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"Things Not Seen" in the Frescoes of Giotto: An Analysis of Illusory and Spiritual Depth

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"THINGS NOT SEEN" IN THE FRESCOES OF GIOTTO:
AN ANALYSIS OF ILLUSORY AND SPIRITUAL DEPTH

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Louisiana State University and the School of Art
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Art History

in

The School of Art

by
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Aaron Hubbell

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ABSTRACT

This research explores Giotto di Bondone's (1266-1337) use of empty and concealed space as a means of implying psychological and spiritual concepts. Focused on his narrative frescoes, this project borrows from art historian Mary Pardo's analysis of the Arena Chapel frescoes as examples of Giotto's *ingegno*, or visual wit. Giotto conveys the emotional and psychological state of his figures as well as the presence of the divine through spatial and architectural divisions between figure groups and the suggestion of narrative elements outside of the viewers' perspective. Along with close visual analysis, this thesis draws on art historical literature on the fresco cycles of the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels in Florence and the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi. Most prior research on Giotto's fresco cycles only tangentially address his use of spatial compositions. Through highlighting the narrative impact of hidden and omitted elements, this research shows that Giotto's particular use of *ingegno* not only permeates his larger oeuvre beyond Padua, but is so incorporated into his narrative compositions that many of his stylistic imitators can only mimic his visual wit in a superficial manner.

INTRODUCTION

Giotto's Ingegno

Among the artistic pillars of the *Duecento* and *Trecento*, Giotto di Bondone is revered as a pivotal figure in the rise of naturalism, carefully moving away from the ornate flatness of the Italo-Byzantine style. Giotto's legacy as a pioneer of figural and spatial realism in painting left an indelible mark on the development of the medium over the following centuries. As the Cinquecento artist and historian Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) boldly claimed:

That very debt painters owe to Nature,...is also owed, in my opinion, to Giotto, the Florentine painter; for when the methods and outlines of good painting had been buried for so many years by the ruins of war, he alone, although born among inept artists, revived through God's grace what had fallen into an evil state and brought it back to such a form that it could be called good.¹

Yet even in its early development, the pursuit of naturalism was not confined merely to the technical modeling of three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface. Rather, as described by Cennino Cennini (1370-c.1440), naturalism in the art of painting demands that one "find things not seen, hiding in the shadow of natural ones, and fix them with the hand, thus demonstrating that that which is not, is."² In modern terms, the representation of the intangible and transcendental aspects of the human experience are as much a part of visualizing the natural world as the persons, places, and events that inhabit it.

The exploration of this double-natured representation is the subject of an essay written by art historian Mary Pardo, in which she discusses allusions to the intangible within Giotto's narrative fresco cycle in Arena Chapel in Padua. In "Giotto and the Things Not Seen, Hidden in

¹ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 15.

² Cennino Cennini, *Il Libro dell'Arte*, ed. Franco Brunello (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1971), 3-4.

the Shadow of Natural Ones," Pardo argues that Giotto's spatial illusionism suggests the presence of hidden realities ranging from the psychological to the spiritual.³ She cites multiple examples from the *Life of Christ* and *Life of the Virgin Mary* fresco cycles and analyzes the potential meaning conveyed by Giotto's use of open space. One example Pardo puts forward is in *Joachim Among the Shepherds* (Figure 1), in which the separation of Joachim from the pair of country peasants, as well as the further separation of the viewer from the pictorial group through the turned back of the nearest shepherd, emphasizes Joachim's sense of isolation, which reflects the sorrow and shame of the aged man, recently expelled from his community on the assumption that his childlessness was a curse from God. Another example includes the *Raising of Lazarus* (Figure 2) where the composition of the figure groups includes a distinct space between Christ and his retinue and the astonished crowd surrounding the resuscitated Lazarus, a space that Pardo describes as a "pregnant gap, like a momentary break in the structure of reality" that highlights the visible effect of the invisible miracle, emphasized by the juxtaposition of the illuminated hand of Christ to the left with the shaded palm of the young man to the right.⁴

Pardo also finds significance in Giotto's use of concealed and partially-visible space, such as the foreshortened angel squeezing through a window in the *Annunciation to Anna* (Figure 3), whose obscured body implies the suddenness of the supernatural breaking into the mundane.⁵ Pardo also cites the *Kiss of Judas* (Figure 4) as a dramatic expression of confusion and disillusionment of the Apostles at the betrayal of their teacher by one of their own through the collection of robed figures within the scene, from the anonymous hooded figure whom she equates with "mischief," to the young man fleeing out of the left frame whose cloak is grabbed

³ Published in *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 18, No. 36 (1997), pp. 41-53.

⁴ Pardo, 46.

⁵ Ibid, 45.

by the hooded figure (alluding to the fleeing nude disciple in Mark 14:50-52), to the steadfast figure of Christ all but enveloped in the mantle of Judas, whose betrayal is wrapped in an embrace.⁶ Pardo rounds out her theory with a far more expansive example in the massive *Last Judgment* scene over the entrance of the chapel (Figure 5), where she argues that the inclusion of the miniature model of the Arena Chapel offered by its patron to the Virgin (Figure 6) invites the viewer to imagine themselves hidden within its interior and participating in the transcendent cosmos surrounding them.

Pardo summarizes Giotto's skill at conveying the intangible through the hidden and concealed with the concept of "ingegno", a natural talent for quick wit and insight into solving peculiar problems.⁷ Pardo specifically describes Giotto's particular mode of ingegno as mirroring that of the classical painter Timanthes, whom Pliny described as "the only artist whose works always suggest more than is painted, and great as his art is, his ingenium surpasses it."⁸ It is Pardo's assessment of Giotto's visual wit that will serve as the focus of this thesis. My intent is to prove that Giotto's particular style of ingegno, his use of the invisible and intangible to contribute to the overall narrative, is perceptible throughout his frescoes outside of Padua. I will also discuss the varying extent to which his visual wit can be found in the works of those artists who followed Giotto and to what extent it was passed on to his imitators.

⁶ Ibid, 47.

⁷ Pardo, 47. See also Emma Barker, Nick Webb, and Kim Woods, ed., *The Changing Status of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 57. According to John Florio in his 1598 Italian-English Dictionary, "ingegno" signifies the concept of "inventiveness" and "inclination" as opposed to the general English translation of "genius." While practice and skill (Ital., "arte" or "ars") could be learned, an artist's innate talent ("ingegno") separated the liberal arts from mechanical arts or handicrafts. And while Alberti stressed the importance of an artist's diligence over natural skill, he also insisted on the importance of an artist's ingegno.

⁸ Pliny, *Natural History*, Vol. 8, ed. & trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 316-317 (XXXV, 74).

Outline of the Thesis

The first two chapters of this thesis will discuss select episodes from the *St. Francis* cycle in the Bardi chapel and the *St. John the Baptist* and *St. John the Evangelist* cycles of the Peruzzi chapel, both housed within the Church of Santa Croce in Florence.⁹ Both chapters begin with the historical background of these chapels, their relationship to the church of Santa Croce itself, and any pertinent information regarding damage and/or restoration since their creations. Each chapter will then analyze the frescoes' compositions with particular attention to the spatial placement of figures, the use of both visible voids and implied spaces, and how or if they may inform the viewer's perception of the narrative's events.

The third chapter discusses a third fresco cycle, the *Legend of St. Francis* in the basilica of San Francesco in Assisi.¹⁰ This chapter necessitates a more in-depth historical discussion due to the dubious nature of the cycle's attribution to Giotto, and as such I will discuss some of the

⁹ See Julian Gardner, *Giotto and His Publics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 49-79; Rona Goffen, *Spirituality in Conflict: Saint Francis and Giotto's Bardi Chapel* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 51-77; Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *The place of narrative: mural decoration in Italian churches, 431-1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 51-53, 64-66; Vincent Moleta, *From St. Francis to Giotto: The Influence of St. Francis on Early Italian Art and Literature* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 93-115; Joachim Poeschke, *Italian Frescoes, the Age of Giotto, 1280-1400* (New York: Abbeville press, 2005), 224-230; Leonetto Tintori and Eve Borsook, *Giotto: The Peruzzi Chapel* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1965), 7-39.

¹⁰ See Thomas de Wesselow, "The Date of the St. Francis Cycle in the Upper Church of S. Francesco at Assisi: The Evidence of Copies and Considerations of Method," in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William Cook (Boston: Brill, 2005), 113-167; Joachim Poeschke, *Italian Frescoes, the Age of Giotto, 1280-1400* (New York: Abbeville press, 2005), 40-67; Alastair Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 3-260; Bruno Zanardi, "Giotto and the St. Francis Cycle in Assisi," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 32-62.

major arguments for and against his attribution, including historical documentation (or lack thereof) and stylistic comparisons with Giotto's other works in Padua and Florence. However, given the cycle's close similarity to Giotto's other works and the longstanding tradition of his authorship of the basilica's decorative program, analysis of select episodes from this fresco cycle are worth exploring in order to determine if there is some line of influence from the frescoes' anonymous artist(s) to Giotto, or vice versa.

Chapter four will discuss select artists who have drawn significant influence from the frescoes of Giotto, with particular attention given to frescoes by Maso di Banco, Bernardo Daddi, Taddeo Gaddi, Piero della Francesca, and Masaccio.¹¹ In examining their work, I will determine to what degree, if any, Giotto's visual wit was picked up by his artistic followers.

In conclusion, I will determine whether Giotto's *ingegno* should be given more attention as part of his contributions to the development of later Renaissance painting based on the evidence presented in the preceding chapters.

¹¹ See Charles Carman, "Masaccio's 'Tribute Money': An Early Reflection on the Dignity of Man," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 8 (1988), 7-12; Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, "Piero the Storyteller: Tradition and Innovation in the 'Legend of the True Cross'," in *Piero della Francesca: The Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo*, ed. Anna Maria Maetzke and Carlo Bertelli, (Milan: Skira Editore S.p.A, 2001), 27-37; Jane C. Long, "Franciscan Chapel Decoration: The 'St. Sylvester Cycle' of Maso di Banco at Santa Croce in Florence," *Studies in Iconography* 30 (2009): 72-95; Mary Pardo, "Giotto and the 'Things Not Seen, Hidden in the Shadow of Natural Ones'," *Artibus et historiae* (1997): 41-53.

Literature Review

Though the fresco cycles attributed to Giotto in both San Francesco and the Sta. Croce Chapels have garnered extensive research, critical evaluation of his use of space to inform the narrative is often relegated to a brief observation or passing mention, without further discussion.

In *Spirituality in Conflict*, Rona Goffen's chapter on the Bardi Chapel frescoes includes a thorough discussion of the parallelism of the Franciscan scenes, the typological association between St. Francis and Christ, and the cycle's relationship to the conflict between the Spiritual and Conventual camps of the Franciscan Order.¹² Yet her commentary on Giotto's spatial symbolism consists of little more than acknowledging the "dramatic void" between the young saint and his father in the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 7).¹³ Likewise with Vincent Moleta's exploration of St. Francis' influence on the art and literature of Italy in *From St. Francis to Giotto*. While Moleta references the significance of spatial separation in the *Renunciation* and *Trial before the Sultan* (Figure 8) episodes, he touches on them only with tangential interest.

