

THE CHIOSTRO DELLO SCALZO*

by John Shearman

Part I :

The *Chiostro dello Scalzo* is a very familiar monument, but has received remarkably little critical attention. Perhaps it is because we know its architecture so well that we do not readily question the *status quo*. It has so generally been assumed that the building we see today is the original one that this assumption has been the basis, taken for granted, for analyses of the relationship between the architecture and its painted decoration.¹ It is with the belief that analyses of this kind are among the most worth while that the following enquiry is made. The intention is to show that the original situation must have been very different from the present one, and to suggest how it differed. The second task is as important as the first, because it is always important to visualize a decorated structure prior to its decoration : only then can we understand the tension and harmony between it and the new structure that the painter imposes upon it.

The reason for the neglect of this problem is that the decoration of the Scalzo has seldom been considered except as a series of masterpieces of Florentine History-painting. The more truly decorative parts, bases, pilasters, friezes and attics, are no less worth study, not only because their quality is as exceptional in this field as that of the Histories, but also because a closer attention to detail at this point reveals an alarming conflict between surviving decoration and architecture. This conflict poses several questions, some of which can be answered, and leads on to a task of reconstruction; questions are also posed by remarks in the sources, like Richa's, that the terracotta bust of Sarto over the door (fig. 4) was '... *rifatta... nel 1722 in occasione di murare le Logge*'.²

The first problem is set by the style of the architecture itself (fig. 1). The latest possible date for the erection of the atrium of the Compagnia, within which Andrea del Sarto's frescoes were to be painted, is given by the approximate date for the first of these frescoes; at the latest, 1513 or 1514.³ In the early Cinquecento, no parallel can be found for the motif of the coupled columns in the corners of the colonnade; the device is rare, even in later centuries. From a different line of reasoning, the quality of the cutting itself, Paatz was led to conclude that the

* This study was only made possible by help from many quarters. Grants from the Central Research Fund of the University of London have supported repeated visits to Florence. The Soprintendenza ai Monumenti and the friendly custodian of the Chiostro dello Scalzo gave me every facility to study the building in detail. The wonderful photographs here reproduced (figs. 2-5) were specially taken by the Gabinetto Fotografico of the Soprintendenza at the request of Dr. Eve Borsook and myself; through the generosity of Miss Borsook in allowing me a set of her photographs, and the excellence of the photography, I was able to study some aspects of the problem comparatively at my leisure. Finally, I have been most grateful to Dr. Peter Murray, who patiently read the typescript and corrected several errors, to Professor Johannes Wilde who did the same and whose example first made me look at this kind of problem, and to Professor Ulrich Middeldorf for his encouragement, and generosity with his time, and for the hospitality and facilities of the Institute which he placed at my disposal.

¹ e.g. *W. u. E. Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, V, Frankfurt am Main 1953, p. 77*; the same author (p. 83, n. 20) uses the converse of this argument as proof that the present architecture is the original.

² *Richa, Notizie Istoriche...*, VII, 1758, p. 209, quoting from the archives of the Compagnia ('*filza di Contratti alla lettera M*').

³ On many occasions a slightly earlier date for the *Baptism* has been suggested; all that can be established as fact is that this fresco, and the *Charity*, and the ancillary decoration on this wall, preceded the first (*Justice*) for which a credit is entered on Sarto's account with the Compagnia, dated 1st November, 1515.



1 Chiostro dello Scalzo, present state.

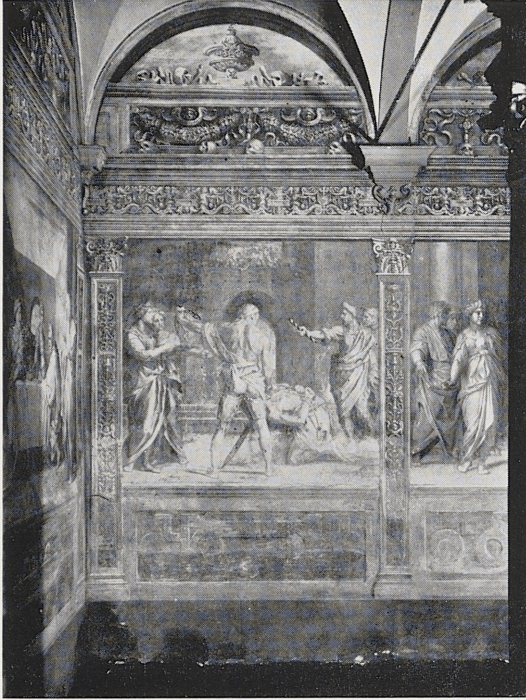
inner column of each pair was a later addition, and he associated them with the alterations of 1722.⁴

The architecture above these columns is, in its fragile and almost neo-classic linearity, as hard to associate with the robust Tuscan Renaissance.

An equally casual glance at the wall-paintings shows again an unparalleled situation. The fresco-cycle is contained within fields which are shaped by the vault into a rounded top, as in the *Chiosticino* of Ss. Annunziata. There, the frescoes fill this shape, and their painted frames follow the arch of the vault, as if to support it; here, the frescoes are rectangular, the painted architecture is trabeated, and meets the vault in such a way as to leave a meaningless segment of *chiaroscuro* sky supporting it.

