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Gerardo de Simone, Emanuele Pellegrini - predella@predella.it

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Rome and Spoleto: Fra Filippo Lippi and Bishop Berardo Erolì in the Duomo of Spoleto

Fra Filippo Lippi's last mural project was the apse decoration (1466-1469) in the Cathedral of Spoleto. Although payment records reveal details of the chronology, technique, and execution of the murals, this paper will focus on the role that the bishop of Spoleto, Berardo Erolì, played in its genesis. Erolì's involvement is attested in the documents, which reveal that the apse mural was not the only, or even the most ambitious project undertaken there. A new chapel for the sacred icon of the Madonna, the church's great treasure, was also begun at Erolì's behest in 1466. The murals recall in subject and general design the mosaics in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. In addition, in Spoleto as in Rome, the holy icon was displayed to the faithful on the feast of the Assumption (15 August). As in Rome, Lippi's images in the apse visualize the events that culminated in Mary's coronation in heaven and create a monumental frame for the Assumption rituals. Bishop Erolì's concurrent projects to link the holy icon with the apse imagery served to elevate Spoleto by emulating the venerable traditions of the Eternal City.

Fra Filippo Lippi's last mural project was the apse decoration in the cathedral of Spoleto, painted between 1466 and 1469 (figs. 1, 2)¹. Payments in the accounts of the Opera del Duomo of Spoleto, which have long been known, reveal details of the attribution, chronology, and technique of the mural². In this paper I wish to focus on the role the bishop of Spoleto, Berardo Erolì (1409-1479), played in its genesis, and to examine the totality of the work he sponsored in the cathedral, which has not been examined from this perspective. Although he has been considered important, his efforts have only been examined in isolation. I believe that the murals were conceived as a magnificent setting for the revered Marian icon of the cathedral and its display on feast days, above all the Assumption. In this way, Erolì also sought to link the Spoleto Duomo physically and liturgically with the most venerable Marian basilica in Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore.

Erolì, originally from Narni, had been appointed bishop of Spoleto in 1448 by Pope Nicholas V (r. 1447-1455), and served five popes in varying capacities before his death in 1479³. In 1449 he was named papal vicar for the city of Rome, where he resided for the rest of his life. Pius II (r. 1458-1464) raised him to the cardinalate in 1460 as cardinal-priest of Santa Sabina. In Rome his palace was on Via Papalis, near Sant'Eustachio. The procession that transferred the relic of Saint Andrew's head to the Vatican in 1462, a highlight of Pius's papacy, passed by Erolì's palace, the walls of which, Pius noted, «had [been] decorated [...] most beautifully» and the adjacent square «covered with carpets»⁴. Personally austere, Erolì well understood the culture of opulence and display at the papal court.

Pius, who praised Erolì in his *Commentarii* as «a man of distinguished character and learning, with a reputation as a champion of justice»⁵, often turned to him for his legal knowledge and diplomatic ability. Erolì served numerous times as papal legate to Umbria, residing in Perugia for 11 months in 1462 to 1463, and he seems often to have traveled to his home diocese.

Erolì supported institutions in Spoleto and Narni, including the convent of San Girolamo outside Narni (1461-1471), where he installed the Observant Franciscans⁶. The renovation of San Girolamo included a convent with a cloister, a library, and a pharmacy. Now disfigured by nineteenth-century restorations, it was so sumptuous that at first the friars refused to move in, citing vows of poverty, but they eventually succumbed to Erolì's will.

Some indication of this vanished décor is Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Coronation of the Virgin*, commissioned by Erolì or his heirs at an unknown date for the high altar of San Girolamo, but only finished in 1486, 15 years after the bishop's death (fig. 3)⁷. The altarpiece, with its shimmering gold background, luminous colors and luxurious tooling, gives some idea of the splendor of San Girolamo's refurbishment. Erolì, recognizable from the *gisant* of his tomb (Grotte Vaticane, Saint Peter's, Vatican City; fig. 4), is portrayed in the altarpiece in the guise of Saint Berard, one of five Franciscan protomartyrs killed in Morocco in 1220 for preaching Christianity, and canonized by Sixtus IV in 1481. With his head covered by the dark brown cowl of his habit and his countenance expressing rapt contemplation, he stands to the left at the side of Saint Francis and above the kneeling figure of Saint Bonaventure.

The association of Florentine artisans with Erolì's projects is notable: he has been linked to the earliest employment of Benozzo Gozzoli in Umbria, an *Annunciation* in Narni signed by the artist and dated to ca. 1449⁸. He may also have facilitated Gozzoli's work from 1452 in Montefalco, which was part of his diocese⁹. Vasari relates that Erolì may have been advised to employ Lippi by Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464)¹⁰. Surviving letters from Erolì in the Medici archive, however, are mostly from the 1470s and addressed to Lorenzo di Piero; the earliest, from 1462, is addressed to Giovanni di Cosimo, the brother of Piero, not to their father¹¹. Erolì could also have encountered Lippi in Perugia where the artist was well known. In addition, the bishop corresponded with Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, to whom, of course, Lippi was also familiar, perhaps best for his misbehavior¹².

By whatever means Erolì induced Lippi to paint in the cathedral of Spoleto, the bishop's involvement is attested in the payment records¹³. The final payment of 210 florins toward the 700 ducats total sum was made posthumously on 23 February 1470 to Lippi's longtime collaborator Fra Diamante¹⁴. The Opera

officials made the payment «at the command [...] of the vicar of Monsignore of Spoleto», that is, the bishop, whose vicar at that time was Sante da Norcia. The entry refers to a written document «by the hand of [...] Golino di Govanni, the notary of the Episcopal Treasury [...]». From this wording I infer that the notarial document was not a payment order, as has been thought, but more likely the contract, now lost, that specified the total compensation. If so, it would appear from this entry that Eroli had commissioned Lippi for the work through a contract drawn up by the bishop's notary, not by the notary of the Opera del Duomo, as would have been the case if the Opera had been the patron.

It seems also that Eroli had provided a substantial part of the funds. The very first payment to Lippi, on 2 July 1466, for 77 florins (the equivalent of 50 papal ducats) was made on the same day as another artisan received funds from «the vicar of Monsignore»¹⁵. While this payment to Lippi does not state that it comes from Eroli, the implication has been drawn by scholars that it does. In the records of the *entrata*, a note on the same day recorded a donation of 50 ducats to the Opera from the bishop, thus confirming Eroli's role¹⁶.

The accounts also reveal that the apse mural was not the only, or even the most ambitious project undertaken at this time in the Duomo of Spoleto. A new chapel for the icon of the Madonna – believed to have painted by Saint Luke and the great treasure of the church – was also begun in 1466; it too was paid for at the direction of Bishop Eroli¹⁷. In 1469, also at Eroli's initiative, artisans began to reconstruct the chapels off the aisles of the cathedral¹⁸. The placement and semicircular plan of the chapels are reminiscent of Brunelleschi's design for Santo Spirito in Florence, which was widely imitated. A drawing of 1614 in the Vatican Library, the accuracy of which has, however, been questioned, recorded these fifteenth-century alterations.

