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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 61. Bd., H. 4 (1998), pp. 509-519

Published by: [Deutscher Kunstverlag GmbH Munchen Berlin](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1482941>

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The Judgement of the Commune: The Frescoes of the Magdalen Chapel in Florence

The painted decoration of the Magdalen Chapel in the Bargello in Florence consists of an image of Hell occupying the entrance wall (fig. 1), a scene of Paradise opposite this on the east wall (fig. 2), and scenes from the lives of Mary Magdalen and John the Baptist on the lateral walls. What is striking about the program is the representation of separate, independent scenes of Heaven and Hell, especially in the absence of a Last Judgement scene¹.

The Magdalen Chapel, also known as the Cappella del Podestà, is located in the northeast corner on the first floor of a civic building in Florence, the former Palazzo del Podestà, now the Museo Nazionale del Bargello. The palace was the courthouse and the residence of the *podestà*, chief administrator of civil and penal justice. Litigants brought their cases to the great hall for judgement and it was in the Magdalen Chapel

that those convicted of serious crimes received their last rites before execution.

Several Florentine chroniclers and biographers, from Villani to Vasari, attribute the frescoes of the chapel to Giotto. With few exceptions, these frescoes have been discussed in the art historical literature only within the context of Giotto's œuvre, or in terms of the portrait of Dante which Giotto is supposed to have included in the scene of Paradise (fig. 3)².

Without reference to Giotto, however, a reconsideration of the documentary evidence regarding the dating of the Magdalen Chapel frescoes will confirm the date assigned by Supino in 1920³. This paper will also demonstrate that the civic function of the chapel is reflected in the decoration which was commissioned by the Florentine Commune and executed under the supervision of a confraternity. Furthermore, a

I am grateful to Julian Gardner and also to Caroline Bruzelius, Amanda Collins, Chiara Frugoni, John Osborne and my colleagues in Rome for their valuable comments. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Canadian Academic Centre in Italy (Rome, May 1996) and at the Universities Art Association of Canada Conference (Montréal, November 1996). Research for this article was undertaken with support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship.

¹ In wall-painting, Heaven and Hell traditionally form the lower left and right sections of a Last Judgement scene. For example, the mosaic at Torcello and the frescoes of Sant'Angelo in Formis, S. Cecilia in Trastevere (Rome) and the Arena Chapel (Padua). See Beat Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends: Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes*, Wiener Byzantinische Studien III, Graz-Vienna-Cologne 1966; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, New York-Berlin-Gluckstadt 1930–1960, Section IV: The Fourteenth Century, Vol. II: Nardo di Cione, 49–51; Jérôme Baschet, *Les justices de l'au-*

delà: les représentations de l'enfer en France et en Italie (XIIe–XVe siècle), Rome 1993, 135–232. Both Offner and Baschet have demonstrated that the separation and enlargement of Hell represents a critical moment in the history of eschatological imagery. Offner, 50; Baschet, 293–349. See below note 37.

² For documentary evidence, bibliography and summaries of the arguments of dating and attribution of the Magdalen Chapel frescoes see I. G. Supino, Giotto, Florence 1920, I, 231–244; Offner (as note 1), 49–51; E. H. Gombrich, Giotto's Portrait of Dante?, in: *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXI, 1979, 471–483; Giovanni Previtali, *Giotto e la sua bottega*, 3rd ed., A. Conti, ed., Milan 1993 [1967], 151–155, 348–353; Francesca Flores D'Arcais, *Giotto*, Milan 1995, 370–379.

³ Supino (as note 2), I, 236–237, cited a portion of the document presented below as Appendix 1, as the basis for dating the decoration of the chapel shortly after 1321 (1322). His dating was cast into doubt by subsequent art historians but is here revived with additional supporting evidence. Where the date of a document based on the Julian calendar conflicts with our current system, I have added the Gregorian date in parentheses.



1. Bargello, Magdalen Chapel, West wall, Inferno

review of the role of the Angevin monarchs in Florence, in particular their connection with the Palazzo del Podestà, will demonstrate an Angevin bias in the decorative program of the Magdalen Chapel.

A painted inscription on the left wall of the chapel, below the image of a saint identified as

San Venanzio (fig. 4), patron saint of the *podestà* of Florence, Fidesmino de Varano, dates the work to Varano's *podesteria* in 1331 and 1337⁴. Based on this inscription and the report of a fire in the Palazzo del Podestà in 1331 (1332)⁵, several scholars have dated the present decoration of the Magdalen Chapel in the later 1330s⁶.

