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THE SAN MARCO LAST SUPPER
BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO:
A DOMINICAN MESSAGE

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THE SAN MARCO LAST SUPPER BY DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO: A DOMINICAN MESSAGE

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ABSTRACT

THE SAN MARCO LAST SUPPER
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The Last Supper fresco by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the guest refectory of the Dominican Convent of San Marco, Florence is typical in its subject matter of refectory decoration during the Renaissance. It has been virtually dismissed in the literature as a copy of Ghirlandaio's fresco of the same subject in the refectory of Ognissanti. But, on closer examination, one finds there are significant differences between the two. This thesis describes those differences, and suggests why they were made.

Ghirlandaio's earlier Last Supper of 1476, at Passignano is shown to be the source for his compositional format, the single-image loggia, employed at both Ognissanti and San Marco, and the heightened contemplative spirit of the San Marco fresco. Located in the *foresteria*, the image at San Marco proves to embody a message of penitence and piety directed toward the guests of the monastery, the wealthy and powerful members of Renaissance society.

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INTRODUCTION

Quattrocento Florence produced a wealth of artistic activity in both the public and private arenas as the Florentine citizenry gained a heightened appreciation for the varied purposes to be served through art. Art created for the church often represented a combination of political and personal motivations as well as religious concerns. The rising status of the artist engendered increased interaction between artist and patron. These complex relationships require us to ask who or what determined the character of a particular commission; and why a particular theme or mode of expression was employed.

The Last Supper fresco by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Small Refectory of the Dominican Convent of San Marco, Florence (Figure 1), is most often dismissed in the literature as a virtual copy of Ghirlandaio's fresco of the same subject in the refectory of Ognissanti (Figure 2), and at first glance this does appear to be the case. Both works depict a vaulted upper room that appears as a direct extension of the architecture of the actual room itself, incorporating the console and vaulted ceiling into the images. Both also share essentially the same compositional structure, and the same floral and ornithological iconography. But on closer examination one finds increasing differences in detail and overall tenor. The Ognissanti fresco is the more animated and naturalistic; the San Marco fresco seems, by comparison, staged and still. Here, the figures and objects are almost incrementally spaced on the picture plane, recalling his earlier, nearly iconic, rendition at the Badia of Passignano (Figure 3).

The Ognissanti fresco, dated 1480 by an inscription below Christ's feet, (MCCCCLXXX) is presumed to have been painted first. The date of the San Marco remains problematic. There are no documents associated with the fresco, but it has been accepted as the work of Ghirlandaio, or, at least, his shop, since Vasari.[1] Ambiguous and conflicting generalizations are made regarding the date of execution but it is agreed that it is the latest Last Supper by Ghirlandaio and was painted sometime in the decade following that at Ognissanti.

The fresco by Ghirlandaio is the only Last Supper at San Marco. In 1536 Giovanni Sogliani painted the fresco St. Dominic and His Monks Fed by Angels in the Great Refectory, a work which is presumed to be a faithful copy of a composition originally painted by Fra Angelico in that same room and which was later destroyed in the expansion of the refectory. Fra Angelico was summoned to Rome in 1445, where he spent most of the rest of his career until his death in 1455.[2] The building of the Small Refectory in the *foresteria* may not have been completed until after his departure.

The San Marco fresco is habitually associated with the Ognissanti. Many scholars have even assumed that it dates from the same year, 1480. In this thesis I will show that the San Marco version is significantly different, and that it went so far as to reinstate an element of the devotional spirit seen in his earlier Last Supper of 1476, at Passignano. I will then ask what caused Ghirlandaio to paint the San Marco Last Supper to be so like the Ognissanti in format and yet so different in character? I will suggest an answer to this question by looking into the intended function of the painting as a focus within the *foresteria* or guest wing of the cloister.

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[1]Walker, 190.

[2]Walker, 185, 231.

PART I: BACKGROUND

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME OF THE LAST SUPPER IN ART

Prior to the mid-Quattrocento it was common to include an image of the Last Supper as part of a Passion cycle, such as that in Duccio's Maestà and Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes.[3] Duccio's and Giotto's versions represent one type of Last Supper composition, which is primarily narrative, and likely to focus on the identification of the treachery of Judas. Jesus and, or, Judas may be depicted reaching into the bowl; sometimes Jesus himself presents the morsel to Judas, depending on the Gospel account followed. Another type, often called the "Communion of the Apostles," depicting Christ as celebrant of the Mass serving the host[4] and, or, chalice to the Apostles, is most often used for altarpieces due to its sacramental nature. Luca Signorelli's painting for the Cathedral of Cortona, c. 1470-80, exemplifies this type. Between these two types is a third, which may be called the "Institution of the Eucharist." Paintings of this type show the company of the Last Supper at table, illustrating Christ's establishment of the memorial practice of his salvific act on the Cross as recounted in the Gospel texts. His actions described there would later take the form of the Eucharist of the Mass,[5] the sacrament of his

[3]Passion (Latin "passio") meaning "suffering." It refers to the suffering of Christ on the cross and the days leading up to it. It includes the Last Supper as part of this chronology but can also be assumed to reflect Christ's suffering due to the pending betrayal by both Judas and Peter, and the announcement of his death.

[4]Host (Latin "hostia") meaning "victim." The Eucharistic bread or wafer is so-named because in the traditional Latin Mass it is thought of as the body of Christ, who died on the cross.

[5]Eucharist (Greek "eucharistein") meaning "to give thanks." Walker, 37. In Catholic theology, the Mass is understood as the ceremonial re-enactment and re-presentation of Christ's sacrificial death as well as of his Last Supper. Hence, we find the common pairing with the Crucifixion.

continuing presence with the church, as recounted in Luke 22:19:

> *. . . he took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.*

The recognition of these several types of image can be seen in the panel paintings by Fra Angelico of 1452-53 for the Silver Cupboard used for storing the sacramental chalices in SS. Annunziata, Florence. Fra Angelico appropriately emphasizes the theme of the sacrament by including two scenes derived from the Last Supper account, one panel, a narrative one (Figure 4), identifying the Betrayer, Judas, and a second panel depicting the more strictly sacramental Communion of the Apostles. (Figure 5) Though this last work also includes the table in the background of the scene and is often given the title Institution of the Eucharist, Christ is clearly presented as a celebrant serving the host in wafer form to kneeling Apostles. This is Christ celebrating the Mass as it was practiced in the church at that time, and therefore, one has a sense of greater distance from the narrative account. Many works based on the Last Supper appear on a continuum between the extremes, conflations incorporating elements of each. Such is the case with Ghirlandaio's frescoes, though they are primarily based on the narrative account.

The widely-circulated 14th century Franciscan text, by an anonymous author, entitled Meditations on the Life of Christ, instructs the reader to consider four things regarding the Last Supper. "The first is the literal dinner; the second is the washing of the feet; the third is how he instituted the Sacrament; the fourth is the most beautiful sermon that he made to them."[6]

At San Marco, we find elements of three of these aspects; the dinner itself, the institution of the Sacrament, and the sermon that follows. This last is perhaps the most significant to the San Marco Last Supper. The inscription, which reads, "I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom,"[7] is in fact taken from Luke's account of the homily or sermon delivered by Jesus to the Apostles after the Supper. The author of the Meditations on the Life of Christ instructs the reader then to:

> *. . . meditate with discretion on everything that is said and done, for all should be deeply impressed on you, and not abbreviated but prolonged. . .This is the memorial that, when received as food and faithfully meditated upon by the knowing soul, should completely inflame and inebriate it and transform itself completely into Jesus Christ by the strength of love and devotion. . . He is the one on whom your salvation depends, in whose will and power it is to give you (or not to give you) the glory of Paradise.*[8]

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[6]Mistici del Duecento e del Trecento, ed. Levasti (1935), 447 ff. This passage is reproduced in Gilbert, 1974, 385.

[7]Walker, 188, confirms my reference for the inscription which I did not find translated anywhere in the literature on the San Marco Last Supper. The Latin reads "EGO DISPONO VOBIS SICUT DISPOSUIT MIHI PATER MEUS REGNUM UT EDATIS, ET BIBATIS SUPER MENSAM MEAM IN REGNO MEO."

[8]Meditations, 310, 314-15.

THE LAST SUPPER IN REFECTORY DECOR

The Last Supper became a common subject for refectory decoration beginning in the 14th century. The relationship between the Last Supper and refectories actually goes back to the 12th century, when one occasionally finds the Last Supper as the subject of the tympanum decoration over the entrance to a refectory such as that of Saint-Benigne in Dijon.[9] In Florence alone there are 15 Last Suppers in refectories.[10] Ghirlandaio himself painted four, possibly five,[11] the first in Passignano in 1476, the Ognissanti in 1480, a third later that year in San Donato, Polverosa,[12] and the San Marco fresco sometime (it is presumed) in the decade following. The Italian word *cenacolo* is variously used to indicate both the refectory itself, and, often, the fictive dining room of the Last Supper decoration. This double meaning of the word signifies the importance of the association of the room with the image, although, in fact, the Last Supper was by no means the exclusive subject for

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[9]Wirz, 24. Braunfels, 145-46.

[10]Braunfels, 145. See Walker for a complete survey of Florentine refectory decoration c.1350-1500.

[11]In his listing of Ghirlandaio's works, Schmeckebier, 217, includes "San Donato at Polverosa (1480), and a destroyed Last Supper in the Camaldolite monastery in Florence." He offers no documentation for the last work and I have encountered no other reference to such a work by Ghirlandaio. Schmeckebier does not include the San Marco Last Supper in this list. However, on p. 217 he writes "A variation of [the Ognissanti] Last Supper executed by the shop, decorates the refectory of the Convento di San Marco in Florence."

[12]Davies, 168. The Last Supper at San Donato, Polverosa is not mentioned by Vasari. However, documentation of payment to Domenico and Davide exists dated 31 May 1481. See Walker, 243 and Vertova, 48, for discussion of documentary material. It is assumed that it was a variant of the Ognissanti and San Marco frescoes. It was destroyed in 1530 when the entire convent was demolished in preparation for the siege of Florence, since it was situated on the outskirts of the city. The loss is unfortunate not only in itself, but because it might have helped resolve the problematic dating of the San Marco fresco.

refectory decoration.

The refectory wall allowed the subject to be treated on a new monumental scale in the 14th and 15th centuries, in response to the flourishing of monastic communities in that time. The earliest known refectory Last Supper, in S. Croce, Florence, was painted by Taddeo Gaddi, c. 1335-40 (Figure 6). Although it is one of a program of images including the Crucifixion above, flanked by four smaller scenes, and occupies less than one third of the wall space, Eve Borsook asserts that the Last Supper is the dominant image here.[13] It is closest in proximity to the viewer and Gaddi projects the company of the Last Supper into the refectory space by placing the figures as though they were in front of the decorative bands which frame the other scenes. Such an attempt to make a connection with the viewer is characteristic of Renaissance art. John Spencer introduces Alberti's treatise of 1435, On Painting, by writing, "This art will not only please the beholder but also touch him. It is to be effective, *making a direct link between itself and the beholder*."(italics mine)[14] The placement of Judas on the near side of the table is symbolic of his separation from those who would remain faithful but also creates an undeniable association with the viewer.[15] Gaddi emphasizes

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[13]Borsook, 1980.