In her book, *Giotto*, Francesca Flores D'Arcais discusses the composition and execution of the San Francesco and Peruzzi cycles, approaching both as examples of the Master's compositional skill, if not painted by his hand directly.¹⁴ She explores the cycles' narrative scenes and Giotto's execution of them, particularly the much larger episodes of the Peruzzi cycle, yet again any reference to the artist's use of space is either brief or addressed in tandem with other visual elements, such as figural expression and architectural design.

¹² Rona Goffen, *Spirituality in Conflict* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 51.

¹³ Ibid, 65.

¹⁴ Francesca Flores D'Arcais, *Giotto*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1995), 32.

Alistair Smart gives a thorough analysis of the twenty-eight scenes of the Legend of St. Francis in his *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto*, discussing the distinct styles, compositional execution, and potential influences discernible in the cycle's anonymous painters, whom he refers to as the "St. Francis Master", the "St. Cecilia Master", and the "Master of the Obsequies of St. Francis."¹⁵ Though Smart argues against the traditional attribution of the cycle to Giotto at great length, his analysis of the individual scenes and their compositions' narrative significance, spatial elements, and figure placement offers a valuable insight into the styles of the artists he attributes them to, which may have potentially influenced, or drew influence from, Giotto himself.

James H. Stubblebine tackles the *Legend of St. Francis* cycle quite extensively in *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art*.¹⁶ In his chapter on "The Relation of the Assisi Cycle to Giotto's Santa Croce Frescoes", Stubblebine addresses the similarities and deviations between the Franciscan narrative of the Upper Church in Assisi with its counterpart in the Bardi Chapel, specifically citing the former as a clear reduction of the latter.¹⁷ He also draws stylistic comparisons between the *St. Francis Appearing to Brother Agostino* episode in Assisi (Figure 11) with the *Feast of Herod* (Figure 18) in the Peruzzi Chapel. While Stubblebine addresses the narrative impact of the frescoes spatial compositions as well as psychological inferences that can be drawn from figure placement and gesture, he does not directly characterize them as part of a distinctively Giottoesque wittiness.

¹⁵ Alistair Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 233.

¹⁶ James H. Stubblebine, *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 33.

Richard Offner, in an essay published in *The Burlington Magazine*, analyzes the fresco cycles unanimously attributed to Giotto and notes a consistency of style and aesthetics from the Arena Chapel through to the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels.¹⁸ However, in a second essay, Offner finds this consistency lacking in Assisi, citing the less fluid, more solidly sculptural figures in the narrative.¹⁹ Offner does discuss the spatial layouts of select examples from the various cycles, such as the architectural elements of the *Feast of Herod* in the Peruzzi Chapel or the implied nave in the background of the *Miracle of the Crib at Greccio* in Assisi, yet only in their relationship to the stylistic and compositional techniques of the arguably separate artists.

In *Italian Frescoes in the Age of Giotto, 1280-1400*, Joachim Poeschke details the decorative program of the Upper and Lower Church of San Francesco with a brief chapter dedicated to Giotto's Sta. Croce chapels.²⁰ While Poeschke does take time to acknowledge the Assisi *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 26) and the Peruzzi *Raising of Drusiana* (Figure 20) on the merits of their compositional and figural layout, his focus is primarily on detailing the background and patronage of the churches and their placement within Giotto's artistic development.

Gary Radke's and William Cook's respective chapters in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto* offer additional analysis of the Bardi, Peruzzi, and Assisi cycles. Radke's "Giotto and Architecture" briefly touches on the spatial arrangement of the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapel frescoes, noting a distinct sense of intimacy established by the architectural forms of the former

¹⁸ Richard Offner, "Giotto, Non-Giotto", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* Vol. 74 (1939): 259.

¹⁹ Richard Offner, "Giotto, Non-Giotto-II", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* Vo. 75 (1939), 101.

²⁰ Joachim Poeschke, *Italian Frescoes, the Age of Giotto, 1280-1400* (New York: Abbeville press, 2005), 40.

while those of the latter expand and animate the episodes.²¹ Cook's chapter, "Giotto and the Figure of St. Francis", examines the Bardi episodes while primarily focusing on the representation of the saint as compared to the cycle's Assisi counterpart, emphasizing St. Francis' depiction as a Christ-like figure.²² Both offer insightful commentaries on the symbolic implications of the frescoes' figural and spatial compositions, but again, only insofar as they relate to their respective topics.

While the narrative symbolism of space and concealment in Giotto's oeuvre has not gone wholly unnoticed among his chroniclers and admirers, neither has it received the thorough and critical analysis it deserves, with the exception of Pardo's essay on the Paduan frescoes. In light of her claim that such spatial symbolism is uniquely linked with Giotto's visual wit, as opposed to merely one narrative device among many, future literature discussing the impact of this key figure in the development of Trecento art in particular, and Italian art in general, would do well to consider more thoughtfully this Florentine master's compositional and narrative wit.

²¹ Gary M. Radke, "Giotto and Architecture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76.

²² William R. Cook, "Giotto and the Figure of St. Francis," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 135.

CHAPTER I: THE BARDI CHAPEL CYCLES

After his Paduan frescoes, Giotto's narrative cycles in the church of Santa Croce in Florence are prime examples of the master's mature work. While the financial support of the Church of the Holy Cross was largely drawn from a collection of wealthy Florentine families, including the Acciaiuoli, Alberti, Baroncelli, and Peruzzi, it is the Bardi family that is credited as one of the most influential regarding Santa Croce's decorative program.²³ An exact date for the frescoes of the Bardi Chapel remains elusive, but the general consensus among scholars places them within the range of the early 1310's to the mid 1320's.²⁴ The Bardi Chapel's *St. Francis Cycle* was the next major decorative program composed by Giotto after his extensive work in the Arena Chapel in Padua, which he completed in 1308. Assuming that Giotto's distinct visual wit can be found outside of his Paduan frescoes, the Bardi Chapel would be a likely place to find it flourishing.

²³ Julian Gardner, *Giotto and His Publics* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 54. See also Goffen, 53.

²⁴ While some academic scholarship has suggested 1317 as the earliest possible date for the Bardi Chapel's decorative program due to its inclusion of St. Louis of Toulouse (who was canonized the same year) on the Bardi Chapel's altar wall, Rona Goffen disagrees with this assumption based on the fact that Louis of Toulouse had been artistically represented as a saint in the city of Aix since 1307, a city in which the Bardi had both familial and financial connections. Goffen offers a date-range of 1310-1316 on the basis of a scaffold hole penetrating the Bardi Chapel's south wall into the Peruzzi Chapel's north wall which was discovered by Leonetto Tintori during his twentieth-century restoration of both chapels, indicating that Giotto and his workshop likely executed both cycles around the same time. Goffen notes that the Peruzzi were charged with the expenses of entertaining King Robert of Naples, an avid supporter of the Franciscan Order, during a visit to Florence on September 30th, 1310, which may have spurred the Peruzzi and their Bardi associates to proceed with their respective commissions. However, William Cook favors 1325 for the Bardi program, citing that the fresco cycle is stylistically far enough removed from the Arena Chapel to warrant a later date. Julian Gardner argues that the *terminus ante quem* of the Bardi cycle must be no later than 1321, citing figural motifs in the Velluti Chapel of Sta. Croce's southern transept, which mimic a grouping of friars in the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido*.

The Patronage of the Bardi Chapel

While the Alberti family held the primary right of patronage for Sta. Croce, the Bardi family were the basilica's most prominent patrons, sponsoring four of its sixteen chapels.²⁵ The family chapel dedicated to St. Francis, situated to the right of the main choir, is attributed to Giotto. The patron of the St. Francis chapel was Messer Ridolfo de' Bardi, however there is no documentation to indicate whether Giotto was commissioned by Ridolfo directly or by some other member of the Bardi family.²⁶ Regardless, the chapel and its decorative program faced no shortage of funds, as the Bardi served as bankers for the papacy and for French, English, and Sicilian royalty under Ridolfo's leadership.²⁷

The St. Francis Cycle

Giotto's contribution to the decorative program of the Bardi Chapel consists of multiple frescoes that cover the chapel's interior space (Figure 14). The altar wall was decorated with four full-body portraits of Franciscan saints, two on either side of the chapel's single window, of which only three currently remain: the aforementioned *St. Louis of Toulouse*, as well as *St. Clare of Assisi* and *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, with the now-damaged space originally housing St. Anthony of Padua (Figure 15).²⁸ The groin-vaulted ceiling above includes a representation of St. Francis with personifications of the Franciscan virtues of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity, and the interior of the chapel's arch contains eight half-length portraits of saints in barbed quatrefoils.²⁹ I will focus my analysis on the seven episodes depicting the life of St. Francis. The scenes are divided into three distinct groups. Both the left and right walls contain three,

²⁵ Gardner, 53. See also Goffen, 51.

²⁶ Ibid, 53.

²⁷ Ibid, 54.

²⁸ Poeschke, 227.

²⁹ Poeschke, 230.

vertically aligned episodes consisting of two rectangular scenes topped by a lunette, each approximately 280 x 450 cm., while a large panel depicting the *Stigmatization of St. Francis*, of approximately 390 x 370 cm., is situated above the chapel's arch.³⁰ The scenes to the left, from the top down, represent the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*, the *Apparition at Arles*, and the *Death and Ascension of St. Francis*, while those on the right include the *Confirmation of the Rule*, the *Trial before the Sultan*, and the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido*. The chronology of the scenes in terms of their placement in the chapel calls for what Marilyn Aronberg Lavin dubs an "Aerial Boustrophedon" reading. The narrative moves in a meandering pattern from the *Renunciation* at the left wall's top register across the chapel's interior to the *Confirmation* on the top of the right wall's register, then down the right wall to the *Trial before the Sultan* in the middle register, then shifting across the chapel's interior space again to the *Apparition* at the left middle register, then down again along the left wall to the *Death and Ascension* at the lowest left register, and finally across the chapel once more to the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido* at the bottom right register.³¹ William Cook also notes that the cycle as a whole can be read as either two vertical rows, top to bottom, or as three pairs of registers across the interior, with each pairing themed around the cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and charity.³² Goffen specifically groups the frescoes of the left wall with St. Francis' life as imitator of Christ while those on the right emphasize his role as founder, missionary, and heavenly intercessor of the Friars Minor.³³ In relation to these six scenes, the *Stigmatization* on the exterior

³⁰ Edi Baccheschi, *The Complete Paintings of Giotto* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.), 117.

³¹ Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, *The Place of Narrative: Mural Decoration in Italian Churches 431-1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 53.

³² Cook, 144-152.

³³ Goffen, 63.

of the chapel serves as a unifying theme for the series, underscoring St. Francis' role as an *Alter Christus*.³⁴

As in Padua, Giotto has composed this narrative cycle with an acute awareness of space, both in terms of the placement of the figures and the vantage point of the viewer. In the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 7), Giotto's use of a spatial void to inform the narrative is quite obvious. The scene contains two groups of figures, with the one on the left comprised of the affluent laity and merchants of Assisi, led by Francis' father Pietro di Bernardone, while the nude Francis, Bishop Guido of Assisi, and several clerics, stand to the right.³⁵ The background of the lunette is filled by a strongly foreshortened building, possibly the bishop's palace. A notable gap divides the two groups and emphasizes the separation between the secular, commercial world Francis has left behind and the austere, spiritual one he has embraced. This void is further accentuated by the walls of the building in the background against which both groups are set, with Francis standing directly before the corner. James Stubblebine describes this placement as a "psychological borderline" which places Francis literally and figuratively at a turning point.³⁶ Pietro di Barnardone, physically restrained by one of his companions, glares at his son intensely, but Francis' face and hands are directed up toward the empty air above them. Unlike its counterpart in Assisi, this fresco does not include the hand of God breaking through the atmosphere, yet it is clear to whom Francis now looks for approval. Cook cites Francis' gesture as Giotto's visual representation of St. Bonaventure's description of the young man's zeal in his *Legenda Santi Francisci*:

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cook, 144.