The accounts identify many of the chief artisans involved in these projects. Like Lippi, some of them were Tuscan and had links to projects underway in Rome at the time. Giacomo da Pietrasanta, who had worked in Rome for Pius II and Paul II (r. 1464-1471), was paid in January 1469, having been «sent by Monsignore to construct the chapel or chapels in Santa Maria»¹⁹. He and his assistant were cited frequently in disbursements for the chapels off the north aisle between 1469 and 1470, and off the south aisle from 1473 to 1488. Thus, Eroli's guiding hand in the renovation of the Romanesque church seems clear and suggests a taste for up-to-date design influenced by Florentine artists.

Subsequent alterations destroyed much of what the payments recorded, most notably renovations conducted under Pope Urban VIII (r. 1623-1644), who as Maffeo Barberini had been bishop of Spoleto between 1608 and 1617²⁰.

After Maffeo's elevation to the papacy, the Cardinal Nephew Francesco Barberini carried on the work, finished only in 1668. During this time, Lippi's murals escaped destruction solely through the efforts of the cathedral Chapter. Between 1785 and 1792, Giuseppe Valadier further constructed new altars and portals.

Today, Lippi's original mural cycle in Spoleto survives only in part. While the apse was preserved, much of the decorative and figurative elements of the triumphal arch have been lost, as has the architectural framing of the apse itself (figs. 5-7). The nineteenth-century choir stalls further obscure the original wainscoting and reduce the architectural context of the murals. In addition, Lippi's technique, using large areas of *a secco* painting, resulted in a loss of detail and color. A conservation undertaken from 1987 to 1990 revealed the vibrant colors of Lippi's palette, but it could not restore the rich effects that must have characterized the original surface²¹.

Nonetheless, the apse mural presents a striking vision of the Virgin's last days on earth and triumph in heaven to the visitor who approaches from the entrance portal. The Virgin kneels before a white bearded God the Father, who blesses her with His right hand while placing a crown on her head (fig. 8). Behind them, a giant aureole with snaking flames radiates light, while concentric bands studded with gilded wax bosses denote the celestial spheres. Crowds of angels, blowing trumpets and offering flowers, surround the central figures. At the lower left and right, Old Testament prophets and heroines as well as pagan sibyls resting on clouds regard the holy figures with amazement. Directly beneath the *Coronation*, the *Dormition of the Virgin* takes place, while her *Assumption* and *Donation of her Girdle to Saint Thomas* in the upper register are barely visible, having been nearly obliterated by previous restoration (fig. 9).

Scholars have noted that the apse mural recalls in its subject and general design the resplendent mosaic apse of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome (fig. 10)²². The depictions share features: a central *Coronation* (although in the Roman basilica Christ crowns the Virgin) and the presence of the cosmic spheres with the sun and moon below. In addition, the vertical alignment of the *Dormition*, out of chronological order in the narrative scenes of the Virgin's life below, is a distinctive aspect of the Roman work that recurs in Spoleto. Significantly, at this time the cathedral of Spoleto was newly referred to as «Santa Maria Maggiore», a possible allusion to the venerable Roman church²³.

Spoleto, the ancient duchy under Lombard rule from the sixth century, became part of the Carolingian Empire in the eighth century. It was ceded to the Papal States in 1198²⁴, and in that year Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) consecrated the rebuilt cathedral. From 1213, Spoleto was under direct control of the papacy, ruled

by a governor, usually a cardinal, although communal institutions emerged in the course of the thirteenth century to exercise temporal power. Gil de Albornoz as cardinal legate between 1353 and 1367 reinforced papal authority by, among other things, building fortresses such as the Rocca of Spoleto (fig. 11). Hence, the pairing of the cathedral of Santa Maria in Spoleto with the papal basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome may have been widely understood. But no matter how indeterminate the association, I contend that Eroli made it explicit. The bishop was deeply enmeshed in the papal bureaucracy and seems to have sought to underscore the connection of his diocese with the Eternal City through his patronage.

I would like to probe this relationship a little further. In particular, we know from the documents that a new chapel for the Marian icon of Spoleto was being built at the same time as Lippi's murals were underway. In all likelihood it, too, was commissioned by Bishop Eroli. Funds from «the vicar of Monsignore» were used to pay workers, and toward the end of the project, an unpublished payment records that on 26 December 1466, a laborer was paid to mount «a pediment [*frontone*] above the door [to the chapel of the icon] with the arms of Monsignore»²⁵. Today nothing remains of this chapel. An indication of its prominence is that, already by 1519, a lavish new chapel for the icon was planned but never executed; again in the 1540s, another chapel was built to which the icon was ceremoniously transferred in 1561²⁶. In the seventeenth century, an ornate chapel was built, and in 1668 the icon was translated there with great festivities under the auspices of Bishop Cesare Facchinetti (r. 1655-1672), where it remains today (figs. 12, 13)²⁷.

According to local legend, in 1185 the image of the Madonna was donated to Spoleto by Federico Barbarossa in recompense for having sacked the city 30 years earlier, although the first mention of the icon in Spoleto dates only to 1291²⁸. Scholars suggest it was painted in Constantinople in the early twelfth century. The image, measuring 31 by 24 centimeters, was executed in tempera on a wood panel overlaid with fine linen. It has been cut down and has suffered losses to the paint film, especially in the area of the Virgin's face. Her mantle, originally a rich purple, is now a dark blue-black, and the gilded background is heavily abraded. The letters of the scroll have been reinforced. It is a replica of a fifth-century icon, the so-called *Haghiosoritissa*, now lost, from the church of the Virgin in the Chalcostrateia neighborhood of Constantinople. As a holy icon originating from the East, not merely a Western replica, and its attribution to the hand of Saint Luke, the image had extraordinary prestige in the territory of the old duchy of Spoleto.

The Madonna, facing right, inclines her head slightly while holding up a scroll with her left hand (fig. 14). Posed without the Christ Child, she presents a petition in the form of a dialogue in Greek:

Madonna: Receive the prayer of your mother, Compassionate One.

Christ: What do you ask, Mother?

Madonna: The salvation of mortals.

Christ: They irritate me.

Madonna: Pity them, my son.

Christ: But they have not been converted.

Madonna: And save them freely.

Christ: They will have redemption.

Madonna: I thank you, O Word.

For this reason, the image type came to be known as the *Madonna Avvocata* (Madonna as Advocate). In its original setting in Constantinople, Christ was depicted in another icon (now lost) as he «who answered». The Spoleto image, however, seems never to have had a pendant; gilded rays at the upper right signify the presence of the Savior.

