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Giambettino Cignaroli's *Ecstasy of Saint Francis at Pontremoli*

In 1765, Verona's premier painter, Giambettino Cignaroli (1706-70), completed a canvas representing Ecstasy of St. Francis for the main altar of San Francesco in Pontremoli. Painted toward the end of Cignaroli's career, the altarpiece is one of two works that the artist produced in Verona for Tuscan patrons. Financed by Giuseppe and Lorenzo Pavesi, the St. Francis altarpiece is an example of the transformative eighteenth-century patronage of the Pavesi and other lesser nobility which revitalized the city of Pontremoli with works of art by Italian artists of disparate backgrounds and styles during the course of the eighteenth century.

In 1765, Verona's premier painter, Giambettino Cignaroli (1706-70), completed a canvas representing *Ecstasy of St. Francis* (fig. 1) for the main altar in the Church of San Francesco in Pontremoli. Painted toward the end of Cignaroli's career, the altarpiece is one of two works that the artist produced in Verona for Tuscan patrons. Financed by Giuseppe and Lorenzo Pavesi¹, the *St. Francis* altarpiece is an example of the transformative eighteenth-century patronage of the Pavesi and other lesser nobility which revitalized the city of Pontremoli during the course of the eighteenth century. Architectural expansion and renovations, brilliant *quadratura* fresco decoration, and the creation of altarpieces for local churches, transformed the city which would be declared, in 1778, a «città nobile».

Cignaroli's artistic career had begun to flourish as early as 1745². Working from Verona, the artist accepted an ever growing number of commissions for works beyond his hometown, establishing an international reputation, as his biographer the Oratorian cleric Ippolito Bevilacqua (1721-94), noted repeatedly. By 1765, for example, as Cignaroli was finishing the *St. Francis*, he was also nearing completion of an enormous canvas, *The Head of St. Torpès Saved by Angels and Restored to Archbishop Federigo* (1760-66), for the north aisle of the Pisa duomo. According to Bevilacqua, Cignaroli regularly hosted numerous dignitaries in his studio, and in 1754, at the instigation of Cignaroli's friends, the painter kept a journal with the names, rank, and nationality of his guests³. The high point of Cignaroli's associations with such illustrious travelers occurred in 1769, when the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II visited his studio. The emperor had seen the *San Torpès* in Pisa, and other Cignaroli works in Turin and Milan, and had insisted on meeting the painter

in person⁴. Cignaroli commemorated the event with an inscribed marble plaque, still to be seen today, mounted on the street outside of his studio.

Requests for paintings came from all over northern Italy and northern Europe. Notable among his eminent clientele during this period were Frederick Augustus II, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1751); Ferdinand Michael Cyriakus Graf von Hallweil and Bishop of Wiener Neustadt (1753); and Louise-Elisabeth, daughter of Louis XV of France, and Duchess of Parma (1751)⁵. Additional commissions came from Elisabetta Petrovna, daughter of Peter the Great (1761); Count Karl Joseph von Firmian, Plenipotentiary of Lombardy to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Milan (1762); Marchese Alessandro Pico della Mirandola in Madrid (1762); John Udney, the English Consul to Venice (1763); Marchese Francesco Albergati, who made a gift of a *Leda* (lost) to the King of Poland, Stanislaus II Poniatowski (1766); Carlo Emanuele III, Duke of Savoy and King of Sardinia (1769); and Joseph Wenzel, Prince of Lichtenstein (1769).