[14]Spencer, 27. Belting, 197, writes of this Renaissance phenomenon of association with the beholder, that often a caption accompanied the *Imago Pietatis*, addressed to the viewer, and which reinforces the pictorial rhetoric with a verbal rhetoric: 'All you who pass by, behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.' (*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus!*)"

[15]In the centuries to follow, the representation of Judas develops to identify even more directly with the beholder. A particularly startling example is the figure of Judas in the Last Supper in the Badia di Monteoliveto, Florence by Il Sodoma, 1515, who turns and confronts the viewer in much the same way as the cat in the San Marco Last Supper. It is generally assumed that this is a self-portrait of the artist. Andree Madeleine Hayun writes in Giovanni Antonio Bazzi - "Il Sodoma", "This violation of the barrier usually assumed between player and viewer. . . provokes the viewer into a reaction stronger than the one warranted by the context or expression residing in the work itself. . . But the realm of Christian personages. . . could be approached as

the relationship by making the figures of the faithful considerably larger than life while Judas remains merely life-size, our size, a comparatively diminished figure. The Judas figure in the 14th and 15th centuries admonished the beholder "to fight the Judas in his own soul."[16] The *frati* eating in the refectory would naturally associate themselves with the company of apostles, who mirror their own activity and would aspire to emulate them in other ways as well. The ambiguity presented to the monk of himself as both one of the faithful and the Betrayer would be cause for meditation.

The San Marco Last Supper appears in the Small Refectory of the *foresteria*, which was used primarily by guests of the monastery, laymen rather than monks.[17] We must consider who these guests were and how they were related to the monastery to determine how their presence might have effected the image chosen for their dining hall.

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a palpable event." In another example of Judas associated with a specific person in a treatment of the Last Supper, Pfeiffer, 389-400, discusses Lucas Cranach's Dessau Altarpiece, c.1565, which portrays various reformers in attendance at the Last Supper. He argues that the figure of Judas is a portrait of Friedrich Staphylus, a one-time adherent of Lutheranism who then betrayed the faith.

[16]Philip, Lotte Brand. "The Prado Epiphany by Jerome Bosch." Art Bulletin, XXXV, 1953,290.

[17]Lauts, 49.

DOMINICAN IMAGERY

The Dominican Order, founded by St. Dominic in 1215, committed itself to three "heroic" traits: mortification, prayer, and love of neighbor. The Dominicans were mendicant, scholarly, contemplative and penitential, focusing on preaching and the preparation necessary for that calling. It was the first order to link a life with God devoted to prayer and study to a ministry of salvation through penitential preaching. St. Dominic established that the outward-going activities of the pulpit and confessional were to be the sole focus of their lives. Theological study was to equip them to combat heresy.[18] The goal of community life for the friar was to "impose on him self-control, constant scrutiny of conscience and obedience to rule and authority. [It] subject[s] him to a ceaseless exercise of the virtues, *restraining the impetuosity of his emotions and passions;* establishing peace in his soul; and *nourishing in him fraternal charity.*"(italics mine)[19] The common dormitory was abandoned almost everywhere in the late 14th and 15th centuries. The heart of the monastery became the cells, in which the friars not only slept but studied and worked. In Braunfels' words, "The friar arms himself for his mission privily. . . Franciscan and Dominican mysticism was the governing force in the cultural climate of the municipal republics and free cities of the 14th and 15th centuries, and outstanding preachers played a decisive part in the spiritual and imaginative life of the urban population."[20]

[18]Braunfels, 128. The Inquisition drew its inquisitors primarily from the Dominican ranks due to their superior theological knowledge.

[19]Catholic Encyclopedia, 965, 972.

Eve Borsook contends that the mendicant orders were responsible for most of the great narrative cycles. These cycles exemplify the great Dominican theologian St. Thomas Aquinas' three functions for pictorial decoration: instructing the ignorant, rendering sacred mysteries visible so that they could be better committed to mind, and exciting devotion.[21] According to William Hood, the painted images of the Dominicans served three additional functions: explaining the ideals of common life, recording the history of the order and presenting models of the preaching life; all "stimulating imitation" of the virtues depicted.[22]

The concept of models for imitation had become prevalent by the Quattrocento. Texts of that time collected in Mistici del Duecento e del Trecento,[23] reveal an emphasis on the importance of the likeness between Christ and the writer who is stimulated to "resemble him perfectly."[24] This concept extended to a book written in 1454 for young girls titled Garden of Prayer which encouraged the reader to associate places and people known to her with those on which she is meditating to better enter into the meaning of the stories.[25] These writings employ emulation of a model as a didactic and spiritual tool much as we see the concept at work in Dominican images. With their emphasis on penitential preaching and pedagogy, the Dominicans favored subjects supporting the mission and history of the Order. The frescoes in the Spanish Chapel at S. Maria Novella by Andrea da Firenze, 1365, exemplify these values. The Triumph of the Dominican Order, also

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[20]Braunfels, 137.

[21]Borsook, 1980, XIX-XX.

[22]Hood, 111-12.

[23]Mistici del Duecento e del Trecento, ed. Levasti, 1935.

[24]Gilbert, 1974, 384.

[25]Baxandall, 46.

called the Triumph of Repentance, depicts the friars in the form of dogs (*domini canes*)[26] guarding the "estates" of the world and assisting them to Heaven. The accompanying image, the Triumph of St. Thomas Aquinas, represents the various means to truth and knowledge: Virtues, Evangelists and Prophets, the Arts and Sciences, and leading practitioners of each discipline.[27] Identification with the beholder in private areas of the monastery often took the form of including saints of the Order in paintings of secondary scenes in a program of images, as well as at the Crucifixion, which often appeared in refectories together with the Last Supper or as the primary image. At San Marco each of the cells reserved for the novitiate includes a Crucifixion scene with St. Dominic who kneels grasping the cross staring up at the figure of Christ. Thus, the hopeful novice is encouraged to associate himself with the Order and the devotion required of him as he moves toward taking his vows. Savonarola at San Marco instructed, "one should watch and meditate on one's crucifix always thinking 'God is dead, crucified by me.'"[28] R. Scott Walker confirms the prevalence of this model of direct association, as he points out in his study of Florentine refectory decoration that the author of the Lignum Vitae encourages contemplation such that one can say, with the Apostle Paul "I am nailed to the cross with Christ." (Gal. 2:19)[29]

Commonly found in the houses of other orders, there are surprisingly few images of the Last Supper in Dominican refectories. The Madonna and Child Enthroned with Sts. Dominic, Thomas Aquinas, John the Baptist, Peter Martyr, and a Donor in S. Maria Novella, c.1390, and the Crucifixion with the

[26]A black and white dog is a symbol for the Dominican Order due to their black and white robes.

[27]Braunfels, 144.

[28]Ringbom, 20.

[29]Walker, 52, note 21.

Virgin, John the Evangelist, and St. Dominic in San Domenico, Fiesole, c.1435 are typical of the preference for depicting scenes that include saints of the Order.[30] Only Ghirlandaio's fresco at San Marco and Leonardo's fresco at S. Maria delle Grazie in Milan opt for the Last Supper as the subject for the refectory decor. Walker accounts for the selection at Milan as being due to a powerful patron, Ludovico Sforza, "whose desires overrode the traditions of the order."[31] The deviation from traditional subjects at San Marco supports the contention that the image had a specific purpose. Located in the guest refectory rather than the principle monastic dining hall, the primary beholders of the image would not be brothers of the Dominican friary, but rather members of the outside community. The inscription speaks directly to the viewer in the first person; here Christ Himself exhorts all to follow in his footsteps. In addition to this overt directive, the character of the work as a whole manifests aspects of the Dominican persona, inviting contemplation and a penitential response. This fresco is the visual equivalent of a sermon.

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[30]Walker, 116, 124.

[31]Walker, 45, 54-55, note 33.

THE MEDICI AND PATRONAGE AT SAN MARCO

San Marco came under the patronage of Cosimo il Vecchio and his brother Lorenzo dei Medici in the 1430's, following their support of a petition to the Council of Constance to remove the Sylvestrines from the site and give it to the Observantine Dominicans of Fiesole.[32] The convent was originally built in 1299 for the Sylvestrines who had since allowed it to fall into grave disrepair.[33] According to Giuliano Lapaccini, author of the chronicle of San Marco (written mid-century), Eugenius IV transferred San Marco "out of respect" for Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo.[34] It has been suggested that Cosimo was in the first place encouraged to undertake the patronage as an act of penance for sins of usury in recognition that "contrition and lamentation were made possible by external acts."[35]

Cosimo took his patronage seriously, using his influence to obtain a tax exemption for San Marco in 1437, and, later, in 1455, obtaining a papal bull from Calixtus III permitting the community to accept and retain property and annual revenues with the proviso, which seems like a contradiction, that "the convent remain observant."[36] The Dominicans, as a mendicant order, accepted a rule of poverty. At the same time, St. Dominic, himself, allowed his Order to accept revenues in cash because, whereas land burdened the

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[32]Brown, 406, 409.

[33]Brown, 405, 408.

[34]Rubinstein, 66.

[35]Weissman, 265.

[36]Rubinstein, 66-67.

organization with work, money freed them for their scholarly and pedagogic avocations.[37]

In 1437 Cosimo employed the architect Michelozzo to renovate the dilapidated structure of San Marco. A fire in 1436 necessitated the additional task of rebuilding the dormitory area. All of the work was finished in 1443, at which time Cosimo and Lorenzo commissioned Fra Angelico, himself a Dominican, to paint frescoes throughout the convent and to create the main altarpiece.[38]

A contemporary source called Cosimo's expense at San Marco "insane." The Augustinian Canon Timoteo Maffei praised the size and decoration of San Marco, the richness of its library, and the splendor of its furnishings while observing that they were such as "the profession of poor religious would hardly appear to require. "[39] Antoninus in his Chronicles begins with a sharp attack on the comfort and sumptuous display in Dominican houses; writing "houses and cells enlarged, vaulted, raised to the sky and most frivolously adorned with superfluous sculptures and paintings." However, he goes on to point out that changed conditions required them to dispense with the rule of poverty "since otherwise it would not be possible to maintain themselves."[40] Although numbers in the monasteries had multiplied in the century following the devastation of the Black Death of 1348, charity declined, patrons preferring to spend on sumptuous gifts of art and architecture.[41] However, Cosimo did help in

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[37]Braunfels, 126.