On closer examination the architecture is indeed disturbing. Obviously, we may remove, but unfortunately only mentally, the broken pediments over each end door, the almost rococo plaster pendants from the brackets which support the vault on the walls, and the rosettes in the centre of each cross-vault, as Paatz suggests; the *Settecento* character of these needs no further demonstration, and they may for the moment be associated with the 1722 alterations. Paatz's

⁴ *Op. Cit.*, p. 76 ff. The following details in the atrium were stated by *Paatz* to be additions: i) The door-frames (Originally narrower — but see n. 31, below); ii) The four inner columns of the coupled pairs; iii) The scroll-work below the wall-brackets; iv) The stucco rosettes in the centre of each vault. The glass roof, of course, is 19th century.



2 Chiostro dello Scalzo, end bay of left wall.



3 Chiostro dello Scalzo, centre bay of left wall.

further observation, that four of the columns, capitals and bases, do not belong to the original set, is also completely convincing when they are seen within the cloister; they are very close copies of the originals, but this cannot disguise their inferior quality. In the bases the crossed bones are fatter, softer, less tightly drawn, and in the capitals the acanthus and volutes are flabbier and cut with less precision. But, what happens if we follow up the conclusion that these were also added early in the eighteenth century? First, the double-dosseret coupling these four to the original corner-columns must also go⁵, and then everything that rests upon it; this will include the double arch which springs across from this point (figs. 1, 4) to the extended bracket on the shorter walls, above the *Virtues*. It is just conceivable that the outer arch of each pair might be original, and supported on the original corner-columns and a smaller bracket; but the unavoidable conclusion is that if the four inner columns are not original, then the whole of the cross-vault over each doorway (that is, the middle one of each shorter side) and the short barrel-vault supported on the dosserets, between the arches, are not original either (fig. 4). This argument may be taken further when we have examined the painted decoration, but at this stage it is also clear that the wall supported on the columns, at least on these shorter sides, must either have been very different or non-existent (fig. 1).

⁵ Since there is no observable difference between these entablatures and those placed on top of the other columns, it would seem reasonable to argue that those also must be as late as the four additional columns (in which case the *entire* vault would be unsupported); but in this case there is a certain limit on the value of observation, as such a simply profiled moulding could perhaps be reproduced with deceptive accuracy, and it is better not to base anything upon such arguments. Most of the carved stone, and the *settecento* plasterwork, has been heavily painted in a colour close to the *pietra serena* of the columns, so it is not possible to deduce much from the stone itself; to a considerable extent this paint blurs the quality of the carving.



4 Chiostro dello Scalzo, detail of section above entrance door.

If the present vault, in the bay by each door, is not the original one, the next question is whether it is possible that it replaces another of the same or different shape.

The argument passes naturally now to the walls and their decoration near the vault. In the first place, we must think away the segments above the last horizontal (figs. 4-5). The type of urn here, although it incorporates (as do the four additional bases) the crossed bones from the bases of the central columns on each side, is conceivable not around 1510, but only as an unworthy representative of *Settecento* taste; the colour of these segments is of a colder grey than any of the variations used in the rest of the decoration. Most important of all, the miserable painter responsible for them had such a crude understanding of light that he would not have been tolerated for one moment in Sarto's atelier; not only is the light gauche and insensitive, in contrast to the beautifully subtle play over the rest of the decoration, but it is inconsistent within each segment, and contrasts in direction in many cases with the uniform light falling on every detail of painted architecture, treated without exception as if it flowed from the centre of the atrium, and so outwards along each wall and corresponding to the natural light. In some cases, but not in all, the lowest part of these segments, the skulls and ribbons, can be seen even from the ground to have been painted *a secco* over the upper ledge of the attic. The reason for this is that the upper, horizontal, limit of the *original* decoration is not on a uniform level; this can be seen most clearly in the corners (fig. 5). The attic is slightly higher on the



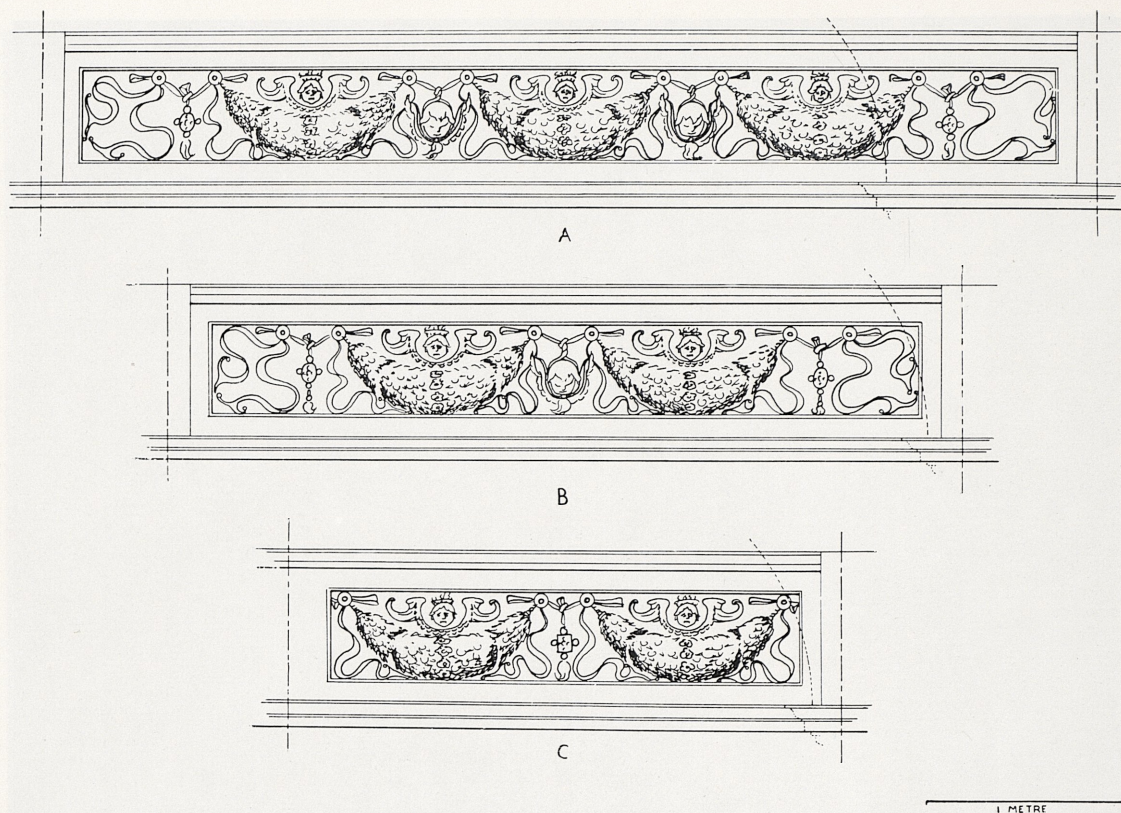
5 Chiostrò dello Scalzo, detail of far left corner.