Icons of the *Madonna Avvocata* were widely disseminated in Rome and the surrounding territory²⁹. The most famous one in Rome was conserved in the convent of Santa Maria in Tempuli, located near the Baths of Caracalla, until it was moved in 1221 with the nuns, who had adopted the Dominican Rule, to nearby San Sisto, and thus became known as the *San Sisto Madonna*³⁰. Painted in Byzantium, it is the oldest of a related group. Like the Spoleto icon, the San Sisto icon shows the Madonna without the Child, but it differs in that the Virgin faces left rather than right, addresses the viewer directly, and, although she raises her hands in supplication, she does not hold a scroll.

The *San Sisto Madonna* also played a role in the distinctive Roman procession on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, celebrated on 15 August³¹. In that lavish ceremony, the sacred *Acheropita* icon of Christ from the Sancta Sanctorum at the Lateran Palace was processed through the city to Santa Maria Maggiore, where it was reunited with the miraculous icon of the Virgin and Child, later known as the *Salus Populi Romani*. Along the way, the procession passed by Santa Maria in Tempuli, where the San Sisto icon may have joined the cortege.

Scholars have revealed the procession's relevance to the imagery of the Coronation of the Virgin³². The mosaic *Coronation* in Santa Maria Maggiore, with narrative scenes of the life of the Virgin below, visualize the last days of the Virgin on earth and her reception in heaven. The encounter of Mother and Savior at the procession's culmination began the concluding sequence of events that celebrated Mary's triumphant Coronation in heaven. The *Coronation* mosaics in

Santa Maria Maggiore refer explicitly to these holy images as experienced by worshippers during the Assumption ceremony. We can be sure Cardinal Erolì was among the participants, for he was a member of the prestigious Roman confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum, charged with bearing the Savior icon on its litter to its destination and assuring its return to the magisterial altar in the «Holy of Holies»³³.

Unfortunately, there seem to be no descriptions of the Assumption ceremony in fifteenth-century Spoleto, so we do not know if the ritual was performed there as it was in other towns near Rome. A papal bull of indulgence, dated to the Assumption in 1291, describes a procession with the icon to the high altar³⁴. In the nineteenth century, the icon was brought to the altar on the eve of the Assumption.

However, records of the Duomo renovations in the fifteenth century perhaps provide an essential clue. In 1489, payments to a mason refer to a place above the portico «where they display the icon in the piazza»³⁵. Two years later the *operai* decided to build a new portico abutting the Duomo facade, the one that remains today (fig. 14)³⁶. The portico created an updated public face for the cathedral, but it also had a liturgical function. In addition to the two pulpits, the roof of new portico over the central arch was furnished with a balustrade embellished by candelabra. This ornamented and well-lit space was where, as the documents reveal, the ostension of the sacred icon occurred. That the portico served this function continuously is confirmed by the pastoral visit in 1610 by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, who, as noted, was serving as the bishop of Spoleto (1608-1617). In his report we learn that the icon, after being processed beneath a *baldacchino*, was displayed from this spot on the feasts of the Annunciation and the Assumption³⁷.

The presentation of the holy icon above the portico might suggest another analogy of the Spoleto ceremony with that in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The Roman procession concluded with the meeting of the Madonna and Christ icons, but, as mentioned above, there is no evidence of the existence of a portable companion image of the Savior at Spoleto. However, the most prominent part of the Spoleto facade is the mosaic of Christ flanked by the Virgin (as the *Madonna Avvocata*) and Saint John the Evangelist (fig. 15)³⁸. Displayed from the balcony, the small icon would have appeared below the rose window and the mosaic, bringing the two holy images together in view of the assembled populace. Might the facade mosaic have served as the companion to the sacred panel in the Spoleto ceremony? When the icon was displayed above the portico, the ritual meeting of Christ and his Mother via the miraculous images – the essence of the ceremony in Rome – might have been recalled. In the absence of contemporary accounts, however, this question remains unanswered.

The link between the *Madonna Avvocata* icon and the apse image of her last days on earth and heavenly coronation in Lippi's new mural in Spoleto is therefore highly likely, and it may well have been the motivation for Bishop Erolì's concurrent projects in the cathedral. Together, the new chapel and the apse mural visualize the Virgin's role as patron of the city and advocate for the faithful.

Similarly, the relationship of icon and apse would make the parallels between the cathedral and Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome even more explicit. In addition to their dedications to the Virgin, both churches shared facades featuring rose windows with mosaics and Romanesque *campanili*. In the fifteenth century, before its Baroque additions, the late thirteenth-century mosaics at Santa Maria Maggiore showing the Enthroned Blessing Christ with foundation narratives below were clearly visible (fig. 16). In its interior decoration, too, Santa Maria Maggiore provided a model for the Spoleto Duomo. Then as now in the Roman church, Old Testament narrative mosaics decorated the nave walls above the arcade, while on the triumphal arch some of the earliest Marian scenes survive. On the interior west facade, scenes of the *Last Judgment*, no longer extant, were depicted³⁹. While in Spoleto little of the original fifteenth-century wall decoration survives, evidence suggests that Old and New Testament murals covered the nave walls and a *Last Judgment* filled the interior facade⁴⁰. We have no indication of the preexistent apse decoration, which, based on constant efforts to repair the roof, may have been destroyed or at least in an advanced state of disrepair⁴¹.

More generally, the explicit links between the great Roman basilica and the Spoleto Duomo forged by Erolì's renovations were a manifestation of the renewed appreciation of early Christian sites as examples of "Christian antiquity"⁴². Erolì had, of course, firsthand knowledge of the papal urban renewal projects from the time of Nicholas V. The themes of papal primacy and the centrality of Rome in Christendom declaimed in orations at the papal court might have also influenced his thinking and his architectural patronage.

Lippi's Coronation murals, while they refer directly to the Roman mosaics, differ in detail. Most obviously, Lippi's mural shows the Virgin kneeling before a seated God the Father who wears an elaborate conical crown, the *triregnum*, alluding to papal authority⁴³. Lippi had painted a kneeling Virgin in the Coronation before, in his 1447 Sant'Ambrogio altarpiece (fig. 17)⁴⁴. The kneeling position is perhaps derived from depictions of Queen Esther before King Ahasuerus⁴⁵. Esther, who is depicted at the far right of Lippi's mural among the Old Testament heroines, was considered a type or prefiguration of the Virgin by Christians (fig. 18). The Sant'Ambrogio altarpiece also depicts God the Father, not Christ, as at Spoleto,

and this imagery seems to have been widely used for the Coronation by Florentine artists in the late fifteenth century.