[38]Brown, 409-11. Orlandi, 80, reproduces the document of commission.

[39]Rubinstein, 68.

[40]Rubinstein, 67-68.

[41]Braunfels, 129, writes that many joined monastic orders to escape the burdens of life. In 1277, 414 Dominican houses are on record, in 1358 that number rose to 635, and by 1720 there were 1076.

meeting the living expenses of the *frati* with monthly gifts and an endowment once the restoration was completed.

Cosimo's involvement extended to having a cell reserved for his use at the monastery, a double chamber at the end of the corridor by the Library.[42] According to Christopher Hibbert, the forementioned Antoninus Pierozzi, the Prior of San Marco who became Archbishop of Florence in 1445, "was one of Cosimo's closest friends . . . the two men could often be found talking together, and with other members of the community in the large cell which Cosimo reserved for his own private use and to which he retreated by himself when feeling the need for quiet reflection."[43]

The patronage of the Medici was continued after Cosimo's death by his son Piero and particularly his grandson Lorenzo il Magnifico, and yet it appears to have been significantly reduced in terms of monetary support. On Cosimo's death Antoninus recorded in his Chronicles, "He did not leave us anything," which suggests that the endowment mentioned by Hibbert was, after all, not substantial.[44] Lorenzo continued to give weekly alms for the living expenses of the monks, but lacked the financial means of his grandfather, so his patronage took the form largely of using his influence on behalf of the monastery. An indication of this support appears in a letter of July 1487. Lorenzo wrote that he had recently " made strong representations to His Holiness that he reform the convent of Santa Caterina at Pisa" by transferring it to the friars of San Marco "which today consists entirely of worthy men, and most of them are dedicated to studies ."[45] He also wielded his power against the wishes of the general of the Order in 1471, in supporting

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[42]Hibbert, 317. Known as cell #39.

[43]Hibbert, 74.

[44]Rubinstein, 67.

[45]Rubinstein, 74.

the appointment of Santi Schiattesi as vicar. He justified his action as part of inheriting the responsibility for "the peace and welfare of our convent of San Marco" from his father and grandfather.[46] This kind of patronal interference in the affairs of the convent may perhaps have given impetus to the decision to feature the prominant inscription in the fresco of the Last Supper in the guest refectory, "I confer on you a kingdom. . .", which emphasizes service and humility on the part of those who have position in this world.

It seems unlikely that the Last Supper was paid for with Medici money. Lorenzo commissioned fewer works than his father and grandfather. Still, it is likely that he would have approved of the selection of Ghirlandaio as the artist, as he recommended Ghirlandaio for work in Santa Trinita, 1483-86, and S. Maria Novella, 1485-90, and for employment in the Sistine Chapel. Hibbert notes that Lorenzo's reputation as a connoisseur was such that when a new altar panel was commissioned from Ghirlandaio for Santo Spirito, one of the conditions stipulated was that it should be done "according to the manner, standards and form" as would please Lorenzo though he was not the patron for the work.[47] In light of this incident, his relationship with San Marco and his later support of Ghirlandaio, it is conceivable that Lorenzo was in some way consulted regarding the fresco.

Since Ghirlandaio's Last Supper was presumably painted sometime in the decade of Savonarola's rise to power at San Marco, the question of his possible influence on that image may be raised. Savonarola came to San Marco in 1482. Unless the fresco was painted immediately after the Ognissanti, which some scholars do suggest, the fresco would have been painted during Savonarola's tenure there. Savonarola was assigned as lector

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[46]Rubinstein, 80, note 66.

[47]Hibbert, 166-68, 323, note 8.

in theology to San Marco in 1482, and became prior in 1491. Ronald Steinberg states "For [Savonarola] the only value of art lay in its didactic functions and as an aid to spiritual or mystical experiences."[48] Savonarola's advocacy or denouncement of specific artists, artworks and styles remains in dispute, although it does seem fairly clear that he would have been likely to condemn such a lavish decorative quality as is to be seen in much of Ghirlandaio's work; and it so happens that this particular fresco exhibits a certain restraint in ornamentation. Moreover, the clear message of the inscription would appear to be in keeping with Savonarola's concern for devotion and piety. It is not inconceivable that this fresco would have met with Savonarola's approval, or else did not require it, as he did not rise to full power at San Marco until 1491, by which time this work had most likely been finished for some years.

[48]Steinberg, Ronald M., 49.

PART II: CHARACTER AND PURPOSE

LAY PIETY AND PENITENTIAL CULTURE

The church was not an unusual gathering place for the rich and powerful in Quattrocento Italy. Cosimo il Vecchio's private cell at San Marco testifies to the accepted role of the monastery as a retreat for the layman for a period of days or weeks. Ludovico Sforza, patron of Leonardo's Last Supper in the refectory of the Dominican monastery of S. Maria della Grazie in Milan (Figure 7), was known to have eaten dinner in that refectory twice a week. The refectory is situated near the entrance, making it a semi-public place rather than the sole reserve of the monastic community.[49] By the mid-Quattrocento there were at least 100 lay confraternities in Florence; 41% of them met in the five main friaries, one of which was San Marco, and more than half of these were flagellants.[50] According to G. A. Brucker, the Observant orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans received the most support from patrons due to their ability to "create a conventual experience - austere, spiritually intense, that appealed to the upper echelons of Florentine society."[51] It should also be noted that, as a preaching order, the Dominicans were highly educated, providing an intellectual as well as spiritual stimulus to the visitor. Hence, we have Cosimo's retreat and the *foresteria* at San Marco.

Braunfels, in his study of monastic architecture, writes "[In the

[49]Braunfels, 146, finds this location significant to the activity of the monastery.

[50]Henderson, 233-34. These are particularly illuminating numbers since due to the Black Death the population of Florence had shrunk by two-thirds between 1340 and 1440, from over 100,000 to between 37,000 and 40,000.

[51]Brucker, 52.

Renaissance] the chapter-house, refectory, and church become 'public' in character. It is there that [the *frati*] sway a congregation. . .[the refectory becomes] the scene of sermons, discussion and study, as well as the place where leading men of the town ate together with the brethren."[52] He goes on to state that the monastery became so integrated with the life of the citizenry that they simply added cloisters as needed to accommodate them. Hence, S. Maria Novella ended up with seven cloisters.[53] At San Marco, the building of the second cloister, which contains the guest quarters, was among the later sections of the construction completed by Michelozzo.[54] A corridor beside the Small Refectory gives access to the street, thereby allowing outsiders to enter the *foresteria* without disturbing the functioning of the community. (Figure 8) There are entrances to the refectory in each side wall, one to the monastery, the other to the corridor of the *foresteria* to the north. The recently built Library of San Marco was the first to allow access to the public.[55] This would indicate even greater interaction with the citizenry and the need to accommodate their presence with a meeting-place, the refectory, designed with their use in mind.

Besides, as Ronald Weissman has stated, "Florentine intellectuals . . . found acceptable the penitential culture of lay religion . . . and believed that penitential culture itself supported and was supported by the *vita civile*."[56]

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[52]Braunfels, 138.

[53]Braunfels, 140.

[54]Marchese, V. San Marco, convento de padri predicaton in Firenze. Florence, 1853, 75-76. Referenced in Walker, 185. Walker, 186, notes that the Medici arms are sculpted into the center of the ceiling of the refectory. This does not in any way indicate patronage of the fresco, since it was probably part of the original construction by Michelozzo which was done under Medici patronage.

[55]Hood, 118.

[56]Weissman, 265.

This may account for the unusual inscription selected, "I confer on you a kingdom. . .", from the Gospel of Luke for the San Marco Last Supper. The original context of this passage is Luke's account of the identification of Judas and the institution of the Eucharist:

> *. . .[when] a dispute arose among them [the Apostles] as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones.*(emphasis mine)
>
> LUKE 22: 24-30

The inscription thus makes a ready connection with the diners in the small refectory, the powerful and wealthy citizens of Florence and from abroad who needed to be reminded of Christ's perspective on what determines a person's position now and in the hereafter. The portion of the passage used for the inscription politicly focuses on God's grace. The viewers, however, would readily recognize the context within which these words were spoken and would perhaps have added the final phrase of the passage "and sit on thrones," to their reading of the inscription.

Maundy Thursday was the center of the confraternities' Holy Week celebrations, for it included the scene from the Last Supper in which Christ demonstrated his true humility: in washing his disciples feet. The groups

read the scriptural accounts aloud to guide their actions as they went through the imitation of Christ's actions.[57] The particular passage from which the inscription is taken may also be interpreted as an encouragement to service or, more specifically, patronage; just as Christ, the King, descended from his high position to serve mankind, so should they. If the appeal to follow Christ's example failed, the underlying doctrine of penance, so prevalent in the Renaissance, remained a powerful motivation.

In his account of Christ's so-called sermon to the Apostles following the Last Supper, the author of the Meditations on the Life of Christ, widely read in Quattrocento Italy, directs the reader to ". . . Meditate how. . . [Christ] instructed them affectionately and solicitously, speaking of charity many times: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another; and in this all will know you as my disciples, if you love one another" (John xiii, 34, 35, xv, 12) . . . meditate how He admonished them to observe His commandments, saying in the sermon 'If you love me, observe my commandments' (John xiv, 15), and 'If you observe my commandments, you will dwell in my love' (John xv, 10)."[58] The inscription in the San Marco "Last Supper" derives from Luke's greatly abbreviated account of this same period of instruction following the Supper. It may be seen as Christ's final prescription for his followers.

Marvin Becker, in his study of lay piety in Early Renaissance Florence, identifies the emphasis placed on the *imitatio Cristi*, finding it was directly related to a concern for "the possibility of realizing a 'true' Christian community where affluent citizens would be fully cognisant of their social responsibilities. . . the stress on charity and love might indeed look evasive

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[57]Henderson, 242-43.

[58]Meditations, 315.

until one realizes that they surfaced with compelling social forces. These virtues alone could foster the family, guard the city, and even enlarge a Florentine empire. Men were regarded as God's creatures charged with solemn obligation to care for one another; man's dignity did not reside in solitary experience or in strategic personal relationships. Neither pride of caste nor cultivation of autonomous feelings of selfhood were sufficient to endorse this *dignitas;* instead, man's consciousness of his solidarity with all men was quintessential."[59] The inscription at San Marco, "And I confer on you a kingdom. . . ," resonates with these implications. Becker notes that according to contemporary sources "The [monk] . . . took the easier path toward salvation living under vows, while the [layman] selected the hard road when remaining in the world of temptation."[60] Thus, the San Marco guest refectory delivers a message of exhortation, grace and warning combined to those who traveled the "hard road."