⁴ *Hoc opus factum fuit tempore potestarie magnifici et potentis militis domini Fidesmini de Varano civis Camerinensis honorabilis potestatis...* The rest has been lost but a partially effaced date is inscribed above in a painted plaque at the feet of the saint: ... DNI. M. CCC. XXX ... For the *podesteria* of Varano see Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Provvisioni*, Reg. 28, f. 25 (31 dicembre 1337) and f. 68 (30 luglio 1337). As yet I have been unable to find evidence of Varano's *podesteria* of 1331 as reported in J. A. Crowe and G. B.

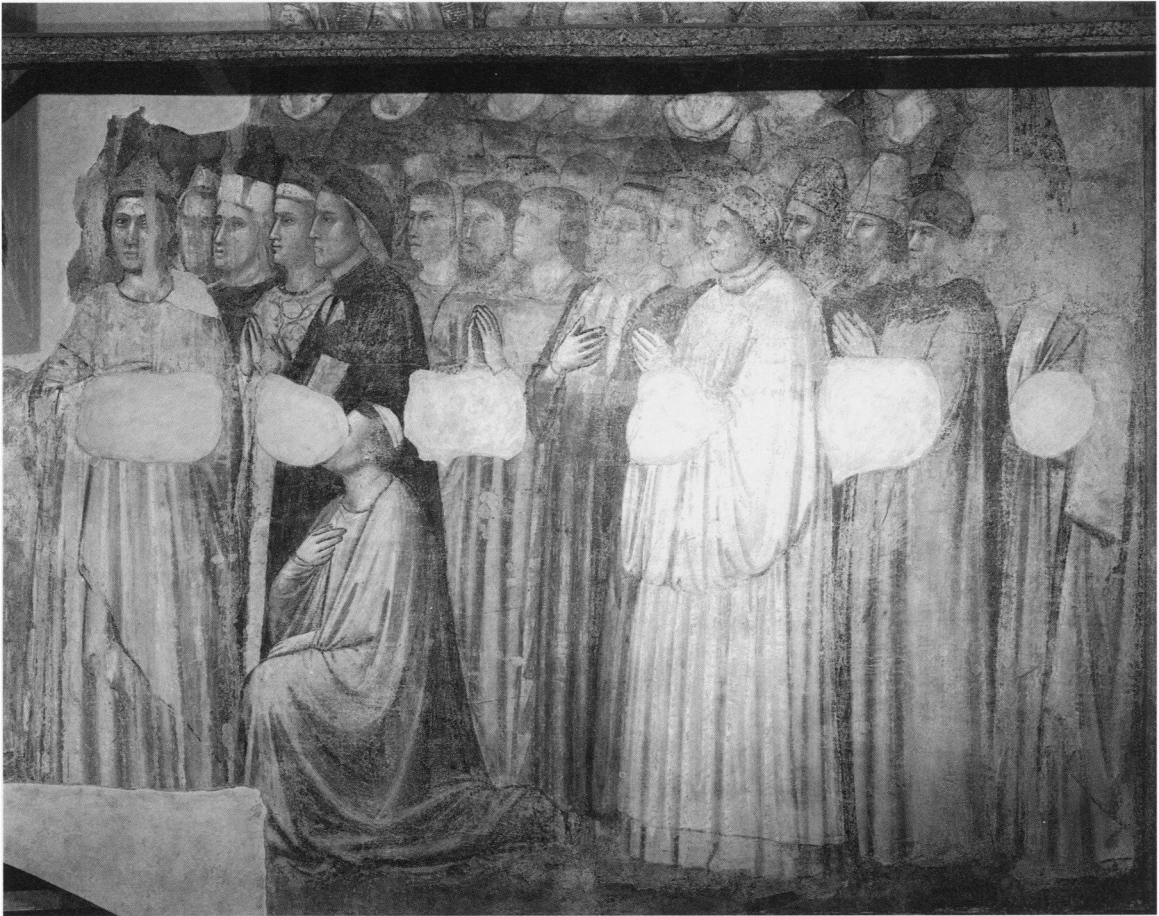
Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in Italy: Umbria, Florence and Siena from the 2nd to the 16th Century*, D. Langton, ed., London 1903, II, 50.

