Arnold Witte

San Martino ai Monti as a Tridentine Theatre. Dughet's Frescoes as a Visualization of a *sacra rappresentazione*

Abstract

The church of San Martino ai Monti in Rome contains a fresco cycle painted between 1647 and 1651 by Gaspard Dughet and Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi. Prior research on the cycle suggested it represented the Carmelite claim to the 'Elianic Succession', which traced the institutional history of the order back to 930 BC. The basis of this assumption was found in an erudite Latin treatise that evoked a theological discussion with the authors of the *Acta Sanctorum*. This essay probes two questions raised about the cycle by a manuscript with the text for a theatrical play entitled *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, written for the Carmelite prior general Giovanni Antonio Filippini and dated 1647. Firstly, the manuscript shows that the cycle addressed both a vernacular public and the Carmelite community itself: to the former it offered instruction in general Christian virtues; and to the latter it demonstrated the validity of the three monastic vows. This sheds new light on the issue of how church decorations in Seicento Rome could be interpreted in various modes by different audiences, and in particular on the way in which sermons and other serious forms of instruction could be paired with more 'entertaining' forms of oral communication. Secondly, the relationship between the manuscript and frescoes in this particular case forces us to think beyond the standard repertoire of iconographers – the printed text – as the primary vehicle for the diffusion of religious and moral concepts, and consider the spoken word (and its residue, manuscripts) as part of a multimedia strategy to spread Counter-Reformation concepts of spiritual reform.

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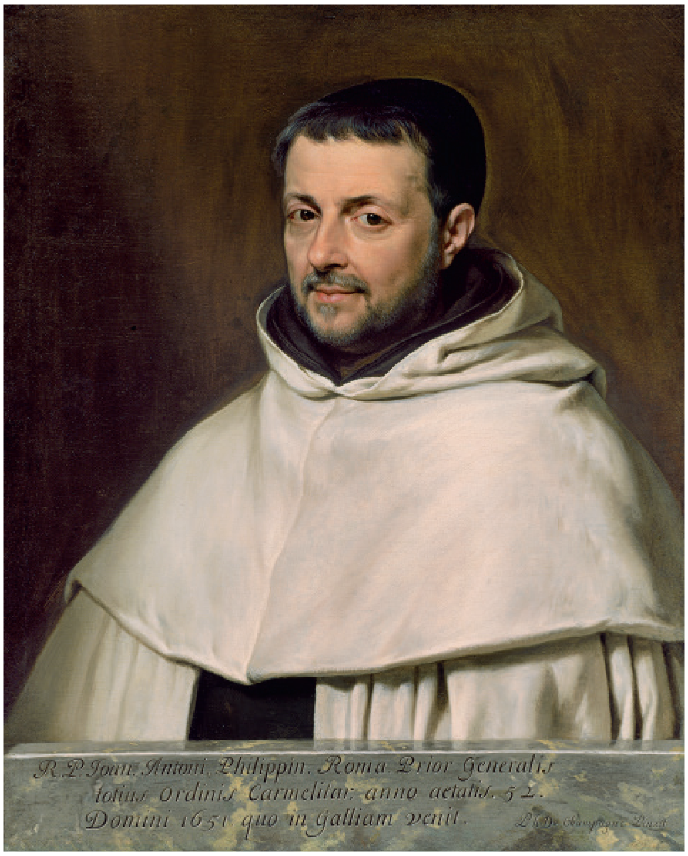
1. Introduction

Between 1636 and 1655, the church of Santi Silvestro e Martino ai Monti, usually denoted as San Martino, underwent major renovations since the building was in dire need of repair.[1] Giovanni Antonio Filippini (1598–1657; fig. 1), who in 1636 had been elected prior of the Calced Carmelite monastery, to which the church belonged, not only commissioned artists but also paid for the entire project from his own inheritance. Earlier publications attributed the project's slow progression and the broad range of artists Filippini had employed to his 'lacking artistic vision,'[2] when, in fact, this delay had been caused by the limited work that could be financed each year from the annual revenues Filippini received from his inheritance, which consisted of investments in real estate and *monti*, or bonds.[3] The project received another impetus in late 1636, when workmen discovered a space underneath the monastery.[4] To maximize the impact of this discovery, Filippini published his treatise, *Ristretto di tutto quello, che appartiene all'antichita, e veneratione della chiesa de' santi Silvestro, e Martino De' Monti di Roma* (1639; fig. 2), which sought to provide the church with a venerable history dating to the beginnings of Christianity by linking the subterranean space to Pope Sylvester (died 335) and identifying it as the *titulus* bequeathed to the early Christian community by the Roman patrician Equitius.[5]


R. P. Joan. Antoni. Philippin. Roma. Prior Generalis
totius Ordinis Carmelitar: anno aetatis. 52.
Domini 1651 quo in Galliam venit.
Ph. De Champaigne Pinxit

1 Philippe de Champaigne, *Portrait of Giovanni Antonio Filippini*, 1651, oil on canvas, 73.3 × 59.7 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 1993.35 (photo Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

If this increased historical significance of San Martino had furnished one reason for a more ambitious decorative program, the election of Filippini as prior general of the Carmelite Order in May 1648 and the approaching 1650 jubilee celebrations provided additional reasons for upscaling the project.[6] The architect and painter Filippo Gagliardi (1606/1608–1659) was employed as part of this expanded decorative scheme in 1647,[7] and Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi (1606–1680) and Gaspard Dughet (1615–1675) were commissioned to fresco the walls of the aisles. Fourteen large landscapes representing scenes from the life of the Old Testament Prophet Elijah were foreseen with some additional scenes

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[*] This article has been long in the making, and I owe a great debt to many friends and colleagues who have helped me along the way. I especially thank Johanna Heideman, Padre Pierdamiano Spotorno, Harald Hendrix, Eric Moormann, and the anonymous reviewers for their support and valuable suggestions.

[1] Miletti/Ray 1967, Buchowiecki 1974, p. 886, and Metraux 1979, p. 90.

[2] Metraux 1979, p. 82: "In view of the quality of these pictures, it is probably safe to assume that Filippini was not the most artistically adventurous of patrons."

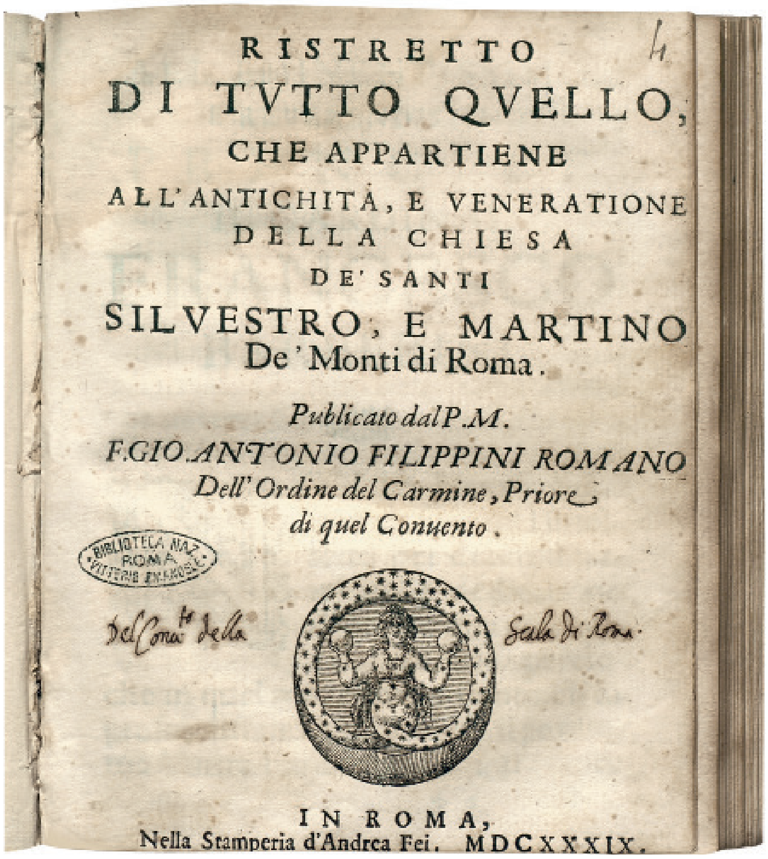
[3] Witte 2008a; see also Heideman 1980, p. 540, n. 11.

[4] Silvagni 1912, p. 331 and Osborne/Claridge 1998, pp. 97–107 make clear that this space very quickly became an object of interest for Roman antiquarians such as Cassiano del Pozzo.

[5] Filippini 1639.

[6] Ventimiglia 1779, p. 254; this corresponds with the interpretation of the chronology of execution in Heideman 1980, p. 545, and might explain why Filippini commissioned Pietro Testa to design a new apse decoration replacing the frescoes by Galeazzo Leoncino, painted only five years earlier; see Sutherland 1964, p. 61; for the commissioning of Testa, see Passeri (1772) 1995, pp. 186–187, and Cropper 1988, pp. 230–235.

[7] Titi (1674) 1987, vol. 1, p. 132, Gerone 1998, p. 269, and Witte 2008b and 2013; Gagliardi also painted the two interiors of old San Giovanni in Laterano and Old Saint Peter's and designed the architectural vistas in the clerestory. Gagliardi maintained the position as overseer of the project until after Filippini's death; ASR, Ord. Rel. Masc. Carm. Calzati S. Martino ai Monti, 9 contains several account books with payments between 1657 and 1664 in which Gagliardi appears regularly.



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RISTRETTO
DI TVTTO QVELLO,
CHE APPARTIENE
ALL'ANTICHITÀ, E VENERATIONE
DELLA CHIESA
DE' SANTI
SILVESTRO, E MARTINO
De' Monti di Roma.

Publicato dal P. M.
F. GIO. ANTONIO FILIPPINI ROMANO
Dell' Ordine del Carmine, Priore
di quel Conuento.

BIBLIOTECA NAZ.
ROMA
VITTORIO EMANUELE

Del Conv.to della Scala di Roma.

IN ROMA,
Nella Stamperia d'Andrea Fei. MDCXXXIX.

2 Anonymous, Frontispiece of Giovanni Antonio Filippini, *Ristretto di tutto quello, che appartiene all'antichita, e veneratione della chiesa de'santi Silvestro, e Martino De' Monti di Roma*, Rome 1639 (photo Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma)

connected to the history of the Carmelite Order. Pietro Testa's (1611–1650) involvement in this project, first suggested by De Rossi in 1765, remains opaque as payments refer to his altarpiece depicting Saint Angelus of Jerusalem and other works for Filippini, but do not unambiguously prove his direct involvement in the fresco cycle.[8]

With respect to the chronology of this part of the decoration, Dughet, who was certainly working at San Martino in 1648, could not have started before July 1647, and possibly received his first payment in December 1647.[9] While Dughet continued working until spring 1649,[10] Grimaldi probably started in June 1648[11] and left for France in late 1648 or early 1649. On 11 November 1650, the feast day of Saint Martin, Pope Innocent X visited the church together with fourteen cardinals and the Spanish and French ambassadors, which amounted to an unofficial inauguration ceremony. In 1651, after an interruption of almost two years, Dughet finished the cycle by adding the last four frescoes in a semi-separate part of the church, between the rear entrance and the raised choir.[12]

Although the attention received from high-ranking ecclesiastics proves that Filippini's use of visual culture was an effective strategy, the exact meaning of the iconographic program has been a subject of debate in modern literature. Due to the long timespan and the (erroneous) assumption of a lack of artistic expertise on the side of the patron, this debate concerned both the overarching program and the meaning of the fresco cycle created by Dughet and Grimaldi.

A hitherto neglected manuscript source, which contains a play about Elijah, written for and almost certainly commissioned by Filippini, offers a new and unexpected reading of the frescoes. This new source and its visual representation reflect on a range of theoretical issues that are both specifically art-historical and broadly interdisciplinary. The focus in the present contribution will be on the so-called *Ordenspropaganda*, or the visual identity of religious orders, and on narrative intermediality. Through this perspective, the play shows how Baroque church decorations could, and indeed often were meant to be 'read' at various levels, indicating that its iconography allowed for multiple interpretations. Moreover, Baroque church decoration, as this case indicates, can be related to religious theatrical spectacles, not on the level of visual sources, stylistic interaction, or formal aspects, but with respect to iconographical content. Such performances, of prime importance for the ecclesiastical authorities in their interpretation of the Tridentine decree governing the use of images, were ideally suited to communicate with several audiences on Counter Reformation principles.

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[8] Petrucci 2014, pp. 37–39, with further references, and Albl 2021, pp. 183–185 for the Saint Angelus altarpiece. The extent of Testa's possible involvement will be discussed further below. The statement in Roisecco 1765, p. 499, that "in alcune de' quali [paesaggi] dipinse le figure Niccolò Pussino di lui fratello, ed in altri il suddetto Pietro Testa" can hardly be trusted on account of its vagueness and the many errors in this one sentence.

[9] Sutherland 1964, pp. 65 and 117, on the payments to Dughet and Grimaldi; Boisclair 1985 (with earlier dating, ca. 1647–1651) and Boisclair 1986, pp. 193–199 for Dughet; Heideman 1964 and Ariuli/Matteucci, pp.125–128 for Grimaldi's involvement. In this article, I mainly follow the convincing argumentation offered in Heideman 1980 for the exact chronology of the execution.

[10] Sutherland 1964, pp. 65 and 118 (with the transcription of the last payment in June 1649), and Boisclair 1985.

[11] Heideman 1980, p. 542.

[12] Sutherland 1964, p. 118: "20th May [1651]. Dato al Sig[no]re Gasparo Pittore, che ha dipinto li quattro paesi nella nostra Chiesa cioè la visione del P[a]dre [?] S. Elia, di S. Emerentia, di Gierusalem presa da Tito Imperatore, edi S. Cirillo gerosolimitano in tutto scudi venti sei moneta – sc. 26.–." See also Heideman 1980, pp. 540–542.

2. Erudite iconography?

Located on the walls of the aisles of San Martino, the fresco cycle by Dughet and Grimaldi is organized in two superimposed tiers: on the walls of the right aisle, the larger vertical landscapes are placed below and the smaller horizontal ones above; the left aisle is decorated with smaller horizontal frescoes, both single and paired (fig. 3). In these landscape settings, numbering eighteen scenes in total, small figures act out the story of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet, and his follower, Elisha. In the *Book of Kings*, after Elijah prophesied drought and famine to King Ahab, Queen Jezebel, and the Israelite people in punishment for their adoration of their god Baal, the prophet went into hiding in the desert to escape the queens' wrath; subsequently, he was hosted by the widow of Zarephath, whose son he resuscitated. He then returned and challenged Ahab and his priests to prove the existence of Baal. Elijah erected an altar on Mount Carmel and prayed to God, who then consumed his offering, and, after ordering the priests of Baal to be killed, appointed Elisha as his successor before ascending to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Dughet's and Grimaldi's frescoes represent, in a random order that has puzzled earlier scholars, several episodes from this biblical account, with two additional scenes representing Elisha as his successor (*Elisha Venerated after Crossing the Jordan* and *Elisha Cursing the Mocking Boys of Bethel*) and five further scenes showing monks and hermits living on Mount Carmel and in Europe. The first scene shows Emerentia consulting 'the sons of prophets' living on Mount Carmel, who foretell that her daughter Anna would bear the Virgin Mary; the second scene shows Basilides, who purportedly predicted the Destruction of Jerusalem by Emperor Titus (fig. 4); the third represents the thirteenth-century Saint Cyril, who foresaw the future of the Carmelite Order (fig. 5). One further fresco linked the community on Mount Carmel to its subsequent European history by depicting Saint Simon Stock (fig. 6), the first general after the Order had left the Holy Land. More unusual is a fifth, apocryphal scene, in which the parents of Elijah have a vision of "many men dressed in white in the aspect of religious men of Carmel bowing down to the infant [Elijah]", which underlines the historical continuity between the Old Testament prophet and the later Order.[13]

Prior research has explained the iconographical program of this fresco cycle and its more general meaning along two converging lines. On the one hand, Susan Bandes claimed in 1976 that it served the Carmelites in their intellectual and theological argument with the Jesuits revolving around the claim that the former had been founded by Elijah in 930 BC. Based on this notion of the so-called Elianic succession, the Carmelite Order constituted Christendom's oldest monastic institution. Jesuit hagiographers compiling the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum* strongly opposed this view and attacked the Carmelites on this point, until 1698, when Pope Innocent XII issued a bull silencing both parties.[14] The Car-

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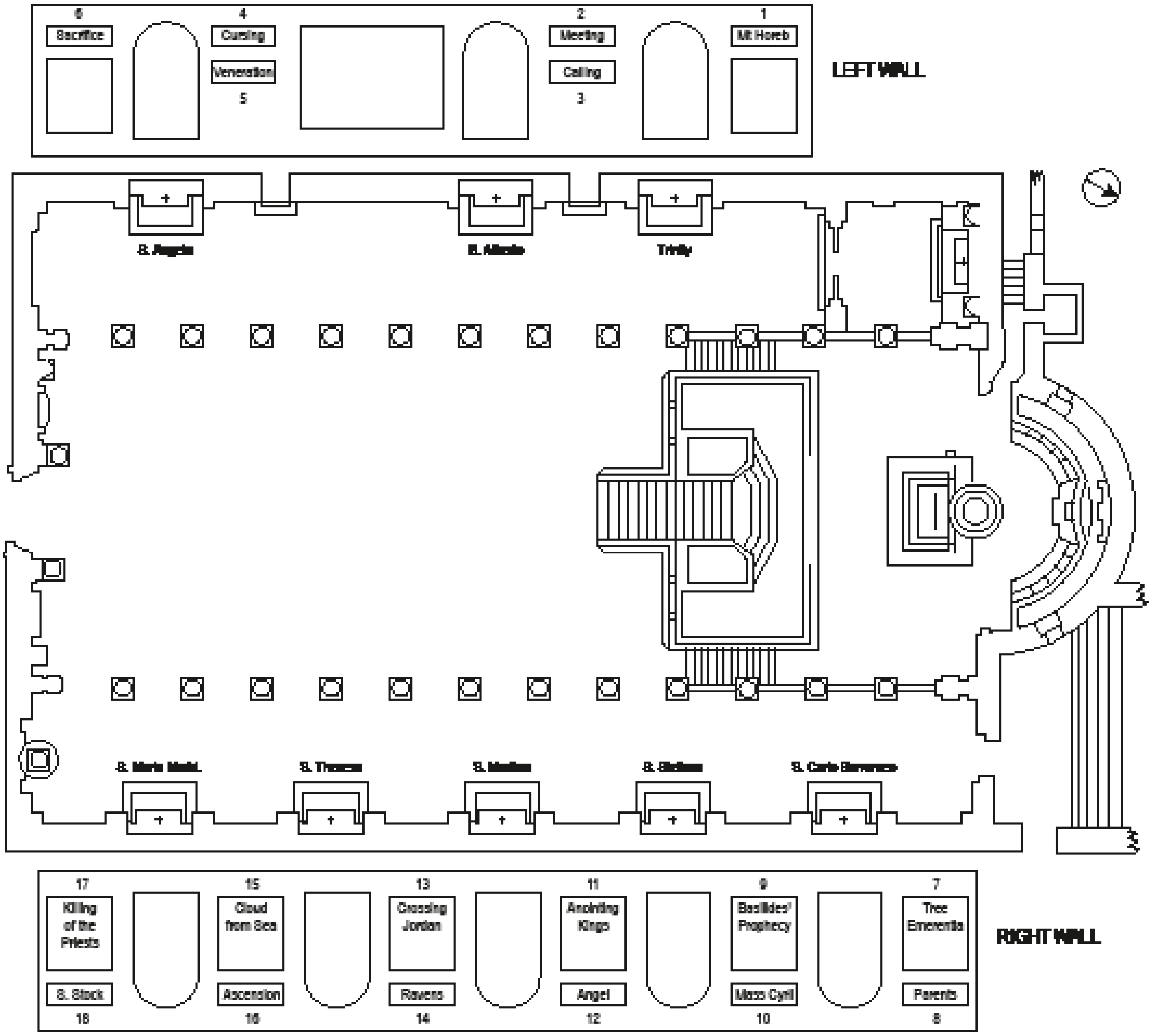
[13] See ASR, Ord. Rel. Masc. Carm. Calzati, S. Silvestro e Martino ai Monti, 9, fol. 35r: "la visione della m[ad]re d'Elia, a' cui fanciullo s'inchinarono molti vestiti di bianco, ch'era figura de'Religiosi Carm[elita]ni."