The Pontremoli altarpiece of St. Francis was completed at a time when Cignaroli's artistic and intellectual life was closely allied with the enlightened Farnese-Bourbon court at Parma. In addition to receiving a commission from the Duchess of Parma, Cignaroli – along with a fellow pupil of Scipione Maffei, the Veronese nobleman, polymath, and Knight of Malta, Michele Enrico Sagramoso (1720-91) – was admitted as an honorary member of the R. Accademia di Belle Arti di Parma in October 1758. Although it is not known how early in his career Cignaroli became involved with the academy, twenty letters which he wrote to its Secretary for Life, Abbot Carlo Innocenzo Frugoni (1692-1768), reveal Cignaroli's intimate knowledge of the academy's affairs. Two letters mention his own reception piece, or *dono*, for the academy, the 1759 *Head of a Girl with a Rosary* (Galleria Nazionale di Parma, inv. 467), and other letters recommend his pupils to the academy's *concorsi* and urge the admittance and acceptance of Veronese noblewoman and pastellist Massimiliana Gazzola (Gazola) Guarienti to the academy⁶. The letters to Frugoni also demonstrate Cignaroli's acquaintance with Guillaume du Tillot (1711-74), reformist and political advisor to Philip I, Duke of Parma, who, in 1757, directed Du Tillot to form the royal art academy⁷. Other letters reveal Cignaroli's acquaintance with the court's resident sculptor, Jean-Baptiste Boudard (1710-68)⁸. Cignaroli's close association with the Parmese academy surely encouraged his own interest in establishing a similar institution in Verona. The Veronese Accademia di Pittura e Scultura formally opened on March 15, 1766, with Cignaroli as its Director for Life⁹.

No contract between the Pavesi and Cignaroli for the *Saint Francis* altarpiece seems to have survived. The commission may have been associated with the court at Parma, since the Pavesi came from Piacenza, and two lines of the family acquired the fiefs of Cassio and Castenuovo in 1789 and 1794 from the Camera

ducale di Parma¹⁰. However, it is more likely that the Pontremoli work was related to the commission of the Pisa *St. Torpès*, since the two paintings were contemporaneous, and they were the only works by Cignaroli to be sent to patrons in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Pontremoli was ceded to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany by King Philip IV of Spain in 1650¹¹. One hundred years later, on July 1, 1750, Francis I, Holy Roman Emperor and Grand Duke of Tuscany, began the process of ennobling a number of Tuscan cities and their illustrious families, with Pontremoli declared a «città nobile» by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo in August 1778¹². In 1797, Pontremoli became a suffragan diocese of the archdiocese of Pisa, and Girolamo Pavesi became its first bishop. Not surprisingly, among the families ennobled and entered into the *Libro d'Oro* of Pontremoli were the Pavesi¹³.

The rise of the Pavesi family's influence in Pontremoli began in 1688, with the purchase and expansion of the family palace (now the Palazzo Ruschi Pavesi). Geronimo di Lorenzo Pavesi acquired the building from the Counts Belmesseri «con tutte le sue botteghe, fondaci et horti»¹⁴. The adjacent houses belonging to the Campi family were acquired during the last years of the seventeenth century, and in 1693, Geronimo di Lorenzo Pavesi asked Pontremoli's Consiglio Generale to make additional properties available for purchase¹⁵. Lorenzo Pavesi's sons, Giuseppe, Francesco, and Archdeacon Paolo, were responsible for the first phase of restructuring and unifying the properties into a single unit with three facades conforming to the interior spaces, which the three brothers divided equally. This first phase began on April 9, 1734, and continued until 1743¹⁶. The architect responsible for the renovations is not specifically named, but it is believed that the *maestri architetti* cited in the documents are the Cremonese Francesco Natali, called il Piacentino (1669-1735), who was a pupil and assistant to the Bibiena, and his Pontremolense-borne son Giovanni Battista Natali (1698-1765), also called il Piacentino¹⁷. The Palazzo Pavesi, with the uniformity of its façade elements (pediments, windows, balconies, etc.) is generally acknowledged to be the finest example of Pontremoli's scenographic urban redesign dating from the beginning of the eighteenth century¹⁸. Around 1750-54, Giovanni Battista Natali, his nephew Antonio Contestabili (1716-90), and their assistants painted brilliant frescoed *quadrature* throughout the palace's interior¹⁹.