³⁶ James Stubblebine, *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985), 21.

With marvellous fervour he then turned to his father, and spoke thus to him in the presence of all: "Until this hour I have called thee my father on earth; from henceforth, I may say confidently, *my Father who art in Heaven*, in whose hands I have laid up all my treasure, all my trust, and all my hope."³⁷

As in the *Kiss of Judas* in Padua (Figure 4), Giotto's use of concealment via drapery also serves the narrative. While Stubblebine sees the act of Bishop Guido covering Francis' body as a visual bonding of the young man to the Church, his implied nudity, born through an act of voluntary poverty and coupled with the stigmata he will soon bare, accentuates the Christological resonances of his spiritual journey.³⁸

In the next scene in sequence, the *Confirmation of the Rule* (Figure 8) in the lunette on the opposite wall, Giotto has defined an interior space in which the action of the episode unfolds. Francis, accompanied by twelve companions, kneels before Pope Honorius III and the papal curia, here embodied by two cardinals, as he receives permission to exercise his monastic rule. Two groups of bearded theologians flank the central space in rectangular extensions of the chamber.³⁹ With regards to the episode as a self-contained composition, there is little to suggest that the spatial construction of the scene holds any significance to the narrative itself. However, Giotto's placement of this scene opposite that of the *Renunciation* alludes to a common theme, as both scenes involve the submission of the Poor Man of Assisi to a spiritual father. In the *Renunciation*, Francis leaves the material life of his paternal father and dedicates himself to the service of his Heavenly Father, while in the *Confirmation* Francis submits to his spiritual father the method by which he and his followers will live out their lives of service and poverty.

³⁷ Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis of Assisi: From the "Legenda Santi Francisci" of S. Bonaventure* ed. Archbishop of Westminster (London: R. Washbourne, 1868), 22.

³⁸ Stubblebine, 21. See also Cook, 146.

³⁹ Vincent Moleta, *From St. Francis to Giotto: The Influence of St. Francis on Early Italian Art and Literature* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), 106.

Through the pairing of these two lunette scenes across the chapel's interior, one can discern a variation in Giotto's suggestive use of space, connecting both events by way of the ideas of humility and obedience, both integral to the Franciscan way of life.

Following the *Confirmation*, the *Trial before the Sultan* (Figure 9) represents Francis' missionary activity. Here again Giotto has defined the location of the scene with stage-like simplicity, the composition consisting of verticals and horizontals in a symmetrical arrangement.⁴⁰ Giotto has placed the sultan, al-Malik al-Kâmil, in the center with his Alims (scholarly holy men) and Moorish servants to the left and St. Francis and Fra Illuminatus taking up the right.⁴¹ Al-Kâmil gestures towards a burning fire, into which Francis has agreed to walk as proof of the legitimacy of his faith. The sultan's gaze, however, is directed towards his fleeing priests, whom he commands to do likewise. As in the *Renunciation*, Giotto has again clearly divided his groups, though the gap between them is filled by the testing fire. However, there is a further distinction between the figure groups. The collection of fleeing Alims and the tentative Fra Illuminatus, both of whom are situated at the ends of the composition, are depicted with their hands covered and turning away from the fire. Conversely, the figures of the sultan and of St. Francis are shown with bare hands in emphatic gestures, the former commanding his priests to meet the Christian's challenge, while the hand of the latter is raised either to cross himself in blessing or to bless the fire as an instrument of God's Will.⁴² If the hands are understood as

⁴⁰ Stubblebine, 25.

⁴¹ Gardner, 65.

⁴² Goffen, 73.

extensions of the will, by concealing them Giotto stresses the cowardice of the reluctant figures while simultaneously highlighting the courage of Francis in the face of peril.⁴³

The next two scenes within the series, the *Apparition at Arles* (figure 10) and the *Death and Ascension of St. Francis* (figure 11), are both straightforward in their compositional structure. In the *Apparition*, Francis appears in a vision to his religious brothers while St. Anthony, standing to the left, gives a homily regarding the crucifixion. In the *Death and Ascension*, Francis' soul rises to Heaven, escorted by angels, while his followers mourn his lifeless body. As in his larger oeuvre, Giotto's composition of the two scenes includes arranging figures throughout the lower half of the space, grounding them in the physical world, while the upper half is open and airy. This is assisted in the *Apparition* by the slender architecture and wide arches of the courtyard, as well as the open roof of the chamber in the *Death and Ascension*.⁴⁴ Both the figure of Francis in the former and his glorified soul in the latter inhabit the ethereal expanses above the crowded scenes, however this association of the open sky with the divine is certainly not unique to Giotto and therefore should not be treated as a purely original narrative device on his part. There is little else in either of these scenes to signify a deeper reading of the narrative, at least in regards to Giotto's spatial voids and invisible elements. As such, I will move on from these scenes without further comment.

The final scene within the narrative, the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido* (Figure 12), is a combination of two posthumous miracles from Bonaventure's account of the life

⁴³ Moleta, 108.

⁴⁴ Howard Davis, "Gravity in the Paintings of Giotto," in *Giotto in Perspective*, ed. Laurie Schneider (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 157.

of the saint.⁴⁵ While there have been difficulties in analyzing the execution of this scene due to the extensive damage it suffered from an eighteenth-century whitewashing and from nineteenth-century restoration efforts, Giotto's ingegno is still quite discernible.⁴⁶ On the left side of the composition, the dying Fra Agostino sits upright and leans forward, receiving the last rites while attended by a group of friars. To the right, bishop Guido of Assisi, who clothed Francis at the start of the narrative cycle, lies asleep in full regalia, accompanied by two sleeping servants. Within this fresco Giotto unifies the two separate rooms by the presence of the glorified Francis while dividing them only by a baldachin, thus twisting the very nature of space between these two distinct events. It is unclear whether Giotto included an actual representation of the saint, as much of the central section of the fresco has been destroyed (a form of concealment entirely unintended by Giotto). However, when Gaetano Bianchi filled in the missing sections of the fresco during a mid-nineteenth century restoration, he placed a bust of St. Francis materializing over the foot of Bishop Guido's bed, claiming that he based his recreation off of a fragment of the saint's nimbus.⁴⁷ One of the most striking figures within the episode is a friar to the far left, who breaks into the composition with the same suddenness Pardo attributes to the angel in the *Annunciation to Anna* (Figure 3). The friar draws back a curtain in response to hearing the infirm Agostino's loud cry, who gazes across the composition and seemingly through the conjoined spaces at the figure of St. Francis presumably above bishop Guido, beseeching his spiritual father to wait for him.⁴⁸ The abrupt appearance of the bewildered brother from behind the curtain emphasizes the miracle that has taken place, as well as Agostino's sudden reaction to it. The

⁴⁵ Goffen, 76.

⁴⁶ Moleta, 110.

⁴⁷ Barbara Buhler Walsh, "A Note on Giotto's 'Visions' of Brother Agostino and the Bishop of Assisi, Bardi Chapel," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 26, no. 1 (1980): 20.

⁴⁸ Walsh, 23.

significance of the spoken voice is also implied by Bishop Guido, who cups his hand to his ear to signify his attentiveness to Francis as the latter informs the bishop of his passing into eternal life.⁴⁹ Though the figure of Francis no longer exists to unify both episodes, Giotto's use of voices to inform the narrative remains.

Though spatially separated from the majority of the St. Francis cycle in the chapel's interior, the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (Figure 13) is considered the culmination of the narrative, an event which spiritually illuminates the individual scenes within the chapel. Francis, alone on Mount La Verna, is depicted in what Stubblebine describes as a vigorously twisting contrapposto, initially facing the right of the composition but pulled to the left side by the vision of the Seraphic Christ, Who imprints the Stigmata onto Francis' body via rays of golden light.⁵⁰ Unlike similar representations, Giotto excludes Francis' companion, Brother Leo, further emphasizing the Christological typology, with Mt. La Verna serving as Francis' own garden of Gethsemane. A chapel with an open door stands situated to the right of the composition while a cave forms in the clefts of the mountain to the left of Francis. Unlike the miniature Arena Chapel in Giotto's *Last Judgment* in Padua, there does not appear to be any particular association between the implied interiors and the placement of the episode within the building itself, though both Cook and Moleta suggest that the presence of the cave can allude to Elijah in the wilderness or the splitting rocks at the hour of Christ's Passion.⁵¹ But because of the placement of the *Stigmatization* on the exterior of the chapel, to the right of the sanctuary, the movement of Francis turning from the left to the right could suggest the initial focus of his prayer was beyond

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Stubblebine, 31.

⁵¹ Cook, 154. See also Moleta, 61.

the frame, directed at the crucifix above Santa Croce's altar where the attention of the congregation would also normally be directed.⁵²

One final aspect of Giotto's *ingegno* as it appears in the Bardi Chapel is the manner in which each episode relates to the chapel's primary light source, the long single window on the altar wall (Figure 15). Goffen notes that in each of the interior episodes of the cycle, minus the damaged *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido*, Francis' placement within the scenes can be read in relation to the light of the chapel's window. Francis and the clergy are illuminated against the right side of the background architecture of the *Renunciation*; Francis' bi-locating figure comes from the direction of the light in the *Apparition at Arles*; Francis faces towards the light in both the *Approval of the Rule* and the *Trial before the Sultan*; and both the corpse of Francis and his ascending soul face the light in the *Death and Ascention*. Just as Pardo suggested that the tripartite window of the Arena Chapel signifies the invisible presence of the triune God illuminating the lives of Christ and the Virgin, so too could Giotto's composition of the life of St. Francis be viewed as illumined by divine grace. Pairing the window with the chapel's original altarpiece, a crucifix painted by Ugolino da Siena, Giotto's fresco cycle could be further viewed in light of the Passion of Christ (literally and figuratively), in a unifying manner akin to the *Stigmatization* on the chapel's exterior.

Through Giotto's composition of the Bardi chapel cycle, it seems that his capacity to suggest more than is depicted did not diminish since his time in Padua. On the contrary, the limited number of scenes, coupled with the wider space available to represent them, contributed to Giotto's further exploration of his suggestive use of space, filling the narrative with as much meaning and nuance as possible.

⁵² Stubblebine, 31.

CHAPTER II: THE PERUZZI CHAPEL CYCLES

Following the Bardi and Arena chapels, the next (and last) major decorative cycle attributed to Giotto are the episodes from the lives of Sts. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist in the Peruzzi Chapel, dated roughly between 1310 and 1335.⁵³ While Giotto demonstrates a growing intricacy and complexity in the composition of his architectural structures, his *ingegno* maintains a clear, albeit reduced, presence.

