

1 Groundplan of the Churches of S. Giacomo Maggiore and S. Cecilia, Bologna (Bentivoglio Chapel, no. 19).

THE CHURCH OF SANTA CECILIA AND THE BENTIVOGLIO CHAPEL IN SAN GIACOMO MAGGIORE IN BOLOGNA

With an Appendix containing a catalogue of Isabella d'Este's correspondence concerning Lorenzo Costa and Francesco Francia

by *Clifford Malcolm Brown*

For Giovanni Arici

The architectural splendor of the Bentivoglio chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore, which sets off its important decorations — the Trionfi by Lorenzo Costa and Francesco Francia's Madonna Enthroned — is well known to students of North Italian art and architecture (Fig. 2, 3). Equally celebrated are the frescoes by Costa, Francia and Amico Aspertini in the otherwise undistinguished church of Santa Cecilia, located directly behind San Giacomo on Via Zamboni (Fig. 1, 9, 10).¹ Yet, as sometimes happens to historic monuments, much pertaining to them is taken for granted. Published opinions, the literary traditions that have accrued over the centuries, are accepted at face value even when some of the statements are at variance with the facts, or when they touch only lightly on issues requiring more serious study.²

¹ This article is based on material in my doctoral dissertation on Lorenzo Costa, written under Prof. Rudolf Wittkower at Columbia University. For assistance in preparing this text I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Father Federico Cruciani of San Giacomo Maggiore, to Prof. Ulrich Middeldorf, director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut and to the director of the Archivio di Stato in Mantua, Avv. Dott. Pascucci and his staff — Dott. Gilberto Carra and especially Signorina Anna Maria Lorenzoni.

² The bibliography is as follows. *Giovanni Gozzadini*, *Memorie per la vita di Giovanni II Bentivoglio*, Bologna 1839, pp. 77 ff., 148 ff.; *Gustavo Frizzoni*, *Gli affreschi di Santa Cecilia in Bologna*, Bologna 1890 (first published in "Il Buonarroti" [1876] and reprinted without changes in *Frizzoni's*, *Arte italiana del Rinascimento*, Milan 1891, pp. 369-393); *I. B. Supino*, *L'arte nelle chiese di Bologna, II, Secoli XV-XVI*, Bologna 1938, pp. 313 ff.; *Angelo Raule*, *S. Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna*, Bologna 1955; *Maurizio Calvesi*, *Gli affreschi di Santa Cecilia in Bologna*, Bologna-Milan 1960; *A. Raule*,



2 Bentivoglio Chapel, S. Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna.



3 Bentivoglio Chapel, S. Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna.

L'Oratorio di Santa Cecilia in Bologna, Bologna 1964; *Il Tempio di San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna. Studio sulla storia e le opere d'arte*, Bologna 1967. This collection of essays, written by members of the Istituto di Storia dell'Arte of Bologna University, with its lavish illustrations appeared after the completion of the present article. The reader is urged to refer to it so as to control his judgment of points raised in this article which are not always in agreement with those stated in the text published for the 7th centenary of the founding of the Augustinian church of San Giacomo. The readers attention is especially directed to the chapter on "L'architettura della Chiesa di San Giacomo" (pp. 37-72, especially p. 58). I regret to say that the interrelated projects which I discuss in this article, are not dealt with in that chapter, where there is — in addition — a somewhat inadequate treatment of the exact nature of the relationship of the Bentivoglio chapel and the Church of Santa Cecilia. Most of the inscriptions found in the Bentivoglio chapel are transcribed in the chapter dealing with that monument. The reader does not therefore have to consult the earlier and scattered sources cited in my notes. A minor oversight, due to the almost illegibility of the inscription at one point, accounts for the incomplete transcription of the inscription along the moulding in the chapel. The words "*II Kal.*" should precede the main portion of the inscription given in note 5, p. 129, which reads in its entirety: *II Kal - Christo optimo maximo divoque Joanni Evangelistae ob devotionem Joannes Bentivolus Secundus Sfortia Vicomes de Aragonia hoc opus decavit. Anno gratiae MCCCCLXXXVI die VI Junii.*

Every author since 1776 has repeated the statement that in 1483 the Bentivoglio appropriated the western end of the church of Santa Cecilia in order to enlarge their chapel in San Giacomo. Such repetition does not alter the fact that the statement is both imprecise and incorrect. Architectural evidence exists to prove that the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel did not significantly effect the church of Santa Cecilia, while the document cited in support of the date 1483 refers to an entirely different undertaking. Certain additional evidence, of a somewhat more speculative nature, lends support to the hypothesis that plans for the enlarging and redesigning of the Bentivoglio chapel were drawn up no later than the year 1478. Should this evidence be acceptable, and the manner in which it is interpreted prove correct, then one is faced with a rather curious situation. Historically it has always been maintained that the territorial integrity of Santa Cecilia was violated to accommodate the Bentivoglio. It may turn out, however, that it was the church of San Giacomo itself which was mutilated, or in any event substantially modified, in the course of the execution of a series of interrelated projects one of which concerned the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel.

An examination of all aspects of these monuments, their architecture, the decorations which they house and the iconography of these paintings, is beyond the scope of this article. Attention shall be focused primarily on two problems related to the church of Santa Cecilia. The first part of the text shall be concerned with the question of the presumed alteration of the church to allow for the amplification of the Bentivoglio chapel and thereby with the issues surrounding the reedification of the chapel itself. One part of the history of Santa Cecilia has always been linked to the story of the Bentivoglio chapel. An examination of this segment of their histories would make little sense unless related to the whole picture and it shall therefore be necessary to deal with matters slightly tangential to the limited objectives of this article. This also in part because the histories of both churches have never been adequately presented. New evidence, drawn from the correspondence of Isabella d'Este Gonzaga, for the date commissioning of the fresco cycle in the Church of Santa Cecilia will be examined in the second part of the article.

I

Precious little is known about the history of the parochial church of Santa Cecilia. The statements made by the early Bolognese historians, who had access to the documents, and who wrote at a time when oral traditions still had a ring of authenticity, allow for little more than a rough outline pitted with lacunae. In 1323 the church was acquired by the Augustinian monks of San Giacomo Maggiore who, in 1359 with the consent of the bishop, rebuilt the structure previously owned by the order of the Santuocia Terrabotti.³ For what reasons and by what means Santa Cecilia became a parochial church, under the supervision of the Augustinian monks, and why title to these rights was taken away from whatever church previously had jurisdiction over the area around Via Zamboni, remains unclear. It is nevertheless a fact that by 1374 the church of Santa Cecilia had assumed the role which it was to continue to play until it was suppressed in 1805. This is known from the Testament of Antonolo Bentivoglio (dated 1374) in which he describes himself as *Nobilis vir Dominus Antonius quondam Bertucij, olim Domini Francisci de Bentivolis, Civis Bononiensis Capellae Sanctae Ceciliae sanus*

³ See Raule (1964, pp. 7-8) for the documents of 1323 and 1359 which were transcribed by Guidicini; also Cherubino Ghirardacci (*Della Historia di Bologna, Parte seconda, data in luce dal R. P. M. Aurelio Solimani*, Bologna 1657, pp. 41, 238) who, as archivist of San Giacomo during the latter half of the 16th century, had access to the original documents.

*per Christi gratiam, mente, et sensu, licet corpore languens.*⁴ Already before the turn of the century the parish church counted, and was subsequently to count, among its members many of Bologna's leading citizens: The Bentivoglio, the Malvezzi and the Poggi.

From the date of the mid 14th century rebuilding, until the year 1483, the documents and the chronicles maintain a perfect silence. Then in 1483 Gaspare Nadi in his diary recorded that he was responsible for the vaulting of the church. It is important to note, however, that the commission had originally been awarded to Gabriele da Como three years earlier.⁵ Another lacuna and then a letter written by Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio to Isabella d'Este Gonzaga in which he informed her of his father's patronage of the church and of his plan to decorate it with a fresco cycle.⁶ Ghirardacci and Bianchetti refer to these frescoes under the years 1505 and 1506 respectively.⁷ About such decorations that must have existed prior to this time nothing is known except that until 1521 a Lippo di Dalmasio Madonna hung above the altar.⁸ The later history of the church, that which unfolded during Malvasia's lifetime, is of no consequence here and may therefore be passed over.⁹

It is possible to add to this outline, a detail which explains the motive behind the decision to vault the church in 1480. Between 1478 and 1481 the portico that runs along Via Zamboni, from the western end of San Giacomo to the eastern end of Santa Cecilia, was erected under the patronage of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and Virgilio Malvezzi (Fig. 1, 5, 6).¹⁰ Part of the northern wall of Santa Cecilia, including a portion of the trecento door which gave access to the building, was buried when the level of the pavement was raised because the church sat at a lower level than San Giacomo; a matter of little importance till the time when it was decided to unite the two structures by this portico. Access to the church of Santa Cecilia was impaired, but still possible, since the upper half of the narrow doorway remained above the level of the new pavement. As part of a general restoration of the building, the floor of the nave was raised to the level of the pavement outside and the height of the walls increased to accommodate the roof over the new portico. Yet while the floor and roof were elevated, the vaults which Nadi constructed in 1483 are actually lower than the ceiling it replaced. This is especially clear from the outline of the 14th century windows on the southern side (Fig. 8).¹¹ A discussion of one other modification, one that involved shifting the entrance from the northern flank

⁴ *Ghirardacci*, 1657, pp. 327-330. According to Bolognese usage, and in the context in which it appears, the word "*cappella*" designates a parochial church. See *Corrado Ricci*, *Gli Aspertini*, in: *L'Arte XVIII* (1915), p. 83. Primiticcio in his Testament, written in Paris in 1570, left a *l'hosp.e di poueri* (in Bologna) *alli quale si costuma pagare dodeci scudi ogn anno se ne dare uentre (sic) quattro a ueram.e si assignara un censo perpetuo di simile somma si farà ancora un cenzo a S. Cecilia la quale è la Parochia di Bolog. per dir ogni anno l'Uff. per li morti... Michelangelo Gualandi*, *Memorie originali italiane risguardanti le belli arti*, Bologna 1840, I, p. 56. See also note 40.

⁵ *Diario bolognese di Gasparo Nadi* (ed. *Corr. Ricci, Alberto Bacchi della Lega*), Bologna 1886, p. 98. *Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri*, *La chiesa ed il portico di San Giacomo in Bologna*, in: *Archivio Storico dell'Arte*, VII (1894), pp. 317-334 (pp. 330-332).

⁶ Transcribed in the appendix and discussed in the second part of the article.

