



**FONTES** **E**-Quellen und Dokumente zur Kunst 1350-1750  
Sources and Documents for the History of Art 1350-1750

VASARI IN ENGLAND, 2:  
*FRA ANGELICO TRANSLATED, 1850*

**GIORGIO VASARI,**

*The Life of GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE,*  
Translated from the Italian of Vasari  
By **GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI,**  
With Notes and Illustrations

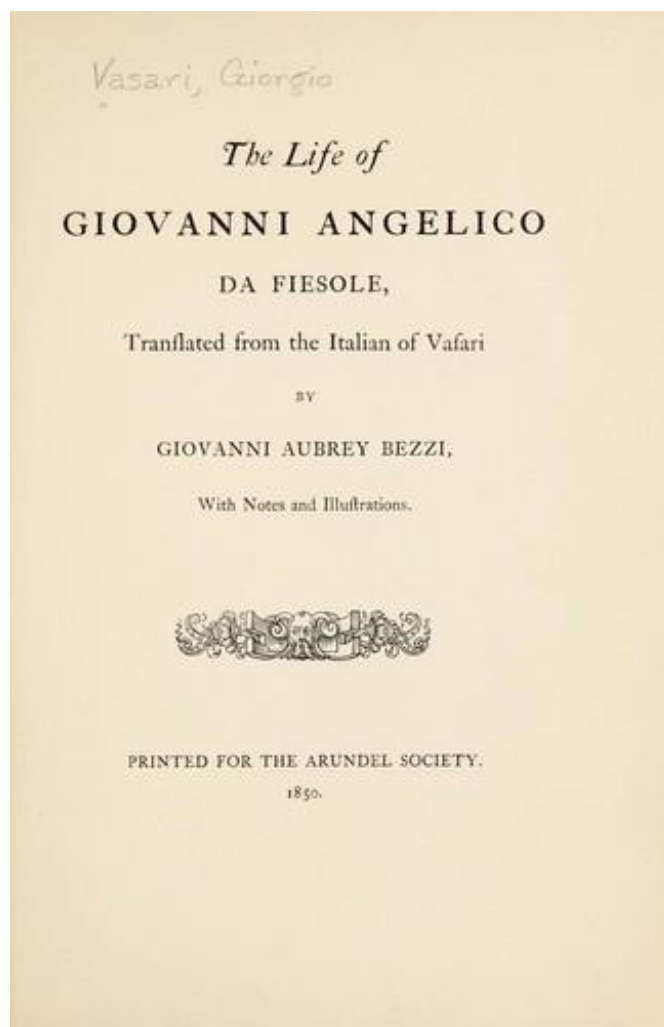
Printed for the Arundel Society,  
London: The Chiswick Press, 1850

Edited by  
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Title page of GIORGIO VASARI, *The Life of GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE*, Translated from the Italian of Vasari By GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI, With Notes and Illustrations, Printed for the Arundel Society, London: The Chiswick Press, 1850, 32 pages and 1 + 20 plates, with 1 figure, "Printed by C. Whittingham, Chiswick."

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*PREFACE*

This edition of Giovanni Bezzi's translation of Vasari's Life of *Fra Angelico* (London 1850) is the second in a series of *FONTES* editions dedicated to the critical fortune of Vasari's *Lives* in England from its beginnings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It began initially as a supplement to *FONTES 75 (Was Mrs. Foster a Plagiarist?)*, to which Bezzi's translation offers a valuable element of comparison. This edition of Bezzi's translation was compiled at a time when research libraries were not readily accessible – hence the extensive reliance on online sources. Only a selection of the plates is offered here, but a complete set will be offered in a subsequent 'Addendum' (*Nachtrag*). These are to be taken from an exemplar of the book recently acquired through the antiquarian book trade. In this example, issued in a single leather binding by the Arundel Society in 1854, Bezzi's translation of Vasari's *Angelico* (printed in 1850) is bound together with John Ruskin's *Giotto and his Works in Padua being An Explanatory note of the Series of Woodcuts Executed for the Arundel society After the Frescoes in the Arena Chapel*, Printed for the Arundel Society, 1954 (London: Printed by Levey, Robson, and Franklyn, Great New Street and Peter Lane). The editor is grateful to several friends and colleagues for helpful suggestions.

## *INTRODUCTION: FRA ANGELICO TRANSLATED, 1850*

The introduction compiles essential information about Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi's translation of Vasari's *Life of Fra Angelico*, produced for the Arundel Society in 1850 in London. Bezzi, his collaborators, and the institutional setting for the book are discussed, as well as Bezzi's text as a translation, his commentary to the life of Angelico and its sources, including the translator-commentator's identification of his sources. The catalogue of works by Fra Angelico and the plates are described, and Bezzi's translation of Vasari as a medium for an artist monograph is analysed in light of the history and pre-history of this genre of art historical writing. Following the full text of Bezzi's book is a selection of the plates published by the Arundel Society. There are included the full texts and a consideration of Vasari's two lives of Fra Angelico (1550 and 1568), as well as a comparative analysis of these two texts, followed by a discussion of Mrs. Jonathan Foster's translation of Vasari's life of Fra Angelico, which was published nearly simultaneously with Bezzi's translation in 1850, also in London. A full text of Mrs. Foster's translation is also included. The introduction is organized into clearly identified topics, many of which assemble information available in online sources, information which often may be expanded by online searches. This information is largely derivative and is so identified; the remaining sections owe little to published literature.

### *THE ARUNDEL SOCIETY:*

The Arundel Society for Promoting the Knowledge of Art was founded at London in 1849. Its primary purpose was to promote the knowledge of early Italian and Flemish painting in England. The Society began with a meeting at the house of the painter, Charles Locke Eastlake. Also present were Bellenden Ker, a lawyer, Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi (*infra*), and Edmund Oldfield, assistant keeper of antiquities at the British Museum. In 1850, Eastlake was elected President of the Royal Academy and knighted, and, in 1855, he became the first Director of the National Gallery. With this initial leadership, the Arundel Society, between 1850 and 1897 (when it was discontinued), issued many works about early Italian painting and published each year chromolithographic reproductions of Italian art works, in particular, of fresco paintings. Thereby the Society encouraged the study of art by reproducing the works of the old masters and raised public awareness for the preservation of their works. The Society was named after Thomas Howard (1585-1646), Earl of Arundel, the famous collector of ancient marbles and works of art, often seen as the founder of English taste for the fine arts, whom Horace Walpole called „the father of *vertù* in England.” The first council of the Society was constituted by Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi, Lord Lindsay (Alexander), Edmund Oldfield, Samuel Rogers, and John Ruskin. After 1856, under the leadership of the traveller, archaeologist, collector, and diplomat Austen Henry Layard, the Society concentrated even more upon copying and publishing frescoes of the early Renaissance. The Department of Prints, Drawings and Paintings of the Victoria and Albert Museum owns over 300 watercolours made by copists employed by the Arundel Society (see: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/conservation-journal/issue-23/the-arundel-society-techniques-in-the-art-of-copying/>). The history of the Arundel Society is part of the wider history of reproductions of works of arts and the methods employed in them, and its activities are paralleled in those of other similar societies.

*SIR CHARLES LOCK EASTLAKE:*

Sir Charles Lock Eastlake RA (17 November 1793–24 December 1865), English painter, gallery director, collector and writer of the early nineteenth century. Eastlake was born in Plymouth, the son of an Admiralty lawyer. He was educated in Plymouth. Committed to becoming a painter, in 1809 he became the first pupil of Benjamin Haydon and a student at the Royal Academy schools in London.

As an art scholar, he translated Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre* (1840) and the *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* by Franz Kugler. These publications and his reputation as an artist led to his nomination in 1841 to be the Secretary of the Fine Arts Commission, the commission in charge of government art patronage.

Having previously advised the National Gallery on acquisitions, he was appointed the Gallery's first Keeper in 1843, a post he later resigned to resume writing and painting. Elected President of the Royal Academy and knighted in 1850, he was a notable figure in the British art establishment, being appointed the first President of the Photographic Society in 1853 and, in 1855, the first Director of the National Gallery. [*summarized from Wikipedia*]

In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol.16, William Cosmo Monkhouse writes:

“In 1832 Eastlake was presented with the freedom of his native city of Plymouth, and the reputation he had acquired as an authority on art began to show itself in many ways. Though he thought and wrote much upon art, he refused to enter into any engagements which would interfere with his profession as an artist. Twice, in 1833 and 1836, he refused to be the first professor of fine arts at the London University (...). He declined to give a series of lectures at the Royal Institution, and, after the government had adopted his scheme for the establishment of schools of design, he could not be induced to undertake its direction. In 1836, however, he consented to be one of the council appointed by the board of trade for the new schools. In the following year he was examined before Mr. (afterwards Sir Benjamin) Hawes' committee for inquiring into the means of promoting the arts in this country, and his evidence and a letter which he wrote to the chairman may be said to have been the commencement of his long labours as a public servant. His learning and capacity attracted the attention of Sir Robert Peel, and when the commission for the decoration of the houses of parliament (called the 'Fine Arts Commission') was appointed he was singled out for its secretary. He had previously declined to be one of the commissioners, on the ground “that they would have to select the artists most fitted for employment.” The appointment brought him into close communication with Prince Albert, and he was from this time the chief adviser of the government and the prince in all matters of art.”

“He threw himself with the greatest ardour into his new duties, and poured without stint all the accumulated knowledge of his life into a series of papers and memoranda on art, which were buried in appendices to the blue-books of the commission, only to be resuscitated in part by his friend Mr. Bellenden Ker, by whom a selection from them was published in 1848 ('Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts,' 1st ser.) His labours in connection with the commission were heavy, especially in the earlier of the twenty years during which they lasted. In 1843 a competition of cartoons was held in Westminster Hall, and for this, as well as for the subsequent exhibitions in connection with the decoration of the houses of parliament, Eastlake prepared catalogues carefully designed to instruct and interest the thousands who came to see them.”

Monkhouse concludes with the following estimate of Eastlake's life and character:

“Eastlake's life was one of singular purity, loftiness of aim, and unremitting industry, entailing deservedly a high reputation as a painter, a writer, and a public servant. The cultivation of the arts in this country received so marked a stimulus from the exhibition of 1851 that their progress since is generally, and in the main rightly, ascribed to its influence; but it should not be forgotten that a vigorous movement for the promotion of art had commenced long before, and that the exhibition itself was the outcome of prolonged exertions in which Eastlake was second to none. Of his learning and highly trained reasoning faculty his writings are a sufficient witness. His style is marked, as his widow has justly observed, by a “quiet lucidity of expression,” and whether we regard him as a critic, an expert in technique, an art scholar, or an authority on questions of principle, he holds an honourable place in the literature of the fine arts. Perhaps his *Materials for the History of Oil-painting* is at the present time the most valuable and most frequently consulted of his works” (*Methods and Materials of Painting of the Great Schools and Masters*, by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, ed. Dover edition [unabridged and unaltered republication of the first edition], New York: Dover Publications, 1960, 2 vol.).

*Literature:* David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian art world*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978 (review: Leopold D. Ettlinger, in: *Kunstchronik*, 34, 1981, pp. 117-122).

#### GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI:

Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi was a music master in Charles Eastlake's native Plymouth, and he subsequently became his friend Eastlake's assistant secretary in the Royal Commission of Fine Arts (Eastlake assigned 200 pounds of his annual payment of 500 pounds to Bezzi as compensation). Bezzi was a Piedmontese refugee in England, where he married Charlotte Aubrey, adding her surname to his. Little appears to be known about Bezzi, although he moved in English and international art circles in the Victorian period, and it should be possible to assemble considerably more information about him from the records of the time and the letters of his contemporaries. His date of birth has not been established, but he apparently died in Piemonte circa 1879, a few months before Sir Anthony Panizzi (Antonio Genesio Maria Panizzi, Director, Library of the British Museum, b. 1797; see Enrico Friggeri, *La vita, le opere e i tempi di Antonio Panizzi*, Cavessago 1987), who died on 8 April 1879. Bezzi was long a resident in England, and was familiar with its language and literature. He possibly came to England around 1820, or somewhat later. In an exhibition catalogue of the Bodleian Library, *Art and its Images: An Exhibition of Printed Books containing engraved Illustrations after Italian Painting*, Issue 2 (p. 70, no. 23), Christopher Hamilton Lloyd states that Bezzi had come to England in 1823 with Panizzi. Bezzi's address in London was 14, Pall Mall East. Anton Johann Groß-Hoffinger describes “Hr. Aubrey Bezzi” as an “ausgezeichneter Freund und Kenner der Künste.” Another writer characterized Bezzi as “a gentleman no less intelligent than zealous in everything that relates either to the arts or to letters.” Bezzi was the Secretary of the Musical Institute of London, founded in 1851. In 1852, Bezzi published, in London (J.W. Parker and Son), the anthology, *Readings in Italian Prose Literature. With Biographical Sketches by Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi* (xv + 488 pages).

Around 1840, Bezzi was involved in the rediscovery and restoration of a portrait of Dante by Giotto in Florence. The following comment offers many insights into Bezzi's life and mind. In an article in the *International Magazine*, vol. 1, Issue 1 (July 1, 1850: "Richard Henry Wilde and Dante"), we read:

"A correspondent of *The Spectator*, under the signature of G. AUBREY BEZZI, writes as follows:—

"The questions are, what share Mr. [*Seymour*] Kirkup had in the recovery of the fresco of Giotto in the chapel of the Palazzo del Podestà at Florence, and whether directly or indirectly I have been the means of depriving him, or any of the coöperators in that good work, of the merit due to their labours. I shall best enable those who take an interest in this matter to arrive at a fair conclusion, by giving a short history of the recovery of that beautiful fresco. It was Mr. [Richard Henry] Wilde, and not Mr. Kirkup, who first spoke to me of this buried treasure. Mr. Wilde, an American gentleman respected by all that knew him, was then in Florence, engaged in a work on Dante and his times, which unfortunately he did not live to complete. Among the materials he had collected for this purpose, there were some papers of the antiquarian Moreni, which he was examining when I called one day, (I had then been three or four months in Florence,) to read what he had already written, as I was in the habit of doing from time to time. It was then that a foot-note of Moreni's met his eye, in which the writer lamented that he had spent two years of his life in unceasing and unavailing efforts to recover the portrait of Dante, and the other portions of the fresco of Giotto in the Bargello, mentioned by Vasari; that others before him had been equally anxious and equally unsuccessful; and that he hoped that better times would come, (*verranno tempi migliori*.) and that the painting, so interesting both in an artistic and historical point of view, would be again sought for, and at last recovered. I did not then understand how the efforts of Moreni and others could have been thus unsuccessful; and I thought that with common energy and diligence they might have ascertained whether the painting, so clearly pointed out by Vasari, was or was not in existence: several months, however, of wearisome labours in the same pursuit taught me to judge more leniently of the failures of my predecessors. Mr. Wilde put Moreni's note before me, and suggested and urged, that being an Italian by birth, though not a Florentine, and having lived many years in England and among the English, I had it in my power to bring two modes of influence to bear upon the research; and that such being the case I ought to undertake it. My thoughts immediately turned to Mr. Kirkup, an artist who had abandoned his art to devote himself entirely to antiquarian pursuits, with whom I was well acquainted, and who, having lived many years in Florence, (I believe fifteen,) would weigh the value of Moreni's testimony on this matter, and effectually assist me in every way, if I took it in hand. So I called upon him, either that same day or the next, and I found that he, like most other people, had read the passage in Vasari's life of Giotto, in which it is explicitly said that the portrait of Dante had been painted with others in the Palazzo del Podestà, and was to be seen at the time the historian was writing; but that he had not read, or had not put any confidence in, the note of the Florence edition of Vasari published in 1832–1838, in which it is stated, that the Palazzo del Podestà had now become a prison — the Bargello; that the Chapel had been turned into a *dispensa*, (it was more like a coal-hole where the rags and much of the filth of the prison was deposited); that the walls of this *dispensa* exhibited nothing but a dirty coating, and that Moreni speaks of the painting in some published work; the annotator concluding thus — "It is hoped that some day or other we shall be able to see what there is under the coating of the walls." So everybody hoped that some day or other the thing would be done, but nobody set about heartily to do it; and it is inconceivable to me that Mr. Kirkup, who shows in this letter, if it be his, such jealousy for the credit of the recovery, should have



lived so many years in Florence either entirely ignorant of that which every shop-boy knew, or knowing there were chances of bringing such a treasure to light, that he should have never moved one step for that purpose. That Mr. Kirkup took no active part in this matter at any time, is quite proved by two admissions I find in the letter of your correspondent. He first says, "I remember that the first time I passed to the Bargello to see it, I found Marini on a scaffold, &c." The fact is, that several months had elapsed between the first presentation of the memorial and the erection of the scaffold during which Mr. Kirkup admits that he never thought of visiting the place, while I had spent hours and hours there, under not very pleasant circumstances, and had detected raised aureolas and other evidences of old fresco. But he continues — "Marini was permitted to return to the work on account of the government; and at that point Bezzi returned to England. It was *some months afterwards that I heard that Marini had found certain figures*, and soon afterwards the discovery of Dante himself" (sic.) These two passages sufficiently show the nature of Mr. Kirkup's labours, and how far he was really eager in the pursuit of this object, both during the time when I was most deeply engaged in it, and also for "some months" after I had quitted Florence. But to resume: Mr. Kirkup, however ignorant, or culpably negligent, or a little of both, he might previously have been on the subject, yet when I brought it before him, he at once admitted its importance, and made a liberal offer of money, if any should be required, to carry out the experiment. Thus encouraged by Mr. Wilde and by Mr. Kirkup, I sought and found among English, American, and Italian friends and acquaintances, many that were ready to assist the plan. Then it was that I drew up a memorial to the Grand Duke; not because I am an 'advocate,' as your correspondent is pleased to call me, for that is not the case, but simply because, having taken pains to organize the means of working out the common object, the coöperators thought that I could best represent what this common object was. In the memorial, I stated that, according to what Vasari, Moreni, and others had written, it was just possible that a treasure was lying hidden under the dirty coatings of the walls of the dispensa in the Bargello; that a society was already formed for the purpose of seeking with all care for this treasure; that all expenses would be gladly borne by the society; that should anything be found, we would either leave the paintings untouched, or have them removed at our expense to the gallery of the Uffizi, and that we begged of the Grand Duke the necessary sanction to begin our operations. The answer was favourable, and I was referred to Marchese Nerli, and to the Director of the Academy, to make the necessary arrangements. Then the real difficulties began: first, I was put off on account of the precautions that were to be taken in working in a prison; then, the Director was ill, or unavoidably engaged, or absent; I found, in short, that the object was to tire me out, and that I had to contend with the same power that had defeated Moreni and my other predecessors in the attempt. This battle continued many months. I have already spoken too much of my share in the pursuit of this object, and I will not enter into further details — some of them ludicrous — of this contention; but I will say explicitly, that, besides his encouragement, and his repeated offers of money, (which were not accepted because money was not wanted, at least not to any amount, and what was wanted I furnished myself;) Mr. Kirkup did not afford me any assistance. At this stage of the business, I met indeed with a most valuable ally, without whom I believe I should have been beaten; and that was Paolo Feroni, a Florentine nobleman and artist to whom I have before expressed and now repeat my best acknowledgments. At the end of this long contention against obstacles which often eluded my grasp, the Grand Duke, in consequence of a second memorial I presented to him, issued a decree appointing a commission to carry out the proposed experiments. This commission was composed of two members I had myself proposed, viz, the sculptor Bartolini, and the Marchese Feroni, of myself, of the Direttore of the Edifizi Pubblici Marchese Nerli, and of the Direttore of the Accademia delle Arti, the two latter ex-officio: further, the decree declines the proposed voluntary subscriptions, and places at the disposal of the Commissioners a sum of money which proved more than sufficient to cover all the

expenses of the restoration of the fresco. The Commissioners employed the painter Marini, and the happy result of his carefulness and ability is now before the world.”

“I will now conclude by asserting, that I had nothing to do with what has been said or written at Florence of this recovery, either in the *Strenna*, or at the meeting of the Scienziati, which was held in 1841, I believe, and at which the fresco of Giotto was naturally a great object of interest. I left Florence in May 1840, before the portrait of Dante was actually uncovered, so that I only saw a portion of the fresco. I have never heard, or read, or said, or written, anything tending to disparage the real coöperation of Mr. Kirkup, or of my late lamented friend Mr. Wilde, or of anybody else in this matter, — nay, that it was at my request that the editor [*Eastlake*] of the English translation of Kugler’s Handbook of the History of Painting, published in 1842, has in the preface of that book mentioned Mr. Kirkup as having assisted materially in the recovery. Besides the Marchese Feroni and the artist Signor Marini, there are as many disinterested witnesses who have stated, and if called upon will repeat again, all the material points of my narrative; but, better than all, there is now in London an English gentleman, the world, whom I am happy to be allowed to call my friend, who was in Florence part of the time, and saw with his own eyes the share I had in this laborious undertaking, which ought not to have brought this bitter contention upon me: he was an intimate friend of Mr. Wilde, with whom he had long correspondence on this very subject after Mr. Wilde’s return to America.”

(See:

[http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_International\\_Magazine/Volume\\_1/Issue\\_1/International\\_Weekly\\_Miscellany/Richard\\_Henry\\_Wilde\\_and\\_Dante](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_International_Magazine/Volume_1/Issue_1/International_Weekly_Miscellany/Richard_Henry_Wilde_and_Dante) )

Aubrey Bezzi’s activities in Florence appear to be completely in line with the aims of the Arundel Society, and it is perhaps not without significance that the publication of Bezzi’s translation of Vasari’s life of Fra Angelico, with accompanying lithographic illustrations, was the very first project undertaken by the Arundel Society following its establishment in 1849. In its first years the attention of the Society concentrated largely on illustrating Fra Angelico’s works as well as those of Giotto.

[*The account of Aubrey Bezzi derives largely from online sources.*]

*ARUNDEL SOCIETY, FIRST PROJECTS:*

In his *Descriptive Notice of the Drawings and Publications of the Arundel Society: arranged in the order of their issue* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1869), Fredric W. Maynard describes the numerous projects of the Arundel Society until 1869/1870. (<http://archive.org/details/descriptivenotic00maynrich>)

[page 15:]

DESCRIPTIVE NOTICE –  
PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY  
FIRST YEAR (1849-50).  
ANNUAL PUBLICATIONS.

I. The Life of Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole,  
translated from Vasari by Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi;  
with Notes, and twenty-one Plates illustrative of the  
Painter's Works.

II. "The Distribution of Alms by St. Lawrence," a  
Copper-plate Engraving by Professor L. Gruner, from  
a Drawing by Mr. Tunner after the fresco by Fra  
Angelico in the Chapel of Nicholas V. in the Vatican.



St. Lawrence giving alms to the poor;  
after Fra Angelico, c.1849-50; engraving on chine collé.

Inscription: *Fra Giovanni Angelico (...) pinx - J. Turner del - L. Gruner sculp;*  
*LONDON ENGRAVED FOR THE ARUNDEL SOCIETY 1849-50.*

On pages 15-18, Maynard gives a brief descriptive summary of Bezzi's small book.

*THE CHISWICK PRESS:*

The Chiswick Press was founded by Charles Whittingham (1767-1840). In 1809 he started a paper-pulp factory at Chiswick, near London, and, in 1811, founded the Chiswick Press. The management of the Press was taken over in 1840 by the founder's nephew, also Charles Whittingham (1795-1876). The first Charles Whittingham was known for his popularly priced classics, but the Chiswick Press became influential in English printing and typography under the second Charles Whittingham, who published some of the early designs of William Morris.

The nephew, Charles Whittingham, who from 1824 to 1828 had been in partnership with his uncle, assumed control of the business in 1838. He already had printed works at Took's Court, Chancery Lane, London, and had printed various notable books, devoting himself especially to the introduction of ornamental initial letters and to the artistic arrangement of the printed page. In 1852 the whole business was moved to London. Under the management of the younger Whittingham the Chiswick Press achieved a considerable reputation. The Chiswick Press deserves credit for the reintroduction of quality printing into England around 1844.

At the end of Bezzi's Vasari translation, we read "PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK" (this is Charles Whittingham II), and the typographical distinction of the book is characteristic of the productions of the press.

Chiswick is a part of London, situated in the south west of the city in the Borough of Hounslow, and in the direction of Heathrow Airport. [*summarized from Wikipedia*]

*Literature:* Janet Thompson, *Charles Whittingham the Younger and the Chiswick Press, 1852-59*, Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1985; see also: Janet Ing, "A London Shop of the 1850s: The Chiswick Press", in: *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 80: 2, [1986?], pp. 153-178.

*GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI'S TRANSLATION:*

Bezzi possessed the two principal prerequisites for translating Vasari. As a native Italian he understood Vasari's language, and hence his text. And his many years in England had made him an accomplished writer of English. He could further rely on the assistance of his English wife and his English friends, and he was knowledgeable about and a passionate student of early Italian painting. His English text is economical, very clear, and never ostentatious. He does not seek effects not found in Vasari, but attempts to render Vasari's meaning accurately, accounting for all of Vasari's meanings and shades of meaning. Occasionally he offers skillful solutions for passages difficult to translate. It would perhaps be exaggerated to say that Bezzi attempts to reproduce Vasari's style in English, in any event a difficult undertaking, but Bezzi's English text is lucid and placid. A close comparison of Bezzi's English text with Vasari's Italian one suggests that Bezzi's translation is nearly always correct. Possibly „sufficiently“ on page 6 diverges slightly from Vasari's meaning, and „bontà sua“ is not quite

the same as „of his scrupulous subjection to duty“ (p. 15). But these are trifling objections, and Bezzi’s translation may be deemed excellent.

*THE NOTES AND BEZZI’S SOURCES:*

In a note at foot of page 19, Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi explains clearly and unequivocally from where he derives his commentary:

“‡ The Notes distinguished by a \* are translated from those of the Florentine edition of Vasari, published in 1832-8; those marked with a † are from the German translation of Ludwig Schorn (Stuttgart und Tübingen 1837.) The Notes included within brackets are added by the present Translator.”

\* = the Vasari edition published by David Passigli in Florence in 1832-1838, that is the commentary conveniently found in the then newest complete Vasari edition: *Le Opere di Giorgio Vasari pittore e architetto aretino*, Firenze: Per David Passigli e Soci, 1832-1838.

† = the German translation of Ludwig Schorn (and Ludwig Förster), 1837: *Leben der ausgezeichnetsten Maler, Bildhauer und Baumeister von Cimabue bis zum Jahre 1567 beschrieben von Giorgio Vasari*. Mit den wichtigsten Anmerkungen der früheren Herausgeber, so wie mit neueren Berichtigungen und Nachweisungen begleitet und herausgegeben von Ludwig Schorn und Ernst Förster, Stuttgart-Tübingen: Cotta, 1832-1849, 6 vol. (reprint, ed. Julian Kliemann, 1983).