[14] Bandes 1976, p. 48, and Koch 1959.


6
Sacrifice
4
Cursing
Veneration
5
2
Meeting
Calling
3
1
Mt Horeb
LEFT WALL
S. Angelo
S. Alberto
Trinity
S. Maria Madd.
S. Teresa
S. Martino
S. Stefano
S. Carlo Borromeo
17
Killing of the Priests
S. Stock
18
15
Cloud from Sea
Ascension
16
13
Crossing Jordan
Ravens
14
11
Anointing Kings
Angel
12
9
Basilides' Prophecy
Mass Cyril
10
7
Tree Emerentia
Parents
8
RIGHT WALL

1. Gaspard Dughet: God Appearing to Elijah on Mount Horeb
2. Gaspard Dughet: The Meeting of Elijah and Abdia
3. Gaspard Dughet: The Calling of Elisha
4. Gaspard Dughet: Elisha Cursing the Mocking Boys of Bethel
5. Gaspard Dughet: Elisha Venerated after Crossing the Jordan
6. Gaspard Dughet: Elijah's Sacrifice on Mount Carmel
7. Gaspard Dughet: The Tree of Emerentia
8. Gaspard Dughet: The Vision of Elijah's Parents
9. Gaspard Dughet: Basilides' Prophecy
10. Gaspard Dughet: The Mass of St. Cyril
11. Gaspard Dughet: The Anointing of the Kings
12. Gaspard Dughet: Elijah Fed by the Angel
13. Gio. Francesco Grimaldi: Elijah Crossing the Jordan
14. Gaspard Dughet: Elijah Fed by the Ravens
15. Gio. Francesco Grimaldi: Elijah and his Servant See a Cloud Appearing in the Sky
16. Gaspard Dughet: Elijah's Ascension into Heaven
17. Gaspard Dughet: The Killing of the Priests of Baal
18. Gaspard Dughet: The Madonna appearing to St Simon Stock

3 Schematic rendering of San Martino ai Monti with numbers indicating the placement of the frescoes, 2022 (© Sanne van Rooij)

melites, however, used many means to defend their claim, and Bandes interprets the frescoes as a visual interpretation of this literary diatribe.

This interpretation agrees with the theory that, especially after the Council of Trent, the visual expression of a regular identity played a key role in the decoration of monastic churches – in Italy but also elsewhere in Europe. Art fulfilled a propagandistic function, communicating to a general audience a specific corporate and religious identity of the order in question.[15] Especially the Jesuit Or-

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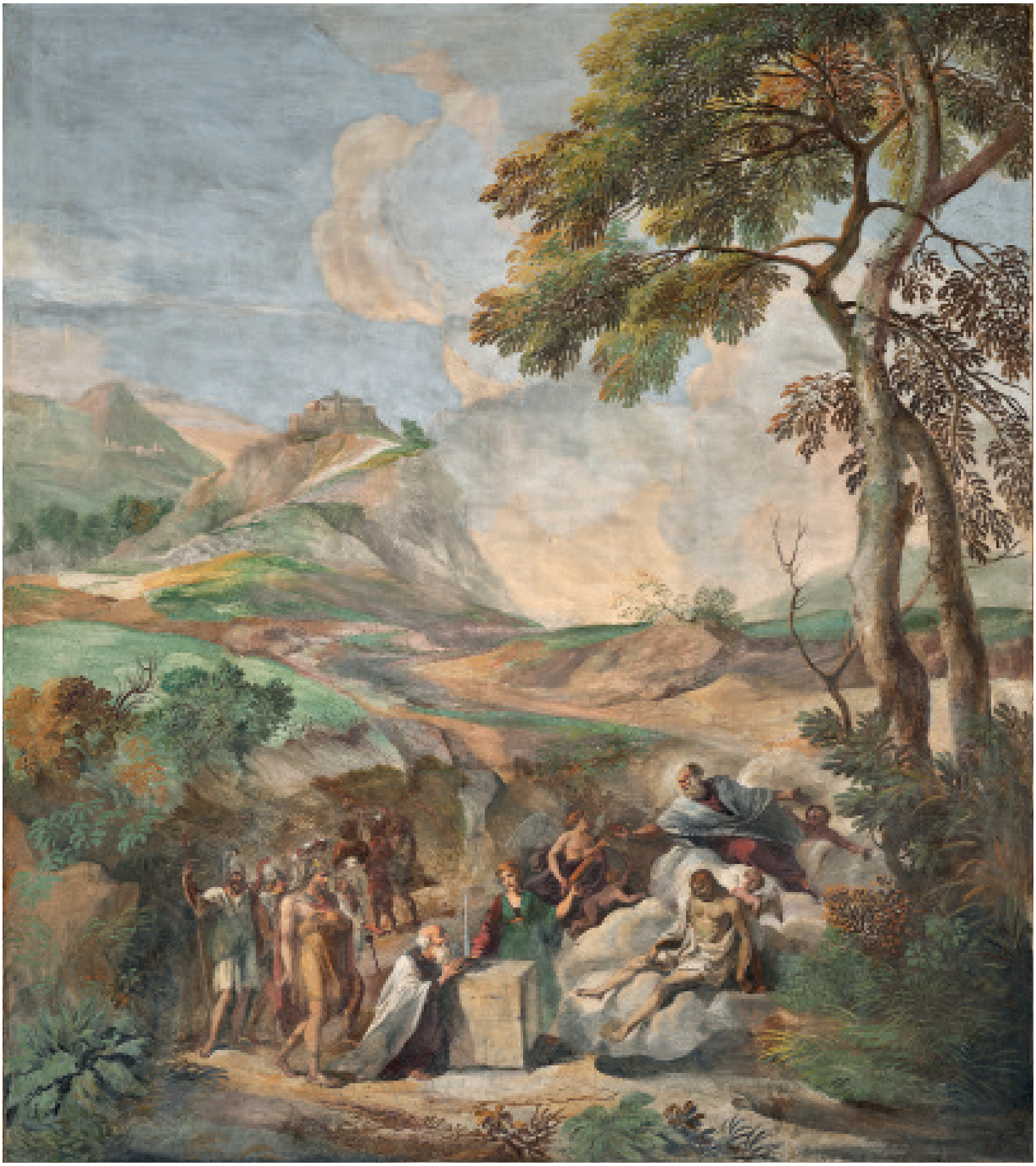
[15] Levy 2004.



4 Gaspard Dughet, *The Prophecy of Basilides*, 1651, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

der has been studied from this perspective; however, other new congregations, such as the Oratorians and the Theatines, also used the visual arts, in the form of altarpieces or fresco cycles, to underline their special mission.[16] In fact, regular self-representation, or *Ordenspropaganda*, was a well-known iconographic issue from the rise of the mendicant orders onwards, and many studies attest to this throughout the premodern period.[17] In 1932, Émile Mâle maintained that during the Counter-Reformation, even the older orders saw the need to express their identity through visual means. He applied this concept to interpret the San Martino cycle as a form of Carmelite self-promotion, however, without referencing the Jesuit denunciations against them.[18]

On the other hand, Michele Metraux argued in her unpublished 1979 thesis that these frescoes, together with the rest of the decorative program of San Martino, were intended to align the historical importance of the location, as expressed in Filippini's 1639 *Ristretto*, with Carmelite history, while also stressing the task of the Order in the Catholic overseas mission. The Elianic succession was not the main theme but rather an important subsidiary argument in a more general discourse on sacred history and the place of the Carmelite Order in it.[19] However, according to Metraux, this led to an overall iconographical scheme that capsized under its own ambition: "Such an ambitious and large program in the hands of someone like Filippini and his group of novice artists was bound to run into difficulties and eventually to bog down in a scheme which was probably only fully intelligible to Filippini himself."[20]

The main contemporary source buttressing both Bandes' and Metraux's interpretations is the multi-volume *Annales Sacri, Prophetici et Eliani Ordinis Beat. Virginis Mariae de monte Carmeli* authored by the Spanish friar Juan Bautista de Lezana (1586–1659), a Carmelite theologian and professor of metaphysics at the Sapienza, who was responsible for the Carmelite novitiate in Rome.[21] Filippini had, as general of the Carmelite Order, collaborated closely with Lezana between 1648 and 1652 in a mutual attempt to spur its spiritual reform, which explains why the third volume of *Annales Sacri*, published in 1653, contained a discussion of the San Martino renovations and a description of the fresco cycle by Grimaldi and Dughet. In it, Lezana linked each scene to his discussion in the first volume of the *Annales* about the lives of Elijah and Elisha as founders of the Carmelite Order. Lezana's identifications are furthermore seconded by Filippini's account books, his diary *Nota di tutti li benifitij da farsi del N.R.P.M. Gio. Ant. Filippini… cominciando li 11 di febraro 1636*, and the resume in *Descrittione succinta dell'Antichità, e Renovatione della Basilica de' SS. Silvestro, e Martino di Monti di Roma, de' Padri Carmelitani*, which describes the project *post factum*.[22] While all these documents contain factual information, they offer no direct clue as to the intentions of the decoration program.

Although both interpretations are plausible on account of the close relations between Filippini and Lezana and the temporal proximity between decoration and publication, there are three unresolved issues. First, Bandes' central assumption that these frescoes served a theological debate becomes problematic when considering its precise historical trajectory.[23] Although there are medieval Carmelite sources arguing for the Elianic succession, the debate surfaced in the public arena only in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and thereafter only gradually. Bollandist negations of the Carmelite claim were merely suggested in

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[16] Bailey 2003, pp. 6–9 and *passim*; see *La regola e la fama* 1995 and Witte 2019, pp. 474–477 for the Oratorians; *Sant'Andrea Avellino* 2011 for the Theatines.

[17] See Blume 1983, and Bourdua 2004, pp. 1–13, on the Franciscans; Cannon 2013, esp. pp. 1–21, on the Dominicans.

[18] Mâle 1932, pp. 444–448.

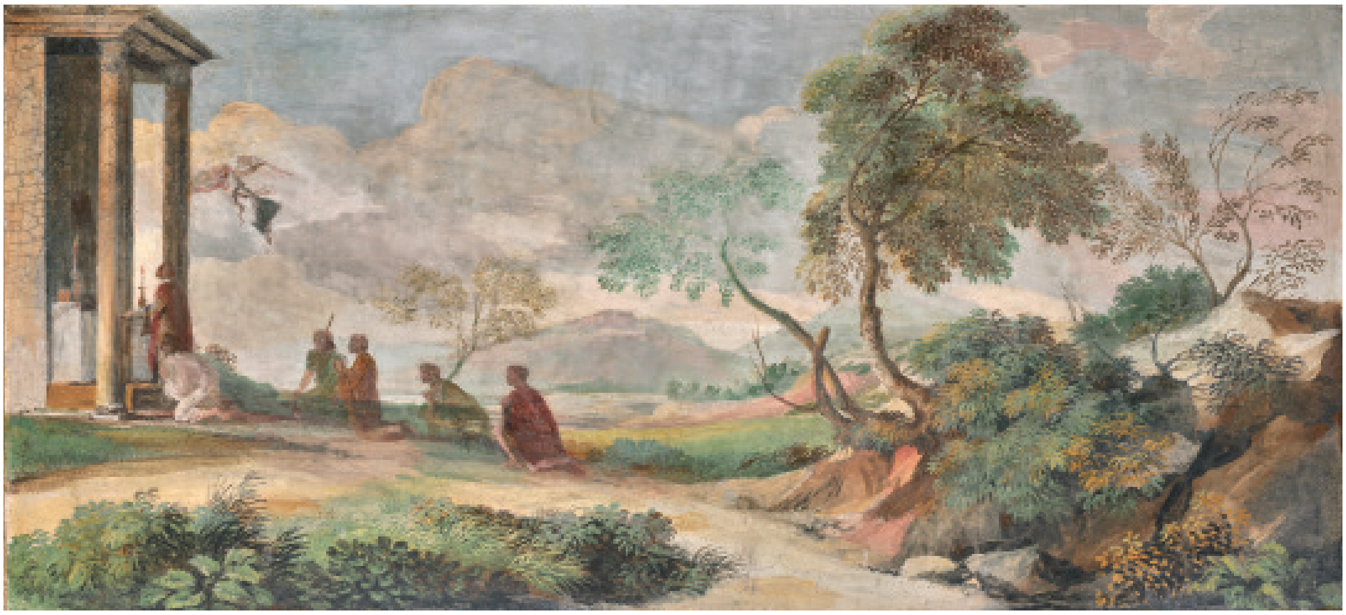
[19] For a recent discussion of the concept of 'sacred history', see Ditchfield 2012.

[20] Metraux 1979, p. 123

[21] For Lezana, see Villiers 1752, vol. 1, pp. 772–779, Garrido 1976, and Smet 1975–1985, vol. 3, 1, pp. 1, 319.

[22] See Sutherland 1964, p. 61, and Heideman 1980 for an overview of the archival sources. See ASR, Ord. Rel. Masc. Carm. Calzati, S.Silvestro e Martino ai Monti, 9 for the *Descrittione*.

[23] Although the claim of the Elianic succession was already made from the thirteenth century onwards, this did not lead to explicit attacks from the side of other religious orders prior to the seventeenth century, see Boase 1939, p. 108, and Koch 1959, p. 549, who maintained that the audience for this narrative consisted mainly of the Carmelites themselves.



5 Gaspard Dughet, *The Mass of Saint Cyril*, 1651, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

the 1668 *Acta Sanctorum* volumes of March and April, which stated that "The Order of the Carmelite Religious, which established its seat in Palestine on Mount Carmel, had its beginnings under the Roman Pontiff Alexander [III]; in what year of his pontificate, however, remains unsure."[24] Only in 1675 was the Carmelite position openly refuted in the first volume of April, in the life of Saint Albert of Vercelli, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had written the first Carmelite Rule:

> My intentions are definitely not to deny the course of the Elianic succession […]. That could have continued, if this is true, somewhere on [Mount] Carmel; and wherever the Carmelites may have been, they have without any doubt called their Superiors by whatever name you want; it is impossible to believe, however, that they were subject to one arch-monastery or punishable by one prefect in the same way that most religious Orders nowadays exist under one general.[25]

Thus, according to the Jesuit authors of the *Acta Sanctorum*, the Carmelite Order could trace back its *institutional* roots only to the eleventh century AD and not to 930 BC. Tracing their *spiritual* roots back to Elijah, on the other hand, was not an issue at all, which means that a representation of Elijah alone cannot be considered an allusion to this intellectual quarrel.

Second, discussions on the Elianic succession were not centered in Italy but in Spain. An early source at the basis of the claim was produced by the fourteenth-century Catalan Carmelite Riboti, and another important Spanish publication that kickstarted the seventeenth-century discussion was the 1598 *Dilucidario y demostracion de las chronicas y antiguedad del Sacro Orden de la siempre Virgen Madre de Dios Sancta Maria del Monte Carmelo*.[26] Also the Carmelites in Antwerp

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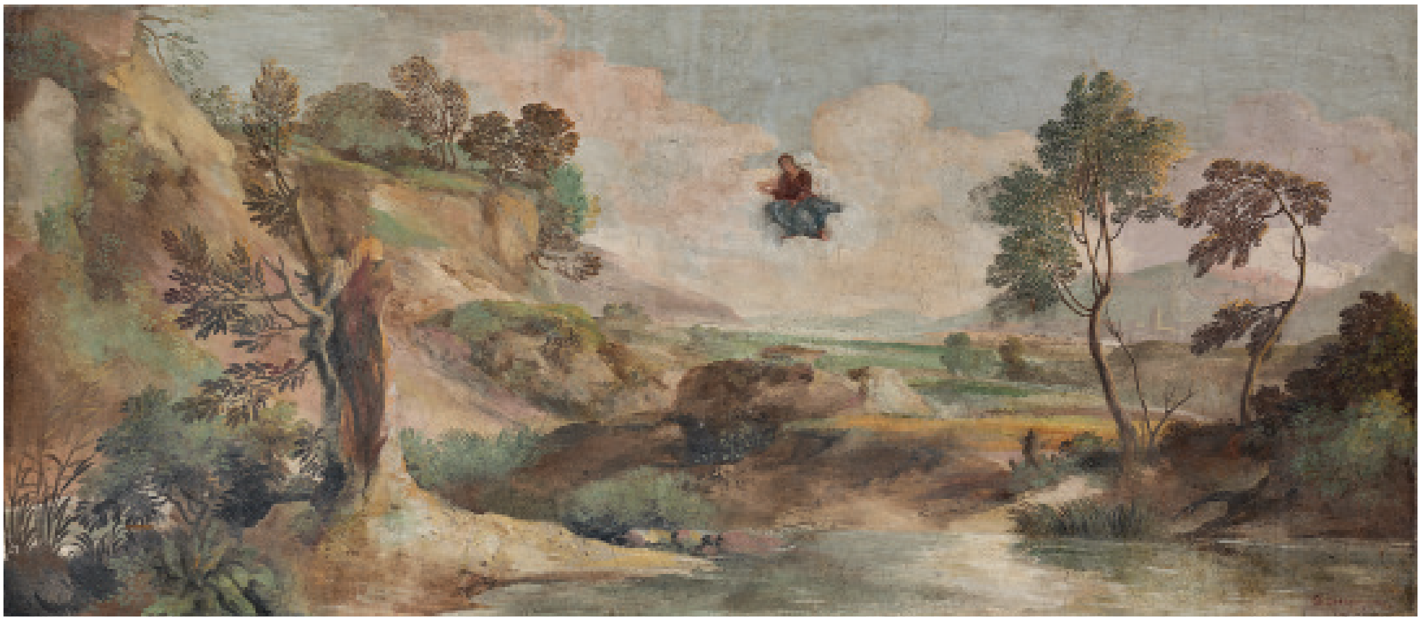
[24] *Acta Sanctorum* 2005, 29 March, Life of Saint Berthold, Commentarius 4: "Ordo Religiosorum Carmelitanorum, qui in Palaestina in ipso Carmelo Monte fixere sedes, sub Alexandro Romano Pontefice sumpsit originem, quoto autem anno ejus Pontificatus, habetur incertum." (all translations are the author's except otherwise noted).

[25] *Acta Sanctorum* 2005, 8 April, Life of Saint Alber of Vercelli, Commentarius 59: "Ceterum intentionis meae non est Carmelitanum ab Elia processionem hoc argumento negare. Potuit illa, si vera est, alibiquam in Carmelo fuisse continuata; ubicumque autem fuerunt Carmelitae, suos proculdubio habuerunt Superiores quocumque voles nomine appellatos; nunquam tamen credas, illos uni veluti Archimonasterio subordinatos aut ejus Praefecto fuisse obnoxios, uti nunc plerique Religiosorum Ordines uni Generali subsunt."