In a letter addressed to Antonio Zoccoli, Giles of Viterbo established the critical nature of "the outpouring of love which the Incarnation effected and symbolized. Through this love man is transformed into 'God' and rendered immortal. The Incarnation, as a work of love, evokes from man a response in love. Thus charity is seen as the principle duty of the Christian life." The Catholic theologian John W. O'Malley's commentary on this letter, in his study of Renaissance sermons, Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome, addresses man's necessary response in the acceptance of grace. ". . .Man's dignity or, in this instance, man's transformation is not viewed as assigning him a niche in a hierarchy of honors, but as imposing upon him a mission. It also imbues him with a holy dynamism that enables him to fulfill his

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[59]Becker, 192, 196.

[60]Becker, 191, refers to Poggio and Lorenzo Valla as his sources.

mission. That dynamism derives from the love of God poured into men's hearts."[61] Duty and redemption are inextricably intertwined, the consummate *imitatio Cristi:* "I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom [and sit on thrones.]"

[61]O'Malley, 173. Text of the letter is reproduced in O'Malley "Man's Dignity, God's Love, and the Destiny of Rome: A Text of Giles of Viterbo," Viator, 3 (1972), 389-416.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAST SUPPER AT PASSIGNANO

The San Marco Last Supper exhibits a marked stillness, as if capturing a moment frozen in time. The scene is quiet, each Apostle self-contained and introspective, as though he were an exemplar of solitary Dominican contemplation. An almost regular pattern is created by the figures alternating with their shadows across the picture plane, emphatically punctuated by the gilded discs of their nimbuses. This almost mathematic regularity recalls the Last Supper at Passignano, where each Apostle is framed within his own wall panel lined up with the perspective grid of the floor tiles. The circular halos framing their heads have a distinctly iconic quality. The similarity in tone between the Passignano and San Marco frescoes is undeniable.

The fresco at Passignano, dated 1476, marks Ghirlandaio's earliest surviving and very likely first portrayal of the Last Supper. The Badia or Abbey Church of Passignano was founded by St. Giovanni Gualberto, who also established the Vallombrosan Order and died there in 1073. The Order takes its name from the forest of Vallombrosa, southeast of Florence, and incorporated many eremitic elements into the Rule of St. Benedict, including poverty, strict enclosure and perpetual silence. The church was rebuilt in the 13th century, and enlarged and remodeled in the 15th century.[62] At that time the Abbott, Don Isidoro del Sera, originally engaged another painter, Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli, for the task of decorating the refectory. But in 1474, after completion of two lunetted images in the upper region of the wall, Don Isidoro, apparently dissatisfied, paid Rosselli for his work and sought

[62]Walker, 169.

another painter.[63]

Ghirlandaio was commissioned to complete the original scheme as designated by the Abbott. At that end of the Refectory the two sections of vaulting, supported in the middle by a console of *pietra serena*, divide the upper part of the wall into two lunettes, and thus eliminate the possibility of a centrally located Crucifixion in this area. The Abbott designated an Expulsion of Adam and Eve and a Murder of Abel for the left-hand and right-hand lunettes, respectively.[64] These scenes were completed by Rosselli and remained when Ghirlandaio accepted the project. The lunettes were separated from the area below by an architrave with a polychrome decorative frieze, leaving only a narrow horizontal band of wall for the Last Supper. Theologically, the sin of Adam and Eve and their subsequent expulsion from Paradise established mankind's need for salvation. Cain's murder of his brother Abel, the innocent victim who like Christ offered a sacrifice acceptable to God, is seen here as a prefiguration of the Betrayal of Christ by one of his own disciples, Judas. The Last Supper links these events, as the betrayal by Judas brought about the final sacrifice that would expunge man's guilt; the painting of the Last Supper for this refectory wall at once fills out the space and rounds out a cohesive program of images. Perhaps most significant for the study of Ghirlandaio's Last Suppers, the project at Passignano confronted the unique compositional challenge posed by the central positioning of the console, and the division of the upper part of the wall into lunettes, which prohibited the use of a traditional arrangement of scenes, and inadvertently presented Ghirlandaio with the solution he needed several years later for the refectory decorations of Ognissanti and San Marco. There, faced with the

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[63]Vertova, 42.

[64]Vertova, 42 and Walker, 169. Walker reproduces the two lunetted images.

same central obstruction, a console, with two vaults springing from it on either side, forming lunettes, he translated the two lunetted registers of Passignano into two fictive vaulted bays, as though to create a loggia open to the garden beyond, and thus establishing a single, coherent illusion that functions as an extension of the refectory space itself. The fictive vaults are painted as the star-studded heavens, like other ceilings at that time. The actual vaulting of the room may have originally been painted in the same way, enhancing the illusion of real presence.[65] At San Marco, moreover, Ghirlandaio created an additional link between the actual and fictive architecture; the *pietra serena* consoles here have painted counterparts in the form of supports for the arches that frame the outdoor vista: a Corinthian pilaster and a Corinthian column or pier in the middle, thereby creating an even greater sense of continuity with the true architectural space.

This type of illusionistic extension of a vaulted room was so successful that it became the standard in the century to follow. Even when an artist incorporated additional scenes, these occur in the landscape viewed beyond the upper room rather than as the distinctly separate registers of the refectory decor as seen at S. Croce and S. Apollonia. For example, the Last Supper fresco by Perugino, 1493-96, in the Great Refectory of S. Onofrio di Foligno, Florence (Figure 9) includes the Agony in the Garden as if it were taking place in the hills beyond the center arch of the loggia. In Cosimo Rosselli's Last Supper of 1481-82 in the Sistine Chapel (Figure 10), three events occur in the landscape beyond, the Agony in the Garden on the left, the Betrayal in the center and the Crucifixion on the right. Rosselli broke with convention by placing these scenes in chronological sequence, rather than giving the Crucifixion its traditional, hieratic placement in the center. But this sequence

[65]Walker, 35-36, makes this suggestion.

may be deemed appropriate for an image in a Passion cycle with a narrative emphasis. This ordering of the scenes also serves to reinforce the impact of the identification of Judas as the Betrayer in the primary image, by depicting the actual betrayal in the Kiss of Judas directly above the major players. Rosselli adopted the scheme even though it was not necessitated by architectural features, finding the proportions of the format suited to the register assigned him by the project.

Another compositional element originating at Passignano is the positioning of Jesus, John and Judas with regard to the console. The central location of this feature made impossible the expected central placement of Christ, as at S. Croce. There, Gaddi balanced the placement of Judas to the right of Jesus in front of the table by placing John to the left of Jesus, next to Peter. John is collapsed on the table, creating a dark void above him that counterbalances the dark mass of Judas to the fore. This void also provides a clear visual field for Christ's gesture of blessing. At Passignano Ghirlandaio simply moves Christ to the left of the console to avoid the appearance of its piercing the top of his head and places Judas just to the right. John, in his recumbent position between the two, rests his head nearly on the table and thus out of the way of the console. This same sequence is repeated at Ognissanti and San Marco. This compositional response to the intervention of the console also brings out the implication that at this moment, at the table of the Last Supper, the Apostle beloved by Christ is virtually eclipsed by Judas, the Betrayer.

Vertova states that Domenico sent his brother, Davide, and assistants ahead to Passignano so that they would execute the "less difficult" parts and would limit his time in that remote locale,[66] suggesting that it may be largely

a shop work. The self-containment of the individual Apostles, with no interaction occurring between them, is apt for a Vallombrosan community, which practiced enclosure and perpetual silence. The simple forms of Apostles facing forward and placed behind the long white stripe of the tablecloth establish a sense of order and clarity. Vertova considers this regularized and stilled composition to be merely static, even a feeble effort, in which "the heads are treated as busts as if any variety introduced would be a desperate measure."[67] And yet this careful placement and externally placid countenance of the figures establish the character of the work. After an attempt at Castagnesque activity at Ognissanti, Ghirlandaio was to reinstate some of that contemplative quality at San Marco.[68]

The Last Supper at Passignano has been little known due to its rather remote locale, and the Vallombrosan practice of enclosure, and, more recently, its status as private property to which few outsiders have gained access. Yet this early work provided the basis for Ghirlandaio's much-admired composition of the Last Supper at Ognissanti, and, even more so, the painting of the same subject at San Marco.

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[66]Vertova, 44-45. This is a documented work, with records of payments made to Domenico and Davide in 1476 and 1477. See Walker, 176, for manuscript sources.

[67]Vertova, 45.

[68]Walker, 169. The fictive balustrade, and probably, the two outer rows of tile were added later so the beholder originally had a greater sense of proximity to the scene.

CASTAGNO'S INFLUENCE ON THE LAST SUPPER AT OGNISSANTI

The San Marco Apostles have an introspective air with eyes downcast or averted. The only eye contact made with the beholder is by the cat, who stares pointedly out at the viewer. The Apostles' gestures record a variety of meanings undetectable in their becalmed though melancholy faces: prayer, benediction, and hands folded as if in resignation. One Apostle points toward Judas while another indicates himself as if to ask "Am I the one?" Peter grasps his knife foreshadowing events to come, when he would cut off a man's ear at Jesus' arrest.

The Ognissanti Last Supper has been described as a "gathering without center"[69] though it anticipates the naturalism embodied in Leonardo's later work.[70] Walker states that Ghirlandaio was at the peak of his artistic powers when he created these "rippling dramatic movements" toward Christ in confrontation with Judas in a scene that is "intensely naturalistic."[71] It is true that the Apostles are depicted as reacting to Christ's revelations of both the betrayal and the institution of the New Covenant. They lean toward one another, expressing dismay and puzzlement in their faces as well as through posture and gesture. Their subtle halos hover above their heads in stark contrast to the metallic discs of San Marco. Their garments are simple and unadorned, compared to the gold-trimmed costumes of the company at San Marco. The Apostles at Ognissanti are more "human;" they embody

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[69]Wolfflin, 25, uses the phrase.

[70]Walker, 13, classifies Leonardo's "Last Supper" in S. Maria delle Grazie, Milan, c.1495-97/98, as a Florentine work.

[71]Walker, 70.

ambiguous, confused emotions.