The notes enclosed in brackets ([...]) represent Bezzi’s own contributions. He includes up-to-date information about the present location of works of art and adds much information gleaned from the published research into Fra Angelico by the Florentine Dominican Padre Vincenzo Marchese. Bezzi also adds present locations, cites Lanzi and Seroux d’Agincourt, and, on one occasion, corrects Vasari’s German editors (Schorn and Förster).

Among Marchese’s publications are the following:

*Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani del P. Vincenzo Marchese*, 2.a ed. con giunte, correzioni e nuovi documenti, Firenze: Le Monnier [1855], 2 vol.

*Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani, con aggiunta di alcuni scritti intorno le belle arti del P. L. Vinc. Marchese*, Firenze: Presso Alcide Parenti, 1846-1847, 2 vol. (=1845)

*S. Marco, Convento dei Padri Predicatori in Firenze, illustrato ed inciso principalmente nei dipinti del B. Giovanni Angelico: con la vita dello stesso pittore, e un sunto storico del convento medesimo del P. Vincenzo Marchese domenicano*, Firenze: Società Artistica, 1853

*Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani del P. Vincenzo Marchese, dello stesso istituto*, 3.a ed., Genova, 1869, 2 vol.

*Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani del P. Vincenzo Marchese*, 4.a ed., accresciuta e migliorata, Bologna: G. Romagnoli Libr. ed., 1878 – 1879, 2 vol.

*Literature: Alcune lettere del Padre Fr. Vincenzo Marchese Domenicano precedute da un cenno della sua vita e delle sue opere, scritto da Biago Pisani, Padova: Antoniana, 1895; Il P. Vincenzo Marchese e Cesare Guasti dal loro carteggio inedito (1845-1887), per cura di Isidoro Del Lungo, Firenze: Presso la "Rassegna Nazionale", 1899.*

#### *THE CATALOGUE OF WORKS:*

Bezzi writes that "*The following CATALOGUE of the Paintings now remaining from the hand Fra Giovanni Angelico is given by Padre Marchese in his "Memorie" already quoted. Its pretensions to completeness must be limited to the specimens left in Italy.*"

The catalogue is arranged by places (Perugia, Cortona, Fiesole, Florence, Rome, Orvieto, Montefalco, Paris, Berlin), with Italian towns followed by foreign ones. Bezzi identifies his own additions to Marchese. There is an interest in describing exact locations, in identifying support, technique, and subjects. Datings and dimensions receive no attention. Nevertheless, the catalogue attempts to establish a census of Fra Angelico's works.

#### *THE PLATES:*

At the beginning of the life of Fra Angelico is his profile portrait ("*Fra Giovanni da Fiesole.*") taken from a fresco painting by Fra Bartolommeo (see page 22 note ‡) in a line engraving by Giovanni Battista Nocchi (*Thieme-Becker*, vol. 25, p. 496). Nocchi also published *La vita di Gesù Cristo*, Firenze 1843, with eight plates after Angelico (preceded by the "*Vita di fra Giovanni da Fiesole*" by Giorgio Vasari and a preface by the editor Numa Pompilio Tanzini).

The 20 plates, following page 32, are preceded by a Vignette (*sepia*), "*Tombstone of Fra Giovanni, in Sta. Maria sopra Minerva, Rome.*" ("*G. Scharf [...] del ab orig. 1843.*"). The lithographs printed on very thin paper are pasted onto the plates, which are tipped into the book.

The plates provided very detailed and exact line drawings after the paintings of Angelico, offering twenty visual documents of his art, which complement the text of Vasari and the catalogue of Fra Angelico's works. Published by "E. Pistrucchi" and "Stannard & Dixon", the lithographs (the drawing for one dated "1843") are drawn by the German-born printmaker, painter and draughtsman George Scharf (also Georg Johann Scharf; 1788-1860), active in London (3 St. Martin's Lane, 1817-30; 14 Francis Street, Tottenham Court Road, London, 1830-1848; 1 Torrington Square, 1848-1856). Watercolourist and draughtsman, especially of contemporary London life; also a lithographer, to which occasionally he acted as his own publisher. Born in Germany and worked in Munich; came to England with the British army after Waterloo in 1816. Exhibited at the RA 1817, 1826, 1828-37, 1841, and 1848-50. Member of the New Watercolour Society. Worked for the British Museum, the Geological Society, the Zoological Society, Charles Robert Cockerell, and others. A very large collection of his work is in the British Museum. Father of Sir George Scharf (also an artist). Died 11 November 1860.

*Literature:* J. Kierkuc-Bielinski, *George Scharf: From the Regency Street to the Modern Metropolis*, exhibition catalogue, Soane Museum, 2009; P. Jackson, *George Scharf's London: Sketches and Watercolours of a Changing City: 1820-50*, London, 1987. Brigitte Huber, "Ein Altbayer zeichnet London: Der Maler, Zeichner und Lithograf Georg Scharf (1788-1860)", in *Oberbayerisches Archiv*, vol. 134, Munich, 2010, pp. 39-81. The Scharf papers in the Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery include journals (1833-60) and correspondence with Charles Darwin and Sir Richard Owen, among others. [*Information from British Museum website*].

*The plates with their legends are as follows:*

Plate 1. Crucifixion and various Saints. "Crucifixion painted on the wall of the Chapter house of S. Marco at Florence. / Page 7." Signed: "GS" [= George Scharf]. "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 2. "Coronation of the Virgin, / painted in one of the cells of S. Marco at Florence. / Page 8." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 3. Altarpiece, Madonna with infant Saviour and Saints. Now in the Accademia at Florence. "Madonna & Saints in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, at Florence. / Page 8." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*G. Scharf litho.*"

Plate 4. "Coronation of the Virgin, painted for S. Domenico at Fiesole, now in the Louvre. / Page 9." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*Stannard & Dixon, imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho.*"

Panel-pictures, now in the Accademia at Florence. [5.-11.]:

Plate 5. "The Flight into Egypt / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 6. "Murder of the Innocents / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 7. "The raising of Lazarus. / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 8. "Christ's entry into Jerusalem. / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 9. "Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver. / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 10. "Christ washing the disciples feet. / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 11. "The Burial in the Garden. / One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 12. "Deposition, painted for the sacristy of S.ta Trinita, now in the Accademia delle Belle Arti at Florence. / Page 10." / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 13. "Tabernacle painted in 1433, for the Flax-Merchants, now in the Uffizj at Florence. / Page 11." / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 14. "Figure of our Saviour as Judge in the Duomo of Orvieto. / Page 11." / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*Stannard & Dixon , imp.*"

Plate 15. "Group of Prophets painted in the Duomo of Orvieto. / Page 11." / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*Stannard & Dixon , imp.*" / "*G. Scharf, litho.*"

Plate 16. Last Judgment, painted for the Friars of the Angeli; now in the Accademia delle Belle Arti at Florence. / Page 11." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*Stannard & Dixon , imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 17. "The Marriage of the Virgin, now in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence." / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 18. "Annunciation in S.ta Maria Novella at Florence./ Page 11." "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 19. "St. Peter preaching, with St. Mark taking notes, a picture in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence. / This formerly belonged to the Tabernacle, Plate 13." Signed: "*GS.*" / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*E. Pistrucci imp.*" / "*G. Scharf litho. Sculp.*"

Plate 20. "Adoration of the Kings, a picture in the Gallery of the Uffizj at Florence / This belonged Originally to the Tabernacle Pl. 13." / Signed: "*GS.*" / "*Angelico da Fiesole*" / "*Stannard & Dixon , imp.*" / "*G. Scharf, litho. sculp.*"



*GIOVANNI BEZZI'S TRANSLATION OF VASARI'S VITA AS AN ARTIST MONOGRAPH:*

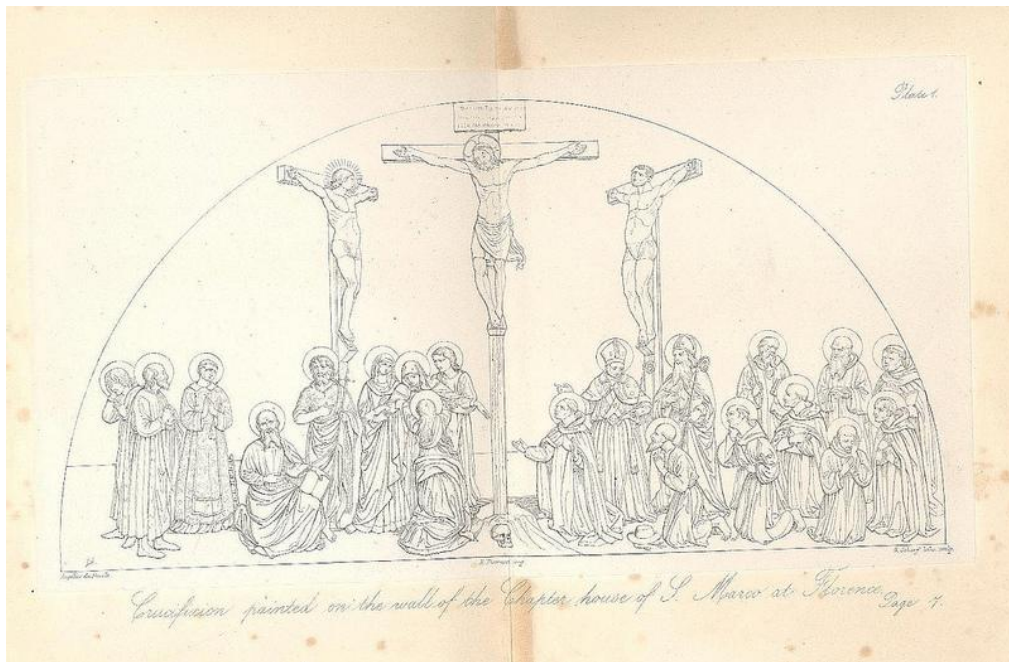
Vasari's lives of the artists provide the archetypal model for the modern artist monograph, embodying biography in combination with a treatment of the artists's works, and establishing the binomial life and works (*Leben und Werke / vita e opere*). Although Vasari was not without predecessors in writing artistic biographies, his monumental book overshadowed all that went before him. In response to Vasari, Condivi issued his book devoted to a single artist, Michelangelo in 1553 (in this he had been preceded by Antonio Manetti's 'Brunelleschi', ms. circa 1480; first published after 1800), and, in 1568, Vasari's *Vita del Gran Michelagnolo Buonarroti* was issued as a separatum, extracted from Vasari's *Vite* of Italian artists. A single artist was treated again in a sort of revised extract from the *Vite*, the *Vita* of Jacopo Sansovino issued in the 1570s by the sculptor-architect's family. Separate lives of other artists, most often written following in the footsteps of Vasari, were those of Irene di Spilimbergo (1562), Lamberti Lombardi (1565), Titian (1622), Motta (1616), Tintoretto (1642), Veronese (1646), Pietro da Cortona (1679), and Bernini (1682). By the eighteenth century, many authors wrote lives of single artists (Guidalotti, 1716; Zanelli, 1722; Valle, 1732; Bartolozzi, 1753, 1754; Albrizzi, 1760; Hugford, 1761; Manni, 1762; Vinci, 1765; Michel, 1771; Bevilacqua, 1771; Bardoni, 1779; Ratti, 1781; Affò, 1784; Fontanesi, 1787, and others), anticipating the emergence and flowering of the modern artist monograph in the nineteenth century at the hands of authors such as Passavant, Waagen, Ruhmour, Cicognara, Quatremère de Quincy, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Grimm, Justi, and many others, such as Stefano Ticozzi (Titian, 1817) and Luigi Pungileoni (Correggio, 1817) in Italy and Adam Weise (Dürer, 1819) in Germany.

Bezzi and the Arundel Society have used the form of Vasari's artistic biographies as a medium for what is *in nuce* a modern artist monograph: concentrated on a single artist, his life and works. It is not simply a biography, but an attempt to assemble the complete oeuvre and to delineate the painter's art. Angelico's *vita* provided a singularly opportune example for this attempt, for it consistently portrays the Frate's works as an extension of his life and person, of his faith and religious vocation. Not only are the works listed in a catalogue of works, which details their provenance and locations, but the works are illustrated in a not inconsiderable number of lithographic reproductions, in line with the programme of the Arundel Society. Owing to the succinct format, the information about the artist is more limited than in a number of modern artist monographs that had appeared before 1850, but the Arundel Society was also aiming its publications at the general reader, and, to an extent, the texts published by the Arundel Society are supplements to the printed images of works of art which it distributed. Bezzi's small book is, in any event, more than simply an English translation, albeit an excellent one, of Vasari's *vita* of Fra Giovanni da Fiesole: in its notes and catalogue it attempts to present exact, accurate, and fairly complete information about the artist.

*FRA ANGELICO:*

Fra Angelico (born Guido di Pietro; c. 1395–February 18, 1455) was an Early Italian Renaissance painter. He was known to contemporaries as Fra Giovanni da Fiesole and, perhaps somewhat later, as Fra Giovanni Angelico. As Vasari (1568), Serafino Razzi writes “il quale per la sua bontà è da molti chiamato Fra Giovanni Angelico” (*Vite dei santi e beati*, Firenze: Sermartelli, 1577, p. 25). In modern Italian he is sometimes called *Beato Angelico*, although he was beatified only recently by pope Giovanni Paolo II (1982). Fiesole is sometimes misinterpreted as being part of his name, but it is only the name of the town where he took his vows as a Dominican friar.

*Literature:* See the monographic studies by the nineteenth-century Dominican Vincenzo Marchese listed *supra*. Other monographs are: Diane Cole Ahl, *Fra Angelico*, London: Phaidon, 2008 (reviewed by Laurence Kanter, in: *Burlington magazine*, 151, 2009, pp. 403-404); Laurence Kanter and Pia Palladino, *Fra Angelico*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005; Creighton E. Gilbert, *How Fra Angelico and Signorelli saw the End of the World*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003; Giorgio Bonsanti, *Beato Angelico: catalogo completo*, Firenze: Octavo, 1998; Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Angelico*, Milano: Jaca Book, 1998; Mario Salmi, *Il Beato Angelico*, Spoleto: Panetto & Petrelli, 1958; *Mostra delle opere di Fra Angelico nel quinto centenario della morte: 1455 – 1955*, ed. Luciano Berti, Redig de Campos, Umberto Baldini, premessa di Mario Salmi, Città del Vaticano, 1955; John Pope-Hennessy, *Fra Angelico*, London: Phaidon Press, 1952 (2nd ed. 1974).



THE FULL TEXT OF  
GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI,  
*THE LIFE OF GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE*,  
London 1850

[cover]

**Arundel Society**

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THE LIFE OF

FRA ANGELICO

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1849—1850

THE LIFE OF  
GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE.

*The Life of*  
GIOVANNI ANGELICO  
DA FIESOLE,

Translated from the Italian of Vasari

BY

GIOVANNI AUBREY BEZZI,

With Notes and Illustrations.

PRINTED FOR THE ARUNDEL SOCIETY.

1850.

[page (5)]

[*Portrait*]  
Fra Giovanni da Fiesole.

FRATE\* GIOVANNI ANGELICO Da Fiesole, whose secular name was Guido<sup>(1)</sup> having been not less excellent as a Painter and Illuminator, than as an Ecclesiastic, on both accounts well deserves that his life should be honourably recorded. He might have lived an easy life in the world, and, in addition to what he had, might have gained whatever he wished by the exercise of

[*Note:* \* Fra or Frate, that is, Brother.]

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that Art, in which he excelled from his very youth; nevertheless, being good and gentle by nature, he determined for his own satisfaction and peace of mind, and in order to attend above all things to the saving of his soul, to enter the religious Order of the Dominicans.<sup>(2)</sup> For although it is possible to serve God in all conditions of life, still there are some to whom their own salvation appears more secure in monasteries than in the world; which indeed as it succeeds fortunately for the good, so, on the contrary, is the result truly miserable and sad to him who makes himself an Ecclesiastic for other ends.

There are by the hand of Fra Giovanni in his Convent of St. Mark at Florence, illuminated choir-books inexpressibly beautiful, and of a like perfection are those which he executed with incredible diligence, and left in S. Domenico at Fiesole.<sup>(3)</sup> It must be said, however, that in these he was helped by an elder brother of his,<sup>(4)</sup> who was also an Illuminator, as well as sufficiently practiced in the art of Painting. One of the earliest works of this good Father is that which he painted on panel in the Certosa of Florence; and which is there placed in the principal Chapel of the Cardinal Acciaiuoli; it represents our Lady, with the infant Jesus in her arms; at their feet are some very beautiful angels singing and playing upon instruments of music, and at their sides St. Lawrence, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Zanobius, and St. Benedict. The Predella contains illustrations of the lives of these saints in small figures done with the utmost care. In the Transept of that same Chapel are two other paintings on panel by the same hand, one representing the Coronation of our Lady, with

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two Saints, painted with the most beautiful ultramarines.<sup>(5)</sup> He afterwards painted in fresco on the screen\* of S. Maria Novella, next to the door facing the Choir, St. Dominic, St. Catharine of Sienna, and St. Peter the Martyr, and some small subjects in the Chapel of the Coronation of our Lady.<sup>(6)</sup> On the doors of the old organ he painted on cloth an Annunciation, which is now in the Convent, opposite to the entrance of the lower dormitory, between the two cloisters. This good Father was for his deserts so beloved by Cosimo de Medici, that having built a wall around the Church and the Convent of St. Mark, Cosimo took care to have the whole Passion of Jesus Christ [*see Pl. I*] painted by Giovanni on one of the walls of the Chapter house,<sup>(7)</sup> with all the Saints on one side, who had been heads or founders of any religious Order, sorrowing and weeping at the foot of the Cross, and on the other the Evangelist St. Mark attending upon the Mother of the Son of God, who has fainted at the spectacle of the Saviour of the world crucified; ministering unto and supporting her are the other Marys, all sorrowful, and together with them Sts. Cosimo and Damiano. It is said that the head of St. Cosimo is the portrait, taken from life, of his friend the Sculptor Nanni d'Antonio di Banco. Under this work he painted, upon the frieze over the dado, a Tree with St.

[*Note:* \* "Screen" is an imperfect translation of the word "tramezzo," which indicates a structure attached to the sides of the High Altar, for the use of the Choral performers. These Altar-Screens, which have now disappeared, were to be seen in several Churches of Florence, such as S. Maria Nuova, S. Maria Novella, S. Croce, S. Marco and others. Vasari, in his own Life, says that Cosimo I. commissioned him to remove the Altar-Screen of S. Maria Novella, and that the Church was very much improved by the removal.]

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Dominic at the root of it, and, within round shields about the branches, all the Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Saints, and theological teachers, who had belonged to his Order, — that

of the Dominicans, — down to his own time. In this work, and with the assistance of the Brethren, who collected information from different places, he was enabled to paint several portraits. They were these: St. Dominic in the middle, who holds the trunk of the tree; Pope Innocent V, a Frenchman; the Beato Ugoni, first Cardinal of that order; the Beato Paolo of Florence; the Patriarch, St. Antonino,<sup>(8)</sup> Archbishop of Florence; Giordano Tedesco, second General of that order; of Beato Niccolò; and the Beato Remigio, and Boninsegno the Martyr, both Florentines; all these are on the right side. On the left he placed Benedict XI. of Treviso; Giandomenico, a Florentine Cardinal; Pietro, da Palude, Patriarch of Jerusalem; Albertus Magnus, the German; Raimondo the Catalan, third General of the Order; the Beato Chiaro of Florence, Father Provincial at Rome; St. Vincent of Valence, and the Beato Bernardo of Florence; all these heads are full of grace and beauty.<sup>(9)</sup> Within some lunettes under the outer cloister he painted also many beautiful figures in fresco, and a Saviour on the Cross with St. Dominic at the foot of it, which is very much praised,<sup>(10)</sup> and, besides many other things about the cells [*see Pl. 2*] and on the walls, he painted in the dormitory a subject from the New Testament beautiful beyond all praise.<sup>(11)</sup> But most wonderful of all is the principal altar-piece [*see Pl. 3*] on panel in the same Church, for the Virgin in it by her sweet simplicity inspires devotion in the hearts of all beholders, and the Saints who

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surround her breathe a like influence.<sup>(12)</sup> In the Predella are represented some subjects from the martyrdom of Sts. Cosimo and Damiano, and of others, so beautifully, that it is impossible to conceive small figures more delicate, or better conceived, or more carefully finished.<sup>(13)</sup> He executed likewise the principal altar-piece of S. Domenico at Fiesole, which, having probably shown signs of decay, has been retouched by other painters, and somewhat injured, but the Predella, and the Ciborium of the Holy Sacrament are better preserved, and an infinite number of small figures, seen in the celestial glory, are so beautiful that they really appear to belong to Heaven, and no one is ever sated with beholding them.<sup>(14)</sup> In a chapel of the same Church there is also a panel painted by him, representing the Annunciation, in which the Angel Gabriel's<sup>(15)</sup> profile is so devout, delicate, and well drawn, that it looks not like the work of a mortal hand, but as if it had been painted in Paradise. In the landscape in the background are seen Adam and Eve, who were the cause of the Incarnation of our Redeemer through the Virgin. The Predella contains also some beautiful small subjects; but of all his works, that in which Fra Giovanni surpassed himself, and manifested his greatest powers and knowledge of his Art, is a picture in that same Church, at the left of the door of entrance, representing Christ crowning the Virgin-mother [*see Pl. 4*] in the midst of a choir of Angels, and surrounded by hosts of Saints, both men and women,<sup>(16)</sup> so innumerable, and still so well brought out in their various attitudes and in their individual expression, that an indescribable pleasure and sweetness is felt in con-

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templating them, and it seems, that the blessed Spirits cannot be in Heaven otherwise than they are here represented, or rather, to speak more correctly, that they could not be different, if they were there in the body; for not only the Saints are living, and have a delicate and sweet expression of countenance, but the entire colouring of the picture appears to be the handiwork of a Saint or Angel, which indeed it is; hence most rightly was this good Monk ever called Frate Giovanni Angelico. The subjects of the Virgin and St. Dominic, which he painted on the Predella, are divine in their kind, and I for my part can assert in all truth, that I never look upon that work without discovering new beauties, and never leave it without regret. In the Chapel of the Annunziata at Florence, built by Piero, son of Cosimo de Medici, he painted on



the doors of the ambry, in which stand the silver vessels, some small figures worked out most carefully [*see Pl. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11*].<sup>(17)</sup> This Father painted so many pictures, which are dispersed through the houses of the Florentines, that sometimes I am lost in wonder when I think how works so good and so many could, though in the course of many years, have been brought to perfection by one man alone. The Very Reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, Superintendent of the Hospital of the Innocents, has a most beautiful little picture representing the Virgin: and Bartolomeo Gondi, as great a lover of the Arts as any gentleman can be, possesses a large picture, a small one, and a Crucifixion, all by his hand. The pictures on the arch above the gate of San Domenico are his also, as well as the Deposition from the Cross, painted on wood for the Sacristy of Santa Trinita, [*see Pl. 12*]<sup>(18)</sup> upon which he bestowed so much care

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that it may be reckoned one of his completed works. In San Francesco, beyond the Porta a San Miniato, there is an Annunciation, and in S. Maria Novella, besides the works already mentioned, he painted small subjects on the Pascal candle, and on the Reliquaries, [*see Pl. 18*] which are exposed upon the Altar on the great solemnities of the Church. In the Abbey of the same City, over the door of the cloister, he painted a St. Benedict in the act of enjoining silence.<sup>(19)</sup> For the Flax-merchant's Guild he painted a picture, [*see Pl. 13*]<sup>(20)</sup> which is in their Guildhall, and at Cortona a little lunette over the door of the church<sup>(21)</sup> of his own Order, as well as the principal Altar-piece; these are on panel. In the Duomo of Orvieto he began some Prophets [*see Pl. 14 and 15*] (which were afterwards completed by Luca da Cortona), on the ceiling of the Chapel dedicated to the Virgin. For the Confraternity of the Tempio of Florence, he painted a Dead Christ on panel,<sup>(22)</sup> and, in the Church of the Friars of the Angeli, a Paradise and a Hell in small figures,\* [*see Pl. 16*] in which with great propriety he represented the Blessed in glorified beauty, and full of joy and heavenly delight, and the Damned made ready for the pains of Hell, in all the various shapes of sorrow, and bearing stamped upon their faces their sins and their shame. The Blessed are seen in celestial dance, entering the gates of Paradise, and the wicked dragged down by Devils into the eternal punishment of Hell. This work is in the same church towards the great Altar at the right hand, where the priest sits when Mass is sung.<sup>(23)</sup> For the Nuns of San Piero Martire

[*Note: \* Or rather the "Quatuor Novissima."*]

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(now transferred to the Monastery of S. Felice in Piazza this Saint being likewise of the Order of Camaldoli) he painted on panel our Lady, St. John the Baptist, St. Dominic, St. Thomas, and St. Peter Martyr, with many small figures,<sup>(24)</sup> and there is also a panel by his hand on the Screen of S. Maria Nuova.<sup>(25)</sup>

The fame of Fra Giovanni having spread throughout the whole of Italy on account of these his many works, Pope Nicholas V. sent for him,<sup>(26)</sup> and ordered him to paint in the Chapel of the Palace in Rome, where the Pope usually hears Mass, a Deposition from the Cross, and some beautiful subjects illustrating the Life of S. Lorenzo,<sup>(27)</sup> as well as to illuminate some books, which are most beautiful. In the Minerva\* he painted the principal Altar-piece, and an Annunciation, which is now against a wall near the great Chapel;<sup>(28)</sup> and he ornamented with paintings, for the same Pontiff, the Chapel of the Sacrament in the Palace, which was subsequently destroyed by Paul III. in order to straighten the staircase. This great work of Fra Giovanni was a fresco in his best manner, and it represented some portion of the Life of Jesus

Christ; he introduced in it several portraits from life of remarkable contemporary persons, which in all probability would all have been lost, if Jovius had not saved, and placed in his own Museum, those of Nicholas V., of the Emperor Frederick, (who at that time had come to Italy,) of the Monk Antonino, afterwards Archbishop of Florence,<sup>(29)</sup> of Biondo of Forli, and of Ferrante of Aragon.

[*Note:* \* This title is commonly given in Rome to the Church of S. Maria, built upon the site of an ancient temple of Minerva.]