The history of the Church of San Francesco and its monastery begins in the early thirteenth century, when around 1219, St. Francis himself preached to the local populace²⁰. Fixed dates for this early church are unknown, because much of the relevant archival material was destroyed in a fire in 1495²¹. The present building was consecrated on September 12, 1503, with some alterations and renovations made during the middle of the seventeenth century²². Pavesi family patronage of

the Church of San Francesco began in 1706, when Geronimo di Lorenzo Pavesi financed the sculpture of the *Virgin of the Immaculate Conception* atop a column in the piazzale in front of the church²³. In 1713, under the direction of the Order's Superior Bonaventura Conti, a new main altar of inlaid marble was installed²⁴, and Francesco Natali frescoed the Chapels of St. Anthony and St. Ursula (1725-26)²⁵. The church's extant eighteenth-century interior was primarily financed through the donation of alms, beginning in 1731 during the tenure of Superior Padre Bernardino Armanettias. Giovanni Battista Natali designed the church's portico in 1741, and the completion of the decorations in 1758 is commemorated by a stucco cartouche on the façade's interior wall²⁶. The importance of the Church of San Francesco to the citizens of Pontremoli is attested to by the generous support it received from the community, by the significant dedicatory changes made to its chapels during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries²⁷, and by the presence of the members of almost one hundred local families who are interred there. The Pavesi have the distinction of being buried in a sanctuary whose main altarpiece, Cignaroli's *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, was commissioned by the family²⁸.

Cignaroli himself recorded the Pontremoli *St. Francis* with a compositional drawing (fig. 2) in one of three albums of his drawings and engravings after his designs. These albums have been conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, since 1836²⁹. The *St. Francis* drawing differs from the painting in minor details and consequently, like many compositional drawings in the Ambrosiana albums, is not a *modello* for the altarpiece, but, rather, a *ricordo* of the design that the artist kept to authenticate his painting and the dates of its execution.

According to the inscriptions on the recto of the Ambrosiana *St. Francis*, the altarpiece was installed in the Church of San Francesco in May 1765. This date also indicates that the canvas was made at the end of a six-year period in which Cignaroli had been working on the *St. Torpès* for the Pisa Duomo. The *St. Torpès* canvas is first documented in a contract with the Pisan deputies on July 31, 1760. Final payments were received by the artist on April 30, 1766³⁰. Given the merits of the *St. Francis* altarpiece, it is surprising that the painting, installed one year earlier than the *St. Torpès*, was overlooked by biographer Bevilacqua, who otherwise lists almost all of Cignaroli's other painted oeuvre. Art historian Luigi Lanzi (1732-1810), who was acquainted with Bevilacqua's *Memorie*, cites only three paintings in his short entry on Cignaroli, but he does state that although he himself had not seen the *St. Francis*, he had heard that the work was well done³¹. The other two paintings Lanzi cites are the *St. Torpès*, incorrectly titled and mentioned in cursory fashion, and the much smaller 1766 *Flight into Egypt* in San Antonio Abate, Parma, described in great detail and at considerable length³². It is not yet understood how Lanzi knew of the Pontremoli altarpiece, but it is likely that he heard about it

during his travels in 1793-94³³.

Cignaroli's Pontremoli composition is reminiscent of Giambattista Piazzetta's *St. Francis as the Man of Sorrows*³⁴ (fig. 3), begun in 1729 and completed in 1732, for the Franciscan Church of Santa Maria in Araceli attached to the convent of the Poor Clares in Vicenza. That Cignaroli was aware of Piazzetta's *St. Francis* is almost certain, because he produced an altarpiece in 1741 at nearby Montegaldella for a chapel in a villa owned by Count Ascanio Conti, and in 1745, he painted two frescoes (lost) for the Cappella del SS. Sacramento in Vicenza's cathedral³⁵.

Cignaroli adopted Piazzetta's zig-zag design and many of the same details: the guardian angel supports the collapsed saint; Brother Leo holds a book; there is a human skull, symbol of mortality; putti flutter; and there is a burst of celestial light in the upper right. By including the seraphic angel (here a cherub), Cignaroli composed a traditional, nocturnal stigmatization of St. Francis that is punctuated with pinks and golden yellows³⁶. Cignaroli's narrative differs from Piazzetta's, however, because it represents Francis' vision, ecstasy, and stigmatization, whereas Piazzetta's composition depicts a subsequent moment, when the saint swoons in ecstasy and levitates. Piazzetta's seraphic crucified Christ has vanished from the scene, and the angel turns and looks towards the burst of the light of His arrival and departure in the upper right³⁷.