⁷ *Ghirardacci*, 1657, p. 238; *Ch. Ghirardacci*, *Della Historia di Bologna. Parte terza* (ed. *Albano Sorbelli*), in: *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (ed. *L. A. Muratori*), Città di Castello 1933, XXXIII, part. I, p. 341; *A. Bianchetti*, *Cronica delle cose spettanti alla città di Bologna*, Bologna, Bibl. comunale, ms. B 2355, p. 779.

⁸ According to *Guido Zucchini* (*Un'opera di Ercole da Bologna*, in: *Belli Arti*, I [1948], p. 339) whose bibliographic citation is somewhat unclear.

⁹ A point concerning the question of patronage will be discussed in note 45.

¹⁰ *Malaguzzi Valeri*, 1894, pp. 330 ff., especially p. 332 where the dedicatory inscription of October 10, 1478 is transcribed. For additional pertinent information see *Giuseppe Bosi*, *Archivio di rimembranza felsinne antiche e moderne*, Bologna 1857, III, pp. 375-378 (brought to my attention by Prof. *Carlo Volpe*).

¹¹ See *Raule* (1964, pp. 10 ff.) for a more detailed description of the trecento structure.

to the western end, can most profitably be entertained when the question of the relationship between the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel and the church of Santa Cecilia is examined. For this reason nothing further shall be said about this matter for the moment.

The history of the Bentivoglio chapel poses even more problems and is in some respects an even greater enigma than the Church of Santa Cecilia (Fig. 2, 3). Again the documents and the historians pass over many crucial details in silence. Although always parishioners of the church of Santa Cecilia, there is no record that the Bentivoglio owned a chapel in San Giacomo or in any other church prior to the middle of the 15th century, by which time they had become the leading family and the dominant force behind political life in Bologna. 1445 is the date of their acquisition of a chapel in San Giacomo, 1505 the date of their patronage of Santa Cecilia.

In 1402 Giovanni I Bentivoglio was buried *sine honore* in San Giacomo where his body had been taken after his assassination.¹² A similar end awaited his successor, Antonio Galeazzo, who was interred however in the church of San Cristoforo del Ballatoio in 1435.¹³ The violent ends met by these members of the house of the Bentivoglio also awaited Annibale, who was cut down in June of 1445. On February 25th of that year a marble inscription was carved which announced Annibale's purchase of a chapel in San Giacomo (*...generosa casa di Bentivogli acquistata e stabilita e ornata con la sepultura p. lo magc. Annibale...*).¹⁴ The inscription, now located on the right side of the entrance arch, suggests that Annibale was motivated less by a desire to glorify God, that to remedy an embarrassing situation: a family that had apparently previously failed to patronize the church and one without a sepulchral site to perpetuate its name. This urge towards self aggrandisement is nowhere more keenly felt than in the decorations commissioned by Giovanni II some forty years after the chapel has been purchased. The *trionfi bentivoleschi*, the artistic glory of the chapel, like the sculpture in the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini, bear witness to a man primarily interested in what the arts could do in providing for a fitting apotheosis.¹⁵

Having acquired the rights to a chapel, Annibale brought Antonio Galeazzo's body to San Giacomo where it was *in eminenti sepulcro collocatum*.¹⁶ The relief on the lower face of the monument, to which Borselli refers, shows Antonio Galeazzo seated before the students whom he had taught during the years 1418-1420 in his capacity of *Lettore* in the faculty of Civil and

¹² *Girolamo Borselli*, *Cronica gestorum ac factorum memorabilium civitatis Bononiae* (ed. *Albano Sorbelli*) in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Città di Castello 1926, XXIII, part 2, pp. 68-69 (with date incorrectly given as 1401); *Ghirardacci*, 1658, p. 532.

¹³ *Ghirardacci*, 1933, p. 45; *Borselli*, 1926, p. 82 (with date incorrectly given as 1436).

¹⁴ *Gozzadini*, 1839, p. 72, note 2.

¹⁵ Only Antonio Galeazzo, Giovanni II's son, demonstrated a genuine love of the fine arts. Giovanni II was primarily concerned with architectural projects. *Malaguzzi Valeri*, 1894, p. 323. See *Charles Mitchell*, *The Imagery of the Tempio Malatestiano*, in: *Studi Romagnoli*, II (1951), pp. 77-90, for a discussion of the program devised for that monument. In spite of the acknowledged importance of Bentivoglio Triumphs, the literature is curiously silent on the complexities of the iconographic program. No note has been made of the presence of Dante and Virgil, of the Inferno and Purgatory, in the mid-ground of the "Triumph of Fame" and the "Triumph of Death and of Divinity" (Fig. 4). It is by means of these motifs, rather than by the themes and groupings taken from Petrarch — which themselves are handled in an unorthodox manner — that the problematic iconography of these paintings can best be approached. The seemingly illegible inscription on the arch in the "Triumph of Fame" (*Lasati ogni sperance...*), which I was only recently able to decipher, confirms the correctness of this theory. Further research on the iconography of the Bentivoglio Triumphs, where the Petrarchian theme has been subtly combined with and enriched by ideas gleaned from the *Divina Commedia* and from Boccaccio's "De Casibus Virorum Illustrius", now in progress under a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies.

¹⁶ *Borselli*, 1926, p. 82. The inscription below the sepulchral monument transcribed by *Ghirardacci*, 1933, p. 45.



4 Lorenzo Costa, *Triumph of Fame* (Det.). Bentivoglio Chapel, S. Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna.

Canonical Law.¹⁷ This tomb, attached to one of the piers of the ambulatory outside the chapel, is the only decoration datable from the time of Annibale who did not live long enough to initiate other projects.

Eighteen years were to elapse between Annibale's death and the erection of a monument to his memory. Antonio Galeazzo, his father, had waited only 10. In 1458 Sante, who had ruled Bologna since 1446, commissioned the equestrian relief now found on the right hand wall of the chapel.¹⁸ Here Annibale is shown as he appeared at the Battle of S. Giorgio on August

¹⁷ It is Prof. *James Beck's* belief that both representations of the deceased are posthumous portraits of Antonio Galeazzo. *Beck* also suggests that, although the marble from which the tomb was carved had been intended for one Vari da Ferrara which Jacopo della Quercia had been commissioned to carve in 1433, nothing had been done with the stones until they were acquired by the Bentivoglio some ten years later. Prof. *Beck's* arguments will appear in his forthcoming monograph on Quercia. For the traditional opinion that Quercia himself carved the tomb for Vari, whose features are present both on the reclining effigy and the ex Cathedra figure on the relief see: *Supino*, 1938, pp. 302-303 and *Anna Maria Matteucci*, *La Porta Magna di San Petronio in Bologna*, Bologna, 1966, pp. 83-84.

¹⁸ *Rivista economica*, anno IV, numero 12, December 1949, p. 29, "Restauro al monumento funerario di Annibale Bentivoglio". See also *Cecilia M. Ady*, *The Bentivoglio of Bologna*, London 1937, pp. 21-28. See *Gozzadini* (1839, p. 78, note 3) for a transcription of the inscription beneath the relief. Any discussion of the iconography of the chapel, whose theme is the glorification of the Bentivoglio, must come to grips with *Ghirardacci's* puzzling assertion that "nell'altro quadro (the one balancing the Madonna Enthroned with the Bentivoglio Family, discussed further along in the text) v'erano dipinti li suoi antecessori pure al naturale, il quale poi fu guasto per porvi Annibale a cavallo di rilievo" (1933, p. 243). It is difficult to understand why a work presumably painted by Costa towards 1490 and one that was an integral part of the decoration of the chapel — in which the Bentivoglio, present and deceased, faced the trionfi — was destroyed a little more than a decade later to be replaced by an equestrian relief somewhat incongruously surrounded by a sparsely populated landscape which was painted under Costa's direction towards 1506.

14th 1443 when, leading the combined forces of Bologna, Florence and Venice, he defeated the armies of the Duke of Milan, thereby ending a three year struggle to liberate the Bolognese from foreign rule. No such tomb or memorial plaque is known to have been erected for Sante who died of natural causes in 1462.¹⁹ The blame for this rests with Giovanni II, the man who married his predecessor's wife. Yet it was Giovanni who reaped the rewards of Sante's far-sightedness. It was during his rule that the principal architectural project inaugurated by Sante was completed: the celebrated palace destroyed in 1507.

The chronicles affirm that Antonio Galeazzo, Annibale, Sante and perhaps also Giovanni I were buried in the family chapel. But only the tombs of the first two are known. Gozzadini may have been correct when he suggested that a burial chamber exists beneath the now badly worn majolica pavement.²⁰ Exactly in the center of the chapel a series of rectangular shaped stones interrupt the pattern of hexagonal shapes. Here a square shaped marble slab may have been located which gave access to the vault beneath, if indeed it exists, and which perhaps bore a memorial inscription to Sante.

Fate was to deny to Giovanni II and his family the privilege of resting with their forbears. Ousted from Bologna in 1506 by Pope Julius II, Giovanni died in Milan and was buried in a now unidentifiable spot, perhaps in San Maurizio.²¹

Knowledge of the Bentivoglio chapel which is so spotty for the early period, becomes much clearer after 1486. On June 6th of that year a gold inscription was carved on the moulding which proclaimed that *Joannes Bentivolus secundus Sfortia Vicecomes de Arogonia* dedicated, perhaps rededicated might be a more appropriate word, the chapel to *Cristo ottimo maximo divoque Joanni Evvangelistae* (Fig. 2, 3).²² Shortly thereafter Giovanni attended to the problem of decorating the chapel's all but barren walls. In August of 1488 Costa completed the "Madonna Enthroned with the Bentivoglio Family", which was set on the right hand wall next to the Annibale monument. Perhaps in November of 1490 the *trionfi* were installed on the left hand wall.²³ Now the decoration of the lateral walls was complete. The paintings and

¹⁹ *Ghirardacci* (1933, p. 180) described how Sante's body was placed *sopra un palio altissimo con 8 torchi e fu sepellito nella cappella Bentivoglio*. *Ghirardacci's* detailed description (1933, pp. 106-107), of Annibale Bentivoglio's funeral is also worthy of attention.

²⁰ *Gozzadini*, 1839, p. 78, note 1. — *M. Oretti* in his *Sepolcri nelle chiese di Bologna* (Bologna, Bibl. comunale, ms. B 114, p. 297 verso) reproduces a rectangular shaped sepulchral stone, *consumata in tutto*, on which the Bentivoglio arms alone remain visible. In *Oretti's* time this stone was located *in terra contra la cappella Poggi dalla porta alla Sagristia di San Giacomo*. Was this the original marker for Giovanni I grave?