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Seeing that Fra Giovanni was a most holy, peaceful, and humble minded man (as in very deed he was) the Pontiff thought this simple Monk worthy to fill the archiepiscopal chair of Florence, which happened at that time to be vacant; but upon its being offered to him, Fra Giovanni intreated his Holiness that this dignity might be bestowed upon some other person, in as much as he did not consider himself fit to hold rule over men; and he pointed out a Monk of his Order, who loved the poor, was most learned, and capable of governing, and upon whom that high office might be conferred much more fitly than upon himself. Hearing this, and being aware of its truth, the Pope most freely granted the request, and it was thus that the Dominican monk Antonino came to be Archbishop of Florence, a man famous for his sanctity and his learning, and, in a word, such as to deserve to be canonized by Adrian VI. now in our own times. Great was the goodness of Fra Giovanni (indeed most rare in these days) to yield so great a dignity and honour, offered to him by the Pontiff, to another man, whom with gladness and singleness of heart he thought more fit for them than himself. Let the Ecclesiastics of our times learn from this holy man not to seek greedily those honours which they cannot worthily sustain, but rather to yield them to the more deserving. But to return to Fra Giovanni; would to God that every Ecclesiastic (and the Faithful ought to take this in good part) spent his time, as did this truly angelic Monk, in the service of God, and to the good of his neighbour and of the world! What more can any one desire, what more ought any one to desire, than by holy living to gain the Heavenly Kingdom,

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and by virtuous labours to leave in this world a lasting fame? In truth it cannot be, nor must we think it possible, that such high and extraordinary gifts as were in Fra Giovanni should descend from on high upon any but a man of the holiest life, for those, the working of whose art is in religious things, ought themselves to be devoted to the Church and holy men, seeing that when such things come from the hand of men of little faith and little reverence for Religion, they often suggest to the mind sinful desires and wanton thoughts; whence arise both blame and praise, blame for the impure intent, praise for the power and skilfulness of the working. But I should be sorry to lead any one to the wrong conclusion, that weakness and awkwardness are devotional, or that beauty and excellence must be sensual, as some think, who, when they see a representation of a woman or a youth more than commonly fair and gracious, call it at once wanton, not perceiving how unjustly they condemn the judgement of the Painter, who holds that the Saints in Heaven are as much more beautiful than mere mortal beings, as Heaven is more beautiful than our Earth and all our works; and what is worse, they discover their own gross and corrupt mind, when they draw out of these things evil desires. If they loved purity as much as they wish to show by their foolish zeal, these representations would turn their thoughts to Heaven, and foster the desire of making themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things, from whom, as from their fountain, all beauty and perfection do flow. How must we suppose such men to be moved, how must we believe that they demean

themselves, when they are in the presence of living beauty, accompanied by lascivious blandishments, by

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honeyed words, by graceful movements, by glances that ravish all but the stoutest hearts, if the image, the shadow, so to speak, of beauty, awakens in them such emotions? But on the other side, I would not let it be believed that I approve of those figures almost wholly unclothed, that are seen in churches; because in them it is evident that the artist has not properly considered what was due to the place; for even to make a show of the knowledge of his Art, the Painter should do it with all due consideration of circumstances, persons, times, and places.

Fra Giovanni was in his manner of life simple and most holy; and the following may be taken as an indication of his scrupulous subjection to duty. One day Nicholas V. having invited him to dinner, he refused to eat meat, because he had not previously obtained the required permission of his Superior, forgetting, in his unquestioning obedience, the authority of the Pope to release him from it. He avoided all worldly business, and living in purity and holiness, he so loved the poor, as, I believe, his soul now loves Heaven; he worked continually in his Art; nor would he ever paint other things than those which concerned the Saints. He might have been rich, but he cared not for riches; nay, he was wont to say, that true riches consist entirely in being content with little. He might have had command over many, and would not; saying, that to obey others was less troublesome and less liable to error. It was in his choice to have honours and dignities in his Convent and beyond it; but they were valueless to him, who affirmed that the only dignity he sought was to avoid Hell, and to reach Paradise: and what dignity is to be compared to that, which all Ecclesiastics, and indeed all men, ought to seek.

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and which is found only in God and in a virtuous life? He was most kind, and living soberly and chastely, he freed himself from the snares of the world, frequently repeating that the Painter had need of quiet, and of a life undisturbed by cares, and that he who does the things of Christ should always be with Christ. That which appears to me a very wondrous and almost an incredible thing is, that among his brethren he never was seen in anger: and it was his wont, when he admonished his friends, to do so with a sweet and smiling gentleness. To those who asked for his works he invariably answered with incredible benignity, that they had only to obtain the consent of the Prior, and then he would not fail to do their pleasure. In fine, this Monk, whom it is impossible to praise over much, was in his works and words most humble and modest, and in his pictures of ready skill, and devout; and the Saints which he painted have a more saint-like air and semblance than those of any other Painter whatever. It was his rule not to retouch or alter any of his works, but to leave them just as they had shaped themselves at first; for he believed, and he used to say, that such was the will of God. It is supposed that Fra Giovanni never took up a brush without a previous prayer. He never painted a Crucifix without bathing his own cheeks with tears; and therefore it is that the expressions and attitudes of his figures clearly demonstrate the sincerity of his great soul for the Christian Religion. He died in 1455, in the fifty-eighth year of his age,<sup>(30)</sup> and left surviving him his scholars, Benozzo<sup>(31)</sup> Fiorentino, a close imitator of his style, and Zanobi Strozzi,<sup>(32)</sup> who painted many works both on canvass and on wood, that are dispersed

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through the houses of the Florentines. One of his pictures, on panel, is now on the Screen of S. Maria Novella, by the side of the work of Fra Giovanni, and another in the now ruined Convent of S. Benedetto of the Order of Camaldoli, beyond the Porta a Pinti. It was, however, transferred to the Convent of the Angeli, in the small Church of S. Michele (situated before the principal Church), and placed against the wall at the right hand side, going towards the Altar.<sup>(33)</sup> A third, on panel, is in the Chapel of the Nasi in S. Lucia; and a fourth in S. Romeo.<sup>(34)</sup> In the closet of the Ducal Palace there is also, by the same hand, the portrait of Giovanni de Medici son of Bicci, and that of Bartolommeo Valori, both in one picture. Gentile da Fabriano<sup>(35)</sup> and Domenico son of Michelino were two other scholars of Fra Giovanni; and Domenico painted, among many other things, the picture for the Altar of S. Zanobi in the Church of S. Apollinare at Florence.

Fra Giovanni was buried by his brethren in the Church of the Minerva at Rome, by the side entrance near the Sacristy, in a round tomb,<sup>(36)</sup> upon which was placed his portrait, of the natural size. This epitaph was carved on the marble:<sup>(37)</sup>

“Non mihi sit laudi, quod eram velut alter Apelles;

Sed quod lucra tuis omnia, Christe, dabam:

Altera nam terris opera extant; altera caelo.

Urbs me Joannem flos tulit Etruriae.”\*

[*Note:* \* Not that in me a new Apelles lived,  
But that Thy poor, O Christ, my gains received,  
This be my praise; Deeds done for fame on Earth  
Live not in Heaven. Fair Florence gave me birth.]

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In S. Maria del Fiore there are two very large books, divinely illuminated,<sup>(38)</sup> by Fra Giovanni; they are very richly ornamented, held in great veneration, and seen only on the days of the great Festivals of the Church.

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## NOTES. ‡

(1)\*

IN [the later editions of] Lanzi's "Storia Pittorica," and in the "Giornata d'istruzione a Fiesole" of Giuseppe del Rosso, the secular name of Fra Giovanni is stated to have been Santi Tosini. This, however, is a mistake, which has its origin in the Lettere Fiesolane, where, (in the fourth Letter), Fra Giovanni is confounded with another monk of the same Order and Convent. Baldinucci found in some ancient Florentine records an allusion to "Frate Guido vocato frate Giovanni." In the Chronicles of the Dominican Fathers he is mentioned as "Frater Johannes Petri de Mugello," and his brother, also a Dominican, is entitled "Frater Benedictus Petri de Mugello." Again, in an instrument cited by Della Valle [Storia del Duomo d'Orvieto, p. 368] mention is made of "Frater Johannes Petri." From these documents we learn the name of the painter's father, and consequently his own surname. The adjunct of Fiesole is derived not from his birthplace, but from his convent. [Fra Giovanni was born, according to Padre L. V[incenzo]. Marchese (Memorie dei più insigni pittori, scultori, e architetti Dominicani, Firenze, 1845) in the neighbourhood of Vicchio, a fortress situate[d] between Dicomano and

[Note at foot of page (19):]

‡ The Notes distinguished by a \* are translated from those of the Florentine edition of Vasari, published in 1832-8; those marked with a † are from the German translation of Ludwig Schorn (Stuttgart und Tübingen 1837.) The Notes included within brackets are added by the present Translator.

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Borgo a S. Lorenzo, near the Sieve, in the beautiful province of Mugello, and but a few miles from Vespignano, the birthplace of Giotto. The same writer represents the titles of "Beato" and "Angelico" as epithets by which the painter was popularly distinguished, in testimony both of the purity of his life, and the devotional spirit of his works. And this account seems in accordance with an allusion in Vasari's text (p. 10). Other authorities, however, consider these as designations proper to the spiritual rank which was solemnly conferred on Fra Giovanni by the Church.]

(2). \* He entered holy Orders in 1409, when he was twenty years of age. Vasari, in his Life of Masaccio, says that the study of that artist's works was the source of Fra Giovanni's excellence in painting. Fra Giovanni, however, was born in 1387, Masaccio in

1402; Bottari therefore thinks it probable, that the former may have been a scholar of Gherardo Starnina, though he may subsequently have profited from seeing the works of Masaccio, whom he survived twelve years. In the paintings of Fra Giovanni no indication is seen of that study and pursuit of the Real which characterises Masaccio: animated, indeed, by a spirit at once pious and independent. It is hardly to be supposed that he would have fettered himself by the more material aims of his contemporary. Von Rumohr attributes to Fra Giovanni the great merit of having been the first to express the mental emotions and their most subtle modifications in the human countenance; “not that we mean,” says Rumohr, “to point him out as a physiognomist, for in seizing “the varieties of the human countenance, Masaccio has unquestionably a power greater than Giovanni’s, in whose hands there “is no doubt a certain uniformity of expression; but yet Giovanni “obtained a very decided influence on his times by the clearness “with which, within those limits, he impressed upon the countenance “the tenderest emotions of the soul.”

(3). \* Most of these miniatures were effaced by the constant use of the books, which were dispersed after the suppression of the convents by the French; some, however, are still preserved in S. Marco.

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(4). \* Very probably the same “Frater Benedictus Petri de Mugello” mentioned in note (1).

(5). [Of these three paintings on panel, one, according to Padre Marchese, is the same which is now in the Gallery of the Uffizii: the other two appear to be lost.]

(6). \* Three beautiful little paintings, probably those here named, are now in the sacristy of Sa. Maria Novella.

(7). \* This painting is still in very good preservation, except the red mantle of the Magdalene, which has been infelicitously retouched. [Although the description of it is introduced by Vasari whilst referring to the earlier works of Fra Giovanni, it appears from Marchese, p. 279, that it could not have been executed before 1441, when the painter was about fifty-four years of age.]

(8). \* Frate Giovanni did not paint S. Antonino, who was then living, but some other person, whose portrait, as Baldinucci shews, was subsequently turned into a representation of that saint, by altering the old inscription, adding the glory and the diadem on the head, and giving him the archiepiscopal pallium.

(9). † The whole of this large painting is still well preserved, and full of beauty. [Marchese, however, says (p. 292) that during the French occupation of Florence some troops quartered in the convent erased the pupils from the eyes of all the figures.]

(10). \* The Crucifixion and the lunettes are still in good preservation.

(11). \* In the cells are still preserved some subjects from the New Testament, and from the life of S. Domenico; but the painting in the dormitory is no longer to be seen: there is however a Madonna, surrounded by Saints, not mentioned by Vasari.

(12). \* This is now in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, ruined by cleanings and retouchings from inexperienced hands.

(13). \* The predella is now on the principal altar of the Cappella dei Pittori, near the large cloister of the Ss. Nunziata. The lateral subjects are in tolerable preservation, but the central piece is spoiled by retouching.

(14). \* The picture is yet in the Church, but the predella, so

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much praised by Vasari, passed into the hands of strangers; and a copy is now substituted for the original.

(15). † This picture of the Annunciation was sold about the middle of the last century to the Duke Maria Farnese.

(16). † This excellent picture has been, since 1812, in the Gallery of the Louvre. Outlines of it have been published by Ternite, with an introductory essay by A. W. Schlegel on the Coronation of the Virgin, and the Miracle of S. Dominic (Paris, 1817). A panel, representing the Death and Ascension of the Virgin, was in the possession of the late W. Y. Ottley, Esq.

(17). † They are upon eight panels, divided into thirty-six compartments, representing the life of Christ, and passed from the library of the monks of the order of Serviti to the gallery of the Florentine Academy. Outlines of them have been published by G. B. Nocchi and by Metzger. ‡

(18). † Now in the gallery of the Academy of Florence. At the top of the picture, on three smaller panels, are the three Marys at the grave, the Resurrection, and Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene; and at the sides, three saints. One head alone in this picture has suffered from unskilful restoration. It contains the portrait of Michelozzo Michelozzi, [mentioned by Vasari in his Life of that artist].

(19). \* It is there still, though spoiled by dust and damp, over a walled up door in the small cloister containing the well.

(20). † This is a large tabernacle. In the centre the Madonna is sitting with the divine infant on her lap, and at the sides are twelve angels. The doors have two saints on the inner side, and two on the outer. This tabernacle is now in the Gallery of the Uffizii, at the entrance of the eastern corridor, and bears the date of 1433.

‡ Prefixed to the outlines of G. B. Nocchi is the profile portrait of the painter given, on a reduced scale, in the first page of the present translation. Fra Bartolommeo, a monk of the same religious house with Fra Giovanni, though not a contemporary, introduced his figure amongst the Beati in the fresco of the Last Judgment, painted, about 1499, in a chapel belonging to the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova at Florence. (See Vasari, Vita di Fra Bartolommeo.) From this fresco the head of Nocchi was traced.

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(21). \* † The painting over the door has suffered much, and the altar-piece has been removed to the choir. Formerly there were three other pictures of Beato Angelico in the sacristy of the Church of S. Domenico, viz. an Annunciation with large figures, and two panels with small, representing the life of the Virgin, and that of S. Domenico. These three pictures are now in the church of the Gesù.

(22). \* After the suppression of this confraternity, in 1786, the picture passed into the Accademia delle Belle Arti. Besides the dead Christ, the Marys, etc. the painter has introduced into this composition S. Domenico and the Beata Villana, because the confraternity of the Tempio had some ancient claims to the relics of the latter saint, which were preserved in the Dominican Church of Sa. Maria Novella.

(23). † This most beautiful picture is also at present in the Accademia.

Another celebrated work of Fra Giovanni, representing the Last Judgment, was in the collection of Cardinal Fesch at Rome; [and is now in that of Lord Ward at London.] A third Last Judgment, of large size, in good preservation, and (according to Lanzi) one of the best works of Fra Angelico, is still in the Church of Sa. Maria de' Pazzi at Florence.

[Herr L. Schorn gives the following account of some other works of the Beato Angelico.] “Three small panels, representing the “history of five Martyrs, two others with theological disputants,



“the above mentioned Madonna with the four Saints, and an  
 “excellent dead Christ at the foot of the Cross, with various Saints,  
 “are in the Florentine Gallery. The Gallery of the Uffizii possesses  
 “five panels by the same hand, viz. the Preaching of a Saint, the  
 “Marriage of the Virgin, the Adoration of the Magi, the Death  
 “of St. Mary, and the Birth of John the Baptist. Three of these are  
 “engraved in the ‘Galleria di Firenze.’ In the sacristy of the  
 “Dominicans at Perugia, is a Madonna. In the Corsini Gallery  
 “at Rome an Ascension of Christ, a Descent of the Holy Ghost,  
 “and a Last Judgment. In the collection of paintings in the

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“Vatican there are two small pictures from the life of S. Niccolò  
 “di Bari. In the Gallery of the Royal Museum at Berlin, a  
 “Virgin enthroned, a St. Francis, a St. Francis and St. Dominic  
 “greeting each other, and the Last Judgment, in which Cosimo  
 “Roselli is said to have helped him, (see Waagen’s Verzeichniss.) A  
 “mystical picture representing the Ascension of the believing Soul  
 “to Heaven, is now in the collection of Messrs. Weuddstadt at  
 “Frankfort.”

(24). \* This picture is in the Grand-Ducal Gallery, hanging  
 near the tabernacle mentioned in note (20).

(25). \* This is also in the Gallery in the first room of the Tuscan  
 School.

(26). [In the opinion of Padre Marchese (see pp. 320-331)  
 Vasari has, in this and the succeeding paragraph, confounded  
 Nicholas V. with his predecessor Eugenius IV. According to this  
 critic, Bartolommeo Zabarella, Archbishop of Florence, died in  
 1445, and Eugenius, who then occupied the papal chair, bestowed  
 that see on St. Antonino on the 1st of March, 1446. In support  
 of these statements Marchese cites Padre Guglielmo Bartoli (*Vita  
 di S. Antonino e de’ suoi Discepoli*, and *Vita di Fra Giovanni  
 Angelico*), and also a letter of Francesco Castiglione, the friend of  
 Antonino, preserved in the “Acta Sanctorum.” Consequently, if  
 the see of Florence was ever offered to Fra Angelico, it must have  
 been by Eugenius, and by him also the Painter must have been first  
 invited to Rome, some time before March, 1446. Eugenius died  
 in February, 1447, and on the fifth of March following, Tommaso  
 da Sarzana was elected to the papal chair, with the title of Nicholas  
 V. Within two months of this event, on the first of May, 1447,  
 Fra Giovanni wrote from Rome to the Chapter of Orvieto, offering  
 his services for the decoration of their Cathedral; which, in the  
 opinion of Marchese, is inconsistent with the supposition that he was  
 brought for the first time to Rome by Nicholas, for the purpose of  
 painting in the Vatican. On the other hand, it is very surprising

that Vasari, besides assigning these incidents to the wrong Pontiff, should at the same time mistake the portrait preserved in the

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museum of Paulus Jovius. For since the fresco which contained this portrait contained also, as he tells us, that of “the Monk Antonino afterwards Archbishop of Florence,” it is clear that the Pope there introduced must be he whose pontificate commenced before the appointment of Antonino. However this question may be resolved, it is certain that Nicholas, a liberal patron both of learning and art, continued, if he did not initiate, the favour shewed to the painter. He is at least entitled to the credit of having commissioned the frescoes of the Chapel which bears his name; for on one of them is the following inscription placed in the ensuing century by Gregory XIII. — “Greg. XIII. Pont. Max. egregiam hanc picturam a F. Joanne Angelico Fesulano ord. Praed. Nicolai Papae V. jussu elaboratam ac vetustate poene consumptam instaurari mandavit.” See Seroux d’Agincourt, *Hist. de l’Art*, Pl. CXLV. where an outline is given of all the paintings in the chapel.]

(27). [These, and the subjects from the Life of S. Stefano, are in the Chapel of Nicholas V. near the Stanze di Raffaelle, and approached through the Sala di Costantino. They are for the most part in good preservation.]

Of this Chapel Herr L. Schorn says, “It was restored under “Gregory XIII. and reopened, but it became so totally neglected “after his time, that Taja learned its existence by reading the “inscription of Gregory XIII., and Bottari could only get admit- “tance to it through the window. In the middle of the last “century mass was again performed in it; but the Chapel was “again forgotten, and it was a German, Herr Wolfesz Hirt, “who directed to it the attention of the lovers of art. The paint- “ings of Fra Giovanni appear to have suffered much from resto- “rations. They represent in two rows, one above the other, the “life of the two deacons, St. Lawrence and St. Stephen, whose bones “were preserved in S. Lorenzo fuori le mura. The higher row “contains,

“1. The ordination of St. Stephen as Deacon.

“2. The Saint distributing alms.

“3. His preaching to the people.

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“4. His appearance before the Council at Jerusalem.

“5 and 6. The leading forth and stoning of the Saint.

“The lower row contains,

“1. The ordination of St. Lawrence as Deacon.

“2. The Pope giving to St. Lawrence the riches of the Church to be bestowed upon the poor.

“3. The Saint distributing these riches among the poor.

“4. The Saint in bonds before the judgment seat of the Emperor.

“5. His martyrdom.

“On the arches of the windows and of the doors are the four fathers of the Greek, and the four of the Latin, Church, and on the ceiling the four Evangelists. A Descent from the Cross, which was over the altar, is concealed by whitewash. The Evangelist St. John has been beautifully etched by Stolzel; the preaching of St. Stephen, and the distribution of alms by St. Lawrence, have been etched by Ottley.” †

(28). \* These two panels are still in the Church of the Minerva, one over the altar of the Caraffa Chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas Aquinas, the other over the altar of the Chapel of the Rosario.

† In the transept of the Church there are now some paintings which are attributed to Fra Giovanni. Wood cuts from them are to be seen in a rare work entitled “*Meditationes Reverendissimi patris Domini Johannis de Turrecremata.*”

(29). \* He was subsequently canonized: here he is represented by Fra Giovanni merely as a monk. [For the supposed portrait of him in S. Marco see note (8).]

(30). † In the first edition Vasari says in his sixty-ninth year. Fra Giovanni died at Rome on the 18th of February, 1455. See Baldinucci, vol. 3, p. 99.

(31). † Benozzo Gozzoli’s life is written by Vasari.

(32). † This Zanobi di Benedetto was of the noble family of

‡ The copper-plate engraving now published by the Society is from the third subject in the lower series.

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Strozzi. Baldinucci gives a lengthened notice of him (vol. 3). He painted, not merely pictures for churches, but trays resembling our tea-boards, which it was the custom to present to women, as a gift after their confinement, and which were ornamented with sacred subjects.

(33). † This picture is no longer to be found. [The panel pictures mentioned by Vasari are now difficult to trace, having been dispersed at the suppression of the religious orders by the French.]

(34). † Richa ("Notizie delle Chiese Florentine," part i. p. 258) was not able to find this picture.

(35). † Lanzi doubts this, because, in 1417, Gentile was already employed on the Duomo of Orvieto as Magister Magistrorum, and Fra Giovanni at this time was only thirty years old; but according to Della Valle, (*Storia del Duomo d'Orvieto*), Gentile's residence in that city dates from 1423. His first master was Allegretto da Fabriano.

(36). \* The tomb is not round, but oblong.

(37). [An inscription is added, above these lines, which is given in the Vignette following the Plates. The date (1455) is adduced by the Italian and German Editors, in proof of the Inaccuracy of Della Valle, who, in the Catalogue of Artists employed at Orvieto, which is appended to the "*Storia del Duomo*," enters Fra Giovanni under the year 1457. In fact, however, this is simply a misprint for 1447, as may be seen by reference to the narrative portion of the same work.]

(38). \* Some of the illuminated books of Sa. Maria del Fiore have been transferred to the Laurentian Library, but of these mentioned by Vasari we have no accurate information.

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*The following CATALOGUE of the Paintings now remaining from the hand of Fra Giovanni Angelico is given by Padre Marchese in his "Memorie" already quoted. Its pretensions to completeness must be limited to the specimens left in Italy.*

#### PERUGIA.

*Church of S. Domenico.* In the small Choir of the Monks, the Blessed Virgin on a throne with the Infant in her arms; at the sides two panels (now separated), one with S. John the Baptist, and St. Catherine the Virgin and Martyr, the other with S. Domenico and S. Niccolò di Bari. In the Sacristy, twelve small panels with twelve Saints; a picture on wood with two subjects from the life and death of S. Niccolò di Bari; two small panels with the Virgin receiving the Annunciation, and the angel Gabriel.

#### CORTONA.

*Church of S. Domenico.* On the facade of the Church, over the entrance door, in Fresco, the Blessed Virgin with the Infant in her arms, and at the sides two Domenican Saints. On the Canopy of the Porch, the four Evangelists. Within the Church, in the lateral Chapel near the High Altar, the Virgin enthroned, surrounded by Angels and Saints.

In the *Chiesa del Gesù* an Annunciation and two predellas, one with the history of S. Domenico, and the other with that of the Virgin. [All these works were painted about 1414. See "Memorie," vol. 1, p. 248.]

#### FIESOLE.

*Convent of S. Domenico.* In the Choir of the Church, a picture on wood, with the Blessed Virgin in a throne surrounded by Angels and Saints. In the Refectory, a fresco of the Crucifixion, with St.

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John and the Virgin beside the Cross. In the old Chapter House, also in fresco, the Blessed Virgin with the Infant in her arms, between S. Domenico and S. Thomas Aquinas, figures of the size of life.

*Church of St. Jerome.* The Blessed Virgin with the "Seraphic Doctor" and other Saints.

## FLORENCE.

*Convent of St. Mark.* In fresco — the Crucifixion in the first cloister, and five lunettes, with half-length figures. In the Chapter House, the Crucifixion, and the portraits of illustrious Dominicans. In the Convent, all the cells but two of the upper Dormitory, amounting to thirty-two, and three subjects on the external walls. Some Crucifixes in the Dormitory called “Il Giovanato.”

*S. Maria Novella.* Three Reliquaries.

*The Academy.* The Deposition from the Cross. Two small panels representing the Beato Albertus Magnus, and S. Thomas Aquinas discoursing from the Pulpit. The Blessed Virgin with the Infant in her arms. S. Cosimo healing a sick man. Another Deposition from the Cross. The Final Judgment. The entombment of the five Martyrs, Sts. Cosimo and Damiano, and their three brothers. A Pieta, with the instruments of the Passion. Eight panels, which formed the doors of the Ambry in the Church of the Annunziata, with thirty-five subjects from the life of Christ. The Blessed Virgin in the midst of several Saints. Another similar panel. The Blessed Virgin, with two Angels and some Saints.

*Gallery of the Uffizii.* A large tabernacle with the Blessed Virgin on a throne, and several Saints. The Coronation of the Virgin. Six small panels representing the Adoration of the Magi, two subjects from the life of S. Mark, the Marriage and the Death of the Blessed Virgin, and the Birth of S. John the Baptist.

*Gallery of the Pitti Palace.* A picture on wood, formerly in the Church of S. Peter the Martyr, and afterwards in the Gallery of the Uffizii; it represents the Blessed Virgin, and several Saints.

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## ROME.

*Vatican.* Chapel of Nicholas V. painted in fresco with subjects from the lives of the Martyrs St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. Gallery. Two small panels with subjects relating to S. Niccolò di Bari.

*Valentini Gallery.* Part of a predella, probably belonging to the picture in the Choir of the Church of S. Domenico at Fiesole.

*Corsini Gallery.* Last Judgment.

*Gallery of Cardinal Fesch.* A Final Judgment. [Now in Lord Ward's Collection in London.]

## ORVIETO.

*Cathedral.* A large fresco on the roof of the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, representing the upper portion of a Last Judgment, left unfinished by Fra Angelico, and completed by Luca Signorelli.

## MONTEFALCO.

*The Church of the Franciscan Monks,* according to Rosini, has some works of Fra Giovanni; the subjects, however, he does not mention.