⁵ Giovanni Villani, *Istorie fiorentine di Giovanni Villani cittadino fiorentino fino all'anno MCCCXLVIII*, Milan 1802–1803, VI, Lib. X, cap. CLXXXIV (28 febbraio 1331), 255; Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Libri fabarum* XV, f. 62v (11 marzo 1332).

⁶ See note 2. Also Baschet (as note 1), 359, 627.



2. Bargello, Magdalen Chapel, East wall, Paradise



3. Bargello, Magdalen Chapel, detail: lower right section of Paradise

Nearly identical entries which appear in the registers of the *Capitoli del Comune di Firenze* and the *Provvioni del Comune di Firenze* in the Archivio di Stato⁷ serve, however, to establish that revenues collected by the Commune from fines imposed on illicit games, prohibited arms and curfew-breakers

were assigned to the lay brothers of the Palazzo del Comune (as the Palazzo del Podestà was also known), in an amount up to 100 gold florins, to be spent on construction and works, including the pictures and the window oculi of the chapel. Both documents are dated 22 January 1321 (1322).

⁷ Appendix, 1. Many thanks to Sabina Marinetti, Università di Roma Tor Vergata, for her help with the transcription.

⁸ Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Provvioni*, Reg. 17, f. 15r (4 settembre 1320).

⁹ See Appendix, 2. For a date of 1260–1280 for the eastern section of the palace see Walter Paatz, *Zur Baugeschichte des Palazzo del Podestà (Bargello) in Florenz*, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, III, 1930–1931, 287–321, esp. 317, Docs. 28, 29, 34, 37, and figs. 3, 4. In my view, the

continuous funding and works indicated in the documents from 1316 to 1320 refer to the eastern part of the palace. See also Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Mostra Documentaria e Iconografica del Palazzo del Podestà (Bargello), aprile-giugno 1963*, Cataloghi di Mostre Documentarie VII, G. Martini, ed., Florence 1963, Docs. 15, 17, 18.

¹⁰ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (as note 4), II, 50, attribute the original program to Giotto in 1301, and date the later addition of the figure of San Venanzio to c. 1331. Supino (as note 2), I, 236–237, considers the inscrip-

While an earlier record exists to indicate that fines collected in 1320 from prosecution of these same crimes were also allocated for works in the Palazzo del Podestà⁸, the entries of 1321 (1322) are the first mention I have found of the chapel in the documents. These entries clearly present the probability that frescoes in the Magdalen Chapel were executed in, or shortly after, 1322 when the funding was made available. They also determine that while the operations were placed in the hands of the confraternity, the Commune paid for the work and undoubtedly would have retained control in deciding the program and the artist hired to execute it.

Further support of a date around 1322 for the decoration of the Magdalen Chapel is supplied by documents which suggest that the chapel was built as part of a campaign between 1316 and 1320⁹. Records of consistent funding for works in the Palazzo del Podestà in these years give little reason to suspect any delay in the decoration of the chapel once the money had been allocated.

The discrepancy in date between the inscription and the documents has been explained by a number of hypotheses: 1) that the inscription refers only to the depiction of San Venanzio, added at a later date¹⁰, 2) that the inscription refers to the decoration of the lateral walls which includes the *stemma* of Fidesmino de Varano in the borders of the narrative scenes (fig. 5), and which may have constituted a separate campaign subsequent to that of the end walls¹¹, and 3) that the inscription refers to a restoration of original frescoes after the fire of 1332¹². A fourth hypothesis is that the decoration of the chapel might have been delayed after its construction by more than



4. Bargello, Magdalen Chapel, North wall, San Venanzio

tion and image of the saint as a later overpainting dated c. 1337.

¹¹ Meiss reports that Tintori examined the intonaco and concluded that the lateral walls were painted after the end walls, but cites no reference, in Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss and Charles Singleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts of the Divine Comedy*, Princeton 1969, I, 40–41. For the arms of Fidesmino de Varano, see Previtali (as note 2), 349. For similar arms painted on the frame of a panel in the Louvre, and sculpted in stone in S. Francesco in Pisa (probably belonging to

the Unghi family of Florence), see Julian Gardner, 'The Louvre Stigmatization and the Problem of the Narrative Altarpiece', in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, XLV, 1982, 217–247, esp. 220 and note 9.

