Michelozzo may have co-opted from the Strozzi portal the idea to produce a portal that is suitable for his sponsor's mausoleum, as Giovanni had co-opted from the double function of the Strozzi

Sacristy the idea to build the Old Sacristy as his personal mausoleum. While quoting the semi-circular tympanum of the Strozzi portal, Michelozzo, however, substituted the image of God the Father or Saint Onofrio with the scallop shell. In this way, he provided his portal with an abstract but comparable symbolism, perhaps having in mind Giovanni's and Cosimo's concern about accusations of an inordinate display of wealth and authority. The shell may have acquired the additional symbolism of pilgrimage, as it was associated

gionamenti, exh. cat., Florence 1978, pp. 486–489, identifies the figure as a portrait of Onofrio.

⁶³ Jones (note 59), p. 33.

⁶⁴ Saalman (note 60), p. 155, caption to Fig. 8. Krautheimer/Hess (note 31), p. 261, note 16, also believe that the portal is a Ghiberti school

piece. Saalman (p. 149) attributes the structure of sacristy building to Ghiberti, citing Giuseppe Marchini, "Aggiunte a Michelozzo," in: *Rinascita*, VII (1944), pp. 24–51: 37f. Saalman (*ibidem*) notes that recently discovered documents confirm Marchini's "intuition". The documents were published by J. Russell Sale, "Palla Strozzi and Lorenzo Ghiberti: New

with one of the three main Christian pilgrimage sites, the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, to which also Florentines went in search of redemption.⁶⁵

If this is true, then Michelozzo may have carried over the multifaceted symbolism of the scallop shell, both a marker of the gateway to the afterlife and a symbol of redemption through pilgrimage, also to the other three portals he placed on the transept walls in the 1450s. The two walls indeed align as a surround for a mortuary, which the transept was to become when Cosimo de' Medici signed a contract with the prior and canons of the church, on 13 August 1442, to finance the construction of the main chapel and the entire transept. The contract stipulates that these spaces are to belong to Cosimo, his family, and his descendants; that the transept is to bear only his arms and insignia; and that it is to be his exclusive burial site. The space thus became a Medici mortuary with Cosimo's burial at the foot of the high altar in 1465, the scallop shells establishing the funereal environment.

Michelozzo's portal of the Old Sacristy might be viewed as a component of the decoration project Cosimo commissioned Donatello to execute on the pendentives and lunettes in the Old Sacristy's main room. The roundels on the pendentives represent scenes from the life of Giovanni's patron saint, John the Evangelist: his writing the Book of Revelations on the isle of Patmos, his miraculous resurrection of Drusiana, his martyrdom, and his ascension. The roundels in lunettes represent the four evangelists, with Saint John accorded a place of honor above the

entrance to the *scarsella*, which is dedicated to him.⁶⁶ A decoration so steeped in redemptive subject matter and so personal was, in Cosimo's day, unheard of in sacristies; as was the portal with a scallop shell, with its own redemptive reference. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Donatello and Michelozzo, who were partners for some years, conceived these decorations as a coherent project – if they were commissioned simultaneously. The question is answered in the positive, as is now argued.

The precise date of Donatello's commission to decorate the sacristy is not documented. According to Pietro Ruschi, he received it in 1428, which, however, contradicts the traditional date of 1435.⁶⁷ Of the two dates, Ruschi's is favored here. In addition to the fact that it allows sufficient time for Donatello to begin the commission before his departure to Rome in 1432,⁶⁸ several intimately connected incidents took place that relate to death and burial: Just a few months before his demise on 20 February 1429, Giovanni de' Medici established two canonical prebends he endowed on 8 November 1428 for masses that were to be said for himself in the Chapel of Saint John the Evangelist inside the sacristy and for his family and friends in the neighboring Chapel of Cosmas and Damian;⁶⁹ and, as Margrit Lisner determined persuasively, Cosimo commissioned Giovanni's commemorative sarcophagus, which he placed under the dome of the sacristy upon his mother's death in 1433.⁷⁰ The endowment document describes the two chapels as “constructis, et edificatis”,⁷¹ suggesting

Documents”, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, XXII (1978), pp. 355–358.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of the scallop shell as symbolizing pilgrimage, see Wasserman (note 36), pp. 25–28.

⁶⁶ For a discussion and illustrations of Donatello's decoration, see Janson (note 46), pp. 132–140 and pls. 56b–61.

⁶⁷ Ruschi (note 8), p. 72. For the traditional date, see Janson (note 46), p. 135.

⁶⁸ Ruschi (note 8), pp. 70–76. Michelozzo participated in the later

stage in the decoration of the sacristy, as sculptor and architect, according to Janson (note 46), p. 159, and Ruschi, pp. 79 and 81.

⁶⁹ The prebends had been approved by Pope Martin V with a papal bull dated 6 March 1428; the document for their establishment is discussed and transcribed in Moreni (note 1), I, pp. 22–24, and II, pp. 361–368, doc. VII.

⁷⁰ Margrit Lisner, “Zur frühen Bildhauerarchitektur Donatellos”, in: *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3rd s., IX/X (1958/59), pp. 72–127: 84.

⁷¹ Moreni (note 1), II, p. 366.



28 Florence, San Lorenzo, southern transept with Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, reconstruction of its appearance as finished by Michelozzo, ca. 1428/29

that the building of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian, too, was well advanced. We may deduce from this that its new entrance portal, and therefore also the portal to the Old Sacristy that served as its model, were realized around 1428.

