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Giovanni da Modena and the Relaunch of the Vita-Panel in the Quattrocento

This paper investigates a little known group of fifteenth-century vita retables from Bologna, taking as its starting point the painting of Saint Bernardino da Siena, executed by Giovanni da Modena in 1451, now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna. The painter took as model a well established but much older form, that of the vita retable, to exploit to the full the saint's life. How binding was such a thirteenth- and fourteenth-century prototype on the painter called to depict the recently canonized saint? And were there specific reasons behind the use of such models? New archival discoveries shed light on these questions in addition to the function and patronage of Giovanni da Modena's Bernardino da Siena.

This essay focuses on an unusual aspect of the reception of medieval elements in the early Renaissance, pointing at the evolution of the hagiographic altarpiece. However, the area under consideration is not Florence, but Bologna, where, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, a different Renaissance developed, based on other premises but engendered by partly similar instances. In fact, I will focus on Giovanni Falloppi da Modena, an artist who updated his paintings to the latest fashions and consequently had a key role in all late Gothic painting in Northern Italy¹. I am interested in demonstrating not just the mere persistence of the vita retable form, of which I will show examples later, but also the originality with which Giovanni da Modena approached this typology, rethinking it according to marked proto-Renaissance interests.

Part I. A Problem of Categories

The Middle Ages and the Renaissance are semantically complex historiographic categories that have become laden with meaning according to points of view and time. Reviewing a famous book, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* by Huizinga, Jacques Le Goff observed that «when one descends into the deep layers of history, continuities are what one sees [...]»; and concluded that «at this level of depth, it is impossible to arrive at a classification according to periods»². Le Goff clearly identifies the problem with which we must come to terms. And nevertheless,

despite their relative nature and intrinsic partiality, the terms we employ maintain an indisputable critical validity.

Therefore, revival or persistence? “Persistence” as a synonym of continuity between two different eras? Perhaps these questions are rhetorical and mean little for the topic under discussion, but they elucidate the parameters within which my paper is conceived. We will see at the end how and if it is possible to respond.

Part II. The Example of Giovanni da Modena

It is with this particular problem in mind that I intend to examine the case of the large altarpiece of Giovanni da Modena with stories of Saint Bernardino, originally in the church of San Francesco and today in the National Gallery of Bologna³ (figs. 1-4). The painting was attributed to Giovanni Falloppi da Modena in 1983 by Carlo Volpe, who connected it to known documents, from which it is clear that in 1451 «Maistro Zoane da Modena» was paid 17 *denari* to paint a «*telaro* with the figure of Saint Bernardino»⁴.

The large rectangular canvas is divided by a powerful illusionistic architecture conceived according to a central vanishing point. The long sides of the canvas are subdivided into four deep ogival niches in which minuscule figures portray the numerous miracles of the saint, as if in small theatrical prosceniums⁵. The subdivision of the scenes is clear: the upper compartments of the horizontal register indicate the post mortem miracles, while the others refer to those performed when the saint was still alive. Bernardino appears in the centre, characterized by his elderly emaciated features and holding aloft the trigram IHS he invented. Depicted with considerable three-dimensionality, the saint leans out of the frame, caught in the act of delivering one of the sermons that made him so famous *coram populo*⁶.

Critical opinion regarding the painting is divided over its original function. Having been executed on canvas, some scholars (Bisogni, Wilson) have hypothesized that it may have been a banner, such as that executed by Bonfigli, now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale dell’Umbria, Perugia (inv. 164), and for which we have extant and precise documents⁷ (fig. 5).

Carlo Volpe instead hypothesized that Giovanni da Modena’s canvas was commissioned by the Company of Saint Bernardino as the altarpiece of their homonymous chapel in the church of San Francesco (figs. 6-7), a hypothesis recently revived by Daniele Benati (2004) and Rosa D’Amico (2009), but with no

additional arguments⁸. This suggestion seems to be supported in the first instance, by the relatively good condition of the painting surface. Despite having been executed in 1451, it does not seem to bear traces of early restoration, an indicator of a lack of exposure to atmospheric agents, as testified by the restoration of 1970. Secondly, there is the important matter of the provenance, which I will discuss in greater detail. It is also important to remember that banners were occasionally placed on altars, and therefore difficult to exclude this function *a priori*.

Compared to the Perugia canvas which is orchestrated in two parts with a register focusing on the foundation of the oratory by the citizens, the Bologna version presents a more articulated narration of the salient facts of the life of the saint and therefore revives the function of the Vita-Panel. The episodes are inserted within an architectonic organization so powerful as to significantly lend weight to its original function as an altarpiece. Let us attempt to understand the reasons for this choice.