¹² This possibility was discarded by Supino (as note 2), I, 236–237, on the basis that the fire was concentrated in the western section of the palace and caused no major damage to the chapel, and, that if the frescoes had been damaged, Giotto would have been

ten years¹³. Given the above evidence for construction between 1316 and 1320 and for a decorative campaign around 1322, and, given the additional testimony of Giovanni Villani that several building campaigns were undertaken by the Commune immediately after the termination of the *signoria* of Robert of Anjou in January 1331 (1322) to strengthen and beautify the city¹⁴, I believe this last hypothesis to be the least tenable. The other three hypotheses still allow for the possibility of an original decoration of the chapel undertaken immediately after the allocation of funding in 1321 (1322).

In eliminating the question of attribution to Giotto from this discussion, I present here the documentary evidence, uncomplicated by considerations of style and attribution. Giotto may or may not have painted the frescoes, but *some* frescoes were, in all probability, executed shortly after January 1322. A later campaign under Fidesmino de Varano, probably in 1337 and comprising the lateral walls (or at least the decorative borders and the image of San Venanzio), either completed the program or painted over a previous decoration.

On the end walls, the opposition of separate scenes of Heaven and Hell is an unusual feature of the Magdalen Chapel's decoration. The apparent absence of a Last Judgement scene¹⁵ can be explained by the chapel's civic function as the Cappella del Podestà. From the fourteenth until the sixteenth century the chapel was the place of

preparation for execution of those condemned to death by the Commune¹⁶. Members of the Archconfraternity of S. Maria della Croce al Tempio attended to the physical and spiritual needs of the condemned throughout the night prior to execution by bringing a crucifix, spiritual books, lamps, wine, water, mattresses and cushions. Their primary mission was to hear the confessions of the guilty. At dawn they made preparations for mass and communion. Near the appointed hour, the Montanina, the funerary bell of the Bargello, began its slow peal and the lay brothers surrounded the condemned person and assisted him in the procession to the gallows, holding him up if necessary and comforting him with words of mercy. The Magdalen Chapel was, therefore, a theatre of pathetic scenes and laments throughout the night and trembling at dawn¹⁷.

Thus, for the condemned who entered the Magdalen Chapel, one form of judgement had already taken place. Not the judgement of God but the judgement of the tribunal of Florence. We are reminded of the testimonies of Ghiberti and Vasari that in the great hall of the Palazzo del Podestà Giotto painted the image of the Commune as a seated judge surmounted by balanced scales symbolizing just decisions¹⁸. So having been judged, perhaps before Giotto's very image of the Commune, and having entered the chapel for his last rites, the condemned now contemplated the fate of his soul in the afterlife. The

asked to restore them along with other works he painted in the palace in 1334. For Giotto's chronology see Previtali and D'Arcais (as note 2).

¹³ This has never been proposed since no one has connected the chronology of the building with the dating of the frescoes except the restorer, Rossi, who was perhaps unaware of the documentary evidence. Rossi's restoration uncovered an exterior window in the entrance wall and traces of trestles of a wooden roof at the base of the same wall, indicating that the chapel was added on to an existing part of the building. He concluded that the chapel was not built until after the fire of 1332. Filippo Rossi, *Relazione dei lavori eseguiti nella Cappella giottesca del Palazzo del Podestà*, in: *Rivista d'Arte*, XIX, 1937, 390–398. The technical evidence requires further

study. Rossi's observations are consistent with other documentation but his conclusion is hasty and unfounded.

¹⁴ Villani (as note 5), V, Lib. IX, cap. CXXXV (31 gennaio 1321), 138.