The Patronage of the Peruzzi Chapel

As stated in the previous chapter, the Bardi family were not the only wealthy patrons to employ Giotto's artistic talents in Santa Croce. The Peruzzi family, close associates of the Bardi in their banking affairs, also commissioned a chapel within the Franciscan church. The Peruzzi were one of the most respected families in Florence during the late Duecento and early Trecento, serving as bankers to royal families in England, France, Aragon, and Naples.⁵⁴ At one point, the Peruzzi family was wealthy enough to lend a substantial 600,000 florins to King Edward III of

⁵³ The construction of the chapel could not have begun any earlier than the first decade of the *Trecento* due to Donato Peruzzi, the chapel's patron, stipulating in his will that the funds endowed to Sta. Croce be used in the construction of a chapel within ten years of his death. Though it is not known exactly when his death took place, he was still alive by 1299, and thus a period of 1300-1310 seems likely for a *terminus post quem*. Historian Rona Goffen's suggestion of 1310-1316 for the interior program would fit within that date range. Painter Leonetto Tintori and historian Eve Borsook suggest that the *Baptist cycle* was completed at least by 1328 due to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's copying of two figures from the *Feast of Herod* for one of his murals in the Church of San Francesco in Siena. Noting a lack of borrowing from the *Evangelist cycle* from Sienese and Florentine artists of this period, Tintori and Borsook suggest that the Evangelist frescoes may not have been started until after 1330. Account records of the Peruzzi family note that, beginning on December 27th of 1335, the Peruzzi began annually donating funds for banquets to be held in honor of the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. This might signify that the cycle was completed at least by 1335.

⁵⁴ Leonetto Tintori and Eve Borsook, *Giotto: The Peruzzi Chapel* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1965), 7. See also Goffen, 53.

England, though this ultimately led to bankruptcy and financial ruin for the Peruzzi when Edward defaulted on their loan in 1343.⁵⁵ In 1292, Donato di Arnolfo Peruzzi bestowed 200 *libbre* to the Franciscans of the church of Santa Croce, which was situated in the vicinity of the gate, ward, and piazza bearing the family name.⁵⁶ The construction of the chapel may have been intended for family burials, but the only person known to have been interred within it was Donato's brother, Giotto di Arnolfo Peruzzi in 1336.⁵⁷ Both art historian Eve Borsook and the artist Leonetto Tintori attribute the commission of the chapel's interior program to Giovanni di Rinieri Peruzzi, due to the inclusion of the cycles of St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist, which both refer to Giovanni's patron saint and the spiritual patron of Florence, respectively. However, art historian Joachim Poeschke does not believe that the depicted saints confirm the patronage of the chapel to Giovanni Peruzzi on the grounds that the content of the chapel's decorative program, and the other chapels along Sta. Croce's transept, would have been determined by the convention of the monastery, rather than by the individual donors.⁵⁸

Restoration of the Peruzzi Cycles

As with the Bardi chapel next to it, the Peruzzi frescoes were hidden beneath a coat of eighteenth-century whitewashing. The frescoes were rediscovered and repainted in 1841, and were not properly restored until the early 1960's.⁵⁹ However, it appears that the frescoes in the chapel suffered extensive damage even before their whitewashing. In 1333, Santa Croce stood in

⁵⁵ Poeschke, 224.

⁵⁶ Tintori & Borsook, 8.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁵⁸ Poeschke, 224.

⁵⁹ Francesca Flores D'Arcais, *Giotto*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1995), 254.

several feet of water due to flooding from the Arno River.⁶⁰ This, coupled with the fact that the frescoes were executed *al secco* (that is, on dry plaster), contributed to the deterioration of the paintings.⁶¹ It is unclear why the frescoes were executed *al secco* rather than using the traditional *buon fresco* method (on wet plaster). A variety of theories have been offered, such as that Giotto or his workshop may have been in a rush to complete the project or that the artist used the more fragile technique as a way to snub his patrons for some unclear reason.⁶² Art historian Francesca Flores D'Arcais suggests that Giotto may have merely desired to explore a different technique.⁶³ However, Tintori and Borsook propose that the difference is actually due to about four or five of Giotto's workshop assistants painting the chapel's interior. They note that, unlike Giotto's frescoes in the Bardi and Arena Chapels, the plaster was applied in two large zones per episode, with their edges clumsily connecting across the horizontal span of the wall, cutting across figures' faces in some instances (Figure 22).⁶⁴ It is possible that Giotto merely prepared the scheme for the two cycles and left the project in the hands of less-experienced workers.⁶⁵ Whatever the reason, it is clear that the Peruzzi chapel frescoes represent a distinct departure from Giotto's traditional methods.

The Baptist and Evangelist Cycles

The composition of the Peruzzi chapel's interior frescoes follows a layout quite similar to that of the neighboring Bardi chapel. The altar wall now contains only fragments of its original decorations, including the remains of a roundel holding the Lamb of God above the single

⁶⁰ Tintori and Borsook, 14.

⁶¹ D'Arcais, 254.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Tintori and Borsook, 15.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 14.

window.⁶⁶ Similar roundels housing the four symbols of the evangelists fill the quadrants of the groin vault above while the entrance arch displays eight hexagons with half-length portraits of prophets (Figure 14).⁶⁷ Like the Franciscan cycle in the Bardi chapel, the lateral walls of the Peruzzi chapel are collectively divided into six episodes, three stacked in vertical tiers on each wall, consisting of two rectangular scenes topped by a lunette and each measuring roughly 280 x 450 cm. The left wall contains episodes from the *Baptist* cycle, specifically the *Annunciation to Zachariah* (Figure 16), the *Birth and Naming of John the Baptist* (Figure 17), and the *Feast of Herod* (Figure 18), while the right wall depicts *John on Patmos* (Figure 19), the *Raising of Drusiana* (Figure 20), and the *Ascension of John* (Figure 21) from the *Evangelist* cycle. Lavin describes the chronology of the two cycles as a "Straight-Line Vertical" pattern, with the cycles on each wall intended to be read from the top down, starting with the elder of the two Johns on the left.⁶⁸

At an initial glance, the *Baptist* and *Evangelist* cycles display a striking difference compared to Giotto's earlier works in the Arena or Bardi Chapels regarding the placement of architectural elements. With the exception of *John on Patmos* (Figure 19), the unfolding narratives are either contained in or subdivided by intricately detailed architectural structures placed at oblique angles that emphasize their individual perspectives, especially when viewed from the chapel's entrance.⁶⁹ In the *Annunciation to Zachariah* (Figure 16), both the father of the Baptist and the speaking angel are housed under a baldachin-like sanctuary, with a group of pious worshipers filling the space formed by the left curve of the lunette up to where it cuts off

⁶⁶ D'Arcais, 254.

⁶⁷ Poeschke, 230.

⁶⁸ Lavin, 65.

⁶⁹ Gary M. Radke, "Giotto and Architecture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97.

the sanctuary's roof, while a pair of women stand framed by a multistoried building behind them to the right. In the *Birth and Naming of John the Baptist* (Figure 17), the episode is divided into two rooms connected by a slender doorway, with the figure of Elizabeth reclining in an elevated bed and attended by maidservants in the room on the right while family and neighbors present the infant Baptist to the mute Zachariah in the room on the left. The last scene of the *Baptist* cycle, the *Feast of Herod* (Figure 18), is also divided into two distinct areas, with Herod and his retinue dining in a chamber that opens to the left, revealing a tower projecting in the background, while Salome and her mother appear framed in a chamber to the right, the former presenting the severed head of John the Baptist to the latter. In the *Evangelist* cycle, the *Raising of Drusiana* (Figure 20) displays the miraculous resuscitation of one of St. John's Ephesian disciples with a detailed city wall filling the background, while the lowest scene, the *Ascension of John the Evangelist* (Figure 21), frames the ascending apostle and the astonished mourners within a nave-shaped building, including a cut-away roof to track the miraculous event. In a manner not unlike the *Kiss of Judas* (Figure 4) in the Arena chapel, Giotto's uses the frame to suggest that each episode is contained within its own distinct world, which the viewer only observes as if through a window. This use of the frame to suggest a larger space within an image, expanding beyond the boundaries it delineates, is by no means unique to Giotto, though the master is upheld as one of the first to explore its potential.⁷⁰ It is in the Peruzzi Chapel that Giotto's environments evolve from the simple stage-like sets of the Bardi and Arena Chapels into more intricate architectural spaces. With this new spatial language, Giotto has carefully enclosed and defined the narrative

⁷⁰ Mark J. Zucker, "Figure and Frame in the Paintings of Giotto," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer 1982), 1.

scenes, leaving very little space open or unused. However, this development has not utterly curtailed his particular spatial motifs.

In the *Raising of Drusiana* (Figure 20), Giotto appears to be drawing heavily from several previous compositions. The Evangelist, surrounded by pious followers, stands to the left with his arm outstretched towards the figure of his devoted follower Drusiana, who sits upright in her bier as the mourners around her look on in shock. Both Drusiana's posture and the astonishment of those nearby recall the dying brother and his surprised attendant in the *Vision of Fra Agostino* (Figure 11). The cluster of figures is further emphasized by the architectural motifs that crown both groups, with John and his followers situated beneath a pair of towers flanking either side of the city gate while Drusiana's retinue is placed under the cupolas of an Eastern Church.⁷¹ Between John and Drusiana there is a distinctive expanse, mirrored by the articulated corner of the background wall, that punctuates the miraculous event. The visual tension of this break in the crowd bridges the distance between the miracle worker and his devotee, suggesting the presence of John's healing command. Poeschke notes that this figural composition is not unlike the *Raising of Lazarus* (Figure 2) in the Arena Chapel, though here the gestures are more emphatic, with John's outspread fingers and hand giving a strong, oratorical gesture compared to Christ's modest benediction.⁷² The use of background architecture to stress the divide between these two groups also recalls the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 6), with Francis and his father visually divided by both a spatial gap and the walls of the palace set at an angle behind them.

⁷¹ D'Arcais, 257.

⁷² Poeschke, 225-226.

As the architectural structures become more integrated in framing the narratives with the Peruzzi frescoes, Giotto's removal of parts of these structures becomes all the more significant with regard to the interpretation of the narrative episodes. In the *Ascension of John the Evangelist* (Figure 21), the cut-away roof offers a clearer view of the miraculous trajectory of the apostle's assumption, creating a space through which John's soul rises to the figure of Christ. The origin point of this visual upsweep is the tomb into which the astounded bystanders peer. The interior of the tomb is kept hidden from the viewer, alluding to an obscure netherworld or place of the dead from which John is called, with his soul passing through the crowded architectural space of the living into the open celestial realm above with Christ and the awaiting apostles. The significance of the tomb out of which John ascends may have garnered greater weight after Giotto di Arnolfo Peruzzi was entombed in the chapel, with the interred patron now inhabiting the place of the dead suggested beneath the fresco.

While Giotto's experimentation with new ways of framing and compartmentalizing his narratives through architecture diminished the amount of "wasted" space within his compositions, his visual wit still appears in full display within the Peruzzi frescoes, though it is more apparent in the *Evangelist* cycle than the *Baptist* cycle. The Peruzzi chapel features only two distinct episodes in which empty and concealed space inform the narrative, as opposed to the four from the Bardi Chapel or the half dozen discussed by Pardo in Padua. Nevertheless, Giotto's visual wit is still clearly prevalent in the Peruzzi Chapel.