Vita Panel

Recently, numerous studies have added much to our knowledge of the origins and evolution of this typology of altar decoration. Its roots have been traced in Byzantium and Sinai in particular (*Vita-Icon* or *Leben-Tafel*), and its re-elaboration from the thirteenth century occurred under the impulse of the growing cult of modern saints, above all Francis of Assisi. There are numerous examples in which the saint stands at the centre of the panel flanked by episodes of his life. Indeed one can follow the evolution of this typology beginning with rectangular panels such as the relic-panel preserved in the museum of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, and the more developed examples attributed to Giunta Pisano, and move on to the gable-ended vertical panels from Tuscany.⁹

The architectonic and illusionistic inhabited framework adopted by Giovanni da Modena in the Bolognese canvas suggests that the Vita-Panel evolved during the fourteenth century through the likes of Pietro Lorenzetti, Lippo Memmi, and Simone Martini. In these examples, the sub-division of scenes becomes complex and is articulated by deliberately using projecting frames, a painterly response to contemporary experiments in creating the most modern and innovative architectonic polyptychs¹⁰.

Bolognese Vita-Panels

If we accept Giovanni da Modena's painting as a mid-fifteenth century reinvention of the Vita-Panel originating in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there can be no hesitation in discerning a derivation in the more

elaborate and chronologically late prototypes. Which leads us to ask what could Giovanni have seen in Bologna?

There are as yet no systematic studies of the carpentry of Bolognese panels nor studies of the evolution of the altarpiece in this city. The fact is, unlike other Italian urban centres, many fourteenth-century Bolognese works survive only in fragmentary form, making it very difficult to ascertain their legibility and evolution. In the specific case of the Bolognese Vita-Panel, there is not a single complete surviving example. However, it is reasonable to believe that models of this type were present, as confirmed by the case of Giovanni da Modena himself, who evidently based his work on accounts given *in loco*. In any case, by looking more closely, it is possible to hypothesize. Modern critics situate the works of an artist provisionally named Pseudo-Jacopino in the first half of the fourteenth century in Bologna. Two rectangular panels depicting the life of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh are attributed to him (figs. 9- 10). Despite small discrepancies in their dimensions, both come from a single altarpiece¹¹.

There is no doubt that more scenes, now lost, completed the legend of Saint Catherine. It is not easy to establish how many scenes are missing, but their remarkable size suggests that there were at least two other scenes. Yet, given the dimensions of these surviving panels, it is in fact probable that only two scenes per side flanked the central standing figure of the saint. In this case, the missing scenes could have been the conversion of the saint and her profession of faith in front of the proconsul, both placed on the left, after which the story continued perhaps on the right with the two extant scenes¹².

Another fourteenth-century example that is no less problematic, because it is also fragmentary, is provided by the Vita-Panel dedicated to Saint Anthony by Vitale degli Equi, datable to the 1340s (figs. 11-14). In this case, there are only four lateral panels preserved in the National Gallery of Bologna¹³. The panels, projected in height and therefore along a vertical grain, included more narrative scenes of the legend of the saint. We know from Marcello Oretti¹⁴, a learned Bolognese writing in the eighteenth century, that the work was made up of six lateral panels, of which two are therefore lost. The polylobed shape of the punched decoration, still visible beneath the sawn off upper area, provides the clue that the panels originally ended in a pointed arch and needed a wooden architectonic framework that would have brought all the parts together. In this way, the *Vita-Icon* was therefore rethought as an organic addition to the external form of the most modern polyptych.

One last potential model is provided by Jacopo di Paolo¹⁵. This artist produced

two large rectangular panels, depicting the life of Saint Margaret including her *Martyrdom* and *The Incarceration of the Saint in the Presence of Olibrio Who Venerates the Idols*¹⁶ (figs. 15-16). Since Roberto Longhi drew attention to them, they have always been thought to form a diptych. This is difficult to sustain however, given the panels' physical, iconographic and typological make up¹⁷. We should instead view them as two links in a chain that formed an elaborate ensemble with at its centre the dominating figure of Saint Margaret¹⁸. In my view, these examples amply demonstrate, despite their fragmentary remains, that Vita-Panels were a vital force in Bologna before Giovanni da Modena's late experiment.

The Reasons Behind the Choice

According to a manuscript drafted in 1768 by the Bolognese Carrati¹⁹, the canvas was ordered from Giovanni da Modena in 1451. All critical opinion up to the present day has hypothesised that the painting was executed for the chapel of Saint Bernardino, the second on the left in San Francesco and the first in a series of fourteenth-century chapels of quadrilateral form ending in a polygonal apse that transformed the external and internal profile of the Gothic building (figs. 6, 8).