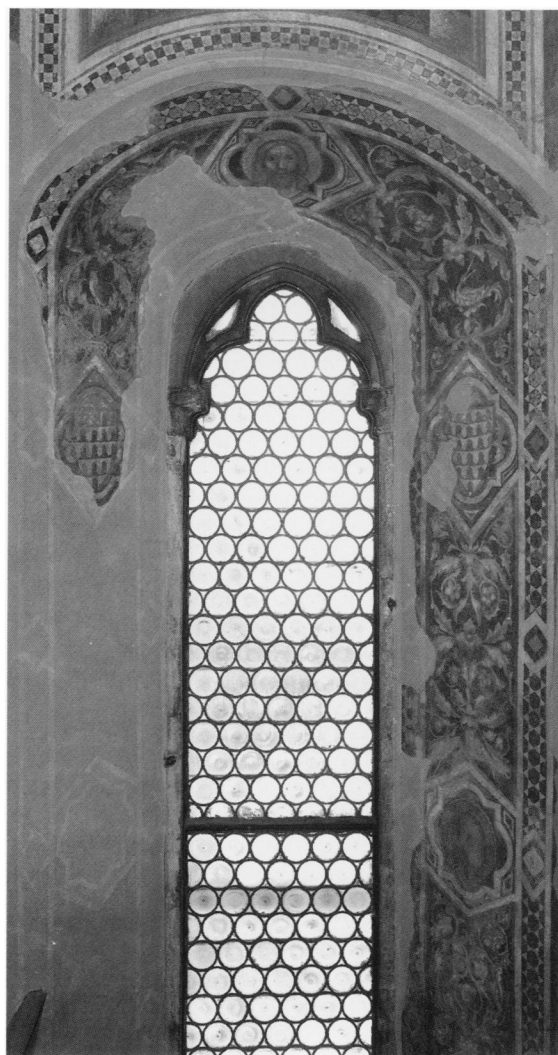
¹⁵ The image of Christ above the window in the scene of Paradise (fig. 2) represents Christ in Glory, not Christ-Judge. It is not known what imagery existed in the large lacuna above Satan (fig. 1) but the possibility exists of a Last Judgement scene on the entrance wall. Lacking either visual or documentary evidence, however, I follow Offner's opinion (as note 1), 50, that the entire wall may have represented Inferno in a manner similar to that in the Strozzi Chapel in S. Maria Novella in Florence (c. 1357).

¹⁶ For the use of the chapel and the function of the con-

alternatives were clearly painted on the chapel walls: Paradise or Inferno.

On the north wall of the chapel, adjacent to the scene of Paradise on the east wall, are two scenes from the life of John the Baptist: the Naming of the Baptist, and beneath it, the Feast of Herod. Scenes of the life of the Baptist, the most important patron saint of Florence and often an intercessor in Last Judgement scenes, is appropriate in the chapel of a Florentine civic building, and especially here in the company of eschatological scenes. The cycle of the life of Mary Magdalen, covering the south wall with seven scenes and extending to the north wall with one further scene¹⁹, also befits the function of the chapel. Mary Magdalen's repentance of her sins, her subsequent penance, her contemplation and apostolate, and her devotion to Christ, all of which resulted in her salvation, set an example upon the walls for every sinner who entered for his last rites.

The cycle of the life of Mary Magdalen recalls Angevin involvement in the promotion of the cult of the Magdalen and suggests at least the possibility of Angevin interest in the decoration of the chapel. In 1279 relics of Mary Magdalen were discovered near Marseilles and accepted as authentic by Charles II of Anjou. A chapel was built on the site, liturgical processions were devised, associations with ancient Provençal legends were developed, and the cult soon spread in France and Italy²⁰. This is not to suggest that a



5. Bargello, Magdalen Chapel, North wall, Decorative border of the right window, the *stemma* of Fidesmino de Varano

fraternity, also known as the Compagnia dei Neri, see Giovanni Battista Uccelli, *Della Compagnia di S. Maria della Croce al Tempio*, Florence 1861; Eugenio Cappelletti, *La Compagnia dei Neri: L'Arciconfraternità dei Battuti di S. Maria della Croce al Tempio*, Florence 1927; Ronald Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, New York-London 1982; Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance*, Ithaca-London 1985, 51–58.

¹⁷ Cappelletti (as note 16), 52–55.

¹⁸ Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Lorenzo Ghibertis Denkwürdigkeiten (I Commentarii)*, J. von Schlosser, ed., Berlin 1912, I, Commentario II, 36; Giorgio Vasari, *Vita di Giotto*, in: *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, Paola

Barocchi and Rosanna Bettarini, eds., Florence 1966–1987, II, Pt. I, 116.

¹⁹ On the south (right) wall, reading left to right: (upper register) the Feast in the House of the Pharisee, the Resurrection of Lazarus, a window, the Maries at the Tomb, (lower register) the Noli me tangere, the Magdalen talking with the angels, the Communion of the Magdalen, and Bishop Maximinus blessing Mary Magdalen. On the north wall adjacent to the entrance in the lower register remains one scene of the Miracle of the Prince of Marseilles. Two other scenes are lost.