In addition, Lippi included the scene of the Assumption of the Virgin and the gift of her girdle to the apostle Thomas (now ghostly motifs but once clearly visible), missing from the Roman examples⁴⁶. Both of these innovations in the imagery of the Assumption and Coronation emphasize the Virgin's mercy and her humanity⁴⁷. The Virgin's gift to Thomas was tangible evidence of her assumption – body and soul – into heaven. The emphasis on the Virgin's corporeal assumption, a theological point debated at the time, assumed particular force in Tuscany, where the scene was often depicted. Lippi's long residence in Prato, where the actual relic was preserved only steps from his workplace, seems a likely explanation for this aspect of his mural in Spoleto, although Erolì or one of his representatives must have approved the design⁴⁸.

Yet Lippi's murals also respond to the culture of Spoleto. It has been noted that architectural details, such as the pier to the right in the *Annunciation*, replicate classical *spoglie* in local monuments, such as those in the Basilica of the Savior in Spoleto (figs. 19, 20)⁴⁹. The landscape, deeper and more sweeping than the landscapes in the Prato murals, evokes the hilly terrain of Spoleto itself.

The striking illusionism of the Spoleto murals might also respond to contemporary trends in Rome, such as the now fragmentary murals in the chapel of Cardinal Bessarion in Santi Apostoli, painted between 1464 and 1467, just before Lippi began his murals. The curving, altar wall of the chapel depicted Christ in Majesty, with narrative scenes of the life of Saint Michael the Archangel below (fig. 21)⁵⁰. Not only the shape of Bessarion's chapel, but the placement of the murals conformed very closely to Lippi's subsequent design. How Lippi might have become familiar with these is unknown, as he never went to Rome as far as we know. Documents tell us, however, that during the time the Spoleto murals were being executed, Lippi sent Fra Diamante to Rome on two occasions – most importantly, in May 1468, when he was summoned by the Monsignore of Vicenza⁵¹. The «monsignore» was none other than Marco Barbo (1420-1491), cardinal-nephew of the reigning Pope Paul II⁵². Almost a year later, on 15 May 1469, Fra Diamante again went to Rome⁵³. The dates of his trips are too late to have influenced profoundly the design of the Spoleto murals, for by then they were well advanced. However, we might see the hand of Cardinal Erolì – a close associate of Bessarion and Barbo – in these Roman connections.

Furthermore, if the Spoleto murals were modeled on the mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore, there must have been some communication of design information to the artist, either verbally or by means of a drawing. We do know that Erolì or his

nephew supplied a drawing of a fountain for the piazza facing the cathedral, a project begun in 1468 and taken up again in 1490⁵⁴. Hence the bishop's active participation in these projects seems certain.

Lippi's murals in Spoleto, then, show the artist's response to special demands of patronage and imagery. They form a fitting conclusion to his long career, for he died in Spoleto on 10 October 1469, and was buried in the cathedral⁵⁵. His grave is lost, but his son Filippino designed the cenotaph, now located in the south transept of the cathedral (fig. 22).

Although Erolì resigned the bishopric of Spoleto in 1474 to become the cardinal-bishop of Sabina (Sabine Hills), his nephew Costantino Erolì (14??-1500) was appointed in his place and continued the vigorous campaign of renewal in the cathedral. Through their efforts, Spoleto was linked to Rome through history, culture, and faith. Nonetheless, it was the powerful and influential Bishop Berardo Erolì who initiated the concurrent architectural and decorative projects that transformed the interior and exterior of the Duomo. By linking the holy icon with the apse imagery, he elevated Spoleto by emulating the venerable traditions of the Eternal City. How appropriate, then, that Erolì was buried in Old Saint Peter's (see fig. 4), and in a portion of his testament, conserved in the archive of the confraternity of the Santissimo Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum of which he and his nephew were members, he bequeathed his Roman palaces to the Basilica of Saint Peter and the hospital of the confraternity⁵⁶. And, of course, it was the elite Santissimo Salvatore *confratelli* who transported the miraculous Savior icon in Rome's glorious Assumption procession that culminated at Santa Maria Maggiore.

- 1 For Lippi's biography, see the entry by L. Bortolotti in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Roma, 2005, vol. 65, pp. 198-207. The most recent discussion of the murals in Spoleto is G. Benazzi, *Le storie della Vergine di Filippo Lippi*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto: storia, arte, conservazione*, ed. by G. Benazzi, G. Carbonara, Milano, 2002, pp. 261-277. See also J. Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work*, London-New York, 1993, pp. 292-305, 473-477, cat. 66.
- 2 The payments are found in Archivio di Stato, Spoleto, Archivio di Opera del Duomo di Spoleto (hereafter ASS, AODS), Registro no. 4 (formerly no. 1), dal 1455 al 1505, cc. 105r-124v (new pagination; formerly cc. 116r-135v). They were selectively published by L. Fausti, *Le pitture di Fra Filippo Lippi nel Duomo di Spoleto*, in «Archivio per la storia ecclesiastica dell'Umbria», 3, 1915, pp. 1-36 (reprinted as a book by the Ente Roca di Spoleto in 1970); by Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., pp. 542-544, doc. 27; and in digest form by L. Andreani, *Regesti*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 465-467, docs. 85-174.
- 3 For Erolì's biography, see the entry by A. Esposito in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Roma, 1993, vol. 43, pp. 228-232.
- 4 Pius II, *Commentaries of Pius II*, trans. by F.A. Gragg, «Smith College Studies in History», 35, 1951, bk. 8, p. 535.