6 Gaspard Dughet, *The Virgin Appearing to Saint Simon Stock*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

– who were in contact with the Bollandists, whose offices were located in the very same city[27] – publicized the thesis that they traced their origins back to Mount Carmel. The discussion at this point, however, did not focus on Elijah but on two other figures: John of Jerusalem, who, according to the Carmelites, had headed their first rule in 412 AD and the fifth-century saint Cyril of Alexandria, purportedly a Carmelite monk.[28] It was also in Spain that the discussion reached its apex, from where it reached the papal curia. According to Pierre Helyot's history of religious orders (1714–1719), "[t]he affair became known sooner in Spain than in Rome, and one was startled to see a decree issued there [in Spain] by the Inquisition on November 14 of 1695, ordering the condemnation of the Acts of the Saints of March, April and May, because they contained erratic and heretical propositions (…)."[29] In other words, using an intellectual and theological debate to explain Dughet's and Grimaldi's frescoes does not accord with the historical and geographical development of the discussion; moreover, not Prophet Elijah but other (later) historical figures became the main bone of contention.

Yet other sources suggest that Dughet's frescoes were not meant to strengthen the Carmelite position vis-à-vis outsiders but aimed to (re)introduce the subject to the community of Friars.[30] In 1653, the same year in which Lezana's third volume appeared, the Neapolitan Carmelite Luca Antonio Rossi published his *Elia Rivelante* (fig. 7), a panegyric poem dedicated to Filippini. This Italian poem explained to an internal audience that Elijah should be considered the real founder of the mendicant community. Its literary structure ingeniously introduced Elijah as a prophet who would appear (in Carmelite habit) to readers in their sleep and subsequently 'reveal' the historical development of the Carmelite community, both in Palestine and in Europe.[31]

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[26] Coria Maldonado 1598.

[27] Peeters 1961, pp. 22–24, and Godding 2010, p. 583.

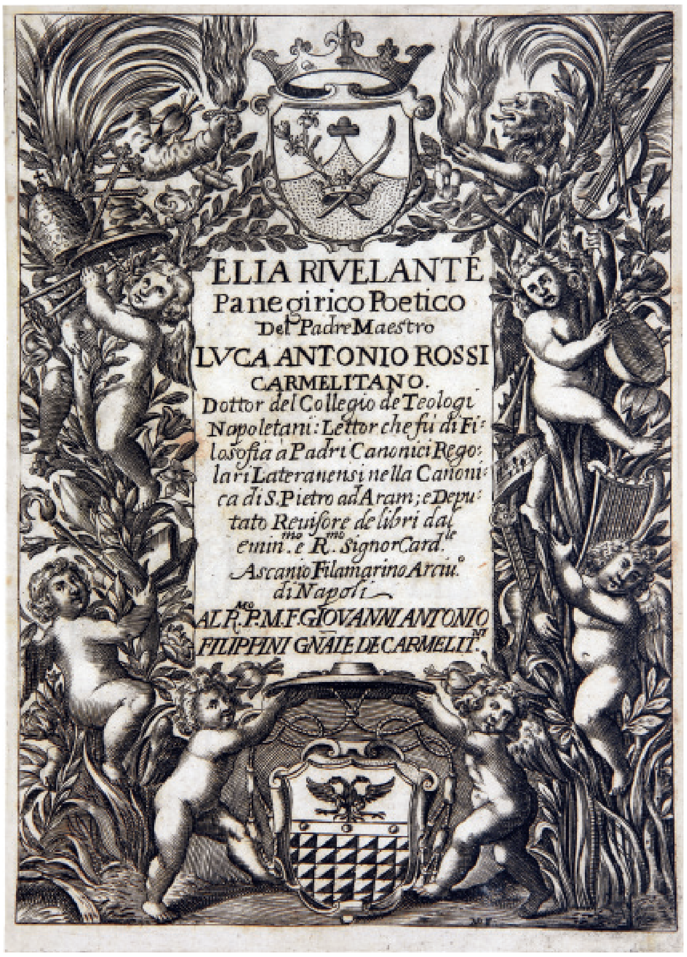
[28] De la Croix 1969, pp. 180–185.

[29] Helyot 1714–1719, vol. 1, p. 293: "L'affaire alla plus viste en Espagne qu'à Rome, & l'on fut estonné d'y voir paroistre le 14 de Novembre 1695 un Decret de l'Inquisition, portant condamnation des quartorze volumes des Actes des Saints des mois de Mars, Avril & Mai; parce qu'ils contenoient plusieurs propositions erronées, Heretiques, […]."

[30] Metraux 1979, p. 123: "Such an ambitious and large program in the hands of someone like Filippini and his group of novice artists was bound to run into difficulties and eventually to bog down in a scheme which was probably only fully intelligible to Filippini himself."

[31] Rossi 1653.

Thus, Elijah was being promoted as the founder of the Carmelite Order within the community itself, and not to outsiders. But why? Medieval texts in which Elijah was a central theme had already promoted the Carmelite community's spiritual identity.[32] But although the prophet had been included in standard Carmelite liturgy in the mid-fifteenth century, this continued to be a subject of discussion since his status as a saint was uncertain, for he had not died but ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot.[33] Moreover, in contrast to almost any other Christian order, the Carmelites had no unequivocal founder, which increasingly became a problem during Counter-Reformation, when a return to the pristine rules was prescribed by the Tridentine Decrees.[34] This was underlined by Lezana in his 1646 *Reformation Regularium*.[35] Filippini and Lezana, as mentioned before, had collaborated in a program of spiritual reform for the entire order, which resulted in the 'Articoli Filippini'. This set of rules furnished a new devotional focus for all Carmelites in which Elijah figured prominently.[36] From the early 1640s onwards, Filippini also collaborated with Lezana to include the feast of Elijah in the Carmelite Breviary on 20 July.[37] They persuaded the general chapter of 1645 to prescribe this liturgy for the entire order, which was codified in a Latin treatise by Lezana in 1651.[38] In other words, the issue of strengthening his position as spiritual example for the Carmelite Friars themselves, and as patron saint for the order, gained greater significance around 1650.



ELIA RIVELANTE
Panegirico Poetico
Del Padre Maestro
LVCA ANTONIO ROSSI
CARMELITANO.
Dottor del Collegio de Teologi
Napoletani: Lettor che fù di Fi-
losofia à Padri Canonici Rego-
lari Lateranensi nella Canoni-
ca di S. Pietro ad Aram; e Depu-
tato Reuisore de libri dal
emin.^{mo} e R.^{mo} Signor Card.^{le}
Ascanio Filamarino Arciu.^{o}
di Napoli
AL R.^{mo} P.M.F. GIOVANNI ANTONIO
FILIPPINI GNALE DE CARMELIT.^{ni}

7 Anonymous, Frontispiece of Luca Antonio Rossi, *Elia Rivelante*, Naples 1653 (photo Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma)

Third and last, prior discussions have not taken into consideration that Pius V's decision to elevate San Martino to *parrocchia matrice* by amalgamating five roman parishes into one meant that the church would receive general visitors for the mass and/or confession.[39] As prior of the monastic community, Filippini would have been very much aware of that, especially since it meant an increase in pastoral responsibilities for his friars. His *Ristretto* mentioned that the parish covered a large area of the city, implying a substantial group of churchgoers.[40] An erudite theological debate in Latin on the Elianic succession was not accessible to this kind of audience for reasons of language, nor was the promotion of a particular Carmelite identity relevant to their spiritual life. Especially the latter point raises the question of whether Bandes' and Metraux's erudite interpretations, drawn from Lezana, provide the right key to interpret the frescoes by Grimaldi and Dughet, since that places its iconography in a very particular, and indeed elitist context of ecclesiastical history and regular propaganda.

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[32] Klueting 2017, pp. 133–142.

[33] Bandes 1976, pp. 46–48 and Sułecki 2015, pp. 253–254.

[34] *Storia della chiesa* 1976, pp. 115-121.

[35] Ackerman 1995, pp. 127–133 and Lezana 1646.

[36] Smet 1975–1985, vol. 3, 1, pp. 1, 15–16.

[37] Boase 1939, pp. 110–122 claimed that internal debate on the position of Elijah was the explanation of the fresco cycle; Bandes mentioned it as a related issue. See Botte 1956, p. 217, for the liturgical cult of the saint.

[38] Lezana 1651, pp. 47–67. See also Kallenberg 1956, p. 140 and Boyce 1997, pp. 158 and 184 n 18; for the decision of the Carmelite General Chapter, see *Acta Capitulorum Generalium* 1912–1934, vol. 2, p. 62.

[39] Mellini 2010, p. 252 and Fontana 1855, p. 35.

[40] Filippini 1639, pp. 66–67.

3. Elinaic iconography

Even today the fresco cycle in San Martino is considered a *unicum*, leaving unanswered the question of whether the uninitiated audience could make sense of its iconography. The literature on early modern visual representations of Elijah, in Italy or other countries, is severely limited, and Bandes and Metraux have ignored this larger issue.[41] However, earlier examples can be found in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Germany, as Edeltraud Klueting discussed – for example in Hirschhorn an der Neckar, Frankfurt am Main, and Cologne.[42] These cases tie into the spiritual reform of the Carmelite Order, which started in the fifteenth century; here, the Elianic iconography was not aimed at external visitors, and so the concept of *Ordenspropaganda* does not apply easily. However, in comparison with San Martino, all German examples much more explicitly emphasized the order that Elijah is supposed to have founded, as well as its development after it was formally established in Europe in 1247, and thus the institutional aspects.

Three Italian examples from the seventeenth century also demonstrate that the cycle in Rome cannot simply be seen as a visual argumentation upholding the Elianic succession against the Bollandist critique. Forty years before the San Martino decoration, the cloister of the Carmelite monastery in Naples was frescoed with an extensive pictorial cycle visualizing the history of the Carmelite Order. In 1606, Giovanni Balducci finished a cycle of 27 scenes that deviates markedly from those at San Martino.[43] The Neapolitan cycle starts with *The Sacrifice on Mount Carmel*, leaving out Elijah's mission to Ahab and Jezebel; it is followed by *The Calling of Elisha*, *Elisha rising up in the Fiery Chariot*, and other scenes that make overt references to the Elianic succession – by depicting Saint Cyril, Sant'Alberto, and other likely prior generals of the Order.[44]

A second example, in the first cloister of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, was painted in various instalments between the 1630s and the start of the eighteenth century by Galeazzo Ghidoni, Domenico Bettini and Cosimo Ulivelli.[45] This cycle concentrates on Elijah and Elisha, just as in Rome, except that one entire wall contains scenes dedicated to Elijah, showing him hiding out in the desert and resuscitating the son of the widow of Zarephath, while a second wall is completely taken up by episodes from the life of Elisha. The third wall is decorated with images of later (presumed) Carmelites such as Basilides, John of Jerusalem and Saint Cyril. This section is extended with scenes portraying Carmelites martyred in Persia, the founding of the Florentine monastery in 1243, and Saint Louis of France introducing the Carmelites in Paris in the later 1250s. As such, this entire cycle represents a chronological narrative – organized in a logical order – and it explicitly relates the Elianic past to the Florentine (and European) present.

A third, late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century example can be found in the Carmelite convent at Grottaglie in southern Italy. Located in the cloister of the convent, as in Naples and Florence, this series is based on the prints in Daniel à Vergine Maria's 1680 *Speculum Carmelitanum* that were designed and etched by the Flemish artist Abraham van Diepenbeeck. Forty scenes in total depict the life of Elijah as the founder of the Carmelite Order. The Grottaglie frescoes meticulously follow the chronological sequence of Van Diepenbeeck's prints. These represent biblical and apocryphal sources and constitute a hagiography of the prophet, recounting his life from his birth – in a vision of the small baby being nurtured by flames, surrounded by men in white habits – to his supposed instituting of the monastic order and building of the first Carmelite church, and not least, his ascension to heaven in the fiery chariot.[46] Since Van Diepenbeeck did not provide any images showing the prophet's later disciples on Mount Carmel for the *Speculum*, these did not appear in Grottaglie either.[47] The interesting point in this print series is that while it chronologically coincides exactly with the *querelle* between the Carmelites and the Jesuits and made for a publication explicitly defending the Elianic succession, they omitted the main claim: namely, that Elijah's later disciples and followers on Mount Carmel were part of a regular order. And as such, the Grottaglie series also did not support this claim as a visual argumentation.

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[41] For the iconography of Elijah, see Réau 1956, pp. 245–247 and Emond 1961, p. 53. See also Pigler 1974, vol. 1, pp. 174–180 for examples of cycles and single scenes.

[42] Klueting 2017, pp. 133–142.

[43] Musella Guida 1982, p. 41. See also Monaco 1975, p. 169.

[44] Musella Guida 1982, p. 49, n. 57.

[45] Paatz/Paatz 1942, pp. 216–219, and *La chiesa di Santa Maria* 1992, pp. 196–197.

As Jonathan Brown has argued, the visual representation of a religious order could follow two different models: either as a visual account of the founder's hagiography or as a "hall of fame" of members throughout its history.[48] The Carmelite examples discussed above more or less fit one of these two models, but the San Martino fresco cycle presents a different format of visual argumentation. Dughet's and Grimaldi's frescoes followed the biblical account much more meticulously than the three near contemporaneous Italian examples, while also adding a range of later representations: apocryphal, biblical and historical. From that reason, it must be assumed that San Martino is not a simply a Carmelite attempt at artistic self-promotion, and it hardly could have been perceived by seventeenth-century lay onlookers as refuting Bollandist negations. Furthermore, as the Roman cycle was located in the church of a Carmelite convent and not its cloisters, it functioned in a liturgical setting, which also affected its interpretation. Finally, if the main aim was to assert a claim on their institutional history, the cycle should have presented a chronological order, as in Naples, Florence and Grottaglie. With no apparent narrative logic underlying the Roman cycle, the content, setting, and order of the frescoes in San Martino invite a different kind of contemplation in relation to the way the newly discovered play presented various episodes as exemplary illustrations of monastic and Christian virtues.

4. A *sacra rappresentazione* for San Martino

Curiously neglected in discussions on San Martino ai Monti is a manuscript held at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome of a play entitled *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*. This play is dated (in the preface) to December 1647, which coincides with the starting date of the execution of the landscape frescoes. Even more important, the theatrical text follows, to a large extent, the same narrative represented episodically in the frescoes, including some – but not all – of the later scenes connected to the history of the Carmelite Order. In other words, this new source is almost exactly contemporaneous, alternating between the narrative on the Old Testament prophet and the later episodes from the Carmelite Order.

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[46] Turi 2009, pp. 487–508.

[47] Moreno Cuadro 2013, p. 161.

[48] Brown 1978, p. 119.

[49] Cappiardi 1644a, 1644b and 1645. Sala/Tarani 1929 vol. 1, p. 115 mentions a fourth (undated) manuscript, *Sonnetto per P.D. Innocenzio Sali, nell'occasione del suo Dottorato in sacra Teologia*. These works stand in the tradition of panegyric poetry written by Vallombrosan monks such as Crisostomos Talenti and Adriano del Beccuto; see Zuccarello 2005, pp. 162–168 for Talenti and pp. 208–209 for Del Beccuto.

Vespasiano Cappiardi (ca. 1609–after 1651), the Vallombrosan monk who wrote the play and published minor poetic works dedicated to members of Florentine and Roman noble families,[49] descended from a family of ceramists from Montelupo Fiorentino, located on the Arno between Florence and Pisa.[50] Cappiardi took his monastic vows at Vallombrosa twice: Once on 25 January 1620, but they were annulled, probably as he was underage, and then again on 8 July 1625, by which time he must have turned 16.[51] From this, it can be deduced that he was born in 1609. In August 1628, he received dispensation from taking priestly orders because of reduced sight in his left eye – maybe a pretext allowing him to focus on other activities.[52]

According to a Vallombrosan biography, Cappiardi was summoned to Rome in 1634 to work as a musician for the Barberini.[53] However, the *breve* issued on 7 September 1635 by Urban VIII had been requested by Cappiardi himself. Since he had to take care of two underage sisters and two impoverished nieces, he was granted permission to live outside the monastery – maintaining his religious habit – earning a living as musician and singer.[54] There are no accounts confirming his affiliation with the Vallombrosan monastery of Santa Prassede, two blocks from San Martino, but going by the dedication in *Rappresentazione*, it is possible to surmise that this monastery was the place where it was written.[55] Except for the praise of Cappiardi's musical gifts in the papal brief of 1635, nothing further is known about his activities as organist or composer. The play he wrote for Filippini, however, suggests that he must have had experience in the latter field.

Preserved in manuscript form, in *quarto* format, with gilt-edged folios in parchment binding, embossed with Filippini's escutcheon (fig. 8), *Rappresenta-*

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[50] Berti 2001, pp. 241–243.

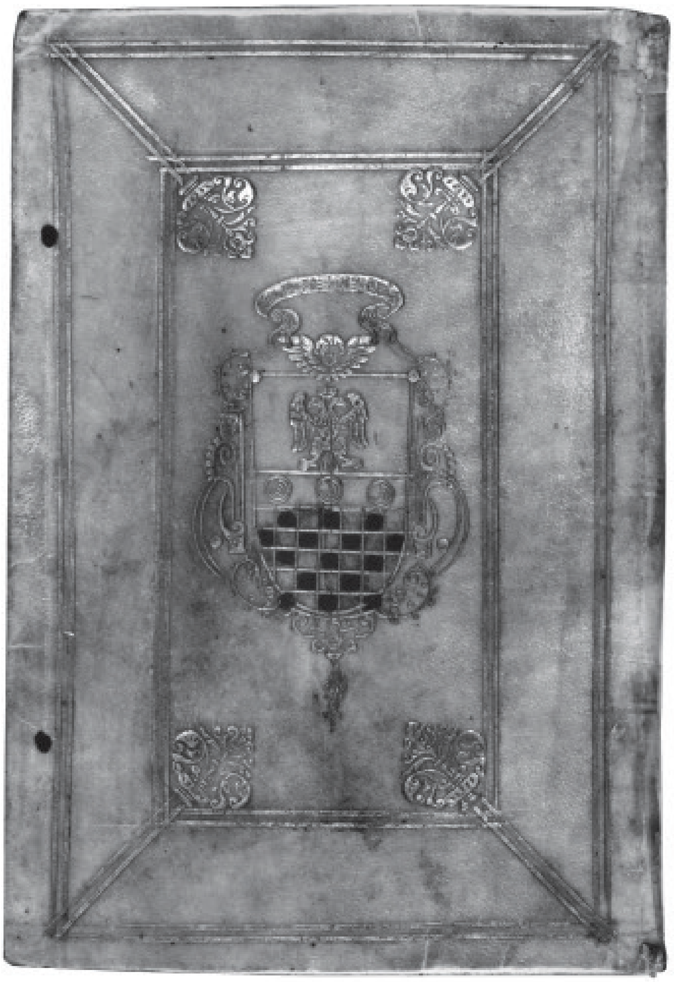
[51] ASF, Corporazioni Religiose Soppresse dal Governo Francese, S. Maria di Vallombrosa, 260–86, fol. 66v: "Ego Isidorus Hieronimi de Innorio a Fiorentia emisi mea solemne professionem die 25 Januarij 1619 ab Incarnatione inter Missas Solemnia sub obbedientia Rma in Xpi Pres et Domni d. Horatij Morandij Presidis Gnalis Vallis Umbrose, Cora ad R Pre D. Thesauro de Velis Abaet Vallse coram oib [=omnibus] Monachis et Novitijs / Et D. Vespasianus Nicolai Cappiardi a Fiorentia." Idem, fol. 78v: "Pacificatui pro.nis D. Vespasiani - Die octava Mensis Julij 1625. D. Vespasianis Niccolai Cappiardij a Flor.a cum sub die 2 Januarij 1619 professione emisisset, ut in hoc libro a 66 ac postmodû [com pta] fuerit male Professû es. hoc essi conv formä decretor. sacri Concilij Tridentini, et [incli]nationes Canonicas hinc est, qul. hac supra da. die ratificavit eam professione sua in manibus ac.m R. Pris D. Anthime de Martellis Abb. Sce. Mariae Vallisumbrosae in Pontificabilis constitute [...]."