What are the circumstances that would permit Cosimo and Michelozzo to become involved, during Giovanni's lifetime, with the construction of the Chapel of Cosmas and Damian and with putting the finishing touches to the Old Sacristy? A plausible

answer is that Giovanni had surrendered to Cosimo (and Cosimo to Michelozzo, his favored architect) responsibility for these enterprises, because, in his late sixties, he was old and ill and aware of impending death, as is evidenced by the two canonical prebends. The gravity of his father's health probably aroused in Cosimo the idea to cluster Donatello's decoration, the sarcophagus, and the portal into a single project, in concert with the second stage in the construction of the family chapel.

The family chapel dedicated to Cosmas and Damian acquired a high status in the transept, as a result of the second stage in its construction. It will be recalled that Cosimo went to the expense of tearing down a partially built wall, in the midst of the chapel's construction, to make way for an exceptional entrance portal that replicates the portal of the Old Sacristy. Obviously, the chapel did not need two entrances, since its entire interior was fully accessible from the wide arched opening. Nor is there evidence, physical or documentary, that Cosimo had contemplated a religious ceremony, a religious decoration, or a second altar that necessitated an additional entrance. Symmetry was obviously on his mind. More fundamentally, he had in mind a strategy to create a *façade* that unites the chapel and Giovanni's mausoleum into a family spiritual compound as well as to centralize the arched entrance of the chapel – instead of treating it, as Brunelleschi had planned, as one of a continuous series of arched entrances to the chapels – in order to veer attention to an altar that is dedicated to the Medici saints (Fig. 28). With this maneuver, Cosimo supplemented the devotional introspection Brunelleschi had implanted in the chapel with a devotional outreach to the congregation assembled in the church. This action elevated the chapel into a sort of chancel, while the sacristy as the mausoleum of the family patriarch became a kind of appendix that was

entered privately from the chapel and publicly from the transept. Michelozzo, with Cosimo's sponsorship, mirrored the *façade* at the opposite end of the transept crossing, with this important result: the facing *façades*, in addition to forming a spiritual environment for Cosimo's mortuary by way of the scallop shell motif, acquired an architectural function. With their rich forms, the *façades* override Brunelleschi's sober, planar, and uniform architectural fabric to create a strong lateral axis that intersects with his resolute longitudinal axial focus on the main chapel.⁷²

The present article is the last I will devote to architectural history. Together with an article entitled "The Quirinal Palace in Rome" and published on The Art Bulletin in 1963, it brackets many years of research into Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture. I am indebted to several historians for their aid in the preparation of this study, above all Pietro Ruschi, who accompanied me at the church several times, Marvin Trachtenberg, Andrew Morrogh, and Monsignor Timothy Verdon, who supplied me with important information and bibliographical references. I wish also to acknowledge the librarian at Temple University in Rome and the Interlibrary Services of Temple University in Philadelphia. Finally, there are Loris Ciampi and my ragazzi di bottega, Paolo Pianigiani and his wife, the photographer Alena Fialová. They performed many important tasks for me at the church, which I had neglected to carry out myself.

⁷² For a partial view of the transept, looking south, see Cohen (note 2), p. 108, Fig. 2.50.

This study is devoted to the double-bay Chapel of Cosmas and Damian in San Lorenzo, Florence, which despite its Medici patronage has attracted few scholarly interest, and its relationship with the neighboring Old Sacristy. It aims to demonstrate that the chapel was begun later than the sacristy and built in two stages: Filippo Brunelleschi, who had designed the new transept of San Lorenzo on commission from Giovanni de' Medici, was involved only with the first stage. After he had built the external walls and begun the one towards the interior of the church, around 1428 Giovanni's son Cosimo took over, bringing in his favored architect Michelozzo di Bartolomeo. He must have been responsible for the demolition of the unfinished internal wall and the adaption of its pilaster and pier into an entrance to the chapel's inner chamber. With its tympanum featuring a scallop shell, the portal is identical in appearance to the one Michelozzo built contemporaneously at the sacristy entrance, thereby creating a symmetrical façade that unites the chapel and the sacristy into a Medici spiritual compound. It is argued here that this type of scallop shell was alien to Brunelleschi's architectural language and that its introduction in the lantern of the cathedral was due to Michelozzo as well; in San Lorenzo it must have been chosen also for its funeral symbolism, in a space that was to contain the tombs of both Giovanni and Cosimo de' Medici. Moreover, this article analyzes the reasons for the awkward placement of the entrance to the Old Sacristy, which cuts off the folded angular pilaster. It maintains that Brunelleschi's entrance must have been contained within the thickness of the wall and that only the wooden door installed in the 1450s forced its enlargement, thereby damaging the sacristy's carefully thought-out architectural system.

Giovanni Trambusti, Florence: Figs. 1, 5–8, 12–16, 18, 22, 23, 25. — Da Carl von Stegmann/Heinrich von Geymüller, *Die Architektur der Renaissance in Toscana* [...], Munich 1885–1908, I: Fig. 2. — Alena Fialová, Empoli/Florence: Figs. 3, 4, 10, 11, 24. — Gabinetto Fotografico Soprintendenza Beni Artistici e Storici di Firenze, Florence: Fig. 9. — Giovanni Trambusti, Florence, edited by Massimo Caroni, Rome: Figs. 17, 28. — Loris Ciampi, Florence: Figs. 19, 20. — Marvin Trachtenberg, New York: Fig. 21. — From Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, New York 1964: Fig. 26 — Sailko/Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-3.0: Fig. 27.

Umschlagbild | Copertina:
Bronzino, *Portrait Francesca Salviati (?)* | *Ritratto di Francesca Salviati (?)*
Frankfurt a. M., Städel Museum
(S. 260, Abb. 16 | p. 260, fig. 16)

ISSN 0342-1201

Stampa: Grafiche Martinelli, Firenze
ottobre 2024