- 5 Pius II, *Commentaries*, ed. by M. Meserve, M. Simonetta, Cambridge, Mass., 2007, vol. 2, bk. 4, chap. 9, pp. 232-233.
- 6 For the history of the monastery, see G. Erolì, *Notizie de' vescovi Erolì estratte dalle vite de' Narnesi illustri*, Terni, 1852, pp. xix-xx, note 19; M. Guardabassi, *Indice-guida dei monumenti pagani e cristiani riguardanti l'istoria e l'arte esisstenti nella provincia dell'Umbria*, Perugia, 1872, p. 135; G. Erolì, *Descrizione delle chiese di Narni e suoi dintorni*, Narni, 1898, pp. 385-395; F. Russo, *S. Girolamo di Narni*, in «Miscellanea francescana», 37, no. 1, 1937, pp. 167-181.
- 7 Erolì, *Notizie*, cit., pp. xviii-xx, note 19 (attributed to Lo Spagna); Guardabassi, *Indice*, cit., p. 135 (attributed to Filippo Lippi); G. Erolì, *La Coronazione di Maria Vergine del Ghirlandaio e la Madonna del Libro di Raffaello*, Narni, 1880, pp. 29-30; Russo, *S. Girolamo di Narni*, cit., pp. 174-176; J.K. Cadogan, *Domenico Ghirlandaio: Artist and Artisan*, New Haven-London, 2000, pp. 255-257, cat. 31; p. 357, doc. 27; A. Novelli, L. Vignoli, *L'arte a Narni tra medioevo e illuminismo*, Perugia, 2004, pp. 79-88.
- 8 D.C. Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, New Haven-London, 1996, pp. 232-233, cat. 42; E. Lunghi, in *Benozzo Gozzoli: allievo a Roma, maestro in Umbria*, ed. by B. Toscano, G. Capitelli, Cinisello Balsamo, 2002, pp. 198-199, cat. 18; Novelli, Vignoli, *L'arte a Narni*, cit., pp. 61-69, cat. 5.
- 9 Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, cit., pp. 41-47; *ead.*, *Frescante a San Fortunato*, in *Benozzo Gozzoli: allievo a Roma*, cit., pp. 93-94.
- 10 G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori*, ed. by G. Milanesi, Firenze, 1878, vol. 2, pp. 611-646.
- 11 Archivio di Stato, Firenze (hereafter ASF), Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato; the letters to Lorenzo di Piero in Florence are the following: filza 46, no. 261, from Spoleto, 27 July 1473; no. 348, from Narni, 3 August 1474; no. 363, from Rome, 30 September 1474; no. 372, from Rome, 14 October 1474; no. 376, from Rome, 29 October 1474; no. 381, from Rome, 7 January 1475; no. 452, from Rome, 31 May 1477; no. 466, from Rome, 19 July 1477; no. 484, from Rome, 29 November 1477; filza 34, no. 30, from Rome, 10 February 1476. See also L. de' Medici, *Lettere*, vol. 1, ed. by R. Fubini, Firenze, 1977, pp. 411, 415; vol. 3, ed. by N. Rubinstein, 1977, p. 42; vol. 4, ed. by N. Rubinstein, 1981, p. 17.
- 12 Esposito, *Berardo Erolì*, cit., p. 231; Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., p. 34.
- 13 See note 2. A recent discussion is G. Benazzi, *Filippo Lippi a Spoleto. Tempi, costi, materiali e collaboratori* in *Officina Pratese: Tecnica, Stile, Storia*, ed. by P. Benassi et al., Firenze, 2014, pp. 77-92.
- 14 ASS, AODS, registro 4, c. 124r, 23 February 1470.
- 15 ASS, AODS, registro 4, c. 106v, 2 July 1466.
- 16 ASS, AODS, registro 4, c. 4r, 2 July 1466; Fausti, *Le pitture*, cit., p. 7; Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., p. 473; G. Benazzi, *Le storie della Vergine*, cit., p. 261.
- 17 C. Bozzoni, G. Carbonara, *Il quattrocento e il cinquecento: ulteriori sviluppi*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 105-107.
- 18 *Ivi*, pp. 103-104; S. Nessi, *La cattedrale nella storia diocesana*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., p. 69.
- 19 S. Borsi, F. Quinterio, C. Vasić Vatovec, *Maestri fiorentini nei cantieri romani del quattrocento*, Roma, 1989, pp. 226-236; C.L. Frommel, *Architettura e committenza da Alberti a Bramante*, Firenze, 2006, p. 184.
- 20 C. Varagnoli, *Il Seicento: la cattedrale barberiniana*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 111-121.

- 21 For the technique and restoration of the murals, see G. Benazzi *et al.*, *Le storie della Vergine*, in «Art e dossier», 51, 1990, pp. 16-23; P. Virilli, *I dipinti di Filippo Lippi nell'abside del duomo di Spoleto*, in *Tecniche della pittura murale dall'alto medioevo al quattrocento*, ed. S. Rinaldi, Viterbo, 1998, pp. 32-37; G. Benazzi, *Le 'storie della Vergine' di Filippo Lippi nel Duomo di Spoleto. Alcune considerazioni dopo il restauro*, in *Scritti per l'Istituto Germanico di Storia dell'Arte di Firenze*, ed. by C. Acidini Luchinat *et al.*, Firenze, 1997, pp. 125-132; Benazzi, *Filippo Lippi a Spoleto*, cit. pp. 85-90.
- 22 Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., p. 477; P. Verdier, *Le Couronnement de la Vierge. Les origines et les premiers développements d'un thème iconographique*, Montréal, 1980, p. 162.
- 23 The source of this designation is a chronicle written 1466-1472 by a notary, Giovanni di Luca da Spoleto; cited in Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., p. 544, doc. 27, II.1. The only earlier reference I have found is from a notarial document of 1245; but all the official documents, statutes, etc. refer to the church as «Santa Maria». However, the reason for the definitive mid-fifteenth-century change may be simply be that this Santa Maria was the most important church in Spoleto with a Marian dedication.
- 24 For the history of the Papal States, see D. Waley, *The Papal State in the Thirteenth Century*, London, 1961; P. Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter: The Papal State in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance*, Berkeley, 1972; S. Carocci, *Vassalli del papa: Potere pontificio, aristocrazie e città nello stato della chiesa (XII-XV secolo)*, Roma, 2010; *id.*, *The Papal State, in The Italian Renaissance State*, ed. by A. Gamberini, I. Lazzarini, Cambridge, 2012, pp. 69-89. A. Sansi, *Storia del commune di Spoleto dal secolo XII al XVII*, Foligno, 1879, 2 vols., remains a valuable source.
- 25 ASS, AODS, registro 4, c. 110r, 26 December 1466.
- 26 Bozzoni, Carbonara, *Il quattrocento e il cinquecento*, cit., pp. 107-108; the contract for the 1519 construction is published in A. Rossi, *Di una cappella fabbricata a Spoleto nel Cinquecento per la santa Icone*, in «Giornale di erudizione artistica», 2, 1873, pp. 218-222.
- 27 C. Metelli, *Vicende decorative prima e dopo il rifacimento barberiniano*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 335-339.
- 28 On the icon's history and restoration, see M. Bonfioli, *Un importante restauro: l'icona del Duomo di Spoleto*, in «Spolegium», 27, 1982, pp. 35-38; M. Bonfioli, E. Ermini, *Premesse ad un riesame critico dell'«icone» del Duomo di Spoleto*, in *Atti del IX congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo*, Spoleto, 1983, pp. 821-836; M. Bonfioli, *L'icona del Duomo di Spoleto: Nuovi contributi alla sua storia*, in «Spolegium», 33, 1988, pp. 17-25; *ead.*, *Per la storia dell'icona di Spoleto. Documenti*, in *Scritti di archeologia e storia dell'arte in onore di Carlo Pietrangeli*, ed. by V. Casale *et al.*, Roma, 1996, pp. 237-242; *ead.*, *La «santissima icona»*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 185-187.
- 29 H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence; A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. by E. Jephcott, Chicago, 1994, pp. 314-329; G.E. Solberg, *The Madonna Avvocata Icon at Orte and Geography*, in *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by A. Ladis, S.E. Zuraw, Athens, Ga., 2001, pp. 123-135; R. Perry, *The Medieval Inchinata Procession at Tivoli: Ritual Construction of Civic Identity in the Age of the Commune*, in «Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians», 1, 2017, pp. 36-62.
- 30 P. Amato, *De vera Effigie Mariae: Antiche Icone Romane*, Milano, 1988, pp. 42-49; H. Belting, *Icons and Roman Society in the Twelfth Century*, in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance: Functions, Forms, and Regional Traditions*, ed. by W. Tronzo, Bologna, 1989, pp. 27-41; *id.*, *Likeness and Presence*, cit., pp. 72, 314-320.