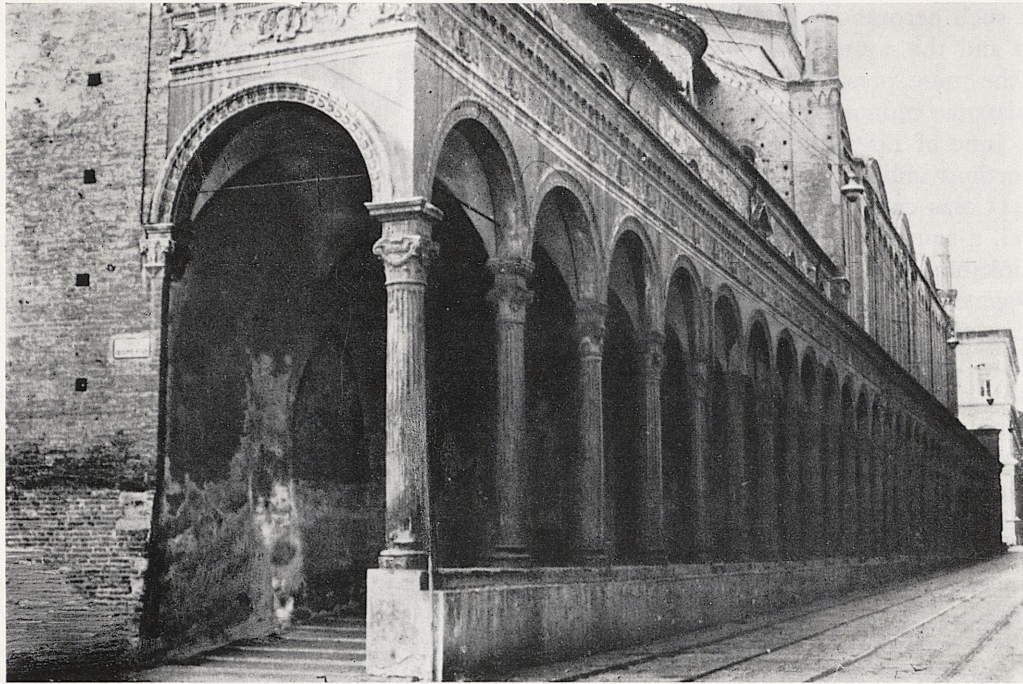
²¹ See *Angela Ottino della Chiesa* (Bernardino Luini, Novara, 1956, pp. 111-112) for further information concerning the chapel which Alessandro Bentivoglio acquired and which Luini decorated between 1522 and 1524. *Ottino Della Chiesa* makes no mention of Giovanni II's tomb, located by *George C. Williamson* (Bernardino Luini, London 1907, p. 54) in the vault beneath the high altar. *Antonio di Paolo Masini* (Bologna perlustrata, Bologna 1666, I, p. 230) stated that Giovanni was buried in the church of San Francesco d'Osservanza.

²² *Supino*, 1938, pp. 332, note 17, where the inscription is incompletely and incorrectly transcribed.

²³ Thus significantly on the second anniversary of the abortive plot by the Malvezzi against the Bentivoglio. See *Ghirardacci* (1933, p. 255) and *Borselli* (1926, p. 110) for a description of the service held in the chapel on November 24, 1489; the first anniversary of the "congiura Malvezzi". All that is now clearly visible of the damaged inscription which runs across the border of both canvases is:

MCCCC ^o	L	X	XXX
↗	V		NO
[Laurenti]us	Co[sta]		Faciebat

I agree with Dott. *Ferdinando Rodriguez* that the last word of the second line might be interpreted as an abbreviation for "novembre." The fragmentary first numeral of the second line is puzzling. Ideally one would like to see the "No(v)" preceded by the numerals XX VII to correspond to the date of the Malvezzi plot. See also above note 18 for additional information concerning the decoration of the lateral walls of the chapel.



5 View of portico, looking West.

sculpture were viewed through painted arches, within which attractively painted landscapes set off the individual scenes. Sometime before 1499 Francia's "Madonna Enthroned" was placed above the altar. It was only towards 1500, and perhaps closer to 1505, that the three lunettes beneath the dome and the areas under the vaults of the triumphal arch were frescoed.²⁴

²⁴ Two inscriptions, important for the iconography of the chapel, deserve to be mentioned; the one almost illegible which runs across the lower border of the right hand wall, the other which is painted on the landscape on either side of the Annibale relief. The latter is transcribed by *Gozzadini* (1839, p. 78, note 2). The problematic inscription on the gate appears to be modern and is based in part upon the plaque placed on the left side of the entrance arch when the Marchese Hyppolito Bentivoglio acquired the chapel in 1676. Only the inscription on the gate transcribed by *Gozzadini* (1839, p. 77, note 2). The statement that the chapel was founded in 1404 (not 1494 as *Gozzadini* wrote), and that it was dedicated by Giovanni II to John and the Virgin, runs contrary to the dedicatory inscription carved on the moulding below the vault and was not derived from the Hippolito plaque. The metal plaque located under the Hippolito inscription dates from the time of Carlo Guido Bentivoglio (1805). The profile portrait bust of Giovanni II Bentivoglio, inscribed "Antonius Bal. Annum Agens XVIII", under the dedicatory inscription of 1445 was attributed to Francesco Francia by *Adolfo Venturi* (*Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. VI, Milan, 1908, p. 799). This attribution is in error as is clear from the inscription which clearly states that one Antonius Bal(atini, according to *C. Ricci* and *G. Zucchini*, *Guida di Bologna*, 6th edition, Bologna 1930, p. 128) executed the work in his 18th year. Although the date 1497, incised under the shoulder, does not appear in the engraving published in the "Eletta dei monumenti più illustri e classici, sepolcrali ed onorarii di Bologna" etc. (ed. *Benedetto Visibelli* and others), Bologna 1838-1844, vol. II, its authenticity is attested to by *Ghirardacci* (1933, p. 243). The Annunciation on the spandrels of the arch above the altar, painted by Felice Cignani, date from Hyppolito Bentivoglio's patronage of the chapel. Only some of the 17th century additions were removed during a partial restoration of the chapel by Prof. Raffaldini in 1952 (*Giornale dell'Emilia*, 30 Ottobre, 1952, p. 4).

Of such decorations that existed prior to 1486, other than the dedicatory plaque of 1445, the tomb and the equestrian monument, nothing is known. Considerable uncertainty surrounds also the more pressing issue of how and by what means the chapel was transformed into a Renaissance monument.

In June of 1486 when Giovanni II dedicated the chapel, it already possessed the physical proportions and architectural features it now bears. But the chapel that Annibale acquired in 1445 was certainly Gothic in style and of somewhat different proportions. A Renaissance chapel, a square surmounted by a dome, with a raised and recessed platform for the altar is unthinkable in Bologna prior to the arrival of Pagno di Lapo Portigiani. It was this collaborator of Donatello and Michelozzo, active in Bologna from 1453 until 1468, who first carried the Tuscan style across the Appennines.²⁵

What exactly was the relationship of the Renaissance chapel, constructed sometime after Pagno's arrival, to the Gothic structure which it replaced? What effect, if any, did the rebuilding of the chapel have on the church of Santa Cecilia which was located directly behind it? Answers to these questions can be found either by consulting published opinions or by reexamining and reevaluating the significance of such evidence as has survived. It seems only logical to preface a reappraisal of the situation by first discussing what has previously been written about the problem.

Giovanini Gozzadini has always been credited with the discovery of the answer to the question of when and by what means the Gothic chapel was transformed. His solution – actually it was not his – has been accepted by virtually all scholars who have repeated his statement that *nel 1483 Giovanni II Bentivoglio per aggrandire la sua magnifica cappella... avea fatta accorciare e voltare la chiesa di Sta. Cecilia... E fama che per grato animo verso i padri Ermitani, che tal cosa gli aveano consentita, facesse poi edificare il bellissimo portico...*²⁶ This is to say that the eastern end of the Renaissance chapel occupies space on which part of the western end of the church of Santa Cecilia had been located. So often has this statement appeared in print between 1839, the date of Gozzadini's text, and 1964, when the most recent monograph on Santa Cecilia was published, that it has almost achieved the status of canonical law. This in spite of the fact that the logic is false, the chronology reversed, the first part of the statement misleading and in part in error and finally that the date 1483 refers not to work undertaken in the chapel but only to the vaulting of the church of Santa Cecilia. Aside from this, the statement simplifies what is in reality a far more complicated situation and concerning which nothing is even so much as implied.

The reader already knows that the portico along Via Zamboni was erected between 1478 and 1481 (Fig. 1, 5). Thus even if Giovanni II had received permission to disfigure Santa Cecilia, he could not have repaid the favour by erecting a portico on which work had been completed some two years earlier. It has also been noted that the date 1483 which Nadi records in his diary, refers only to the church of Santa Cecilia and not even by implication to any work undertaken in the chapel.

²⁵ First documented in Bologna in 1451 but stabilized in the city only after 1453. I. B. Supino, *La scultura in Bologna*, Bologna 1910, pp. 90 ff.; Aldo Foratti, *L'attività di Pagno di Lapo Portigiani in Bologna*, in: *Miscellanea di Storia dell'Arte in onore di I. B. Supino*, Florence 1933, pp. 353-373.

²⁶ Gozzadini, 1839, p. 148, note 3. Repeated, sometimes with slight changes in wording, by Salvatore Muzzi (*Annali della città di Bologna*, Bologna 1842, IV, p. 80), Bosi (1857, p. 272), Giuseppe Guidicini (*Cose notabili della città di Bologna*, Bologna 1869, II, p. 65), Frizzoni (1876/1890, p. 4), C. Ricci (*Guida di Bologna*, Bologna 1882, p. 123), F. Malaguzzi Valeri (*L'architettura a Bologna nel rinascimento*, Rocca S. Casciano 1899, p. 87), Ricci-Zucchini (1930, p. 128), Calvesi (1960, p. 5), Raule (1964, pp. 8-10). Frizzoni, Calvesi and Raule gave the date as 1484, while Muzzi and Bosi cited the year as being 1481.



6 View of S. Cecilia showing the portico, the remains of the trecento door and the late 15th century entrance to the vaulted passageway.

Gozzadini cited the *Raccolta* of Diego Antonio Barbieri as his source of information for the events that unfolded in the year 1483. Yet the truth of the matter is that Barbieri nowhere alludes to the *accorciamento*. Aside from this, Gozzadini did indeed rely upon the text which Barbieri composed between 1760 and 1783.²⁷ Without actually relating the modifications made in Santa Cecilia to the rebuilding of the cappella Bentivoglio, Barbieri linked his phrases in such a way that a cause and effect relationship could be implied. *...poi l'anno 1483 fu refabbricata [Santa Cecilia], e posta col portico d'avanti sulla strada maestra a spesa di suddetti Padri con architettura di Gasparo Nadi e fu alzata tanto, che i Bentivogli fecero di dietro ad una*

²⁷ D. A. Barbieri, *Raccolta di varie notizie su le chiese di Bologna*, Bologna, Bibl. comunale, ms. Gozz. 269, p. 80.

loro nobilissima cappella in S. Giacomo Maggiore...²⁸ But the real source for Gozzadini's assertion lay less in a misreading of Barbieri's manuscript than in a different text altogether.