An entirely different situation arises from my archival research, which overturns what has been stated until now regarding the provenance of the painting. The chapel of Saint Bernardino turns out in fact to have been founded and constructed only in 1454, at the time of the legation of Cardinal Bessarion. The document is unequivocal: «facta et constructa unam cappellam magnam in ecclesia Sancti Francisci in civitate Bononie ad sanctum Beati Bernardini ordini minorum Santi Francisci», that is to say a large chapel made, constructed and dedicated to Saint Bernardino of the Order of Friars Minor of Saint Francis in the church of San Francesco in the city of Bologna²⁰. It is also clear that the chapel was consecrated on 6 May 1455 by the Vice-Legate, Giovanni Marcolino of Fano, Bishop of Nocera. The most important discovery concerns the patronage, since we learn that the confraternity of Saint Bernardino was founded only in 1454. Consequently, there is a clear discrepancy between the supposed date of execution of the canvas, 1451, and the period of construction of the chapel, 1454-1455²¹.

This discrepancy is easily understandable. Until now, and following Volpe (1983), it was believed that the documents relevant to the painting dealt with the commission of the Company of Saint Bernardino. Carrati's manuscript is instead unequivocal already from its title: *Extract from the Expense Accounts of the Convent*. Carrati diligently copied and summarized the Franciscan documentation, now in large part lost, recopying the three documents (23 January, 13 March,

8 May 1451) relevant to the commission of the canvas to the Modenese painter. Contrary to what has been surmised until now, it is the Franciscan fathers who commissioned the canvas, and not the confraternity of Saint Bernardino, which was a private “società” whose accounts were external to those of the convent²². We therefore gather that the painting, wished for by the Franciscans soon after the canonization of the saint, could not have been conceived for a chapel that was only built three years later, by a newly founded Company of Saint Bernardino. This finding consequently restores historical order. Having not been created for the lay confraternity dedicated to the saint, as it stands it is impossible for the canvas to have functioned as a processional banner. Banners were in fact were mostly connected to brotherhoods, and indeed came to life during processions and within an urban context.

After the canonization of Bernardino in 1450, it was therefore the Franciscan fathers who paid homage to the saint and cemented the cult in the building in which his memory must have been sparkling, even without the presence of his tomb. Numerous sources record the resounding success of his preaching on the “pergulum de petra” located on the lawn of the Bolognese church in 1434.

The exact paternity of the commission can also elucidate why a Vita-Panel was chosen at such a late date to celebrate the newly canonized saint. All things considered, this typology had undergone a massive development within the Order. An order which, as everyone knows, had made the visual strategies connected with the popular devotion of Saint Francis the medium of its undisputed success. It is not by chance that the miracles chosen for Giovanni da Modena’s painting present him as a miracle worker in two episodes that occurred in the presence of his tomb. Viewed in those terms, one wonders if the choice of the Vita-Panel was the result of very deliberate reasoning. Even though he enjoyed a vast and wide following, Bernardino had been canonized only recently. Raising him onto an altar with an effigy which recalled the venerated images of the founding father of the Order, Francis of Assisi, was the means of linking him to an ideal genealogy; Saint Bernardino is like Saint Francis, and no less authoritative. With his life spent preaching the Gospel and converting souls, Bernardino recalled and revived the legend of the founding saint, which in many homilies he had praised as the mediator of salvation. Therefore the life of Bernardino was delineated in the manner of the new ‘*alter Christus*’ in that he was the ‘*alter Franciscus*’. I believe that this interpretation may justify the presence of a tree in seven out of nine scenes. In this context, it is not a digression into landscape painting by a late Gothic painter, but a precise recalling of the *Lignum Vitae*, of which Bernardino had given a precise description in a homily in 1424; a theme, that of the tree (and therefore of

the *Lignum Vitae*)²³, which also recalls the rare Bernardine iconography adopted by another Bolognese painter, Orazio di Jacopo²⁴ (fig. 17).