[52] AAV, Sec. Brev. Reg., 727, fols. 571r–577v: "Per don Vespasiano Cappiardi Monaco di Vallombrosa. Di potersi ordinare in sacris, non ostante, che nello occhio sinistro habbia una macchia che gli impedisce la vista, ma non causa deformità, poiche non si conosce." The inserted letters are dated to August 1628. Migne 1839–1845, vol. 19, pp. 163–164, explains that this kind of dispensation was granted rather too frequently by the Roman Curia.

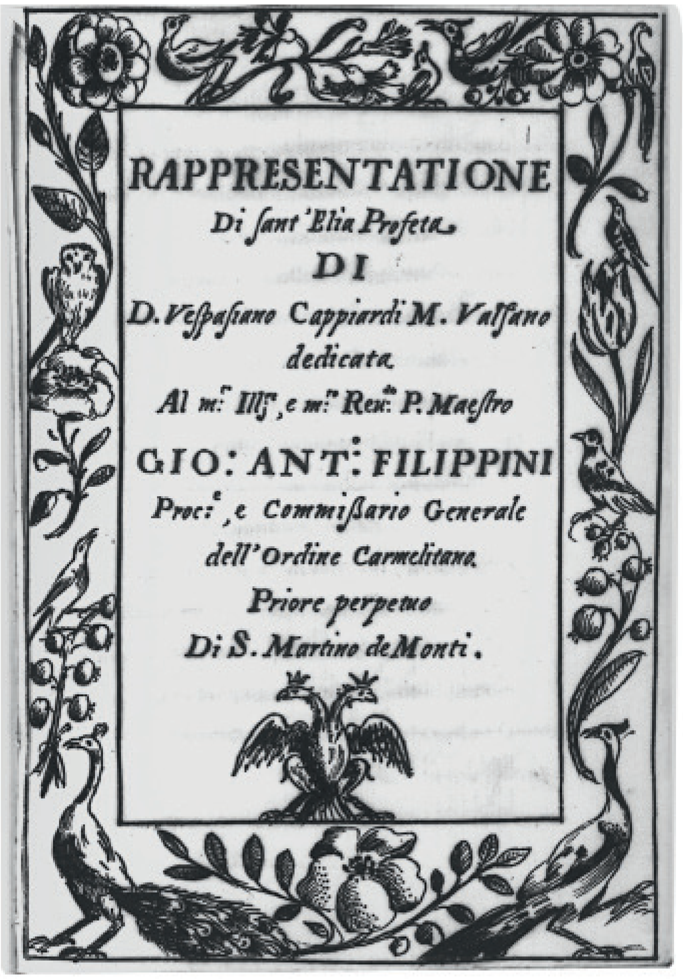
[53] Sala/Tarani 1929, vol. 1, pp. 114–115: "Capiardi D. Vespasiano di Niccolò da Firenze fù poeta assai buono, e molto perito nella musica. Delle poesie diede saggio pubblicando per le stampe varî componimenti, e della sua perizia nella musica ne fanno fede i contemporanei, i quali l'udirono per molti anni in Firenze nella Chiesa di S. Trinità, over era monaco ed organista. Passò nel 1634 con Breve Apostolico al servizio del Cardinale Barberini in Roma, dove sembra cessasse di vivere l'anno 1651, essendo Abate titolare. Aveva professato in Vallombrosa lì 6 agosto 1620." Tarani 1920, p. 124 provides erroneous information: "D. Vespasiano Cappiardi da Firenze, poeta assai gradevole e peritissimo nella musica. Cessò di vivere in Roma presso il cardinale Barberini il 6 agosto 1617, essendo abate titolare."

[54] AAV, Sec. Brev. Reg, .826, fol. 119r/v: 'Lic. Subveniendi duabus eius sororibus': "quae sua cantandi, et organa pulsandi peritia."

[55] See Hammond 1979 for musicians and composers living at the Barberini palace; the *Stati d'anime* of 1656 and later do not contain his name, and the *Libro dei Morti* 1590–1720 of the parish of Santa Prassede do not mention him; the same goes for the *Libro dei Morti* of the parish of San Martino ai Monti. On the lax situation within the Vallombrosan order during the seventeenth century, which affected the rules with respect to residence, see Zuccarello 2005, pp. 171–190.



8 Anonymous, Cover of Vespasiano Cappiardi, *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia Profeta*, Rome 1647 (photo Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma)



RAPPRESENTATIONE
Di ſant'Elia Profeta
DI
D. Veſpaſiano Cappiardi M. Valſano
dedicata
Al m:^{to} Ill:^{re}, e m:^{to} Rev:^{do} P. Maeſtro
GIO: ANT: FILIPPINI
Proc:^{re}, e Commiſsario Generale
dell'Ordine Carmelitano
Priore perpetuo
Di S. Martino de Monti.

9 Anonymous, Frontispiece of Vespasiano Cappiardi, *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, Rome 1647 (photo Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma)

zione di Sant'Elia probably survived because it was a presentation copy. After 1873, the volume was transferred along with the entire library of the Carmelite monastery to the Roman Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale.[56] The text, with approximately 2200 lines filling 77 folios and an elaborately decorated title page, is neatly handwrittten (fig. 9). It was written for fifteen actors and two choirs (representing the People of Israel and the Prophets of Baal, respectively). The text also frequently mentions musical accompaniment (in prologue, epilogue and *intermedi*) and parts to be sung, such as 'ariette'. The third *intermedio* indicates an 'arietta a due concertata', clarifying that the singing voices were accompanied by a (small) orchestra.[57]

The structure of *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, with five acts, a prologue, and an epilogue, follows that of the sixteenth-century 'spiritual tragedy'; it is an example of the approximation of religious drama to the classical rules of theatre.[58] However, Cappiardi adopted a formal rhyme scheme of paired, enclosed and alternating verses, harking back to its Renaissance (vernacular) predecessors.[59] With the choice of 'rappresentazione' in its title, the play represents a conscious return to the genre of sacred theatre.[60] In the study of post-Tridentine religious culture, popular religious spectacles are a relatively neglected subject. It is often assumed that Renaissance courts were prime locations for the development of modern – i.e., secular – theatre, and it is possible to infer that the tradition of *sacre rappresentazioni* evaporated during the sixteenth century. Vasari has suggested this, arguing that the stage machinery designed for that purpose by Brunelleschi had fallen into disuse.[61] Observing changes in textual structures and genre indications of a declining tradition, or at least a reduction of these texts to mere reading material, recent studies of vernacular religious plays have upheld this assumption.[62] Corroborations for this assumption might be found in the adverse reactions of Catholic authorities to theatre, such as the 1565 prohibition of *sacre rappresentazioni* in the diocese of Milan, similar episcopal rulings against theatrical performances in liturgical spaces in Florence in 1577, and the negative appraisal of theatre by Pope Gregory XIII in 1574.[63]

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[56] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11. See Blasi 2005 for this collection at the BNCR. For the codicological description, see URL http://manus.iccu.sbn.it//opac_SchedaScheda.php?ID=67027 (last accessed 30.6.2022) and Blasi 2005, p. 158. Hammond 1985, p. 243, has stated that printing opera libretti was exceptional, and they were mostly copied in manuscript for circulation.

[57] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 49r.

[58] Radcliff-Umstead 1983, pp. 44 and 59 and Cascetta 1995, pp. 117–119.

[59] This is visible in the prologue and the '*Colloquio per doppo l'opera*' or the epilogue, each consisting of ten *stanze* that vary in length from six to eight lines, while always maintaining a rhyme scheme of six verses. See Radcliffe-Umstead 1986 for Cecchi; see, for example, Bartolomeo Abbati's *Il Magno tragedia sacra* of 1645 and Annibale Lomeri's *Cicilia Sacra in Drammatica poesia* of 1635 for examples of unrhymed sacred plays. Allacci provides a good overview of the various indications of genre, Allacci 1755.

But these prohibitions could just as easily attest to a continuing practice. In fact, in seventeenth-century Milan and Naples, the performance of (paraliturgical) plays representing hagiographic stories remained a regular feature.[64] In the meantime, the *sacra rappresentazione* was adapted to new theatrical concepts and therefore strayed from its *Quattrocento* origin as a single act recited in *ottava rima*.[65] The impact of humanist concepts led to an approximation of the rules of classical theatre, and to the denomination of these plays as spiritual comedy, *rappresentazione sacra* or *tragedia spirituale*.[66] Furthermore, confraternities in Rome and Florence seem to have continued with such performances.[67] The issue, therefore, seems to be primarily one of neglected or misinterpreted sources, not one of a disappearing tradition of religious entertainment.[68]

Cappiardi's text mainly deviated from the tradition of sacred representations by including four *intermedi* – a relatively rare phenomenon in 16th-century religious plays that essentially interrupted the simple narrative structure of a hagiography.[69] Gianmaria Cecchi's *Esaltazione della Croce*, performed in 1586 in honor of the marriage between Cesare d'Este and Virginia de' Medici, contained six *intermedi* illustrating biblical themes, with effects produced by stage machinery and only brief (sung) texts.[70] Three quarters of a century later, they might be seen as an adaptation to the Roman context, where Bernini's staging of Barberini court operas with religious subjects – such as *Sant'Alessio* – had turned these additions into events in their own right.[71] However, in *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, these interludes were turned into meaningful elements within the religious narrative, which can also be traced in other contemporary religious plays. As argued by Harness, *intermedi* could be used to "highlight and amplify specific didactic messages", thereby directing the interpretation of the main plot into a particular direction.[72] By means of these insertions, Cappiardi's play also offered an allegorical layer, steering the interpretation towards the main theme of Elijah's life as a Prophet.

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[60] Coeval examples of *sacre rappresentazioni* are Giovanni Angelo Lottini's *S. Bastiano Sacra Rappresentazione* of 1608 and Carubina Venturella's *Rappresentazione di S. Cecilia Vergine, et Martire* of 1631. See Bernardi 2002 for the persistence of the genre in the seventeenth century; see also Zaccaro 2009, who points out the popularity of religious theatre in Spain, where the medieval sacred plays develop into sacred comedies and *autos sacramentales*, and Bletsacher 1985, who describes the persistence of the genre at the Vienna court during the seventeenth century.

[61] Lumini (1877) 1991, p. 172, and D'Ancona 1891, p. 61; for the visual arts, see the same assumption in Aronberg Lavin 1990. For Vasari's statement, see D'Ancona 1891, p. 331.

[62] D'Ancona 1891, p. 331, Newbigin 1997, pp. 80 and 96, and Newbigin 2007a, p. 205.

[63] Pastor 1901–1933, vol. 9, p. 782 and Black 1989, pp. 65 and 114; see also Turchini 1976, pp. 415–417.

[64] Landi 2004, Bernardi 2000–2003, p. 1023 and Brindicci 2006, *passim*.

[65] D'Ancona 1891, pp. 379–395, Newbigin 1983, xxxi–lii and Ventrone 2008, pp. 167–193; see also Clubb 1964, pp. 107–109, for the changing definitions and conventions of the genre in the sixteenth century and Weaver 2002, pp. 52–56, for the staging of these plays in female convents.

[66] Crescimbeni 1731, pp. 301–302.

[67] Wisch/Newbigin 2013, pp. 263–391, and Eisenbichler 1998; for a prolific Florentine author in this particular field, see Cecchi 1856.

[68] Brindicci 2006, pp. 50–51, and Luisi 2008, p. 19, the latter noting that sixteenth-century published versions were for distribution to the audience, while manuscripts were for performances. See Turchini 1976, p. 414: "data la carenza della documentazione [...] bisogna essere coscienti, metodologicamente, che si conosce soprattutto il controllo esercitato sulle sacre rappresentazioni di cui si sono spesso perse le tracce o le testimonianze scritte." Coppola contains the texts of more than 30 *sacre rappresentazioni* from the 15th century copied in manuscript between 1560 and 1575, *Sacre rappresentazioni aversane* 1959. Allacci recounts printed editions of sacred plays from the second half of the seventeenth century.

5. Theatrical narrative and its visualization

Apart from the coincidence of date, the relation between the visual and the performative arts is also alluded to explicitly in Cappiardi's sonnet inserted before the actual text in the manuscript of *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*. This poem celebrates the prior's exemplary devotion, at the same time also referring to the splendor of the artistic decoration of San Martino:

> You who flee the dangerous faults of this world
> In your solitary and narrow cell,
> While despising pomp and treasures,
> You make your soul Virtue's handmaiden.
>
> Whence did you receive such a grand genius?
> Whence comes the faith that shines forth so vibrantly?
> Whence, Filippino, comes the vast amount of gold and silver
> that your hand rains down?
>
> The sacred walls, the holy altars,
> the sacred vessels, coffered ceilings and roofs
> inspire unusual effects with their profound spirit.
>
> Because in your purity you are only comparable to yourself,
> Because you have eyes directed only at divine works,
> You desire that others learn virtue from your glories.[73]

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[69] Mayer Brown 1973, p. 12. An exception was Gianmaria Cecchi's 1586 *Esaltazione della Croce*, which contained six *intermedi* visualizing biblical themes with stage machinery and brief (sung) texts – see Nutter 2001, p. 484 and D'Ancona 1891, vol. 3, pp. 124–138. Moreover, *intermedi* presented musical intermissions in spoken drama, whereas in the case of the *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, the entire play included music and singing.

[70] Nutter 2001, p. 484. For the description of the *intermedia* see D'Ancona 1891, vol. 3, pp. 124–138.

[71] Nutter 2001, pp. 476–488; see Filippi 2001 for *intermedia* in Jesuit plays with musical accompaniment – often unconnected to the subject of the play or even not religious in subject at all, such as 'il ballo della bizzarria' or 'leoni e alberi attirati dal suono di Orfeo.'

[72] Harness 2010, p. 372.

[73] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 2r: "Tu che in angusta e solitaria cella / Fuggi del mondo il perigliosi error / E sprezzator di fasti, e di tesori / Fai di vera Virtù l'anima ancella. // Onde hai genio si grande? Onde si bella / Vibra la fedeltà lampi, e splendori? / Onde d'argenti, Filippino, e d'ori / Ne diffonde la man tanta procella? // Di spirito vasto inusitati effetti / Spiran le sacre mura, e i sacri Altari / I sacri vasi, i laquearij, e i tetti. // Perche sei nel candor solo a te pari / Perche ad opre divine i lumi eretti / Vuoi ch'altri il ben dalle tue glorie impari."

These poetic references to the embellishment of the church interior indicate that Cappiardi was well informed about the works in San Martino. In the preface to the play, he further hinted at artistic renderings of the subject: "I will be content with outlining these things, not being an expert in colors, knowing neither how to draw nor how to paint […]"[74] All this suggests that the frescoes were planned in conjunction with the play and Filippini had aimed at an interplay of media.

But the theatrical text is not a direct reflection of the frescoes, nor does it offer a literal retelling of the biblical story. Cappiardi stated in his dedication that he took the poetic liberty of dwelling on certain details to enhance its vivacity. He specifically named the scene where King Ahab decides to send only his servant Abdia away to search for food and water – which, in fact, does not stray far from the biblical account.[75] Other characters in the play, indeed, lack a historical or biblical basis; they were supposed to enliven the action on stage and find their justification in the three alternating storylines. The added characters, mainly servants or courtiers of King Ahab, serve to reflect and comment upon the actions of the main protagonists. According to Cappiardi, even though he had 'strayed slightly' by adding scenes, these poetic liberties did not alter the meaning of the sacred story.[76] The main difference between the biblical account and Cappiardi's play lies in two subsidiary storylines, the first concerning Matusalem and his son Sansone, captain in King Ahab's army and the second being the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, part of the biblical account. Neither of these two additional storylines was depicted by Dughet and Grimaldi in San Martino.

The first three scenes of Act 1 each introduced one of the three storylines that make out the main plot of the play. The first is situated at the royal court: a period of drought has hit the country and Ahab orders the temple priests to prepare votive offerings to Baal, to lift the curse. In the second scene, Matusalem laments the carelessness of his son Sansone. In the third, Elijah encounters the widow and works the miracle of the never-ending abundance of flour and oil. These three narrative lines convene in Act 3, when the priests of Baal and Elijah invoke their respective gods to consume the offerings prepared for them, and the fifth and last act culminate in the killing of the king and queen.

In the intermediate scenes, the first storyline of Ahab and Jezebel tells of their growing desperation, which drives them to send out their majordomo Abdia in search of food and herbs in other regions. Abdia represents the true believer, lamenting the blindness of his lord Ahab to the true religion as the main cause of the curse on the Israelites. Ahab and Jezebel, on the other hand, consider Elijah as the instigator of the drought and accuse him of disturbing the peace of their people. When Elijah announces God's wrath on them, they follow his order to summon Ahab's priests to prepare an offering to their false deities. After the failure to have their sacrifice consumed by Baal and the priests' subsequent execution, Jezebel swears revenge on Elijah, and orders the servants to track the prophet down. When he is found, he predicts that their reign will soon come to an end; their death is not staged but recounted by Abdia in a monologue. The play concludes with a scene in which Elisha is astonished by the parting of the waters of the river Jordan with Elijah ascending to heaven in a fiery chariot, leaving his mantle to Elisha.

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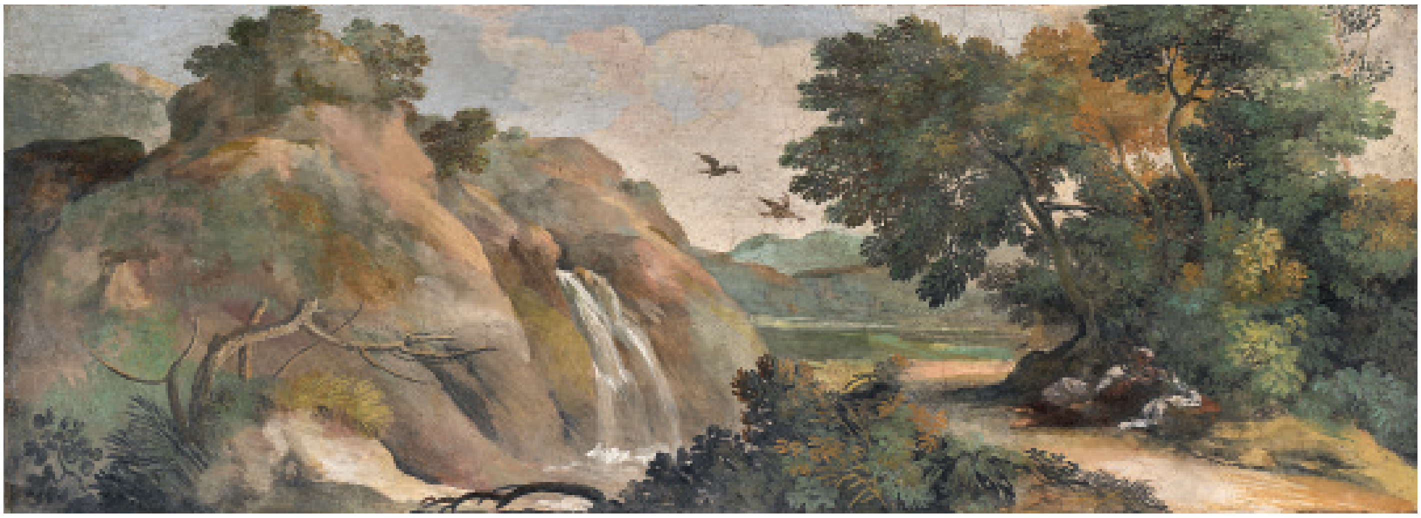
[74] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 2v: "sia contentato d'ombreggiare quelle cose che come inesperto di maneggiare i colori, non sapeva ne delineare, ne dipingere […]."

[75] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 2v: "tal volta mi sia discostato da i sentimenti del testo (come nel particolare d'aver Acab commesso solo ad Abdia la cura di cercar fontane, et herbe; et in altri luoghi) […]."