Above Piazzetta's painting is an inscription from Isaiah 53:4, «Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et Dolores nostro ipse portavit» (Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows). This typological parallel between Christ and St. Francis, established in the Middle Ages, arose from «a mystical interpretation of stigmatization as the fulfillment of Francis' wish for death, martyrdom, and emulation of Christ»³⁸. Thus, Francis' mystical experience on Mt. Alverna, for example, was likened to Christ's agony in the garden or His crucifixion on Golgotha. Later, at the end of the sixteenth century, Caravaggio introduced a radically new interpretation of the saint's experience with a psychological exploration of mysticism (to which the stigmatization alludes) and the mystical dying of Divine Love³⁹. Francis' transformation is underscored by the supporting angel, a Guardian Angel⁴⁰, whose physical role also recalls the *imago pietatis*, images of angels who support the body of the dead Christ, and Caravaggio's revolutionary iconography and imagery had immediate consequences in his own day⁴¹.

With the publication in 1612 of the *Trattato dell'angelo custode* by the Jesuit Francesco Maria Albertini (1552-1619), the cult of the Guardian Angels spread even further. Albertini's treatise includes descriptions of the appearances and behavior of these special angels, who «take the form of a youth», and who particularly favor certain individuals such as martyrs who «suffer for the love of God»⁴², and it is therefore not surprising that such angels would appear as aides to

St. Sebastian and St. Francis. In Rome, in 1614, the cult of the Guardian Angels was officially sanctioned by Pope Paul V Borghese, who approved of the formation of the Confraternita dei SS. Angeli Custodi at S. Stefano del Cacco. By the eighteenth century, angelic guardian/companions of St. Francis had become commonplace, as can be seen in the works of Piazzetta and Cignaroli.

The chiaroscuro of the Pontremoli altarpiece and its somber mood may have been influenced by Piazzetta's works of similarly mystical pathos, such as his *St. Francis* at Vicenza. However, a few years before the Pontremoli altarpiece, Cignaroli had already explored comparable expressions of suffering, anguish, and death in two secular works of heroic suicide painted for Count Firmian in Milan: the *Death of Socrates* and its pendant *Death of Cato*, signed and dated in 1762⁴³. Cignaroli's inventiveness with these dramatic subjects with their diversity of affect due to death and dying is intensified by a tenebrist, gloomy atmosphere in dungeon like interiors. The emotionally charged countenances of the deathbed lamenters beside the dead Socrates and dying Cato foreshadow in a more complex fashion the ecstatic death-like pallor of the ecstatic St. Francis in a nocturnal landscape setting. Bevilacqua describes how affect and decorous invention in works like Cignaroli's *Socrates* and *Cato* moved foreign viewers, a description that seems applicable to the *St. Francis*, as well: «in essi impiegò Giambettino tutto quel mai di sapere che avea per far colpo [...]. Moltissimi forestieri [...] hanno pro- testato al nostro pittore [...] d'aver provato quasi ugual ribrezzo nell'animo, come se stati fossero presenti alla verità di que' fatti»⁴⁴.

The history, patronage, and quality of Cignaroli's *St. Francis* are emblematic of the artistic flowering of Pontremoli during the last years of the seventeenth and early years of eighteenth century. The aspirations of Pontremoli's noble class and the city's cultural growth contributed to the city's new status. Of the diverse artists who worked there, many, like Giambettino Cignaroli, trained in such major centers as Florence, Parma, and Rome, or lesser ones such as Verona and even Pontremoli. These painters included such luminaries as Alessandro Gherardini, Francesco Natali, Sebastiano and Giuseppe Galeotti, Antonio Contesabili, Gian Domenico Ferretti, Vincenzo Meucci, Giuseppe Peroni, Giuseppe and Giovanni Bottani, and Giovanni Battista Tempesti. At the end of the century, the works of Tempesti and Cignaroli would be compared side by side in the Pisa Duomo as premier examples of Central Italian and Venetian methods⁴⁵. Throughout the same century, though on a smaller scale, Pontremoli's churches, palaces, and villas provided a time honored *paragone* of an exceptional range of contemporary artistic styles and schools.