When the Franciscan Order decided to make the cult more concrete in the church in Bologna, it did so by commissioning a painting that, despite reinventing it, reiterated the dense forms of meaning of the Vita-Panel. It seems to me that this reading fits perfectly also because of the eight famous Bernardine panels executed by various artists in 1473 and now in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria.²⁵ After various conflicting hypotheses, the recent restoration seem to have reached the conclusion that the eight panels could more realistically form a complex *macchina d'altare* with the scenes constituting the inner walls of a niche which contained a statue of the saint. Once again, the community of San Francesco al Prato of Perugia, who commissioned the work, derived their model from the *Vita-Icon*. Although this work has only partially survived, the panel of the Master of San Giovanni da Capestrano has fared better. This case is even more interesting, given that Observant Franciscans anticipated the official cult of Giovanni da Capestrano, who had died in 1456 but was not yet canonized when the painting was executed, legitimating him in manner and form ("*modo et forma*") as Saint Francis. If my observations are correct, and notwithstanding the fragmentary nature of my examples, one can identify a specific will to revive the Vita-Panel, as opposed to chance repetition.

This new reading leads me to reconsider the original location of Giovanni da Modena's painting. Having discarded the possibility that it functioned as a processional banner, and that it was placed on the altar of a chapel dedicated to the saint that had not yet been constructed, there remains one hypothesis²⁶. The archaic form of the painting combined with its strong vertical axis can suggest that it was destined for the rood screen (*tramezzo*) of the church (fig. 8). In fact, we know that the *tramezzo* must have been furnished with an upper loggia²⁷, and the Franciscans had previously commissioned a monumental painted cross from Giovanni da Modena, now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna.

Part III. Conclusion

To return to the wider questions posed in the introduction, what can be adduced from this discussion? If my proposed reading is accepted, we must admit that the typology of the Vita-Panel was taken up again and revived by Giovanni da Modena according to dynamics not merely connected to persistence justified by the Bolognese artistic environment, considered by many to be merely provincial.

What about revival or persistence? Persistence as a synonym of continuity of two different eras, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? Should revival be understood instead as a re-invention which in itself creates a deeper fracture with reference to the past? I believe that the example under consideration has given us an indication of further reflection in favour of the second hypothesis. If the “persistence” of the typology of the Vita-Panel in the fifteenth century is indubitable, and there are numerous cases that confirm that the typology had not been abandoned, the case of Giovanni da Modena acquires, in my opinion, an entirely different significance. The interesting thing to emerge is that the Franciscan and Observant Orders used the Vita-Panel in deliberate ways, intending to create a certain uniformity of representation of the saints connected to the order and especially those recently canonized. It is quite probable that Giovanni da Modena had to follow specific instructions from the Franciscan friars of Bologna, and here lies the innovative quality of the solution he adopted.

When Giovanni da Modena was called to execute the commission that would officially confirm the cult of Saint Bernardino, the artist did not limit himself to re-proposing an archaic Vita-Panel structure, according to the examples that were likely under his eyes in the city. Instead, he conceived an architectonic framework of such invention and strength in spatial projection as to compete with monumental architecture. The milestone reached, of great visual impact, also recalls the empirical rationality which went as far back as the so-called “neo-giottesque” Bolognese trend, which had had a considerable role on the painter’s early work but which he had managed to overcome. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the new interpretation of Giovanni Falloppi must have overstepped the bounds of the Vita-Panel and even weighed on the layout of the Rosary altarpiece, executed by numerous Bolognese painters between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (fig. 18).

In conclusion, this case study, although driven by the *desiderata* of the Franciscan Order, gives credence to the observation made by Erwin Panofsky in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*²⁸: the beginning of an “intuitive” and “distinctly artistic” approach by the painters of the fifteenth century compared to the previous tradition, an engine of modern renewal.

1 C. Volpe, *La pittura in Emilia nella prima metà del Quattrocento*, in *La pittura nell’Emilia e nella Romagna. Raccolta di scritti sul Trecento e Quattrocento*, D. Benati, L. Peruzzi eds, Modena, 1983, pp. 51-72; Idem, *La pittura gotica da Lippo di Dalmasio a Giovanni da Modena*, in *La Basilica di San Petronio in Bologna*, C. Volpe ed., Bologna, 1983, 1, pp. 226-294; R. Grandi, *La pittura tardogotica in Emilia*, in *La pittura in Italia. Il Quattrocento*, F. Zeri ed., Milano, 1986,