end walls than on the side⁶, and the painter of the segments attempted to correct this discrepancy. In passing, it may be observed at this point that this discrepancy is strange if the artists of the original scheme were unrestricted above, as at present; the details of those parts of the painted architecture which are clearly original are so meticulously exact that carelessness in this case is unconvincing as an explanation, and it is tempting to imagine some horizontal restriction above in which this inaccuracy occurred, for in the architecture, as opposed to the decoration, such inaccuracies can be found.⁷

One of the peculiarities of the type of vault built in the Scalzo is that its shape at the lowest point, in the corners, is very much slimmer than when it meets a bracket on a side wall; in fact, it vanishes to a point in the first case, but remains as thick as the arch (and therefore approximately as thick as the painted pilasters) in the second (fig. 5). This constructional detail is fortunate in the present argument, since it reveals an important fact about the painted decoration of the attic. The panels of the attic, with swags and winged heads, are most carefully planned so that they come to a natural and harmonious close at the vertical lateral limits; they were, indeed, framed at each end, as above and below. The lateral limit, in each case, is accurately

⁶ This discrepancy is more marked on the left wall than on the right.

⁷ For example, on the end wall, the distance between the door-frame and the left corner is ten inches more than the equivalent distance on the right.



6 Reconstruction of decorative panels of attic; A : above doors and *Virtues*; B : above centre bays of side walls; C : above corner-bays.

determined by the width of the base of each painted pilaster below (fig. 2). The framing is preserved in the corners, where the slimmer vault does not interrupt, but is almost entirely lost above the brackets on the side-walls. I think it could even be argued at this point that this awkwardness makes the present form of the whole of this vault unlikely, but that would be to a certain extent imponderable, and the point is not necessary at the moment.

The panelling of the attic is not entirely rigid in design, but is flexible in small details; for example, on the fractionally lower side walls the winged heads lose their flaming crests, and ribbons and tassels are adjusted so as to harmonize with the skulls placed on the ledge in front. These panels, moreover, have to fit three different situations. The shortest (two swags only) are those over the almost square frescoes in the corners. A rather longer panel was needed above the centre pairs of frescoes on each side wall (two swags extended by a pendant and ribbons). The longest panel is that over each door, for this must also cover the *Virtues* on either side; these have three swags, but they are interrupted, as none of the others are, and at present there is no sign of their natural lateral limits (fig. 4). I have argued above that the vault that cuts this design cannot be original, and the cutting itself seems to confirm this conclusion. If, then, we imagine the vault removed, the design may be reconstructed up to the limit defined by the painted pilaster bases below, so as to complete the swags, and include, probably, another pendant and ribbons (fig. 6 shows the three basic designs of these attic-panels).

If it can be accepted that this was the relationship of decorative panels and pilasters here, as in all other cases, then the conclusions about the vaulting at each end of the atrium can be carried a stage further, so as to exclude three possibilities. Firstly, no vault corresponding in shape to the present one can have been in place when the decoration was made. Secondly, the four new columns cannot be substitutes for others (requiring replacement for some reason) originally nearer the centre (opposite the jambs of the door, for example) because too much of the attic painting remains for a narrower vault. Thirdly, the original vault cannot have rested simply on the corner columns, because in that case the arch between them would have been stretched to an ellipse, which would be a stylistic monstrosity. Therefore there can never have been a vault of any kind over the sections comprising the *Virtues* and the doors. Since a vaulted cloister with sections missing at each end is hard to imagine, it is time to consider exactly what Richa meant by the '*occasione di murare le Logge*', and to see whether there is any further evidence of the alterations of 1722.

II - *The Rebuilding of 1722.*

It is fortunate that there exists an almost complete record of the rebuilding among the papers of the Compagnia, now in the Archivio di Stato in Florence.