Sixteen years after Barbieri began to compile his manuscript, Marcello Oretti and Carlo Bianconi issued a revised edition of Malvasia's "Le pitture di Bologna", that celebrated guidebook first printed in 1686.²⁹ Here on page 56 they recorded something found neither in the earlier editions nor in the writings of Borselli, Ghirardacci, Masini etc. Their statement that in ...1483 fu voltata [Santa Cecilia] da Mastro Gaspare Nadi, e fu scortata tanto, che Giovanni II Bentivoglio potè aggrandire la sua suddetta cappella in San Giacomo... seems to have derived from the same source from which Barbieri took his ideas. But the Oretti, Bianconi texts contains in addition the highly influential reference to the *accorciamento*.³⁰ The idea however did not originate with Oretti and Bianconi in the 18th century. Its roots go back to the middle of the preceding century. Although Masini in his "Bologna Perlustrata" (2nd and revised edition 1666) makes no allusion to it, it is found in Matteo Mainardi's little known guidebook which appeared in 1633.³¹ Yet although Oretti and Bianconi did not originate the "rumour" it was, nonetheless, they who popularized the idea which then passed into the mainstream of Bolognese thought.

Is it correct to maintain as Oretti and Bianconi have done, that the Bentivoglio chapel was enlarged and transformed in the year 1483? Nadi recorded only that he vaulted Santa Cecilia in this year, while Ghirardacci and Bianchetti refer to the chapel only to speak of the paintings commissioned after 1486.³² Thus the date 1483, and some authors have recorded the year as 1484, has no documentary meaning whatsoever for the chapel.

For a time I was inclined to go along with Supino who insisted that the chapel was converted into a Renaissance monument during the time of Sante Bentivoglio, Giovanni II's predecessor, who died in 1462. Noting that the architecture and the decorative motifs called to mind the Tuscan style of Brunelleschi and Donatello, and recognizing that Pagno di Lapo was documented in Bologna after 1453, Supino concluded that this was a logical moment for the chapel to have been redesigned (Fig. 2, 3).³³ Supino's arguments although brief are compelling, especially when it is recalled that Sante spent his youth in Florence and that Borselli and Ghirardacci inform us that he made Pagno the architect for his palace in 1460.³⁴ The attribution

²⁸ Barbieri prefaces the passage quoted in the text with the following: "...la riedificarono [Sta. Cecilia] ed era [before the rebuilding of 1359] prima voltata a quel tempo avanti la Piazza de Bentivoglio..." See Raule (1964, p. 8) for an explanation of this passage in which the word *voltata* refers not to the vaulting of the structure but to the axis on which the building was orientated. That Santa Cecilia originally possessed a small wooden portico, subsequently replaced by the great portico which united the two churches, was noted by Bosi (see citation in note 10).

²⁹ (Carlo Cesare Malvasia), *Pitture, sculture ed architetture... della città di Bologna* (ed. M. Oretti, C. Bianconi), Bologna 1776.

³⁰ Repeated in the editions of the "Pitture, sculture ed architetture" of 1782 (p. 58) and 1792 (p. 60). See note 26 for the subsequent citations of the 1776 text.

³¹ Matteo Mainardi, *Origine e fondazione di tutte le chiese che di presente si trovano nella Città di Bologna... già descritte da D. Luigi Sarti da Piano e da Giov. Nicolo Pasquale Alidosi, et hora di nuovo ampliate*, Bologna 1633, p. 16.

³² Ghirardacci, 1933, p. 243; Bianchetti, ms. B 2355, p. 707 (both under the year 1487).

³³ Supino, 1938, p. 314. First noted by Ricci-Zucchini (1930, p. 128). These authors and then later Raule (1955, p. 31) maintained that work on the Renaissance chapel was initiated in the year 1445 but completed only towards 1484 when Giovanni II received permission to shorten the church of Santa Cecilia. Yet Pagno, to whom they attribute the design, did not arrive in Bologna until a decade later. It is impossible to maintain, as Raule has done, that the chapel was designed in two stages. The raised altar platform is an integral part of the design and could not have been added to the square surmounted by the dome at a later date. Raule's is an obvious attempt to reconcile two disparate opinions.

³⁴ Borselli, 1926, p. 95; Ghirardacci, 1933, p. 173.

of the chapel to Pagno is however problematic and has not met with unqualified acceptance. Yet the rationale behind the date proposed by Supino has far more to recommend itself than the date usually assigned to the chapel which is supported only by a statement made late in the 18th century.

In spite of the logic behind Supino's arguments, his case unfortunately may be incorrect. This primarily because both his, and those scholars who accepted the Oretti-Bianconi statement, failed to situate the rebuilding of the chapel in the context of a project of far greater magnitude; one that had only as a secondary objective changes in the shape of the chapel acquired by Annibale Bentivoglio. This project involved the complete redesigning of that portion of Via Zamboni, on either side of which the churches of San Giacomo and Santa Cecilia and the palaces of the Bentivoglio and Malvezzi were located. Such evidence as exists to support this suggestion provides a precise date for the rebuilding of the chapel, points out the exact manner by which this was accomplished, and relates this change to the necessary mutilation of the entire northern portion of the apsidal end of San Giacomo Maggiore.

Neither documentary nor archeological evidence has yet been found to substantiate this hypothesis. Logic demands nevertheless that San Giacomo, like most other gothic churches in Bologna and elsewhere, originally possessed a proper apse with a full orchestration of radiating chapels. As it now exists, San Giacomo is a church with a truncated apse. Chapels on the northern side, corresponding to those on the southern side (chapels 15 and 16) are lacking (Fig. 1). This raises the question, when and for what reason was the shape of the apse so altered that it lost those chapels which had projected out into Via Zamboni.

Sometime prior to 1478 a decision was reached, about which no record has been preserved, to redesign Via Zamboni — then called Via San Donato — to enlarge and straighten out what had been a narrow street, one made even narrower and more irregular by the projection of the apse of San Giacomo. One consequence of this plan was the need to modify the shape of the apse, another, to erect the portico which required a straight unbroken expanse and whose presence also necessitated the raising of the level of the pavement by Santa Cecilia in addition to the other changes already commented upon (Fig. 1, 5). While the church of Santa Cecilia lost little when it was modified to accommodate the portico, and more will be said concerning this, San Giacomo lost a portion of its ambulatory. The final result of the destruction of the chapels of the northern portion of the ambulatory was to allow for the redesigning of the Bentivoglio chapel on a scale which made it larger than the principal apsidal chapel: chapel number 18.

Should the sequence of events suggested here prove acceptable then it shall be necessary to conclude that the Bentivoglio chapel, as it now appears, dates not from the 1460's but probably from the period just after the construction of the portico between 1478 and 1481. This means that it was Giovanni II and not Sante Bentivoglio who was responsible for its reedification and, curiously enough, that the date proposed by Oretti and Bianconi for the rebuilding was perfectly correct.

It is difficult to believe that the three interrelated projects just described — actually there was a fourth which involved the creation of a vaulted passageway between the two churches — were initiated in the 1460's but only completed two decades later. The fact that it was Giovanni II who sponsored the construction of the portico, would suggest that it was he who was the guiding force behind the plan to redesign Via Zamboni and in the process the family chapel as well. This would provide an answer for what otherwise appears so curious and unexplainable. Why a chapel acquired in 1445 bears a dedicatory inscription with the date 1486 and which names Giovanni II as the founder.

If the northern portion of the ambulatory was mutilated towards 1477, a year before the construction of the portico was begun, it is not inconceivable that the rebuilding of that

portion of the ambulatory, of which the Bentivoglio chapel now became its most prominent feature, was not completed until the middle of the ninth decade. The final stages of the redesigning of Santa Cecilia, in the wake of the modifications required by the presence of the portico, were after all not accomplished until 1483 when the church was vaulted. These events, the mutilation of the apsidal end of the church, the construction of the portico and the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel were the prelude to the documented redesigning of the choir and the nave of the church between 1483 and 1499.³⁵ Again, as was true of the building of the portico, it was Giovanni II who, appropriating public funds, acted as patron.³⁶

To return from this necessary digression to the problem which motivated the writing of this article: the effect if any which the redesigning of the Bentivoglio chapel had on the church of Santa Cecilia.

In its original form the chapel that Annibale acquired in 1445 resembled its twin on the other side of the apse: chapel number 17 which still preserves much of its 14th century appearance (Fig. 1). Prior to the loss of the northern portion of the ambulatory, the Bentivoglio chapel inclined, as chapel 17 still does, some 45 degrees away from the near perfect east-west orientation it now shares with the principal apsidal chapel (number 18). Then as a result of the mutilation of the ambulatory, the Bentivoglio chapel was turned on its axis, one wall of the hollow wedge that separated the apsidal chapels from each other was removed and a considerable amount of additional space thereby gained.

But still more space was required to accommodate the projected design for the new chapel. The main area, square in shape, was covered by a dome raised on pendentives. Beyond and below the dome, a triumphal arch gave access to the raised and recessed altar platform; a platform that extends some 180 cm. further east than the altar wall of chapel number 18. This is known for certain because the difference between the projection of the two chapels was masked by a corridor, some 180 cm in depth, tacked on to the lower portion of the exterior of chapel 18 (Fig. 7). The corridor, which rose to the level of the windows of the main apsidal chapel, corresponded roughly in height to the recessed altar wall of the Bentivoglio chapel. This high narrow corridor, approachable from doors in both chapels, led to a door which opened onto the monastery of San Giacomo.