## PARIS.

*Louvre.* A large picture on wood, representing the Coronation of the Virgin, and a predella, with subjects from the life of S. Domenico.

## BERLIN.

*Royal Museum.* S. Domenico and S. Francisco embracing each other, and a Final Judgment.

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## LIST OF PLATES.

VIGNETTE at the beginning of the Life. Portrait of Fra Giovanni.  
From the fresco-painting by Fra Bartolommeo. (See p. 22, Note.)

### Plate

1. Crucifixion and various Saints.

On the wall of the Chapter House of S. Marco at Florence.

2. Coronation of the Virgin.

From one of the cells in S. Marco.

3. Altarpiece, Madonna with infant Saviour and Saints.

Now in the Accademia at Florence.

4. Coronation of the Virgin.

Now in the Louvre.

Panel-pictures, now in the  
Accademia at Florence. [= 5.-11.]

5. The Flight into Egypt.

6. The Murder of the Innocents.

7. The Raising of Lazarus.

8. Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.

9. Judas receiving the Thirty Pieces of Silver.

10. Christ washing the Disciples' Feet.

11. The Burial in the Garden.

12. The Deposition from the Cross.

Now in the Accademia at Florence.



## 13. Tabernacle.

Now in the Gallery of the Uffizii at Florence.

## 14. Figure of Christ.

In the Duomo at Orvieto.

## 15. Group of Prophets.

In the Duomo at Orvieto.

## 16. The Last Judgment.

Now in the Accademia at Florence.

## 17. The Marriage of the Virgin.

Now in the Gallery of the Uffizii.

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## 18. The Annunciation.

On a Reliquary in the Sacristy of Sta. Maria Novella.

## 19. St. Peter preaching.

Now in the Gallery of the Uffizii.

## 20. The Adoration of the Magi.

Now in the Gallery of the Uffizii.

Vignette. Tombstone of Fra Giovanni, in Sta. Maria sopra Minerva,  
at Rome.

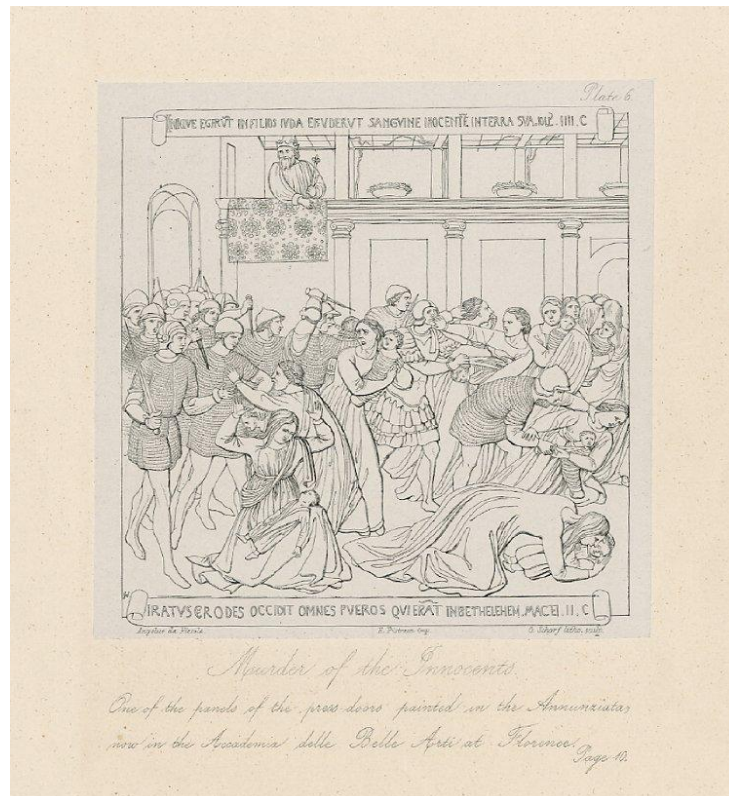
SELECTED PLATES FROM BEZZI'S ANGELICO MONOGRAPH



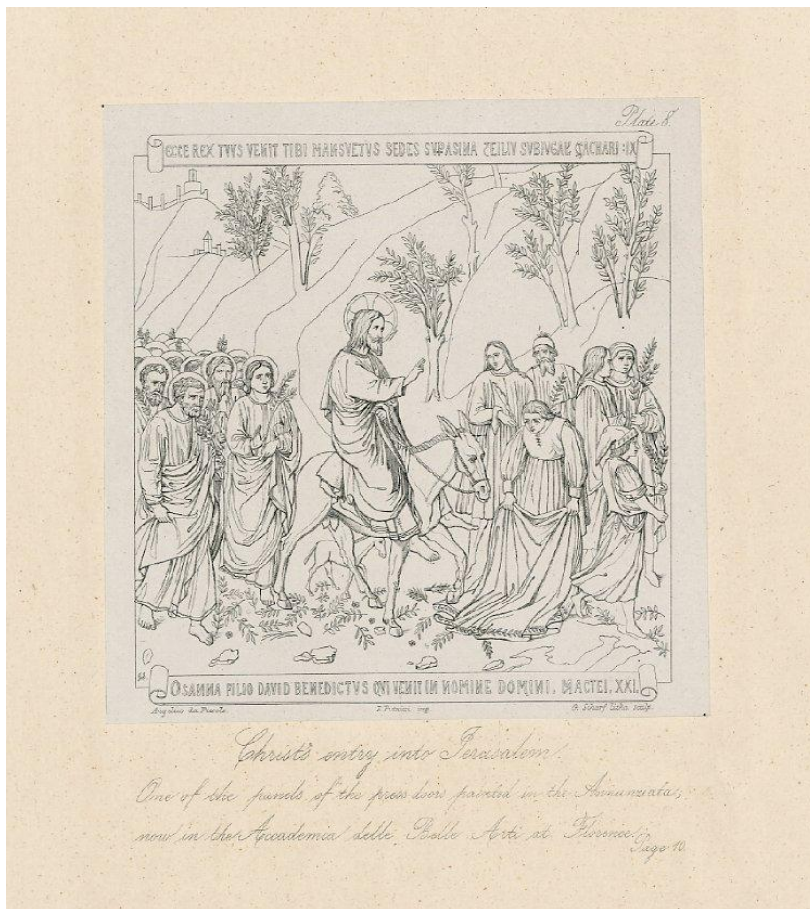
- (I.) Plate 3. Altarpiece, Madonna with infant Saviour and Saints.  
 Now in the Accademia at Florence.  
 “Madonna & Saints in the Accademia delle Belle Arti, at Florence. / Page 8.”  
 “*Angelico da Fiesole*” / “*G. Scharf litho.*”



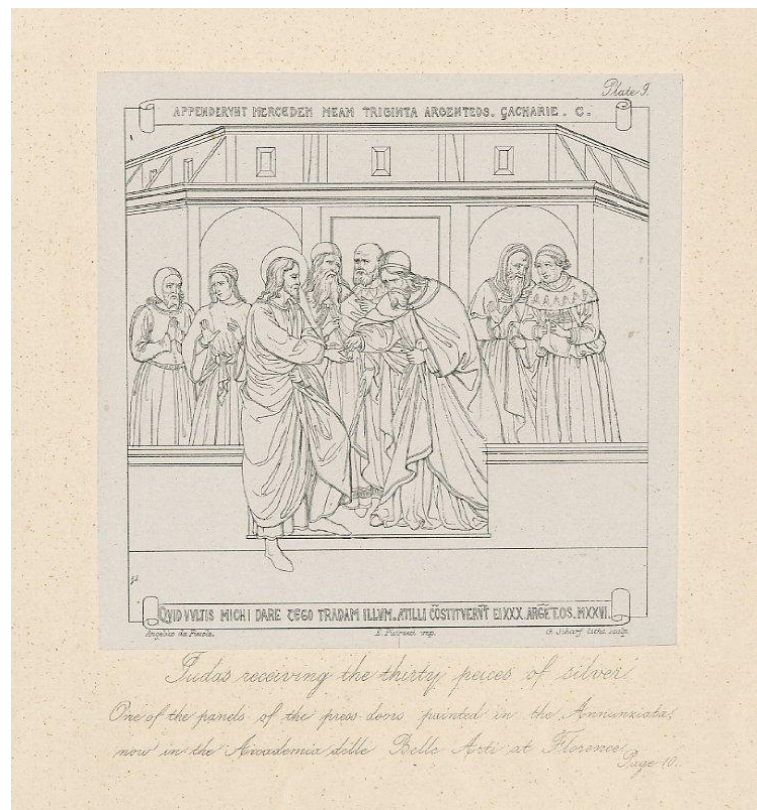
(II.) Plate 5. "The Flight into Egypt /  
 One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, /  
 now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10."  
 "Angelico da Fiesole" / "E. Pistrucci imp." / "G. Scharf litho. Sculp."



(III.) Plate 6. "Murder of the Innocents /  
 One of the panels of the press doors painted in the Annunziata, /  
 now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10."  
 "Angelico da Fiesole" / "E. Pistrucci imp." / "G. Scharf litho. Sculp."



(IV.) Plate 8. "Christ's entry into Jerusalem. /  
 One of the panels of the press-doors painted in the Annunziata, /  
 now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10."  
 "Angelico da Fiesole" / "E. Pistrucchi imp." / "G. Scharf litho. Sculp."



(IV.) Plate 9. "Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver. / One of the panels of the press doors painted in the Annunziata, / now in the Accademia delle Belle Art at Florence / Page 10." "Angelico da Fiesole" / "E. Pistrucci imp." / "G. Scharf litho. Sculp."



(VI.) Plate 14. "Figure of our Saviour as Judge in the Duomo of Orvieto. / Page 11." /  
"Angelico da Fiesole" / "Stannard & Dixon, imp."



(VII.) Plate 15. "Group of Prophets painted in the Duomo of Orvieto. / Page 11." / "Angelico da Fiesole" / "Stannard & Dixon, imp." / "G. Scharf, litho."



## APPENDIX I:

VASARI, *Vita di Fra Angelico*, 1550

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FRA' GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE  
Pittor Fiorentino

Certamente chi lavora opere ecclesiastiche e sante, doverrebbe egli ancora del continuo essere ecclesiastico e santo, perché si vede che, quando elle sono operate da persone che poco credino e manco stimino la religione, fanno spesso cadere in mente appetiti disonesti e voglie lascive; onde nasce il biasimo dell'opre nel disonesto, e la lode nell'artificio e nella virtù. Ma io non vo' già che alcuni s'ingannino, interpretando il devoto per goffo et inetto, come fanno certi che, veggendo pitture dove sia una figura o di femmina o di giovane, un poco piú vaga e piú bella [368] e piú adorna d'ordinario, le pigliano e giudicano subito per lascive. Né si avveggano che non solo dannano il buon giudizio del pittore, il quale tiene de' santi e sante che son celesti, e tanto piú belle della natura mortale quanto avanza il cielo la terrena bellezza dell'opere nostre, ma ancora scuoprono l'animo loro essere infetto e corrotto, cavando male e voglie non oneste di quello; che se e' fussino amatori della onestà come in quel loro zelo sciocco voglion mostrare, eglino ne caverrebbero desiderio del cielo e laude del sommo Iddio, da 'l quale perfettissimo e bellissimo nasce ogni bellezza delle creature sue. Veramente fu fra' Giovanni santissimo e semplice ne' suoi costumi, e questo solo faccia segno della bontà sua, perciocché volendo una matina Papa Nicolò V dargli desinare, si faceva coscienza mangiar de la carne, senza licenza del priore, non pensando alla autorità del pontefice. Schifò tutte le azzioni del mondo, e pura e santamente vivendo, fu de' poveri tanto amico, quanto pensò che l'anima sua avesse a essere del cielo. Egli tenne del continuo in esercizio il corpo occupato nella pittura, né mai volle lavorar cose altro che di santi. Potette esser ricco, e non se ne curò, anzi diceva la vera ricchezza essere il contentarsi di poco. Possette comandare a molti, e lo schifò, dicendo esser men fatica e manco errore ubbidire altrui. Puotè aver dignità ne' frati e fuori, e non le stimò, dicendo la maggior dignità è cercar fuggire lo inferno et accostarsi al paradiso. Era umanissimo e molto sobrio, e castamente vivendo, da i lacci del mondo si sciolse, usando dire spesso che chi faceva questa arte aveva di bisogno di quiete, e di vivere senza pensieri, e d'attendere all'anima, e chi fa cose di Cristo, con Cristo debbe star sempre. Dicesi che non fu mai veduto in collera tra' [369] frati, il che grandissima cosa mi pare a credere, e che sempre sogghignando semplicemente ammoniva gli amici. E con amorevolezza a ognuno che ricercava opre da lui, diceva che ne facesse esser contento il priore, et egli sempre farebbe cosa che gli fosse in piacere. I suoi ragionamenti erano umilissimi e bassi, e l'opre sue furono sempre tenute bellissime et eccellenti. Fu chiamato al secolo Guido detto Guidolino; poi frate di San Marco di Fiorenza, fu nominato frate Giovanni Angelico de' frati predicatori. Costui fu nelle sue opere molto facile e devoto; et invero si può dire che i santi non abbino aria piú modesta da santi che quegli che da esso furono lavorati. Fu costui al secolo pittore e miniatore, et in San Marco di Fiorenza sono alcuni libri miniati di sua mano; e perché era di coscienza e quieto, per sodisfazione dell'anima sua si ridusse a la religione, per vivere piú onesto, con bonissimo animo di lasciare il mondo in tutto e per tutto.

Lavorò in fresco cose assai, et in tavola similmente; e nella cappella della Nunziata di Fiorenza dipinse l'armario dell'argenterie che in detta cappella sono, e condusse infinito numero di storie di figurine piccole con somma diligenza. A San Domenico da Fiesole sono alcune sue tavole, ma una Nunziata fra l'altre, che nella predella dello altare ha storie piccole di San Domenico e della Nostra Donna, che diligentissime e bellissime sono; così l'arco sopra la porta di essa chiesa. In Fiorenza fece a Cosimo de' Medici la tavola dell'altar maggiore di San Marco, et in fresco il capitolo di detti frati, pagato da Cosimo, e sopra ogni porta nel chiostro mezze figure et un Crocifisso, et in tutte le celle de' frati una storia del Testamento Nuovo per ciascuna. Fece in Santa Trinita nella sagrestia una tavola d'un Deposto di Croce, nella quale usò gran [370] diligenza, et è delle più belle cose che facesse mai; et una altra tavola, a San Francesco fuor della porta a San Miniato, d'una Nunziata. In Santa Maria Novella fece il cereo pasquale dipinto di storie piccole et altri reliquieri con istorie di figure da tenere sull'altare. Et in Badia sopra una porta del chiostro, un San Benedetto che accenna silenzio. Fece ancora a' Linaiuoli una tavola, la quale è nell'Arte loro. Dipinse a Cortona uno archetto sopra la porta della chiesa del convento loro, similmente la tavola della chiesa. Ad Orvieto cominciò una volta con certi profeti, in duomo alla cappella della Madonna; la quale fu poi finita da Luca da Cortona. Fece medesimamente alla Compagnia del Tempio in Fiorenza una tavola d'un Cristo morto; e negli Agnoli di Fiorenza un Paradiso et un Inferno di figure piccole. Et in Santa Maria Nuova al tramezzo della chiesa si vede ancora una tavola sua.

Per questi tanti lavori si divulgò per la Italia molto altamente la fama di questo maestro, giudicato da tutti non manco santo che eccellente. Avendo egli in consuetudine di non ritoccare o racconciare alcuna sua dipintura, ma lasciarle sempre in quel modo che erano venute la prima volta, per credere (secondo che egli diceva) che così fusse la volontà di Dio. Dicono alcuni che fra Giovanni non arebbe preso i pennelli se prima non avesse fatto orazione. Non fece mai Crocifisso, che e' non si bagnasse le gote di lagrime. Onde certamente si conosce nelle attitudini delle figure sue, la bontà del grande animo suo nella religion cristiana. Perciò sentí la fama sua Papa Niccola V e mandato per lui, et a Roma condottolo, gli fece fare la cappella del palazzo, dove il papa ode la messa, con un Deposto di Croce e con istorie bellissime di San Lorenzo, dove ritrasse Papa Niccola di naturale. Fece ancora nella Minerva la tavola dello altar maggiore [371] con una Nunziata, che ora è locata allato alla cappella grande a canto un muro. E la cappella del Sacramento in palazzo per detto papa, ruinata al tempo di Papa Paulo III per drizzarvi le scale; cosa molto eccellente nella maniera sua. E perché al papa pareva persona di santissima vita, quieto e modesto, et aveva rispetto et amore alla sua bontà, vacando in quel tempo l'Arcivescovado di Fiorenza, ordinò che fra' Giovanni ne fusse investito, parendogli ch'egli più d'ogni altro degno ne dovessi essere. Intendendo ciò, il frate supplicò a Sua Santità che provvedesse d'uno altro, perciocché egli non era buono a governar popoli; ma che nella religione avevano un frate amorevole de' poveri, il quale era persona santa, dottissima e di grandissimo governo, il quale amava egli quanto se stesso. Per il che se e' piacesse a Sua Santità di darlo a questo tale, lo riputerebbe propriamente, come se e' fusse collocato nella stessa persona sua. Il papa, sentendo questo, gli fece la grazia liberamente; e così fu fatto Arcivescovo di Fiorenza frate Antonio dello ordine de' predicatori, che da Papa Adriano VI fu poi canonizzato ne' tempi nostri. Era fra' Giovanni tanto continovo nella arte, che e' lavorò infinite cose, le quali si sono smarrite, e pure tuttavia se ne ritruova qualcuna in diversi luoghi. Aiutò sempre i poveri de le sue fatiche, né mai abbandonò la religione. Morí di anni LXVIII nel MCCCCLV. E lasciò suoi discepoli Benozzo Fiorentino, che imitò sempre la sua maniera; Zanobi Strozzi, che fece quadri e tavole per tutta Fiorenza per le case de' cittadini, e particolarmente una tavola posta oggi nel tramezzo di Santa Maria Nuova allato a quella di fra' Giovanni; Gentile da Fabbriano, e parimente Domenico di Michelino, il quale in Santo Apolinare [372] fece la tavola a lo altare di San

Zanobi, e nel convento degli Agnoli un Giudizio con infinito numero di figure. Fu sepolto fra' Giovanni da' frati suoi nella Minerva di Roma, lungo la entrata del fianco presso alla sagrestia, in un sepolcro di marmo tondo, dove si vede intagliato questo epitaffio:

NON MIHI SIT LAVDI QVOD ERAM VELVT ALTER APELLES  
SED QVOD LVCRA TVIS OMNIA CHRISTE DABAM  
ALTERA NAM TERRIS OPERA EXTANT ALTERA COELO.  
VRBS ME IOANNEM FLOS TVLIT AETHRVRIAE.

## APPENDIX II:

VASARI, *Vita di Fra Angelico*, 1568VITA DI FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE  
DELL'ORDINE DE' FRATI PREDICATORI  
PITTORE

[I, 358]

Frate Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole, il quale fu al secolo chiamato Guido, essendo non meno stato eccellente pittore e miniatore che ottimo religioso, merita per l'una e per l'altra cagione che di lui sia fatta onoratissima memoria. Costui, se bene avrebbe potuto commodissimamente stare al secolo, et oltre quello che aveva, guadagnarsi ciò che avesse voluto con quell'arti che ancor giovinetto benissimo fare sapeva, volle nondimeno, per sua sodisfazione e quiete, essendo di natura posato e buono, e per salvare l'anima sua principalmente, farsi [I, 359] religioso dell'ordine de' frati predicatori; perciocché se bene in tutti gli stati si può servire a Dio, ad alcuni nondimeno pare di poter meglio salvarsi ne' monasterii che al secolo. La qual cosa quanto a i buoni succede felicemente, tanto per lo contrario riesce, a chi si fa relligioso per altro fine, misera veramente et infelice.

Sono di mano di fra Giovanni, nel suo convento di S. Marco di Firenze, alcuni libri da coro miniati, tanto belli che non si può dir più; et a questi simili sono alcuni altri, che lasciò in S. Domenico da Fiesole, con incredibile diligenza lavorati. Ben è vero che a far questi fu aiutato da un suo maggior fratello che era similmente miniatore et assai esercitato nella pittura. Una delle prime opere che facesse questo buon padre di pittura, fu, nella Certosa di Fiorenza, una tavola che fu posta nella maggior cappella del cardinale degl'Acciaiuoli, dentro la quale è una Nostra Donna col figliuolo in braccio e con alcuni angeli a' piedi, che suonano e cantano, molto belli, e da gli lati sono S. Lorenzo, S. Maria Madalena, S. Zanobi e S. Benedetto. E nella predella sono di figure piccole, storiette di que' santi fatte con infinita diligenza. Nella crociera di detta cappella, sono due altre tavole di mano del medesimo: in una è la incoronazione di Nostra Donna, e nell'altra una Madonna con due Santi, fatta con azzurri oltramarini bellissimi. Dipinse dopo, nel tramezzo di S. Maria Novella, in fresco a canto alla porta dirimpetto al coro, S. Domenico, S. Caterina da Siena e S. Piero martire, et alcune storiette piccole nella capella dell'incoronazione di Nostra Donna, nel detto tramezzo. In tela fece nei portegli che chiudevano l'organo vecchio, una Nunziata che è oggi in convento, dirimpetto alla porta del dormitorio da basso, fra l'un chiostro e l'altro. Fu questo padre, per i meriti suoi, in modo amato da Cosimo de' Medici, che avendo egli fatto murare la chiesa e convento di S. Marco, gli fece dipignere in una faccia del capitolo tutta la passione di Giesù Cristo, e dall'uno de' lati tutti i santi che sono stati capi e fondatori di religioni, mesti e piangenti a' piè della croce, e dall'altro un S. Marco Evangelista intorno alla Madre del figliuol di Dio, venutasi meno nel vedere il Salvatore del mondo crucifisso, intorno alla quale sono le Marie, che tutte dolenti la sostengono, e S. Cosimo e Damiano. Dicesi che nella figura del S. Cosimo, fra Giovanni ritrasse di naturale Nanni d'Antonio di Banco, scultore et amico suo. Di sotto a questa opera fece in un fregio, sopra la spalliera, un albero che ha San Domenico a' piedi; et in certi tondi, che circondano i rami, tutti i papi, cardinali, vescovi,

Santi e maestri di teologia, che aveva avuto insino allora la religione sua de' frati predicatori. Nella quale opera, aiutandolo i frati, con mandare per essi in diversi luoghi, fece molti ritratti di naturale, che furono questi: S. Domenico in mezzo, che tiene i rami dell'albero, papa Innocenzio quinto franzese, il beato Ugone, primo cardinale di quell'ordine, il beato Paulo Fiorentino patriarca, S. Antonino arcivescovo fiorentino, il beato Giordano tedesco, secondo generale di quell'Ordine, il beato Niccolò, il beato Remigio fiorentino, Boninsegno fiorentino martire; e tutti questi sono a man destra; a sinistra poi: Benedetto II trivisano, Giandomenico cardinale fiorentino, Pietro da Palude, patriarca ierosolimitano, Alberto Magno tedesco, il beato Raimondo di Catelogna, terzo generale dell'ordine, il beato Chiaro Fiorentino provinciale romano, S. Vincenzio di Valenza, et il [I, 360] beato Bernardo Fiorentino; le quali tutte teste sono veramente graziose e molto belle. Fece poi nel primo chiostro, sopra certi mezzi tondi, molte figure a fresco bellissime, et un crucifisso con S. Domenico a' piedi, molto lodato; e nel dormitorio, oltre molte altre cose per le celle e nella facciata de' muri, una storia del Testamento Nuovo, bella quanto più non si può dire. Ma particolarmente è bella a maraviglia la tavola dell'altar maggiore di quella chiesa, perché oltre che la Madonna muove a divozione chi la guarda, per la semplicità sua, e che i santi che le sono intorno sono simili a lei, la predella nella quale sono storie del martirio di S. Cosimo e Damiano e degl'altri, è tanto ben fatta, che non è possibile immaginarsi di poter veder mai cosa fatta con più diligenza, né le più delicate o meglio intese figurine di quelle. Dipinse similmente a S. Domenico di Fiesole, la tavola dell'altar maggiore, la quale, perché forse pareva che si guastasse è stata ritocca da altri maestri e peggiorata. Ma la predella et il ciborio del Sacramento sonosi meglio mantenuti; et infinite figurine, che in una gloria celeste vi si veggiono, sono tanto belle che paiono veramente di paradiso, né può, chi vi si accosta, saziarsi di vederle. In una capella della medesima chiesa, è di sua mano, in una tavola, la Nostra Donna annunciata dall'angelo Gabriello, con un profilo di viso tanto devoto, delicato e ben fatto, che par veramente, non da un uomo, ma fatto in paradiso; e nel campo del paese è Adamo et Eva, che furono cagione che della Vergine incarnasse il Redentore; nella predella ancora sono alcune storielle bellissime. Ma sopra tutte le cose che fece, fra Giovanni avanzò se stesso e mostrò la somma virtù sua e l'intelligenza dell'arte, in una tavola, che è nella medesima chiesa allato alla porta, entrando a man manca, nella quale Giesù Cristo incorona Nostra Donna in mezzo a un coro d'angeli, et in fra una moltitudine infinita di santi e sante, tanti in numero, tanto ben fatti e con sì varie attitudini e diverse arie di teste, che incredibile piacere e dolcezza si sente in guardarle, anzi pare che que' spiriti beati non possano essere in cielo altrimenti, o per meglio dire, se avessero corpo, non potrebbero; perciòché tutti i santi e le sante che vi sono, non solo sono vivi e con arie delicate e dolci, ma tutto il colorito di quell'opera par che sia di mano d'un santo o d'un angelo, come sono; onde a gran ragione fu sempre chiamato questo da ben religioso, frate Giovanni Angelico. Nella predella poi, le storie che vi sono della Nostra Donna e di S. Domenico, sono in quel genere divine; et io per me posso con verità affermare che non veggio mai questa opera che non mi paia cosa nuova, né me ne parto mai sazio.