In a book of *ricordi*, from 1712-1727, there appears the following resolution of a meeting held on 12th July 1721:

'Ricordo come questa mattina di domenica si sono radunati il P. Governatore e Conservadori di nostra Compagnia in Camera di nostro P. Correttore, et avendo sentito, che la stoia⁸ di compagnia minaccia rovina, e perciò dovendosi rifabbricare, sarebbe bene rifarla in volta, ma di stoia come per altro da molti viene desiderato, secondo il disegno fatto dal Sig^e Pietro Giovanozzi⁹, anno risoluto...' to send an '*avviso*' to each Brother, to inform him that the Compagnia has not the means to carry out this task from its own resources, and to suggest a contribution; a Camarlingo (Paolo Antonio Carigi) was elected specially to look after this fund.¹⁰

At a second meeting held on 31st May 1722, to settle the '*rifacimento della stoia in volta*' and '*altri lavori come mostra il disegno già fatto dal S^e Pietro Giovanozzi*' a certain Filippo Gori was elected Capomaestro Muratore.¹¹

However, immediately after the first meeting, the Circular, or *avviso*, referred to was printed and distributed to members; there are several such circulars of the Compagnia preserved, but they were usually to warn the Brothers about religious functions and duties, such as the veneration of the Madonna of Impruneta. On this occasion, however, it read like this:

'FRATELLO IN CRISTO DILETTISSIMO.

L'Imminente rovina, che del continuo si dimostra la stoia della nostra Compagnia del Nome Santissimo di Giesù sotto la protezione di S. Giovambattista detta lo Scalzo, e l'impotenza della medesima a riparare a così grande spesa, ci danno impulso a ricorrere alla benigna carità di VS. acciò come

⁸ *Stoia*, or *Stuoia*, usually a reed-matting, but by extension also a '*Graticcio di canne palustri schiacciate, intrecciate, e intonacate per soffitare le stanze*' (Zingarelli, Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana, 5th ed., 1936/7, p. 1554); the rare meaning of a colonnade — an Italian form of *Stoa* — (Scarabelli, Vocabolario Universale della Lingua Italiana, VII, Milan 1878, p. 1582) will not make sense in any of the following documents.

⁹ Florentine architect, 1680-1734: to judge by *Thieme-Becker's* entry, not a very familiar figure.

¹⁰ Archivio di Stato, Florence, Corp. Rel. Soppr. 1196, No. 17, Libro 'G' c. 227; see also No. 19, Libro 'C', *Ricordi e Deliberazione de' Conservadori della... Compagnia*, c. 103, where the identical information is placed under the date 13th July.

¹¹ Libro 'G', c. 250, libro 'C', c. 111 (also dated 31st May). On 30th June, 1722, it is recorded: '*... si è dato principio alla fabbrica del rialzare la Compagnia, e rifare la stoia in volta, tutto a gloria di Dio, e di nostro S. Padre...*' (Libro 'G', c. 252), while by January 1st, 1723, '*... è quasi terminata la nuova fabbrica*' (c. 263).

affezionato, si voglia compiacere di concorrere con abbondante limosina a tal rifacimento, mentre con ciò si verrà ella ad accertare d'aver per scorta sicura per l'anima sua il nostro Santo Padre, che chosi come fu Precursore del nostro Redentore, così anco farà della medesima buon protettore; E dovendosi quella rifabbricare, si desidera rifarla per più decoro, e abbellimento in volta secondo i disegni già fatti da Periti Architetti.

Per minorargli l'incomodo, verrà da lei uno dei fratelli destinati a pregarla a voler sottoscrivere in un foglio a questo effetto consegnatoli con esprimere la somma della limosina che averà pensiero di contribuire, per poi pagarla in mano del medesimo fratello, o del Sig. Paol Anton Carigi destinato Camarlingo di queste limosine.

La preghiamo adunque per amore delle Piaghe del Crocifisso, a concorrere con larga mano, acciò con tal dimostrazione di lei possa *dilexi decorem domus tuae*; E l'immenso Remuneratore gle ne renderà centuplicato il merito, e così sia. Viva Felice.

Di nostra Compagnia li 13 Luglio 1721.

Devotiss. Servi nel Signore
Il Governatore, e Conservadori'.¹²

A year later, 12th July 1722, a contract was drawn up between the Compagnia and the Capomaestro, Filippo Gori; this gives a fairly clear picture of the work now to be undertaken, which had grown considerably from the first, modest project. This is a summary¹³:

- I. 'Che a carico, e spesa di detto maestro Filippo Gori sia il rifare la suddetta Stoia in volta, e fare rispettivamente tutti gli altri lavori e spese necessarie non tanto di materiali, che di maestri muratori, manuali, legname, legnaioli, Ferro, et ogni altra cosa necessaria per la totale terminazione della Fabbrica... e che si deva regolare secondo il sopradetto disegno fatto da detto Sig^c Pietro Giovanozzi...'
- II. 'Che il muro laterale da farsi per rialzare tutto il cerchio della Compagnia, e il ricetto davanti la Compagnia, e lo stanziole dietro l'altare che e di grossezza a di 5/6, che va rialzare almeno braccio 5... and this wall is to be plastered etc. in the passage which is to go, on the street side, from above the Porticina to a new room to be built above the 'ricetto dello scrivano'.
- III. This gives details of the 'Tettoia, che copre tutto il Vaso¹⁴ della Compagnia diffatta, e rifatta...'
- IV. 'Che il tetto, che copre il ricetto avanti la Compagnia deva essere rimesso all'altezza di che sopra...' etc.
- V. Details of the 'Palco da farsi... sopra al med^o ricetto'.
- VI. Elaborate instructions to the carpenters about the 'Stoia, che doverà rifarsi sopra tutto il vaso di Compagnia in volta...' (to be made of deal of good quality, and of 'canne grosse, e stagionate').
- VII. 'Che sotto il palco delle stanzi da farsi di nuovo sopra il ricetto avanti la Compagnia vi si deva fare la stoia a Cielo di Carozza (i.e. an elliptical vault) ben centinata, e di canne ben condizionate'.
- VIII. and IX. Details of the cornices for the *Compagnia*, and beneath the 'Stoia da farsi nel ricetto...'
- X. Serviceable stone in the *Compagnia* is to be re-adapted according to Giovanozzi's plan, and deducted from the cost.
- XI-XIV. These refer, respectively, to the stonework above the porch, the Staircase to be erected 'dietro all'Altare di Compagnia', the ceiling of a small room behind the *Compagnia*, and the window for the room above the clerk's *ricetto*.
- XV. 'Che tutto il legname col quale è formato la stoia di presente', and other materials provided by the *Compagnia*, are to be valued and deducted from the cost.
- XVI-XIX. These give, respectively, provisions for disputes, a finishing date (October, 1722), an immediate payment on account to Filippo Gori, and the procedure to be followed in the event of his death. Then follow the signatures.