- 1 L. Bertocchi and M. Bertocchi, *La chiesa di San Francesco a Pontremoli*, Milano 1994, p. 66.
- 2 For an excellent survey and contextualization of Cignaroli's career in Verona, see A. Tomezzoli, *Verona, 1740-1799*, in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Settecento di Terraferma*, edited by Giuseppe Pavanello, Milano 2011, pp. 217-254.
- 3 I. Bevilacqua, *Memorie della vita di Giambettino Cignaroli eccellente dipintor veronese*, Verona 1771, p. 44. Cignaroli's *Giornale*, hitherto lost, has been rediscovered, and is in course of publication. See Bruno Chiappa's catalogue entry in *Il Settecento a Verona: Tiepolo, Cignaroli, Rotari: la nobiltà della pittura*, edited by F. Magani, P. Marini, and A. Tomezzoli, Milan 2011, pp. 253-254, cat. no. 99.
- 4 Bevilacqua, *Memorie*, cit., p. 44.
- 5 At the duchess' behest, Cignaroli painted the 1759 *San Ildefonso Altarpiece* (Madrid, Prado), as a gift for her mother-in-law, Elisabetta Farnese, the Queen of Spain.
- 6 G. Biadego, *Di Giambettino Cignaroli pittore veronese. Notizie e documenti*, Venezia 1890, p. 52, letter XI. For Cignaroli's *dono*, see also L. Fornari Schianchi, *Galleria Nazionale di Parma. Catalogo delle opere. Il Settecento*, Milano 2000, p. 74, cat. no. 680, and illustrated. For Cignaroli's Veronese pupils and the *concorsi*, see Biadego, *Di Giambettino*, cit., pp. 46-48, letters III-V. The letters dated August 29 and September 29, 1759 (Biadego, *Di Giambettino*, cit., pp. 50-52, letters IX and XI, respectively), precisely date to 1759 Gazzola Guarienti's personal admittance to the Academy and the submission of her pastel *dono*, *Head of a Young Lady* (Galleria Nazionale di Parma, inv. no. 688). Based on these letters, there is now a precise date when Gazzola Guarienti's pastel entered the collection, see Fornari Schianchi, *Galleria Nazionale di Parma*, cit., pp. 94-95, cat. no. 702.
- 7 Biadego, *Di Giambettino*, cit., pp. 45-46, and pp. 49-50, letters I, II, and VIII, respectively. Bevilacqua, *Memorie*, cit., p. 47, mentions Du Tillot's kindness towards the artist, who received a gold repeating clock from the French minister.
- 8 Biadego, *Di Giambettino*, cit., pp. 46 and 51, letters II and IX, respectively.
- 9 Tomezzoli, *Verona, 1740-1799*, cit., p. 231.
- 10 N. Zucchi Castellani, *Storia di Pontremoli dalle origini all'Unità d'Italia*, Genova 1990, p. 109. Also called the Magistrato camerale, the Camera ducale di Parma (which also included Piacenza) oversaw ducal finances and properties.
- 11 For a history of Pontremoli, see Zucchi Castellani, *Storia di Pontremoli*, cit., *passim*.
- 12 B. Casini, *I "Libri d'Oro" delle città di Pontremoli e Modigliana*, Massa-Uliveti 1987, pp. 1-3.
- 13 *Ivi*, p. 14, no. 26; p. 16, no. 16; p. 17, nos. 45 and 50; and p. 20, nos. 62 and 64.
- 14 I. Trivelloni Manganelli, *Dimore pontremolesi*, Sarzana 2001, p. 137. The gardens were between the building and the Verde River.
- 15 *Ivi*, pp. 137 and 140.
- 16 *Ivi*, p. 143.
- 17 *Ibidem*. On Francesco Natali and G.B. Natali at Pontremoli, see also R. Bossaglia, V. Bianchi and L. Bertocchi, *Due secoli di pittura barocca a Pontremoli*, Genova 1997, pp. 86-99, and 118-129.
- 18 G.L. Maffei, *Profilo storico-urbanistico dello sviluppo della città di Pontremoli*, in «Studi e Documenti di Architettura», 3, 1973, pp. 49-112, and Bossaglia-Bianchi-Bertocchi, *Due secoli*, cit., p. 62.
- 19 *Ivi*, pp. 130-139, for Antonio Contestabili at Pontremoli.