CHAPTER III: THE LEGEND OF ST. FRANCIS IN SAN FRANCESCO

The basilica dedicated to the *Poverello* (Ital. "Poor Man") of Assisi houses a remarkable collection of late Duecento and early Trecento frescoes by a number of artists ranging from Cimabue to Simone Martini, filling both the upper and lower areas of the church.⁷³ The twenty-eight episode fresco cycle spanning the nave of the Upper Church chronicles the life, death, and posthumous miracles of St. Francis. Traditionally attributed to Giotto, this cycle has garnered considerable attention over its seven-hundred-years existence and even more so in the past century.⁷⁴ However, this attribution has also become a point of intense debate. Before discussing the influence of Giotto's *ingegno* on the execution of the cycle, it is first necessary to summarize the main issues surrounding the so-called "Assisi Problem".

The Question of Giotto's Attribution

In 1312, the chronicler Riccobaldo Ferrarese recorded that Giotto had been active in Assisi in some capacity. This was later followed by Lorenzo Ghiberti in the 1450's, who wrote in his *Secondo Commentario* that Giotto had painted "nearly all the lower part" of the Church of San Francesco, and again by Vasari in 1568 when he attributed the *St. Francis Legend* to Giotto in the second edition of his *Lives of the Artists*.⁷⁵ This attribution was generally accepted among art historians until the 1820's, when art historians Carl Friedrich von Rumohr and Karl Witte separately questioned the cycle's authorship on the basis of distinct stylistic differences found

⁷³ Poeschke, 40.

⁷⁴ Alastair Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 7.

⁷⁵ Edi Baccheschi, *The Complete Paintings of Giotto* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1966), 90. See also Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

between the *Legend* and Giotto's larger oeuvre.⁷⁶ This dissenting opinion developed over the course of the next two hundred years, with contributions from historians Friedrich Rintelen (1920), Richard Offner (1939), Millard Meiss, and Alastair Smart (1960).⁷⁷ The question of the *Legend's* authorship has produced two opposing perspectives that have yet to be reconciled. Those who uphold Giotto's affiliation with the *St. Francis Legend* are counted among the *integrazionisti* (Ital: Integrationists) and generally insist that the spotty records tying Giotto with Assisi could only be referring to the expansive fresco cycle in San Francesco. The *integrazionisti* also argue that the stylistic dissimilarities between the *Legend* and Giotto's other frescoes are due to the cycle being part of the master's earlier, unrefined work.⁷⁸ Critics of the traditional attribution of the cycle are dubbed the *separatisti* (Separatists), who argue that the *Legend* was either painted by some anonymous innovator, stylistically separate from Giotto, or that it is a derivative series by an unknown artist or artists following the style of the Florentine master in the early-to-mid *Trecento*.⁷⁹ This debate has also developed along nationalistic lines, with the majority of *integrazionisti* found among Italian historians while the *separatisti* are dominant within Western scholarship outside of Italy.⁸⁰

Despite these points of contention, it is generally agreed upon that the earliest possible date for the beginning of cycle is in the later decades of the Duecento, long after the completion

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Thomas de Wesselow, "The Date of the St. Francis Cycle in the Upper Church of S. Francesco at Assisi: The Evidence of Copies and Considerations of Method," in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William Cook (Boston: Brill, 2005), 114.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 114-117.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 115.

of San Francesco's construction in 1236.⁸¹ It is also clear that the basis of the cycle is St. Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*, which was deemed the official biography of St. Francis by the Friars Minor in 1266. While the sequence of the narrative scenes does not exactly match those in Bonaventura's account, a paraphrased excerpt from the *Legenda* was added beneath each fresco to offer context for the scenes and their relation to the life of Francis, though the text has now become largely illegible.⁸²

While the question concerning Giotto's authorship of the *St. Francis Legend* remains a hotly contested issue, the focus of this chapter is to determine whether these frescoes reflect the same unique approach to the intangible and concealed found in the narrative cycles unequivocally attributed to the Florentine master. If a firm stylistic connection can be made, it may pave the way for a new perspective regarding Giotto's dubious connection to the *St. Francis Legend*.

The St. Francis Legend

The twenty-eight frescoes of the *St. Francis Legend* are divided into multiple bays along the left, right, and back walls of the Upper Church's nave. Each bay consists of an ornate Gothic window, flanked by scenes from the Old and New Testament, with the Franciscan scenes (roughly 270 x 230 cm each) occupying a band below (Figure 23). Each bay contains three scenes from the *Legend*, with the exception of the two bays nearest the entrance wall (scenes 10-13 on the right and 16-19 on the left), as well as the two episodes on either side of the main doors (scenes 14 and 15). The first image to suggest a profound use of empty space is the *Homage of a*

⁸¹ Giorgio Bonsanti, *The Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi: Glory and Destruction* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1998), 9.

⁸² Poeschke, 64.

Simple Man (Figure 24), which is also the first scene within the cycle's narrative. Francis, still a worldly young man, is honored by a humble citizen of Assisi who spreads his cloak on the ground before him, foretelling his life of sanctity as bystanders curiously observe the incident.⁸³ Distinctive landmarks situate the scene within the main square of Assisi, specifically the Torre del Popolo to the left and the Temple of Minerva in the center.⁸⁴ The gulf formed between the simple man and the young Francis is further emphasized by the expansive interior of the Roman temple in the background. The sacred space of the pagan temple, however, is Christianized by the addition of a rose window and angels carved in relief within its pediment.⁸⁵ These anachronistic decorations could suggest that, in as much as the pagan temple's sacrality gains new meaning through its situation in a Christian community, so too will the life of the worldly Francis be revitalized by his imitation of Christ, reflected by the meekness and piety of the man kneeling before him. This spatial gap is also reminiscent of the *Raising of Lazarus* in the Life of Christ cycle Padua (Figure 2) or the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 6) in the Bardi Chapel's Franciscan cycle in Florence (as well as its counterpart later in San Francesco's *Legend*), though the visual tension between the two groups is undercut by the larger space the cloak affords.

Much like the *Homage of the Simple Man*, the *Vision of the Palace* (Figure 25) is another episode from the early life of Francis foretelling his life of holiness. In a dream, Christ presents to Francis a vision of a palace filled with sets of armor emblazoned with the image of a cross, symbolizing both the call of the young man to serve as a soldier of Christ as well as the

⁸³ Smart, 151.

⁸⁴ John Hendrix, *History and Culture in Italy* (Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 2003), 165.

⁸⁵ Smart, 152.

Heavenly honors awaiting him and his followers.⁸⁶ The composition of the scene is divided into two; the left half depicting the sleeping Francis and the figure of Christ within a sparse architectural structure, while the right is filled with the multi-storied palace. The left section of the scene is further subdivided by a curtain that hangs along the left half of the saint's bed while its right section is draped around one of the bed's wooden beams. The central void that is formed is compositionally reminiscent of the *Homage* scene.⁸⁷ The field of blue formed by the open curtain is broken only by the gesture of Christ guiding the mind of Francis and the eyes of the viewer towards the celestial vision. This empty space can be seen as a transitional point connecting the mundane world with the spiritual destiny of the saint, both divided from and united to one another in a manner not dissimilar to the *Vision of Brother Agostino and Bishop Guido* (Figure 11) from the Bardi Chapel.

In the Assisi variation of the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* (Figure 26), the use of space to emphasize the division of father and son is as frank as in the Bardi version. Like the Florentine fresco, this image depicts the naked Francis, backed by Bishop Guido and the clergy of Assisi, separated from his merchant father and secular compatriots by a conspicuous gap. Francis' gaze is also directed upwards, though the open sky above him now includes the Hand of God mirroring Francis' gesture of prayer with one of blessing. The Assisi artist also utilizes architecture to stress this spatial division, though here both groups of figures are staged before a pair of blocky, towering buildings that further separate the two groups, whereas the episcopal palace from the Bardi scene simultaneously connects and divides the Bernardone men.⁸⁸ The

⁸⁶ Ibid, 158.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 164.

similarity between the arrangements of Francis, his father, and the bishop in both fresco cycles is so striking that one could have easily been modeled off of the other. Assuming that the Assisi version predates the Bardi fresco, the argument could be made that, if Giotto was not the artist of the Assisi cycle, then his distinctive visual wit clearly stems from this anonymous master painter. However, the gestures of the figures, specifically the listless manner in which Pietro is held back by his comrade or the casual posture of the Bishop as he covers Francis' nakedness, indicate that the Assisi Painter lacked either the capacity or interest to illustrate the tension present in Giotto's execution of the Bardi scene.⁸⁹

Two additional episodes can be found among Francis' earthly miracles that mimic the spatial division of the *Renunciation*. In the *Exorcism of the Demons of Arezzo* (Figure 27), the figures of Francis and his companion Brother Silvester, along with the towering cathedral behind them, are separated from the diabolically infested city of Arezzo by a blue expanse of sky.⁹⁰ As in the *Renunciation* and the *Vision of the Palace*, the void is broken by a gesture as Silvester blesses the city with the sign of the cross, while Francis prays behind him. The expanse separates the sacred figures from the demonically oppressed city, akin to Giotto's *Raising of Lazarus* in Padua, though the suggestion of divine influence lacks the personal aspect found in the *Renunciation* or the expressive reactions in the *Lazarus* episode.

In *St. Francis Before the Sultan* (Figure 28), the St. Francis Painter again uses a pillar of sky to split his composition, with the Sultan of Babylon seated in his throne to the right while Francis and the Muslim holy men occupy the center and left of the composition, respectively.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid. See also Stubblebine, 23.

⁹⁰ Smart, 179.

⁹¹ Stubblebine, 25.

Though art historian Alastair Smart observes that the confrontation between Francis and the Sultan across a spatial vacuum accented with lofty architectural forms recalls the tension between Francis and his father in the streets of Assisi, this division is slightly undercut by the further subdivision of Francis and Fra Illuminatus from the Sultan's priests by the testing fire.⁹² While this second division gives Francis the central focus of the composition, it lacks the dramatic weight of Giotto's Bardi counterpart, where the expanse divided Francis from both the Sultan and his retinue, tying the division of the two faiths to the divine presence of God through the testing fire. In the Assisi scene, the division between Francis and the fleeing priests is lessened by the mosque-like structure connecting the two groups. And though Francis and the Sultan are the major players within this event, the dynamic figure of the foremost priest in red robes with his forceful *contrapposto* conveys the most visual interest.⁹³ Thus the main divide in the scene serves more to emphasize the competing wills of Francis and the Sultan rather than suggest Divine Providence overseeing the test of faith.

While there are noticeable parallel's to Giotto's visual wit in the *St. Francis Legend* in Assisi, they do little to suggest that the Florentine painter was the compositional mastermind behind the cycle. These parallels may even suggest the opposite, that the St. Francis Painter was mimicking Giotto's style and compositional structure. As mentioned above, Stubblebine noted the lack of tension found in the Assisi version of Pietro Bernardone when compared to the volatile Bardi figure. Stubblebine also observes that the two children in the bottom left corner of the Assisi *Renunciation* share the same postures and gestures as a pedestrian group in Giotto's *Flight into Egypt* (Figure 29) from the Arena Chapel, with the left figure in profile, right hand extended while his left clutches his robes, with the figure to his right turning towards his

⁹² Smart, 183.