A definitive comparison of the central grouping of Christ, John, Peter and Judas at Ognissanti with the corresponding figures at San Marco is impossible due to the 17th century repainting of the head of Christ,[72] and yet it is notable that at Ognissanti John merely rests on Christ's breast, in keeping with the gospel account, whereas at San Marco he appears emphatically collapsed on the table (as at Passignano), asleep, or, as is sometimes suggested, fainted in shock at the words he has heard. The author of the Meditations on the Life of Christ emphasizes John's special devotion to Christ, presenting it as exemplary. "John drew close to Him and did not part from Him. . . no one was drawn to Him as faithfully and familiarly as John."[73]

Ognissanti was a Benedictine monastery for the *Frati Umiliati* of the *Arte della Lana*, the wool guild. The land was given to the *Umiliati* in 1250, close to the Arno, whose water was necessary for treating and dying wool. They observed personal and community poverty, and, as manual laborers, they also taught weaving and the working of wool to the urban poor.[74] They were craftsmen rather than scholars, perhaps more given to natural human exchange than the Dominicans, whose interactions with the outside world occurred primarily with the high-born of Florentine society rather than the poor. The 13th century structure of the *Umiliati* was rebuilt in 1480, the

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[72]Borsook, 1980, 116. Christ's head was repainted on a fresh patch of plaster, likely destroying Ghirlandaio's work, in the 17th century by Carlo Dolci because of damage due to humidity. The head is clearly in a different hand, a gilded halo frames Christ's head though all of the Apostles halos hover discreetly above. Christ's halo is also cut off by the cornice above the wooden bench on which he sits. The discrepancy between the sinopia, which is still extant, which depicts a much more intimate scene as Christ leans his head toward John's, and Dolci's repainting does not necessarily indicate a change of mind on Ghirlandaio's part because the area of Dolci's repainting would allow for the position indicated by the sinopia.

[73]Meditations, 310.

[74]Walker, 177.

refectory situated between two of three cloisters.[75]

The Ognissanti Last Supper is usually considered dependent on a work of Andrea del Castagno, probably a lost composition in S. Maria Nuova of 1457, described as depicting a so-called triclinium situated in an upper room much like that found in Ghirlandaio's later compositions.[76] From payment documents and the descriptions of those who saw it, we know of a Last Supper there in the "service" dining hall of the hospital. Comparison is often made between Castagno's earlier Last Supper at S. Apollonia and Ghirlandaio's fresco at Ognissanti. However, since S. Apollonia was in *clausura*[77] at the time, and documentation indicates that the fresco at S. Maria Nuova was still visible in 1677, any Castagnesque influence must derive from that now lost work. The Last Supper in S. Apollonia does not include the "triclinium" described in the later work, but may yet reveal some other influences on Ghirlandaio and the Ognissanti in particular. Castagno made his fresco *cenacolo* an extension of the room itself as Ghirlandaio was to do to an even greater extent at both Ognissanti and San Marco, since the device is significant to the effective implication that the monks dine in the company of the Apostles.[78]

The single-image format shared by Ghirlandaio's frescoes is virtually dictated by the architecture of the rooms. Luisa Vertova notes that by the mid-Quattrocento most refectories were built with lower, vaulted ceilings rather than a high truss roof such as that of the S. Croce refectory painted by

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[75]Walker, 177-78.

[76]Hartt, 355.

[77]Walker, 236, and Hartt, 263-64 , confirm that S. Apollonia was in *clausura* and therefore inaccessible to the public, including artists. Hartt notes that the S. Apollonia Last Supper was virtually unknown until the Kingdom of Italy expropriated monasteries in the late 19th century.

[78]Horster, 25.

Taddeo Gaddi.[79] Ghirlandaio was commissioned to paint the Ognissanti fresco the same year the refectory there was built,[80] and San Marco had been rebuilt by Michelozzo in the new style at mid-century. A succession of scenes would be decidedly cramped in such a space. As noted above, this compositional format devised by Ghirlandaio became popular as an effective solution to that very problem.[81]

A second factor to recognize regarding Castagno's influence on the Last Supper at Ognissanti is his realism, seen in the heightened emotion expressed through postures and gestures, and reinforced by the intense corporeality of each and every figure. He generates an impression of energy and agitation rather than stillness. Castagno was much admired in Florence, so it is not inconceivable that Ghirlandaio sought to emulate aspects of his approach to the Last Supper at Ognissanti, except that here Castagno's energy and concentration are made to tend towards mere agitation.[82] At San Marco , on the other hand, the figures hardly move at all.

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[79]Vertova, . Brown, 155.

[80]Borsook, 1980, 116.

[81]A few of the examples of refectory Last Suppers adopting this format, which are included in Vertova, are: Cosimo Rosselli, San Giorgio all Costa, Florence, 1488; Giovanni Sogliani, Santa Maria de' Candeli, Florence, 1514; Franciabigio, Convento della Calza, Florence, 1514; Andrea del Sarto, San Salvi, Florence, 1520. Even Leonardo follows this general plan for his "Last Supper" fresco.

[82]Gilbert, 1974, 383.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE OGNISSANTI AND SAN MARCO LAST SUPPERS

Ghirlandaio had a love for detail and for meticulous craftsmanship. These preoccupations of his are not surprising for the son of a goldsmith,[83] and the detailed realism of Northern art also had its effect on him. A close relationship is assumed between his fresco of St. Jerome at Ognissanti and Van Eyck's small panel of the same subject, as both works exhibit a profusion of symbolic objects, carefully placed and painted with exacting clarity.[84] Ghirlandaio's Last Suppers bear out Wolfflin's remarks in his book Classic Art in reference to the Ognissanti: "Ghirlandaio had to deal with a public which would examine every detail with attention, which had to be regaled with rare plants, birds and other animals, and he paid particular attention to the setting of the table, even counting out so many cherries to each of the company."[85]

Beyond the differences in iconographic elements, which will be described below, one notes an overall emphatic clarity of presentation in the San Marco fresco lacking in the Ognissanti. The scrupulous placement of elements invites the viewer to "read" the work, moving from one object to the next. The pictorial space is shallower, and, thus, with the effect of being closer up, more accessible, to the viewer. The perspective of the table top is tilted further, as though to better identify the foodstuffs scattered across it. On close examination, one finds it intentionally didactic, and thus in keeping

[83]Hartt, 355.

[84]Ames-Lewis, 111.

[85]Wolfflin, 26.

with the charge of a Dominican monastery. In 1480 Cristoforo Landino described Fra Angelico, the quintessential Dominican artist, as "easily understood and good for edifying and instructing people."[86] His words could also be used to describe Ghirlandaio's Last Supper though it may have required a particularly learned audience.

Precedent for such a strong intellectual didacticism does exist. Taddeo Gaddi's fresco at S. Croce (Figure 6) is a prime example. Above the Last Supper are five scenes: in the center the Allegory of the Cross illustrating the Tractatus qui lignum vitae dicitur, once thought to have been written by Bonaventure, which tells the story of the legendary identity of the Tree of Life and the wood from which the cross was carved. Gaddi cited the 12 fruits of faith on scrolls ingeniously presented as branches of the "tree" or cross. The Crucifixion would of course be a natural theme for a church dedicated to S. Croce. Saints from the Order appear at the foot of the tree and a pelican perched at the top signifies self-sacrifice on behalf of others.[87] (The quail at San Marco is the symbolic equivalent.) The four flanking scenes depict the stories of Benedict in a cave receiving food at the upper right, Mary Magdalene anointing Christ's feet in the house of Simon at the lower right, Louis of Toulouse, a more contemporary saint, serving a banquet to the poor at the lower left, and Francis receiving the stigmata at the upper left. These scenes correspond with the themes of the two primary registers, the Crucifixion and the Last Supper.[88] This refectory was used by students of the school attached to S. Croce, and the fresco would have provided rich content for them, involving Biblical themes, stories of Saints of the Order, and a literary work for spiritual and intellectual enrichment. This fresco is directed

[86]Baxandall, 150.

[87]Braunfels, 146.

[88]Gilbert, 1974, 375.

toward its specific audience, as are the Last Supper's at Ognissanti and San Marco.

Both the Ognissanti and the San Marco Last Suppers share a plethora of symbolic elements: the cypress refers to death and the Crucifixion; the palm, to victory; the citron and orange trees, to fidelity and purity - virtues often associated with the Virgin Mary.[89] These trees together represent the means by which man receives grace: the Incarnation through the Virgin, the Crucifixion and the victory of the Resurrection. A dove representing the Holy Spirit and a peacock looking back into the room and signifying immortality, or the all-seeing church, perch in the side windows, and thus indicate the presence of God in the world. Above the trees a quail attacks a sparrow hawk (far upper right at Ognissanti, upper right of the left arcade at San Marco.) It was understood that the quail was prepared to sacrifice himself to protect his young. The pheasant and quail allude to the Resurrection. Sparrows, the lowliest of creatures who are nevertheless cared for by God the Father, fly in the background of Ognissanti and perch on the cornice at San Marco. According to Eve Borsook, this ornithological scheme exemplifies a subtle medieval symbolism.[90]

Both works display vases of flowers on the cornice crowning each wooden bench. The Ognissanti flowers are roses; white for purity and red for martyrdom. They are arranged in a vase which bears the monogram of the community, All Saints, a two-armed cross with O S S Ci (Omnes Sancti) inscribed within its arms.[91] The two vases flanking the scene at San Marco

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[89]According to Ferguson the orange can also refer to the Fall of Man. Vertova indicates the citrus trees in the San Marco are more exotic but easily read symbolically.

[90]Borsook, 1980, 116.

[91]Walker, 179, gives this explanation for the monogram. He also identifies the vase as majolica, on p. 70.

hold lilies on the left, for purity, and a variety of other flowers, unidentified at this time, on the right.

On the tables are strewn cherries symbolizing the sweetness of character which is derived from good works.[92] Cherries were commonly included as part of the menu of special banquets called *pietanze*, given on special occasions such as feast days of the church year and feast days of the patrons of the monastery. Occasionally *pietanze* were offered to a particular community by outside laymen; a reflection of the "generosity of secular benefactors."[93] The cherries would recall, then, a particular kind of ceremonial meal to the beholders, one in which they themselves may have participated. The Ognissanti also includes two peaches carefully placed at either end of the table. These may refer to the silence of virtue, or a virtuous heart and tongue, an aspiration appropriate for the *Umiliati*.[94] The salt in salvers, which symbolizes the prevention of death and decay, and the bread and wine are elements of the traditional Passover supper. No other indications of the Passover meal, such as the paschal lamb, so often included in renderings of the Last Supper, remain. The bread and wine make reference, at the same time, to the Eucharist, though the depiction of the loaves and carafes of wine instead of the wafer and chalice, which often appear in their place, prevent the scene from moving clearly into the sacramental realm. The paired carafes of water and wine reflect the Eucharistic symbolism in which water-mixed-with-wine has come to represent Christ's humanity joined with his divinity in the salvific act of his

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[92]Ferguson, 29.

[93]Walker, 25-26, gives documentation of specific examples for which there exist payment records and menus.

[94]Ferguson, 36, for the meaning of the peach.

Incarnation.[95] The golden wine at Ognissanti remains a puzzling anomaly. The San Marco fresco offers the traditional red of Christ's sacrifice in his blood.