- 31 F. Caraffa, *La processione del SS. Salvatore a Roma e nel Lazio nella notte dell'Assunta*, in «Lunario romano», 5, 1976, pp. 127-151; Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, cit., pp. 323-329; H. Kessler, J. Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim*, New Haven, 2000, pp. 65-125. P. Helas, G. Wolf, *Die Nacht der Bilder. Eine Beschreibung der Prozession zu Maria Himmelfahrt in Rome aus dem Jahr 1462*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2011.
- 32 E. Kitzinger, *A Virgin's Face: Antiquarianism in Twelfth-Century Art*, in «The Art Bulletin», 62, 1980, pp. 6-19; W. Tronzo, *Apse Decoration, the Liturgy and the Perception of Art in Medieval Rome: S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Maggiore*, in *Italian Church Decoration*, cit., pp. 167-193; G. Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter*, Weinheim, 1990, pp. 184-189.
- 33 Esposito, *Ercoli, Berardo*, cit., p. 230. Ercoli and his nephew Costantino Ercoli were members of the confraternity; see *Necrologi e libri affini della provincial romana*, ed. by P. Egidì, Roma, vol. 1, 1908, p. 480; vol. 2, 1914, pp. 13, 139, 457; for Costantino Ercoli, *ivi*, p. 505. On the confraternity generally, see M. Lombroso, A. Martini, *Le confraternite romane nelle loro chiese*, Roma, 1963, pp. 394-397; P. Pavan, *Gli statuti della società dei Raccomandati del Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum 1331-1496*, in «Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria», 101, 1978 [1980], pp. 35-96; *ead.*, *La confraternita del Salvatore nella società romana del Tre-Quattrocento*, in «Ricerche di storia religiosa di Roma», 5, 1984, pp. 81-90; and various essays in *Tra Campidoglio e curia: L'ospedale del SS. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. by P. Helas, P. Tosini, Cinisello Balsamo, 2017.
- 34 Bonfioli and Ermini, *Premesse ad un riesame critico dell'Icone*, cit., p. 832.
- 35 ASS, AODS, Registro 4, c. 189r, 15 September 1489: «dove se mostrar l'icone nella piazza [...]».
- 36 The contract was published by A. Rossi, *Documenti per la storia della scultura ornamentale in pietra*, in «Giornale di Erudizione artistica», 3, 1874, pp. 153-155, no. 18. See also L. Fausti, *Il portico del Duomo di Spoleto; nuovi documenti*, in «Bollettino della regia deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria», 22, 1917, pp. 339-344; M. Ceriana, *Il portico rinascimentale e l'opera di Ambrogio Barocci a Spoleto*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 289-303. The payment records are summarized in Andreani, *Regesti*, cit., pp. 468-469. On the earlier portico that was dismantled, see S. Nessi, *Il duomo di Spoleto nel secolo XII*, in «Spolegium», 12, 1966, pp. 31-36.
- 37 Archivio Storico Diocesano di Spoleto, Visite Pastorali, Maffeo Barberini, 1, 1 July 1610, c. 56r, in Andreani, *Regesti*, cit., p. 493.
- 38 M. Andaloro, *Il mosaico di Solsterno*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 213-219.
- 39 J. Gardner, *The Roman Crucible: the Artistic Patronage of the Papacy 1198-1304*, München, 2013, pp. 260-268.
- 40 E. Lunghi, *I cicli pittorici, le opere d'arte medievali e la cappella di Sant'Anna*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., pp. 241-245.
- 41 S. Nessi, *Nuovi documenti sulle arti a Spoleto. Architettura e scultura tra romanico e barocco*, Spoleto, 1992, p. 27.
- 42 Included in the copious literature on Roman renewal in the fifteenth century are T. Magnuson, *Studies in Roman Quattrocento Architecture*, Stockholm, 1958; C.W. Westfall, *In this Most Perfect Paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447-55*, University Park, Pa., 1974; J.W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome*, Durham, N.C., 1979; C.L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, Bloomington, Ind., 1985,

- pp. 226-291; Frommel, *Architettura e committenza*, cit.; G. de Simone, *Il Beato Angelico a Roma 1445-1455*, Firenze, 2017, pp. 19-36.
- 43 J. Braun, *Tiara*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, 1912, vol. 14, <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14714c.htm>> (accessed 19 December 2018).
- 44 Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, cit., pp. 139-147, 422-426, cat. 36.
- 45 M. Echols, *The Coronation of the Virgin in Fifteenth Century Italian Art*, Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1976, pp. 7-14; *Kings, Queens and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France*, ed. by M. Wolff, Chicago, 2011, pp. 70-71, no. 17.
- 46 Gardner, *The Roman Crucible*, cit., pp. 263-267, notes earlier examples of the *Coronation* paired with the *Assumption*, such as the stained glass window in Siena Cathedral, and the cope at Anagni, a gift to the monastery by Boniface VIII; see *id.*, *Papal Exactions, Royal Gifts and fashionable Cardinals: The Curial Clientele for Opus Anglicanum c. 1300-70*, in *The Age of Opus Anglicanum*, ed. by M.A. Michael, New York, 2016, pp. 22-35.
- 47 H. van Os, *The Assumption in Sienese Painting*, in *id.*, *Studies in Early Tuscan Painting*, London, 1992, pp. 123-279.
- 48 Lippi had designed the stained glass window, executed by Lorenzo da Pelago, with the *Assumption and Gift of the Belt to Thomas* in the main chapel of the Pieve in Prato; see E. Borsook, *Fra Filippo Lippi and the Murals for Prato Cathedral*, in «Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz», 1, 1975, pp. 5-6.
- 49 This correspondence was likely not coincidental; in the contract for a new icon chapel in the Duomo, dating to 1519, the architect was required to furnish capitals specifically modeled on those of the church of the Savior; see Rossi, *Di una cappella fabbricata a Spoleto nel cinquecento per la santa icone*, cit., pp. 218-222.
- 50 M. Gill, *Where the Danger was the Greatest: A Gallic Legacy in Santa Maria Maggiore*, in «Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte», 59, 1996, pp. 506-510; C.M. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the Fifteenth Century*, Leiden-Boston, 2009, pp. 220-232; A. Cavallaro, *Antoniazio Romano, pittore 'dei migliori che fussero allora in Roma'*, in *Antoniazio Romano Pictor Urbis*, ed. by A. Cavallaro, S. Petrocchi, Cinisello Balsamo, 2013, pp. 23-24; M. Gill, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge, 2014, pp. 79-83;
- 51 ASS, AODS, Registro 4, c. 117r, 18 May 1468. This trip must have been taken at some point previously, because on 23 of June, Lippi was paid 2 florins 70 *soldi* for hiring a horse to take Fra Diamante to Florence, where he stayed for 27 days; *ivi*, 23 June 1468.
- 52 Marco Barbo was appointed bishop of Treviso in 1455 and bishop of Vicenza in 1464, a post he held until his death. He was elevated to cardinal on 18 September 1467 and installed as Cardinal-Priest of San Marco on 4 October 1467.
- 53 ASS, AODS, Registro 4, c. 119r, 15 May 1469.
- 54 Sansi, *Storia del commune di Spoleto*, cit., vol. 2, p. 62; Nessi, *Nuovi Documenti*, cit., p. 31; *id.*, *La cattedrale nella storia diocesana*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., p. 69.
- 55 Vasari, *Le vite*, cit., vol. 2, pp. 629-631; vol. 3, pp. 467-468. The tomb was moved several times, during which Lippi's remains were lost; see Fausti, *Le pitture*, cit., pp. 22-26. For the cenotaph, designed by Filippino, see most recently P. Mercurelli Salari, *I lavori in pietra e legname e le opere d'arte del quattrocento*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto*, cit., p. 267.
- 56 Esposito, *Ercoli, Berardo*, cit., p. 230.