[76] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fols. 2v–3r: "[…] resti servita di credere, che la moltiplicazione delle scene, che non // possono essere, è senza spesa, e senza incommodo. M'ha fatto leggermente traviare. Non mutata però la sustantia del fatto."



10 Gaspard Dughet, *Elijah Fed by the Ravens*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

Many scenes of the play, written by Cappiardi, harmonize with Dughet's and Grimaldi's frescoes depicting the life of Elijah. This points to the wider issue of intermediality in the early modern arts, which can only be touched upon here.[77] Of the numerous issues that influence the process of translating text into image, especially the narrative implications are relevant to this case, particularly the narrative structure and its constituent elements in the two different media.[78] The comparison is especially pertinent, given that the pictorial cycle in San Martino follows the structure of the play in some respects, at the same time also deviating from it.[79] This also allows for a reflection on the interpretation by the respective audiences. For the present discussion, it is of particular importance that there are some significant variations between the identification of the scenes in Lezana's *Annales Sacri* and the interpretation of the same scenes on the basis of Cappiardi's *Rappresentazione*.[80] In a number of instances, Cappiardi's text allows for a better understanding of the frescoes, indicating it reflects Filippini's iconographical concepts for the church decoration.

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[77] For intermediality and narrativity, see, for example, Wolf 2018, esp. pp. 63–77, Oy-Marra 2004 and Nendza 2020.

[78] Wolf 2018, pp. 349–354 and Cojannot-Le Blanc 2016.

[79] Aronberg Lavin 1990, and Ganz 2014.

[80] Repeated restorations since 1790 complicate the identification of some frescoes; see Boisclair 1986, 93. A set of drawings was made after the frescoes by Luigi Calamatta in 1818, preserved at the Istituto Romano di San Michele (see Dinoia 2009). Since these copies in pen and ink focused on the landscape and left the contours of the figures open, they will not be taken into account here.

[81] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 12v: "O del vago torrente / Onde beate, e care / E perche si ripente / Quasi fuggirne, e dileguarsi a volo / Lasciando dell'humor chiaro e tranquillo / Vedovo il letto, e inaridito il suolo. / Io delle stille amate / Doppo il soave cibo / Che ministri del Cielo / Offriro i Corbi alle mie brame ardenti." Lezana correctly identified this scene; Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, pp. 578: "Eliae, quae corvi cibaria ministrant."

[82] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 38r: "Ad Acab m'inviò, ma prima io voglio / Con Abdia ritrovarmi: eccolo appunto"

[83] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 38v: "Elia, diletto Elia / In che t'offesi mai / Che per le man del Re mi brami estinto?"

[84] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 38r.

[85] In his set of engravings after the frescoes, Parboni provided the left figure with a crown, turning him into Ahab (as the caption also states); see Parboni 1810, ill. 11; also, in other cases, Parboni could not identify the scenes – see his ill. 4 that depicts the *Vindicta Salvatris* with 'Visio' as its caption.

[86] Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, p. 59.

[87] Singer 1964, vol. 9, p. 369, describes Obadiah as the name of thirteen different people in the Old Testament; see also McKenzie 1965, p. 624. See also Seibert 1968, pp. 4–5.

Dughet's fresco of *Elijah being fed by the Ravens* is related to the first scene of the play in which Elijah appears (Act 1 Scene 3), as it coincides with the flashback in his monologue while walking to the city of Zarephath (fig. 10):

> Oh, beautiful brook / beautiful and charming waves / which I almost repent / running away from, it vanishes so quickly / leaving my clear and tranquil mood / my bed deserted, and barren again the soil. / From these beloved drops / After the sweet food / that those messengers from the Heavens / the ravens offered to my fervent cravings / I quenched my great thirst […].[81]

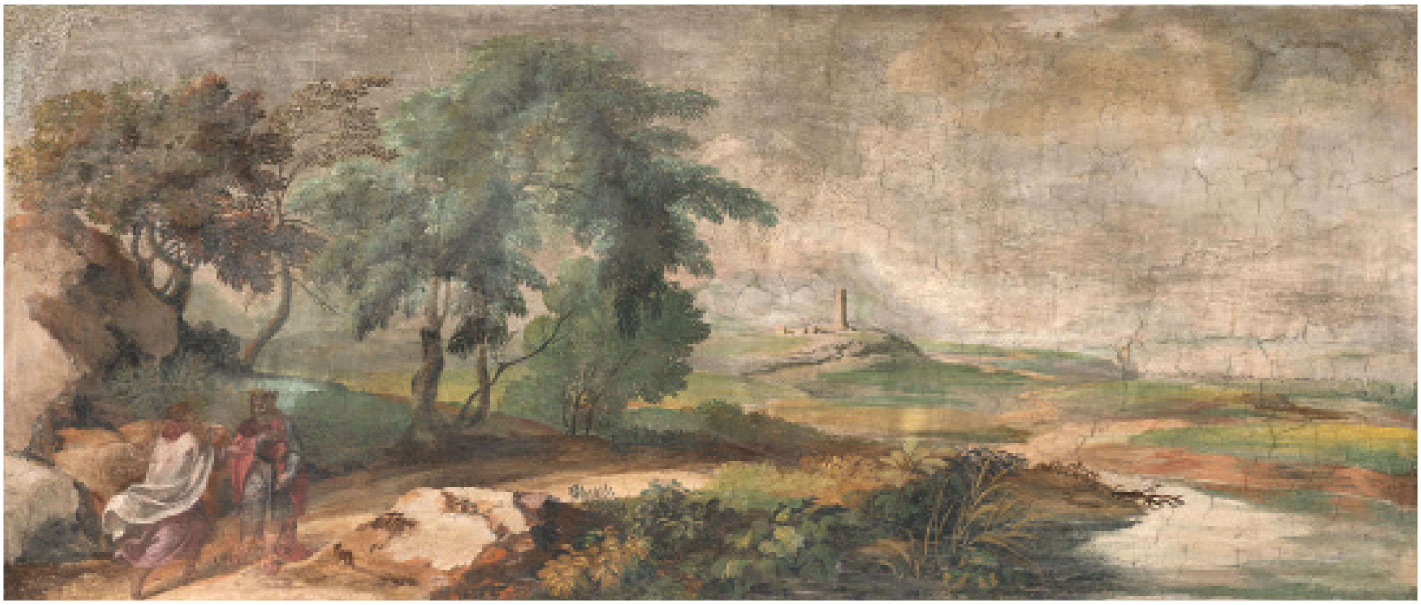
The following fresco (fig. 11) by Dughet does not illustrate the conversation between Elijah and Ahab, as stated in Lezana's description and recent interpretations. Instead, this scene should be read as *Elijah meeting Abdia*, King Ahab's major domo, enacted in Act 3 Scene 1, where Elijah states "He sends me back to Ahab, but first I want to / meet with Abdia – here he is."[82] When they meet, Abdia first refuses to relay Elijah's message to his king, illustrating the conflict between obeying one's true faith and one's master:

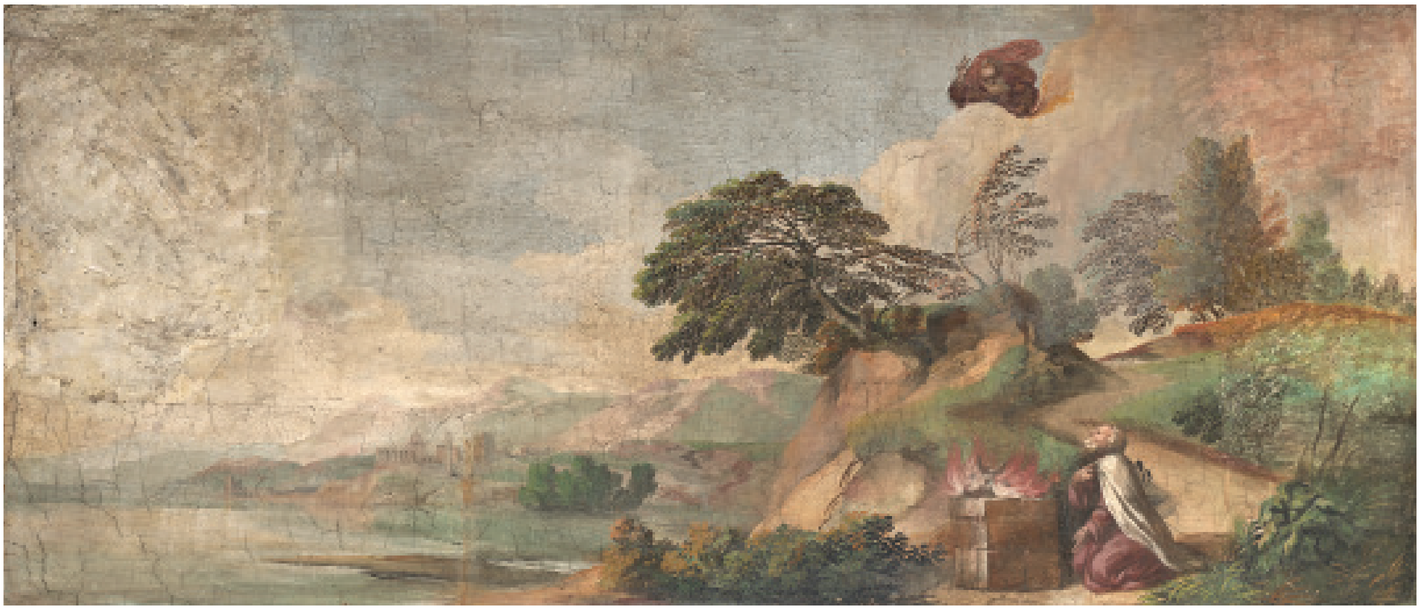
> Elijah, beloved Elijah / With what have I ever offended thee / that you crave to have me killed by the hand of the King?[83]

That Cappiardi offers a better interpretation of the fresco here than Lezana is indicated by the location of the meeting – in the open landscape, not in the sovereign's palace. Dughet's depiction accords with the stage direction, "Elia & Abdia vestito da campagna."[84] The gestures do not correspond with Lezana's description of this fresco, namely, that Elijah is to be seen as reproaching the king for his idolatry – instead, the theatrical text indicates that Elia encounters Abdia while traveling towards Ahab, which corresponds to the prophet's fluttering mantle in the fresco.[85]

Moreover, the figures' attires conform to the descriptions in Cappiardi's text. For one, Elijah does not meet a figure in royal dress. Also the identification with Abdia is problematic in Lezana's context, for Lezana had turned this figure in his appendix into "Abdias Propheta, ac servus Dei, discipulus Eliae", in other words, into a follower of the Prophet and potential member of the Carmelite community, thus offering an argument in favor of the Elianic succession.[86] This Abdia was identified in Judaic sources with an Old Testament prophet, Obadiah, who, like Jonah, was one of the minor prophets,[87] and it was

11 Gaspard Dughet, *The Meeting of Elijah and Abdia*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)





12 Gaspard Dughet, *Elijah's Sacrifice on Mount Carmel*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

this character that Cappiardi claimed he had fleshed out using his poetic imagination. Yet neither the text nor the fresco includes references to Abdia as a potential follower of the Prophet Elijah, for he would then have logically been dressed in a white Carmelite habit.

The next fresco, according to the narrative sequence of the play, is Dughet's representation of *Elijah's Sacrifice on Mount Carmel* (Act 4 Scene 1; fig. 12). This visualization corresponds with Cappiardi's mise-en-scène, as in the first half of this scene, the priests of Baal attempt to have their sacrifice ignited by their god, after which Elijah prays to Yahweh to consume the offering:

> Oh, Lord, whose Name is hallowed, perfect zealot / of your Law, show to these [people] / the strongest forces of your powers, / Shoot your sacred flashes. / See, here, your sacrifice; fire, come now / and in the face of these [people] burn it, and consume it.[88]

The event in the following fresco, Dughet's depiction of *The Killing of the Priests of Baal* (fig. 13), immediately follows the scene of *Sacrifice* in Cappiardi's text, where it is given the form of an order from Elijah to the Israelite people (Act 4, Scene 1) without being represented. It was subsequently recalled by Sansone in a dialogue with his father (Act 4, Scene 4):

> The link to too beautiful a task has been severed / for if I had been present / when the heads of the Prophets of Baal / had to be cut off with a single blow / I would have gladly run to the woods.[89]

and described in a dialogue transpiring at the court between Ahab and Jezebel (Act 4 Scene 5):

> When that true and stunning event had happened / The Tishbite ordered that / death be inflicted on the Prophets / rigorously at the brook Kishon / and it was done exactly as he ordained.[90]

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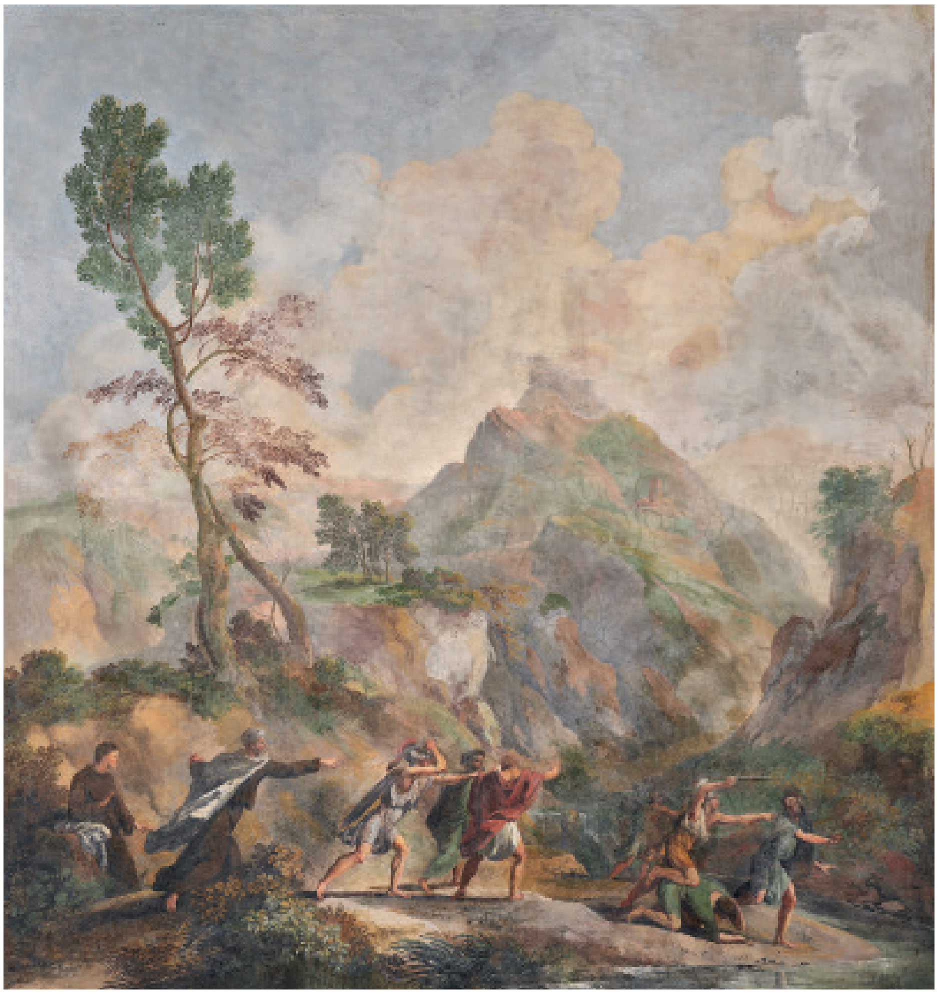
[88] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fols. 53r: "O Dio che sei / Del nome santo tuo, della tua legge / Perfetto zelator, mostra à costoro. / della potentia tua l'alto vigore. / Volgi i tuoi sacri lumi / Eccoti l'holocausto; hor venga il foco, / E in faccia di costor l'arda, e consumi."



13 Gaspard Dughet, *The Killing of the Priests of Baal*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

As the event itself was not to be enacted on stage in Cappiardi's play, Dughet's fresco turned from a diegetic (or indirect) to a mimetic mode of representation.[91]

The next fresco is Grimaldi's rendition of *The Cloud Appearing in the Sky*, witnessed by Elijah's servant (Act 4 Scene 3; fig. 14): "But wait (Oh, Lord), there in the distance / a small cloud / I see it rising up from the sea towards the sky."[92] This servant is given the name of Sarvia in the play, while Lezana identifies him in the appendix on San Martino as 'ipsius discipulis,' or – again – a disciple of Elijah; in the first volume of the *Annales*, this character was called 'Iona Propheta' and identified as the son of the widow from Zarephath, and one of the first followers of Elijah.[93] The caption under Pietro Parboni's print of this fresco describes him as 'puerum suum,' and no clear identification is possible as the dress is not colored.[94] Regardless of the designation, the relation of this servant with Elijah, as that of master and disciple, concords with the description 'il discepolo'

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[89] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fols. 56v–57r: "A troppo bel impresa il fil m'ha tronco / Che se stava presente / Quando a i Profeti di Baal la testa / Recider si dovea n'un colpo solo / Nelle selve volar le facea tosto."

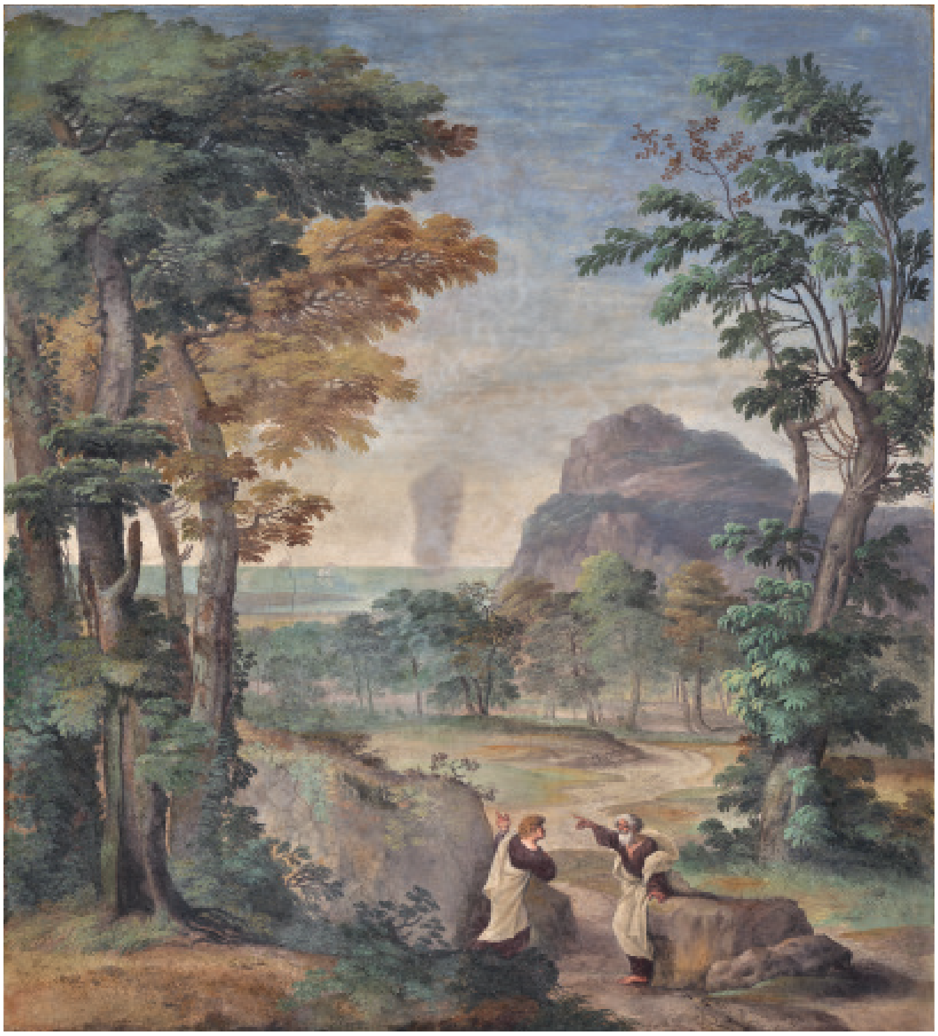
[90] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 58r: "Doppo successo tal vero, e stupendo / Diede ordine il Tesbite ch'ai Profeti / Al torrente Cisoro data la morte / Rigidamente fosse, e così fatto / Puntualmente fù, quanto ei commise."