⁹³ Ibid, 184.

companion.⁹⁴ While the Bardi scene also contains two children as part of the narrative, their presence is more in line with the traditional account of the saint's conversion, with the young bystanders gathering stones to throw at the stripped mad-man.⁹⁵ This seems to suggest that the Assisi Painter was an artist fixated on mimicking Giotto's style rather than the master's dynamism.

This is not the only instance of the Assisi painter's apparent borrowing from Giotto's Arena cycle. Historian M. Roy Fisher notes a striking similarity between the boy climbing a tree in the scene of *St. Francis Mourned by St. Clare* (Figure 30) and another such climber in the *Entry of Christ Into Jerusalem* from the Arena Chapel (Figure 31), with the former appearing less suited for the scene of grief than his counterpart, who serves an essential part of the Gospel narrative regarding the palm branches placed at Christ's feet.⁹⁶ These instances of compositional borrowing would suggest that either Giotto and the Assisi Painter were working from some common source or that one was drawing inspiration from the other. Given that the observing children and the "boy in the tree" fit Giotto's narrative scenes in Padua with a greater sense of belonging than in the Assisi cycle, and since there is currently no evidence to support a shared figural source, it seems far more likely that the Assisi frescoes postdate those of Padua and were executed by an imitator of Giotto rather than the artist himself.

While examples of Giottesque visual wit can be found within the *St. Francis Legend* of Assisi, the larger cycle contains more conventional spatial compositions that lack any distinct narrative significance. Episodes such as the *Dream of Innocent III* (Figure 32), the *Vision of the*

⁹⁴ Stubblebine, 23.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ M. Roy Fisher, "Assisi, Padua, and the Boy in the Tree," *The Art Bulletin* 38 (1956), 52.

Thrones (Figure 33), the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (Figure 34), and even the *Death and Ascension of St. Francis* (Figure 35) and the *Apparition to Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido* (Figure 36) utilize open space and spatial divisions in a manner that appears more to serve the balance of the scenes rather than the narrative's themselves. This is not surprising given the large number of scenes within the cycle as well as the variety of figures and figure groups, architectural settings, backgrounds, and symbolic or thematic elements, which all need to be represented within their respective scenes while maintaining a consistency of size and depth for the figures within the nearly-square frames of the episodes. As such, many spatial gaps and divisions would have been created out of compositional necessity rather than to suggest some non-visible aspect of the narrative. The same can be said of the Arena Chapel frescoes upon which Pardo bases her essay. While scenes such as *Joachim and the Shepherds*, the *Raising of Lazarus*, and the *Kiss of Judas* all reflect Giotto's subtle suggestion of the invisible and intangible, others such as *Joachim's Dream* (Figure 37), the *Wedding Procession* (Figure 38), the *Visitation* (Figure 39), the *Baptism of Christ* (Figure 40), and even the *Crucifixion* (Figure 41) utilize space without any deeper narrative significance.

That being said, when the Assisi frescoes do convey a suggestive sense of space, it appears to lack the intentionality found in Giotto's Paduan or Florentine cycles. In comparing the Bardi and Assisi versions of the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*, there is a greater sense of subtlety in alluding to the divine nature of the separation between Pietro and Francis in the Bardi Chapel, which relies on the viewer's observations to connect Francis' rejection of his earthly wealth with his submission to his heavenly Father, while the latter version emphasizes this idea by including the Hand of God presiding over the gap between the two men. The architectural elements are also far more straightforward in the Assisi version, with the lofty structures visually

stressing the division between father and son while the Bardi scene does so in a more restrained manner, filling the gap with the palace's corner in perspective, dividing the groups but still unifying the entire drama through the massive structure. Again, with the two versions of the *Trial by Fire*, the Bardi version displays a greater sense of the divine presence by completely separating Francis from his Islamic audience, while the Assisi version undercuts this division by attempting to give Francis the focal point of the composition. Of the frescoes discussed above, the *Homage of a Simple Man* appears to have the greatest sense of intent in its suggestion that the Christianized temple's interior space reflects the coming conversion of Francis. As this was one of the latest frescoes executed within the cycle, this may serve as an example of the artist (or artists) taking a more refined approach with the symbolic weight of open space after having developed his/their style in the preceding frescoes.⁹⁷

While the question regarding Giotto's authorship of the *St. Francis Legend* of San Francesco remains a contested issue, it is clear that whatever influence Giotto had regarding the development of the cycle did not produce spatial motifs as strong as in his later, widely accepted works. Indeed, it seems plausible that the St. Francis Painter was an eager imitator of Giotto's rather than the master painter himself.

⁹⁷ Zanardi, 33.

CHAPTER IV: THE LEGACY OF GIOTTO'S INGEGNO

While Giotto's use of spatial devices to suggest the presence of the intangible and supernatural permeates his fresco cycles, these compositional motifs were also incorporated in varying degrees into the works of his stylistic followers as well.

Mary Pardo suggests that something of Giotto's *ingegno* eventually surfaces in Piero della Francesca's *Recognition of the True Cross* (Figure 42) from the mid-*Quattrocento* in the Cappella Maggiore of the church of San Francesco in Arezzo, with which she begins her discussion on spatial and emotive relationships.⁹⁸ Pardo specifically addresses the semi-circular group on the right side of the composition witnessing the resurrection of the dead young man, whom della Francesca depicts upright in his coffin, describing the triangular space formed by St. Helena, the revived man, and the figure holding the True Cross as a charged interval in which the miracle has taken place.⁹⁹ The suddenness of the miracle is indicated by the near perpendicular relationship of the vertical torso of the young man with his horizontal coffin, while the emotive aspect of the moment is obscured by the perspectival construction of the scene with the young man's back towards the viewer and the miraculous cross suspended over him.¹⁰⁰ And yet, like with *Joachim Among the Shepherds* (Figure 1) in Padua, we are encouraged to imagine the psychological and emotional reactions taking place within this "charged interval",¹⁰¹ just as Vasari did in describing the "joy of St. Helena" and the "amazement of the bystanders" in his

⁹⁸ Mary Pardo, "Giotto and the Things Not Seen, Hidden in the Shadow of Natural Ones", *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 18 (1997), 41-43.

⁹⁹ Pardo, 41.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 41-43.

Lives.¹⁰² Though della Francesca's *True Cross Cycle* is removed from Giotto's Arena frescoes by both time and proximity, Pardo argues the narrative devices they share were in continuous use, though were rarely commented on by the artistic literature of the time.¹⁰³

While Piero della Francesca's *True Cross Cycle* attests to the long-lasting impact of Giotto's unique approach to the invisible and intangible, one needs not look far to find it imitated in the works of the master's followers, such as Maso di Banco. Within the Church of Santa Croce is the Holy Confessor's Chapel, also referred to as the Bardi di Vernio Chapel, which includes a series of frescoes relating the acts of St. Sylvester attributed to Maso di Banco by Ghiberti.¹⁰⁴ Drawing from Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, di Banco depicts the miracle of *Sts. Peter and Paul Appearing to Constantine in a Dream* (Figure 43), in which the leprous Constantine, suffering divine punishment for his persecution of Christians, is instructed by the spirits of the Apostles to seek out Pope Sylvester in order to be cured.¹⁰⁵ Maso di Banco's representation of the scene draws strong similarities to Giotto's construction of the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido* (Figure 11) in the Franciscan cycle of the Bardi Chapel, with the figure of Constantine reclining in bed as the truncated figures of Peter and Paul hover above him while his attendants doze on the floor below, oblivious to the miracle. However, the most striking compositional element in di Banco's fresco is the young man whose head pokes in through the door to the right, an expression of surprise on his face from hearing Constantine's call to immediate action.¹⁰⁶ As noted by Barbara Buhler Walsh, the expression of the attendant recalls that of the monk peaking

¹⁰² Ibid, 41-43. See also Vasari, 165.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 43.

¹⁰⁴ Jane C. Long, "Franciscan Chapel Decoration: The "St. Sylvester Cycle" of Maso di Banco at Santa Croce in Florence," *Studies in Iconography* 30 (2009): 73.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Wilkins, David G. Wilkins, *Maso di Banco: A Florentine Artist of the Early Trecento* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 20. 26.

around the curtain in the *Vision of Fra Agostino* (Figure 11) in the St. Francis cycle of the Bardi Chapel, in that both are used by their respective artists to imply the auditory aspects of narratives. In both scenes, the abruptness of the miracle is punctuated by the urgency of the seers' voices, made visible through the reactions of those ministering to them. As both frescoes cycles are situated within the same grand decorative program, it is possible that di Banco, likely working between 1335 and 1339, drew compositional inspiration from Giotto's earlier Bardi commission.¹⁰⁷

Another Florentine artist whose Giottoesque work can be found within Santa Croce was Bernardo Daddi, whose only surviving frescoes can be found in the Pulci Beraldi Chapel in the scenes of St. Lawrence's and St. Stephen's martyrdoms.¹⁰⁸ Both frescoes, which consist of single monumental scenes spanning the side walls of the chapel, were painted around 1331, roughly contemporary with Giotto's cycles in the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels.¹⁰⁹ The *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* (Figure 44) on the left side wall is composed of two scenes. On the left side of the composition, Stephen is brought before Jewish officials within an architectural structure that appears to serve as both council chamber and city boundary, while the right side depicts Stephen about to be stoned by the enraged crowd outside the city, with both areas connected by an open archway. Of the two episodes depicted, the scene of Stephen before the seated judge recalls Giotto's Francis from the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods* in the Bardi Chapel. Stephen, his eyes and right hand pointing upward, gazes into the open void above him, seemingly oblivious to the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *A New History of Painting in Italy: From the II to the XVI Century* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1908), 421.

¹⁰⁹ Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, "Piero the Storyteller: Tradition and Innovation in the 'Legend of the True Cross'," in *Piero della Francesca: The Legend of the True Cross in the Church of San Francesco in Arezzo*, edited by Anna Maria Maetzke and Carlo Bertelli (Milan: Skira Editore S.p.A, 2001), 63-64.

crowd forcefully grabbing at his robes. Though invisible to both his Jewish accusers and to the viewer, the open space above Stephen alludes to his vision of the glorified Christ recounted in Acts 7:55-56 in a manner similar to St. Francis' consecration of himself to God the Father in Giotto's Bardi fresco. However, this suggestion of the Divine does not carry over into the right side of the scene, where the kneeling Stephen is shown praying to a very clear representation of Christ, breaking through the top right corner of the composition to dispense His blessing upon the Protomartyr. Nevertheless, it seems that something of Giotto's visual wit was incorporated by Daddi, if only to further ground his adaptation in the biblical text.

While Giotto's use of spatial devices to suggest the intangible was adapted by some of his artistic followers, this was by no means a ubiquitous trait. Among Giotto's students, Taddeo Gaddi is one of the most faithful and recognizable, especially in the monumentality of his compositions, as seen in the fresco cycle of the *Life of the Virgin* in the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce.¹¹⁰ However, Gaddi's frescoes appear devoid of the spatial gaps or veiling motifs found throughout Giotto's cycles, preferring to embrace the use of architecture to frame and fill his compositions, not unlike Giotto's Peruzzi frescoes. Gaddi's *Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple* (Figure 45) and *Presentation of the Virgin* (Figure 46) reflect the artist's clear interest in composing layered architectural perspectives with his narrative scenes, leaving few spatial voids or concealed spaces.