It will be noticed that this contract, like the *avviso*, makes no mention of the *Cortile*. The *Compagnia*, when referred to thus as a place rather than as the brotherhood, means the main room beyond the atrium, which contained the altar, with Lorenzo di Credi's *Baptism* and the

¹² A printed copy is bound in Libro 'G', a.c. 227; it had been addressed, by hand, to *Sig. Michele Cappuccini*.

¹³ Taken from a copy in A.S.F., Corp. Rel. Soppr. 1189, No. 2 (c. 96v. ff.), which contains translations of all 'testamenti, contratti etc, appartenenti Alla Compagnia'; there is an identical copy in 1189, No. 3, c. 88r. ff.

¹⁴ cf. *Richa*, Op. cit., p. 206, talking of the room beyond the atrium and the 'ricetto', but before the 'Luogo vecchio' (the original chapel): 'Segue il nuovo vaso assai ampio della Compagnia, alla quale fu rifatta la Volta nel 1722, col disegno di Piero Giovanozzi' etc.; it is the 'Church' in *Paatz's* account, p. 76. 'Vaso' seems to be a word used specially for the main room of a *Compagnia*; cf. also *Bocchi-Cinelli*, Bellezze..., Florence, 1766, p. 480, talking of the *Compagnia del Nicchio*: 'vaso bellissimo'.

Sangallo crucifix upon it¹⁵; this identification seems certain from Richa's description not very much later.¹⁶ It was initially the deplorable state of the ceiling here that decided the Conservatori on a scheme of reconstruction; by the date of the contract, this scheme had been expanded so as to involve a general rebuilding of the rooms beyond the atrium: the *Compagnia*, the *ricetto*, a small room behind the *Compagnia*, the staircase, and rooms and a passage above. In addition, this necessitated the raising of the outside wall. Accordingly, in the book of *Debitori e Creditori* from 1697, on 4th August 1722, among the *Creditori*, appears the following entry:

'7801.7.6. sono per più lavori di Pietre, stucchi, muramenti, ei legnami, e maestranze così regolati di comune consenso del Sig^c Pietro Paolo Giannozzi... il tutto occorso nel fare la Stoia di Compagnia in volta, e le stanze sopra il ricetto dello Scrivano, e quelle che sono sopra la Sagrestia...'.¹⁷

On the same account, and in accordance with the contract, the following withdrawal appears, dated 4th August 1722:

'Filippo di Geri Gori dare... a conto della Fabbrica della rialzatura della compagnia... 1400'.¹⁸

However, some time in the Autumn of 1722 it must have been decided to extend the reconstruction still further, so as to include the atrium. Another entry under *Creditori*, on 31st December 1722, makes the first mention of the subject of this article:

'3129.12.4 e sono per più lavori, maestranze, e d'altro..., dal Sig^{tc} Pietro Paolo Giovannozzi... il tutto occorso nel fare le Volticine intorno al Chiostro, e rialzatura del tetto sopra della medesima...'.¹⁹

There is then, in the same book, a separate account headed '*Fabbrica del Cortile Dare - 1723*' (the credits of this account refer only to the incoming monies from the fund resulting from the appeal, and give no details of the work in progress).²⁰ The following are some extracts of the withdrawals:

1723, 3rd April: 175 lire to Giovannozzi for stone for 'la porta di su la strada con i due pilastrini da piedi un per parto', and for 2/3 of a day's work 'per altro servizio'.

26th June: '56 - Gio. Paolo Bini scarpellino a conto delle quattro colonne con suoi piedistalli...'

21st December: '18... Bini scarpellino per no. 9 giornate a traforare (drilling out) le colonne, Capitelli, e Legle (?) de d. Cortile (presumably the original set) per renderlo più stabile...'

1724, 12th January; '112 - per conto delle quattro colonne con le sue base, e capitelli, rozzi aggiuntate nel Cortile così d'accordo con Gio. Paolo Bini scarpellino...' (i. e. for the completion, or assembly in the Cortile, of the columns which arrived with their capitals and bases only roughly cut; this was presumably necessary in order to make exact facsimiles of the columns of the original set).

9th April: a payment to the 'imbiancatore per avere imbiancato la Volta del Chiostro, e sopra, e dare colore d'aria al tetto di dentro...', for painting the windows, etc., and finally '(per avere) dato di colore di pietra alle colonne, e capitelli del Chiostro...'

14th June, and 24th July: payments to 'Francesco Torrini scarpellino per prezzo n. 6 lastrico occorso per coprire il padiglione' and 'per prezzo 4 3/5 di pancrino' (= banchina, bench).

6th August: payment to 'Maestro Romolo Danzerini per n. 12 pezze fatte in rassettare le pancrine per il cortile...'