[91] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 53v. For the diegetic and mimetic modes in narratology, see Nünning/Sommer 2008.

[92] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 55v: "Ma (aspetta mio Signor) la dall'estremo / Picciola nuvoletta / Vedo dal mare incamminarti al Cielo"

[93] Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, pp. 56–57.

[94] Parboni 1810, no. 11.



14 Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi, *The Cloud Appearing in the Sky*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

(without a name), given *post factum* by Filippini in his *Descrittione*. Grimaldi's fresco also depicts the servant in Carmelite dress, although the present state of conservation precludes any certainty.[95]

The subsequent fresco, Dughet's *Elijah Fed by the Angel* (fig. 15), shows the prophet lying under a bush on the bank of a river, with the angel appearing with food from the right, ordering him to return to Ahab, to prophesy the end of his reign. This fresco corresponds with Act 4 Scene 8 of the play, which represents the psychological turning point for Elijah as protagonist:

> *Angel*: From the empyrean spheres / from the angelic crew / I come descending down from the Great Mover / to serve him who is a servant to my Lord. / See, here, that in order to restore his fatigued spirit / I bring him water, and bread, / so that with increased energy / he is able to reach his destination.[96]

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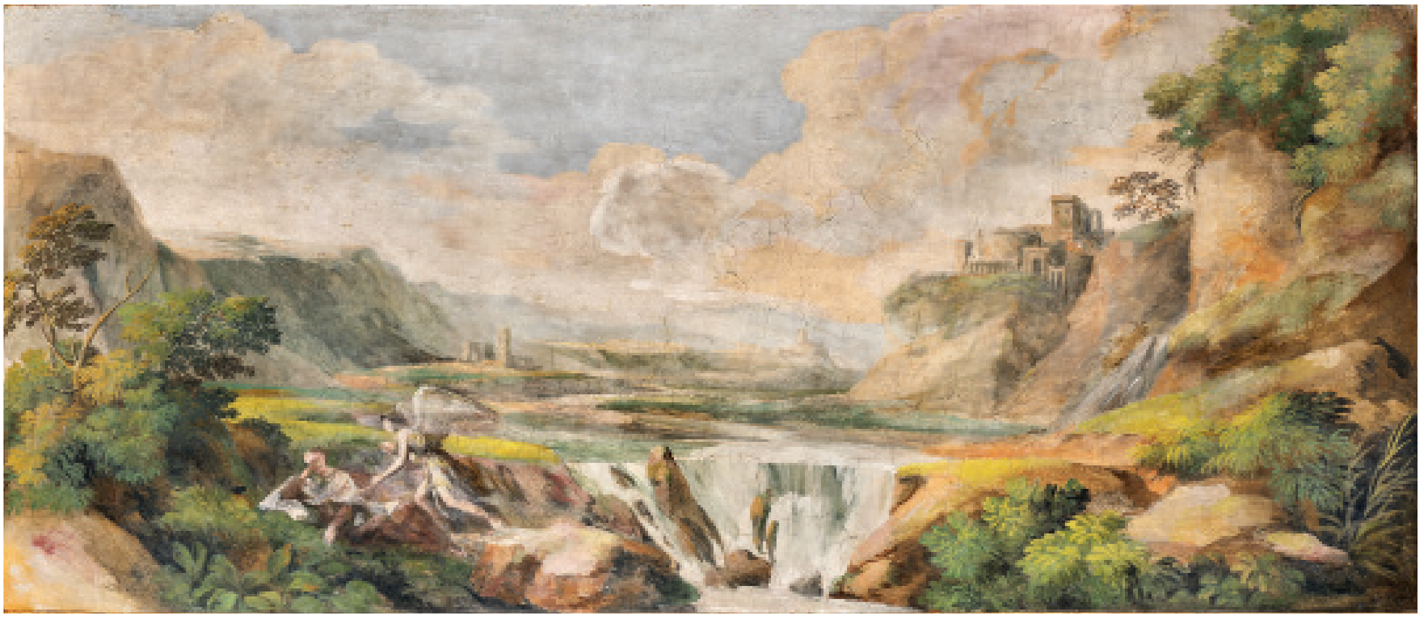
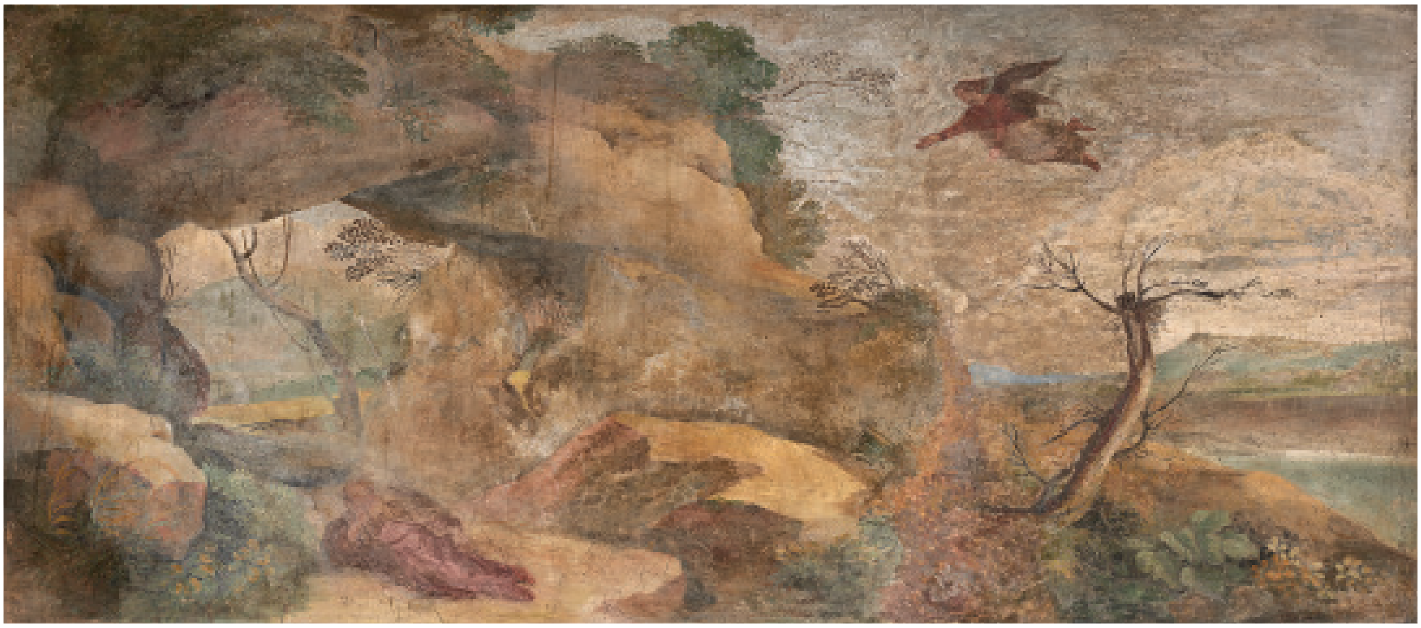
[95] Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, pp. 578; for the citation from Filippini's *Descrittione*, see Sutherland 1964, p. 63. In the first volume of the *Annales* of 1645, Lezana himself also referred to him as "puerum suum", not as disciple: see Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 1, p. 167. This indicates that this shift towards a stricter argumentation of the Elianic succession only surfaced after 1650, postdating the frescoes.

[96] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 61 v: "*Ang.o*. Su dall'empiree sfere / Dall'Angeliche squadre / Io ne discendo al gran motor ministro. Per servir'un ch'al mio Sig.re è servo. / Ecco ch'a ristorar gli spirti lassi / L'acqua ne porto, è l pane / Accio con maggior lena / Al destinato loco ei giunger possa. / Oh del motore eterno / Providenza infinita! / Oh di vera pietade abisso immenso!"





15 Gaspard Dughet, *Elijah being fed by the Angel*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

16 Gaspard Dughet, *God Appearing to Elijah*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

This crucial moment is followed by Dughet's representation of *God appearing to Elijah* hiding in a cave (Act 5 Scene 2; fig. 16). Lezana describes this scene in his 1653 appendix as "Elijah on Mount Horeb", which is a more general interpretation and ignores the divine appearance; in the first volume, he describes only the conversation between God (in the guise of an angel) with Elijah, not the moment of the appearance itself.[97] Cappiardi, on the other hand, mentions specific elements that can be recognized in the fresco, notwithstanding its state of conservation. The stage directions for Act 5, Scene 2 clarify the setting: "Iddio p. di dentro alla scena, et Elia nella Spelonca."[98] The text mentions the strong wind Elijah feels when he comes out of the cave:

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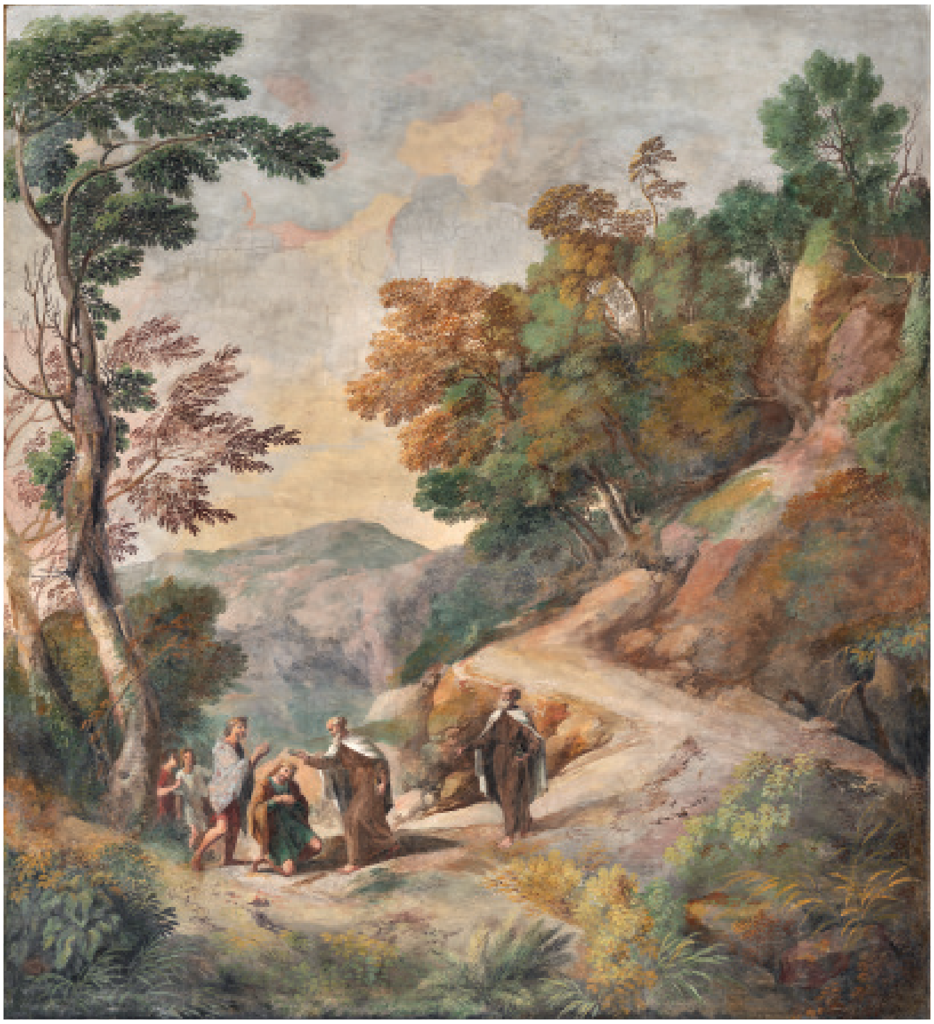
[97] Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, p. 576, referring to Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 1, p. 169; see also Parboni 1810, ill. 10: "Cumque Elias venisset ad montem Dei Horeb mansit in spelunca; et ecce sermo Domini ad eum[…] quid hic agis Elia? Lib. III Reg. Cap. XIX, v. 9."

[98] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 67 v.



17 Gaspard Dughet, *The Anointing of the Kings*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

> And what wind do I feel / that strongly perturbs the mountains and hills / and breaks the stones, see the fire next to it? / Now a sweet breeze of wind gently blows / which restores every spirit; it certainly is God himself.[99]

The impact of this strong wind can be observed in the fresco, particularly on the trees and the shrubs, with their horizontally extended branches, which again points to the correlation between the theatrical text and Dughet's frescoes.

Dughet's representation of *The Anointing of the Kings* is related to the same scene of the play; here, the fresco corresponds to a greater degree with Cappiardi's text, which has Elijah receive a divine order to perform both actions (Act 5 Scene 2; fig. 17):

> Now I send you through the desert / to where Damascus raises its impressive walls to the sky / There you will anoint Azrael King over Assyria / and Jehu the Bold, son of Nimsi, over Israel.[100]

In the appendix, Lezana describes the anointing of one king only, namely Azahalem, although in the first volume, he proclaims the divine command to Elijah

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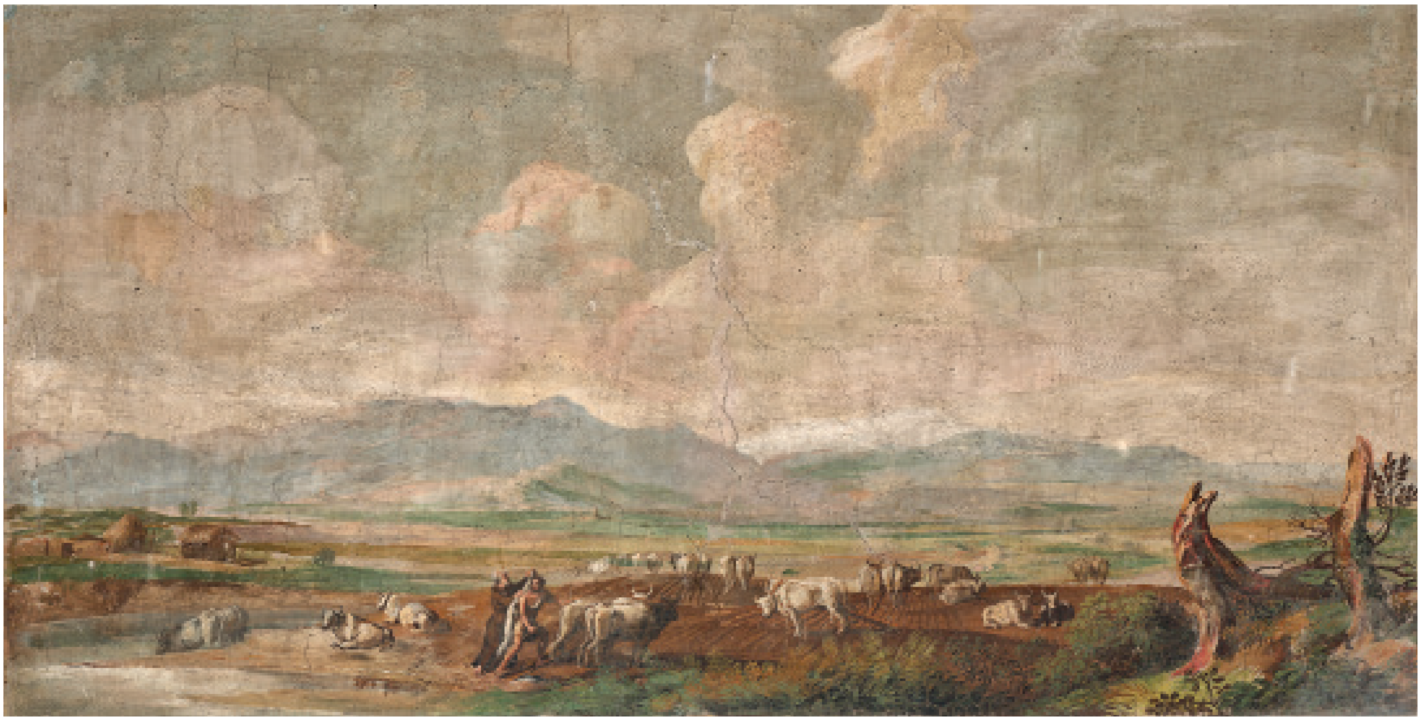
[99] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 68r: "E qual vento sent'io / Che valido sconvolge i monti, è i colli / E i sassi spezza, eccone il fuoco accanto. / Hor spira un venticel d'aura si dolce / Ch'ogni spirti ristora, è Dio per certo."

[100] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 68v.: "Hor la dove Damasco / E stolle al Ciel le formidabil mura / Pel deserto t'invia / Quivi Adzael sopra l'Assiria in Rege / E sopra d'Israel di Namsi il figlio / Ungerai Jehu l'ardito."



18 Gaspard Dughet, *The Calling of Elisha*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

to anoint Azrael, Iehu and also Elisha, whereby the latter is not represented in this fresco.[101] However, the play did not require the anointing to be enacted, indicating it only diegetically, in conformity with the biblical text, where only the command is recounted but not its execution.[102]

The next fresco, Dughet's *The Calling of Elisha*, is consistent with the scene in the play (Act 5 Scene 5; fig. 18), appropriately headed as "Elijah and Elisha with a plough",[103] for this is exactly what the fresco depicts in the setting of an agrarian landscape. The ensuing conversation between the two also highlights the rural character:

> *Elisha*: Oh, how tiresome is today / the art of the agrarian; there is no effort / equal to this one; see how, exhausted, / I guide the ploughshare through the sand / to restore and soften the top layer. / *Elijah*: Elisha, where are you going? Halt your feet. / *Elisha*: Who is that calling me? / *Elijah*: I am Elijah Tishbite, [and] God calls you / as his Prophet and accepts you in my place.[104]

The following fresco (fig. 19) is damaged to such an extent that its identification as *Elijah Crossing the Jordan* is possible only by means of the copy formerly kept at Curia Generalizia of the Carmelites in Rome.[105] The subject of Grimaldi's

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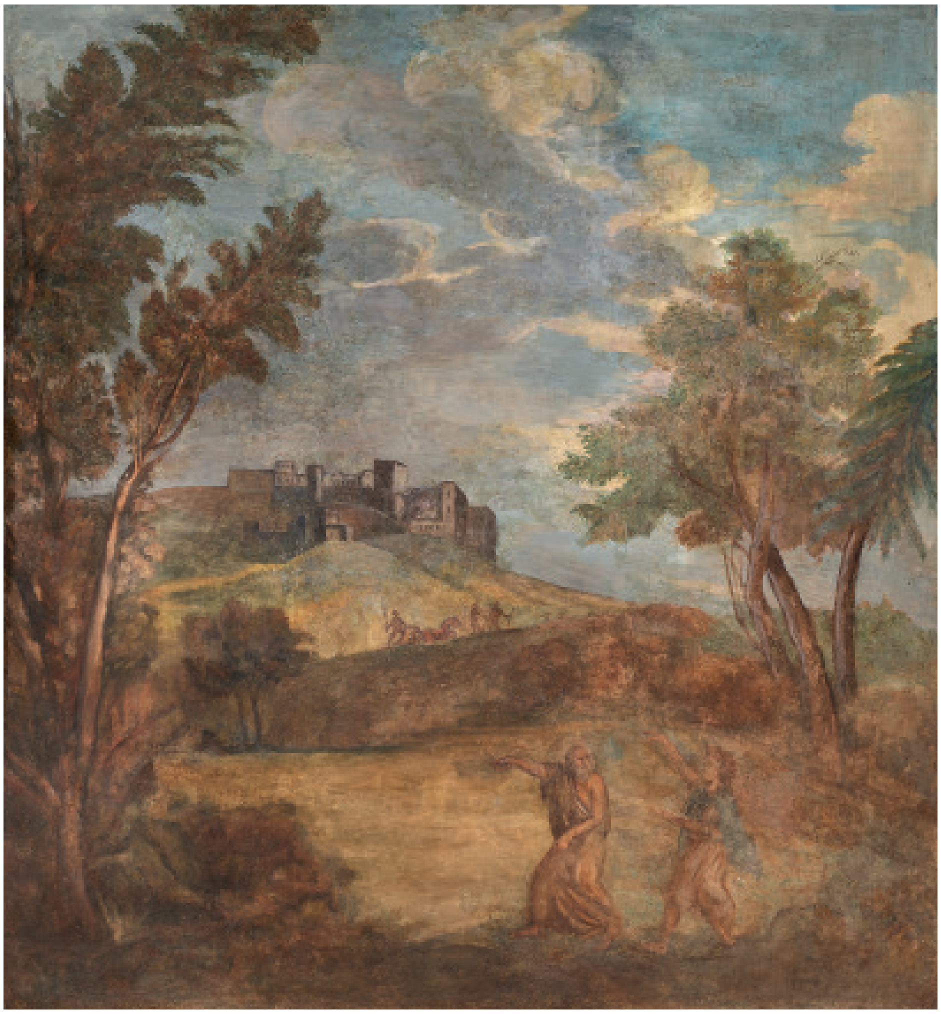
[101] Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 1, pp. 169–170: "Cumque perveniris illuc, unges Hazael Regem super Syriam, & Iehu filium Namsi unges Regem super Israël. Elisaeum autem filium Saphat, qui est de Abelmeula, unges Prophetam pro te."