The table sits on a raised platform. The U-shape, referred to earlier in the discussion of the "triclinium" purportedly in Castagno's lost work at S. Maria Nuova, may be an oblique reference to the Roman triclinium.[96] This multi-sided table is another element that becomes commonplace in later representations of the Last Supper. At Ognissanti, either end of the wooden bench built into the alcove bears the monogram of the community - another instance of association with its audience. The linen tablecloths in both frescoes, embroidered in blue at either end, are of a type that had been manufactured in Perugia since the 11th and 12th centuries. The Ognissanti bears a hypogriffe design, winged dragons which sometimes refer to the Saviour. The hypogriffe may derive from Castagno, for it adorns the ends of the bench at S. Apollonia and may also have been a part of the iconography at S. Maria Nuova.

The Ognissanti includes a brass salver and ewers used for the foot washing, which give the work a more domestic air. Thus the scope of the Ognissanti comprises that event prior to the Supper, to indicate Christ's humility in service to his disciples. The San Marco, on the other hand, encompasses the events following the Supper by means of the inscription. As read in its original Biblical context, this inscription, "I confer on you a

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[95]Ferguson, 45.

[96]Blunt, A. "The Triclinium in Religious Art." Journal of the Warburg Institute 2 (1938-39): 271-76. Blunt notes that in Rome in 1588 a treatise titled De Triclinio was published by Pedro Chacon or Petrus Ciacconus based on archaeological findings. Before this time, there may have been knowledge of the term but a lack of accurate understanding. It is only in understanding the triclinium at which one reclines, that one can fully comprehend details of certain events described in scripture such as John leaning on Christ's bosom at the Last Supper and Mary Magdalen standing behind Christ to anoint his feet.

kingdom. . .", proclaims an attitude of service toward others, but the story of the washing of the feet is clearly the more servile in its emphasis, and thus is in keeping with the charge of the *Umiliati*, compared to the more lofty vocation of San Marco and its guests.

The company's feet are bare, recalling Christ's servanthood in the washing of their feet, and a reminder that this is holy ground. Judas alone is seated on his now standard stool in front of the table, the only figure excluded from the elevated platform.[97] Christ raises his hand in benediction. Only the San Marco fresco depicts Judas wearing sandals - yet another indication of his separation from the rest of the company and of his readiness to leave. This Judas holds the morsel up in his hand for all to see. It is also he that is accompanied by the cat, who confronts the beholder.

The figure of the cat behind Judas presents his mirror image in form as well as in deceptive character.[98] It is the only figure other than Judas on the near side of the table. The cat was long considered one of the animal forms assumed by the devil; as the cat tries to catch mice, so the devil tries to capture the soul.[99] This element may also derive from the account in John 13: 27 which says "As soon as Judas took the bread [as he has here], Satan entered him." Vertova contends that the cat is the counterpart of Judas and an enemy of the *Domini Canes*, the Dominican Dogs.

A cat was believed to be innocent as a kitten and devilish in old age.[100]

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[97]Judas' placement on a stool apart from the rest of the company is sometimes explained in that, as purse-bearer, he was delayed in his arrival due to making the final arrangements for the supper and a place had to be added for him.

[98]According to Jobes, 296, the cat symbolizes ". . . cruelty, egotism, flattery, infidelity, love of ease and luxury, perversity, prowling, slyness, thievery, treachery. . .One who is calculating, false" and treasonous.

[99]Metford, 60-1.

[100]Jobes, 297.

The Biblical scholar, Johann Kaspar Lavater wrote that Judas "acted like Satan, but like a Satan who had it in him to be an Apostle."[101] Judas represents evil, but he is aligned with it of his own choosing. Thereby, his presence is a warning to "fight the Judas in one's own soul." Wayland Hand identifies the period of the 14th - 17th centuries as the golden age of Judas lore,[102] when Judas became a part of popular culture and its literature such as the Golden Legend, which was written by the Dominican, Jacobus de Voragine, in the 13th century. The more than 500 manuscript copies in existence today testify to its wide availability and influence.[103] In this account of the life of Judas, the seed of evil is in him from birth and, though he fights it, he finally succumbs to that evil nature, betraying his master, Christ, to whom he had turned for his salvation, in petty anger.[104]

Yet another view casts Judas as a hero who knowingly betrayed Christ in order to bring about man's salvation. This interpretation is often justified by the text of John 3: 27b, often misinterpreted as a directive from Jesus to Judas in saying, "What you are about to do, do quickly." This heresy harks

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[101]Source unknown.

[102]Hand, 296.

[103]de Voragine, vii of the Introduction.

[104]de Voragine, 172. The legend of the life of Judas , considered apocryphal, is told in the Legend of Saint Matthias, who took Judas place among the ranks of the Apostles after Judas' death. Before his conception, Judas' mother Ciborea dreamed that she would bear a son so evil that he would be the downfall of his race. When he was born, she could not bear to raise him so she put him in a basket, and set it to sea, whence it arrived on the shore of the Island of Iscariot. The Queen found him and raised him as her son. He later killed her true son, his "brother," and fled. He came to occupy a place of honor in Pilate's court. In the service of Pilate, he killed his father to gain his land, and married his mother. Upon finding out the true identities of his victim and his wife, he resolved to do penance by attaching himself to the company of Jesus who made him his disciple and his purse-bearer. Shortly before the Passion, Judas became angered at the wastefulness of Mary Magdalen, who anointed Jesus' feet with oil that could have been sold for 300 pence. Hence he resolved to betray Jesus to the Jews.

This story attaches elements of Moses and Oedipus to Judas, heaping on him the crimes of fratricide, patricide, and incest, making him wholly evil.

back to the 2nd century, when it was taught by a gnostic group known as the Cainites and continued to resurface throughout the history of the church.[105] Others held that Judas simply wanted to force Jesus' hand in bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth.

Without question, the interpretation of the role and character of Judas is complex. The orthodox view, however, maintains his guilt. That is the understanding that would have been shared by the Dominican friars at San Marco and their learned guests. The phrase "the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed" (I Cor. 11: 23), with which Paul begins his account of the Lord's Supper, shows that the betrayal belonged to the Passion kerygma from the earliest days of the church,[106] and was seen as the point at which the final act of the plan of salvation was put into action. In the Golden Legend, Jacobus de Voragine quotes St. Augustine as saying, "The Redeemer came, and the deceiver [Satan] was vanquished; and what did our Redeemer do to him who held us in bondage? He held out to him the mousetrap of His cross, and placed therein the bait of His blood."[107] Thus he reminds us who is in control. Dante relegated Judas to the lowest level of hell in his Inferno, the ninth circle, calling it Giudecca, the Place of Judas, which was to be occupied by traitors to kindred, country, and guests. Treason against a benefactor was of the worst kind; treason against God the ultimate betrayal and absurdity.[108] At San Marco, Judas' master addresses the beholder in the figure of the cat. In conjunction with the inscription, that beholder is offered a choice; the responsibility of a kingdom and Paradise, or the lowest circle of Hell.

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[105]Gartner, vii.

[106]Jeremias, 95, note 5.

[107]de Voragine, 213.

[108]Russell, 135, 221.

Cats, and also dogs, do appear occasionally in scenes of the Last Supper before Ghirlandaio, although at San Marco we have only the implication of a confrontation between the Dominicans and the Deceiver. The Last Supper fresco by the shop of Stefano di Antonio Vanni in S. Andrea at Cercina, dating to the 1470's, includes several dogs and cats playing with bones and scraps that litter the floor. At the right, two stand off against each other.[109] At San Matteo, an earlier fresco of 1466, by Stefano de Antonio Vanni himself, a small dog eats on the floor in front of the table, a symbol of faithfulness and devotion.[110] Cosimo Rosselli includes a cat and dog facing off against each other warily in the foreground of the Last Supper in the Sistine Chapel (Figure 10.)[111]

Following the San Marco fresco, they appear with greater frequency and with more aggressive symbolic posture. A tiger-striped cat at Judas' feet looks out with him at the beholder at S. Maria Regli Angeli, Lugano, by Bernardino Luini (early 16th century.) He is a predator. Another tiger-striped cat, in the center of the image by Judas' feet in the Cappella del Corpus Domini in S. Giovanni Evangelists, Brescia by Moretto Da Brescia (early 16th century), stares, alert and intentional, at a dog which licks the floor, unaware of the attention he is receiving from his enemy. A sketch by Peter Paul Rubens portrays Judas staring out at the spectator, holding his purse in his hand beneath his chin, while a dog rests, vulnerable, under his feet. Clearly not simply domestic touches, these works are only several examples of the

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[109]Walker, 154.

[110]Walker, 145.

[111] Ghirlandaio was working in the Sistine Chapel in 1481-82 and perhaps influenced Rosselli's thinking along these lines if indeed the San Marco commission was already completed prior to his departure for Rome, or was at least underway. Gilbert, 1974, 383 states Rosselli's work is "wholly" dependent on Ghirlandaio's "Last Supper" compositions. However, he may simply be referring to the format which could be derived from Ognissanti.

symbolic inclusion of these animals in the Last Supper. That many other Last Suppers involving cats and dogs may be found in less important locations by the hands of lesser known artists only confirms the recognized symbolic effectiveness of these elements.

A particularly startling depiction of a cat appears in Lorenzo Lotto's Annunciation of the 1520's in S. Maria Sopra Mercanti Recanati. The cat leaps away from the entering angel, back arched in terror, for the announcement of the Incarnation marks his ultimate demise. In Veronese's Feast in the House of Levi a cat plays under the table in front of Christ, while a dog positioned in front of John faces it with a watchful gaze. Perhaps here we find a foreshadowing of the events soon to follow which will fulfill God's curse on the serpent following the Fall "he [man] will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen. 3: 156) The author of the letter to the Romans refers to the Church as the instrument of the completion of Christ's redemptive act, when he writes "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." (Romans 16: 20a) A representation of the Last Supper, such as that at San Marco, carries with it all of these implications as the motive that leads to Christ's salvific act.