Prior to the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel and before the corridor was added to the exterior of chapel number 18, 125 cm. separated the eastern end of San Giacomo from the western end of Santa Cecilia.³⁷ This amount of space still separates the upper half of chapel 18, above the level of the corridor, from what remains of the trecento terminal wall of Santa Cecilia (Fig. 8). Why the lower two thirds of that wall are no longer extant will be explained shortly. The 125 cm. that until the 1470's had separated the two churches was sufficient to provide access to the monastery of San Giacomo from Via Zamboni, but insufficient to ac-

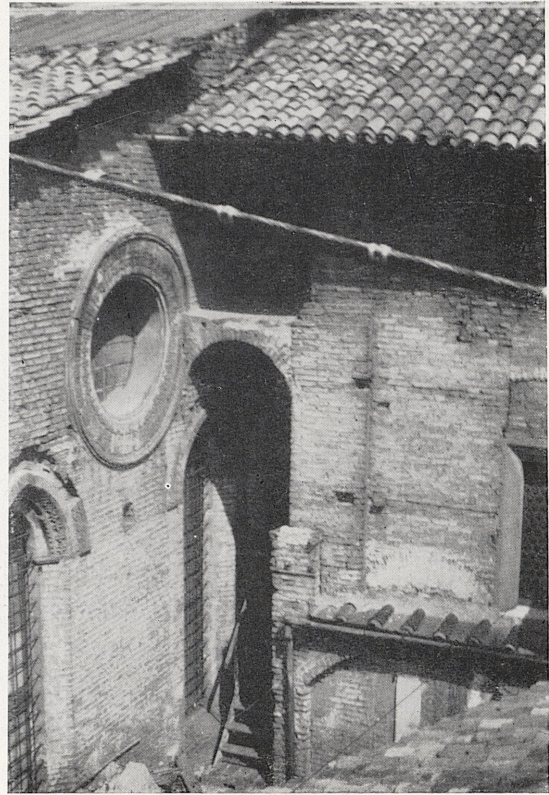
³⁵ *Supino*, 1938, pp. 299-300; *Raule*, 1955, pp. 11-13.

³⁶ *Malaguzzi Valeri* (1894, p. 325; 1899, p. 93). According to Antonio Francesco Ghiselli (*Memorie antiche manuscritte di Bologna*, Bologna, Bibl. univ. ms. 770, vol. IX, p. 19) the *camera di Bologna dono alla fabrica di questa chiesa* (San Giacomo Maggiore) *lire seicento ogn'anno* (between 1478 and 1500). *Malaguzzi Valeri* (1899, p. 93), quoting *Ghirardacci*, sets the price for the erection of the portico in excess of "lire tremilla seicento trentatre." An important and hitherto overlooked document presented to Giovanni II, in 1481 in recognition of his services, by Giovanni Paci da Ripatransone — prior of San Giacomo —, was published by *Luigi Torelli* (*Secoli agostiniani ovvero Historia generale del s. Ordine del gran Dottore di Santa Chiesa*, Bologna, 1682, VII, pp. 319-320).

³⁷ Actually this figure represents the distance between Santa Cecilia and chapel number 18. More space existed between the church and the chapels on the northern side of the ambulatory which were destroyed towards 1477.



7 View from monastery looking North, showing (left to right) portion of wedge separating chapels 17 and 18, vaulted passageway between the churches and the remains of the trecento western wall of S. Cecilia (top center).



8 Situation above the vaulted passageway where the windows of chapel 18 and the remains of the trecento western wall are seen.

commodate a proper entrance to the church. This explains why access to Santa Cecilia had always been through a door on its northern flank. When the altar wall of the Bentivoglio chapel was extended 180 cm. further east and the corridor added to chapel 18 this separation was eliminated and access to the monastery from Via Zamboni no longer possible. The walls of the apsidal chapels of San Giacomo pressed some 55 cm. into the lower two thirds of the western wall of Santa Cecilia which, being some 65 cm. thick could accommodate the intrusion without damage to its structural solidity.

Actually, however, the two buildings never came in physical contact which explains what otherwise would seem so strange. Why the Bentivoglio would have gone to all this trouble to gain so little space when they could as easily have modified the proportions of what is nevertheless an irregular shaped chapel.³⁸ It has been decided as part of the overall project

³⁸ The east wall of the Bentivoglio chapel is 30 cm. thick, thus the physical space of the chapel was augmented only by some 150 cm.; the depth of the triumphal arch on the raised and recessed altar platform. The corridor tacked onto the lower half of chapel 18 is some 166 cm. deep, the outer wall being only 15 cm. thick.

to redesign Via Zamboni to place a vaulted passageway between the two churches. Space for this could be found only by moving the west wall of Santa Cecilia and one consequence of this was to allow room for the expansion of the Bentivoglio chapel. This passageway which served to provide for a more gracious entrance to the monastery, served also as a sort of atrium for Santa Cecilia, whose entrance was shifted from the northern flank to its western end (Fig. 6). This was necessitated in part by the burying of the trecento door in the course of the construction of the portico.

To accomplish this, to erect a vaulted passageway between the two churches, it was necessary to advance the lower two thirds of the western wall of Santa Cecilia some 300 cm. towards the altar.³⁹ The upper third, where the original trecento wall is still visible in its original relationship to the gothic windows of chapel 18, rests above the vaults of this passageway (Fig. 8). Here, in this area carved out of a nave of the church, a shallow choir was constructed.

Even should the proposed reconstruction of the events that took place between circa 1477 and circa 1486 prove imprecise in some of its details, it is nonetheless evident that while the present church of Santa Cecilia is slightly shorter than the church erected in 1359, this was not accomplished to accommodate the Bentivoglio. In the final analysis, having gained a choir, which it had not previously possessed, in addition to a proper entrance on its western end, it is incorrect to apply the word mutilation to the church of Santa Cecilia.⁴⁰

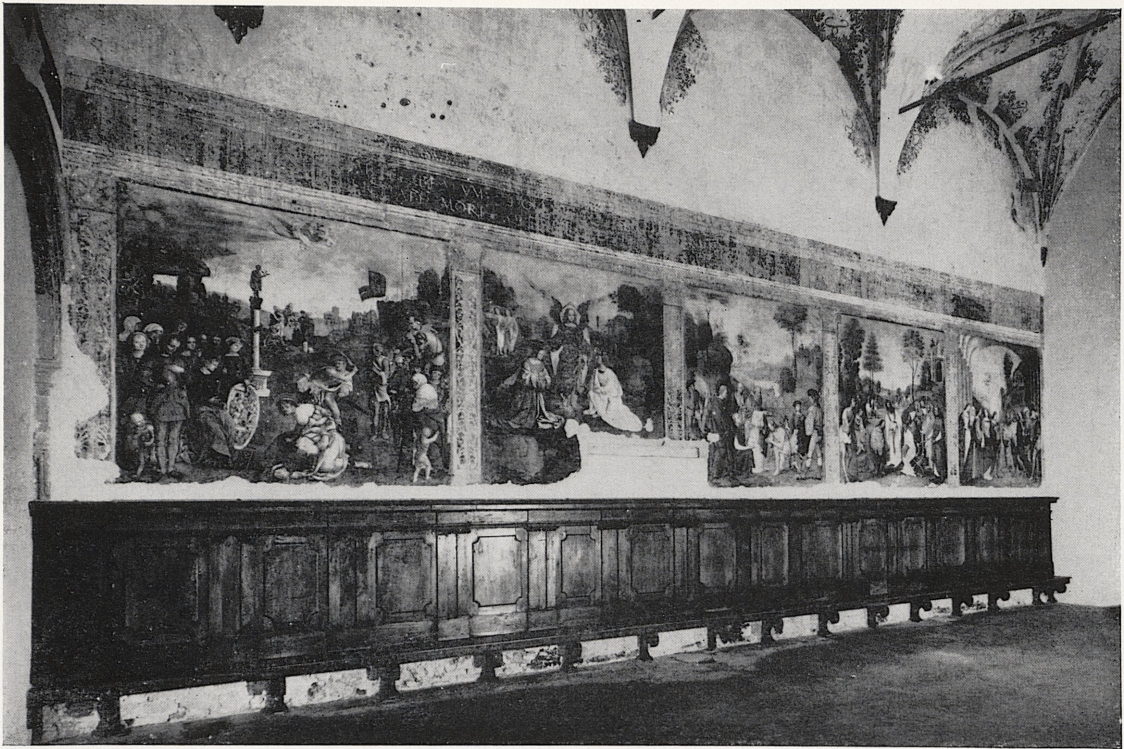
Having pointed up the basic error in that line of reasoning inaugurated by Mainardi and popularized by Oretti and Bianconi and having placed the rebuilding of the Bentivoglio chapel in a proper perspective both with respect to the church of Santa Cecilia and to the redesigning of Via Zamboni, attention may now be focused upon the decorations on the interior of the parochial church.

The architecture of the church of Santa Cecilia is of little consequence either historically or aesthetically. The fresco cycle which it houses, and which portrays ten episodes in the lives of Saints Cecilia and Valerian, is however of great importance for the study of Bolognese painting in the first decade of the 16th century and for the relationship which it bears to earlier and later cycles dedicated to these saints (Fig. 9, 10). Of all the issues that require further discussion, attributional problems, stylistic and iconographic considerations, only one — the question of the date when the cycle was commissioned — will be dealt with here.⁴¹

³⁹ 274 cm. to accommodate the width of the passageway and some 55 additional centimeters to compensate for the projection of the Bentivoglio chapel and the corridor behind chapel number 18.

⁴⁰ On various occasions it has been suggested that, as a result of the "mutilation," the parochial church of Santa Cecilia was reduced in status to the rank of an oratory. The mere fact that Ghirardacci himself was not only a member of the parish, but served as "cappellano" during the 1590's should serve to discredit this statement. See *Sorbelli's* introduction to his edition of *Ghirardacci's* *Historia*, 1933, p. XVII. See also *Luigi Montieri*, *Catalogo di tutte le Chiese, Abaziali, Priorali, Parrocchiali... esistenti nella Città di Bologna...*, Bologna s. d. Beginning on page 17 *Montieri* records all the "chiese parrocchiale con quelle chiese... esistono nel distretto delle medesime Parrocchie." *Julia Cartwright's* suggestion (*Isabella d'Este*, London 1932, I, p. 375) that Giovanni II intended Santa Cecilia to serve as his mortuary chapel derives from *Williamson* who, in his monograph on Francia (London 1907, p. 90) maintained that the "chapel of Santa Cecilia" was constructed, by Nadi between 1481 and 1504, specifically for this purpose.

⁴¹ Too little attention has been paid to the iconographic peculiarities of this cycle and to the distinctively Bolognese treatment of the "Coronation of Saints Cecilia and Valerian" (Fig. 9). The identity of the assistant or assistants responsible for three of the ten frescoes, executed under Aspertini's direction after Costa and Francia abandoned the project, remains highly problematic. In a sequel to this article I shall deal primarily with this question and shall bring to bear on the issues involved two hitherto overlooked drawings and two little known paintings which, together with certain evidence found in the frescoes themselves, should shed new light on this knotty problem.