²⁰ Victor Saxer, *La culte de Marie Madeleine en occident*, Paris 1959, 244–245.

cycle of the life of Mary Magdalen can only be associated with Angevin patronage. Her cult had been growing since the twelfth century and was often associated with the new Order of the Penitents of St Mary Magdalen who sheltered penitent prostitutes²¹. Nevertheless, as Gardner has pointed out, there is a strong connection between the Angevins and the spread of Magdalen iconography in south and central Italy. The Magdalen altar installed in the Lateran in 1297 was commissioned by cardinal Gerardo Bianchi, friend and councillor of Charles I and later co-regent of the Angevin kingdom during the imprisonment by the Aragonese of Charles II, who later served as pall-bearer at Bianchi's funeral²². The patron of the Chapel of the Magdalen in the lower church of San Francesco at Assisi, where there is a cycle of the saint's life also attributed to Giotto, was Teobaldo Pontano, bishop of Assisi, who had been formerly bishop of Castellamare di Stabia, an Angevin diocese²³.

Angevin influence had been strong in Florence since Charles I of Anjou (1266–1285) had served as *podestà* for a thirteen year period, protecting the interests of the Guelf-Angevin-Papal alliance²⁴. He established strong trade and banking links between Florence and the southern kingdom which continued under the subsequent reign of his son Charles II (1289–1309) and were consolidated under his grandson Robert (1309–1343)²⁵.

Conceivably Charles I, or his vicar in Florence, was intended to reside in the Palazzo del Podestà,

and to worship in the Magdalen Chapel, and it might have been with a royal resident in mind that expansion and embellishments were undertaken after the Guelf victory in 1266. A direct Angevin connection with the palace is recorded in 1296, when a door was opened in the south wall onto Via della Vigna Vecchia, and was »sormontata da stemmi«²⁶. The *stemmi*, or coats of arms, consist of the keys of the Church above a row of shields representing the cross of the Popolo and the lily of the Commune flanking the arms of Charles II of Anjou in the centre (fig. 6). Angevin arms also surmount one of the windows on the north side of the palace.

Construction of the eastern part of the Bargello seems to have been undertaken during the *signoria* of Robert of Anjou (1313–1322). Documents of 1317 and 1319 report both on the construction and on the fact that the king's vicar was in residence in the palace²⁷. Particularly interesting in the present context is Giovanni Villani's report that in 1316 Robert's vicar, the Count of Battifolle, oversaw the construction of a large part of the new palace²⁸. This suggests that Robert's representative exercised considerable influence in the construction of the eastern addition to the Palazzo del Podestà, which includes the Magdalen Chapel, in spite of the fact that it was a Communal palace built with Communal funds and controlled, presumably, by Communal officials. Considering that the Angevin kings controlled the most important Florentine gov-

21 Ibid., 222–224.

22 Julian Gardner, Seated Kings, Sea-faring Saints and Heraldry: some Themes in Angevin Iconography, in: *L'État angevin. Pouvoir, culture et société entre XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Colloque international, Rome-Naples, 7–11 November 1995, Rome, forthcoming; Peter Herde, Gerardo Bianchi di Parma, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, X, Rome 1968, 96–100.

23 Gardner (as note 22).

24 Robert Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze*, E. Dupré-Theseider, ed., Florence 1956–1968, IV, Pt. I, 145, Émile Léonard, *Les angevins de Naples*, Paris 1954, 102–103.

25 Romolo Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò e i suoi tempi*, Florence 1922–1930, I, 567–606; Gaetano Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295*, Turin

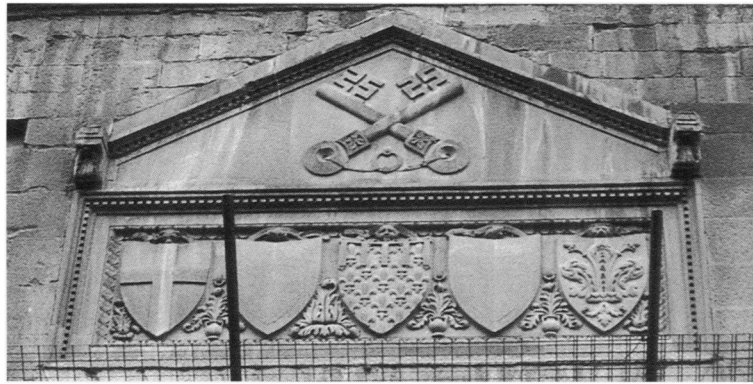
1960, 19; Marvin Becker, The Republican City-State in Florence: an Inquiry into its Origin and Survival (1280–1434), in: *Speculum*, XXXV, 1960, 39–50; David Abulafia, Southern Italy and the Florentine Economy, 1265–1370, in: *The Economic History Review*, s. 2, XXXIV, 3, 1981, 377–388.