It also appears that Giotto's clever sense of space was selectively adapted by artists of the Quattrocento. Unlike della Francesca, the early fifteenth century painter Masaccio did not appear

¹¹⁰ Ugo Procacci and Millard Meiss, *The Great Age of Fresco: Giotto to Pontormo. An Exhibition of Mural Paintings and Monumental Drawings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 28 - November 19, 1968* (Florence: Il Fiorino, 1968), 72.

to adapt the latter's penchant for significant spatial gaps in his fresco cycles. However, his spatial placement of figures is commented on by historian Charles Carman, who suggests that Masaccio's triple repetition of Peter in the *Tribute Money* fresco (Figure 47) within the Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence could allude to the Augustinian idea of one's mental experience of past, present, and future things through memory, direct experience, and expectation.¹¹¹ Carman proposes that Masaccio's composition of the narrative sequence reflects this Augustinian concept. The events unfold from the center, then move to the left, and finally end at the right, suggesting that St. Peter's state of mind begins with his present perception of the need to obey Christ, his humble awareness or "memory" of his own fallen nature reflected in his hunched posture by the shore, and his "fulfillment of expectations" thought a transformed will by his obedience, reflected in his upright and calm stance with the tax collector.¹¹² Thus the atypical flow of the narrative can be read as establishing memory, perception, and expectation in a more conventional sequence. Though far from the spatial and atmospheric devices used by Giotto, Masaccio's use of repetition and distinct figure-grouping to indicate St. Peter's psychological and spiritual perspective suggests a type of visual wit not far removed from that of Giotto, whom Masaccio likely studied during his lifetime.¹¹³

While Giotto's meaningful use of space appears to have been mimicked, adapted, and explored by his followers, there is little evidence to indicate that his spatial motifs were as prevalent in the works of other artists as they were in his own projects.

¹¹¹ Charles Carman, "Masaccio's 'Tribute Money': An Early Reflection on the Dignity of Man," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 8 (1988), 8-9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹³ Stefano Borsi, *Masaccio* (Firenze: Giunti Editore, 1998), 5.

CONCLUSION

Giotto's contribution towards the naturalism that defined the Italian Renaissance clearly consists of more than a simple push towards greater dynamism and expressive figures. Giotto's exceptional skill in drawing his audience towards emotively, psychologically, and spiritually charged readings of his narratives through the subtle use of the concealed, the spatial void, and the "Things Not Seen" grounds his frescoes in both the tangible reality of the viewer and the divine experiences of the saints.

In the Arena Chapel one can find Giotto's *ingegno* at its most prolific, flowing through the *Virgin* cycle, the *Christ* cycle, and the *Last Judgment* in a unifying experience that draws the viewer into the chapel's particular universe. The Franciscan cycle of the Bardi Chapel follows the Paduan frescoes most closely, the wider compositional frames and stage-like architectural backdrops necessitating a meticulous use of space that contributed to the dramatic tension of episodes like *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*, the *Trial by Fire*, and the *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido*. In the Peruzzi Chapel one sees a decrease in the scope of the Florentine master's clever spatial motifs as his exploration of more intricate architectural settings increases, yet its influence is still discernible in works such as the *Raising of Drusiana* and the *Ascension of John the Evangelist*.

The spatial and narrative devices that permeate Giotto's fresco cycles also appear within the *Saint Francis Legend* of San Francesco in Assisi, though the attribution of this series to the Florentine master remains debatable. The compositional structures of the *Vision of the Palace*, the *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*, and the *Trial before the Sultan* reflect more conventional, less calculated approaches to space as a narrative element. And while the *Homage of the Simple*

Man comes the closest to recreating the visual wit found in Giotto's mature works, the muddled replication of figures and groups from the Paduan frescoes within the *Legend* suggest that the Franciscan cycle is the product of a stylistic imitator of Giotto who failed to capture the quality of the master's visual wit.

And though Giotto's innovative style served as a developmental foundation for artists of the *Trecento* and beyond, his particular attention to the suggestive nuances of space and perspective is never quite duplicated by his artistic progeny. While surfacing in the works of artists such as Nani di Banco, Bernardo Daddi, and Piero della Francesca, Giotto's visual wit appears to have been less impactful on his stylistic followers than his advancement towards naturalism, though this can only be definitively determined by a far more thorough analysis of Giotto's contributions to the evolution of painting through the course of the later *Trecento*.

Giotto's gift for imbuing narrative weight within the very space of his fresco cycles is a testament to the genius ascribed to him throughout the centuries. Mary Pardo's praise of the Florentine Master's *ingegno* is justified through careful examination of Giotto's frescoes throughout his artistic career, in which he demonstrated the capacity to give presence to the unseen and intangible.

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IMAGES

Introduction



Figure 1: Giotto di Bondone. *Joachim Among the Shepherds*. c. 1305. Fresco painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 2: Giotto di Bondone. *The Raising of Lazarus*. c. 1305. Fresco painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 3: Giotto di Bondone. *Annunciation to Anna*. c. 1305. Fresco painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 4: Giotto di Bondone. *Kiss of Judas*. c. 1305. Fresco painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 5: Giotto di Bondone. *Last Judgment*. c. 1305. Fresco painting. 1000 x 840 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 6: Giotto di Bondone. *Last Judgment* (Detail). c. 1305. Fresco painting. Arena Chapel, Padua.

Chapter I



Figure 7: Giotto di Bondone. *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 8: Giotto di Bondone. *Confirmation of the Rule*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.

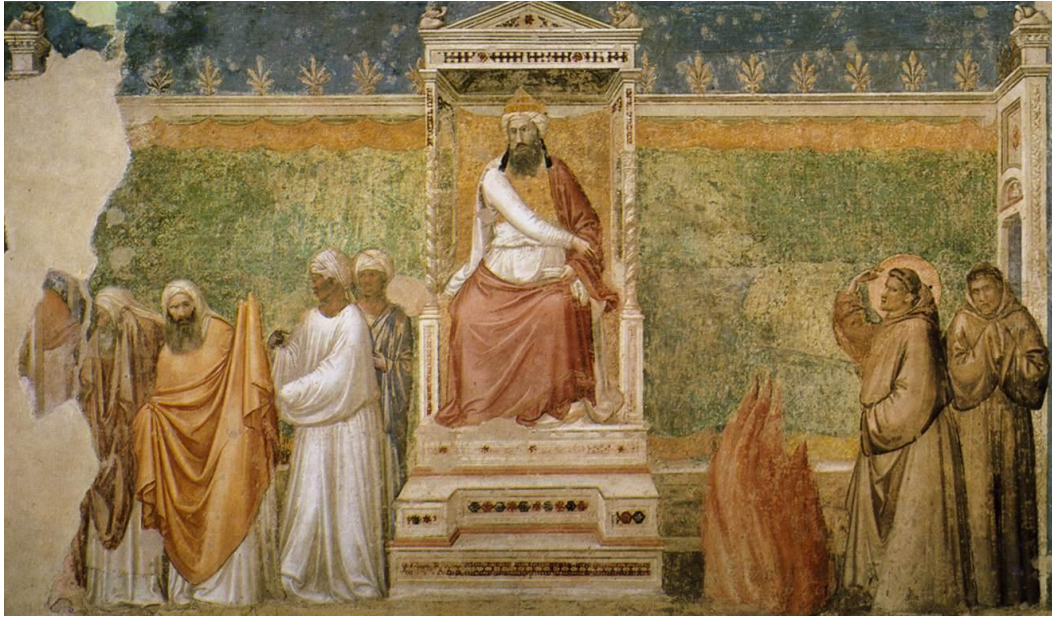


Figure 9: Giotto di Bondone. *Trial before the Sultan*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 10: Giotto di Bondone. *Apparition at Arles*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 11: Giotto di Bondone. *Death and Ascension of St. Francis*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 12: Giotto di Bondone. *Vision of Fra Agostino and Bishop Guido*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 280 x 450 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 13: Giotto di Bondone. *Stigmatization of St. Francis*. c. 1310-25. Fresco painting. 390 x 370 cm. Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 14: Arnolfo de Cambio, Bardi Chapel (left) and Peruzzi Chapel (right). c. mid-1290's. Santa Croce, Florence.

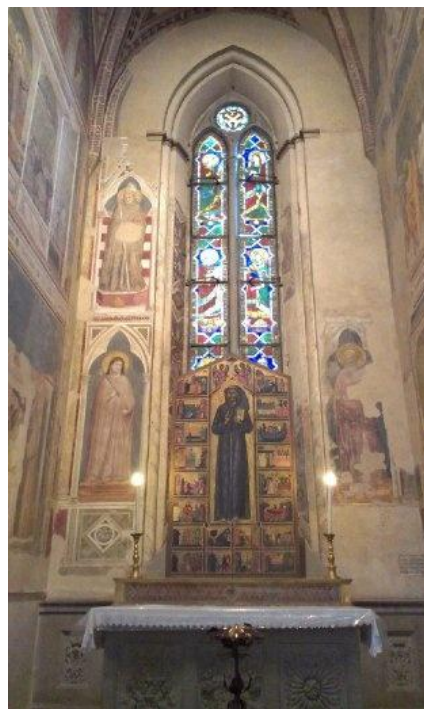


Figure 15: Arnolfo de Cambio, Bardi Chapel altar wall with figures of *St. Louis of Toulouse* (top left), *St. Clare of Assisi* (bottom left), and *St. Elizabeth of Hungary* (bottom right). c. 1310-25. Santa Croce, Florence.

Chapter II



Figure 16: Giotto di Bondone. *Annunciation to Zachariah*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 17: Giotto di Bondone. *Birth and Naming of the Baptist*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.

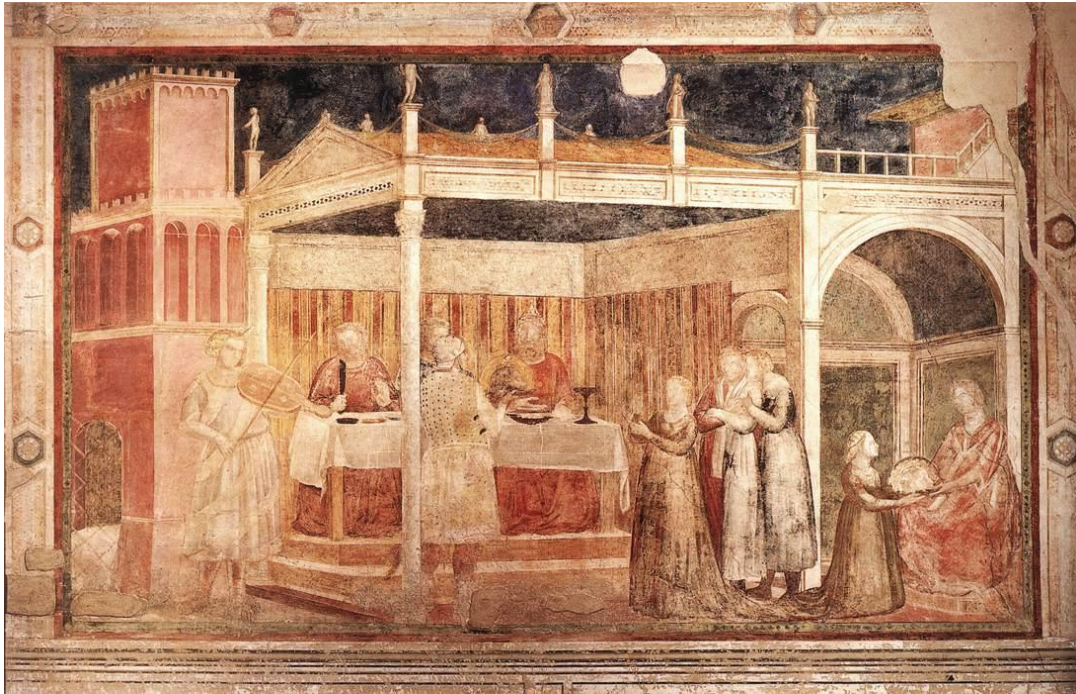


Figure 18: Giotto di Bondone. *Feast of Herod*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 19: Giotto di Bondone. *St. John on Patmos*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 20: Giotto di Bondone. *Raising of Drusiana*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 21: Giotto di Bondone. *Ascension of the Evangelist*. c. 1320. Fresco Painting. 280 x 450 cm. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.