- 20 P. Bologna, *Artisti e cose d'arte e di storia pontremolesi* (1898), reprint, Bologna 1972, p. 54.
- 21 Bertocchi-Bertocchi, *Chiesa di San Francesco*, cit., p. 18.
- 22 *Ivi*, p. 24.
- 23 *Ivi*, p. 60. Bologna, *Artisti e cose d'arte*, cit., p. 58, cites the patrons of the column and its sculpture as Girolamo (Geronimo?) and Lorenzo (father and son).
- 24 *Ivi*, pp. 46-47.
- 25 Bossaglia-Bianchi-Bertocchi, *Due secoli*, cit., pp. 93-96.
- 26 Bertocchi-Bertocchi, *Chiesa di San Francesco*, cit., p. 56, and illustrated.
- 27 See the church plans with the altar dedications in Bertocchi-Bertocchi, *Chiesa di San Francesco*, cit., pp. 12 and 80.
- 28 *Ivi*, p. 43, for Geronimo di Lorenzo Pavesi's marble tomb slab.
- 29 The albums F 256 inferior, F 257 inferior, and F 258 inferior contain 394 of works on paper, and are discussed in R.R. Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums of Giambettino Cignaroli (1706-1170): A Critical Catalogue*, Rome 2011. The Ambrosiana Ecstasy of St. Francis is inventoried as F 258 inf. n. 357. Black chalk and gray washes on off-white paper. Inscribed «Pontremoli / 1765» on the left side, and «Mense / Mij» on the right. Pasted to folio 58 of the codex. See Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums*, cit., p. 227, cat. no. 358.
- 30 For an extensive discussion on the patronage and the evolution of the design for the *St. Torpès*, see Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums*, cit., pp. 74-88.
- 31 «Non fui a Pontremoli, ove mi dicono che sia un San Francesco in atto di ricever le stimate molto ben condotto»: L. Lanzi, *Storia pittorica della Italia dal Risorgimento delle belle arti fin presso al fine del XVIII secolo*, Milano 1825, vol. 3, p. 304. Lanzi mentions Bevilacqua's *Memorie* on p. 305.
- 32 «S. Zorzi a Pisa spicca fra' molti eccellenti pennelli che ornaron quel duomo». This brief citation is in sharp contrast to Lanzi's description of Cignaroli's painting in Parma, «Bellissimo è un Viaggio in Egitto a S. Antonio Abate di Parma. Vi ha espresso la Vergine col S. Bambino sopra uno stretto ponticello, a' quali S. Giuseppe presta ajuto, perchè passino sicuramente. Il Santo porta impressa nel volto e in tutto l'atteggiamento la sollecitudine che ha di lor sicurezza; né si avvede fra questo mezzo, o non cura che una parte del manto calatogli giù dalle spalle sia bagnata e galleggi nel sottoposto fiume; imagine piena di naturalezza e d'ingegno. Il resto anche della pittura è del migliore suo stile [...]»: Lanzi, *Storia pittorica*, cit., pp. 304-305. This passage is also cited by Tomezzoli, *Verona, 1740-1799*, cit., p. 220. It is interesting that neither Cignaroli nor his Pisa canvas is mentioned in Luigi Lanzi, *Taccuino di Roma e di Toscana (1778-1789 circa)*, edited by D. Levi, Pisa 2002. However, the *Flight into Egypt* is briefly cited in comparison with Gregorio Lazzarini's *Flight into Egypt* in S. Silvestro, Venice, in L. Lanzi, *Viaggio nel Veneto*, edited by D. Levi, Florence 1988, p. 27.
- 33 Oddly, Cignaroli's paintings at Parma are not cited in Luigi Lanzi, *Il taccuino lombardo. Viaggio del 1793 specialmente pel milanese e pel parmigiano, mantovano e veronese, musei quivi veduti: pittori che vi son vissuti*, edited by P. Pastres, Udine 2000. Some of Cignaroli's works in the province of Bergamo are cited in Lanzi, *Viaggio nel Veneto*, cit., pp. 26-27. It is even more curious that none of the artist's many works in Venice or Verona are mentioned.
- 34 Oil on canvas, 379 x 188 cm. Musei Civici di Vicenza Pinacoteca di Palazzo Chiericati, inv. no. A105, since 1929. The Christological implication of St. Francis as the Man of Sorrows is supported by the inscription above the altarpiece. See G. Knox, *Giambattista Piazzetta 1682-*