[102] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 68v; Parboni 1810 gave the appropriate biblical citation: "Et ait Dominus ad Eliam: unges Hazael Regem super Syriam, et jehu filium Namsi unges Regem super Israel. Lib. Reg. Cap. XIX. W.15.16." See further the discussion in Heideman 1964, p. 378 and Bandes 1976, p. 56.

[103] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 71v: "Elia, et Eliseo con un vomero."

[104] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 71v: "*Eliseo* Oh di quanta fatica hoggi si prova / L'arte d'Agricolto non c'è sudore / Che tal sudor pareggi: ecco che stanco / |fol. 72r| Porto il vomere al sabio / Per risarcire, è assottiglar la cima. / *Elia* Eliseo dove vai? Ferma le piante. / *Eliseo* E chi sei che mi chiami? / *Elia* Io sono Elia Tesbite, Iddio ti vuole/ Per suo Profeta, è in luogo mio t'ammette."

[105] Heideman 1980, pp. 377–378 and Bandes 1976, p. 57; the copy itself has been stolen. Parboni's print does not show the original staffage, as by the 19th century this fresco had been heavily damaged.



19 Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi, *Elijah Crossing the Jordan*, 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

fresco conforms to Act 5 Scene 10 of the play (also its last scene), where Elijah makes the water part with his mantle; he responds to Elisha's admiration of this act by saying that it is all due to the power of God:

> *Elisha*: With what readiness / do the deep waters of the Jordan recede / upon the mere touch of a pallium? / Oh, virtue, oh, vigor / which it so powerfully contains. *Elijah*: It is God, Creator of admirable things […].[106]

This fresco is followed by Dughet's depiction of *Elijah Ascending to Heaven* (fig. 20) in the fiery chariot in the same scene:

> *Elisha* Oh, I see a chariot / with a steed of fire descending towards us. / Its wheels appear as flashes and lightning / And now it directs its course towards you / Oh, that it flies away, abducting you. / *Elijah* Yonder at your sign (oh, my Lord) I will go. / Elisha, remain in peace.[107]

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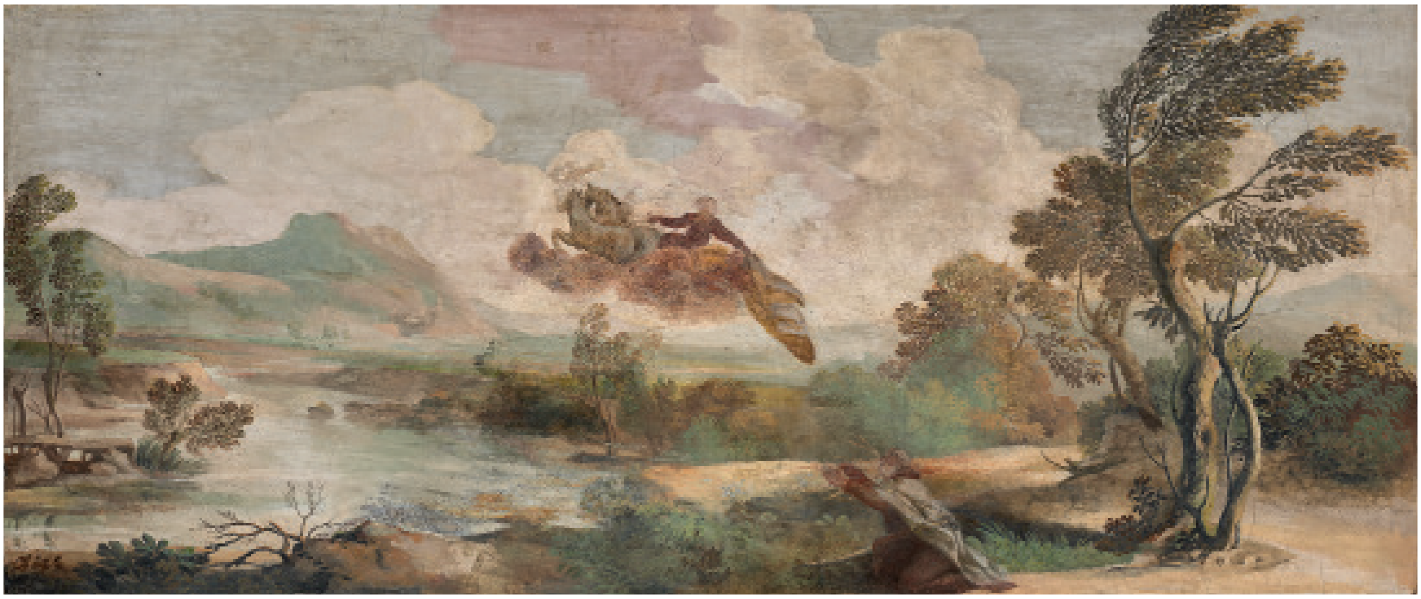
[106] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 76 v: Con qual prontezza / S'apriron del Giordan l'acque profonde / Al contatto vital del pallio solo? Oh virtude, oh vigore / Che dentro a sè, così potente asconde. [Elia] È Iddio fattor dell'ammirabil cose […]"; Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 3, p. 577 also gave the correct interpretation: "Unde ad pallium alludens sequitur postea pictura Patriarchae Elia transeuntis Iordanem sicco pede per pallij percussionem; quod & scriptum reliquimus eo 1. *tomo sub anno 3139 num.3.*"

[107] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 77 r–v: "Eliseo: Ahimè che vedo un carro / Con destrieri di foco a noi descende / Sembran le ruote sue fulmini e lampi // E poi che verso te raddrizzi il corso / Ahi che ratto t'invola / Elia: Ecco a i tuoi cenni (o mio Sig.re) io vengo / Eliseo resta in pace."



20 Gaspard Dughet, *Elisha Ascending to Heaven in a Fiery Chariot,* 1648, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

He leaves his mantle to Elisha in confirmation of his position as the new prophet, who subsequently praises it:

> Oh, you valuable mantle / meagre remnant of the beloved tutor / you will be of my ship / my sail, my helm and anchor, and my harbour. / See how respectfully / and warmly I embrace thee / I clench thee sweetly, and only from you / (risen above any other joy) / will I expect peace and comfort.[108]

The importance of the mantle is, moreover, highlighted by the way it is handled on stage: Elijah rising to heaven in a chariot seems to indicate that "here Elijah is abducted and drops his mantle", and by reciting the words cited above, Elisha "takes Elijah's mantle" into his hands.[109]

Several frescoes, in total six scenes, find no parallel in the theatrical text. Two of the six scenes depict events from the life of Elisha, following in Elijah's footsteps as prophet: *Elisha Cursing the Mocking Boys of Bethel* (fig. 21) and *Elisha Venerated after Crossing the Jordan* (fig. 22).[110] The traversing of the waters with Elijah's mantle echoes the scene in the opposite aisle in which the latter performed this act, while the damnation of the children manifests Elisha possessing the same powers of divine revenge that had supported Elijah in his crusade against Ahab's and Jezebel's idolatry of Baal. As such, these two frescoes might be regarded as a sequel to the biblical story and a 'prelude' to the Elianic succession. According to Heideman, these two frescoes were painted towards the end of the first campaign, in 1649, together with the depiction of Saint Simon Stock (the first general of the Carmelite Order after it was transferred to Europe; fig. 6).[111]

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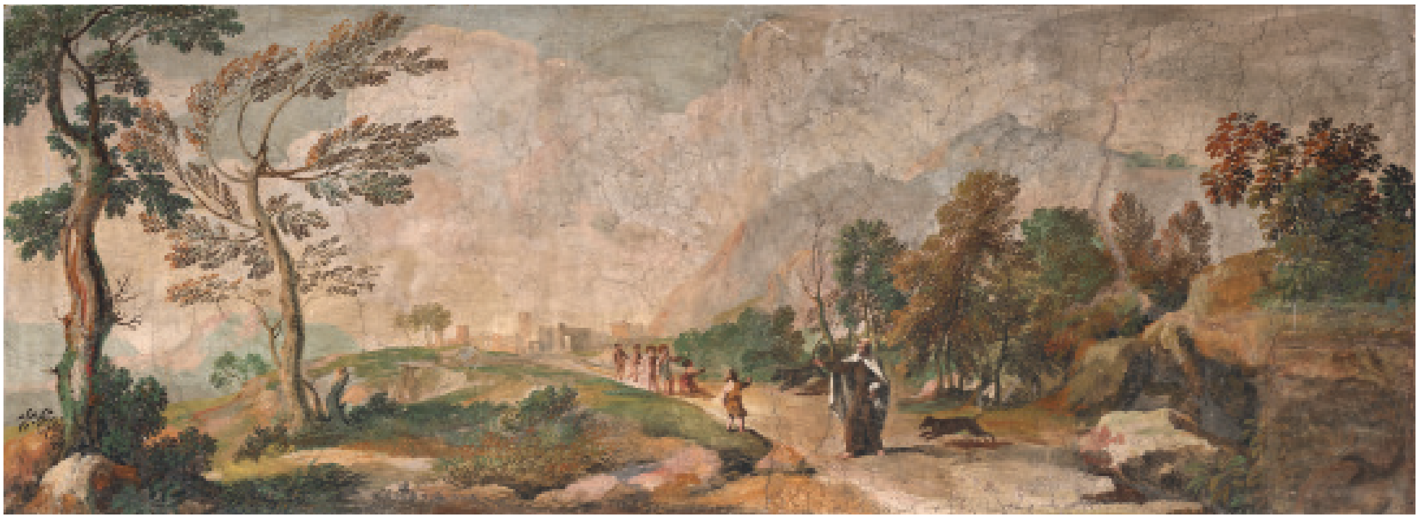
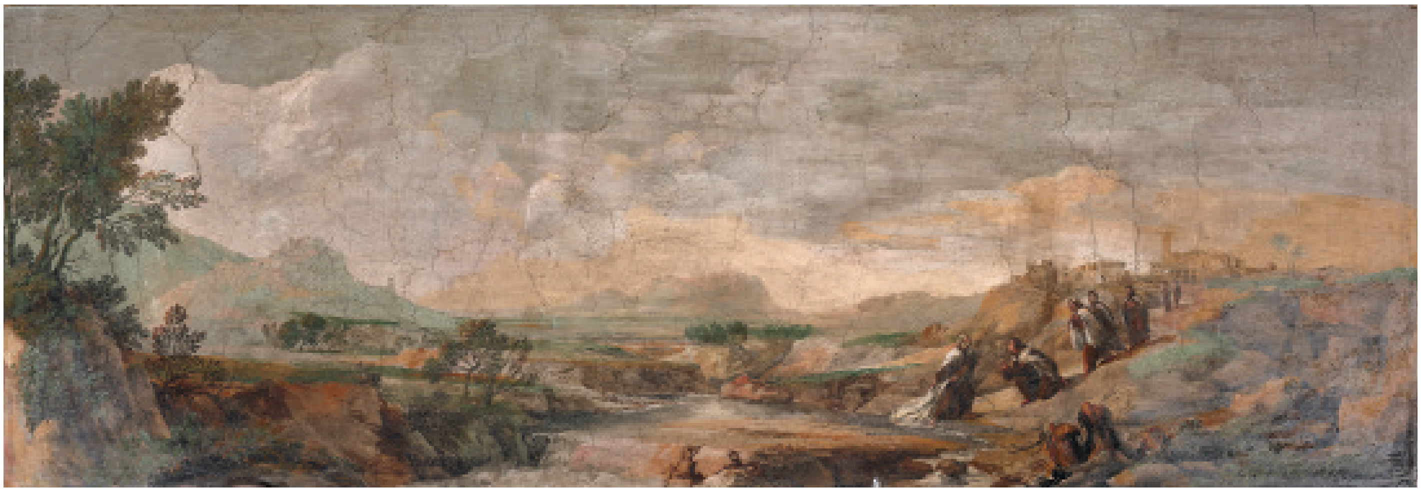
[108] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 78 r–v: "Tu sol pallio gradito / Del caro Precettor povero avanzo / Sarai della mia nave / e la vela, e'l timon, l'Ancora, e'l porto. Ecco che riverente / Caramente t'abbraccio / Dolcemente ti stringo, e da te solo / (All'altre gioie assorto) / Spereò pace, e conforto."

[109] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 77 v: "qui è rapito Elia e lascia cadere il pallio" and 78 r: "prende il pallio d'Elia."

[110] Heideman 1980, 542–544 for the dating of the individual frescoes.

[111] Heideman 1980, p. 542.





21 Gaspard Dughet, *Elisha Cursing the Mocking Boys of Bethel*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

22 Gaspard Dughet, *Elisha Venerated after Crossing the Jordan*, 1649, fresco. Rome, San Martino ai Monti (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

6. Prologue, epilogue and the question of audiences

Apart from the main action, the play also contained additional elements – four *intermedi*, a prologue and an epilogue – that steered the audience's interpretation of the main action. Even here differences between the play and the frescoes can be noted, which can be used to investigate the meaning of the painted cycle's iconography. To begin with, three further frescoes by Dughet were not included in the play. The *intermedi* on the prophet Balaam sent to curse the Israelites, on Tobias healing Tobith, and on the Judgment of Solomon were substituted in the fresco cycle by depictions of the *Tree of Emerentia*, the *Vision of Elijah's Parents*, and the *Mass of Saint Cyril*. Only the fourth fresco found a counterpart in the play in the form of an *intermedio*, showing the *Prophecy of Basilides*. According to Bandes, all four scenes illustrate the presence of hermits on Mount Carmel, and can, thus, together with the other three new scenes deviating from the main Elianic narrative, be connected to the Elianic succession.

However, even with respect to the *Prophecy of Basilides* or *Vindicta Salvatoris*, the play offers a slightly different interpretation of the episode. Cappiardi's list of roles in this interlude does not include a character named Basilides but foresees 'Padri del monte Carmelo', appearing as a group. They receive the vision of the dead Christ as a justification for the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. In his appendix on the church, Lezana named the priest 'Basilides'; however, in a further

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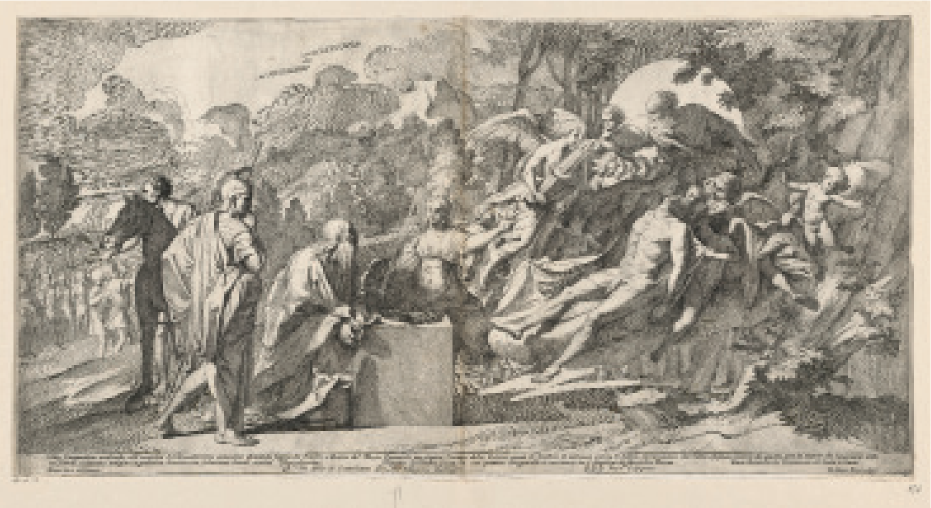
112 Lezana 1645–1656, vol. 2, pp. 184–186 and vol. 3, p. 578. See Boase 1939, pp. 113–115.



23 Carlo Cesare Testa, *The Prophecy of Basilides* (after Pietro Testa), ca. 1650, etching, 38 × 74.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. RP-P-OB-38.238 (photo Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

discussion in volume 2 of his *Annales*, he indicates that the antique sources deviated in this respect, and very little is known about this historical figure.[112] From that perspective, Cappiardi's decision to avoid naming this character is logical.

Dughet's representation, however, depicted only one hermit, thereby being more in line with Lezana than with Cappiardi's *intermedio*. His fresco is quite similar to Pietro Testa's composition in a painting at the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples and a print produced ca. 1650 by his brother Giovanni Cesare (fig. 23).[113] But as discussed by Boase and Albl, Testa's versions differ from Dughet's depiction in quite a few details, such as the position of Christ's body, the postures of Justitia and Basilides, and the soldiers in the right background.[114] This notwithstanding, several authors have presumed that Testa's painting offered the compositional scheme for the fresco, or even suggested he designed the figures for the entire cycle.[115] The latter thesis is not plausible, given the existence of preparatory drawings by Dughet for a number of compositions.

With respect to the chronology, the fresco, which was paid for in July 1651, certainly postdates the painting and the engraving. Testa's drawing is tentatively dated to 1648–1649 and the painting to 1645–1647 based on payments made to the artist.[116] It is highly probable that Filippini had commissioned the painting – Passeri suggests as much, and the print's caption also mentions that the reproduced painting was located at San Martino. On account of the dating and the differences between text and painting, since his painting was made before 1647, it is questionable whether Testa could have been aware of the theatrical text; he was more likely informed by Lezana about the subject. As has been suggested, Dughet was asked by Filippini to follow Testa's example, which explains why he deviated from Cappiardi.

The other three scenes, all painted at the north end of the right aisle (fig. 3), together with the *Prophecy of Basilides*, do not find a parallel in Cappiardi's text. There are several ways to interpret these four frescoes. To begin with, the fresco depicting the *Vision of Elijah's parents* might be read as a 'prelude' to the series, reinforcing the prophet's biographical narrative. The *Tree of Emerentia* would be a second instance, together with the scene of Basilides, of monks on Mount Carmel following in the footsteps of the prophet; and the third substitution, the *Mass of Saint Cyril* (fig. 5), represents an early general of the Order prior to its relocation to Europe, in that sense mirroring the scene of Saint Simon Stock. Not only do they invoke the theme of the Elianic succession, all three scenes also represent visions and prophecies, and in that respect, they reproduce the theme of the *Prophecy of Basilides*.