9 Ex-Church of S. Cecilia, Bologna. View of left hand wall.

A firmly established tradition, with a healthy lineage, places the commencement of work on the fresco cycle in the year 1505. Calvesi has shown that Frizzoni's statement to the contrary was based upon a misreading of his slightly ambiguous source.⁴² Calvesi summoned up as witnesses the entire spectrum of Bolognese chronicles of the 16th through the 18th century, forgetting only to mention one of the earliest and most influential of them all — Cherubino Ghirardacci. In spite of the accord that seems to exist concerning the moment when Giovanni II decided to undertake the decoration of his parochial church, it is nevertheless important to discuss the more precise evidence provided by documents which are contemporary with the frescoes themselves. Ghirardacci, a remarkable historian, on occasion has been guilty of errors in chronology, and Bianchetti, his contemporary, actually discussed the cycle under the following year-1506.⁴³ That both were correct, that the cycle was commissioned towards the very end of 1505, is proven by statements made in letters addressed to Isabella d'Este Gonzaga. The letters in question concern a canvas that Lorenzo Costa was in the process

⁴² Calvesi, 1960, p. 14; Frizzoni, 1890, p. 5. Frizzoni's error was repeated by Supino (1938, p. 323).

⁴³ Ghirardacci, 1933, p. 341; Bianchetti, ms. 2355, p. 779.

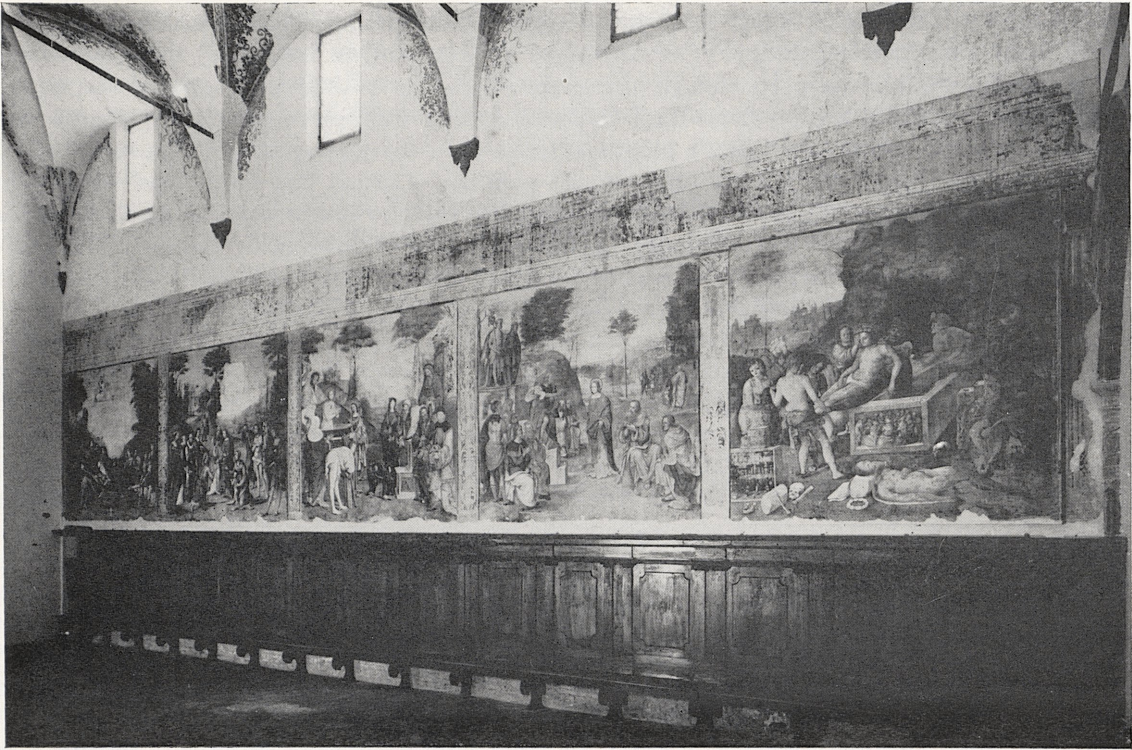
of completing, and that Francesco Francia had been commissioned to paint, for the Marchesa's *studiolo* in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua.⁴⁴

On January 8, 1506 Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio wrote to advise Isabella that Costa would have already completed her canvas had his father not decided to put the artist to work *in la sua nova capella*. This precious notice serves in the absence of other documentation to prove that Giovanni II decided to patronize the church, and to embark upon a program to decorate its lateral walls, only towards the end of 1505.⁴⁵ The letter also suggests the approximate moment when Costa's services were enlisted for this purpose.

Other correspondence between Isabella d'Este and Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio and Gerolamo Casio provides even more precise information concerning the commissioning of the fresco cycle. Antonio Galeazzo's letter of January 8, 1506 fixes the *terminus ante quem* for the undertaking and for Costa's participation. A letter written by Casio five months earlier, on April 17, 1505, provides the *terminus post quem* for both Costa and Francia's entry into the project. All scholars agree that the commission had been awarded to these two artists and that Aspertini was introduced only as a replacement. Thus the date for the commissioning of the cycle revolves entirely around Francia and Costa's availability, which in turn depended upon the d'Este commission.

⁴⁴ It is not possible here to elaborate on the problems that Isabella d'Este encountered attempting to realize her pet project: to *avere ne camerino nostro* (the *studiolo* in the Palazzo Ducale) *picture ad istoria de li eccellenti pictori che sono al presente in Italia*. *Fiorenzo Canuti*, *Il Perugino*, Siena 1931, vol. 2, p. 208, letter dated September 15, 1502. The reader is referred to *Julia Cartwright's* biography of the Marchesa (London, 1932, vol. I, pp. 317 ff.) for a detailed and reasonably accurate description of Isabella's protracted negotiations with Leonardo, Perugino, Bellini, Costa and Francia. No attempt has been made to collate the correspondence and produce a critically annotated edition, in spite of the wealth of material scattered throughout the some 175 letters written by or to the Marchesa between 1500 and 1511. *Cartwright's* text and more recently the biography written by *Jan Lauts* (Isabella d'Este, Hamburg 1952) pull together much of the pioneering work undertaken by *Bragirolli*, *Luzio* and others between 1887 and 1913, without attempting to add anything new or to check the old transcriptions for possible errors. Six books and periodicals are required to assemble the Bellini material which more often than not, as is also true of the Costa and Francia correspondence, is only summarized or at best partially transcribed. Only the Isabella Perugino negotiations have found a proper biographer; *Canuti* who, not only collated the fruits of late 19th and early 20th century archival research but, took pains to verify the correctness of those efforts and to search for new material. Research now in progress, under the terms of a Postdoctoral Fulbright and an ACLS grant to produce a critical edition of the Leonardo, Bellini, Costa and Francia material, as part of a larger study of Isabella d'Este's patronage of the arts. In the appendix at the end of this article reader will find a catalogue of the letters written concerning the Costa, Francia contributions to the *studiolo*. Only those letters having direct bearing on the problem at hand, the dating of the Santa Cecilia fresco cycle, are transcribed. The bibliography for this material is as follows: *Alessandro Luzio*, *Isabella d'Este e Giulio II (1503-1505)*, in: *Rivista d'Italia*, XII (1909); *A. Luzio*, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all'Inghilterra nel 1627-1628*, Milan 1913; *A. Luzio and R. Renier*, *La coltura e le relazioni letterarie di Isabella d'Este*, in: *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, XXXVIII (1901); *Adolfo Venturi*, *Lorenzo Costa*, in: *Archivio Storico dell'Arte*, I (1888), pp. 251-253; *Charles Yriarte*, *Isabelle d'Este e les artistes de son temps*, 6^e article, in: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXXVIII (1896, I), pp. 330-346.

⁴⁵ The phrase "*nova capella*" is slightly ambiguous since the word *capella* can refer either to a chapel within the church or to the parochial church of Santa Cecilia itself (see also note 4). Giovanni II probably acquired patronage rights to the church as may be deduced from the fact that these rights were transferred to Tomasso Salaroli in 1521 (*Zucchini*, 1948, p. 339, note 1). By the seventeenth century patronage was divided four ways as is known from *Malvasia's* discussion of the three altars, in addition to the high altar (1686, p. 90). Where these altars were located in this narrow aisleless building remains a problem, especially as the frescoes, which run the full length of the lateral walls, lie rather low. Two may have been located on either side of the entrance; the other to one side of the high altar. Their presence, combined with the paintings which hung behind them must have considerably disturbed what otherwise was an immaculately simple interior. *Luzio* (1913, p. 207) was clearly in error when he suggested that the *nova capella* mentioned by Antonio Galeazzo referred to the Bentivoglio chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore.



10 Ex-Church of S. Cecilia, Bologna. View of right hand wall.

Although Bentivoglio had notified Isabella early in November of 1504 that Costa was prepared to accept the commission, it was not until January of the following year that the artist received the last of the necessary instructions. A month later, on February 7th 1505, Bentivoglio was able to inform the Marchese of the excellent progress that Costa was making, and Gerolamo Casio assured her, in a letter written on August 17th (1505) that the artist would complete the work before the end of the year. That Costa was unable to meet this deadline is already known from the Bentivoglio letter of January 8, 1506. In fact only a week after Casio's letter had been posted Isabella received the disturbing news, on August 24, 1505, that Costa was gravely ill and Bentivoglio implied that the artist might be incapacitated for at least a month. Then came the letter of January 8, 1506 explaining that the Santa Cecilia frescoes had taken precedence over her canvas. These three letters prove that Costa could not have become involved with the Bentivoglio commission until the end of September and more likely than not until the middle of October at the earliest.⁴⁶

Gerolamo Casio's letter of August 17, 1505, in addition to informing the Marchesa that she would be in possession of Costa's canvas by the end of the year, also dealt with the work which Isabella had commissioned Francesco Francia to paint. Francia had received the *historia*

⁴⁶ See Appendix note 5 for the letter of November 9, 1505 which informed the Marchesa of Costa's recovery and his return to work on the painting. Isabella must have received the finished canvas prior to November 17, 1506, for on that date she wrote to inform Casio that the artist could come to Mantua if he so wished. Archivio di Stato, Busta 2994, Libro 19, letter 245 (partially transcribed by *Luzio*, *I ritratti d'Isabella d'Este*, in: *Emporium*, XI [1900], p. 427).

for his canvas in March of 1505, some two months after Antonio Galeazzo had received final instructions for Costa's painting. On April 2nd (1505) Isabella requested Casio, who was acting as Francia's sponsor, to return the program as she wished to *mutare el sentimento*. Having heard nothing further from the Marchesa, and having been requested by Bentivoglio to give her word concerning Costa's progress, Casio took this opportunity (August 17, 1505) to make inquiries about the *historia* for Francia's painting. Certain that the revised text would be immediately forthcoming, Casio informed Isabella that he had ordered special paint for the canvas and requested that the sum of 25 ducats be sent to Bologna by courier. The Marchesa was also informed that the artist was awaiting her further orders and that in the meantime he had no desire to accept any other work so as to be entirely at her disposal.