Fig.1: Spoleto, Duomo, facade and walls, twelfth century, with later additions.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 2: Fra Filippo Lippi, Apse Murals, 1466-1469. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.

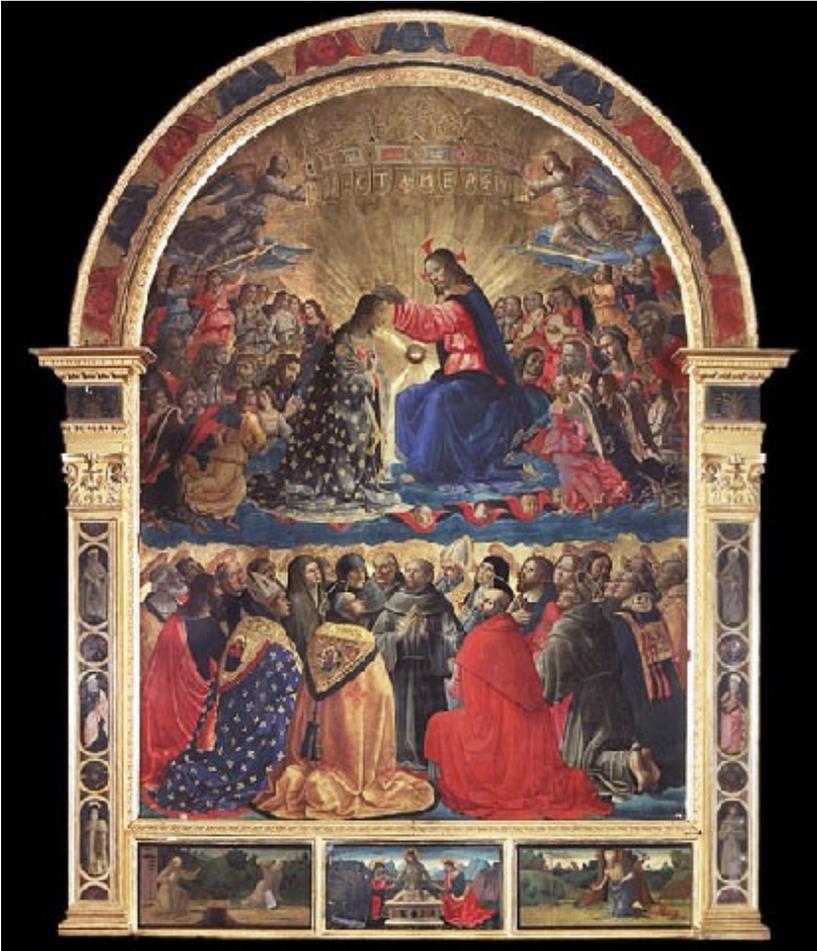


Fig. 3: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, before 1486, tempera and (?) oil on panel. Narni, Pinacoteca Comunale. Photo: New York, Scala/Art Resource.



Fig. 4: Giovanni Dalmata, *Tomb of Cardinal Berardo Erolì*, after 1479.
Vatican City, Grotte Vaticane. Photo: J. Röhl, *Giovanni Dalmata*, Worms, 1994, p. 104.



Fig. 5: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, with triumphal arch (fragmentary), 1467-1468. Spoleto, Duomo. Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 6: Paolo Virilli, Reconstruction of the Apse. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo: G. Benazzi *et al.*, *Le storie della Vergine*, in «Art e dossier», 51, 1990, p. 22.



Fig. 7: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1467-1468. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 8: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, detail, 1467-1468. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 9: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin with the Donation of her Girdle to Saint Thomas*, 1468-1469. Spoleto, Duomo. Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 10: Jacopo Torriti, *Coronation of the Virgin*, apse mosaic, detail, 1295-1296. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore. Photo: M. Righetti Tosti-Croce, *La basilica tra due e trecento*, in *Santa Maria Maggiore a Roma*, ed. C. Pietrangeli, Firenze, 1988, pp. 132-133.



Fig. 11: Rocca, Spoleto, after 1359. Photo by Alden R. Gordon



Fig. 12: *Santissima Icone*, twelfth century. Spoleto, Duomo. Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 13: *Santissima Icone*, twelfth century. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo: M. Bonfioli, *La 'santissima icone'*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto: storia, arte, conservazione*, ed. by G. Benazzi, G. Carbonara, Milano, 2002, p. 186.