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[113] Cropper 1988, pp. 235–241 for the etching; Albl 2021, pp. 185–186 for the painting.

[114] Boase 1939, p. 112.

[115] Petrucci 2014, pp. 37–39.

[116] Heideman 1980, p. 545 for Dughet; for Testa see Cropper 1988, p. 235 and Albl 2021, p. 185, based on Sutherland 1964, p. 62. Cropper's dating of the design does not agree with Albl's dating of the painting, if we assume that the drawing – which is attributed to Pietro himself – preceded the painting.

The play's prologue and epilogue are central to grasping the wider significance of these elements, and the biblical story of Elijah. Not only did they suggest a particular interpretation of the biblical narrative that would be understood by the audience as the play's epicenter, but these introductory and concluding parts also explicitly addressed both the friars and the parishioners. Indeed, Cappiardi's prologue clearly shows that Filippini intended to instruct his own community by means of the play. Personifications of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience appeared on stage. Accompanied by music, they function as expositories, imparting, in the form of duets and an *arietta a tre*, the message that resigning oneself to the Lord's will is the only way to avert Fate's flagellations.[117] They each demonstrate how spectators should remain free of earthly desires for riches and be liberated from impure affects, and how they should avoid obstinacy. The fact that this is announced by personifications of the three vows of the friars' solemn profession means that the Carmelite audience would have applied these concepts to the storyline of the play itself, and to Elijah as their spiritual example. Indeed, the play amply demonstrates the Prophet's poverty, chastity, and especially his surrendering to God's will; Elijah is presented not so much as the spiritual founder of the Carmelite community but as the embodiment of the ideal of monastic life for the seventeenth-century order. It is this expression of a common model, on which the Carmelites could base their spiritual life, that corroborates the idea of the promotion of Elijah in the Carmelite breviary.

On the other hand, the epilogue or *Colloquio per doppo l'op[er]a* addressed a general audience of parishioners. This part was sung throughout, by five personifications, namely, of Pleasure, Idleness, Virtue, Vigilance and Effort. At first, Pleasure and Idleness announce that they provide pastimes befitting a king, to be able to live light-heartedly and heedlessly. When Virtue appears, together with Vigilance and Effort, it is to warn the audience that behind beautiful appearances lurk dangerous deceits that can only be defeated with the help of Vigilance and Effort. The Epilogue closes with the message that the audience is expected to extract wise lessons from the story just enacted on stage: "Although armed and strong, Idleness or Pleasure have no defense or shield against the naked and unarmed arm of Virtue, and innate Pride pursues and pushes them to final ruin."[118] Therefore, the general audience should beware of following the corrupt example of Ahab and Jezebel. They ought to imitate the latter three qualities illustrated in the theatrical characters of Abdia and Matusalem, who were obedient to their worldly lord, but remained alert not to betray the true faith. In sum, while the prologue allowed for a particular Carmelite interpretation of the action, the epilogue opened up a more general interpretation of Elijah's life that would have appealed to the parishioners and other devout spectators.

Also, the play's *intermedi* fitted into the schemes for both the Carmelite and the general audience. The first, about Balaam, whose eyes cannot see the Angel of the Lord until after his donkey has spoken to him, shows the prophet declaring his obedience to the Lord and refusing the riches offered to him by King Balak. For the friars, this showed the virtues of poverty and obedience, while for the parishioners, it demonstrated trust in God and the true faith. The second interlude narrating Tobias' journey in the company of the archangel Raphael and the cure of Tobit's blindness illustrated Divine providence, obedience to the Lord, and the refusal of riches, applicable to both regular and secular Christians. The third *intermedio* told of the Judgement of King Solomon, illustrating the qualities of wisdom and justice. The fourth and last interlude with the Prophecy of Basilides illustrated the visionary capacities of the hermits living on Mount Carmel. For the Carmelite audience, again poverty and obedience were here at stake, and for the general public, it demonstrated divine providence and faith. In other words, the play offered various edifying lessons to fit the different needs of its audience.

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[117] See Newbigin 2007b, pp. 75–77, for the expository figure in performances of *sacre rappresentazioni*.

[118] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 81r: "Benche schierato e forte / Al braccio di Virtude inerme e nudo / Non ha l'Ozio, ò'l Piacer difesa, ò scudo. / Che con ruine estreme / L'alterezza [natia/nazia] l'incalza, e preme."

7. Friars on stage

Finally, the question remains as to whether the play was ever staged – and thus used by either Carmelites or parishioners to 'read' the frescoes. That Cappiardi's manuscript was not intended to be merely read but performed can be gleaned from the many stage directions noted in the margins. These provide indications for aspects such as actors' costumes, appearances on stage ("parte"), changes of scenery (very frequently one finds "si muta la scena" or "torna la scena come prima")[119] and specific actions to be performed ("Elia risvegliato s'asside e con meraviglia guardando il pane, et il vaso" or "Esce Elia sulla bocca della spelonca"),[120] as well as directions for stage machinery ("descende il foco sopra l'olocausto").[121] This also goes for the *intermedi*; in the representation of the Prophet Balaam, at one point, the actor is directed to flog the donkey for its refusal to walk and address it: "da l'asina un raglio e poi dice."[122]

Notwithstanding these explicit stage directions, there are no archival sources documenting (preparations for) a performance. Filippini's account books show monthly payments to the "musici della Salve" made between August 1648 and the end of 1650.[123] These musicians belonged to the Borghese chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore, located close to San Martino, and were hired regularly to accompany mass, but not for rehearsals or performances of Cappiardi's work.[124] We know that festivities were planned in 1650 to celebrate the Jubilee on 11 November, in commemoration of the Feast of Saint Martin. Filippini describes this event in his diary as follows: "[T]here was a great crowd of visitors. Cardinal Carafa read mass with 28 prelates, while I sang Mass and Lezana was deacon. Fourteen cardinals came to visit the church, [as well as] the ambassadors of Spain and France and the entire Camera."[125] Even Pope Innocent X came along and expressed a wish to return at Easter 1651 to see the project finished. However, no performance of a play is mentioned, and apart from that, it would have been much more apt to stage Cappiardi's text on the Feast of Saint Elijah, on 20 July.

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[119] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fols. 12 v, 14 r, 17 r, 30 r and 67 v.

[120] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fols. 62 r and 68 r.

[121] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 53 r.

[122] BNCR, MSS San Martino ai Monti, 11, fol. 22 r.

[123] CSA, I.C.O., 11, *passim*.

[124] CSA, I.C.O, 10. Padre Emanuele Boaga, former head archivist of the Carmelite order at the Collegio Sant'Alberto in Rome, did mention a 'Libro delle Feste' which had been transferred to the Archivio di Stato in Rome; this cannot be found, however. Such an archival document might have contained the payments for the staging of the *Rappresentazione di Sant'Elia*, and it might explain why there are no payments at all for anything related to Cappiardi's involvement. It is clear from the account books of the priorate of Santa Maria in Traspontina, the other main Carmelite house in Rome, that they allocated an annual sum of 50 *scudi* to 'solennizzare la Festa di S. Elia'; see ASR, Ord. Rel. Masc. Carmelitani Calzati S. Maria in Traspontina, 116, fols. 373 r and 441 v. For the Salve, see Lionnet 1983.

[125] *Nota*, as cited in Heideman 1980, p. 541 n. 17.

The selection of artists hired by Filippini from 1647 onwards suggests that he had intended to stage Cappiardi's play.[126] Many painters involved in the decoration of San Martino had contributed to the plays and operas performed at the Barberini court. For example, Filippo Gagliardi collaborated in the centenary celebrations of the Jesuit Order in 1640, and in 1642, he was engaged to stage Giulio Rospigliosi's *Il Palazzo Incantato* at the Barberini palace. The period of time of Gagliardi's presumed hiring – in spring 1647 – coincides with when Cappiardi would have commenced working on his play.

Furthermore, Grimaldi had also been active as a designer of stage sets.[127] He contributed to opera productions, such as *La sincerità trionfante* and *La vita humana*, and continued to be involved in theatrical productions later in his career. The same can be assumed of Dughet, who was granted such commissions later in life: for example, in 1668 he was hired to prepare the staging of *La Baldassarra*, again an opera written by Giulio Rospigliosi, and, according to Pascoli, he painted backdrops for a play staged in Collegio Romano – possibly even contemporaneous with his commission at San Martino.[128] Filippini thus based his selection of artists on their ability to stage a theatrical text, which means they would have been able to follow the instructions in Cappiardi's text to design and execute the stage backdrop and the costumes. In other words, the biographical intersections that Sara Mamone has observed between theatre and other art forms in the courtly realm, resulting in painters collaborating with actors and others involved in performances, were therefore also highly relevant for ecclesiastical patrons.[129]

Who then would have performed it? Although the San Martino archives carry no references to payments made to actors, it is known that often amateurs and not professional actors were engaged to perform this kind of religious theatre. In this context, it must be recalled that San Martino was not only a convent and parish, but – until 1668 – also one of the locations of the Carmelite novitiate,[130] where aspiring friars would be taught the religious foundations of the Order, as exemplified by Elijah. That this was done by performing his life on stage was not exceptional.[131] As Weaver, Reardon and Lowe have argued, during the early modern period, there was a thriving tradition of acting nuns within the confines of their convent. In many cases, such *sacre rappresentazioni* were performed by novices. In this way, they could identify themselves with the saintly protagonists and offer edifying entertainment to an audience of professed nuns, or, in quite a few cases, the general public.[132]

Yet other sources indicate that also monks and friars could appear on stage. Simeone Guidotti's 1601 manuscript, *Rappresentazione del Padre Santissimo Romualdo Abate*, essentially a hagiography of the founder of the Camaldolese Order, Saint Romuald, offers a case in point. Especially relevant to the question of who performed these plays and for what kind of audiences is the conclusion of the play, where an unnamed interlocutor turns and addresses the spectators with the following admonition:

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[126] Witte 2008b.

[127] Ariuli/Matteucci 2002, pp. 61–77.

[128] Ariuli/Matteucci 2002, pp. 76–77 and Pascoli (1730) 1992, vol. 1, p. 60, for the commission at the Collegio Romano: "E dipinse le scene del teatro del colleggio Romano." This commission is ignored by Boisclair 1986. See Roethlisberger 1984, pp. 58–59 and Beaven 2007 for a discussion of the relationship between landscape painting in mid-Seicento Rome and contemporary theatre.

[129] Mamone 2003, pp. 61–65.

[130] Smet 1975–1985, vol. 3,1, pp. 306–309.

[131] Radcliff-Umstead 1983, p. 129 for *sacre rappresentazioni* in the monastic context.

[132] Weaver 2002, pp. 61–66, Reardon 2002, pp. 75–97, and Lowe 2003, pp. 263–264. See also Zaccaro 2009.

> If, however, one of you would like to come and enter our convent as hermit, which certainly after having arrived at the end of this *Rappresentazione* supplying in words and succinctly showing many things that could not have been recited in any other way than with a great number of voices, and not with a short play; it was also our main intention to show that the sacred hermitage of Camaldoli, which was built by our glorious saint Romuald, is still standing, and [for] those of you who desire to harness your spiritual life, there are various ways in which any man is able to acquire eternal life, for which reason also many blessed and saints have reported its merits and have come to acquire these [with us].[133]

This conclusion suggests that first, the audience consisted mainly of lay people, who were called upon to follow the example just seen on stage, namely, to enter the religious order. Second, instructions at the start of the play suggest that it could be performed with a restricted number of actors – and they all are dressed in regular habits.

It is, therefore, likely that Cappiardi's text was to be performed by the Carmelite friars themselves, or the novices. One deviation in the play from the visual and written sources might even be explained by considering how *Basilides' Prophecy* was staged. As discussed above, Dughet (and Testa) depicted this scene with the main protagonist, even if Lezana questioned the historical sources on Basilides. Cappiardi substituted him with 'Padri del Monte Carmelo', which allowed for several or even all Carmelite actors to invest in the role of one of their community's precursors.

This tradition of acting monks continued well into the eighteenth century going by the critique expressed in 1752 by the Dominican author Daniele Concina. In his discussion of Christian theatre, he pointed out the moral hazards of theatre in general, and specifically attacked monks who staged performances, especially of comedies with profane subjects, within the walls of their convents.[134] One of his main points was that laying down one's habit to dress as a layperson was tantamount to abnegating one's regular status and one's solemn profession. This also implies that continuing to wear one's habit on stage while performing an edifying play could strengthen both the actors' and the audience's Catholic faith. That Cappiardi decided to turn the character of Basilides in the *intermedio* of the Vision into a group of 'Padri del monte Carmelo' can thus be interpreted as a moment to have most novices on stage identifying themselves as spiritual successors of Elijah. And just as with *Rappresentazione del Padre Santissimo Romualdo Abate*, it is quite likely that the Carmelites at San Martino hoped to attract new novices from their audience. If not, the parishioners would at least have been able to identify with them through the concept of trusting in God's Providence and True Faith.

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133 BNCF, MSS Conventi Soppressi 1601, fol. 167 r/v: "se pero // qual che d'uno di voi volesse venire à vestirsi Romito con noi, che certo dopo l'esser venuti nell'ultimo di questa Rappresentatione per supplire in dire, e succintamente demostrare molte cose, che non si potevano in altro modo recitare, se non con grande quantità di voce, e non con brevita dell'opera; fù anco nostro principale intento il dimostrarvi, che il sacro ermo di Camaldoli, il q.le edificò il glorioso santo Romualdo è ancora in piedi; et à chi di voi vorra militare la sua santa vita, quivi non mancheranno modi, con i quali |167 v| ciasched'uno huomo è atto ad acquistare l'eterna vita, donde anco tanti beati, e santi ne hanno riportato il debito merito, e sono pervenuti a detto acquisto."

134 Concina 1752, pp. 291–298.

8. Conclusion

If Giovanni Antonio Filippini had intended the decoration of the walls of San Martino to function as an argument in discussions with the Jesuits on the issue of the Elianic succession, it would have been a rather ineffective and expensive way to reach his target audience. The Bollandists in Antwerp voiced their opinions in Latin through the printed word, as did Lezana and other Carmelite authors. Apart from that, it is questionable whether Dughet's and Grimaldi's fresco cycle presented a clear-cut message to the uninitiated beholder about this historical claim since it lacked one fundamental aspect of Elianic cycles in Italy and in Germany – namely a chronological order. As has been argued, the concept of *Ordenspropaganda* misses the mark even in these cases: these cycles were intended for an internal audience of friars and not for external beholders who were taught about the Order's specific identity. Moreover, many regular churches in Italy also functioned as parishes, and this raises the issue of whether propaganda on an institutional level was the only or even the main goal.

Instead, Cappiardi's play represents a more logical source to explain the meaning of these frescoes. Not only is there a chronological coincidence between the start of the frescoes and the manuscript but also the moral message expressed throughout the play about a virtuous, Catholic life, for both friars and the laypeople, can be applied to the frescoes as well. Each scene can be explained in reference to either the Carmelite vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, or to the more generic merits of virtue, vigilance and effort that help one to maintain the true faith. As patron, Filippini may have preferred a 'random' order in the fresco cycle, so that each episode could be considered on its own merit, as a manifestation of a certain Christian virtue.

Apart from offering a new explanation for the San Martino cycle, the connection between Dughet's and Grimaldi's frescoes and Cappiardi's text sheds an interesting new light on the ability of the general public to 'read' the significance of church decorations in *Seicento* Rome. This example necessitates a broader discussion of what Claudio Bernardi has termed 'teatro *pro fide*' and the related issue of 'high' and 'low' iconography, recently taken up by Pamela Jones.[135] Filippini's intermedial strategy illustrates the appropriation and continuation of a Renaissance tradition, and the permeable boundaries between vernacular and humanistic theatre. In fact, there seems to have been a lively tradition in the production of these texts in Rome and its immediate surroundings, even in print, and quite a few were intended for performance in churches.[136]

The San Martino case also indicates that written texts and oral sermons were not the sole means of furnishing the audience with clues to interpret church decorations. Viewers were also instructed through religious spectacles, about which we often know very little.[137] While high-profile patrons, such as the Barberini family, commissioned prints to inform foreign courts about the splendor of their lavish palace events, almost no regular religious community resorted to this manner of publicizing their *feste*. They did not need this since their target audience had no use for it.[138] From their perspective, theatrical performances helped the general audience to remember sacred stories, thereby increasing the effectivity of painted narratives, and did not require an opulent display.[139] Thus, almost no archival trace or visual record exists of many of these spectacles, largely considered an 'amateurs' pastime'.

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[135] Bernardi 2000–2003, pp. 1025 and 1033–1035; Jones 2008, p. 1.

[136] Franchi 1994 contains several examples: for example, on p. 189: "*Il trionfo della povertà riportato da S. Francesco di Paola nella Real Corte di Francia*, opera drammatica del signor Giovan Battista Grappelli posta in musica dal signor Virgilio Unioni Cimapani […]. Da recitarsi in Velletri nella Chiesa de RR.PP. di S. Gio di Dio il dì 20 Aprile 1713."

[137] For a recent publication questioning textual traditions as sole approach for the explanation of iconographical meaning, see Jones 2008, pp. 2–3; see McGinness 1995 on the importance of sacred oratory to painting and its relation to theatrical performances.

Therefore, the question is: what part of the visual culture of the early modern period can be accessed or captured solely through visual sources? In the case of San Martino, the frescoes were the visual residue of the theatrical event, to be viewed by all parishioners, in which an intermedial approach to the narrative can be discerned. The consciously complex narrative structure with diegetic elements, actors relating what is not represented on stage, is willfully turned into mimetic visual representations, simply because a one-to-one translation would not have functioned. With that, the discussion of sacred (musical) theatre and church decoration in San Martino reintroduces a hitherto often ignored phenomenon in the study of the Baroque visual arts and the Counter-Reformation, namely, their use of various media to achieve one and the same goal – religious edification by means of a multi-media *istorie*, in which the means were adapted to the respective medium.

This issue had regained relevance during the Counter-Reformation, when the Catholic Church needed to reaffirm its use of images.[140] In their 1563 decree, the bishops declared: "by means of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption, portrayed in paintings or other representations, the people are instructed and confirmed in (the habit of) remembering, and continually turning over in their minds, the articles of faith."[141] It is the 'other representations' that are often not well researched, especially the impact of this tradition that was of eminent importance for the decoration of churches in early modern Italy, and which offer more insight into how narrative intermediality was at play in the culture of the Counter-Reformation.

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138 Fagiolo dell'Arco 1997; the only exception in this inventory of sources is the *Rappresentazione in onore dei santi Ignatio da Loyola e Francesco Saverio* in 1622 in the Collegio Romano, of which Greuter made three prints.

139 Bolzoni 1995, esp. p. 74.

[140] See Scavizzi 1992 and Hall 2011. For the later impact of Gregory's maxim, see Kessler 2010. For the use of medieval sources in the Counter Reformation controversy over images, see Hecht 2012, p. 198.

[141] Waterworth 1848, p. 235; the original Latin text reads 'Illud vero diligenter doceant Episcopi, per historias mysteriorum nostrae redemptionis, picturis, vel alijs similitudinibus expressas, erudiri, & confirmari populum in articulis fidei commemorandis, & absidue recolendis [...]', see *Canones et Decreta,* p. 76. For the debate on the topic during the brief session, see Jedin 1935.

Abbreviations

AAV
Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Vatican City

ASF
Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Florence

ASR
Archivio di Stato di Roma, Rome

BNCF
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Florence

BNCR
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome

CSA
Collegio San Alberto dei Carmelitani, Rome

Archival sources and manuscripts

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