Nella capella similmente della Nunziata di Firenze, che fece fare Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, dipinse i sportelli dell'armario dove stanno l'argenterie, di figure piccole, condotte con molta diligenza. Lavorò tante cose questo padre, che sono per le case de' cittadini di Firenze, che io resto qualche volta maravigliato, come tanto e tanto bene potesse, eziandio in molti anni, condurre perfettamente un uomo solo. Il molto reverendo don Vincenzio Borghini, spedalingo degl'Innocenti, ha di mano di questo padre una Nostra Donna piccola, bellissima; e Bartolomeo Gondi amatore di queste arti al pari di qual si voglia altro gentiluomo, ha un quadro grande, un piccolo et una croce di mano del medesimo. Le pitture ancora, che sono nell'arco sopra la porta di S. Domenico, sono del medesimo. Et in [I, 361] S. Trinita una tavola della sagrestia, dove è un deposto di croce, nel quale mise tanta diligenza che si può, fra le migliori cose che mai facesse, annoverare. In S. Francesco, fuor della porta di S. Miniato, è una Nunziata; et in S. Maria Novella, oltre alle cose dette, dipinse di storie piccole

il cero pasquale et alcuni reliquiari, che nelle maggiori solennità si pongono in sull'altare. Nella Badia della medesima città, fece sopra una porta del chiostro un S. Benedetto che accenna silenzio. Fece a' Linaiuoli una tavola, che è nell'uffizio dell'arte loro; et in Cortona un archetto sopra la porta della chiesa dell'Ordine suo, e similmente la tavola dell'altar maggiore. In Orvieto cominciò in una volta della capella della Madonna, in Duomo, certi profeti, che poi furono finiti da Luca da Cortona. Per la compagnia del Tempio di Firenze fece in una tavola un Cristo morto. E nella chiesa de' monaci degl'Angeli un Paradiso et un inferno di figure piccole, nel quale con bella osservanza fece i beati bellissimi e pieni di giubilo e di celeste letizia; et i dannati apparecchiati alle pene dell'inferno in varie guise mestissimi e portanti nel volto impresso il peccato e demerito loro; i beati si veggiono entrare celestemente ballando per la porta del paradiso, et i dannati da i demonii all'inferno nell'eterne pene strascinati.

Questa opera è in detta chiesa, andando verso l'altar maggiore a man ritta, dove sta il sacerdote, quando si cantano le messe, a sedere. Alle monache di San Piero martire, che oggi stanno nel monasterio di San Felice in piazza, il quale era dell'ordine di Camaldoli, fece in una tavola la Nostra Donna, S. Giovanni Battista, San Domenico, San Tommaso e San Piero martire, con figure piccole assai. Si vede anco nel tramezzo di Santa Maria Nuova una tavola di sua mano.

Per questi tanti lavori, essendo chiara per tutta Italia la fama di fra Giovanni, Papa Nicola quinto mandò per lui, et in Roma gli fece fare la cappella del palazzo, dove il papa ode la messa, con un deposto di croce et alcune storie di S. Lorenzo bellissime, e miniar alcuni libri che sono bellissimi. Nella Minerva fece la tavola dell'altar maggiore, et una Nunziata, che ora è a canto alla cappella grande, appoggiata a un muro. Fece anco per il detto papa la cappella del Sagramento in palazzo, che fu poi rovinata da Paulo terzo per dirizzarvi le scale, nella quale opera, che era eccellente in quella maniera sua, aveva lavorato in fresco alcune storie della vita di Giesù Cristo, e fattovi molti ritratti di naturale, di persone segnalate di que' tempi, i quali per avventura sarebbero oggi perduti, se il Giovio non avesse fattone ricavar questi per il suo museo: papa Nicola quinto, Federigo imperatore, che in quel tempo venne in Italia, frate Antonino, che poi fu arcivescovo di Firenze, il Biondo da Furlì e Ferrante d'Aragona. E perché al papa parve fra Giovanni, sì come era veramente, persona di santissima vita, quieta e modesta, vacando l'arcivescovado in quel tempo, di Firenze, l'aveva giudicato degno di quel grado; quando intendendo ciò il detto frate, supplicò a Sua Santità che provvedesse d'un altro, perciocché non si sentiva atto a governar popoli, ma che avendo la sua Religione un frate amorevole de' poveri, dottissimo di governo e timorato di Dio, sarebbe in lui molto meglio quella dignità collocata, che in sé. Il papa sentendo ciò, e ricordandosi che quello che diceva era vero, gli fece la grazia liberamente; e così fu fatto arcivescovo di Fiorenza frate [I, 362] Antonino dell'ordine de' predicatori, uomo veramente, per santità e dottrina, chiarissimo, et insomma tale che meritò che Adriano sesto lo canonizzasse a' tempi nostri. Fu gran bontà quella di fra Giovanni, e nel vero cosa rarissima concedere una dignità et uno onore e carico così grande, a sé offerto da un sommo pontefice, a colui che egli, con buon occhio e sincerità di cuore, ne giudicò molto più di sé degno. Apparino da questo Santo uomo i religiosi de' tempi nostri, a non tirarsi addosso quei carichi, che degnamente non possono sostenere et a cedergli a coloro che dignissimi ne sono. E volesse Dio, per tornare a fra Giovanni, sia detto con pace de' buoni, che così spendessero tutti i religiosi uomini il tempo, come fece questo padre veramente angelico, poi che spese tutto il tempo della sua vita in servizio di Dio e beneficio del mondo e del prossimo. E che più si può o deve desiderare, che acquistarsi, vivendo santamente, il regno celeste, e virtuosamente operando eterna fama nel mondo? E nel vero non poteva e non doveva discendere una somma e straordinaria virtù, come fu quella di fra Giovanni, se non in uomo di santissima vita; perciocché devono coloro

che in cose ecclesiastiche e sante s'adoperano, essere ecclesiastici e santi uomini, essendo che si vede, quando cotali cose sono operate da persone che poco credino e poco stimano la religione, che spesso fanno cadere in mente appetiti disonesti e voglie lascive; onde nasce il biasimo dell'opere del disonesto, e la lode ne l'artificio e nella virtù. Ma io non vorrei già che alcuno s'ingannasse, interpretando il goffo et inetto, devoto, et il bello e buono, lascivo; come fanno alcuni, i quali vedendo figure, o di femina o di giovane un poco più vaghe e più belle et adorne che l'ordinario, le pigliano subito e giudicano per lascive non si avedendo che a gran torto dannano il buon giudizio del pittore, il quale tiene i santi e sante, che sono celesti, tanto più belli della natura mortale, quanto avanza il cielo la terrena bellezza e l'opere nostre; e che è peggio, scuoprono l'animo loro infetto e corrotto, cavando male e voglie disoneste di quelle cose, delle quali, se e' fussino amatori dell'onesto, come in quel loro zelo sciocco vogliono dimostare, verrebbe loro disiderio del cielo e di farsi accetti al Creatore di tutte le cose, dal quale perfettissimo e bellissimo nasce ogni perfezzione e bellezza. Che farebbono, o è da credere che facciano questi cotali, se dove fussero o sono bellezze vive accompagnate da lascivi costumi, da parole dolcissime, da movimenti pieni di grazia, e da occhi che rapiscono i non ben saldi cuori, si ritrovassero, o si ritruovano, poiché la sola immagine e quasi ombra del bello, cotanto gli commove? Ma non perciò vorrei che alcuni credessero che da me fussero approvate quelle figure, che nelle chiese sono dipinte, poco meno che nude del tutto, perché in cotali si vede che il pittore non ha avuto quella considerazione che doveva al luogo; perché quando pure si ha da mostrare quanto altri sappia, si deve fare con le debite circostanze, et aver rispetto alle persone, a' tempi et ai luoghi.

Fu fra Giovanni semplice uomo e santissimo ne' suoi costumi; e questo faccia segno della bontà sua, che, volendo una mattina papa Nicola Quinto dargli desinare, si fece coscienza di mangiar della carne senza licenza del suo priore, non pensando all'autorità del pontefice. Schivò tutte le azzioni del mondo; e puro e santamente vivendo, fu de' poveri tanto amico, quanto penso [I, 363] che sia ora l'anima sua del cielo. Si esercitò continuamente nella pittura, né mai volle lavorare altre cose che di santi. Potette esser ricco e non se ne curò, anzi usava dire che la vera ricchezza non è altro che contentarsi del poco. Potette comandare a molti e non volle, dicendo esser men fatica e manco errore ubidire altrui. Fu in suo arbitrio avere dignità ne' frati e fuori, e non le stimò, affermando non cercare altra dignità che cercare di fuggire l'Inferno et accostarsi al paradiso. E di vero qual dignità si può a quella paragonare, la qual deverebbono i religiosi, anzi pur tutti gl'uomini, cercare? E che in solo Dio e nel vivere virtuosamente si ritruova? Fu umanissimo e sobrio; e castamente vivendo, da i lacci del mondo si sciolse, usando spesse fiato di dire, che chi faceva questa arte aveva bisogno di quiete e di vivere senza pensieri, e che chi fa cose di Cristo, con Cristo deve star sempre. Non fu mai veduto in collera tra i frati; il che grandissima cosa e quasi impossibile mi pare a credere; e soghignando semplicemente aveva in costume d'amonire gl'amici. Con amorevolezza incredibile, a chiunque ricercava opere da lui, diceva che ne facesse esser contento il priore, e che poi non mancherebbe. In somma fu questo non mai a bastanza lodato padre, in tutte l'opere e ragionamenti suoi umilissimo e modesto, e nelle sue pitture facile e devoto; et i santi che egli dipinse, hanno più aria e somiglianza di santi, che quegli di qualunque altro. Aveva per costume non ritoccare, né racconciar mai alcuna sua dipintura, ma lasciarle sempre in quel modo che erano venute la prima volta, per creder (secondo ch'egli diceva) che così fusse la volontà di Dio. Dicono alcuni che fra Giovanni non arebbe messo mano ai penelli, se prima non avesse fatto orazione. Non fece mai crucifisso che non si bagnasse le gote di lagrime; onde si conosce ne i volti e nell'attitudini delle sue figure la bontà del sincero e grande animo suo nella religione cristiana. Morì d'anni sessantotto nel 1455, e lasciò suoi discepoli Benozzo fiorentino, che imitò sempre la sua maniera; Zanobi Strozzi, che fece quadri e tavole per tutta Fiorenza, per le case de' cittadini; e particolarmente una tavola, posta oggi nel tramezzo di S. Maria Novella, allato a quella di fra Giovanni, et una in S.

Benedetto, monasterio de' monaci di Camaldoli, fuor della porta a Pinti, oggi rovinato; la quale è al presente nel monasterio degl'Angeli, nella chiesetta di S. Michele, inanzi che si entri nella principale, a man ritta andando verso l'altare, appoggiata al muro; e similmente una tavola in S. Lucia, alla capella de' Nasi; et un'altra in S. Romeo et in guardaroba del duca è il ritratto di Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, e quello di Bartolomeo Valori in uno stesso quadro, di mano del medesimo. Fu anco discepolo di fra Giovanni[,] Gentile da Fabbriano e Domenico di Michelino, il quale in S. Apolinare di Firenze fece la tavola all'altare di S. Zanobi et altre molte dipinture. Fu sepolto fra Giovanni dai suoi frati nella Minerva di Roma, lungo l'entrata del fianco, appresso la sagrestia in un sepolcro di marmo tondo, e sopra esso egli, ritratto di naturale. Nel marmo si legge intagliato questo epitaffio.

*Non mihi sit laudi, quod eram velut alter Apelles;  
Sed quod lucra tuis omnia, Christe, dabam:  
Altera nam terris opera extant, altera coelo.  
Urbs me Ioannem flos tulit Etrurie.*

[I, 364] Sono di mano di fra Giovanni in S. Maria del Fiore due grandissimi libri miniati divinamente, i quali sono tenuti con molta venerazione e riccamente adornati, né si veggiono se non ne' giorni solennissimi.

*(The following addition to the vita of Fra Angelico was not included by Bezzi in his translation.)*

Fu ne' medesimi tempi di fra Giovanni, celebre e famoso miniatore, un Attavante fiorentino, del quale non so altro cognome; il quale fra molte altre cose miniò un Silio Italico che è oggi in S. Giovanni e Polo di Vinezia; della quale opera non tacerò alcuni particolari, sì perché sono degni d'essere in cognizione degl'artefici, sì perché non si truova, ch'io sappia, altra opera di costui; né anco di questa avrei notizia, se l'affizione che a queste nobili arti porta il molto reverendo Messer Cosimo Bartoli, gentiluomo fiorentino, non mi avesse di ciò dato notizia, acciò non stia come sepolta la virtù dell'Attavante. In detto libro dunque, la figura di Silio ha in testa una celata cristata d'oro et una corona di lauro; indosso una corazza azzurra tocca d'oro all'antica; nella man destra un libro, e la sinistra tiene sopra una spada corta. Sopra la corazza ha una clamide rossa affibbiata con un gruppo dinanzi, e gli pende dalle spalle, fregiata d'oro; il rovescio della quale clamide apparisce cangiante e ricamato a rosette d'oro. Ha i calzaretti gialli e posa in sul piè ritto in una nicchia. La figura, che dopo in questa opera rappresenta Scipione Africano, ha indosso una corazza gialla, i cui pendagli e maniche di colore azzurro, sono tutti ricamati d'oro; ha in capo una celata con due aliette et un pesce per cresta. L'effigie del giovane è bellissima e bionda; et alzando il braccio destro fieramente, ha in mano una spada nuda; e nella stanca tiene la guaina, che è rossa e ricamata d'oro. Le calze sono di color verde e semplici e la clamide, che è azzurra, ha il di dentro rosso con un fregio attorno d'oro; et agrupata avanti alla fontanella, lascia il dinanzi tutto aperto, cadendo dietro con bella grazia. Questo giovane, che è in una nicchia di mischi verdi e bertini con calzari azzurri ricamati d'oro, guarda con ferocità inestimabile Annibale, che gli è all'incontro nell'altra faccia del libro. E la figura di questo Annibale, d'età di anni 36 in circa, fa due crespe sopra il naso a guisa di adirato e stizzoso, e guarda ancor essa fiso Scipione. Ha in testa una celata gialla, per cimiero un drago verde e giallo; e per ghirlanda un serpe; posa in sul piè stanco, et alzato il braccio destro, tiene con esso un'asta d'un pilo antico, o vero partigianetta; ha la corazza azzurra et i pendagli parte azzurri e parte gialli, con le maniche cangianti



d'azzurro e rosso, et i calzaretti gialli. La clamide è cangiante di rosso e giallo, aggruppata in sulla spalla destra e foderata di verde; e tenendo la mano stanca in sulla spada, posa in una nicchia di mischi gialli, bianchi e cangianti. Nell'altra faccia è papa Nicola quinto, ritratto di naturale, con un manto cangiante pagonazzo e rosso, e tutto ricamato d'oro; è senza barba in profilo affatto e guarda verso il principio dell'opera, che è dirincontro; e con la man destra accenna verso quella, quasi maravigliandosi; la nicchia è verde, bianca e rossa. Nel fregio poi sono certe mezze figurine in un componimento fatto d'ovati e tondi, et altre cose simili con una infinità d'ucelletti e puttini tanto ben fatti, che non si può più disiderare. Vi sono appresso in simile maniera Annone cartaginese, Asdrubale, Lelio, Massinissa, C. Salinatore, Nerone, Sempronio, M. Marcello, Q. Fabio, l'altro Scipione e Vibio. Nella fine del libro si vede un Marte sopra una carretta antica, tirata da due cavalli rossi. [I, 365] Ha in testa una celata rossa e d'oro, con due aliette nel braccio sinistro, uno scudo antico che lo sporge inanzi, e nella destra una spada nuda. Posa sopra il piè manco solo, tenendo l'altro in aria. Ha una corazza all'antica tutta rossa e d'oro, e simili sono le calze et i calzaretti. La clamide è azzurra di sopra, e di sotto tutta verde ricamata d'oro. La carretta è coperta di drappo rosso ricamato d'oro, con una banda d'ermellini attorno et è posta in una campagna fiorita e verde, ma fra scogli e sassi. E da lontano vede paesi e città in un aere d'azzurro eccellentissimo. Nell'altra faccia un Nettunno giovane ha il vestito a guisa d'una camicia lunga, ma ricamata a torno del colore che è la terretta verde; la carnagione è pallidissima; nella destra tiene un tridente piccoletto e con la sinistra s'alza la vesta; posa con amendue i piedi sopra la carretta, che è coperta di rosso, ricamato d'oro, e fregiato intorno di zibellini. Questa carretta ha quattro ruote, come quella del Marte, ma è tirata da quattro delfini, sonvi tre ninfe marine, due putti et infiniti pesci, fatti tutti d'un acquerello simile alla terretta et in aere bellissime. Vi si vede dopo Cartagine disperata, la quale è una donna ritta e scapigliata, e di sopra vestita di verde e dal fianco in giù aperta la veste, foderata di drappo rosso ricamata d'oro, per la quale apertura si viene a vedere altra veste, ma sottile e cangiante di paonazzo e bianco. Le maniche sono rosse e d'oro, con certi sgonfi e svolazi, che fa la vesta di sopra; porge la mano stanca verso Roma che l'è all'incontro, quasi dicendo: "Che vuoi tu? Io ti risponderò"; e nella destra ha una spada nuda, come infuriata. I calzari sono azzurri, e posa sopra uno scoglio in mezzo del mare circondato da un'aria bellissima. Roma è una giovane tanto bella quanto può uomo immaginarsi, scompigliata, con certe trecce fatte con infinita grazia e vestita di rosso puramente, con un solo ricamo da piede. Il rovescio della veste è giallo, e la veste di sotto, che per l'aperto si vede, è di cangiante paonazzo e bianco; i calzari sono verdi, nella man destra ha uno scettro, nella sinistra un mondo, e posa ancora essa sopra uno scoglio, in mezzo d'un aere, che non può essere più bello. Ma sì bene io mi sono ingegnato come ho saputo il meglio, di mostrare con quanto artificio fussero queste figure da Attavante lavorate, niuno creda però che io abbia detto pure una parte di quello che si può dire della bellezza loro, essendo che per cose di que' tempi, non si può di minio veder meglio, né lavoro fatto con più invenzione, giudizio e disegno; e sopra tutto i colori non possono essere più belli, né più delicatamente a i luoghi loro posti, con graziosissima grazia.

#### FINE DELLA VITA DI FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE

## APPENDIX III:

VASARI, *Vita di Fra Angelico*, 1550, in numbered sections

*The Torrentina vita of 1550 is here divided into numbered sections to facilitate comparing it with the second edition of Vasari's vita of Fra Angelico contained in the Giuntina (1568).*

FRA' GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE  
Pittor Fiorentino

[1550; Section 1:] Certamente chi lavora opere ecclesiastiche e sante, doverrebbe egli ancora del continuo essere ecclesiastico e santo, perché si vede che, quando elle sono operate da persone che poco credino e manco stimino la religione, fanno spesso cadere in mente appetiti disonesti e voglie lascive; onde nasce il biasimo dell'opre nel disonesto, e la lode nell'artificio e nella virtù. Ma io non vo' già che alcuni s'ingannino, interpretando il devoto per goffo et inetto, come fanno certi che, veggendo pitture dove sia una figura o di femmina o di giovane, un poco piú vaga e piú bella [368] e piú adorna d'ordinario, le pigliano e giudicano subito per lascive. Né si avvegano che non solo dannano il buon giudizio del pittore, il quale tiene de' santi e sante che son celesti, e tanto piú belle della natura mortale quanto avanza il cielo la terrena bellezza dell'opre nostre, ma ancora scuoprono l'animo loro essere infetto e corrotto, cavando male e voglie non oneste di quello; che se e' fussino amatori della onestà come in quel loro zelo sciocco voglion mostrare, eglino ne caverebbono desiderio del cielo e laude del sommo Iddio, da 'l quale perfettissimo e bellissimo nasce ogni bellezza delle creature sue.

[1550; Section 2:] Veramente fu fra' Giovanni santissimo e semplice ne' suoi costumi, e questo solo faccia segno della bontà sua, perciocché volendo una matina Papa Nicolò V dargli desinare, si faceva coscienza mangiar de la carne, senza licenza del priore, non pensando alla autorità del pontefice. Schifò tutte le azzioni del mondo, e pura e santamente vivendo, fu de' poveri tanto amico, quanto pensò che l'anima sua avesse a essere del cielo. Egli tenne del continuo in esercizio il corpo occupato nella pittura, né mai volle lavorar cose altro che di santi. Potette esser ricco, e non se ne curò, anzi diceva la vera ricchezza essere il contentarsi di poco. Possette comandare a molti, e lo schifò, dicendo esser men fatica e manco errore ubbidire altrui. Puotè aver dignità ne' frati e fuori, e non le stimò, dicendo la maggior dignità è cercar fuggire lo inferno et accostarsi al paradiso.

[1550; Section 3:] Era umanissimo e molto sobrio, e castamente vivendo, da i lacci del mondo si sciolse, usando dire spesso che chi faceva questa arte aveva di bisogno di quiete, e di vivere senza pensieri, e d'attendere all'anima, e chi fa cose di Cristo, con Cristo debbe star sempre. Dicesi che non fu mai veduto in collera tra' [369] frati, il che grandissima cosa mi pare a credere, e che sempre sogghignando semplicemente ammoniva gli amici. E con amorevolezza a ognuno che ricercava opre da llui, diceva che ne facesse esser contento il priore, et egli sempre farebbe cosa che gli fosse in piacere. I suoi ragionamenti erano umilissimi e bassi, e l'opre sue furono sempre tenute bellissime et eccellenti.

[1550; Section 4:] Fu chiamato al secolo Guido detto Guidolino; poi frate di San Marco di Fiorenza, fu nominato frate Giovanni Angelico de' frati predicatori. Costui fu nelle sue opere molto facile e devoto; et invero si può dire che i santi non abbino aria piú modesta da santi che quegli che da esso furono lavorati.

[1550; Section 5:] Fu costui al secolo pittore e miniatore, et in San Marco di Fiorenza sono alcuni libri miniati di sua mano; e perché era di coscienza e quieto, per sodisfazione dell'anima sua si ridusse a la religione, per vivere piú onesto, con bonissimo animo di lasciare il mondo in tutto e per tutto.

[1550; Section 6:] Lavorò in fresco cose assai, et in tavola similmente; e nella cappella della Nunziata di Fiorenza dipinse l'armario dell'argenterie che in detta cappella sono, e condusse infinito numero di storie di figurine piccole con somma diligenza.

[1550; Section 7:] A San Domenico da Fiesole sono alcune sue tavole, ma una Nunziata fra l'altre, che nella predella dello altare ha storie piccole di San Domenico e della Nostra Donna, che diligentissime e bellissime sono; così l'arco sopra la porta di essa chiesa.

[1550; Section 8:] In Fiorenza fece a Cosimo de' Medici la tavola dell'altar maggiore di San Marco, et in fresco il capitolo di detti frati, pagato da Cosimo, e sopra ogni porta nel chiostro mezze figure et un Crocifisso, et in tutte le celle de' frati una storia del Testamento Nuovo per ciascuna.

[1550; Section 9:] Fece in Santa Trinita nella sagrestia una tavola d'un Deposito di Croce, nella quale usò gran [370] diligenza, et è delle piú belle cose che facesse mai; et una altra tavola, a San Francesco fuor della porta a San Miniato, d'una Nunziata.

[1550; Section 10:] In Santa Maria Novella fece il cereo pasquale dipinto di storie piccole et altri reliquieri con istorie di figure da tenere sull'altare. Et in Badia sopra una porta del chiostro, un San Benedetto che accenna silenzio. Fece ancora a' Linaiuoli una tavola, la quale è nell'Arte loro. Dipinse a Cortona uno archetto sopra la porta della chiesa del convento loro, similmente la tavola della chiesa.

[1550; Section 11:] Ad Orvieto cominciò una volta con certi profeti, in duomo alla cappella della Madonna; la quale fu poi finita da Luca da Cortona.

[1550; Section 12:] Fece medesimamente alla Compagnia del Tempio in Fiorenza una tavola d'un Cristo morto; e negli Agnoli di Fiorenza un Paradiso et un Inferno di figure piccole. Et in Santa Maria Nuova al tramezzo della chiesa si vede ancora una tavola sua.

[1550; Section 13:] Per questi tanti lavori si divulgò per la Italia molto altamente la fama di questo maestro, giudicato da tutti non manco santo che eccellente. Avendo egli in consuetudine di non ritoccare o racconciare alcuna sua dipintura, ma lasciarle sempre in quel modo che erano venute la prima volta, per credere (secondo che egli diceva) che così fusse la volontà di Dio. Dicono alcuni che fra Giovanni non arebbe preso i pennelli se prima non avesse fatto orazione. Non fece mai Crocifisso, che e' non si bagnasse le gote di lagrime. Onde certamente si conosce nelle attitudini delle figure sue, la bontà del grande animo suo nella religion cristiana.

[1550; Section 14:] Perciò sentí la fama sua Papa Niccola V e mandato per lui, et a Roma condottolo, gli fece fare la cappella del palazzo, dove il papa ode la messa, con un Deposto di Croce e con istorie bellissime di San Lorenzo, dove ritrasse Papa Niccola di naturale.

[1550; Section 15:] Fece ancora nella Minerva la tavola dello altar maggiore [371] con una Nunziata, che ora è locata allato alla cappella grande a canto un muro.

[1550; Section 16:] E la cappella del Sagramento in palazzo per detto papa, ruinata al tempo di Papa Paulo III per drizzarvi le scale; cosa molto eccellente nella maniera sua.

[1550; Section 17:] E perché al papa pareva persona di santissima vita, quieto e modesto, et aveva rispetto et amore alla sua bontà, vacando in quel tempo l'Arcivescovado di Fiorenza, ordinò che fra' Giovanni ne fusse investito, parendogli ch'egli più d'ogni altro degno ne dovessi essere. Intendendo ciò, il frate supplicò a Sua Santità che provvedesse d'uno altro, perciocché egli non era buono a governar popoli; ma che nella religione avevano un frate amorevole de' poveri, il quale era persona santa, dottissima e di grandissimo governo, il quale amava egli quanto se stesso. Per il che se e' piacesse a Sua Santità di darlo a questo tale, lo riputerebbe propriamente, come se e' fusse collocato nella stessa persona sua. Il papa, sentendo questo, gli fece la grazia liberamente; e così fu fatto Arcivescovo di Fiorenza frate Antonio dello ordine de' predicatori, che da Papa Adriano VI fu poi canonizzato ne' tempi nostri.

[1550; Section 18:] Era fra' Giovanni tanto continovo nella arte, che e' lavorò infinite cose, le quali si sono smarrite, e pure tuttavia se ne ritruova qualcuna in diversi luoghi. Aiutò sempre i poveri de le sue fatiche, né mai abbandonò la religione.

[1550; Section 19:] Morí di anni LXVIII nel MCCCCLV.

[1550; Section 20:] E lasciò suoi discepoli Benozzo Fiorentino, che imitò sempre la sua maniera; Zanobi Strozzi, che fece quadri e tavole per tutta Fiorenza per le case de' cittadini, e particolarmente una tavola posta oggi nel tramezzo di Santa Maria Nuova allato a quella di fra' Giovanni; Gentile da Fabbriano, e parimente Domenico di Michelino, il quale in Santo Apolinare [372] fece la tavola a lo altare di San Zanobi, e nel convento degli Agnoli un Giudizio con infinito numero di figure.