One may ask then how much direction it is likely Ghirlandaio received for the commission for the fresco at San Marco. Ghirlandaio was a businessman and exhibited a willingness to follow very specific instructions from the client. The contract with Giovanni Tornabuoni for frescoes in S. Maria Novella dated September 1, 1485 specifies exact pigments to be used, details the architectural setting desired, delineates the subject matter and format, and acknowledges Giovanni's authority to dictate every aspect of the work:

> *. . . And in all the said stories and pictures mentioned above, and on the whole of the wall of the said chapel, the ceiling, arch and the columns inside and outside the said chapel, he is to paint and depict figures, buildings, castles, cities, mountains, hills, plains, water, rocks, garments, animals, birds, and beasts, of whatever kind as seems proper to the said Giovanni, but according to the stipulation of colours and gold as above; and he shall apply and paint all the arms which the said Giovanni should require on any part according to his own wish and pleasure. It is further agreed between the said commissioner and the contractor that the aforesaid contractor shall begin to paint one or other of the above-mentioned stories and paintings only after first doing a drawing of the said story which he must show to the said Giovanni; and the said contractor may afterwards start this story, but painting and embellishing it with any additions and in whatever form and manner the said Giovanni may have declared, saving nevertheless all the*

limitations and stipulations written above about colours and gold.(emphasis mine)[112]

Other contracts are similarly specific. According to Chambers, "What Giovanni Tornabuoni required and received was a predictable, workmanlike production in keeping with established conventions of style and sentiment. . . little scope was left to the painter's imagination."[113] In 1490, while scouting for artists, an agent of the Duke of Milan described Ghirlandaio as a "good master on panels and even more so on walls. His things have a 'good air' and he is an expeditious man and one who gets through much work."[114] This attests to a recognition of Ghirlandaio's business acumen rather than of any individual artistic flair. Vasari wrote in his Lives "Ghirlandaio took such pleasure in his work that he told his students to accept every commission brought to his workshop, even though it were only to paint hoops for women's baskets, saying that if they would not paint them he would do them himself - no one was to be sent away unsatisfied."[115] Though perhaps more anecdotal than factual, it again indicates Ghirlandaio's production oriented approach and his attentiveness to client satisfaction.

Glasser states, "Admiration for a work of art may result in the desire to 'have one like it.' Mention has been made of the contract phrase *modo et forma* which reads, in effect, 'make it in the manner and form of . . . '"[116] For example, several Franciscan churches commissioned altarpieces "in the manner and form of" the Coronation of the Virgin in Narni by the

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[112]Chambers, 174-75.

[113]Chambers, 172.

[114]Baxandall, 25-26.

[115]Vasari (Burroughs), 139.

[116]Glasser, 65.

Ghirlandaio workshop.[117] However, this phrase can indicate many things, ranging from style, to composition, to iconographic scheme. The San Marco commission may well have included such a phrase, for the correspondence with the Ognissanti is no less remarkable than the differences discussed above.

Ghirlandaio relied heavily on cartoons to develop his compositions. Sinopie were the "ultimate stage of the preparatory process. . . their summary arcs and contours are not form-searching, exploratory strokes, but, rather, visual summaries of designs that presumably had been fully worked out in drawings before."[118] Jean Cadogan goes on to contend that any changes in pose between the sinopia and the final work of the Ognissanti fresco seem too deliberate to be the result of the latitude allowed for an assistant's hand.[119] (It has already been noted that an analysis of the figure of Christ at Ognissanti is impossible due to the later repainting.) Eve Borsook agrees that Ognissanti provided the model for the San Marco, noting that Ghirlandaio often made use of spolveri because of his reliance on cartoons.[120]

Very early in 1480 Ghirlandaio became involved in plans for a major commission, the frescoes for the Sassetti Chapel in Santa Trinita,Florence, at the same time he might have been painting in San Marco.[121] He was known to rely heavily on his assistants and his brother, Davide, in particular, who jointly signed contracts with him, handling business and financial matters on his behalf. Though not an uncommon practice, the phrase "a sua mano" regularly appears in Ghirlandaio's contracts, indicating the client's awareness

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[117]Glasser, 66-7.

[118]Cadogan, 278.

[119]Cadogan, 279.

[120]Borsook, 1980, L, 116.

[121]Borsook, 117.

of the need to specify elements Ghirlandaio himself would be required to paint. Glasser cites an instance in which Ghirlandaio did not follow a contractual stipulation to paint predella panels "a sua mano." A second contract was subsequently drawn exempting him from the clause.[122] This provides yet more evidence of a business practice that still succeeded in achieving client satisfaction. Walker writes, "the execution [of the San Marco Last Supper], especially that of the figures, seems less polished [than the Ognissanti], leading many authors to see a rather extensive intervention of Domenico's shop [there.]"[123] Schmeckebier states the San Marco was "executed by the shop." This may indeed be the case.[124] But it does not resolve the larger issue: that of the purpose behind the clearly intentional deviations from the Ognissanti that cannot be attributed to the lesser skill or the license afforded the shop. They must be considered as the responsibility of the master or of the patron.

A later incident at San Marco, regarding the commission of a work for the Great Refectory, may betray workings in the monastery that have bearing on the Ghirlandaio commission. In 1536 the *frati* of San Marco contracted Giovanni Sogliani to paint the south refectory wall following a 1526 expansion. Because of the enlargement of this room by one bay, the original south wall had been destroyed, probably including an original fresco presumably by Fra Angelico, necessitating a new painting.[125] Creighton Gilbert suggests that Sogliani's composition is a faithful copy of the original painting by Fra Angelico, bearing a distinct similarity to an extant predella

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[122]Glasser, 74.

[123]Walker, 190.

[124]Schmeckebier, 219. Since he provides no support for this statement and there is no known documentation, this statement must be accepted as conjecture.

[125]Hood, 130, note 8.

panel of the same subject for the Coronation Altarpiece by Fra Angelico.[126] According to Vasari, Sogliani originally proposed an image depicting the feeding of the five thousand but, "the friars refused," saying that they wanted images that were "*positive, ordinarie e semplici.*" Instead they ordered a scene of an event in the life of St. Dominic when "being in the refectory with his friars and having no bread, [he] made a prayer to God, when the table was miraculously covered with bread, brought by two angels in human form." (Figure 12) This story provides an even more direct mirror to the friars dining in that room than the event of the Last Supper itself: a Dominican preference discussed earlier, for recounting a moment in the history of their order. Further, the figures portrayed are actual portraits of San Marco monks, including one whom Vasari identifies as the donor. Sogliani does retain a reference to the Last Supper by depicting St. Dominic's hands raised in the traditional orant position, with 11 monks in the scene.

Vasari reflected a growing Renaissance sense of the artists' craft - quite beyond the recognition that had been accorded to it in Ghirlandaio's time - when he commented ". . . but Sogliani would have been much more successful if he had executed what he had designed, because painters express the conceptions of their own minds better than those of others. On the other hand, it is only right that he who pays the piper should call the tune."[127] In any case, no artist could have introduced so prominant and incisive an inscription, and other distinctive iconographic features, into a work such as those found in the San Marco Last Supper without patron directive or, at the very least, approval.

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[126]Gilbert, 1974,380-81.

[127]Vasari (DeVere), "Sogliani," 164.

CONCLUSIONS

The association of beholder with image in the effort to incite response and affect a transformation of the beholder in *imitatio Cristi* had most likely been a recognized aspect of the function of art at San Marco long before Ghirlandaio's commission. John Pope-Hennessey observes that the cell paintings at San Marco by Fra Angelico were designed as aids to meditation. The depiction of the Communion of the Apostles (Figure 13) as the choice for the cell program instead of a more narrative Last Supper reflects an underlying intention of the frescoes, emphasizing the mystical participation of the monk in the events portrayed.[128] Susan Madigan suggests an alternative interpretation of the cycle, indicating that the apparently random organization of images actually follows the structure of the rosary, that may have been part of a ritual practice of the Order at that time.[129]

In the 13th century the Dominicans adopted a part of St. Augustine's Rule for conduct at table:

> *For ye shall not take your nourishment with your mouths only, but your ears shall hunger after the Word of God.*[130]

Almost all Rules of religious orders prescribe the principle of table reading. For example, in Chapter 4 of the Rule of St. Augustine, he instructs, "When

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[128]Pope-Hennessey, 21-2.

[129]Madigan, Susan Pinto. "Fra Angelico at San Marco: A New Interpretation." Published in Paper:Essays on Art. The Mid-America College Art Association, 1977.

[130]Braunfels, 147.

you go to table, listen to the usual reading without talking or arguing until the meal is finished." The Rule of St. Benedict (written c. 530), Chapter 28, specifies:

> *At the meals of the brethren there should not fail to be reading. . . And let there be the greatest silence, so that no whisper, and no voice but the reader's may be heard there. But for the things that they need as they eat and drink, let the brethren so supply them to one another that no one need ask for anything. And should something be needed, let it be requested by a sign and not by words.*[131]

These two passages indicate that attention of the diners was to be given to the reading, nourishment for the soul. The physical evidence of the presence of lecterns in refectories testifies to the widespread practice of readings at table.[132] Even the painted decor of some of these rooms bears witness to it. Last Suppers such as that by Stefano di Antonio Vanni at San Matteo and depictions of other kinds of monastic meals such as St. Dominic and His Monks Fed by Angels by Fra Angelico in the predella panel of the Coronation Altarpiece may include a reader at a lectern in the painting itself. The Great Refectory at San Marco has a pulpit of pietra serena built into the side wall. The guest refectory, on the other hand, would not require such a furnishing, given the comparatively small size of the room, which measures but 6.3 x 4.2 meters. And yet, since visitors came to the monastery to undergo the conventual experience, it is likely that readings at mealtime were expected here, too.

The San Marco Last Supper, like most refectory decoration, is raised above a dado so all present may easily gaze upon it above the tables where

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[131]These two passages are reproduced in Walker, 20-21.

[132]Walker, 24.

they eat. The proscription against discussion during the meal directs one's attention not only to the reading but also to the lone image which adorns the room, to study and ponder its implications The Apostles themselves embody this attitude of introspective contemplation and engender the same in the beholder. The *frati* of San Marco appear to have taken the charge to provide spiritual as well as physical nourishment seriously, employing art that addresses its particular audience in each of their two refectories.

The close relationship between Ghirlandaio's San Marco and Ognissanti Last Suppers suggest the Dominican brothers' request "for one like" the Ognissanti, specifying at the same time significant iconographic additions such as the explicitly directed inscription and the cat, and stylistic modifications to better suit their purposes. Such instructions would have been followed as a matter of course by Ghirlandaio, from what we know of his business and workshop practices.

Leonardo da Vinci believed that a painting was not complete until it was seen. In the guest refectory at San Marco the intimate size of the room establishes an unavoidable link with the beholder who encounters the Company of His Lord addressing him directly. The still clarity of Ghirlandaio's *tableau-vivant*[133] style invites, even demands, a reading of the image and of the wealth of symbols included, a type of activity that may have appealed in any case to a gathering of prominant Quattrocento Florentines. And the continued need for patron support may have prompted the inclusion of an underlying message for those readers regarding their duty to God's Kingdom.

Braunfels writes, "The Last Supper points to the paradox of the human

[133]Berenson, 31.

condition, poised between grace and guilt,"[134] recalling the monition in the Meditations on the Life of Christ, "He is the one on whom your salvation depends, in whose will and power it is to give you (or not to give you) the glory of Paradise." The *frati* of San Marco extend to the guests of the *foresteria* both the indictment of one who would betray Christ for 30 pieces of silver, and a call to serve, thankful and penitential, as one who is truly great, *imitatio Cristi.*

[134]Braunfels, 146.