11th August: '30 lire - Gio. Panaiotti Pittore per avere dipinto l'urne, e altro nelle lunette del Cortile...'

29th August: '14 lire - Panaiotti... per giornate cinque compresoci lire 12 di materiali occorso nel condizionare i fregi intorno alle pitture...'

¹⁵ During the building operations the demolition got out of hand, and there was a fall of masonry from the 'ricetto' into the 'Compagnia', on 6th September, 1722. The altar-table itself was damaged, the crucifix ruined, and the salvation of the *Baptism* was held to be miraculous (Libro 'G', c. 256).

¹⁶ See n. 14.

¹⁷ A.S.F., Corp. Rel. Soppr., 1200, No. 33, Libro 'G', c. 174; against this entry is the date '1728' in the margin.

¹⁸ Loc. cit. From the same account there are further withdrawals, for 'un moggio Calcino' etc., from 14th September 1722 until 17th July 1743; the reason for this delay was the difficulty the *Compagnia* found in raising the money.

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

²⁰ 1220, No. 33, c. 183 and 197.

29th August: '24 lire - Alessandro Domenico Geri stuccatore...' for days and materials expended in 'ricondizionare di streccogli Sgabelletti (worn-out foot rests) sotto lo pancrino del Cortile, e rintonacata dove aveva a dipingere, e aggiust^o la porta, e finestra...' etc.

26th September: '60 lire... Gio. Panaiotti... per aver ridipinto, e ricondizionato le pitture basso del Cortile, e dato di color di marmo sotto le pancrine...'

There then follow several payments for work in the chapel, on the street-façade, lanterns, etc., and probably the task that marked the completion of the work in the atrium was this:

27th December, 1724: '14 lire - Alessandro Domenico Geri per avere rifatto di terracotta l'effigie d'Andrea del Sarto, e messolo al suo luogo...'

Panaiotti's reconditioning of the decorative parts of the original painting was only the humble sequel to a much more horrifying piece of work. In a book of '*Ricordi e Deliberazione de' Conservatori della... Compagnia*', there is the report of a meeting held on 8th December 1722, by which time it was probably already decided to rebuild the atrium; it begins with a reference to 'la tavola tanto rinomata dell'Altare di nostra Compagnia Pittura di Lorenzo di Credi...' which had already been restored...

'dal R. Sig^{re} Niccolò Vaiani Sacerdote fiorentino che possiede alcuni segreti per ripulire le pitture in ogni genere, ed avendola resetta a meraviglia, in forma che non si riconosce in modo alcuno dove era guasta...²¹ in grado che pare si ce dipinta di fresco (!)... e pareva conveniente il fargli ripulire anco le Pitture tanto celebre di nostro Chioistro, che per nostra disgrazia, e per il tempo, o per accidenti si sono ridotte che a pena si discerne in molti luoghi massime, che vi sive pittura e può averebbe creduto...²² tanto più che aveva fatta sperienza in quella di cantonata da capo a mano ritta per la parte della strade di mano di Francabigio in un terzo della medesima... (i.e. the *Meeting of Christ and the Baptist*) Deliberorno... e ordinarono che... (Vaiani) rilavare, e ripulire tutte le pitture del nostro Chioistro...'²³ (Payments to Vaiani 'di aver ripulite le nostre pitture del Chioistro' are dated 6th January and 28th February 1723, and 6th January 1725).²⁴

At the same meeting a Brother made the much more commendable suggestion that, now that 'la fabbrica della restaurazione della Compagnia era a buon' porto, di terminarsi', the decorations, and especially the *stucchi* should in future be protected from the 'conficcatura, si nella muraglia e soffitta della Compagnia, come del Riceto, e nel Cortile...' that had been allowed in the past. Both Bottari and Richa deplored the results of the cleaning of the frescoes that took place in 1723/24.²⁵

To summarize, then, the changes and restorations within the atrium, as they are revealed by this documentary record:

- 1) The vault which we see now was built (Note: fare, not rifare), and the roof above raised.
- 2) Four new columns — as Paatz so acutely observed — were made to support this new vault; stone benches, which are no longer present, and which indeed have not been suspected to have been present, were repaired; the doors were re-set and the bust of the *genius loci*, Andrea del Sarto, remade.
- 3) The lunettes beneath the new vault, and other less conspicuous parts, were painted; the surviving parts of the original decoration were very thoroughly 'restored'.

²¹ See n. 15.

²² The script becomes illegible at this point. The preceding remarks bear out Richardson's observations only a few years before: e.g. 'The Pictures are almost spoil'd... one can hardly see where the figures have been, None of the faces remain...' etc. (An account... etc., London 1722, pp. 82-85).

²³ 1196, No. 19, Libro 'C', c. 119.

²⁴ 1200, No. 33, c. 180 and 197.

²⁵ Richa, Op. cit., p. 209: 'e per fine di queste Pitture debbe notare altra disgrazia per due fiata cagionata dalla sollecitudine de' Fratelli in farle nettare dalla polvere nel 1617, e nel 1720, che non essendo mestiere di ogni Pittore, piuttosto ne è avvenuto loro dello scapito, che del giovamento'; Bottari, ed. of *Borghini*, Riposo, 1730: 'il rimanente poi (... otto anni a dietro...) fu con gran detrimento lavato... furono tolte via le tinte migliori, e lasciate scolorite affatto'. For a thorough discussion of these sources, and those concerning earlier restorations, see *U. Procacci*, Di uno scritto di G. Bottari sulla conservazione e il restauro delle opere d'arte, *Rivista d'Arte*, 1955, xxx, p. 245 and n. 24.