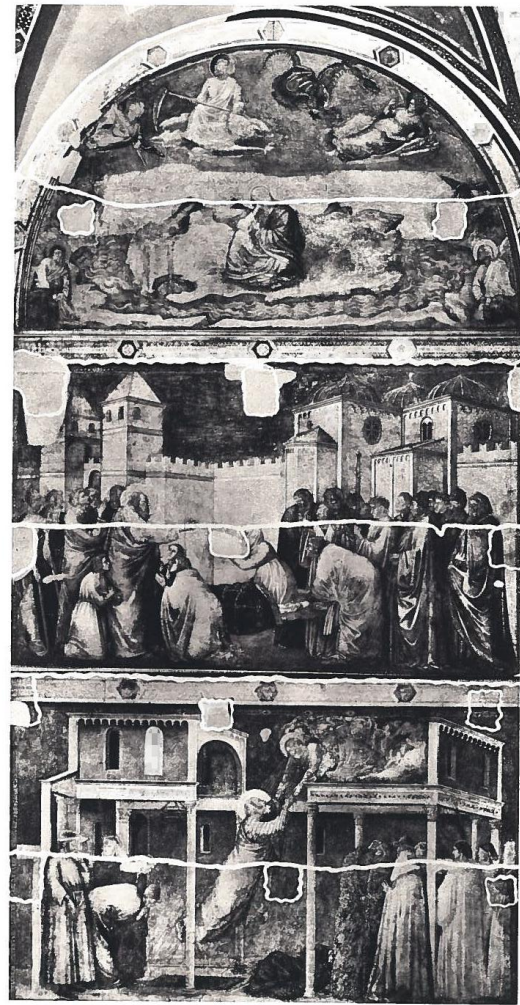


Figure 22. Diagrams showing locations of the scaffolding holes and plaster joins.
 Source: Leonetto Tintori and Eve Borsook, *Giotto: The Peruzzi Chapel* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 1965), 20-21.

Chapter III



Figure 23: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Fourth Bay (Scenes 1-3 on the right)*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 24: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Homage of a Simple Man*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 25: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Vision of the Palace*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 26: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Renunciation of Worldly Goods*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 27: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Exorcism of the Demons at Arezzo*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 28: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *St. Francis before the Sultan*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 29: Giotto di Bondone. *Flight into Egypt* c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 30: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *St. Francis Mourned by St. Clare* (Detail). c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 31: Giotto di Bondone. *Entry into Jerusalem* (Detail). c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.

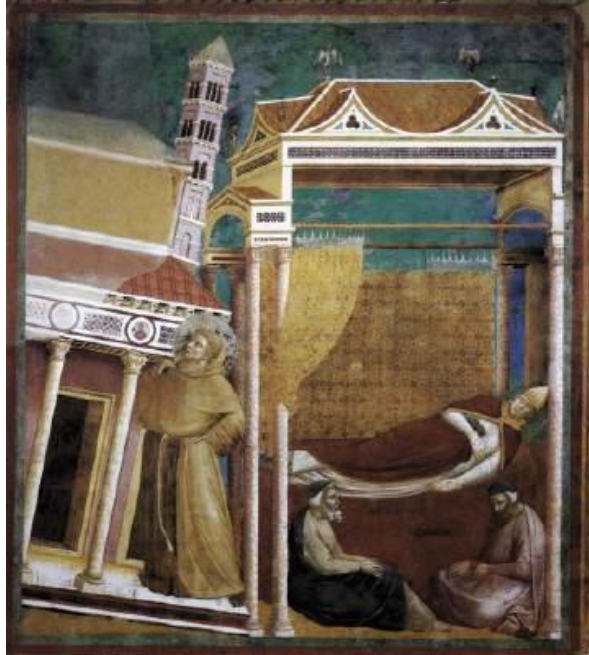


Figure 32: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Dream of Innocent III*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 33: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Vision of the Thrones*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 34: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Stigmatization of St. Francis*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 35: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Death and Ascension of St. Francis*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 36: Attributed to Giotto di Bondone. *Apparition to Fra Agostino and to Bishop Guido*. c. 1300. Fresco Painting. 270 x 230 cm. Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.



Figure 37: Giotto di Bondone. *Joachim's Dream*. c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 38: Giotto di Bondone. *Wedding Procession*. c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 39: Giotto di Bondone. *The Visitation*. c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.



Figure 40: Giotto di Bondone. *Baptism of Christ*. c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.

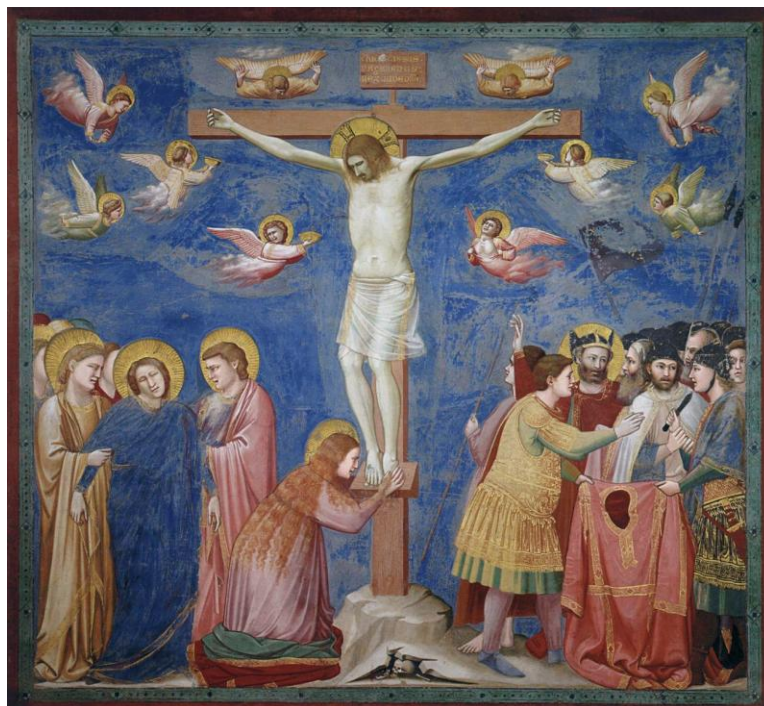


Figure 41: Giotto di Bondone. *Crucifixion* c. 1304-06. Fresco Painting. 200 x 185 cm. Arena Chapel, Padua.

Chapter IV



Figure 42: Piero della Francesca. *Recognition of the True Cross*. 1452-1466. Fresco Painting. 356 x 747 cm. San Francesco, Arezzo.



Figure 43: Maso di Banco. *Sts. Peter and Paul Appear to Emperor Constantine in a Dream*. c. 1335. Fresco Painting. Cappella di Bardi di Vernio, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 44: Bernardo Daddi. *Martyrdom of St. Stephen*. 1331. Fresco Painting. Pulchi Beraldi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 45: Taddeo Gaddi. *Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple*. c. 1330. Fresco Painting. Cappella Baroncelli, Santa Croce, Florence.

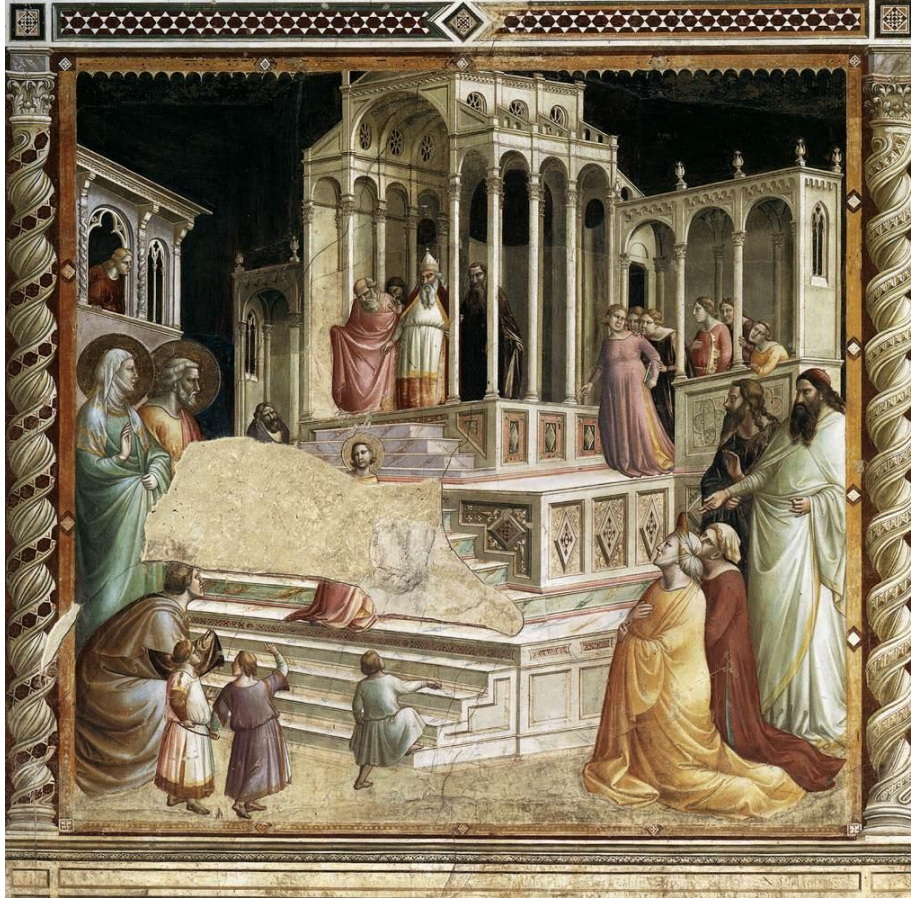


Figure 46: Taddeo Gaddi. *Presentation of the Virgin*. c. 1330. Fresco Painting. Cappella Baroncelli, Santa Croce, Florence.



Figure 47: Masaccio. *Tribute Money*. 1426-27. Fresco Painting. 255 x 598 cm. Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.

VITA

Aaron T. Hubbell was born in Gautier, Mississippi, and raised in Gramercy, Louisiana. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana in 2011. In the fall of 2015, he began the graduate program in art history at Louisiana State University, with a concentration in Early Italian Renaissance painting. He is a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Art History, to be awarded in May of 2017.