- 1754, Oxford 1992, pp. 121-129, and fig. 96.
- 35 The fame of Piazzetta's altarpiece during the eighteenth century is acknowledged by Knox, *Piazzetta*, cit., p. 126. For Cignaroli's frescoes in the Vicenza Duomo, see S.J. Warma, *The Paintings of Giambettino Cignaroli (1706-1770)*, Ann Arbor 1988, pp. 240-241, cat. nos. 106 and 107, and Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums*, cit., pp.187-188, cat. no. 223, and p. 183, cat. no. 208. For a discussion of the Montegaldella altarpiece, see Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums*, cit., pp. 60-74.
- 36 During this period, Venetian representations of the ecstasy/stigmatization of St. Francis seem to have become more formulaic than earlier treatments of the theme. Compare, for example, Giambattista Tiepolo's version (1767-69) for the Discalced Franciscans at Aranjuez (now Madrid, Prado) with Cignaroli's at Pontremoli. Both works appear mirror images of one another, and are set in similar landscapes. See Knox, *Piazzetta*, cit., pp. 126-129, and fig. 98.
- 37 Knox, *Piazzetta*, cit., p. 126.
- 38 P. Askew, *The Angelic Consolation of St. Francis of Assisi in Post-Tridentine Italian Painting*, in «Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes», 32, 1969, p. 289, and p. 289 ff., for the supporting angel motif.
- 39 Caravaggio, *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, 1594, oil on canvas, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Conn.
- 40 See Askew, *The Angelic Consolation*, cit., p. 290ff. B. Treffers, *Il Francesco Hartford del Caravaggio e la spiritualità francescana alla fine del xiv sec.*, «Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz», 1-2, 1989, p. 160, convincingly identifies Caravaggio's angel as St. Francis' guardian angel.
- 41 See, for example, Giovanni Baglione, *The Ecstasy of St. Francis*, 1601, The Art Institute of Chicago, and Orazio Gentileschi, *St. Francis Supported by an Angel*, 1605, Prado, Madrid.
- 42 Translations given in P.M. Jones, *Giovanni Baglione's Saint Sebastian Healed by an Angel and the Cult of Saint Sebastian in Seventeenth-Century Rome*, in *Giovanni Baglione: Saint Sebastian Healed by an Angel*, University Park, Palmer Museum of Art, 2000, p. 12.
- 43 Signed by the artist in Greek, the paintings are now in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. nos. 653 and 648, Budapest. See *Il Settecento a Verona: Tiepolo, Cignaroli, Rotari: la nobiltà della pittura*, cit., pp. 216-217, cat. nos. 69a and 69b, and Tomezzoli, *Verona, 1740-1799*, cit., pp. 220-221.
- 44 *Ivi*, p. 217, and Bevilacqua, *Memorie*, cit., p. 29.
- 45 Coleman, *The Ambrosiana Albums*, cit., pp. 84-85.



Fig. 1: GIAMBETTINO CIGNAROLI, *Ecstasy of Saint Francis*, 1765, San Francesco, Pontremoli
Credit: Walter Massari, Pontremoli



Fig. 2: GIAMBETTINO CIGNAROLI, *Ecstasy of Saint Francis*, 1765, Biblioteca/Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F 258 inf. n. 357

Credit: Biblioteca/Pinacoteca Ambrosiana



Fig. 3: GIAMBATTISTA PIAZZETTA, *Saint Francis as the Man of Sorrows*, 1729-32, Museo Civico Vicenza

Credit: Alfredo Dagli Orti / The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY.