

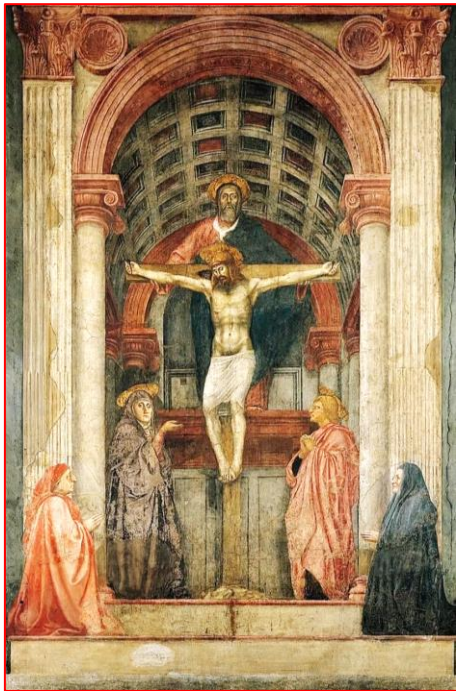
# Following Florence Churches

Dr. Tehilla Ben-Gai

June 2025

Pictures were taken by the author on site.

Aerial images from Google Earth



**Masaccio, 1428: “Holy Trinity”:**

**In Santa Novella Church.**

God holds the crucified Christ; Mary is portrayed as an aged, grieving mother. The donors kneel beside.

Roman architecture frames a revolutionary perspective, drawing viewers into a hierarchy of divine, human, and civic power.

A theological teaching tool and a visual expression of Florentine patronage and authority.

## Introduction:

This presentation is for those who wish to explore Florence’s churches independently—without a guide, but not without depth.

Florence’s sacred spaces are more than religious buildings: they are civic and cultural landmarks. Each church reflects the city’s layered history—where art, devotion, politics, and ambition intersect. From medieval piety to Renaissance humanism, these sites reveal how art was used to teach, persuade, commemorate, and elevate.

Combining the author’s original photographs with concise captions, historical insights, theological and social context, basic architectural terms, and the artistic goals of key figures, this presentation helps visitors understand not only what they are seeing—but why it matters.

## Defining Message:

Unlike Rome, which drew its authority from apostolic martyrdom and papal rule, or Venice, which combined sacred relics with strong republican institutions—Florence did not rely on centralized power or apostolic tradition. Its spiritual and cultural identity was built on innovation, artistic competition, and civic ambition.

Here, ideas emerged that reshaped Western culture: Brunelleschi designed the dome of the Duomo and pioneered linear perspective; Masaccio and Donatello brought depth, movement, and humanist consciousness to art.

Florentine churches became civic stages: guilds, families, and confraternities funded chapels not only as acts of devotion, but to express status, memory, and personal legacy.

Frescoes did more than teach theology—they conveyed values, identity, and ambition.

In Florence, faith was personal, communal, and political. The Renaissance was not born from religious dogma, but from the union of faith, reason, and beauty.

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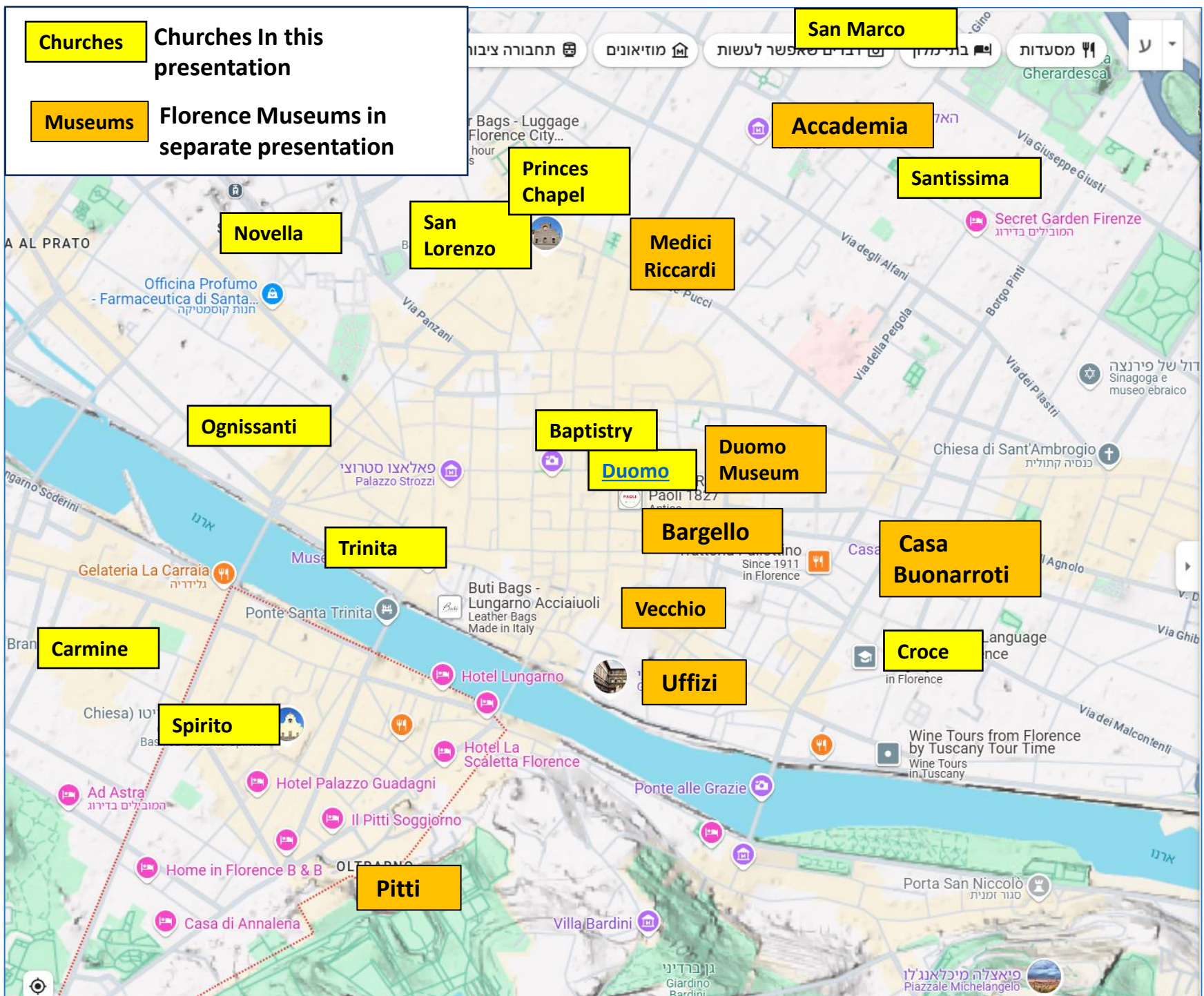
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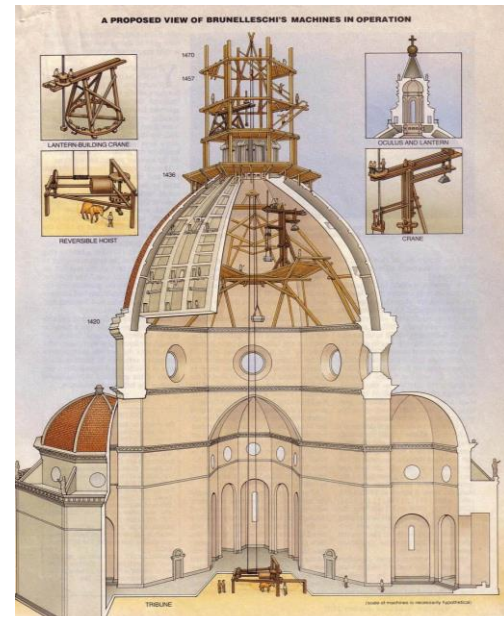
## Orientation Map



The Florence Duomo (Santa Maria del Fiore) Begun in 1296 by Arnolfo di Cambio and crowned in 1436 with Brunelleschi's revolutionary dome, the Duomo stands as Florence's boldest statement of faith, identity, and innovation. Brunelleschi, a goldsmith by training and fiercely independent thinker, devised the largest masonry dome built since antiquity—without scaffolding and without precedent. His dome was not just an engineering feat, but the architectural birth of the Renaissance: rational, harmonious, and mathematically conceived. The bare interior reflects a shift away from medieval excess toward clarity, proportion, and human-scale vision. Here, Florence projected not divine right—but civic pride, ingenuity, and belief in the mind's ability to shape the sacred.



Façade was finished in 19th century in neo-Gothic style.



1418: Brunelleschi won (without detailed sketches) competition of building the Fiori Dome: Double dome without columns or Buttresses.



1490, Ggirlandaido: «Annunciation». Tympanum mosaic, Porta della Mandorla.



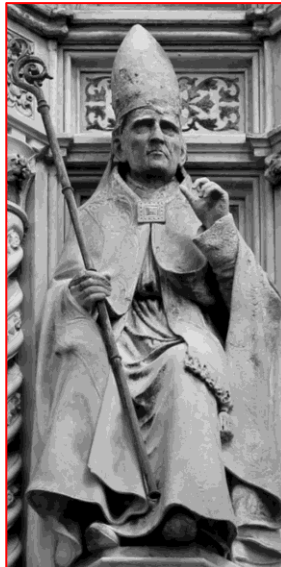
Main entrance, 1900: Augusto Passaglia



Tympanum,



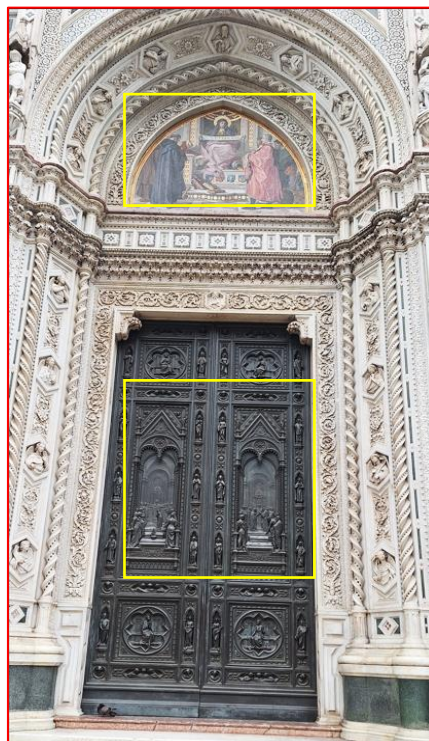
1900, Passaglia: Coronation of the virgin..



Fortunato Galli: Gregorius VII



1365, Andrea Di Bonaiuto: Fresco in the Spanish chapel, Santa Novella church, Florence. Religious and secular hierarchies. Painting the Duomo's Dome as if it was there.



Left Portal , 1900: Augusto Passaglia.



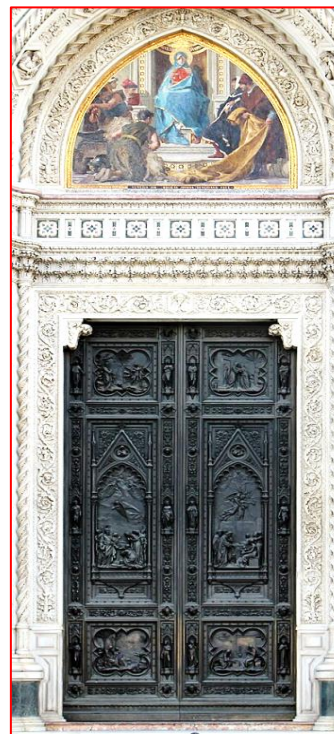
Tympanum, Left Portal.



1900, Passaglia: Marriage of the Virgin.



Romanelli: Leo I



Right Portal , 1900: Giuseppe Cassioli.



Nicolo Barabino, 1886: Craftsmen, merchants and philosophers

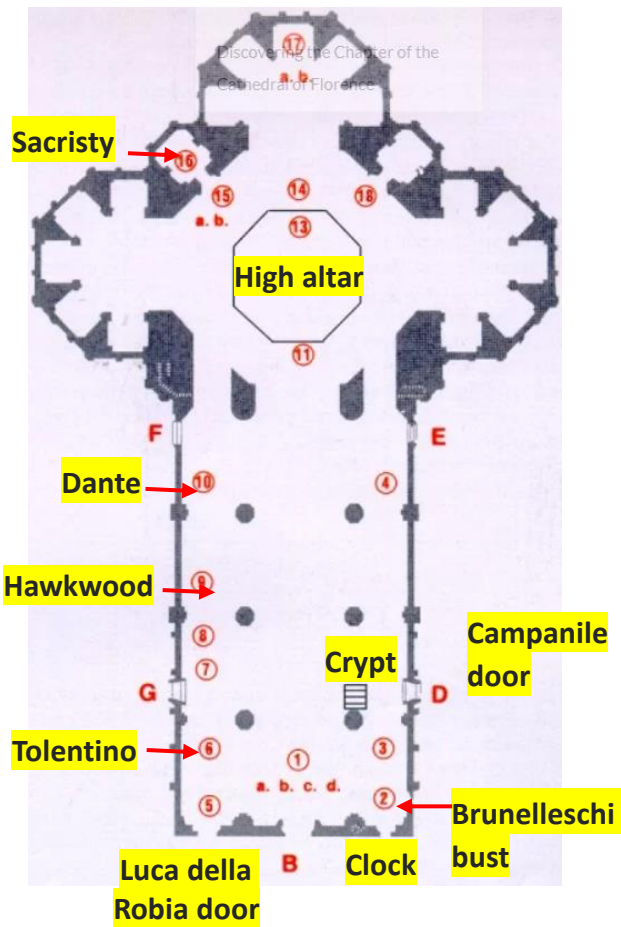


1900, Giuseppe Cassioli: Adoration of the Megi.

**Interior of the Duomo: A space of mission, memory, and order**  
 The cathedral's interior avoids ornate excess, instead guiding the gaze and shaping awareness. Its walls and chapels reflect mission, civic history, and spiritual order.  
 Open space, clean lines, and a clear visual axis create a new concept of prayer and movement.  
 In one wing, the gnomon, liturgical clock, and wooden sacristy turn the cathedral into a place of time, science, and sacred memory.



**Giorgio Vasari, 1572-79: Duomo's Dome: «The Last Judgment»:** Counter Reformation iconography; on the top: prophets look down. **Mannerist style. The largest fresco of its kind.**



**1436, Paolo Uccello:** Mercenary Sir Hawkwood who led the Florentine troops to victory in the battle of Cascina (1364). Monochrome (imitating Bronze). **North wall**



**Buggisno, 1447:** Bust of Brunelleschi



**Bernardino Poccetti:** Christ Sends the Apostles to Preach.



**Francesco Botticini, 1470:** Archangel Raphael and Tobias.



**1456, Castagno: Tolentino:** tense muscles of the horse and man



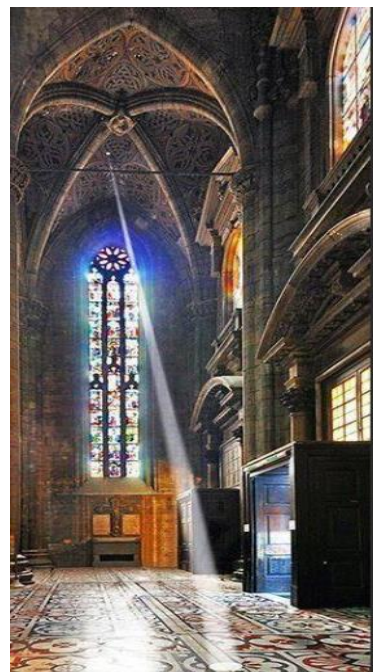
**1443, Uccello:** Liturgical Clock- runs counterclockwise.



**Bernardino Poccetti:** Dinner in Emmaus



**15<sup>th</sup> C.: Sacristy of the Masses:** first example of perspective wooden inlay. **Lorenzo The Magnificent** found escape from the Pazzi conspiracy on 1478.



1786, Sundial. Gnomon, 24 m' high.

### Santa Reparata — A Cathedral Erased, Then Unearthed

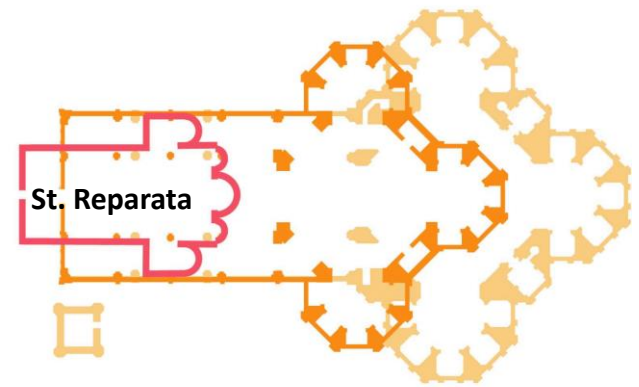
In the 4th century, Florence's cathedral stood here—Santa Reparata. In 1379, it was almost entirely demolished to make way for the new Duomo—not preserved as heritage, but replaced as obsolete.

No conscious continuity was intended, yet its foundations remained buried beneath Santa Maria del Fiore.

Excavations in 1965–73 uncovered Roman pavements, Carolingian renovations, and a Romanesque crypt—a memory not saved by design, but despite neglect.



Santa Reparata, patroness of ancient Florence, on the façade



Romanesque sarcophagus of the Basilica of Santa Reparata



4-7<sup>th</sup> C., Mosaic peacock, symbolizing immortality in Christian iconography.



Gothic tombstone of a bishop, 14th century.



The mosaic floor preserves an early Christian decoration style



Fragment of an Early Gothic Tombstone

### Bell Tower- “Giotto Campanille”

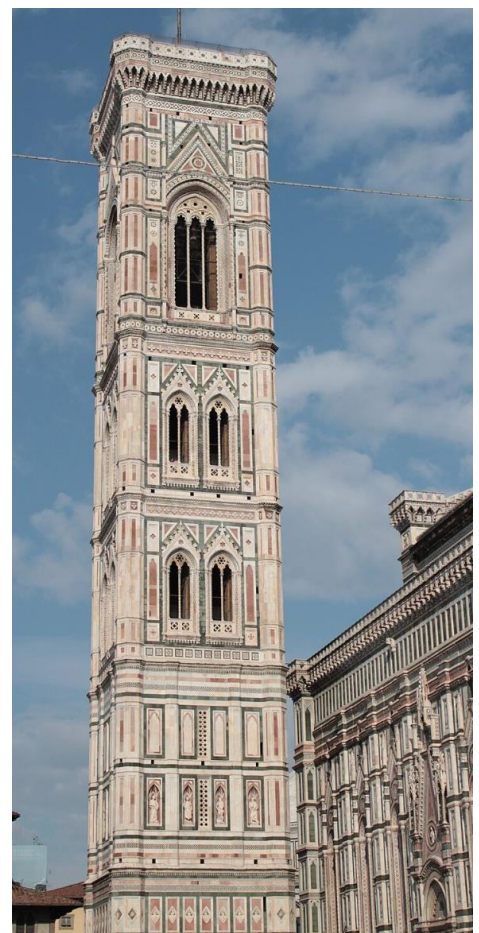
**Giotto's Bell Tower:** Designed in 1334 by Giotto and completed in 1359 by Andrea Pisano, the tower was built as part of the cathedral.

At its base (now with replicas), reliefs celebrate architecture, agriculture, astronomy, and medicine—placing human knowledge at the center, not angels or saints.

It becomes a portal between religious tradition and a rising humanist consciousness

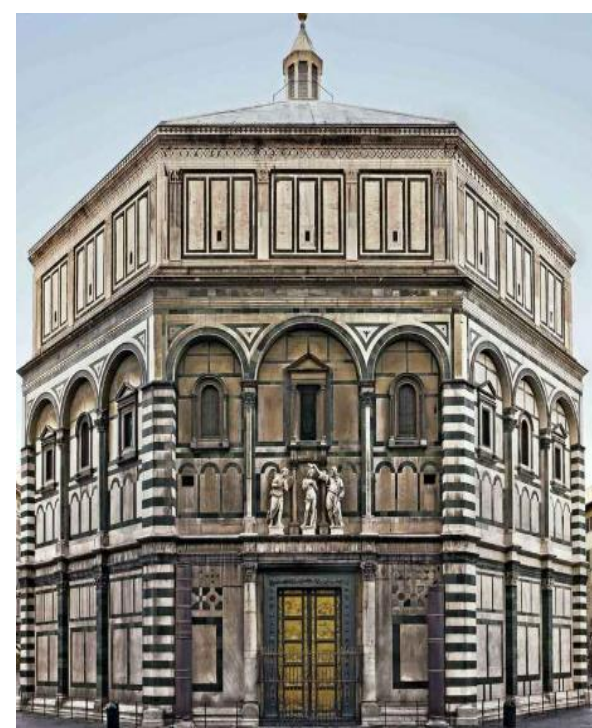


Sculptures of Giotto on the Bell Tower.



### Florence's Baptistery — Sacred Roots, Civic Memory

Built in the 11th century over Roman remains, it honours John the Baptist — a symbol of passage and renewal. All Florentines, from Dante to Renaissance elites, were baptized here, marking their entry into both faith and citizenship. The dome mosaic of the Last Judgment turned the space into a vision of salvation. The three bronze doors (originals in the museum) mark a threshold between city and sacred.



### Tomb of the Antipope: Power, Redemption, and Civic Identity

The only tomb inside Florence's Baptistery belongs to Baldassarre Cossa (1410–1415), former antipope, once a pirate who escaped a death sentence in Naples, later deposed at the Council of Constance and returned to Florence as a cardinal. The Medici commissioned a lavish tomb by Donatello and Michelozzo, honouring him not for piety but for his service to the city's prestige and their own legacy. His personal tale of downfall and redemption became a public statement of reconciliation, memory, and authority.



Byzantine Mosaics: Christ as worlds Judge; Biblical stories. [Under restoration](#)



Devils taking charge of the resurrected souls.



**Celestial hierarchy:** Christ stands at the center as the judging authority, flanked by four seraphim. Beside them: the *Potestates* — “Powers” — lower-ranking heavenly warriors who defend divine order.



Creation of Adam and Eve

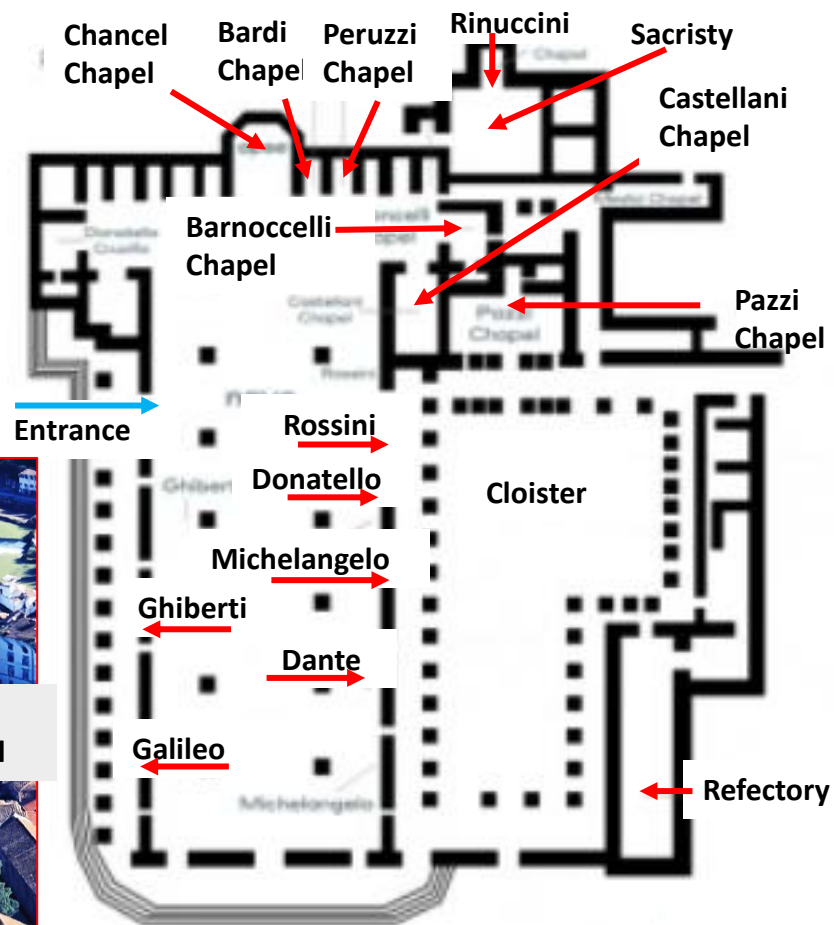


1275: Birth and Naming of the Baptist.



Baptism of Jesus

Built by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1295 for the Franciscan mendicant order—preaching to the urban poor—Santa Croce became a center of popular faith, civic prestige, and national memory. Giotto's frescoes redefined religious storytelling. Tombs of cultural icons turned the church into a pantheon of identity. And private chapels allowed elite families to display not only piety, but also political ambition and civic power



**Facade:** built in 1860 by Jewish architect Niccolò Mata (Framed: star of David)- 500 years after completion of the church.



After St. Francis of Assisi visit Florence, his followers Commissioned the church in 1212.

## Tombs and Monuments

Here rest not the city's rulers or saints, but those who embodied its cultural greatness: Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo, Rossini, and others. Their presence reflects how Florence saw itself — not as a city of kings, but of genius. Each monument proclaims a legacy: of intellectual courage, scientific vision, or cultural contribution. Personal memory was transformed into national identity. Through its tombs, Florence shaped a secular civic heritage — honouring human spirit over royal blood



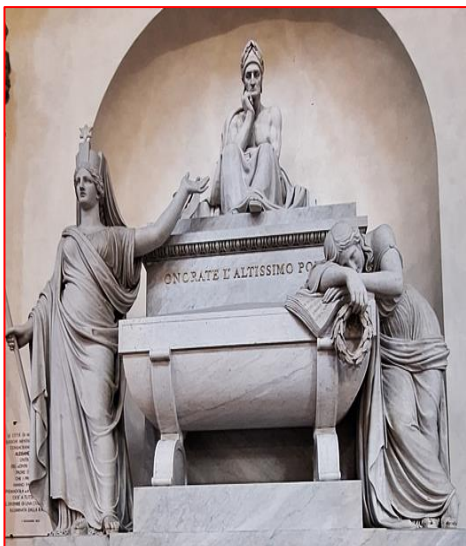
1800, Sommarini: Galileo's tomb (1564-1642).



1570, Vasari: Tomb of Michelangelo (1475-1564).



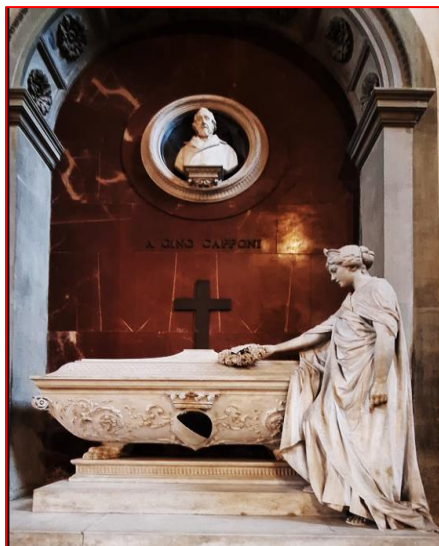
Donatello's Niche, 1433: The Annunciation inside a gilded tabernacle.



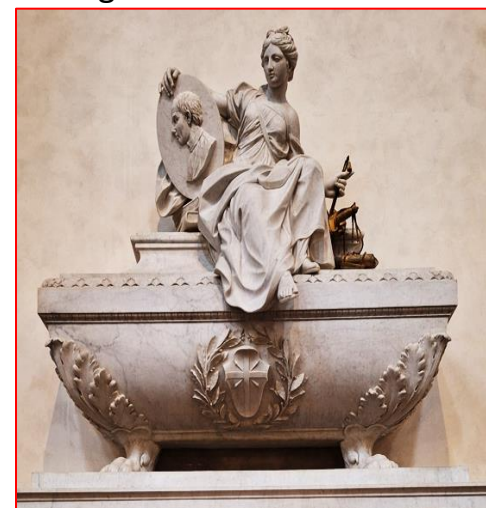
1819, Ricci: Cenotaph of Dante (1265-1321).



Rossini's tomb (1792-1868).



Tomb of Ghiberti (1378-1455).



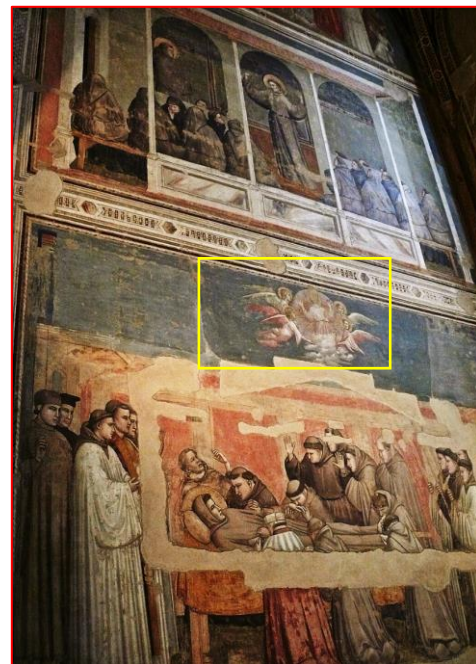
1787, Spinazzi: Machiavelli's tomb (1469-1527).

**Giotto: Bardi Chapel**

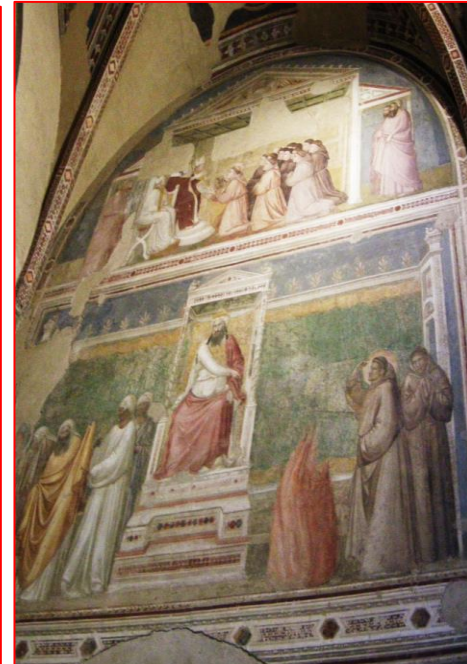
Giotto depicts the life of **Francis of Assisi** in a groundbreaking fresco cycle. Instead of flat, schematic symbols, he created figures with physical and emotional presence, expressing pain, faith, and compassion — with early attempts at perspective, architectural settings, and bodily movement that convey a vivid narrative. Giotto introduced the idea of place, time, and human experience into painting — thus heralding the dawn of the Renaissance.



**Giotto, 1325:** St. Francis Stigmatized as Christ's successor.



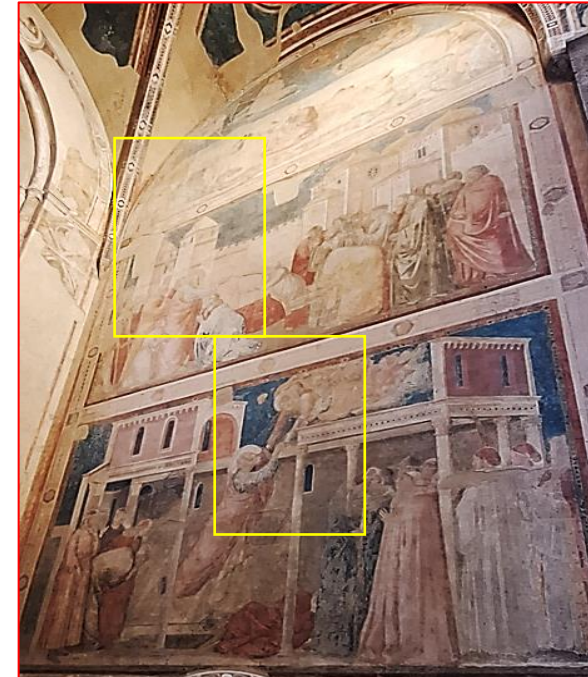
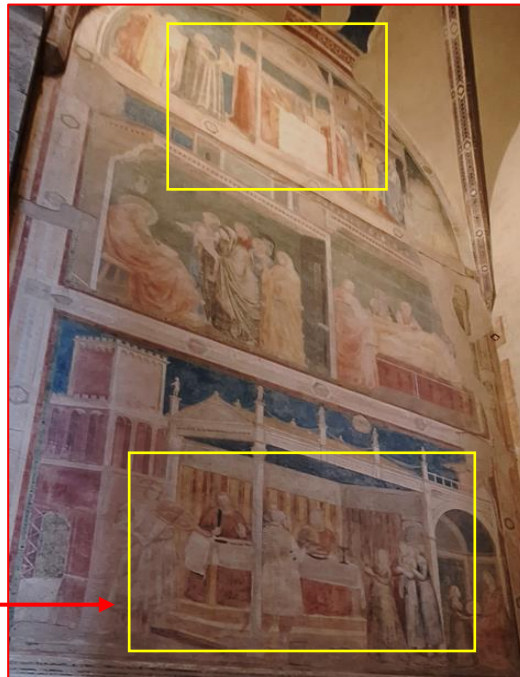
**Above:** Apparition at Arles  
**Bottom:** Death of St. Francis.



**Above:** confirmation of the Rule. **Bottom:** Trial by fire.

**Peruzzi Chapel**

**Giotto: Peruzzi Chapel:** lives of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Though damaged, they show Giotto's advanced use of architectural space, narrative clarity, and human gesture—bridging Gothic tradition and early Renaissance realism.



**1315, Giotto:** Right: John the Evangelist: raising of Drusiana and Ascension. Left: John the Baptist: Annunciation to Zacharias; Feast of Herodes.



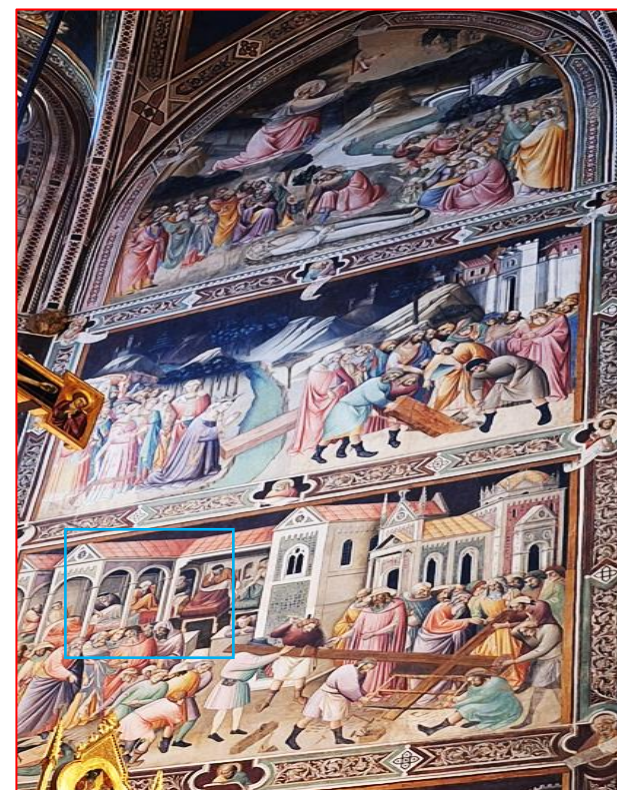
**Feast of Harrods:** Salome hands John's Head to her mother; Feast goes on: Musician playing.

**Chancel/Maggiore Chapel****Agnolo Gaddi, Legend of the True Cross:**

In 1385, the Franciscans commissioned Agnolo Gaddi to paint the apse with the mythic story of the cross on which Christ was crucified. The medieval legend links Adam's death to Christ's sacrifice: Seth plants a tree on his father's grave; from it, the True Cross is made. In 326, Helena, Constantine's mother, discovers the cross in Jerusalem. In 614, it is seized by Chosroes II, king of the Sassanids. In 628, Emperor Heraclius recaptures it and returns it in triumph to Jerusalem. The chapel merges myth, history, and faith—placing Florence in an ancient sacred lineage.



**Right:** Vision of Emperor Heraclius.  
**Left:** Chosroës worshiped by his people.



**Recovery of the wood**

Built by the Peruzzi family in 1270 to store liturgical garments and vessels, it now displays Cimabue's large Crucifix (1287), a key milestone on the path toward Renaissance painting. Severely damaged in the 1966 flood, it became a symbol of Florence's call to preserve its artistic heritage. The surrounding frescoes—by Taddeo Gaddi, Spinello Aretino, and Niccolò di Pietro Gerini—depict the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, framing the cross



1275, Cambio: "Cimabue" Cross": Byzantine iconography.



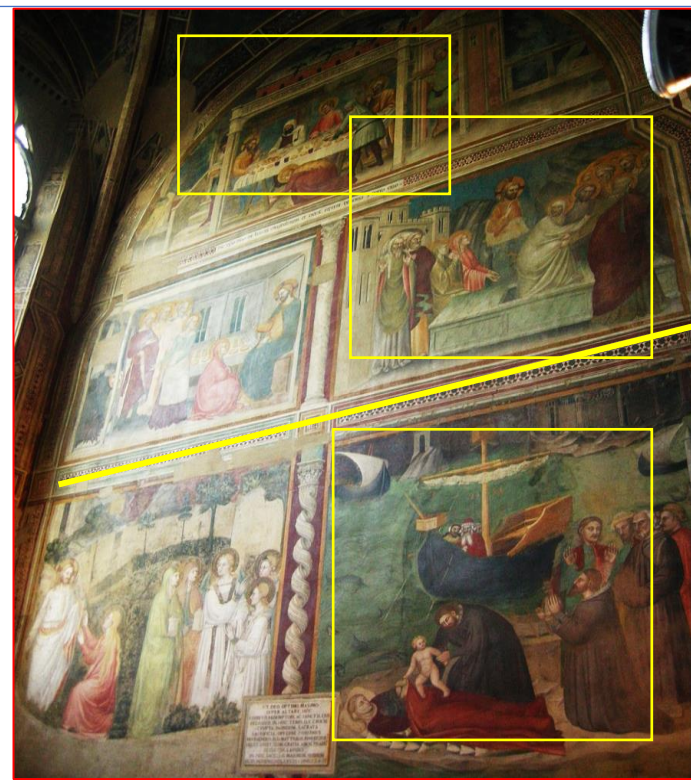
Left: Spinello Aretino: "Way to Calvary"; Niccolò di Pietro Gerini painted "Resurrection" (right) and "The Ascension" (above). In 1360, Taddeo Gaddi painted "The Crucifixion"- his last work.

### Rinuccini Chapel

Commissioned by the Rinuccini family in the late 14th century, the chapel's decoration began in 1365 with Giovanni di Milano, who painted the upper scenes. Matteo di Pacino completed the work in 1370, focusing on the lower parts in a detailed narrative style. Ten frescoes depict the lives of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene—two parallel stories of grace and redemption. The chapel reflects the shift from late Gothic art to an Italian narrative style, seeking emotional depth and movement—paving the way for the fresco innovations of Giotto and his followers.



**Life of the virgin: Upper (Milano) panels:** Expulsion of Joachim; Joachim dream; **Lower (de Pacini):** presentation of the virgin; the marriage of the Virgin.



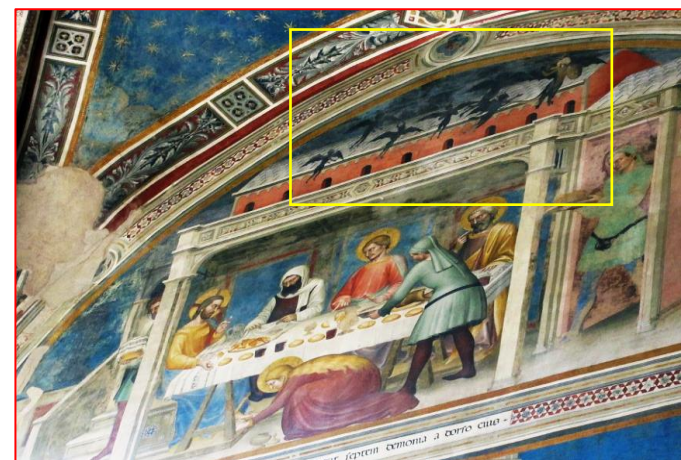
**Life of the Mary Magdalene:** Magdalen at Jesus feet; Jesus raising Lazarus; Recovery of the child.



**Giovanni de Milano:** Jesus said to Magdalen "Nili me Tangere"—meaning "don't touch me".



**Matteo di Pacini, 1370:** Recovery of the child": Detailed approach.



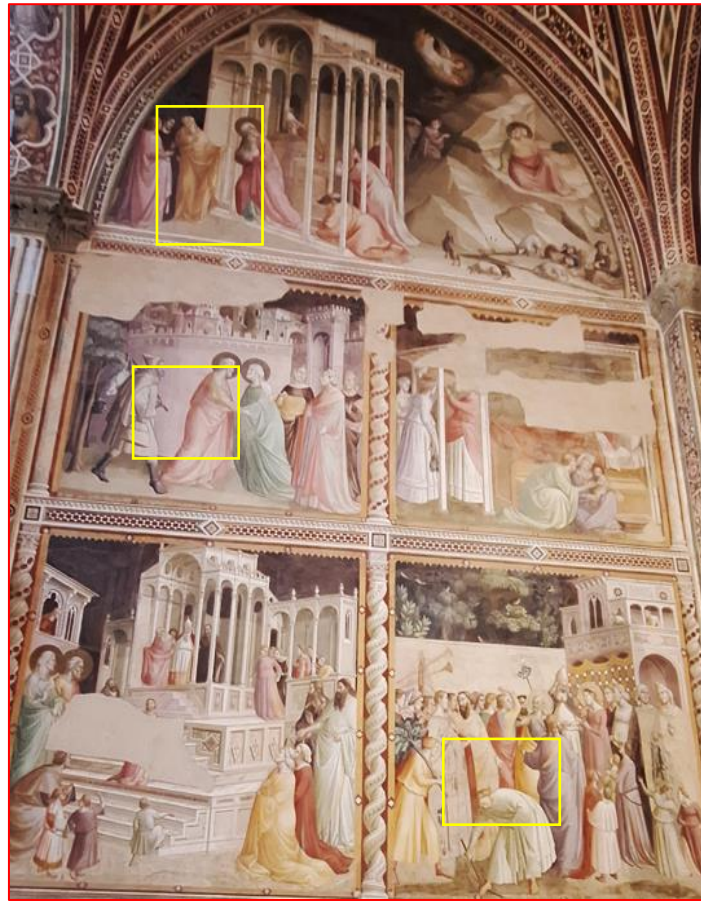
**Giovanni de Milano:** "Magdalene washes Christ feet at the Supper in the House of Simon the Pharisee". Devils which Jesus has just cast out of Mary are seen flying away.

Baroncelli Chapel

Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto's pupil, painted the "Life of the Virgin" cycle. He expanded Giotto's legacy with architectural settings, like the staircase in the "Presentation of the Virgin." Gaddi kept the emotional tone but added urban scenes and visual complexity—advancing narrative art toward the Renaissance.



1330. Taddeo Gaddi: "Annunciation to the shepherds": first night light scene painting in western art.



Taddeo Gaddi, 1328-1338: "Stories of the Virgin". Above: Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple; Joachim and Anne; Virgin's marriage.



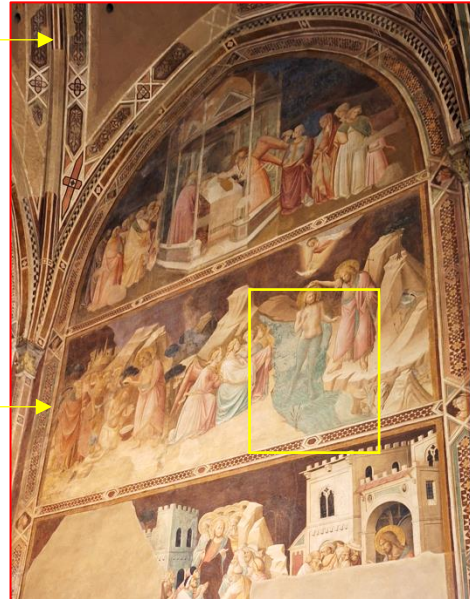
1334, Giotto: "Coronation of the Virgin". central panel.



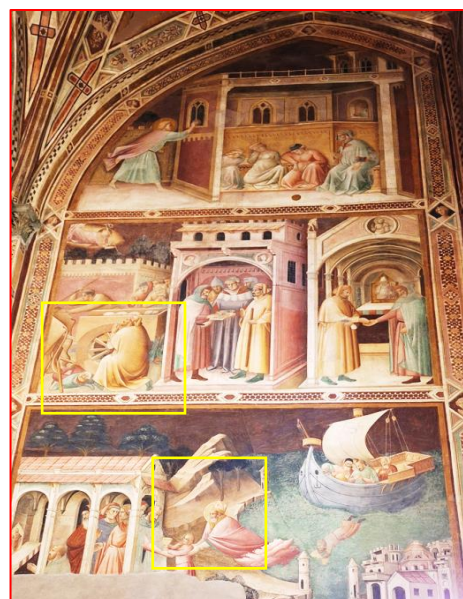
1334, Giotto: "Baroncelli Polyptych"- Coronation of the Virgin.

Castellani Chapel

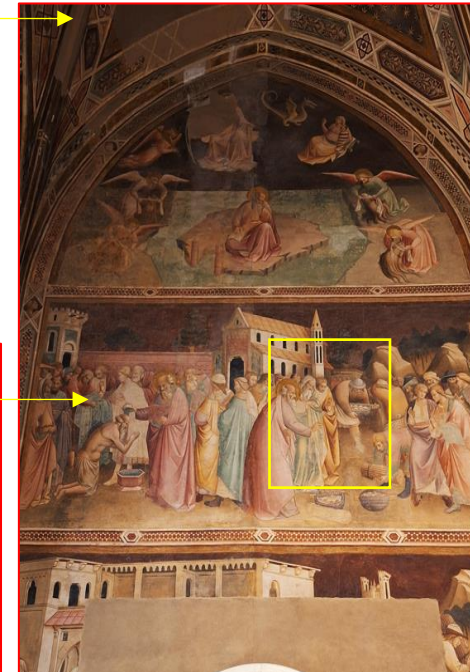
Angolo Gaddi: scenes of the lives of Anthony the Great, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and Nicholas: 4 saints' lives in a unified decorative scheme by the same artist who painted the main apse.



Framed: St. Nicholas, punishes the bad faith debtor.



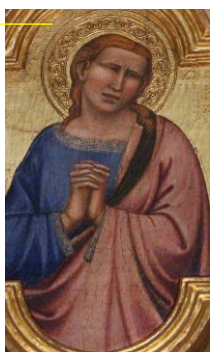
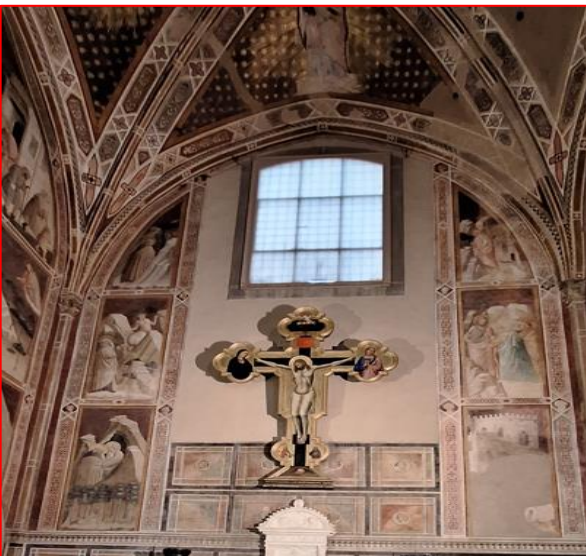
St. Nicholas miracle of the golden cup:



Framed: John the Evangelist transformation of bars into gold and stones into precious stones.



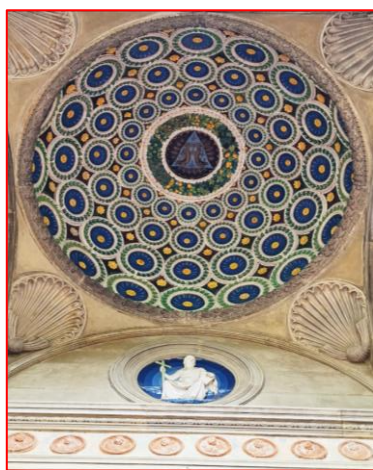
Framed: St. Anthony the Abbot, distribution of goods to the poor.



Gerini and Nelli: crucifix of Niccolo Gerini

**Pazzi Chapel**

**Pazzi Chapel, 1442:** Designed by Brunelleschi as a chapter house for the Pazzi family. Its pure geometry—arches, pilasters, and circular windows—embodied Renaissance ideals of order and proportion. After the 1478 conspiracy, in which a Pazzi member murdered Giuliano de’ Medici during mass, the family was exiled and the chapel left unfinished



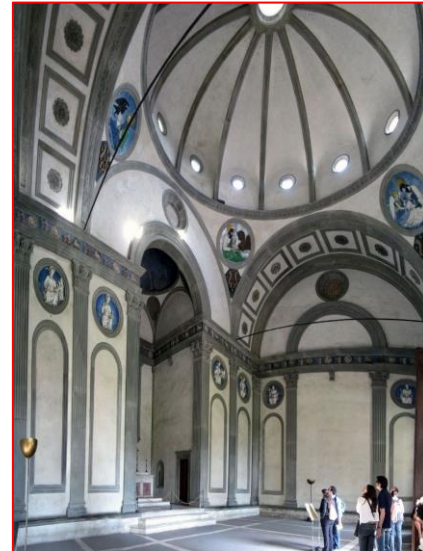
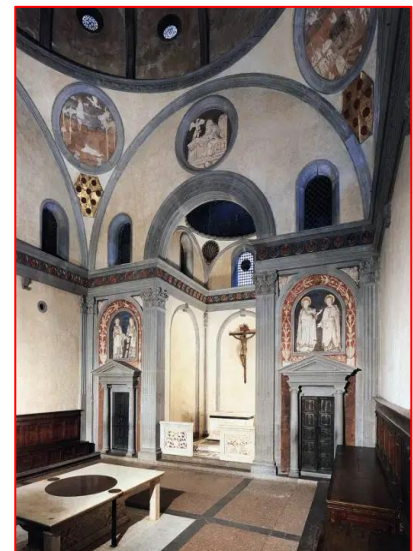
1440, Luca della Robbia: Chapel and Portico.



The celestial symbols on the dome replicate the sky from July 4th—identical to Brunelleschi’s Old Sacristy. Sun and Moon are missing, possibly symbolizing loss or exile.



**Andrea della Robbia:** Four evangelists in the pendentives: Glazed terracotta.



**Brunelleschi, 1442: Architecture Design:** Arches, pilasters, Circular windows of the dome: Geometry, harmony. Chapel completed in 1443 after Brunelleschi's death.

**Refectory**

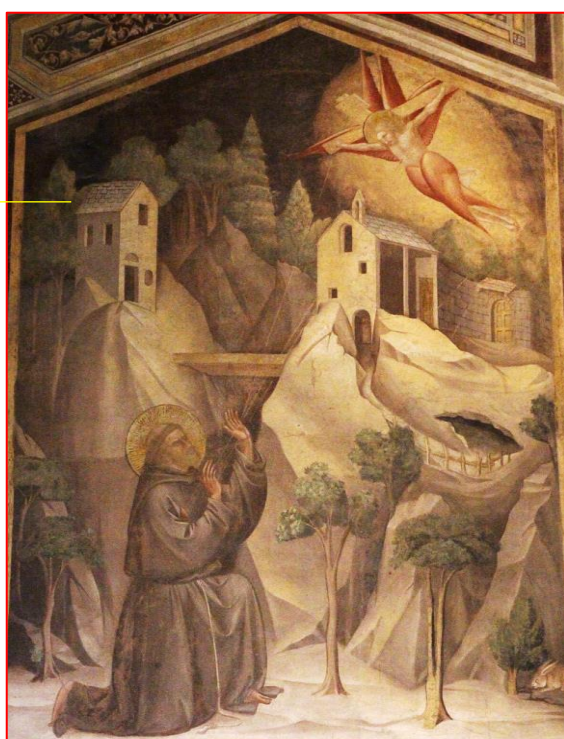
Taddeo Gaddi, Giotto’s pupil for 24 years, created the Fresco cycle between 1334-1366: Creating Visual theology in the refectory: **community meal became a communion.**



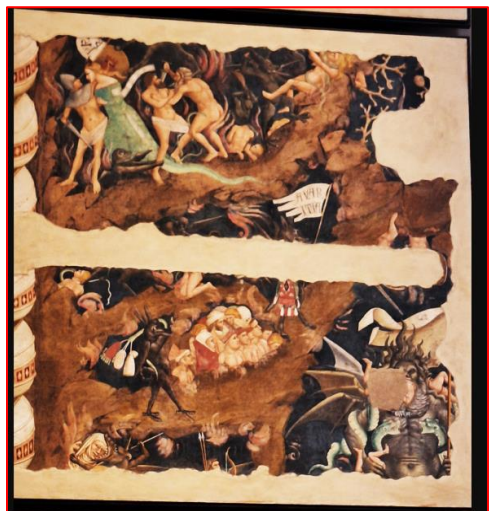
Giorgio Vasari, 1546: “The Last Supper”.



**Taddeo Gaddi, 1345: “Tree of Life”:** St. Francis, embracing the trunk and the patron; Prophets holding scrolls. **“Last Supper”** and **St. Francis receiving the Stigmata;** 4 miracle scenes.

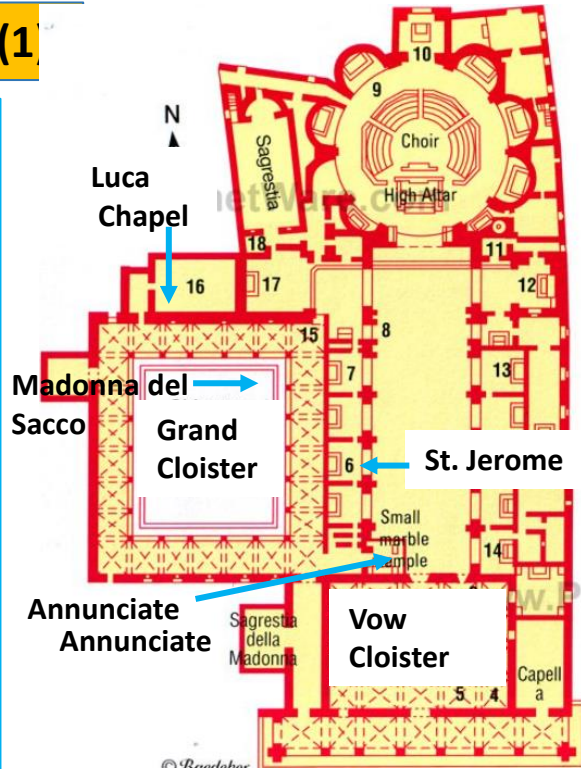


Stigmata of Francis



1350, Andrea Orcagna: Hell fragments- Triumph of Death.

Rebuilt in 1250 and redesigned by architect Leon Battista Alberti in 1444, the church became the mother church of the Servite Order — founded in the 13th century by laymen rather than clergy. The order focused on the Virgin's sorrows, service to others, and communal humility. It became a major pilgrimage site after a miracle: Friar Bartolomeo, unable to complete the Virgin's face, saw it finished by divine intervention. The image still stands in a small chapel behind the altar and remains a focus of continuous local devotion — reflecting a tradition of accessible, popular faith rather than political power or architectural splendor.



1252, Friar Bartholomeo: "Annunciation" before (left) and after controversy restoration. **Luca Chapel**



Andrea del Castagno, 1453: St. "Julian and the redeemer". Crude truth. **Luca Chapel**



Andrea del Castagno, 1453: "Holy Trinity, St. Jerome and two saints": (and the Lion): Realistic Crude truth- old body, wounded; above- foreshortening of Crucifix. **Luca Chapel**



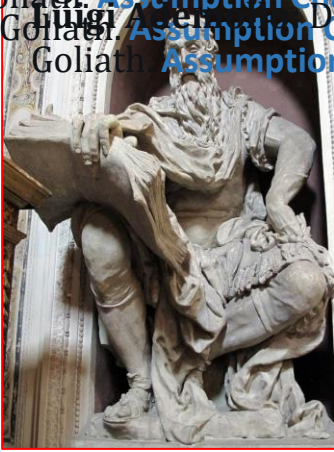
1565, Giorgio Vasari: St Luke Painting the Virgin. **Luca Chapel**



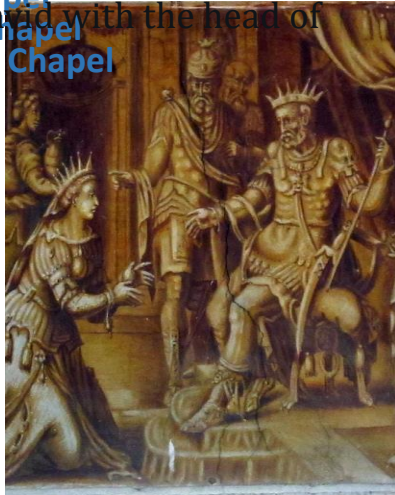
Luigi Ademollo: David with the head of Goliath. **Assumption Chapel**



Montorsoli: Tomb of the many artists: Montorsoli himself, Cellini, Andrea Sansovino. **Luca Chapel**



Giambologna and casali: Statue of King David. **Luca Chapel**



Pietro Candido: Queen of Sheba. **Luca Chapel**



1571, Sandi di Tito: Building Solomon Temple. **Luca Chapel**

**Cloister of Vows:** This cloister serves as the atrium to the Church of Santissima Annunziata. Built in the 15th century and frescoed in the early 17th, it was the passage for pilgrims arriving to fulfill a vow on their way to the sacred space. The fresco cycle depicts Servite saints and miracles granted through them—emphasizing how faith, humility, and devotion to Mary were met with divine grace. The cloister creates a symbolic transition between human intent and spiritual commitment, turning pilgrimage into a visual narrative of devotion.



1460, Baldovinetti: Adoration of the shepherd.



1511. Del Sarto sets the Magi's journey in a Florentine context: an urban-desert scene with merchants, exotic animals (like a zebra), goods, and contemporary portraits—including his own. The scene combines individual figures with social roles, presenting the journey as a collective human procession.



Andrea del Sarto, 1510: "liberation of a woman possessed by the devil"



1510, Andrea del Sarto: Death of Benizi and Resurrection of a Child



1510, Andrea del Sarto: Punishment of the Gamblers



Franciabigio, 1513: "Marriage of the Virgin".



1515, Pontormo: "Visitation", Mary meets Cousin Elizabeth. [Mannerist Masterpiece.](#)

### Grand Cloister of the dead

### Scenes of the "Servite" order.



1525, Andrea de Sarto: "Madonna del Sacco" (with the Sack): Sarto's ultimate masterpiece.



Bernardino Poccetti: Assigning the Rule of St. Augustine to the new Order.

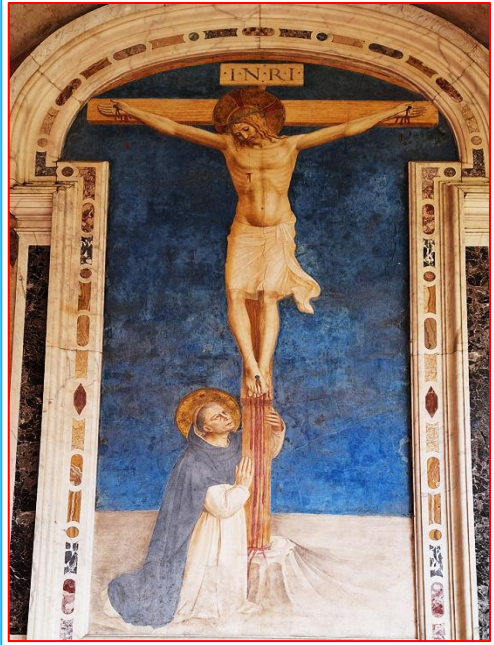


Mascagni: Laying of the first stone of Santa Maria di Cafaggio (Annunziata)

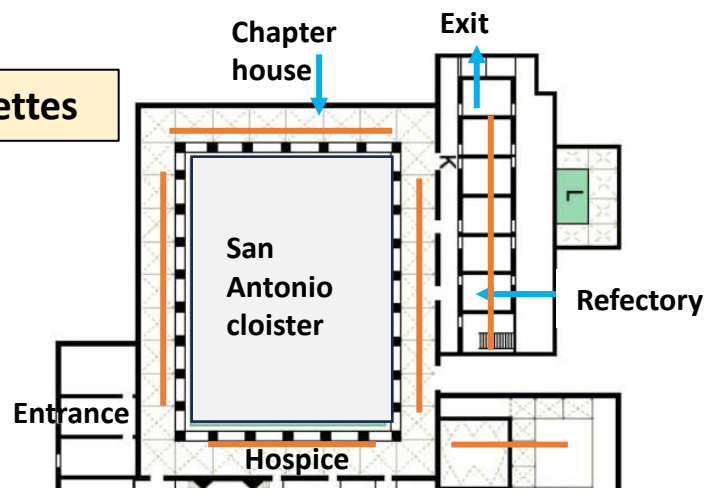
**San Marco, Florence**

Originally built in the 13th century, the monastery fell into decay until 1436, when it was entrusted to the reformist Dominicans of Fiesole, committed to strict monastic life. Cosimo de' Medici financed its reconstruction. It became the first monastery in Early Renaissance style—simple, symmetrical, and centered on two cloisters combining architectural order. Each monk's cell was adorned with a single fresco by Fra Angelico, intended for meditation. In 1489, Girolamo Savonarola became prior, turning San Marco into a center of preaching, religious reform, and opposition to Florence's humanist culture. Its library, designed as part of the renovation, was the first in Europe meant for scholars, not just monks—expressing a new ideal: spirit, knowledge, order, and discipline.

**San Antonio Cloister's Lunettes**



**1440, Beato Angelico: St. Dominico adoring Christ.** Dominic receives Christ's blood directly—symbolizing total devotion through suffering, humility, and divine truth.



**Ground floor map**



**1437, Michelozzo: Cloister San Antonino.** Fresco cycle of miracles of Antoninus.



1589, Death of Saint Antoninus



1589, miraculous river rescue by St. Antoninus Pierozzi,



1589, Antoninus Intervenes with Craftsmen

**Pilgram's Hospice: Angelico's panel paintings.**



**1450, Beato Angelico: "Mystic wheel with Ezekiel's Vision".** Originally from Santissima Annuncziata church. Last work of Fra Angelico.



**1433, Beato Angelico: The Martyrdom of St Mark.**



**Fra Angelico, 1437: "Deposition from the Cross".** Jerusalem on a Tuscan hill.



Small refectory



1482 Domenico Ghirlandaio: "Last Supper": painted for San Marco's Dominicans order after painting the same Biblical scene in the Franciscan Sassetta chapel in Santa Trinita of 1480. Main Change: The cat behind Judas, Symbol of treachery replaced by bag of money.

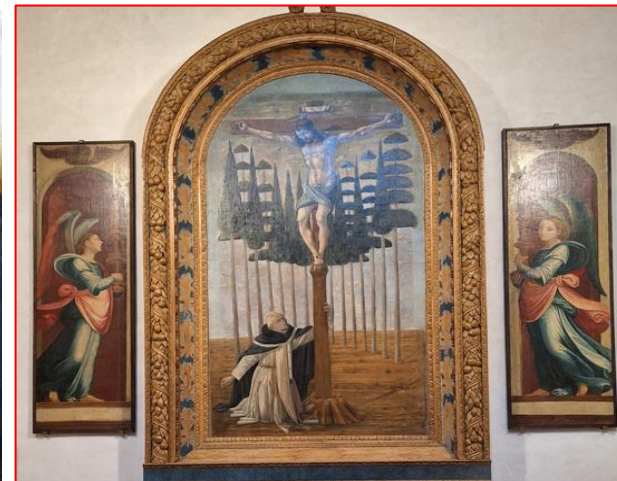
Chapter house



1441, Fra Angelico: Crucifixion with Saints



1441, Angelico: Christ the Pilgrim Welcomed by the Dominicans.



1441, Angelico: Crucifixion on a leaving tree; Dominic attached to the tree- as anchor to the truth.

Large Refectory



1536, Giovan Antonio Sogliani: St Dominic and his Friars Fed by Angels.



1560, Sister Plautilla Nelli: Lamentation.



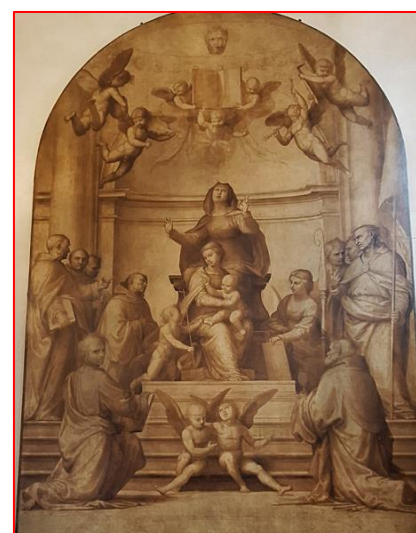
1525, Giovanni Antonio Sogliani: Flagellation and Way to Calvary.



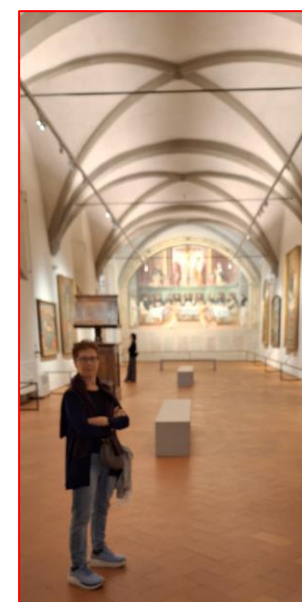
1500, Mariotto Albertinelli: The last Judgment- From Florence hospital.