[1550; Section 21:] Fu sepolto fra' Giovanni da' frati suoi nella Minerva di Roma, lungo la entrata del fianco presso alla sagrestia, in un sepolcro di marmo tondo, dove si vede intagliato questo epitaffio:

NON MIHI SIT LAVDI QVOD ERAM VELVT ALTER APELLES  
 SED QVOD LVCRA TVIS OMNIA CHRISTE DABAM  
 ALTERA NAM TERRIS OPERA EXTANT ALTERA COELO.  
 VRBS ME IOANNEM FLOS TVLIT AETHRVRIAE.

## APPENDIX IV:

*THE REVISION AND EXPANSION OF VASARI'S FIRST REDACTION OF THE FRA ANGELICO  
VITA (1550) IN THE SECOND EDITION OF VASARI'S VITE (1568)*

In comparing the two editions of Vasari's *vita* of Angelico (1550: Torrentiniana; 1568: Giuntina), two initial observations are important:

(1) all of the parts of the Torrentiniana have been used in the Giuntina, although their order has been changed, and the texts have most often been revised and, in many instances, expanded;

(2) there is much new material in the Giuntina. The number of words has more than doubled (Torrentiniana: 1419; Giuntina: 3012).

Thus the new edition of the Angelico *vita* entails a fundamental reordering of the material. Above the Torrentiniana text is divided into numbered sections: 1-21 (APPENDIX III). These reappear in one form or another in the Giuntina in the following order: sections 4, 5, 8, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 1, 2, 3, 18, 19, 20, and 21. New material is distributed irregularly through this new scheme. Briefly stated, what has taken place is that the opening material of the Torrentiniana, consisting of Vasari's moralising exordium and much of the characterization of Fra Angelico as a person, in part anecdotal, has been moved towards the end of the *vita*, immediately preceding the treatment of Angelico's death, disciples, and sepulchre, with its epitaph. Thus the Giuntina opens much more expeditiously, mentioning briefly the friar's secular name and his artistic and religious vocation, before treating his early and later works in much more detail than the Torrentiniana had done, and with the addition of further works and new information and considerations. Vincenzo Borghini was sceptical of Vasari's moralising introductions, but, in the instance of the life of Angelico, this material was not omitted, but moved to a later point in the text. Indeed the moralising component and the identification of the artist with his religious vocation was expanded and strengthened in the Giuntina, with a new emphasis upon the ecclesiastic dimension and upon Angelico's personal *bontà*, and even upon his saintly character (1568: "questo Santo uomo"; "questo padre veramente angelico").

There follow the various sections of the Torrentiniana, rearranged into the order in which these texts reappear, usually with modifications, in the Giuntina. The section numbers refer to the order of the sections in the Torrentiniana. All of the text parts of the Torrentiniana are present in this rearrangement.

[1550; Section 4:] Fu chiamato al secolo Guido detto Guidolino; poi frate di San Marco di Fiorenza, fu nominato frate Giovanni Angelico de' frati predicatori. Costui fu nelle sue opere molto facile e devoto; et invero si può dire che i santi non abbino aria piú modesta da santi che quegli che da esso furono lavorati.

[1550; Section 5:] Fu costui al secolo pittore e miniatore, et in San Marco di Fiorenza sono alcuni libri miniati di sua mano; e perché era di coscienza e quieto, per sodisfazione dell'anima sua si ridusse a la religione, per vivere piú onesto, con bonissimo animo di lasciare il mondo in tutto e per tutto.

[1550; Section 8:] In Fiorenza fece a Cosimo de' Medici la tavola dell'altar maggiore di San Marco, et in fresco il capitolo di detti frati, pagato da Cosimo, e sopra ogni porta nel chiostro mezze figure et un Crocifisso, et in tutte le celle de' frati una storia del Testamento Nuovo per ciascuna.

[1550; Section 6:] Lavorò in fresco cose assai, et in tavola similmente; e nella cappella della Nunziata di Fiorenza dipinse l'armario dell'argenterie che in detta cappella sono, e condusse infinito numero di storie di figurine piccole con somma diligenza.

[1550; Section 7:] A San Domenico da Fiesole sono alcune sue tavole, ma una Nunziata fra l'altre, che nella predella dello altare ha storie piccole di San Domenico e della Nostra Donna, che diligentissime e bellissime sono; così l'arco sopra la porta di essa chiesa.

[1550; Section 9:] Fece in Santa Trinita nella sagrestia una tavola d'un Deposito di Croce, nella quale usò gran [370] diligenza, et è delle piú belle cose che facesse mai; et una altra tavola, a San Francesco fuor della porta a San Miniato, d'una Nunziata.

[1550; Section 10:] In Santa Maria Novella fece il cereo pasquale dipinto di storie piccole et altri reliquieri con istorie di figure da tenere sull'altare. Et in Badia sopra una porta del chiostro, un San Benedetto che accenna silenzio. Fece ancora a' Linaiuoli una tavola, la quale è nell'Arte loro. Dipinse a Cortona uno archetto sopra la porta della chiesa del convento loro, similmente la tavola della chiesa.

[1550; Section 11:] Ad Orvieto cominciò una volta con certi profeti, in duomo alla cappella della Madonna; la quale fu poi finita da Luca da Cortona.

[1550; Section 12:] Fece medesimamente alla Compagnia del Tempio in Fiorenza una tavola d'un Cristo morto; e negli Agnoli di Fiorenza un Paradiso et un Inferno di figure piccole. Et in Santa Maria Nuova al tramezzo della chiesa si vede ancora una tavola sua.

[1550; Section 13:] Per questi tanti lavori si divulgò per la Italia molto altamente la fama di questo maestro, giudicato da tutti non manco santo che eccellente. Avendo egli in consuetudine di non ritoccare o racconciare alcuna sua dipintura, ma lasciarle sempre in quel modo che erano venute la prima volta, per credere (secondo che egli diceva) che così fusse la volontà di Dio. Dicono alcuni che fra Giovanni non arebbe preso i pennelli se prima non avesse fatto orazione. Non fece mai Crocifisso, che e' non si bagnasse le gote di lagrime. Onde certamente si conosce nelle attitudini delle figure sue, la bontà del grande animo suo nella religion cristiana.

[1550; Section 14:] Perciò sentí la fama sua Papa Niccola V e mandato per lui, et a Roma condottolo, gli fece fare la cappella del palazzo, dove il papa ode la messa, con un Deposto di Croce e con istorie bellissime di San Lorenzo, dove ritrasse Papa Niccola di naturale.

[1550; Section 15:] Fece ancora nella Minerva la tavola dello altar maggiore [371] con una Nunziata, che ora è locata allato alla cappella grande a canto un muro.

[1550; Section 16:] E la cappella del Sagramento in palazzo per detto papa, ruinata al tempo di Papa Paulo III per drizzarvi le scale; cosa molto eccellente nella maniera sua.

[1550; Section 17:] E perché al papa pareva persona di santissima vita, quieto e modesto, et aveva rispetto et amore alla sua bontà, vacando in quel tempo l'Arcivescovado di Fiorenza, ordinò che fra' Giovanni ne fusse investito, parendogli ch'egli piú d'ogni altro degno ne dovessi essere. Intendendo ciò, il frate supplicò a Sua Santità che provvedesse d'uno altro, perciocché egli non era buono a governar popoli; ma che nella religione avevano un frate amorevole de' poveri, il quale era persona santa, dottissima e di grandissimo governo, il quale amava egli quanto se stesso. Per il che se e' piacesse a Sua Santità di darlo a questo tale, lo riputerebbe propriamente, come se e' fusse collocato nella stessa persona sua. Il papa, sentendo questo, gli fece la grazia liberamente; e così fu fatto Arcivescovo di Fiorenza frate Antonio dello ordine de' predicatori, che da Papa Adriano VI fu poi canonizzato ne' tempi nostri.

[1550; Section 1:] Certamente chi lavora opere ecclesiastiche e sante, doverrebbe egli ancora del continuo essere ecclesiastico e santo, perché si vede che, quando elle sono operate da persone che poco credino e manco stimino la religione, fanno spesso cadere in mente appetiti disonesti e voglie lascive; onde nasce il biasimo dell'opre nel disonesto, e la lode nell'artificio e nella virtù. Ma io non vo' già che alcuni s'ingannino, interpretando il devoto per goffo et inetto, come fanno certi che, veggendo pitture dove sia una figura o di femmina o di giovane, un poco piú vaga e piú bella [368] e piú adorna d'ordinario, le pigliano e giudicano subito per lascive. Né si avveggano che non solo dannano il buon giudizio del pittore, il quale tiene de' santi e sante che son celesti, e tanto piú belle della natura mortale quanto avanza il cielo la terrena bellezza dell'opere nostre, ma ancora scuoprono l'animo loro essere infetto e corrotto, cavando male e voglie non oneste di quello; che se e' fussino amatori della onestà come in quel loro zelo sciocco voglion mostrare, eglino ne caverebbono desiderio del cielo e laude del sommo Iddio, da 'l quale perfettissimo e bellissimo nasce ogni bellezza delle creature sue.

[1550; Section 2:] Veramente fu fra' Giovanni santissimo e semplice ne' suoi costumi, e questo solo faccia segno della bontà sua, perciocché volendo una matina Papa Nicolò V dargli desinare, si faceva coscienza mangiar de la carne, senza licenza del priore, non pensando alla autorità del pontefice. Schifò tutte le azzioni del mondo, e pura e santamente vivendo, fu de' poveri tanto amico, quanto pensò che l'anima sua avesse a essere del cielo. Egli tenne del continuo in esercizio il corpo occupato nella pittura, né mai volle lavorar cose altro che di santi. Potette esser ricco, e non se ne curò, anzi diceva la vera ricchezza essere il contentarsi di poco. Possette comandare a molti, e lo schifò, dicendo esser men fatica e manco errore ubbidire altrui. Puotè aver dignità ne' frati e fuori, e non le stimò, dicendo la maggior dignità è cercar fuggire lo inferno et accostarsi al paradiso.

[1550; Section 3:] Era umanissimo e molto sobrio, e castamente vivendo, da i lacci del mondo si sciolse, usando dire spesso che chi faceva questa arte aveva di bisogno di quiete, e di vivere senza pensieri, e d'attendere all'anima, e chi fa cose di Cristo, con Cristo debbe star sempre. Dicesi che non fu mai veduto in collera tra' [369] frati, il che grandissima cosa mi

pare a credere, e che sempre sogghignando semplicemente ammoniva gli amici. E con amorevolezza a ognuno che ricercava opre da lui, diceva che ne facesse esser contento il priore, et egli sempre farebbe cosa che gli fosse in piacere. I suoi ragionamenti erano umilissimi e bassi, e l'opre sue furono sempre tenute bellissime et eccellenti.

[1550; Section 18:] Era fra' Giovanni tanto continovo nella arte, che e' lavorò infinite cose, le quali si sono smarrite, e pure tuttavia se ne ritruova qualcuna in diversi luoghi. Aiutò sempre i poveri de le sue fatiche, né mai abbandonò la religione.

[1550; Section 19:] Morí di anni lxxviii nel MCCCCLV.

[1550; Section 20:] E lasciò suoi discepoli Benozzo Fiorentino, che imitò sempre la sua maniera; Zanobi Strozzi, che fece quadri e tavole per tutta Fiorenza per le case de' cittadini, e particolarmente una tavola posta oggi nel tramezzo di Santa Maria Nuova allato a quella di fra' Giovanni; Gentile da Fabbriano, e parimente Domenico di Michelino, il quale in Santo Apolinare [372] fece la tavola a lo altare di San Zanobi, e nel convento degli Agnoli un Giudizio con infinito numero di figure.

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 ALTERA NAM TERRIS OPERA EXTANT ALTERA COELO.  
 VRBS ME IOANNEM FLOS TVLIT AETHRVRAE.

The expansion of the number of works by Angelico which are mentioned in the Giuntina is notable. Among them are illuminated manuscripts at San Domenico in Fiesole and a panel at the Certosa of Florence. Referring to the latter work, it is mentioned that it is among Angelico's earliest works, and there are identified the patron or name of the chapel where it was found, the material support, and the subject matter of the pala, including the identities of the figures and their actions, as well as the subjects painted on the predella. This exactitude and specificity is typical of the additions found in the Giuntina. New also are frescoes of the Saints Lawrence, Mary Magdalene, Zanobius, and Benedict on the choir screen of the Dominican church of S. Maria Novella in Florence. They are positioned "next to the door facing the Choir", and this illustrates a further trait characteristic of the Giuntina additions, the detailed indication of the locations of paintings within the architecture of churches, a trait which may suggest the participation of churchmen in formulating the new text. This is not intrinsically unlikely, for Vasari's helpers and advisors were predominately ecclesiastics.

Similar is the treatment of a further 'new' work in S. Maria Novella: "On the doors of the old organ he painted on cloth an Annunciation, which is now in the Convent, opposite to the entrance of the lower dormitory, between the two cloisters." Again, almost an excess of information, at least for Vasari himself, but these are details of interest to churchmen. The participation of ecclesiastics in artistic and historical research is directly testified to in another new passage concerning Angelico's works in S. Marco at Florence. On a frieze with a Tree of St. Dominic, which Angelico painted there, he was able to include numerous portraits (St. Dominic, Pope Innocent V, the Beato Ugoni, the Beato Paolo, Sant'Antonino, Giordano



Tedesco, the Beato Niccolò, the Beato Remigio, Boninsegno the Martyr, Benedict XI, a Florentine Cardinal Giandomenico, Pietro da Palude, Albertus Magnus, Raimondo the Catalan, the Beato Chiaro, St. Vincent of Vanence, and the Beato Bernardo), owing to “the assistance of the brethren, who collected information from different places.” The friars of the order, Angelico’s brethren, have thus obtained copies of portraits of these men from various places for Fra Angelico to use in portraying these men in his painting. The person who relates the names of these men also mentions with exactitude their offices in the church and the places where they served. In the additions of the Giuntina, the scenes represented in the predellas also appear to be uniformly specified. In the Torrentiniana, predella representations are mentioned only in a single instance. Thus is obtained a further indication of a rigorous and systematic informant.

The re-elaboration of the following passage in the Torrentiniana is symptomatic. Where, in 1550, we read, “e nella cappella della Nunziata di Fiorenza dipinse l’armario dell’argenterie che in detta cappella sono, e condusse infinito numero di storie di figurine piccole con somma diligenza”, in 1568, the same passage reads: “Nella capella similmente della Nunziata di Firenze, che fece fare Piero di Cosimo de’ Medici, dipinse i sportelli dell’armario dove stanno l’argenterie, di figure piccole, condotte con molta diligenza.” The most important addition is perhaps the name of the Medici patron, Piero di Cosimo, in line with the heightened Medicean orientation of the Giuntina, but the object painted (1550: “l’armario”) is more exactly specified: “i sportelli dell’armario”, and the diminutive and pleonastic formulation “figurine piccole” becomes a more sober and dignified “figure piccole”, as though Vasari’s ‘figurine’ did not quite please a more literate and sophisticated reader.

In describing, for the first time in the Giuntina, the high altar of S. Domenico at Fiesole, it is observed that it, “having probably shown signs of decay”, “has been retouched by other painters, and somewhat injured, but the Predella and the Ciborium of the Holy Sacrament are better preserved, and an infinite number of small figures, seen in celestial glory, are so beautiful that they really appear to belong to Heaven, and no one is ever sated with beholding them” (“*Dipinse similmente a S. Domenico di Fiesole, la tavola dell’altar maggiore, la quale, perché forse pareva che si guastasse è stata ritocca da altri maestri e peggiorata. Ma la predella et il ciborio del Sacramento sonosi meglio mantenuti; et infinite figurine, che in una gloria celeste vi si veggiono, sono tanto belle che paiono veramente di paradiso, né può, chi vi si accosta, saziarsi di vederle.*”). Here observation of condition and restoration joins with liturgical observation and aesthetic evaluation.

Among the additions in the Giuntina is the observation that the “Very Reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, Superintendent of the Hospital of the Innocents, has a most beautiful little picture representing the Virgin.” This perhaps testifies to the interest of Vasari’s principal advisor in the preparation of the second edition of the *vite* in the painter Giovanni da Fiesole, and Vasari doubtless had seen Borghini’s picture, as had other of his friends, among them Silvano Razzi, of the nearby monastery of the Angeli. In the Church of the Friars of the Angeli, the Giuntina reports in greater detail “a Paradise and a Hell in small figures.” – “This work is in the same church towards the great Altar at the right hand, where the priest sits when Mass is sung.” Where the priest sits during the Mass is rather manifestly a point of ecclesiastical interest, more or less irrelevant to the consideration of Fra Angelico and his art, but doubtless of interest to Vasari’s informant and reviser. At the end of the life of Angelico, when his disciples are mentioned, the monastery of the Angeli reappears, in an addition of the Giuntina. One of Zanobi Strozzi’s pictures is reported: it was once in the now ruined Convent of S. Benedetto of the Order of the Camaldoli, beyond the Porta a Pinti (Florence). “It was, however, transferred to the Convent of the Angeli, in the small Church of S. Michele (situated

before the principal Church), and placed against the wall at the right hand side, going towards the Altar.” This is a very detailed and informed account of a Camaldolese painting and its provenance, including its removal to the Angeli and placement in the now forgotten fore-church of S. Michele on the worshiper’s right hand wall, including the distinction between the liturgical left and right and that of the beholder, or worshiper. These exact references to the location and positioning of paintings in the Angeli were possibly owed to Silvano Razzi, who collaborated on the Giuntina, working closely in conjunction with his and Vasari’s friend, Vincenzo Borghini.

As Girolamo Razzi, Silvano Razzi (1527-1611) began his adult life as a secular writer, before entering the Camaldolese Order in November of 1559. By 1566, he was dwelling as a monk at S. Maria degli Angeli, where he subsequently became Abbot. Razzi was closely associated with Benedetto Varchi, and he wrote many religious books, including numerous *vite* of saints. In 1588, it is usually said, Silvano Razzi’s brother, Serafino, a Dominican friar (as was Angelico), wrote that Silvano had practically written Vasari’s *Vite*, (“la maggior parte delle Vite de’ Pittori, che sono stampate sotto il nome di Giorgio Vasari”: *Vite dei santi e beati del sacro ordine dei frati predicatori (...) con aggiunta di molte vite, che nella prima impressione non erano*, Firenze: Bartolomeo Sermartelli, 1588, pp. 26f.; cf. pp. 231f. and Kallab, 1908, pp. 401f.). This is doubtless an exaggerated claim, and it is generally discounted completely. It may, however, be a reaction to Vasari’s suppression of the extent to which he was helped (cf. Kallab, p. 398). The same text is also found in the first edition of Serafino Razzi’s *Vite dei santi e beati (...)*, Firenze: Sermartelli, 1577, p. 25, also edited by Silvano Razzi; cf. p. 223, in: “Vita di Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, huomo di Santa Vita, e Pittore eccellentissimo.”: “Ma percioche quanto appartiene all’arte della pittura, è stato detto di fra Giovanni (il quale per la sua bontà è da molti chiamato Fra Giovanni Angelico) tutto quello, che di lui si è potuto sapere delle sue opere eccellentissime da chi ha scritto le vite de’ Pittori per lo signor Cavalier Giorgio Vasaro, non né dirò qui altro [...]”). The claims of Serafino may possibly be owed to Silvano himself, who in any event did not censure them and who was responsible for the printing of the book and who gave it the “ultima mano” (see ‘Preface’, especially p. 1). See further Ugo Scoti-Bertinelli, *Giorgio Vasari scrittore*, Pisa: Nistri, 1905 (online at [archive.org](http://archive.org)), pp. 19, 67, 77, 99-103, 111, 124, 139 (with many references to earlier literature).

Silvano Razzi contributed an addendum, “La descrizione del Sacro Ermo di Camaldoli”, to a work he translated: *Vita e regola del padre santissimo Benedetto* (Firenze 1593). Here are found two passages relating to Giorgio Vasari’s paintings at Camaldoli (pp. 281-282, 295-296; see catalogue of the exhibition, *Giorgio Vasari*, Arezzo 1981, p. 194 [M.D.D.]). They merit close attention, and, if they are characteristic of Razzi’s writings (many of which may be found online), they speak in favour of Razzi’s participation in the Giuntina *vita* of Fra Angelico:

“All’Altare maggiore di detta Chiesa, alquale si saglie per alcuni gradi, era una Tavola molto antica, et assai divota, quando pochi mesi sono deliberarono i Padri, per essere ella tutta scortecciata, e guasta dal tempo, date ordine al Cavalier Vasari, che in luogo di quella vecchia ne facesse una, la quale egli ha poco meno che fornita, insieme col tabernacolo del santissimo Sacramento, con quell’arte, et in quel modo che esso Cavalier suol fare tutte le cose sue.”

The second text is:

“Il Tempio di questo monasterio, il quale è uffiziato da i Padri Eremiti, e Monaci del luogo, con non quasi minor diligenza, che si sia la chiesa dell’Ermo; è alla moderna, e quasi fatto

tutto di nuovo con un tramezzo, e con un coro in alto modo bene accommodato. La tavola dell'Altar maggiore, dentro la quale è un Christo deposto di Croce, fu fatta dal Cavalier Vasari Arretino, già circa quaranta anni sono, con tanta diligenza, che ancor che fusse giovanetto, è tenuta nondimeno così lodevole opera, quanto altra, che egli per avventura facesse già mai. Nel tramezzo sono similmente in basso di mano del medesimo, e sopra i due Altari, che mettono in mezzo la porta del detto tramezzo, due tavole, non così grandi come quella dell'Altar maggiore, ma sì bene di pari bontà, et eccellenza. In una è una Navità del Signore, figurata in una notte maravigliosa: et nell'altra una Madonna in mezzo à un San Girolamo, et ad un San Giovanni Battista. Sopra poi, è d'intorno a queste due tavole, sono diverse historie della vita di San Romualdo, fatte a fresco dal medesimo Cavaliere, ne' suoi primi anni, con tanto disegno, diligenza, et invenzione, che sono tenute maravigliose pitture."

In his "Commentario alla Vita di Frate Giovanni da Fiesole" (Vasari-Milanesi, vol. 2, pp. 527, 530), Gaetano Milanesi observes that the character of the Fra Angelico *vita* diverges from what is for Vasari typical, causing Vasari to appear as "uno di quei devoti scrittori di leggende." He further writes that many believe that the Angelico *vita* was dictated by Don Silvano Razzi (cf. Luigi Lanzi, *Storia pittorica della Italia*, 4.a ed., Pisa: Niccolò Cappuro, 1815, vol. 1, pp. 191-192). But Milanesi rejects this view, appealing to a "riscontro" with the "biografie sacre del Camaldolese", which, he maintains, contrast with Vasari's lives of the artists, although Milanesi adduces no comparisons. He subsequently adds that Razzi does not mention Angelico in his *Vita di Sant'Antonino*. This argument neglects to note that the 1568 edition of the Angelico *vite* is not a new text, but simply a revision of the text of 1550 by Vasari, to which Razzi could scarcely have contributed. For the first edition, Vasari consulted *inter alia* the aged Fra Eustachio at San Marco, as Timoteo Bottonio suggests, and from Fra Eustachio, Vasari gleaned much anecdotal material. The "Arcivescovo Antonino", later Sant'Antonino, appears as Fra Angelico's choice already in the *Torrentiniana*: "e così fu fatto Arcivescovo di Fiorenza frate Antonio dello ordine de' predicatori, che da Papa Adriano VI fu poi canonizzato ne' tempi nostri", and possibly Razzi did not place much trust in this tradition. Whatever Razzi's role in the *Giuntina*, it is certainly not that of a sole author, but, at the most, that of a reviser, corrector, and emendator, whose point of departure was the text of the *Torrentiniana*. There are a notable number of additions in the *Giuntina vita* of Fra Angelico that possess a Camaldolese dimension.

#### SILVANO RAZZI:

Silvano (al secolo Girolamo). - Letterato fiorentino (Marradi 1527 – Firenze 1611), autore di commedie (*La Cecca*, 1556; *La Balia*, 1560; *La Gostanza*, 1565) e di una tragedia (*La Gismonda*, 1569). Entrato nell'ordine camaldolese, scrisse opere di soggetto religioso (vite di santi, ecc.), altre di soggetto storico, tra cui le *Vite di cinque uomini illustri* (*Farinata degli Uberti*, *Gualtieri duca d'Atene*, *Silvestro e Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*, *Francesco Valori*, 1602), e alcune vite di pittori, stampate dall'amico G. Vasari con le proprie (1568) (*treccani.it*).

*See further:* Margaret Daly Davis, in: *Giorgio Vasari*, exhibition catalogue, Arezzo 1981, pp. 193-194; Charles Davis, “Rustici”, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, vol. 39, 1995, pp. 132-133; Charles Davis, “Danti”, in: *Marks of Identity*, ed. Dimitrios Zikos, Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2012, pp. 134-135, 216 (with further literature). Razzi is often treated in studies of Benedetto Varchi, with whom he was closely associated; see Umberto Pirotti, *Benedetto Varchi e la cultura del suo tempo*, Firenze: Olschki, 1971; Benedetto Varchi, *Epigrammi a Silvano Razzi*, ed. Silvano Ferrone, Fiesole: Città di Fiesole, 2003, and other works. A number of works by Silvano Razzi are to be found online, *e.g.*, at Google Books. Works by Serafino Razzi and related studies are also relevant.

In the *Torrentiniana*, Vasari includes a discourse about observing sanctity and decorum in works of religious art. Men of little faith risk falling victim to dishonest appetites and lascivious desires, especially when viewing images of female figures or youths when they appear unusually beautiful, images which such men judge to be salacious. These persons prejudice the good judgement of the painter, who rightly sees the saints as celestial, heavenly figures, more beautiful even than the most beautiful earthly mortals. But the faithless’ own souls are infected and corrupt, and from them arise evil and dishonest cravings. And if such men were lovers of righteousness, as in their foolish zeal they want to claim to be, they would obtain a desire for heavenliness and the praise of Almighty God, from which the beauty of his creatures is born in a most perfect and beautiful form. The Italian text is as follows:

“Certamente chi lavora opere ecclesiastiche e sante, doverrebbe egli ancora del continuo essere ecclesiastico e santo, perché si vede che, quando elle sono operate da persone che poco credino e manco stimino la religione, fanno spesso cadere in mente appetiti disonesti e voglie lascive; onde nasce il biasimo dell’opre nel disonesto, e la lode nell’artificio e nella virtù. Ma io non vo’ già che alcuni s’ingannino, interpretando il devoto per goffo et inetto, come fanno certi che, veggendo pitture dove sia una figura o di femmina o di giovane, un poco piú vaga e piú bella e piú adorna d’ordinario, le pigliano e giudicano subito per lascive. Né si avveggano che non solo dannano il buon giudizio del pittore, il quale tiene de’ santi e sante che son celesti, e tanto piú belle della natura mortale quanto avanza il cielo la terrena bellezza dell’opere nostre, ma ancora scuoprono l’animo loro essere infetto e corrotto, cavando male e voglie non oneste di quello; che se e’ fussino amatori della onestà come in quel loro zelo sciocco voglion mostrare, eglino ne caverebbono desiderio del cielo e laude del sommo Iddio, da ’l quale perfettissimo e bellissimo nasce ogni bellezza delle creature sue.”