III – *Reconstruction.*

Unfortunately none of the many written accounts of the Scalzo frescoes before the alterations of 1722 refers with any precision to the building. Vasari's account is in fact more explicit than the rest, but is nevertheless only this :

'Solevano ragunarsi in Fiorenza, in capo della via Larga... gli uomini della Compagnia che si dice dello Scalzo, intitolata in San Giovanni Battista, la quale era stata murata in que' giorni da molti artefici fiorentini ; i quali, fra l'altre cose, vi avevano fatto di muraglia un cortile di prima giunta (an atrium in the strict sense of the word), che posava sopra alcune colonne non molti grandi...'.²⁶

Probably the last to record the original situation was Richardson :

'The pictures are in a Cloyster which encompasses a little square Court: in two opposite sides of this square are Doors over against one another... The Monastery seems deserted; I found no living Creature there; I enquired a good while before anyone could tell me where it was, and at last had great difficulty to come at the keys'.²⁷

Usually it is described only as 'Cortile', 'Chioistro', 'Claústro', or vaguely : 'Compagnia'.²⁸ Perhaps the lack of attention focussed on the architecture is itself significant, and a reflection of a modest character.

However, the remains of the painted decoration give a clue to the general nature of the original building. The frieze (fig. 5) is a running design which was clearly not intended to be interrupted in any way. The attic, however, is panelled, as explained above in Part I; between each framed panel there is a gap, and it is now impossible to say whether the painting continued right across here. It is possible that it did, and that the caesura between the decorated panels repeated in the attic story the rhythm established by the pilasters between the other decorative panels which once filled each space below the Histories. Alternatively, there may have been an obstruction on the wall here, such as a stone bracket, opposite and somewhat above each capital; the partly fictive, partly real, plastic sequence in this case would imitate even more closely that above the cornice in an antique attic, like the one on the Arch of Constantine. In the corners, enough remains of the framing for it to seem unlikely that there was ever a bracket here, which one would not, in any case, expect.

The horizontal termination above, of the original decoration, in itself suggests an impediment here, as has already been said, and this is supported by the detail that has also been mentioned, the differences in levels at the corners; this is an inaccuracy that is unique in the decorative scheme, and it must surely have had some physical cause.

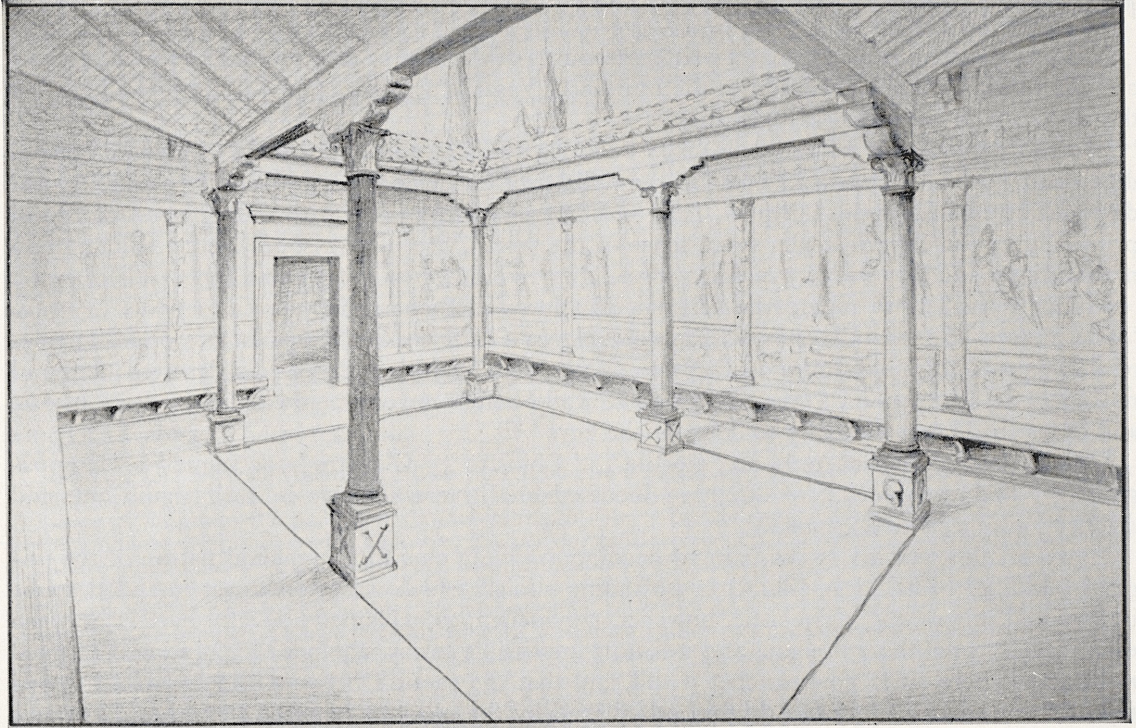
The six original columns are too slender to carry a stone vault. Just as the original painted decoration is inconsistent with a cross-vaulted arcade, so is the very wide intercolumniation that would then have existed at each end.

There is one type of cloister-treatment, a sufficiently common one around 1500, which seems to satisfy the requirements we have in this case. In many places in Tuscany, where there was no floor above the colonnade, and where it was also perhaps desirable to save money, there was placed directly on the columns a tiled and timber roof. The most common principles of construction seem to fit in well with the painted decoration. There is usually (but not always) a stone bracket opposite the column, and these brackets support a beam placed directly along the wall (and it is these beams that I imagine were out of alignment at the corners);

²⁶ *Vasari, Le vite...*, ed. Milanesi, Florence 1880, V, p. 9.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 82.