How long Francia waited for the program which never arrived, before directing his attention elsewhere, is difficult to determine.⁴⁷ It is certain, however, that like Costa he was not in a position to have undertaken work in the church of Santa Cecilia at any time during the month of August or during the months preceding. In light of the information contained in the correspondence, it is evident that the commission for the fresco cycle did not take place until the fall of 1505. Perhaps the date should even be placed closer to December of that year because of the manner in which reference was made to the *nova capella* in the letter of January 8, 1506.

Further support for a date sometime after the middle of 1505 comes from another source. It was Salvatore Muzzi, writing in 1845, who first suggested that Giovanni II's decision to attend to the patronage of the church of Santa Cecilia was directly related to the series of earthquakes which had shaken Bologna between December 28th, 1504 and April, 1, 1505.⁴⁸ The 19th century historian merely made explicit what Ghirardacci had implied when he stated that Bentivoglio *fa ristaurare et dipingere la cappella di Santa Cecilia rimovendo la trameggia*.⁴⁹ The restoration and decoration, as Calvesi has suggested, went hand in hand.⁵⁰ As the task of restoring the edifice was probably not accomplished until the end of May at the earliest further proof exists to support the contention that the commission for the fresco cycle was neither contemplated nor awarded before the second half of the year. The d'Este correspondence provides the answer to the question of how late in the year this event took place.

If Giovanni II's decision to restore and decorate the church was in the nature of a votive offering for his family and the city having suffered only minor damage during the earthquake⁵¹,

⁴⁷ Writing to acknowledge receipt of payment for the portrait he had painted of Federico Gonzaga (December 12, 1510), Francia expressed renewed interest in executing the painting for the Marchesa's *studiolo* (Raccolta d'Autografi, Busta 7, letter 38; Yriarte, 1896, p. 340 where the letter is transcribed in French). Some weeks earlier, on November 29th, Isabella had asked Casio to determine the artist's willingness to undertake this project (Busta 2996, Libro 28, page 83 verso; *Luzio-Renier*, 1901, p. 63, note 3); a task which Casio gladly accepted (unpublished letter dated December 4, 1510, Busta 1147, letter 163). Seven days after she had received Francia's response, the Marchesa requested Casio (December 19, 1510) to inquire whether or not the artist was pleased with the program that had been devised for the painting (Busta 2996, Libro 28, p. 89 verso; *Luzio-Renier*, 1901, p. 63). Francia wrote to Isabella on January 11, 1511 to request that she forward the measurements so that he could begin work (Raccolta d'Autografi, Busta 7, letter 39; *A. Luzio*, Federico Gonzaga ostaggio alla corte di Giulio II, Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria, IX [1896], p. 564). The artist was informed on February 6th that this information would be forthcoming as soon as possible and he was again requested to give his opinion of the program (Busta 2996, Libro 29, p. 5 verso; *Luzio-Renier*, 1901, p. 64). With characteristic thoroughness, the Marchesa wrote to Casio on the same day, requesting that he remind the artist to render judgement on the merits of the program (unpublished letter, Busta 2996, Libro 29, pp. 5-6). Five months later Lucrezia d'Este Bentivoglio began negotiations with Isabella to allow Francia to paint her portrait (*Luzio*, 1913, pp. 210 ff.) and nothing further is heard about the commission for the canvas for the *studiolo*.

⁴⁸ *Muzzi*, 1842, p. 472.

⁴⁹ *Ghirardacci*, 1933, p. 341. Extensive damage to the church of San Giacomo is also recorded (p. 333).

⁵⁰ *Calvesi*, 1960, p. 14.

⁵¹ *Muzzi*, 1842, p. 472.

the commission might also be thought of as an offering made in the hope of averting yet another and even more dangerous calamity. For the same year that saw the angry forces of nature raised against the city, heard also the thundering voice of Julius II ever more menacingly raised against the Bolognese tyrant. Pope Julius was soon to achieve what his predecessor had desired and almost attained; the subjugation of the Bolognese to papal authority and the ouster of the Bentivoglio.

Whether or not Giovanni II Bentivoglio saw the Cecilia cycle nearing completion prior to his flight from the city on November 3rd (1506), only eight days before the triumphal entry of Julius into Bologna, remains a still much debated question. So complex are the issues involved that it is best to leave any discussion of them for another article (see above note 41).

APPENDIX

The correspondence between Isabella d'Este and Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio and Gerolamo Casio concerning the commissioning of two paintings for the Marchesa's *studiolo* in the Palazzo Ducale (1504-1506).¹

I. November 2, 1504: *Bentivoglio requests the necessary information for the canvas which he has arranged for Costa to paint.*

Busta 1146, letter 29. Yriarte, 1896, p. 331 (partial transcription in French with the date given as November 1st).

II. November 10, 1504: *Although referring to her decision to employ new artists (Costa and Francia), Isabella requests Paride da Ceresara to compose a single "inventione" (for Costa).*

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 135. Luzio, 1909, p. 863.

III. November 15, 1504. *Having received the inventione, Isabella now requests Paride to make a sketch of the program so as to minimize the possibility of the artist misinterpreting her intentions.*

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 137. Luzio-Renier, 1899, p. 89.

IV. November 27, 1504. *Isabella forwards the program, together with other instructions, to Bentivoglio.*

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 143. Luzio 1909, pp. 863-864.

V. December 1, 1504: *Bentivoglio requests clarification of certain details to insure that the canvas will meet with the Marchesa's approval.*

Busta 1146, letter 31. Luzio, 1913, pp. 206-207.

VI. December 14, 1504: *Isabella dispatches the needed information.*

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 156. Luzio, 1909, pp. 864-865.

VII. December 25, 1504: *Bentivoglio again requests information on the exact relationship between the illumination of the studiolo and its bearing on the direction in which the shadows should fall in Costa's canvas.*

Busta 1146, letter 36. UNPUBLISHED (alluded to in a confusing reference by Yriarte, 1896, p. 332).

Illustrissima et excellentissima domina domina honorandissima. Ho rezevuto ozi la litera de V. E. a mi jucundissima et monstrata l'ho al pictore qual si è remaso satisfacto de questo. Il voleva et ricercava per la instructione dil quadro ha a fare : et zia ha cominciato per satisfare alla Ex.tia V. et, de di in di, se ne va sbizarigando in quello, per darli la forma et impressione secondo vorà di poi seguire in la

¹ *The letters, all of which are preserved in the Archivio di Stato (Archivio Gonzaga) in Mantua, are arranged in chronological order. Transcriptions are provided only for those letters having a direct bearing on the problem of the dating of the Santa Cecilia fresco cycle. Summaries and bibliographic citations are provided for the remaining correspondence. Also see text, note 44.*

bontà et elegantia; pur non è ancora chiarito d'il lume qual ha ad havere il quadro posto in lo camarino per non havere il Cancellero resposto alla adimanda in la mia litera circa ciò. Gli è necessario che V. Ex.tia ne dia aviso certo perche li ho dicto che a mi pare il sia contrario al disegno facto : perhò vol essere certificato di epsò lume quale havuto non cesserà di exeguire la impresa, et credo li succederà benissimo, per havere grande animo et maggiore desiderio de gratificare V. E. Nè io li mancharò de sollicitudine, como buon factore di quella alla bona gratia dela quele di continuo, me offero et raccomando. Et sit foelix. Bononie X[XV] Decembris MDIV. Excellentie Vestre

Servitor A[n]tonius Ga[leatius] Bentivolus.

Post scripta. Ringratio V. Ex.tia quanto più posso de la promessa mi fa in volere havere la Violante, racomandata et in bono grado presso Lei, per amore mio et cusi gliene resto obligatissimo. Et la certificato che io ho preso summo contento di quella copia dil balare parlare, et molto più di quello "smerzonare" parendomi termine di maggiore importantia; et cusi desidero intendere sino ove se estende la jurisditione di questo smerzonare da V. Ex.tia, che in vero me sarà gratissimo et sopra il tutto si degni advisarmi se se li comprende dentro il basiare o, si, o non, azò sapia poi como governarmi. Non ardisco interrogare alcuno mantuano de la significatione di questo vocabulo "smerzonare", dubitando non me il smacrano perchè, in fine io lo reputo grasso. A Vostra Ex. cum tutto il core me racomando. Dictus Antonius Galeatius Bentivolus, manu propria.

VIII. *February 7, 1505: Because of the famine in Bologna, Bentivoglio request permission to purchase grain in Mantua. The letter also speaks of the progress that Costa is making on the canvas.*

Busta 1146, letter 109. UNPUBLISHED.

Illustrissima et excellentissima domina affinis, et domina honorandissima, Essendo qui la caristia grande, nè potendose havere frumento de loco alchuno, desideroso de subvenire pur al populo et alli amici mei, che hora è il tempo de aiutarli. Ricercho la Ex.tia del Signor Marchese nostro per una mia, se degni concedermi bona licentia che del suo paese io possa cavare, cum li denari mei, duo millia corbe de miglio, o più o mancho parera ad quella, certificandola che magiore apiacere me ne farà cha se me donasse una città, et questo per aiutare li amici non se morino da fame. Ho ellecto V. E. mio procuratore et intercessore in questo, persuadendome che per una sua parola habia ad essere compiaciuto. Così la prego di core, che per me in questo la voglia essere presso La Ex.tia del Sig.e Marchese quello intercessore. La voria fusse io per lei in uno grande suo desiderio, et operare in modo che sia compiaciuto. A mi sarà il beneficio grande et ad sua Ex.tia sarà pocho damno perchè li è abundantia de miglio et ne restaro ad V. Ex.tia sopra modo obligato, offerendomegli in cio vaglio et posso. Il quadro de V. Ex.tia a questa hora se ritrova in tali termini che, a iudicio mio, finito il sia Li satisfarà et ne restarà contentissima; sollicitarò che presto se expedisca cum tutte quelle gratie sarà possibile darli, et alla Ex.tia V. me raccomando quae bene valeat. Bononie, 7 Februarij 1505. Excellentie Vestre

Servitor Antonius Galeatius Bentivolus manu [propria]

IX. *February 12, 1505: Request for grain denied and pleasure expressed at the progress that Costa was making.*

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 195. UNPUBLISHED.