26 Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Provvisioni*, Reg. 6, f. 114r (10 settembre 1296).

27 Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Provvisioni*, Reg. 15, f. 77r/v (28 luglio 1317); Giovanni Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV–XVI*, Florence 1839–1840, I, Appendix II, 452 (8 luglio 1317), 458 (20 novembre 1319). See also below Appendix, 1, for Robert's vicar in residence in 1322.

28 See Appendix, 2.

29 Robert's contract gave him power over the office of



6. Bargello, Exterior, South façade,
the *stemma* above the entrance from Via della Vigna Vecchia

ernment offices²⁹ and maintained strong connections with the Guelph party and the banking families of Florence³⁰, it is not surprising to find that their power clearly extended deeply into Florentine affairs and that they marked their influence in a civic building. In fact Charles of Calabria and his family resided in the Palazzo del Podestà which was made »una dimora degnissima« in his honour³¹.

Robert's *signoria* in Florence was terminated precisely at the point when the Magdalen Chapel funding was assigned, January 1321 (1322), and was followed by a four year period in which Florence operated without a foreign *signoria*. If Milanese was correct in identifying the frontally-posed figure to the right of the window in the

Magdalen Chapel's scene of Paradise as Robert of Anjou (fig. 3)³², then its appearance at the end of his *signoria* was probably intended to commemorate Robert's contribution to Florentine military glory, his administration of Florentine civil justice, and probably too, his participation in the building of the Palazzo del Podestà, including the Magdalen Chapel. The procession of the blessed, at the head of which the purported figure of Robert appears, is reminiscent of the lengthy procession in the Paradise segment of the Last Judgement scene in the choir of the church of S. Maria Donnaregina in Naples, a church rebuilt and decorated by Robert's mother, Maria of Hungary, and completed after her death. There, Heaven and Hell flank the Last Judgement scene

the *podestà*. George Holmes, *Florence, Rome and the Origins of the Renaissance*, Oxford 1986, 192. The contract of 1 September 1326 for the Florentine *signoria* of Robert's son, Charles of Calabria, stipulates that »avrà piena balia e potestà ... potrà nominare e revocare gli ufficiali del Comune.« Caggese (as note 25), II, 90.

30 A portrait of Robert (now lost) is reported on an exterior wall of the palace of the parte Guelfa in 1310. Julian Gardner, Saint Louis of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou and Simone Martini, in: *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, XXXIX, 1976, 12–33, esp. 22. Moreover, Florentine Guelphs occupied key positions at the Angevin court. Bentivegna Buonsostegno of the Bardi company was a councillor and *familiare* of king Robert as well as a consul of the Arte di Calimala.

Donato Acciaiuoli was a councillor and *familiare* of Charles of Calabria. Giovanni Villani, the chronicler, having previously been associated with the Bardi company, was appointed controller of currency by Charles. Caggese (as note 25), I, 573–575, II, 82–89; Pierluigi Leone de Castris, *Arte di Corte nella Napoli Angioina*, Florence 1986, 314, note 9.

31 Caggese (as note 25), II, 89.

32 Gaetano Milanese, *Commentario alla vita di Giotto*, Pt. I: Del ritratto di Dante Alighieri nella cappella del Palazzo del Podestà di Firenze, in: Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, Gaetano Milanese, ed., Florence 1878, I, 418. For the problems of this identification see Supino (as note 2), I, 231–242; for portrait versus representation, see Gombrich (as note 2).

but, notably, are separated from Christ-Judge by two tall windows³³.

The extent to which Robert of Anjou might have had a hand in determining the painted program of the Magdalen Chapel will probably never be clear to us. Nevertheless, the separation of Heaven and Hell and the choice of a cycle of the life of Mary Magdalen may well represent the dictates of the Angevin king through his direct or indirect intervention with those members of the Commune who made the decisions regarding the chapel.

It has been shown that the Angevin kings associated themselves with the image of the seated ruler, the monarch as judge in the tradition of Solomon, and that the numerous images of the enthroned Robert of Anjou are to be seen within this tradition³⁴. Were we intended, therefore, in the absence (or presence) of an image of Judgement, to identify Robert, head of the supreme court of justice in the Angevin kingdom from 1307, controller of the office of *podestà* of Florence from 1313, and thus chief administrator of justice,³⁵ with the Judgement of the Commune? However speculative this may be, it is clearly arguable that Robert's ideas informed the decoration of both the end walls and lateral walls of the Magdalen Chapel, albeit perhaps in separate campaigns.