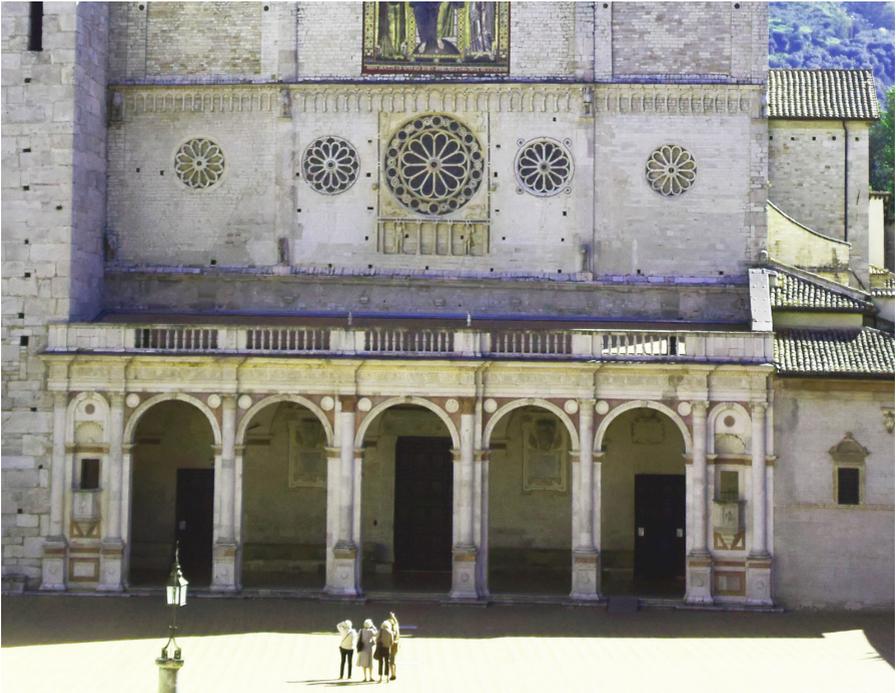


Fig. 14: Portico, begun 1491. Spoleto, Duomo. Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 15: *Christ, the Virgin, and Saint John the Evangelist*, facade detail, 1207, mosaic. Spoleto, Duomo. Photo: M. Andaloro, *Il mosaico di Solterno*, in *La cattedrale di Spoleto: storia, arte, conservazione*, ed. by G. Benazzi, G. Carbonara, Milano, 2002, p. 215.



Fig. 16: Israël Silvestre, *Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome*, detail, etching.
Les Eglises des Stations de Rome, Paris, ca. 1640, plate 5.

Photo: M.M. Cecchelli, *Dalla 'Basilica Liberiana' al complesso paleocristiano e altomedievale*, in *Santa Maria Maggiore a Roma*, ed. by C. Pietrangeli, Firenze, 1988, p. 79.

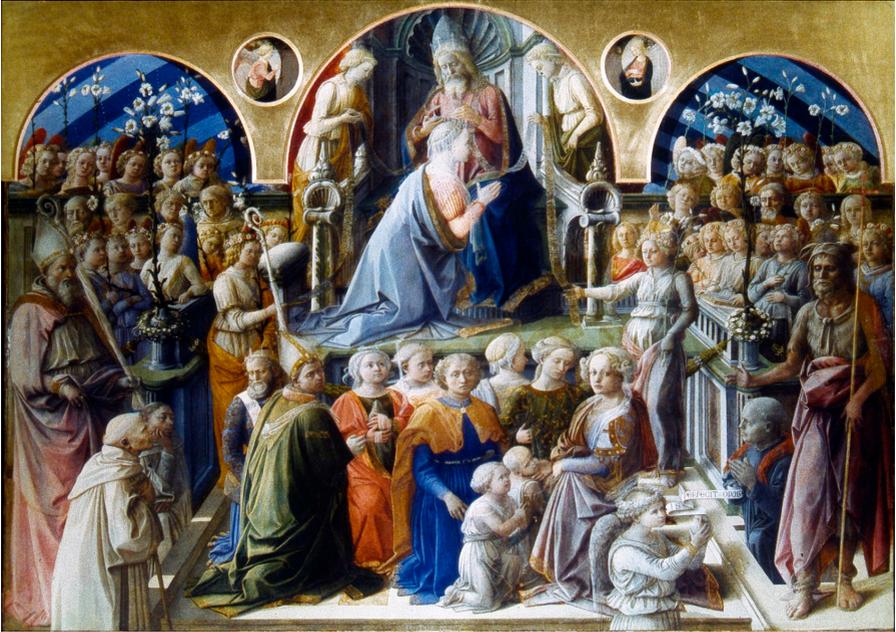


Fig. 17: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1439-1447. Florence, Uffizi.
Photo: J. Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work*, London-New York, 1993, p. 419.



Fig. 18: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Coronation of the Virgin*, detail, 1467-1468. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 19: Fra Filippo Lippi, *Annunciation*, 1468-1469. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.

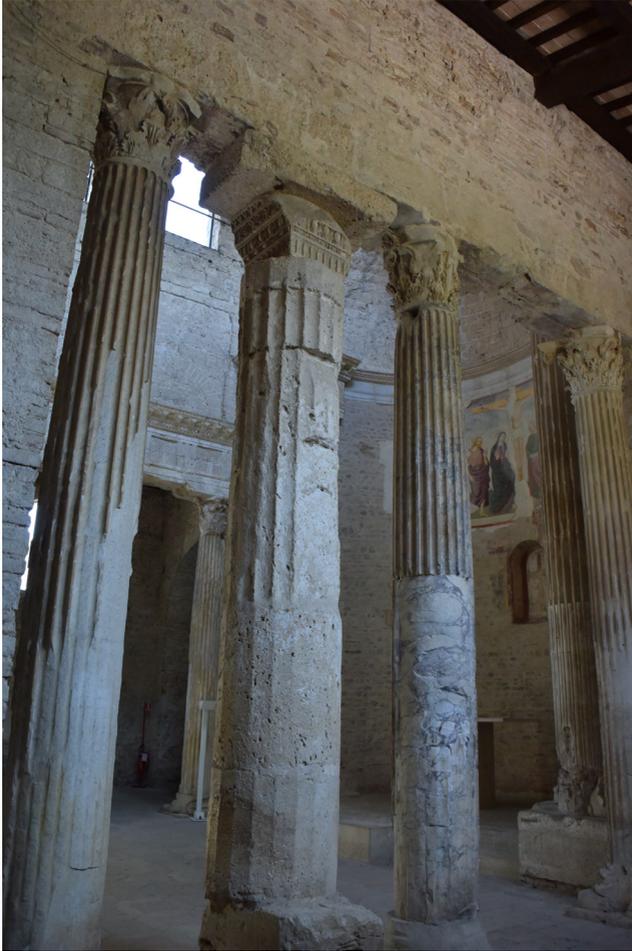


Fig. 20: Basilica of the Savior, interior, begun ca. 400, Spoleto.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 21: Antoniazio Romano, *Stories of Saint Michael the Arcangel*, detail, 1464-1467, fresco. Rome, Santi Apostoli, Bessarion Chapel. Photo by Alden R. Gordon.



Fig. 22: *Cenotaph of Fra Filippo Lippi*, ca. 1487-1490. Spoleto, Duomo.
Photo by Alden R. Gordon.