Domino Prothonotario Bentivolo: Reverende et cetera. Anchora che conoscessimo non essere possibile di potere compiacere la S. V. de extrahere di questo Stato pur un grano de milio per una extrema penuria che d'ogni sorte biave patisse. Nondimeno per non lassare officio alcuno ad procurare la gratificatione sua, havemo voluto presentare le letere di la S. V. al S.re Marchese, nostro consorte, et a boccha parlarne efficacemente di questa cosa. La risposta è stata come la vederà per la letera sua.² Ben ge rincresce non poterla compiacere quod a nuy summamente duole che per lo primo piacere ce ha rechiesto non habbia reportato votivo effecto; ma seguendo il vulgar proverbio "ad impossibile memo tenetur," che per questo sapemo V. S. restarà di nuy satisfacta, repromettendosi che in ogni cosa quale sij in nostra facultà di havere, quella medesima potestà che habiamo nuy. Piacene che'l quadro de la pictura nostra sia in quello bono termine che la ne scrive, non dubitando che l'opera serrà da stare al parangone de le altre cum le quale se accompagnerà, essendo da tal factore sollicitato. Ringraziamola de lo aviso ce ha dato et de la acurata diligentia che la usa et a ley ne raccomandiamo, pregandola ad raccomandationi alli Signori soi patre, matre, fratelli et cognate. Mantue XIJ Februarij M.D.V.[B. Capilupus].

² *Unpublished letter from Francesco Gonzaga to Bentivoglio dated February 12, 1505. Busta 2912, Libro 185, letter 25.*

X. April 2, 1505: Having decided to make certain changes, Isabella request Casio to return the "historia" that had been composed for the canvas which Francesco Francia was to paint.

Busta 2994, Libro 17, letter 223. Luzio, 1909, p. 863.

XI. August 17, 1505. Casio writes to inform the Marchesa of the progress that Costa is making, and to enquire after the revised "historia" for Francia.

Busta 1146, letter 156. First half published by Venturi, 1888, p. 251. Second half, that relevant to Francia, summarized but not transcribed by Luzio-Renier, 1901, p. 62.³

Illustrissima et excellentissima Madama patrona osservandissima, Salute, Il Reverendissimo Prototario nostro Bentivolo ersera me impose fase intendere ad V. Ex.tia come l'opera che faceva il Costa era molto inanti, et che omnino serà finita prima che a Natale proximo, et per il juditio mio V. Ex.tia ne restarà satisfactissima. Me ordinò anchora li facese venire da Firenze, azuro de oltramare finissimo et cusi ho scripto. Si raccomanda pur asai ad V. Ex.tia et cusi fa il Casio pregandola ad mandare il disegno dela tela ha da fare il Franza al quale ho portato, per lavorare in quella, azuro oltramarino finissimo et ho lo apresso di me. Mando Francesco curiero apostata dal Colechio per il resto de li denari del brocato d'oro tirato, che sono ducati centovintiquattro d'oro in oro, et V. Ex.tia potrà, per esso curiero, che è fidatissimo, mandare li ducati venticinque per il disegno al Franza, qual non expecta altro, nè ha voluto piglar lavoro alcuno et se a quella non parvese mandar li denari per qualche respecto, avisimi che io Li pagarò per Lei, et molto mazor summa acadendo; alla quale ex corde mi raccomando. Il prefacto curiero ha ordine da me de non partire senza farlo sapere ad V. Ex.tia. Et anche farli intendere se il colechio lo spaza et, casu che non lo spazase, V. Ex.tia serà contenta per la servitù che gli ha il Casio de far tal opera che sia expedito come vuole il justo eo maxime che fini il tempo al ultimo de marzo. Ala quale restarò obligatissimo et per la quale sono per fare ogni opera pregando Idio per sua continua felicità. Bononie, XVII Augustij 1505. Illustrissime Excellencie Vestre-Servitor Hieronymus Casius.

XII. August 24, 1505: Costa's illness, which prevents him from completing the canvas, mentioned to the Marchesa in a letter which also deals with certain "ortulani ucelli" [apparently a gastronomic delicacy] which Bentivoglio had sent to Mantua.⁴

Busta 1891, letter 121. Luzio 1913, p. 207 (contents summarized and date incorrectly given as April 24th).

Illustrissima et Excellentissima domina mi singularissima et cetera. Visto quanto scrive V. Ex.tia per una sua ad La Signoria de nostra Madre circha li ortulani ucelli; subito ho facto ritrovare l'ocellatore, et ho ordinato che vienga ad V. Ex.tia cum li ucelli. Il serà lo presente ostensore: quella da lui intenderà il vivere di epsi, per farli grassi. Bene me maraviglio de V. E. che in le occurentie sue qui non faccia ricorso ad me, et non ad Madonna nostra Madre, sapendo che li sono buon servitore et prontissimo ad servirla in omni sua occurentia: per questa volta l'haverò per excusata. Dil suo quadro, non li dirò altro, se non che la imputi la tardità alli celi: il pictore è stato et è si gravato de la infirmita, che più volte è stato al puncto de la morte. Io ancora sono stato absente per alcuni mesi, sichè non li è stato il modo a finirlo. Ma quam primum il pictore è revaluto in sanità, lo farò finire, che più lo desidero forsi che non fa V. E. alla quale per infinite volte me li raccomando, et offero; ac bene valet. Bononie 24 Augusti 1505. Excellentie Vestre — Servitor Antonius Galeatius de Bentivolijs.

XIII. January 8, 1506: Bentivoglio requests Isabella to send him an odorific tree and in the same letter informs her of his father's decision to employ Costa for the decoration of the church of Santa Cecilia.

Busta 1891, letter 186. Luzio, 1913, p. 207 (second half of letter transcribed).

Illustrissima et Excellentissima domina mi singularissima et cetera, Quando fui li alli passati, V. Ex.tia per sua benignità mi donò uno albarello de quella sua compositione odorifera, et me è durato sin al presente. Desideroso de haverne ancora, et maxime approximandose il carnevale, la prego se degni mandar mine un'altro albarello, et, quando il fusse bene maggiore del primo lo haverò maggiormente caro, restandoli debitore perpetuo. La Ex.tia V. lo potrà consignare allo presente latore. Dil suo quadro, non li dirò altro; se lo Ill.mo Signore mio patre non havesse messo in opera in la sua nova capella il pictore

³ See text, note 47 for a summary of the correspondence between Isabella and Francia and Casio when an attempt was made 1510 to revive the commission which, for some reason or other never materialized in 1505.

⁴ On a number of occasions Lucrezia d'Este Bentivoglio sent similar presents to Isabella. Busta 1147, letters of August 24 and September 7, 1511.

hora seria già finito. Non mancharò di diligentia et sollicitudine che 'l se finissa, et alla Ex.tia V. me raccomandando; et sit felix. Bononie VIIJ Januarij 1506. Excellentie Vestre — Servitor Antonius Galeatius de Bentivolijs.⁵

⁵ *Between August 24, 1505 and January 8, 1506, as I only recently discovered, Antonio Galeazzo had occasion to speak of Costa's painting. This occurred in a letter dated November 9, 1505 (Busta 1891, letter 129, UNPUBLISHED) in which Bentivoglio expressed pleasure at the Marchesa's recovery from a recent illness and informed her that Costa's health also had improved and that he was now able to continue work on her painting: "Illustrissima et Excellentissima Domina Domina mi singularissima, et cetera. Me piace summamente de la bona reconvalescentia de Vostra Excellentia, benchè lo appetito sipa[sia] ancora prostrato et, per exercitarli, li mando un barilotto de olive per lo cavallaro suo, si como la me richercha et quando le siano poche incolpi il cavallaro qual non ha voluto piu carigho. Se le piacerano alla Excellentia Vostra et mi ne dia aviso: gli ne mandarò in maggiore quantità. Se in altra cosa posso gratificare la Excellentia Vostra me li offero paratissimo et desidero continuamente farli cosa grata per la servitù gli porto. Pretera notifico a Vostra Excellentia che il quadro suo se lavora per essere il pictore resanato, et io lo sollicito de giorno in giorno. Et alla sua bona gratia me raccomandando ac felix valeat. Bononie 9 Novembris 1505. Excellentie Vestre - Servitor Antonius Galeatius Bentivolus."*

An undated and unsigned postscript, presumably written by Antonio Galeazzo, and quite conceivably originally enclosed in this letter, is catalogued in the Archivio as letter 125 (Busta 1891):

"Post scripta. Non voria che Vostra Excellentia credesse per essere stato a longo viaggio [the trip mentioned in letter XII], me havesse smenticato quelle cose mi sono sempre al core. Unde la priego voglia havere in sua bona gratia per amore mio, la Vestra Illustritas [?] el retracto de la quale desideraria sopra modo havere, et quando intenda da Vostra Excellentia lo habia ad havere, mandarò subito il pictore per mandare al exequitione il desiderio mio. Allei mi raccomando quanto piu so et posso. Idem manu propria."

I have thus far been unable to locate other correspondence dealing with the portrait of Isabella which Bentivoglio desired.

RIASSUNTO

In questo articolo l'autore indaga i multiformi aspetti della Cappella Bentivoglio in San Giacomo Maggiore e della Chiesa di Santa Cecilia, due tra i più significativi monumenti del Rinascimento a Bologna. Si studiano con particolare attenzione le influenze della trasformazione e ricostruzione della Cappella Bentivoglio sulla chiesa parrocchiale di Santa Cecilia, situata direttamente dietro ad essa. Si tende a screditare l'affermazione, spesso ripetuta, che la cappella fu eseguita a spese della Chiesa, la cui navata fu accorciata per lasciar posto all'ingrandimento della cappella. La ricostruzione della cappella è vista per la prima volta nel contesto di un progetto molto più vasto e significativo: la ristrutturazione di quel tratto di via Zamboni, ove si ergono i palazzi dei più importanti cittadini di Bologna. La seconda parte dell'articolo solleva la questione della data in cui fu commissionato il ciclo di affreschi in Santa Cecilia, ciclo a cui lavorarono Costa, Francia ed Aspertini. Informazioni tratte dalla corrispondenza di Isabella d'Este sono usate per stabilire un "terminus post quem" per questo lavoro. Di speciale interesse per gli studiosi della storia del mecenatismo durante il Rinascimento è l'appendice contenente un catalogo raisonné della corrispondenza intercorsa con Isabella d'Este riguardo ai progettati contributi del Costa e del Francia al suo studiolo nel Palazzo Ducale di Mantova, progetto che coincise con la loro partecipazione alla decorazione di Santa Cecilia. Un certo numero di lettere, prima sconosciute, vengono pubblicate qui per la prima volta come antipazione di una edizione critica della corrispondenza di Isabella d'Este.

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Fotofast, Bologna: figs. 2, 3, 9, 10. - Villani, Bologna: fig. 4. - Author: figs. 5, 6, 7, 8. Drawing by Ugo Galligani, Florence, based upon I. B. Supino, L'arte nelle chiese di Bologna, sec. VIII-XIV, Bologna, 1932, p. 260: fig. 1.