²⁸ e.g., respectively, by *Bocchi, Anonimo Magliabechiano, Carducho* (*Dialogo de la Pintura...*, ed. Madrid 1865, p. 39), and *Baldimucci*.



7 Chiostro dello Scalzo, suggested reconstruction of original state.

from the beams the sloping timbers run down to the beam supported by the columns, with the guttering. These outer beams are usually lifted off the capitals by a wooden bracket. In the case of the Scalzo, the distance between the corner columns — the intercolumniation impossible for an arcade — would easily be spanned in this way, and it is frequently found that the proportions of the opening made by a wooden roof are considerably over-square.

It would obviously not be permissible to argue very much from the credit entry to Giovannozzi dated 31st December 1722, but at least the most straightforward interpretation can be said to agree, so far as it goes, with these conclusions: he had to raise an already-existing roof, and erect a new vault beneath it.

From several scattered examples of Renaissance *cortile* of this type, it is possible to fill in, in the imagination, the details; a hypothetical reconstruction, based upon such examples, and which can offer no more than suggestions even if the above line of reasoning is correct, is reproduced here as Figure 7.

One other feature of the original state of the atrium has an important place in this reconstruction: the bench, which ran round the walls, and which is allowed for in the decoration. Like the one which still survives in the Sistine chapel, it formed originally the podium upon which the fictive pilasters were erected. The documents which prove its existence do more than explain the gap in the lower part of the decoration. However many details of the design of the roof must remain problematic, what seems certain is that it gave a powerfully horizontal emphasis to the appearance of the atrium. When Andrea del Sarto first saw his problem on the bare walls of the Scalzo, I believe that what he saw was an entirely rectilinear setting. The horizontal of the beams and ceiling was underlined in the benches below, and balanced by

the verticals of the columns. It seems that not only his decorative, but also his narrative frescoes were harmonized most carefully with this setting; the first point is of course obvious, the second perhaps less so. But it is a fact that the Scalzo frescoes — the *Histories* — were composed on subtly different principles from those, for example, in the *Chiostricino* of the Servi. In the latter, the figure-grouping constantly echoes the looping curves of the arcade²⁹, while in the former the predominant pattern of verticals and horizontals has been made meaningless, and apparently unmotivated, by the change to an arcaded setting³⁰ (figs. 2, 3).

To summarize, it seems fair to say that to appreciate fully the qualities of the frescoes of the Scalzo, a mental reconstruction is required perhaps even more drastic than that needed in the case of the *Sala di Costantino*, to take a contemporary example. If it seems that the alterations of 1722 did violence to the painter's intentions, this impression is perhaps a little modified by the reflection that we probably owe the survival of the frescoes to these alterations, that an effort seems to have been made to raise the vault so high as to destroy as little as possible of the original decoration, and finally that Giovanozzi accomplished his task with admirable ingenuity, as well as tact, and for it he deserves to be better known.³¹



8 Late 16th century copy after *Faith* in the Chioistro dello Scalzo. (Louvre, Cabinet des dessins).

²⁹ How often, for example, is the ground-plan of the figure-group curved; trees, hills, and buildings echo these curves in many cases.

³⁰ In each case the later frescoes in each cloister show a more subtle compositional response to the architecture; the Scalzo frescoes may in this respect be compared with the lost *Vineyard* frescoes.

³¹ *Paatz* (Op. cit., IV, p. 679) compares the atrium of the Compagnia of S. Pierino (now the *ricetto* of the Cinema Lux !) to that of the Scalzo, and states that the latter was its prototype. It seems that this relationship must be reversed: the S. Pierino solution, built c. 1580, was Giovanozzi's model. In the case of S. Pierino, where the vault is original, the intercolumniation at the ends is less wide, and the frescoes, by Poccetti and others, are shaped to fit the curve of the vault, like Sarto's in the *Chiostricino* of the Servi.

One other, minor, correction to *Paatz's* entry on the Scalzo: he states (see above n. 4) that the present door-frames are also additions of 1722, but I think that only the broken pediments above were added then. The relationship between the niches of the *Virtues* and these frames is precisely the same as that between the niches and fictive pilasters outside them, and the present frames are shown in a pair of drawings of these *Virtues* in the Louvre, which seem to have been made around 1600 (Cabinet des Dessins, Inv. 1744 — one of a set of copies after the Scalzo fresco cycle which belonged to Crozat); see fig. 8.

RÉSUMÉ

Der Aufsatz handelt vom Problem des Verhältnisses der Architektur des Scalzo-Hofes und Andrea del Sartos malerischer Dekoration. Im ersten Teil werden Inkongruenzen zwischen der Malerei und dem Bau in seiner heutigen Form aufgewiesen. Teil 2 bietet die Belege für

einen Umbau, der um 1722 stattfand. Der dritte Teil schliesslich bringt Vorschläge zur Rekonstruktion des ursprünglichen Baus und erläutert das Verhältnis der Malereien zu ihm. Die Beweisführung stützt sich einmal auf Beobachtungen am Original, zum anderen auf Dokumente des Staatsarchivs. Es wird gefolgert, dass der ursprüngliche Bau weder Arkaden noch Gewölbe besass. Insofern steht die heutige Architektur in grundsätzlichem Widerspruch zu den Absichten des Malers.