Jérôme Baschet is one of a very few authors to consider the Magdalen Chapel frescoes from a viewpoint removed from the attribution to Giotto. In his studies of the imagery of Inferno from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, Baschet considers the frescoes of the Campo Santo in Pisa, dated c. 1335, to be of crucial importance as the first example in monumental painting of the rupture of Inferno from its traditional placement within the Last Judgement scene³⁶. In spite of the absence of a Last Judgement image in the Magdalen Chapel, he places the chapel decoration among a group of four Tuscan frescoes which follow the model of Pisa³⁷, where the imagery has been connected with the writings of Dominican friars³⁸.

The Florentine frescoes, however, were produced in a civic context entirely different from that of the Campo Santo. If one accepts that the chapel was decorated shortly after the allocation of funds for paintings in 1322, then the Magdalen Chapel images of Heaven and Hell predate the Triumph of Death cycle at Pisa. In which case, the first example of a separate, monumental scene of Hell occurs, not in a Dominican nor in a funerary context, but in a secular setting, in the chapel of a public building where civil judgements were pronounced, and possibly under the foreign influence of the Angevin *signoria*.

33 Thus Heaven and Hell, appearing beneath the row of apostles on either side of the windows, approach proportional equality with, and independence from, the Judgement of Christ. For illustrations see Rosa Anna Genovese: *La chiesa trecentesca di Donnaregina*, Naples 1993.

34 Gardner (as note 30), 23–24; *Idem.* (as note 23). The Angevin association with the image of Judgement supports the possibility that a Last Judgement scene might have appeared above the scene of Inferno on the west wall of the chapel. Such a possibility does not substantially alter the arguments in this paper.

35 Léonard (as note 24), 204.

36 Baschet (as note 1), 308–311, 358–363, 624–627. The Campo Santo frescoes were painted in a funerary context, surrounding the cathedral cemetery. For the original arrangement of the scenes (Triumph of Death, Last Judgement, Inferno, and Lives of the

Desert Fathers) see M. Bucci and L. Bertolini, *Camposanto monumentale di Pisa: affreschi e sinopie*, Pisa 1960.

37 Baschet (as note 1), 627, follows Offner's opinion that there was no Last Judgement scene in the Magdalen Chapel. If there were a Last Judgement above, and therefore connected to, the scene of Inferno, the Magdalen Chapel would not qualify as a place where Inferno is separated from the Last Judgement. However, its enlargement and opposition to Paradise would still constitute an important phase in the development traced by Baschet.

38 Baschet (as note 1), 358–359; Chiara Frugoni, Altri luoghi, cercando il paradiso: il ciclo di Buffalmacco nel Campo Santo di Pisa e la committenza domenicana, in: *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di lettere e filosofia*, s. 3, XVIII, 4, 1988, 1557–1643.

Appendix

1. Archivio di Stato di Firenze: *Capitoli del Comune*, Reg. 23, f. 100v; *Provvisioni del Comune*, Reg. 17, f. 56v.

22 gennaio 1321 (1322): Item possint eis que liceat iam dicti priores et vexillifer providere et de pecunia communis ipsius exacta et exigenda et percepta et percipienda ex ludis vetitis et inventione armorum vetitorum et itu de notte post tertium sonum campane quam formam statunt dari et assignari et solvi facere per camerarium camere communis florentie fratribus religiosis pro ipso communi deputatis super constructione et laborerio pallatij communis florentie in quo moratur dominus vicarius regius usque in quantitate centum florenorum auri pro ipsis expen-

dendis solvendis et convertendis per ipsos fratres religiosos in constructione et laborerio pallatij ac etiam in picturis capelle ipsius pallatij et in letterijs dischis fenestris et alijs quibuscumque magisterijs et laboreris opportunis in dicto pallatio.

2. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica di Giovanni Villani*, Franc. Gherardi Dragommani, ed., Frankfurt 1969 [Florence 1844–1845], Lib. IX, cap. LXXIX (1316), II, 197.

1316: ... per lo detto conte di Battifolle vicario s'ordinò e cominciò e fece gran parte del palagio nuovo ove sta la podestà.