- pp. 223-227; A. De Marchi, *Faloppi, Giovanni di Pietro*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 44, Roma, 1994, pp. 492-498; M. Medica, *Giovanni di Pietro Faloppi*, in *Dizionario biografico dei miniatori italiani. Secoli IX-XVI*, M. Bollati ed., Milano 2004, pp. 293-294; D. Benati, *Giovanni da Modena tra gotico e rinascimento*, in *Giovanni da Modena. Un pittore all'ombra di San Petronio*, exhibition catalogue (Bologna 2014), D. Benati, M. Medica eds, Milano, 2014, pp. 15-43.
- 2 The translation is my own. See J. Le Goff, *Il meraviglioso e il quotidiano nell'Occidente medievale*, F. Maiello ed., Bari, 1999, p. 236.
 - 3 D. Benati, in *Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. Catalogo generale. 1 Dal Duecento a Francesco Francia*, J. Bentini, G.P. Cammarota, D. Scaglietti Kelescian eds, Venezia, 2004, pp. 177-178 n. 60. The canvas (227,5 x 155 cm) was restored by Tranchina and Baroni in 1970. The work is made up of two horizontal canvases. The back of the canvas was covered over with a new one (Restoration files of the Soprintendenza of Bologna).
 - 4 Volpe, *La pittura gotica*, pp. 271, 294, note 39. His hypothesis is accepted by D. Benati (*Il tramonto del medioevo a Bologna. Il cantiere di San Petronio*, R. D'Amico, R. Grandi eds, exhibition catalogue, Bologna, 1987, p. 112. n. 15); recently C. Cavalca (*La pala d'altare a Bologna nel Rinascimento. Opere, artisti, città 1450-1500*, Milano, 2013, p. 320 n. 3) has proposed an unacceptable interpretation of Carrati's sources.
 - 5 The miracles depicted in the painting have only been identified recently by Jasmin Wilson Cyril, *The Imagery of San Bernardino, 1440-1550: An Iconographic Study*. Ph.D. University of Michigan, 1991.
 - 6 The depiction of a starry sky over the head of the saint must also be deliberate, as this refers to a miracle in Spoleto during which a star appeared over the head of Bernardino while he was preaching.
 - 7 In fact, we know that the Perugia banner was immediately requested after the canonization of the saint, which took place in 1450, but was remade after it deteriorated a decade later by Bonfigli, and was restored again in 1496. F. Bisogni, in *Enciclopedia bernardiniana. Iconografia*, 4 vols., M.A. Pavone, V. Pancelli eds, Salerno, 1981, 2, p. 43; Cyril, *The Imagery of San Bernardino*.
 - 8 Benati, *Il tramonto del medioevo a Bologna*, p. 112. n. 15, Idem, in *Pinacoteca Nazionale*, 2004, p. 177 n. 70; R. D'Amico, in *L'Osservanza di Bologna: convento e chiesa di di San Paolo in Monte*, D. Biagi Maino, G. Gandolfi eds, Bologna, 2009, pp. 47-48; and more recently Cavalca, *La pala d'altare a Bologna nel Rinascimento*, p. 320 note 3.
 - 9 Klaus Krüger, (*Der Frühe Bilkult des Franziskus in Italien. Gestalt-und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13 und 14 Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1992), hypothesized that this particular typology could derive from the tabernacles with statues of the Virgin Mary and stories on the side, adducing examples from Lazio and Abruzzo which date back to the second half of the twelfth century. There are also Italian scholars who are opposed to this hypothesis, seeing instead parallels between the gabled Vita-Panel and the aforementioned tabernacles.
 - 10 In this way, a process beginning in the late thirteenth century was finally brought to its completion, as demonstrated by the panel with the effigy and stories of St Claire executed in 1283. Here was an opportunity for a new interpretation of the Vita-Panel, in which the illusion of a triptych previously projected on one level reinterpreted the previously portable tabernacles found in Clarissan communities. J. Cannon, *Beyond the Limitation of Visual Typology: Reconsidering the function and Audience of Three Vita Panels of Women Saints c. 1300*, in *Italian panel Painting of Duecento and Trecento*, V. M. Schmidt ed., New Haven and

London, 2002, pp. 291-313; A. De Marchi, *Le pale agiografiche in La Pala d'altare. Dal paliotto al polittico gotico*, Firenze, 2009, pp. 117-127.