FIGURES

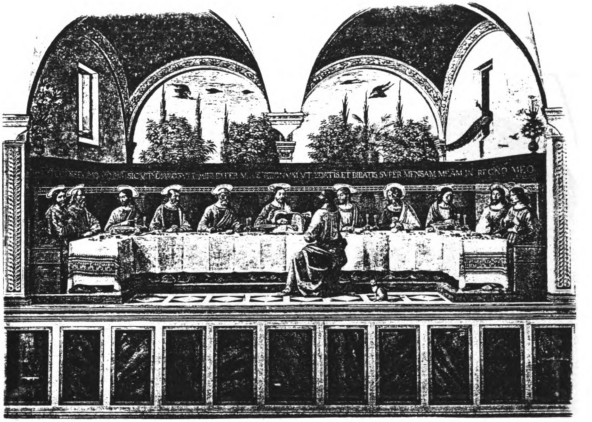


Figure 1. Domenico Ghirlandaio. Last Supper. 1480's. Fresco. Small Refectory, San Marco, Florence.

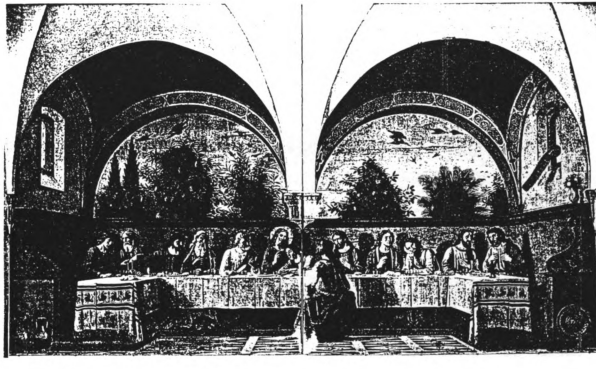


Figure 2. Domenico Ghirlandaio. Last Supper. 1480. Fresco. Refectory, Ognissanti, Florence.

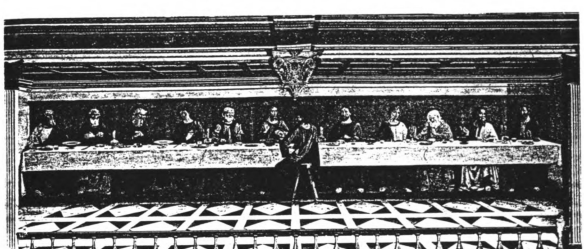


Figure 3. Domenico Ghirlandaio. Last Supper. 1476. Fresco. Refectory, Badia di Passignano.

Figure 4. Fra Angelico. Last Supper. c. 1452-53. Panel. Silver Cupboard, SS. Annunziata, Florence.

Figure 5. Fra Angelico. Communion of the Apostles. c. 1452-53. Panel. Silver Cupboard, Ss. Annunziata, Florence.

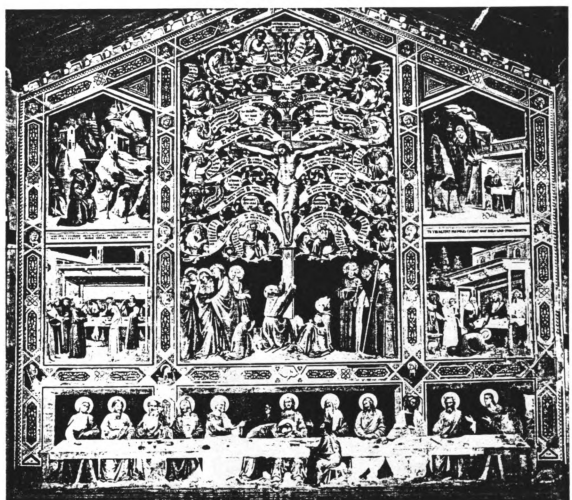
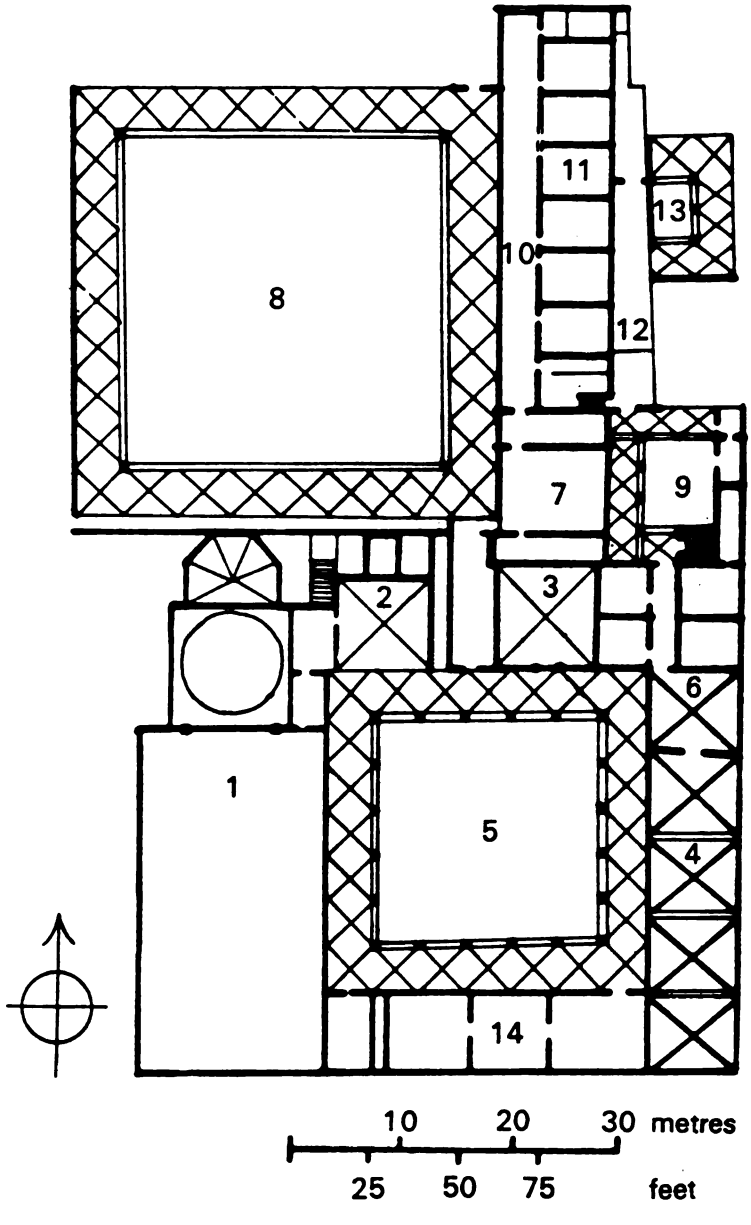


Figure 6. Taddeo Gaddi. Lignum Vitae, Last Supper and Other scenes. c.1435-40. Fresco. Refectory, S. Croce, Florence.

Figure 7. Leonardo da Vinci. Last Supper. 1495-97/98. Fresco. Refectory, S. Maria delle Grazie, Milan.



1 Church
2 Sacristy
3 Chapter-house
4 Great Refectory
5 Cloister of St. Anthony
6 Lavabo
7 Small Refectory
8 Cloister of St. Dominic
9 Cloister of the Spesa
10 Corridor of the *Foresteria*
11 *Foresteria*
12 Corte del Granajo
13 Cloister of the Sylvestrines
14 Former hospice

Figure 8. Plan, San Marco, Florence.

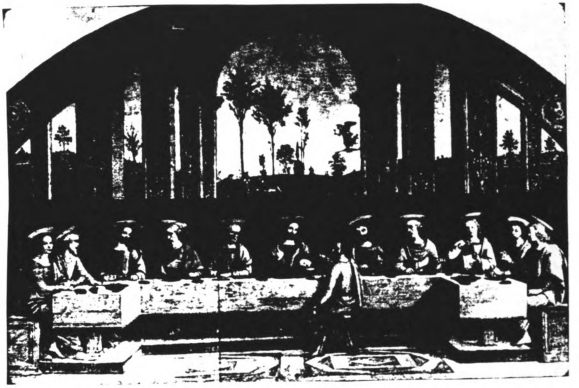


Figure 9. Pietro Perugino. Last Supper. 1490-95. Fresco. Refectory, S. Onofrio di Fuligno, Florence.

Figure 10. Cosimo Rosselli. Last Supper. 1481-82. Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome.

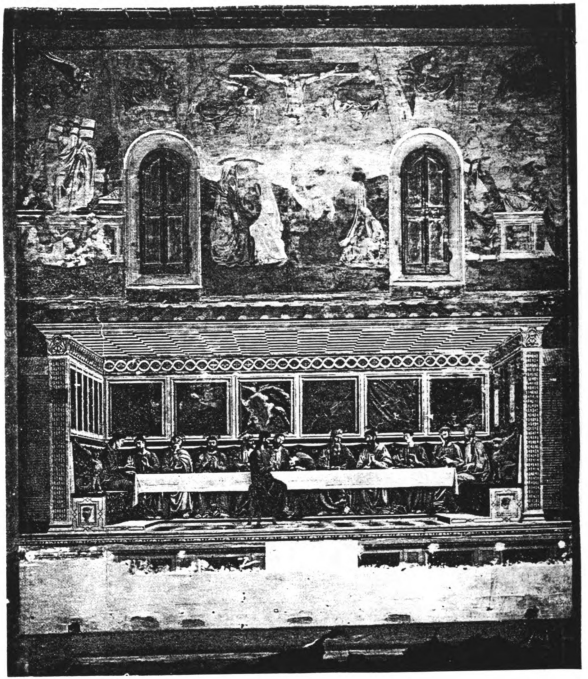


Figure 11. Andrea del Castagno. Last Supper. 1447. Fresco. Refectory, S. Apollonia, Florence.

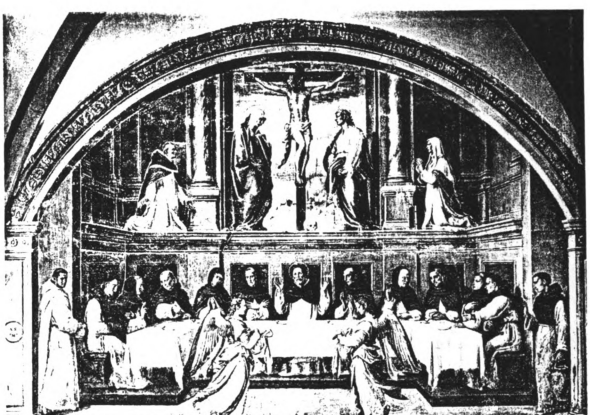


Figure 12. Giovanni Antonio Sogliani. St. Dominic and His Monks Fed by Angels. 1536. Fresco. Great Refectory, San Marco, Florence.

Figure 13. Fra Angelico. Communion of the Apostles. c. 1436-45. Fresco. Cell, San Marco, Florence.

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