This somewhat vaguely formulated proposition is, in the *Giuntina*, maintained, but it is also extensively and substantively reformulated, with greater clarity, and with new content. The *Torrentiniana* counts here 200 words, where the *Giuntina* text reaches 360 words. A new conclusion is added which brings the *Torrentiniana* up to date in a new Tridentine climate:

“How must we suppose such men to be moved, how must we believe that they demean themselves, when they are in the presence of living beauty, accompanied by lascivious blandishments, by honeyed words, by graceful movements, by glances that ravish all but the stoutest hearts, if the image, the shadow, so to speak, of beauty, awakens in them such emotions? But on the other side, I would not let it be believed that I approve of those figures almost wholly unclothed, that are seen in churches; because in them it is evident that the artist has not properly considered what was due to the place; for even to make a show of the knowledge of his Art, the Painter should do it with all due consideration of circumstances, persons, times, and places.”

Further doubt is cast upon the degenerate beholder's lascivious perceptions. But then there appears the Counter Reform caveat against images of naked figures in churches, and the assertion of religious decorum and of the need for the respect of the sanctity of the temple, and against the mere display of art in the representation of nudes. "The Painter should do it with all due consideration of circumstances, persons, times, and places." This is a pre-eminently ecclesiastical concern, one treated by all Counter reform writers on images, from Molanus, to Gilio and Paleotti, and others.

The Italian text of 1568 is as follows:

"Che farebbono, o è da credere che facciano questi cotali, se dove fussero o sono bellezze vive accompagnate da lascivi costumi, da parole dolcissime, da movimenti pieni di grazia, e da occhi che rapiscono i non ben saldi cuori, si ritrovassero, o si ritruovano, poiché la sola immagine e quasi ombra del bello, cotanto gli commove? Ma non perciò vorrei che alcuni credessero che da me fussero approvate quelle figure, che nelle chiese sono dipinte, poco meno che nude del tutto, perché in cotali si vede che il pittore non ha avuto quella considerazione che doveva al luogo; perché quando pure si ha da mostrare quanto altri sappia, si deve fare con le debite circostanze, et aver rispetto alle persone, a' tempi et ai luoghi."

This revamping of Vasari's position and its refocusing around contemporary ecclesiastical concerns is completely in line with questions that were then occupying men of the church in Florence.

The most distinctive component of Vasari's *vita* of Fra Angelico is his equation of Angelico's art with his character and religion. It has been said that this *vita* represents Vasari's most comprehensive attempt to conflate an artist's life with his work (Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and its Project*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006, p. 31). While this may be true, this same element is fully present in the *Torrentiniana*, where it provides the introduction to the entire *vita*. Although such exordia were often suppressed in the *Giuntina*, in this case the initial themes of the *Torrentiniana*, although transposed to a later position in the *vita*, have been subject to extensive further development, and they are intensified. Let us look first at the full development of this topic in the *Giuntina*, asking what elements have been newly introduced, that is, which elements are not found in the *Torrentiniana*. This provides a further indication of the nature of the revision of the 1550 *vita* of Angelico which has taken place in the *Giuntina*.

The word, or name 'Angelico' says it all. It is the distillate of the fusion of Giovanni da Fiesole's holy person and his sacred art: it occurs explicitly three times in the *Giuntina*, but only once in the *Torrentiniana*. Fra Angelico's holiness is indeed a *Leitmotiv* that runs through the entire *Giuntina*.

Reviewing the *Giuntina* from the beginning, a first observation about the main altar of San Marco is that the Madonna and Saints inspire "devotion in the hearts of all beholders." This reference to the devotion of the viewer is new, as is a second reference to the beholder that follows soon after, in the context of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (San Marco), where the figures are "so well brought out in their various attitudes and in their individual expression, that an indescribable pleasure and sweetness is felt in contemplating them" – "it seems, that the blessed Spirits cannot be in Heaven otherwise than they are here represented." Figures are "so beautiful that they really appear to belong to Heaven." An *Annunciation* (San Marco) appears "not like the work of a mortal hand, but as if it had been painted in Paradise." Of the *Coronation*, again, "not only are the Saints living, and have a delicate and sweet expression of

countenance, but the entire colouring of the picture appears to be the handiwork of a Saint or Angel, which indeed it is; hence most rightly was this good Monk ever called Frate Giovanni Angelico.” Here the painter is equated with an angel. This passage, as all the other preceding ones, does not appear in the *Torrentiniana*, and thus the *Giuntina* establishes its basic tenet, before it begins to reuse material from the *Torrentiniana*. “The subjects of the Virgin and St. Dominic”, which Angelico painted on a predella in S. Domenico at Fiesole, are also said to be “divine in their kind.”

Only at this point do passages derived from the *Torrentiniana* begin to resurface. Subsequently, somewhat later on in the text, there are more new references to Fra Angelico’s holy character and comportment, ones identical or very similar to those found in 1550: “Fra Giovanni was a most holy, peaceful, and humble minded man” – “Great was the goodness of Fra Giovanni.” There follows a new reference to “this truly angelic Monk, in the service of God”, and another to him as “a man of the holiest life.”

Only close to the end of the *Giuntina* do we first encounter the texts relating to Fra Angelico’s sanctity with which the *Torrentiniana* had begun. “Fra Giovanni was in his manner of life simple and most holy” (cf. 1550: 17). “He avoided all worldly business, and living in purity and holiness, he so loved the poor, as, I believe, his soul now loves Heaven; he worked continually in his Art; nor would he ever paint other things than those which concerned the Saints” (cf. 1550: 2). “The only dignity he sought was to avoid Hell, and to reach Paradise: and what dignity is to be compared to that, which all Ecclesiastics, and indeed all men, ought to seek” (1550: 2). “He was most kind, and living soberly and chastely” (cf. 1550: 3). Fra Angelico says that “he who does the things of Christ should always be with Christ” (cf. 1550: 3). This statement was recalled by Giovanni Paolo II when Fra Angelico was beatified on 3 October 1982.

Among the thoughts in this section of the *Giuntina*, we read that the saints that Angelico painted have “a more saint-like air and semblance than those of any other Painter whatever”, an idea not found in this formulation in the *Torrentiniana*. It is followed, however, by a text derived from the first edition of the *Lives*: “It was his rule not to retouch or alter any of his works, but to leave them just as they had shaped themselves at first; for he believed, and he used to say, that such was the will of God. It is supposed that Fra Giovanni never took up a brush without a previous prayer. He never painted a Crucifix without bathing his own cheeks with tears; and therefore it is that the expressions and attitudes of his figures clearly demonstrate the sincerity of his great soul for the Christian Religion” (cf. 1550: 13).

Thus the pietistic and moral premises of the *Torrentiniana vita* are more closely focused and amplified in the *Giuntina*. In addition to the accommodation to post-Tridentine concerns, especially about nudity in religious paintings, the *Giuntina* explicitly delineates Angelico’s works in terms of their inspiration of religious devotion, not, that is, as merely didactic, but also as inspirational for specifically religious ends: the pietistic intensification of religious devotion or feeling. The frate’s works are also not merely divine in inspiration, but they also appear divine in their facture, angelic, as if made by the hands of saints or angels. Thus his painted saints are more truly saintly than those of any other mortal painter. In all these aspects the *Giuntina vita* appears to have been pressed into the service of the church.

In 1550, Vasari writes that Angelico’s secular name was “Guido detto Guidolino”, but the *Giuntina* simply eliminates the diminutive “Guidolino”, as perhaps superfluous and almost redundant, or perhaps even vaguely ludicrous, or at least inappropriate to the dignified and

saintly painter. The frequent vernacular use of diminutives, present in Vasari's writing, was often resisted by his more cultivated editors.

Section 1 of the *Torrentiniana* shows a number of such revisions where formulations more appropriate to written prose are substituted for Vasari's at times almost spoken formulations (writing as he spoke): *adoperare*, for *lavorare*; *vorrei*, for *vo'* [voglio]; *s'ingannasse*, for *s'ingannino*; *come fanno alcuni*, for *come fanno certi*. The phrase, *le pigliano e giudicano subito per lascive*, becomes more exact, precise, and correct with the transposition of the word 'subito': *le pigliano subito e giudicano per lascive*. These changes must result from the intervention of a meticulous critical editor. For such changes Vasari had little or no time, and possibly no interest or inclination. They are not, however, atypical of the revisions made throughout the *Giuntina*.

Subsequently, in the *Giuntina*, 'schifare' (*schifò*) is substituted by 'schivare' (*schivò*), thereby slightly more serious, and one less common touch. And when, in the following sentence, Vasari writes (1550): "Possette comandare a molti, e lo schifò, dicendo (...)", the *Giuntina* corrects, "Potette comandare a molti e non volle, dicendo (...).

In the *Torrentiniana* the frescos of the cloister of San Marco were simply "pagato da Cosimo de' Medici", but the *Giuntina* constructs a more complex narrative in which these works were made for Cosimo de' Medici, "avendo egli fatto murare la chiesa di S. Marco." In S. Maria Novella the "reliquieri" are "da tenere sull'altare" (1550); subsequently (1568) we read of "reliquiari, che nella maggiori solennità si pongono in sull'altare." At this point the description of a work in the *Angeli* of Florence is notably amplified. In the *Torrentiniana*, there are only 13 words:

"e negli Agnoli di Fiorenza un Paradiso et un Inferno di figure piccole."

In the *Giuntina*, this text becomes 74 words:

"E nella chiesa de' monaci degl'Angeli un Paradiso et un inferno di figure piccole, nel quale con bella osservanza fece i beati bellissimi e pieni di giubilo e di celeste letizia; et i dannati apparecchiati alle pene dell'inferno in varie guise mestissimi e portanti nel volto impresso il peccato e demerito loro; i beati si veggiono entrare celestemente ballando per la porta del paradiso, et i dannati da i demonii all'inferno nell'eterne pene strascinati."

The changes here appear not only symptomatic but also indicative: "Gli Agnoli" becomes the church of the monks of the *Angeli*, with two new parameters of specific definition. "Bella osservanza" has both aesthetic and religious dimensions, and contains an implicit reference to doctrines of decorum. The added text further elaborates upon the doctrine of salvation and damnation in the two places of Heaven and Hell. The monastery of the *Angeli* was, as we have seen, the home of Silvano Razzi.

In the passage that follows, where we read that Fra Angelico never began painting without first engaging in prayer, and that he never painted a Crucifixion without bathing his cheeks in tears, Vasari's reviser adds a new brief conclusion that makes the point explicit: "and therefore it is that the expressions and attitudes of his figures clearly demonstrate the sincerity of his great soul for the Christian Religion" ("onde si conosce ne i volti e nell'attitudine delle sue figure la bontà del sincero e grande animo suo nella religione cristiana"). Here Bezzi's rendering of "la religione cristiana" with the emphatic "the Christian Religion" is justified, for the *Giuntina* is not referring only to belief in Christ but also to the Christian church as an

institution, and this is a further indication of the intervention of an ecclesiastic, a cleric. Although Vasari's *vita* of Fra Angelico has often been read in terms of his personal piety and its expression of his art, this *vita*, in the Giuntina, is also a reflection of the will and the interests of churchmen and of the Church itself.

When, in affronting the preparations for the Giuntina, Vincenzo Borghini instructs Vasari to concentrate on listing the works of the artists, including many more works, and to tell where they are to be found, he is well aware that the largest number are found in churches: "Il FINE di questa vostra fatica non è di scrivere la vita de' pittori (...)", whose lives may be memorable, but who are remembered "solo per le OPERE loro di pittori, scultori, architetti" (11.08.1564). As for locations Borghini wants greater precision, including the names of buildings. In the new life of Angelico, Borghini's wishes were amply satisfied. Here many more works by Angelico are included, and where works are to be found is clearly indicated. What remains open to question is the extent to which Vasari himself accomplished this task, or, alternatively, the extent to which he was assisted, and how, and to what extent, he was participant in the process. The stylistic, purely verbal revisions do not seem necessarily owed to Vasari. It is difficult to judge the extent he contributed the 'new' works or 'new' information about works and the subjects represented. All of them were in places where Vasari resided or visited: Florence, Fiesole, Cortona, Orvieto, Rome. But often, as mentioned above, the exactness and the detail of the Giuntina's indications do not seem characteristic of Vasari. They appear to reflect the interests and inclinations of an ecclesiastic. The associations with the Camaldolese monastery of the Angeli in Florence are notable. And the transformation of the life of Angelico in the Giuntina into an instrument of the Church and the Christian Religion – which goes substantially beyond the identification of Angelico's personal religion and piety with his holy art and moves in a new clerical and ecclesiastical direction – does not seem entirely to be in line with Vasari's intentions in the *Torrentiniana*.

In the Giuntina a rather lengthy excursus concerning the miniaturist Attavante, whose manuscripts survived in Florence and Venice, is appended to Angelico's *vita*, apparently because this seems a more or less suitable place to insert it into the lives, and not because it was to serve as a counterpoint to Angelico, as some have imagined. This text was furnished to Vasari from Venice by Cosimo Bartoli. The quite detailed descriptions of Attavante's illuminations, with very numerous annotations about colour, are written entirely by Bartoli, in his very characteristic prose. The whole text appears to be largely composed by Bartoli, as Vasari more or less states, with only a few revisions by the author of the *Vite*. Bartoli may also be the source of the brief lines immediately following Angelico's epitaph in 1568.



*Literature:*

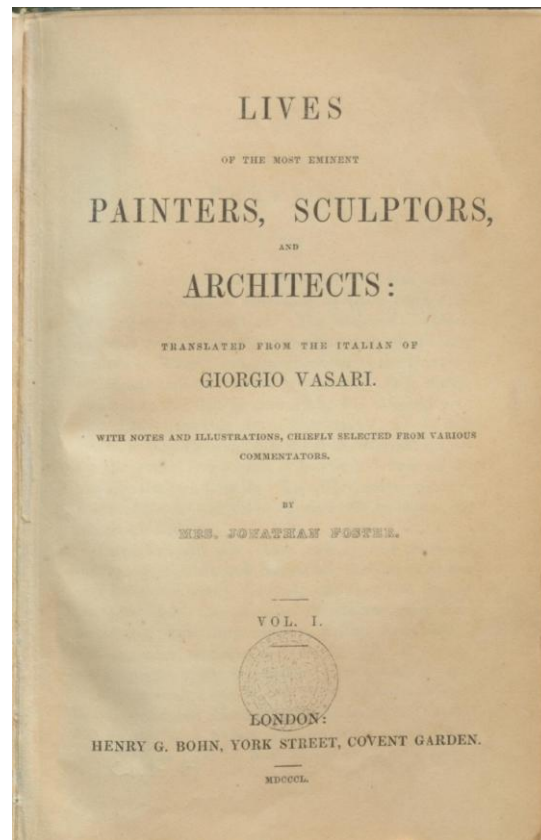
Gabriele Guercio's *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and its Project* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006) contains a section on Vasari's *Vite* as the archetypal artist monograph and a brief discussion of the Angelico *vita*, but the book's principal concern is the nineteenth-century artist monograph.

Patricia Lee Rubin's *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale, 1995) introduces the English language reader to much earlier research concerning Vasari's *Vite*. The text often consists of a series of sometimes unrelated affirmations and generalizations about Vasari as a writer, which are, most often, unsupported by an adequate and detailed citation of Vasari's writings. Some assertions appear correct, and others, questionable. Many remain largely undemonstrated. The reviews of this book were variable (cf. the reviews of Charles Hope and James Ackerman). It is a book especially useful for those who cannot read Vasari in the Italian.

The same is largely true of the volume in which there appeared a study of Vasari's *vita* of Angelico by Diane Cole Ahl: "Sia di mano di santo o d'angelo: Vasari's Life of Fra Angelico, in: *Reading Vasari*, ed. Anne B. Barriault, Andrew Ladis *et al.*, London: Wilson, 2005, pp. 119-131. Most of the contributions to this book demonstrate, more accurately, how not to read Vasari, and represent North American university art history largely written for self-consumption.

*POSTSCRIPT:*

After this text was completed the editor obtained a copy of the excellent edition of Vasari's *vita* of Fra Angelico prepared by Heiko Damm in the Wagenbach series of German translations of the Vasari lives: *Das Leben des Filippo Lippi (...)*, ed. Jana Graul and Heiko Damm, Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2011, pp. 70-77, 78-104, 192-247. In addition to a valuable introduction, Damm's notes afford an informed and up-to-date commentary, predominately oriented toward recent modern secondary literature. Damm (p. 74) describes the miniaturist Fra Eustachio (1472-1555) as Vasari's *Hauptgewährsmann* for Dominican traditions about Angelico, and in this context denies the often suggested rôle of Silvano Razzi in formulating the Angelico biography of Vasari (p. 192, note 10). In any event, Fra Eustachio's anecdotes enriched the Torrentiniana, whereas Razzi participated in the *Vite*-enterprise of Vasari only at the time of the Giuntina. See Wolfgang Kallab, *Vasaristudien*, Wien-Leipzig 1908, pp. 278, 398, and, especially, 401f.; there is no reference to Razzi on p. 262).



Title page, vol. I, Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the most eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, translated by Mrs. Johanthan Foster, first edition, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850

## APPENDIX V:

## MRS. JONATHAN FOSTER'S TRANSLATION OF VASARI'S LIFE OF FRA ANGELICO

As an element of comparison, Mrs. Foster's English translation of Vasari's life of Angelico is included here. It is almost exactly contemporaneous with Aubrey Bezzi's translation, for both translations were first published in 1850. Bezzi's translation may well have appeared first, but this is not entirely certain. See the discussion of Bezzi's translation above.

If we examine the first paragraph of Mrs. Foster's translation, several of its aspects become apparent. There follows Mrs. Foster's first paragraph, followed by Giovanni Bezzi's translation of the same text, and then by Vasari's Italian text.

*MRS. FOSTER:*

FRATE GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE, who, while in the world, was called Guido, having been no less eminent as a painter and miniaturist than excellent as a churchman, deserves to be held in honourable remembrance for both these causes. This master might have lived in the world with the utmost ease and comfort, since, in addition to what he originally possessed, he might have gained whatever he desired by the exercise of the arts with which, while still very young, he was perfectly well acquainted. But he chose nevertheless in the hope of ensuring the peace and quiet of his life, and of promoting the salvation of his soul, to enter the order of the preaching friars; for although it is certain, that we may serve God in all conditions, yet to some it appears, that they can more effectually secure their salvation in the cloister than in the world; and this purpose is doubtless successful, as regards the man of good and upright purpose, but the contrary as certainly happens to him who becomes a monk from less worthy motives, and who is sure to render himself truly miserable. [897 words]

*BEZZI'S TRANSLATION:*

FRATE\* GIOVANNI ANGELICO Da Fiesole, whose secular name was Guido,<sup>(1)</sup> having been not less excellent as a Painter and Illuminator, than as an Ecclesiastic, on both accounts well deserves that his life should be honourably recorded. He might have lived an easy life in the world, and, in addition to what he had, might have gained whatever he wished by the exercise of that Art, in which he excelled from his very youth; nevertheless, being good and gentle by nature, he determined for his own satisfaction and peace of mind, and in order to attend above all things to the saving of his soul, to enter the religious Order of the Dominicans.<sup>(2)</sup> For although it is possible to serve God in all conditions of life, still there are some to whom their own salvation appears more secure in monasteries than in the world; which indeed as it succeeds fortunately for the good, so, on the contrary, is the result truly miserable and sad to him who makes himself an Ecclesiastic for other ends. [811 words]

*VASARI (1568):*

Frate Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole, il quale fu al secolo chiamato Guido, essendo non meno stato eccellente pittore e miniatore che ottimo religioso, merita per l'una e per l'altra cagione che di lui sia fatta onoratissima memoria. Costui, se bene avrebbe potuto commodissimamente

stare al secolo, et oltre quello che aveva, guadagnarsi ciò che avesse voluto con quell'arti che ancor giovinetto benissimo fare sapeva, volle nondimeno, per sua sodisfazione e quiete, essendo di natura posato e buono, e per salvare l'anima sua principalmente, farsi [I, 359] religioso dell'ordine de' frati predicatori; perciocché se bene in tutti gli stati si può servire a Dio, ad alcuni nondimeno pare di poter meglio salvarsi ne' monasterii che al secolo. La qual cosa quanto a i buoni succede felicemente, tanto per lo contrario riesce, a chi si fa religioso per altro fine, misera veramente et infelice. [749 words]

While concise translation is difficult, in quantitative terms Mrs. Foster requires many more words (897) than Vasari (749), while Bezzi's translation represents only a moderate expansion of about 60 words. One instance of Mrs. Foster's prolixity is her translation of Vasari's "il quale fu al secolo chiamato Guido", as "who, while in the world, was called Guido", which Bezzi renders, more economically and accurately, as "whose secular name was Guido." Mrs. Foster's translation, "that they can more effectually secure their salvation in the cloister than in the world" is scarcely an inevitable translation of Vasari's "ad alcuni nondimeno pare di poter meglio salvarsi ne' monasterii che al secolo", but it does resemble Bezzi's "still there are some to whom their own salvation appears more secure in monasteries than in the world", perhaps suggesting that Mrs. Foster may have been able to consult Bezzi's *Angelico* (1850) in preparing, completing, or revising her own translation of the same life, which appeared in her volume two, published in 1850, following volume one, also published in this year. Occasionally Mrs. Foster omits a facet of meaning, which Bezzi, even in his briefer translation, includes. And she makes mistakes. Where she translates, "in addition to the works from his hand already enumerated, are certain stories, decorating various reliquaries which it is the custom to place on the altar in high solemnities, with others which are used in the Easter ceremonies", Bezzi is more accurate: "he painted small subjects on the Pascal candle, and on the Reliquaries, [see *Pl. 18*] which are exposed upon the Altar on the great solemnities of the Church" (Vasari writes: "oltre alle cose dette, dipinse di storie piccole il cero pasquale et alcuni reliquiari, che nelle maggiori solennità si pongono in sull'altare"). Mrs. Foster's "Easter ceremonies" are her own invention.

There are, however, further indications that Mrs. Foster may have read Bezzi's translation. She translates, "Fra Giovanni was kindly to all, and moderate in all his habits, living temperately, and holding himself entirely apart from the snares of the world.", when she reads in Vasari, "Fu umanissimo e sobrio; e castamente vivendo, da i lacci del mondo si sciolse, usando spesse fiato di dire (...)." Mrs. Foster's translation appears to have been suggested, in part, by Bezzi's: "He was most kind, and living soberly and chastely, he freed himself from the snares of the world, frequently repeating that (...)", especially in the somewhat unusual phrase, "snares of the world", which is scriptural and Christian in derivation. There are other parallels which also suggest that Mrs. Foster at least retouched her translation in light of Bezzi's, which she doubtless saw as soon as it was printed.

MRS. FOSTER'S TRANSLATION:

See: <http://archive.org/details/livesofthemostem014991mbp>

Volume 2, ed. LONDON 1907: George Bell and Sons.

[page 24]

LIFE OF THE PAINTER, FRATE GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE, OF THE ORDER OF THE PREACHING FRAIRS

[Born 1387 – Died 1435]

FRATE GIOVANNI ANGELICO DA FIESOLE, who, while in the world, was called Guido, having been no less eminent as a painter and miniaturist than excellent as a churchman, deserves to be held in honourable remembrance for both these causes. This master might have lived in the world with the utmost ease and comfort, since, in addition to what he originally possessed, he might have gained whatever he desired by the exercise of the arts with which, while still very young, he was perfectly well acquainted. But he chose nevertheless in the hope of ensuring the peace and quiet of his life, and of promoting the salvation of his soul, to enter the order of the preaching friars; for although it is certain, that we may serve God in all conditions, yet to some it appears, that they can more effectually secure their salvation in the cloister than in the world; and this purpose is doubtless successful, as regards the man of good and upright purpose, but the contrary as certainly happens to him who becomes a monk from less worthy motives, and who is sure to render himself truly miserable.

There are certain choral books from the hand of Fra Giovanni in his convent of San Marco at Florence, of which the miniatures are such that no words could do justice to their beauty. Similar to these are others, which he left in San Domenico, at Fiesole, and which are executed with inexpressible care and patience: it is true that he was assisted in these works by an older brother, who was also a miniaturist, and tolerably well versed in painting.

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One of the first paintings executed by this good father was a picture on panel for the Carthusian monastery in Florence, where it was placed in the principal chapel, which belonged to the cardinal Acciaiuoli: the subject is a Virgin with the Child in her arms, and with angels at her feet; the latter are sounding musical instruments and singing, and are exceedingly beautiful: on one side of the Virgin are San Lorenzo, with Santa Maria Maddalena; on the other are San Zanobi, with San Benedetto; and on the predella are stories from the lives of those saints, the figures of which are very small, and are executed with infinite care. In the same chapel are two other pictures by the same master, one representing the Coronation of the Virgin; and in the other are the Madonna, with two saints in ultramarine blue of great beauty. In the nave of Santa Maria Novella, and beside the door, which is opposite to the choir, Fra Giovanni afterwards painted a fresco, wherein he represented San Domenico, Santa Caterina da Siena, and St. Peter the martyr. In the chapel of the Coronation of our Lady, which is in the same part of the church, he likewise painted certain small historical pictures; and on the doors which close the old organ he painted an Annunciation on cloth, which is now in the convent, opposite to the door of the lower dormitory, and between the two cloisters.