- 11 *St Catherine of Alexandria freed from the wheel* (cm 63.5 x 81.9) and *The beheading of St Catherine of Alexandria* (61.9 x 67.6). The two paintings gifted by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation formerly belonged to the Gozzadini collection in Bologna. We can dismiss the possibility that the three other scenes portraying Christ from the same museum but of different size, were associated with the Catherine panels and belonged to the same altarpiece.
- 12 A close examination of the panels in Raleigh confirmed the horizontal orientation of the wood grain, a clue that allows me to affirm that the entire ensemble had to have a horizontal development with an ending that was in all likelihood rectilinear. The typology in question seems to be ambiguous with reference to the horizontal development, between *antependium* and *dossal*, which at an early date is exemplified by the panel of Archangel Michael by Coppo di Marcovaldo originally from Vico l'Abate and now in the museum of San Casciano Val di Pesa, or the thirteenth-century panel with stories of Saint Cecilia, executed by a master who gained his name from this panel. My thanks to Maggie Gregory, Chief Registrar and William P. Brown, Chief Conservator.
- 13 Benati, in *Pinacoteca Nazionale*, 2004, pp. 94-95 n. 20 a-d.
- 14 M. Oretti, *Pitture nelle Chiese della Città di Bologna*, Bologna, 1767, Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, Manuscript B 30, c. 180.
- 15 F. Massaccesi, *Francesco Arcangeli nell'officina bolognese di Roberto Longhi. La tesi su Jacopo di Paolo, 1937*, Milano, 2011.
- 16 The panels are in the Longhi Foundation in Florence and in the Moretti Gallery, London (with the latter formerly in the Stramezzi collection, Crema).
- 17 Diptychs almost always present the Madonna and Child or in any case a Christological image in one of the panels.
- 18 To gain an idea of the missing scenes, we can look to Turino Vanni's altarpiece dedicated to the saint, which ends in the usual gabled way. Given the rectangular format of the two panels by Jacopo di Paolo, it is however evident that they could not have formed an altarpiece with a style identical to that of Turino Vanni. The vertical direction of the wood grain confirms the original vertical disposition of the ensemble.
- 19 B.A.M. Carrati, *Giornale di entrata e spesa del convento di San Francesco di Bologna dall'anno 1446 al 1466, estratte alcune notizie da questo per me B.A.M. Carrati questo settembre 1768 con somma diligenza feci*, Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio manuscript B 492, cc. 54-56.
- 20 Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Corporazioni Religiose Soppresse, San Francesco, c. 2r.
- 21 A. Rubbiani, *La chiesa di San Francesco in Bologna*, Bologna, 1886; Idem, *La chiesa di San Francesco e le tombe dei glossatori in Bologna: restauri dell'anno 1886 al 1899*, Bologna, 1900.
- 22 The hypothesis was recently accepted by G.A. Calogero (*in Giovanni da Modena*, 2014, pp. 210-211 n. 17), who read this article in draft.
- 23 *Prediche volgari di San Bernardino da Siena per la prima volta messe in luce*, Siena, 1853.
- 24 My thanks to Machtelt Israëls and Ludwin Paardekooper for providing the colour photograph.
- 25 P. Mercurelli Salari, in *Perugino il divin pittore*, V. Garibaldi, F. F. Mancini eds, exhibition catalogue (Perugia 2004), Milano, 2004, n. 1.9 pp. 184-189.

- 26 Even though the documents do not reveal any evidence that there was an altar dedicated to Bernardino in the church before 1454, it is clear that the Franciscans decided to commission the imposing canvas for a site no less important.
- 27 Giovanni da Modena's painting of San Bernardino could also be reviving the typical triadic scheme of the triumphant architecture of the *tramezzi* and in particular that of the mendicant orders: a monumental cross, a Vita-Panel and an image of the Virgin Mary.
- 28 E. Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City, 1955.



Fig. 1: GIOVANNI FALLOPI DA MODENA, *Saint Bernardino and his Life*, before restoration. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Fig. 2: GIOVANNI FALLOPI DA MODENA, *Saint Bernardino and his Life*, before restoration. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Fig. 3: GIOVANNI FALLOPI DA MODENA, *Saint Bernardino and his Life*. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Fig. 4: GIOVANNI FALLOPPI DA MODENA, *Saint Bernardino and his Life*, detail. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Fig. 5: B. BONFIGLI, *Processional Banner of Saint Bernardino*. Perugia, Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria

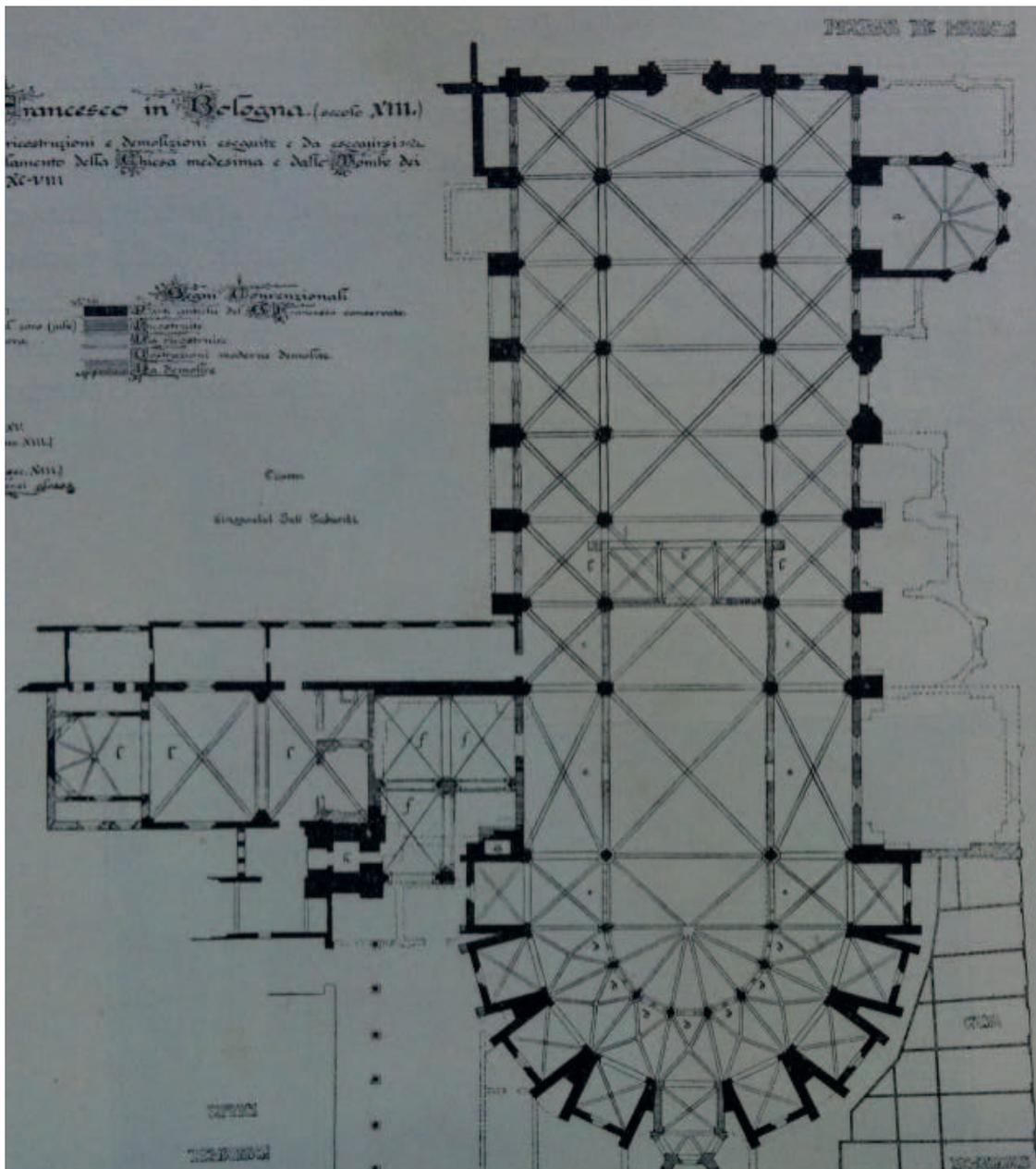


Fig. 6: Bologna, Church of San Francesco and Chapel of Saint Bernardino

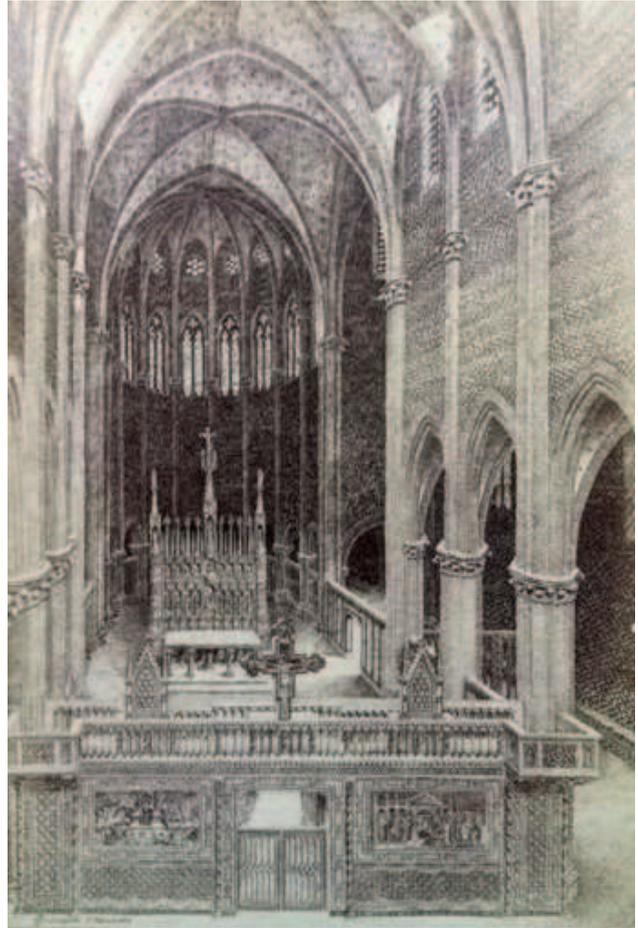


Fig. 7: Bologna, Church of San Francesco, Chapel of Saint Bernardino

Fig. 8: Bologna, Church of San Francesco, Tramezzo arrangement by Alfonso Rubbiani (1886)



Fig. 9: PSEUDO-JACOPINO, *Catherine of Alexandria is Freed from the Wheel*. Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art



Fig. 10: PSEUDO-JACOPINO, *The Beheading of Catherine*. Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art



Fig. 11: VITALE DEGLI EQUI, *Saint Anthony leaves Patras; the Saint Defeats a Dragon*. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

Fig. 12: VITALE DEGLI EQUI, *A Beggar Urges the King of Palestine to Send Food to the Saint who is in the Desert; the Arrival of Food by Camel*. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale



Fig. 13: VITALE DEGLI EQUI, *Sophia, Daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople, is Possessed by the Devil; Sophia Heals During the Funeral of Saint Anthony in the Presence of Theophilus, Bishop of Constantinople*. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

Fig. 14: VITALE DEGLI EQUI, *Miracles post mortem; Anthony Holding the Body of Ephron Unjustly Hanged; Anthony Resurrects Three men Killed by Wild Animals*. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale

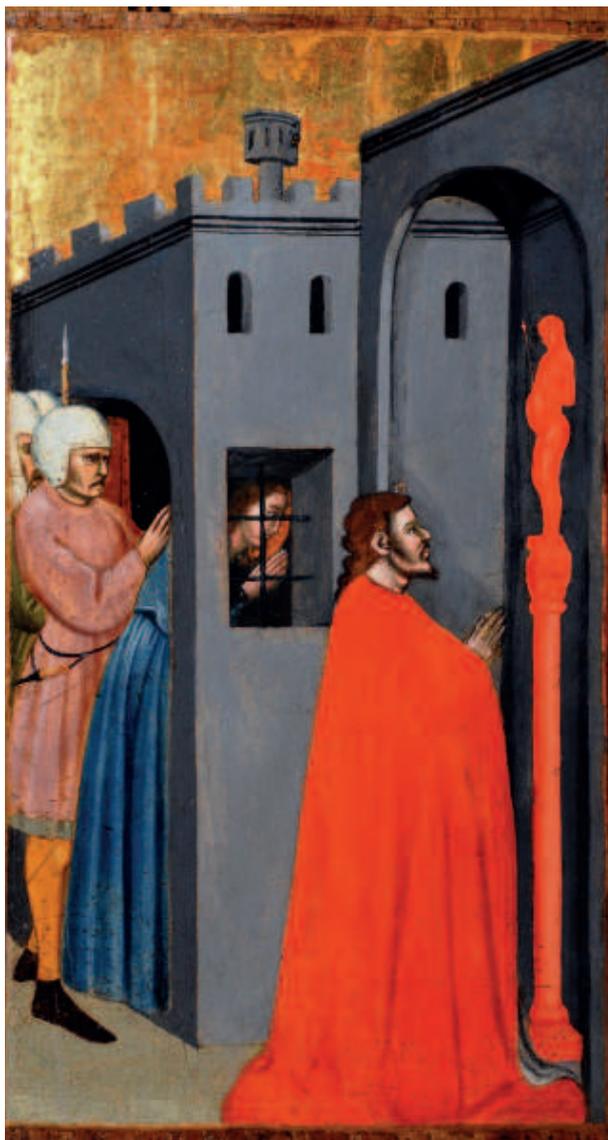


Fig. 15: JACOPO DI PAOLO, *The Incarceration of Saint Margaret in the Presence of Olibrio who venerates the Idol*. London, Moretti Gallery

Fig. 16: JACOPO DI PAOLO, *The Martyrdom of Saint Margaret*. Firenze, Fondazione Roberto Longhi



Fig. 17: ORAZIO DI JACOPO, *Saint Bernardino with the Lignum Vitae*. Private collection.



Fig. 18: P. FONTANA, *The Mysteries of the Rosary Altarpiece*, 1570. Bologna, Istituto di Maternità e Infanzia