Fra Giovanni was so greatly beloved for his admirable qualities by Cosimo de' Medici, that the latter had no sooner completed the church and convent of San Marco, than he caused the good father to paint the whole story of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ on one of the walls of the chapter-house. In this work are figures of all those saints who have been heads and founders of religious bodies, mourning and bewailing at the foot of the cross on one side, and

on the other, St. Mark the Evangelist beside the mother of the Son of God, who has fainted at sight of the crucified Saviour. Around the Virgin are the Maries, who are sorrowing with

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and supporting her; they are accompanied by the saints, Cosimo and Damiano. It is said that in the figure of San Cosimo, Fra Giovanni depicted his friend Nanni di Antonio di Banco, the sculptor, from the life. Beneath this work, in a frieze over the back of the seats, the master executed a figure of San Domenico standing at the foot of a tree, on the branches of which are medallions, wherein are all the popes, cardinals, bishops, saints, and masters in theology who had belonged to Fra Giovanni's order of the Preaching Friars, down to his own day. In this work the brethren of his order assisted him by procuring portraits of these various personages from different places, by which means he was enabled to execute many likenesses from nature. These are, San Domenico in the centre, who is grasping the branches of the tree; Pope Innocent V.; a Frenchman; the Beato Ugone, first cardinal of that order; the Beato Paolo the patriarch, a Florentine; Sant'Antonino, a Florentine; Bishop Giordano, a German, and the second general of the order; the Beato Niccolò, the Beato Remigio, a Florentine; and the martyr Boninsegno, a Florentine; all these are on the right hand. On the left are Benedict XI., of Treviso; Giandomemco, a Florentine cardinal; Pietro da Palude, patriarch of Jerusalem; the German Alberto Magno, the Beato Raimondo, of Catalonia, third general of the order; the Beato Chiaro, a Florentine, and Provincial of Rome; San Vincenzio di Valenza; and the Beato Bernardo, a Florentine; all these heads are truly graceful and very beautiful. In the first cloister, Fra Giovanni then painted many admirable figures in fresco over certain lunettes, with a crucifix, at the foot of which stands San Domenico, which is greatly esteemed;

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and in the dormitory, beside many other things in the cells and on the walls, he executed a story from the New Testament which is beautiful beyond the power of words to describe.

But exquisite and admirable above all is the picture of the High Altar in that church; for besides that the Madonna in this painting awakens devotional feeling in all who regard her, by the pure simplicity of her expression, and that the saints surrounding her have a similar character; the predella, in which are stories of the martyrdom of San Cosimo, San Damiano, and others, is so perfectly finished, that one cannot imagine it possible for any thing to be executed with greater care, nor can figures more delicate, or more judiciously arranged, be conceived.

At San Domenico di Fiesole Fra Giovanni likewise painted the picture of the High Altar; but this perhaps because it appeared to have received injury has been retouched by other masters, and much deteriorated. The Predella and the Ciborium are, fortunately, much better preserved; and the many small figures which are seen there, surrounded by a celestial glory, are so beautiful, that they do truly seem to belong to paradise; nor can he who approaches them be ever weary of regarding their beauty. In a chapel of the same church is a picture from the same hand, representing our Lady receiving the annunciation from the angel Gabriel, with a countenance, which is seen in profile, so devout, so delicate, and so perfectly executed, that the beholder can scarcely believe it to be by the hand of man, but would rather suppose it to have been delineated in Paradise. In the landscape forming the background are seen Adam and Eve, by whom it was made needful that the Virgin should give birth to the Redeemer. In the predella are likewise

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certain stories, the small figures of which are extremely beautiful.

But superior to all the other works of Fra Giovanni, and one in which he surpassed himself, is a picture in the same church, near the door on the left hand of the entrance: in this work he proves the high quality of his powers as well as the profound intelligence he possessed of the art which he practised. The subject is the Coronation of the Virgin by Jesus Christ: the principal figures are surrounded by a choir of angels, among whom are vast numbers of saints and holy personages, male and female. Those figures are so numerous, so well executed, in attitudes so varied, and with expressions of the head so richly diversified, that one feels infinite pleasure and delight in regarding them. Nay, one is convinced that those blessed spirits can look no otherwise in heaven itself, or, to speak under correction, could not, if they had forms, appear otherwise; for all the saints, male and female, assembled here, have not only life and expression, most delicately and truly rendered, but the colouring also of the whole work would seem to have been given by the hand of a saint, or of an angel like themselves. It is not without most sufficient reason therefore, that this excellent ecclesiastic is always called Frate Giovanni Angelico. The stories from the life of our Lady and of San Domenico which adorn the predella, moreover, are in the same divine manner, and I, for myself, can affirm with truth, that I never see this work but it appears something new, nor can I ever satisfy myself with the sight of it, or have enough of beholding it.

In the chapel of the Nunziata at Florence, which Piero di Cosimo de' Medici caused to be constructed, Fra Giovanni painted the doors of the armory or press, wherein the silver utensils for the service of the altar are deposited, the figures are made and executed with much care. He painted besides

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so many pictures which are now in the dwellings of different Florentine citizens, that I am sometimes in astonishment, and am at a loss to comprehend how one man could so perfectly execute all that he has performed, even though he did labour many years. The very reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, superintendent of the Innocenti, is in possession of a small picture of the Virgin by the hand of this father, which is beautiful; and Bartolommeo Gondi, as zealous an amateur of these arts as any gentleman that I know, has a large picture, a small one, and a crucifix, all by the same hand. The paintings in the arch over the door of San Domenico are likewise by Fra Giovanni, and in Santa Trinita there is a picture in the sacristy, representing a deposition from the cross, to which he devoted so much care that it may be numbered among the best of his works.

In San Francesco, without the gate of San Miniato, Fra Giovanni painted an Annunciation, and in Santa Maria Novella, in addition to the works from his hand already enumerated, are certain stories, decorating various reliquaries which it is the custom to place on the altar in high solemnities, with others which are used in the Easter ceremonies.

In the abbey of the same city (Florence), this master painted the figure of San Benedetto, in the act of commanding silence. For the Guild of Joiners, he executed a picture which is preserved in the house of their Guild,

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and in Cortona he painted a small arch over the door of the church which belongs to his order, as also the picture of the high altar.

In Orvieto, Fra Giovanni began to paint certain prophets in the Cathedral; on the ceiling of the chapel of our Lady. These were afterwards finished by Luca da Cortona. For the Brotherhood of the Temple in Florence, he painted a picture representing the Dead Christ, and in the church of the Monks of the Angeli, he executed a Paradiso and Inferno, the figures of both which are small. Fra Giovanni proved the rectitude of his judgment in this work, having made the countenances of the blessed beautiful and full of a celestial gladness; but the condemned, those destined to the pains of hell, he has depicted in various attitudes of sorrow, and bearing the impress and consciousness of their misdeeds and wretchedness on their faces: the blessed are seen to enter the gate of paradise in triumphal dance, the condemned are dragged away to eternal punishment in hell, by the hands of demons. This work is in the church above-mentioned, on the right hand, as you approach the high altar, near where the priest is wont to sit while the Mass is sung. For the Nuns of St. Peter the Martyr, who now occupy the monastery of San Felice in Piazza, which formerly belonged to the Order of Camaldoli, Fra Giovanni painted a picture wherein are represented the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, St. Dominick, St. Thomas, and St. Peter the Martyr, with many small figures. In the centre aisle of Santa Maria Nuova, is also to be seen a picture by the hand of this master.

These many and various labours having rendered the name of Fra Giovanni illustrious throughout all Italy, he was invited to Rome by Pope Nicholas V., who caused him to adorn the chapel of the palace, where the pontiff is ac-

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customed to hear mass, with a Deposition from the Cross, and with certain events from the life of San Lorenzo, which are admirable. The Pope further appointed him to execute the miniatures of several books, which are also extremely beautiful. In the church of the Minerva, Fra Giovanni executed the picture of the High Altar and an Annunciation, which is now placed against the wall beside the principal chapel. For the same pontiff, Fra Giovanni decorated the chapel of the sacrament in the palace, which chapel was afterwards destroyed by Pope Paul III., who conducted the staircase through it. In this work, which was an excellent one, Fra Giovanni had painted stories in fresco from the life of Christ, in his own admirable manner, and had introduced many portraits of eminent persons then living. These portraits would most probably have been lost to us, had not Paul Jovius caused the following among them to be reserved for his museum: Pope Nicholas V, the Emperor Frederick, who had at that time arrived in Italy; Frate Antonino, who afterwards became archbishop of Florence, Biondo da Forli, and Ferdinand of Arragon.

And now, Fra Giovanni, appearing to the Pope to be, as he really was, a person of most holy life, gentle and modest, the Pontiff, on the archbishopric becoming vacant, judged Fra Giovanni to be worthy of that preferment; but the Frate, hearing this, entreated his Holiness to provide himself with some other person, since he did not feel capable of ruling men. He added, that among the brethren of his order, was a man well skilled in the art of governing others,



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a friend of the poor, and one who feared God: on this man he considered that the proposed dignity would be much more appropriately conferred than on himself. The Pope hearing this, and remembering that what he said of this brother of his order was true, freely granted him the favour he desired, and thus was the Frate Antonino of the order of Friars-Preachers made archbishop of Florence. And the new prelate was in truth most illustrious, whether for learning or sanctity; he was of such a character, in fine, that he fully merited the honour of canonization bestowed on him in our own days by Pope Adrian VI.

A great proof of excellence was this act of Fra Giovanni's, and, without doubt, a very rare thing. The resignation of a dignity so eminent, of an honour and office so important, offered to himself by the supreme pontiff, but yielded by him to the man whom he, with unbiased judgment and in the sincerity of his heart, considered much more worthy of it than himself. The churchmen of our times might learn from this holy man to refrain from taking upon them those offices, the duties of which they cannot duly fulfil, and to resign them to those who are more worthy of them. And would to God, that all ecclesiastics (be it said without offence to the good among them) would employ their talents, as did this excellent father, to return to Fra Giovanni, so truly named Angelico, seeing that he continued the whole course of his life in the service of God, or in labouring for the benefit of the world and of his neighbour. And what more can or ought to be desired, than by thus living righteously, to secure the kingdom of heaven, and by labouring virtuously, to obtain everlasting fame in this world? And of a truth, so extraordinary and sublime a gift as that possessed by Fra Giovanni, should scarcely be conferred on any but a man of most holy life, since it is certain that all who take upon them to meddle with sacred and ecclesiastical subjects, should be men of holy and spiritual minds; for we cannot but have seen that when such works are attempted by persons of little faith, and who do but lightly esteem religion, they frequently cause light thoughts, and unworthy inclinations to awaken in the beholder; whence it follows that these works are censured for their offences in this kind, even while praised for the ability displayed in them as

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works of art, Yet I would not here give occasion to the mistake that things rude and inept shall therefore be holy, and that the beautiful and attractive are licentious: this is the false interpretation of many who, when they see feminine or youthful figures adorned with more than common beauty, instantly consider them licentious, and therefore censure them; not perceiving how wrongfully they are condemning the sound judgment of the painter; for the latter believes the saints, male and female, who are celestial; to be as much superior to mere mortals in beauty, as heaven is superior to things earthly and the work of human hands; and, what is worse, they at the same time betray the unsoundness and impurity of their own hearts, by thus deducing evil consequences from, and finding causes of offence, in things which, if they were truly admirers of good, as by their stupid zeal they desire to make themselves appear, would rather awaken in them aspirations towards heaven, and the wish to make themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things, from whom, as Himself, the highest and most perfect, beauty and perfection have proceeded. But what are we to suppose that such people would do if they were placed, or rather what *do* they when they *are* placed, where they find living beauty, accompanied by light manners, by seductive words, by movements full of grace, and eyes that cannot but ravish the heart not amply guarded? What are we to believe they then do, since the mere image, the very shadow, can move them so powerfully? Not that I would have any suppose me to approve the placing in churches of such figures as are depicted in all but perfect nudity; by no means: for in such cases the painter has not taken into

consideration the reserve that was due to the place. He may have just cause for desiring to make manifest the extent of his power; but this should be done with due regard to circumstances, and not without befitting respect to persons, times, and places.

Fra Giovanni was a man of the utmost simplicity of intention, and was most holy in every act of his life. It is related of him, and it is a good evidence of his simple earnestness of purpose, that being one morning invited to breakfast by Pope Nicholas V., he had scruples of conscience as to eating meat without the permission of his prior, not considering that the authority of the pontiff was superseding

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that of this prior. He disregarded all earthly advantages; and, living in pure holiness, was as much the friend of the poor in life as I believe his soul now is in heaven. He laboured continually at his paintings, but would do nothing that was not connected with things holy. He might have been rich, but for riches he took no care; on the contrary, he was accustomed to say, that the only true riches was contentment with little. He might have commanded many, but would not do so, declaring that there was less fatigue and less danger of error in obeying others, than in commanding others. It was at his option to hold places of dignity in the brotherhood of his order, and also in the world; but he regarded them not, affirming that he sought no dignity and took no care but that of escaping hell and drawing near to Paradise. And of a truth what dignity can be compared to that which should be most coveted by all churchmen, nay, by every man living, that, namely, which is found in God alone, and in a life of virtuous labour?

Fra Giovanni was kindly to all, and moderate in all his habits, living temperately, and holding himself entirely apart from the snares of the world. He used frequently to say, that he who practised the art of painting had need of quiet, and should live without cares or anxious thoughts; adding, that he who would do the work of Christ should perpetually remain with Christ. He was never seen to display anger among the brethren of his order; a thing which appears to me most extraordinary, nay, almost incredible; if he admonished his friends, it was with gentleness and a quiet smile; and to those who sought his works, he would reply with the utmost cordiality, that they had but to obtain the assent of the prior, when he would assuredly not fail to do what they desired. In fine, this never sufficiently to be lauded father was most humble, modest, and excellent in all his words and works; in his painting he gave evidence of piety and devotion, as well as of ability, and the saints that he painted have more of the air and expression of sanctity than have those of any other master.

It was the custom of Fra Giovanni to abstain from retouching or improving any painting once finished. He altered nothing, but left all as it was done the first time, believing, as he said, that such was the will of God. It is

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also affirmed that he would never take the pencil in hand until he had first offered a prayer. He is said never to have painted a Crucifix without tears streaming from his eyes, and in the countenances and attitudes of his figures it is easy to perceive proof of his sincerity, his goodness, and the depth of his devotion to the religion of Christ.

Fra Giovanni died in 1455, at the age of sixty-eight. He left disciples, among whom was Benozzo, a Florentine, by whom his manner was always imitated, with Zanobi Strozzi, who

executed paintings for all Florence, which were dispersed among the houses of the citizens. There is a picture by this master in the centre aisle of Santa Maria Novella, near that of Fra Giovanni, and another, which was formerly in San Benedetto, a monastery belonging to the monks of Camaldoli, without the Pinti gate; but the convent is now destroyed, and Strozzi's work is at this time in the little church of San Michele, in the monastery of the Angeli. It may be seen as you enter the principal door, and on the right hand as you go towards the altar, appended to the wall. Another work of Zanobi Strozzi will be found in the chapel of the Nasi family in Santa Lucia; there is likewise one in San Romeo, and in the treasury (guardaroba) of the duke, there is the portrait of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, with that of Bartolommeo Valori, in one and the same picture, both by the hand of this master.

Gentile da Fabriano was likewise among the disciples of Fra Giovanni, as was Domenico di Michelino, who executed the altar-piece of San Zanobi, in the church of Sant' Apollinare, of Florence, with many other pictures. Fra Giovanni

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Angelico was interred by the brethren of his order in the church of the Minerva at Rome, beside the lateral door which opens on the sacristy. On his tomb, which is of marble and of a round form, is the portrait of the master taken from nature; and on the marble is engraved the epitaph, which may be read below:

Non mihi sit laudi, quod eram velut alter Appelles,  
Sed quod lucra tuis omnia. Christe, dabam:  
Altera nam terris opera extant, altera caelo  
Urbs me Joannem flos tulit Etruriae.

In Santa Maria del Fiore are two very large books richly decorated with miniatures most admirably executed by the hand of Fra Giovanni Angelico; they are held in the utmost veneration, are most sumptuously adorned, and are only suffered to be seen on occasions of high solemnity.

*[The concluding section devoted to Attavante is here omitted.]*

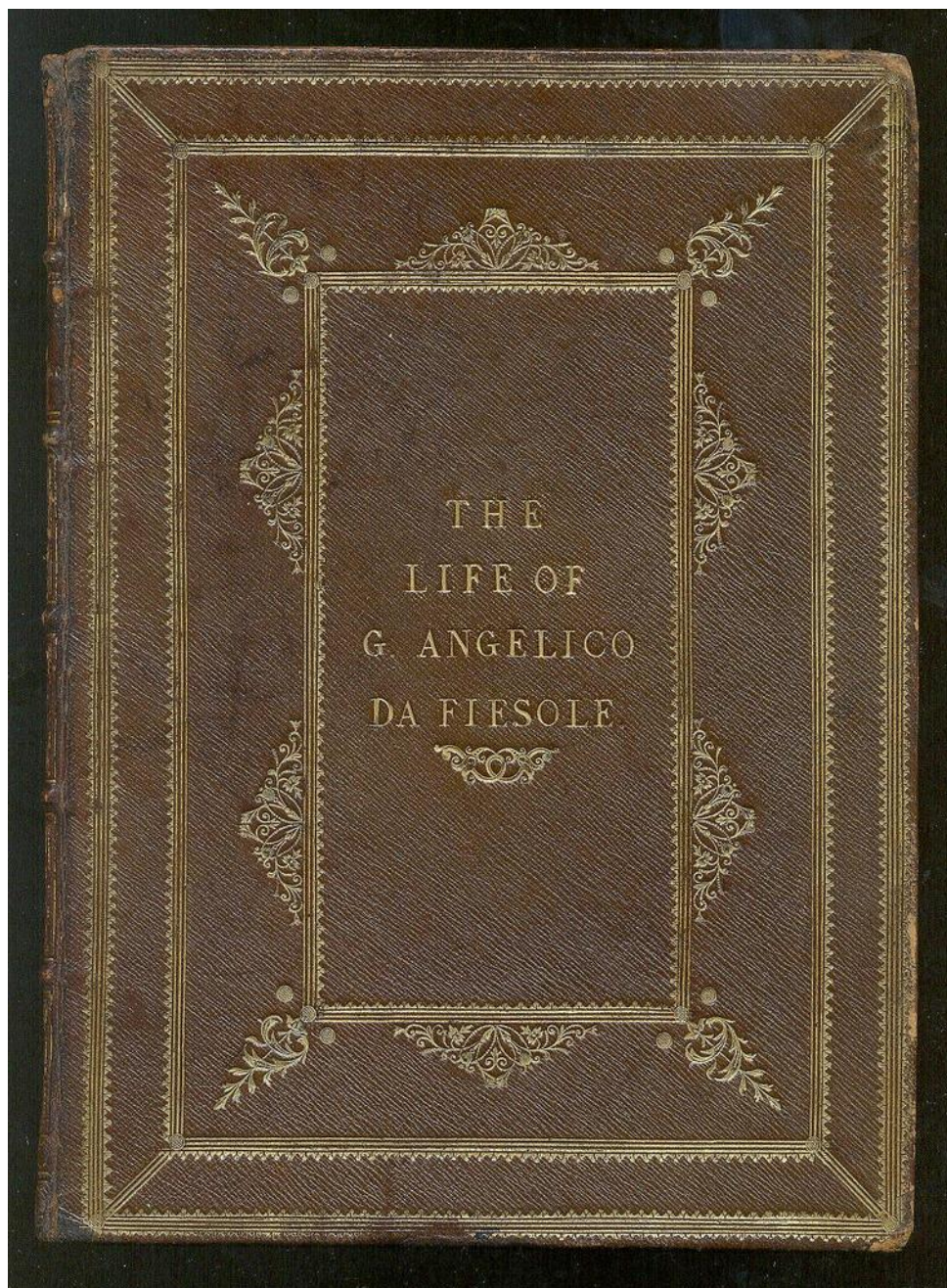
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Arundel Society Binding, ca. 1850, Front Cover: “The Life of G. Angelico”, 1850

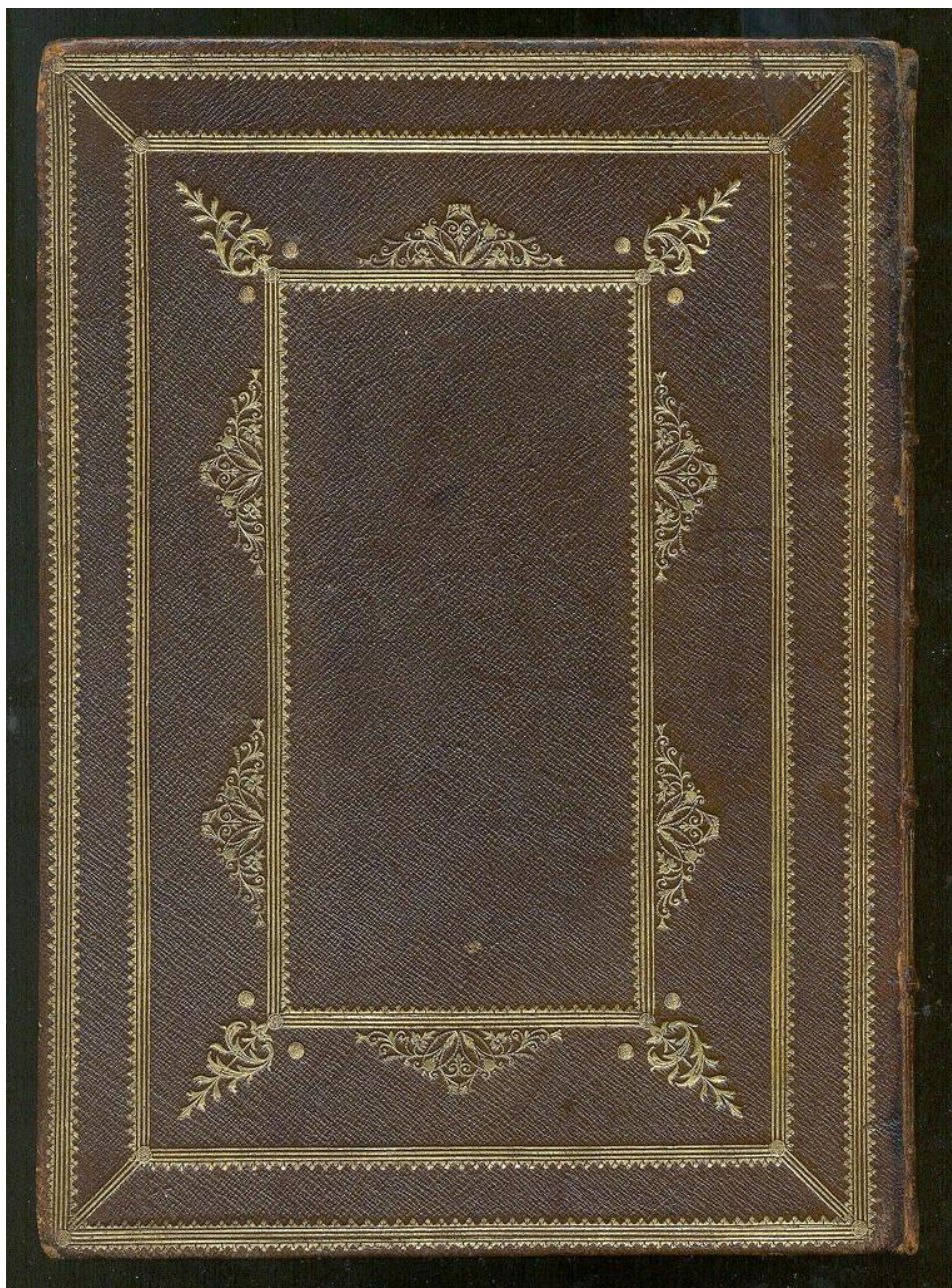
Arundel Society Binding, ca. 1850, Back Cover: “The Life of G. Angelico”, 1850

Arundel Society edition, Title Page: “The Life of G. Angelico”, 1850

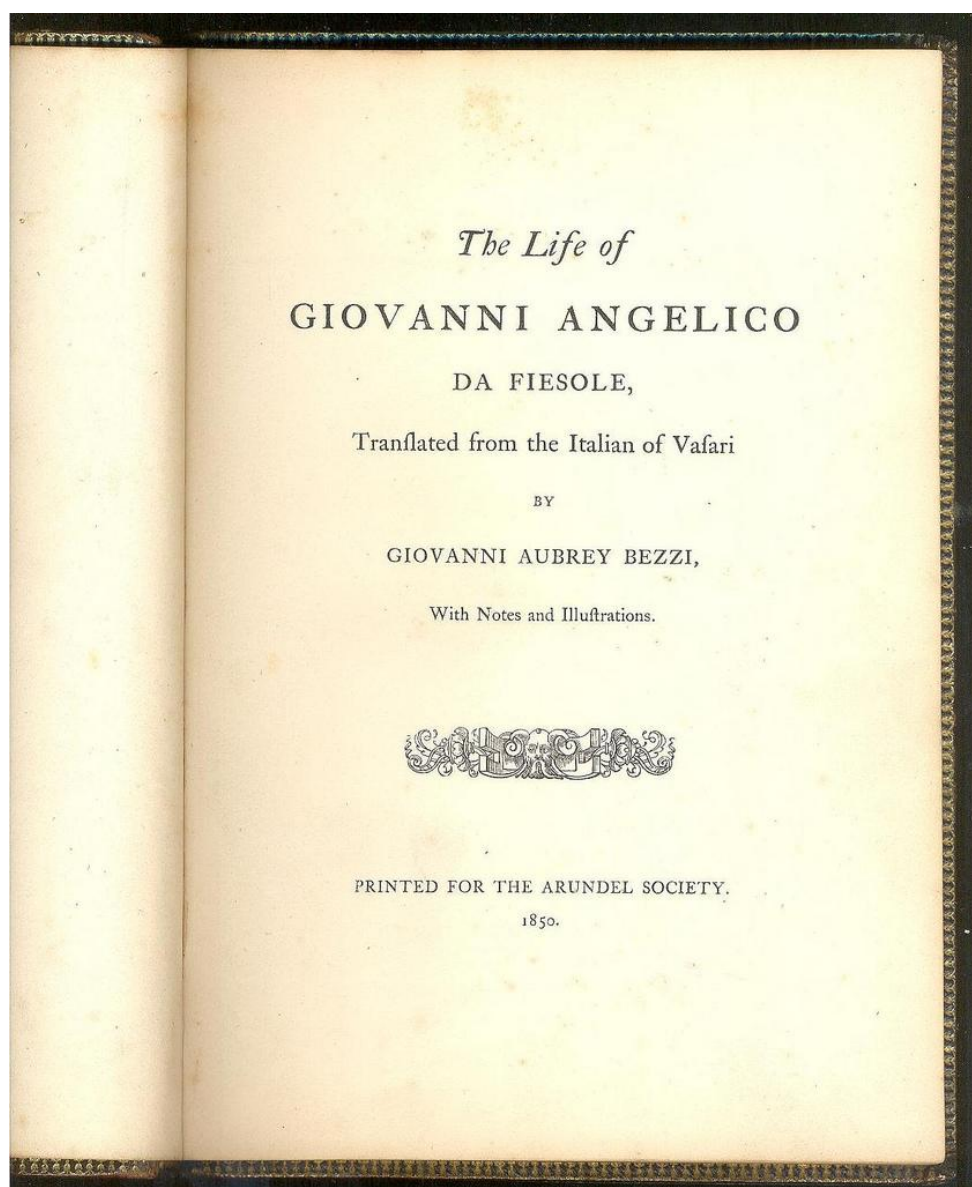
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