Mystical Supper of St. Francis and St. Clare

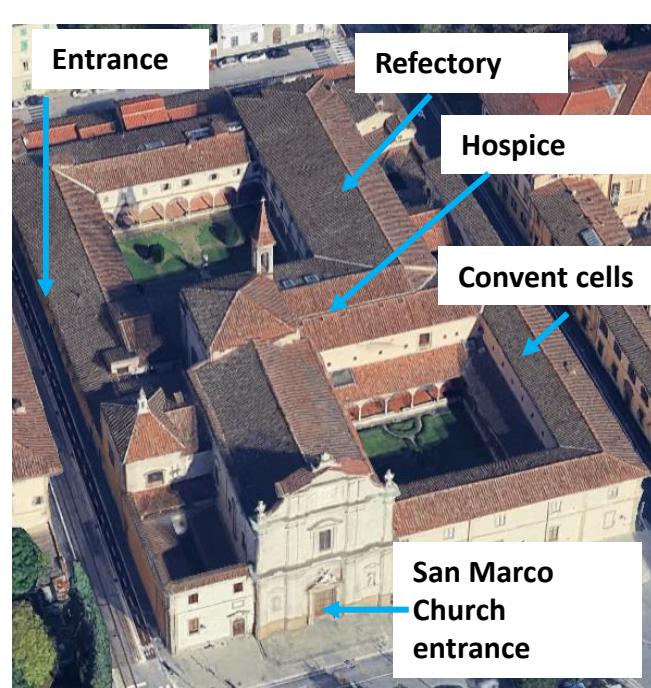
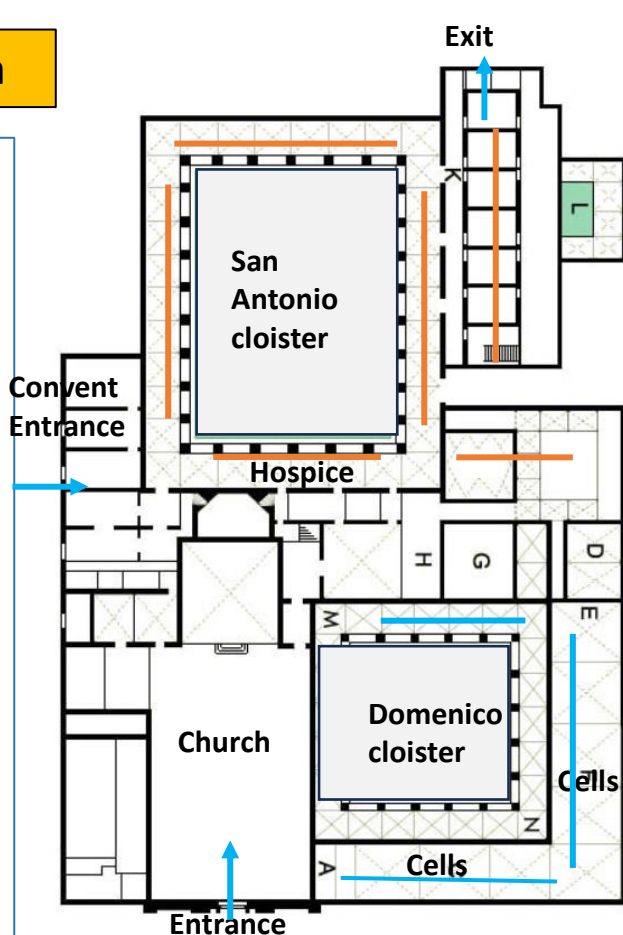


1505, Fra Bartolomeo: Vision of St. Bernard



**Church of San Marco**

The Church of San Marco, which served the monastery, was also renovated between 1430–1440, preserving its traditional Gothic structure while adding Renaissance ornamentation. In the 15th century, it became the center of activity for Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), a fervent preacher who denounced the Medici-sponsored humanism and claimed that intellectual and artistic flourishing led to spiritual corruption. In 1494, he seized control of Florence following the Medici expulsion. Between 1497–1498, he organized public burnings of books and artworks. In 1498, he was excommunicated by the pope and executed by public burning in Piazza della Signoria. The church, where he preached to the public, came to symbolize the clash between Renaissance culture and rigid religious ideals.



Facade: 18th C. Neoclassical facade in contrast to Michelozzo's 15° C. Interior.

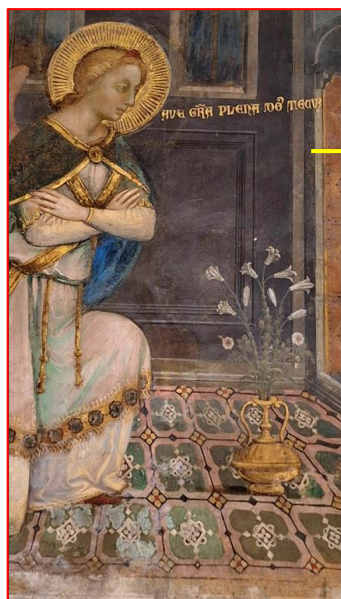
**Ground floor tour- around Antonio Cloister; First floor cells tour- around Domenico cloister.**



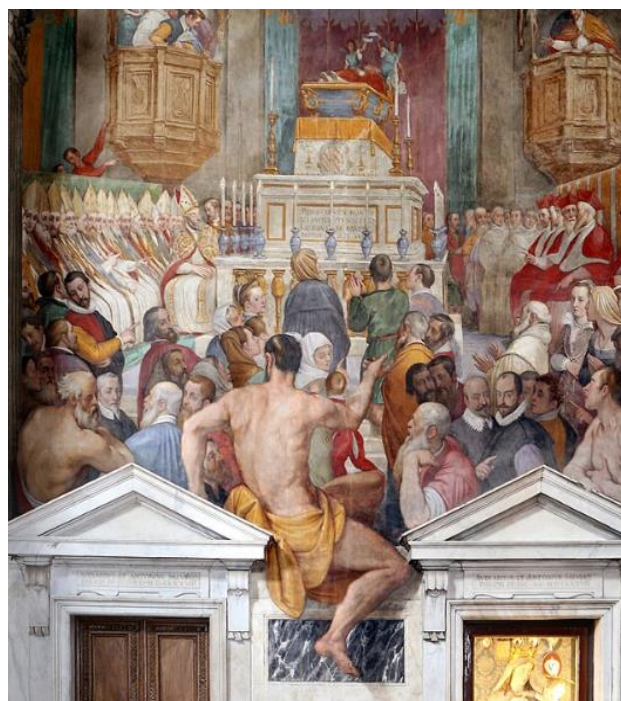
**Jacopo Di Cione, 1371: "Annunciation"- Counter Façade of the church.**



**Fra Girolamo Savonarola: 1452-1498**



**1593, Santi di Tito: Vision of Thomas Aquinas: Christ spoke to him from a painted crucifix: Turco Chapel**



**1590, Passignano: exposition of the body of St. Pierozzi. Salviati Chapel**



**1590, Passignano: Translation of the Body of St. Antonino. Salviati Chapel**

**Antonio Pierozzi, (1389-1459): Dominican Bishop, transformed San Marco from a declining Monastery into a Renaissance spiritual and artistic center with Cosimo's money, Michelozzo's Architecture and Fra Angelico's Art.**



Dormitory: By Fra Angelico, 1439-1442



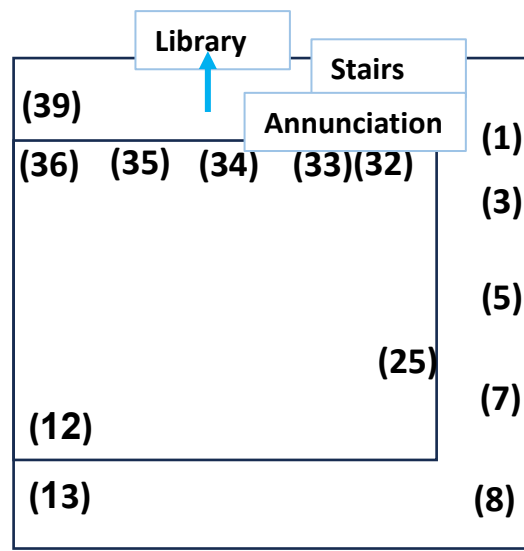
"Noli Me Tangere" (1)



Nativity (5)



1440, Fra Angelico: "Annunciation" - transition from Gothic period into Renaissance.



First floor cell map



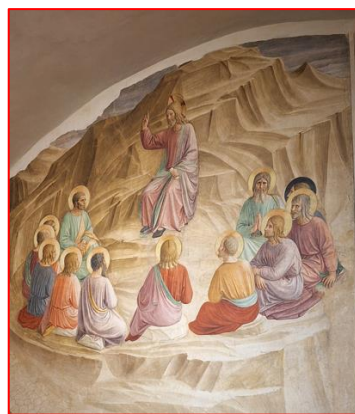
Mocking of Christ (7)



Resurrection (8)



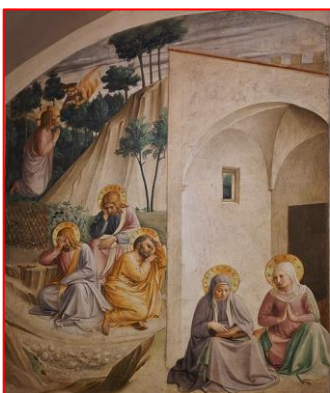
Crucifixion with Magdelena and Dominic.(25)



Sermon of the Mount (32)



Capturing of Jesus Christ (33)



Agony in the garden (34)



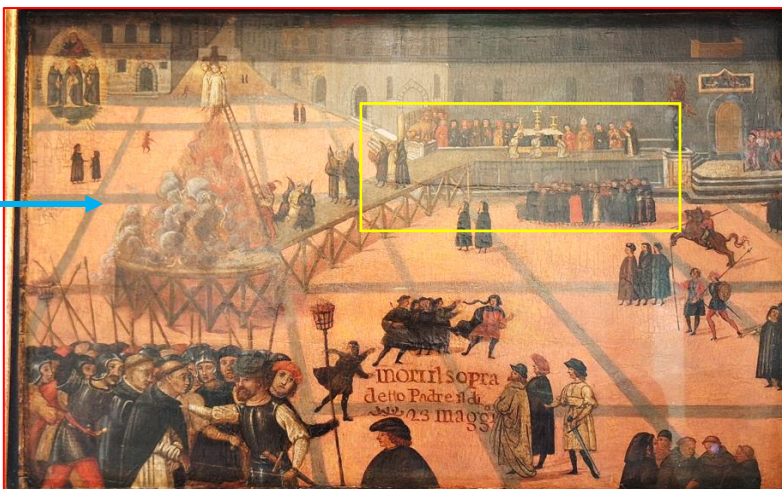
Communion of the Apostles (35)



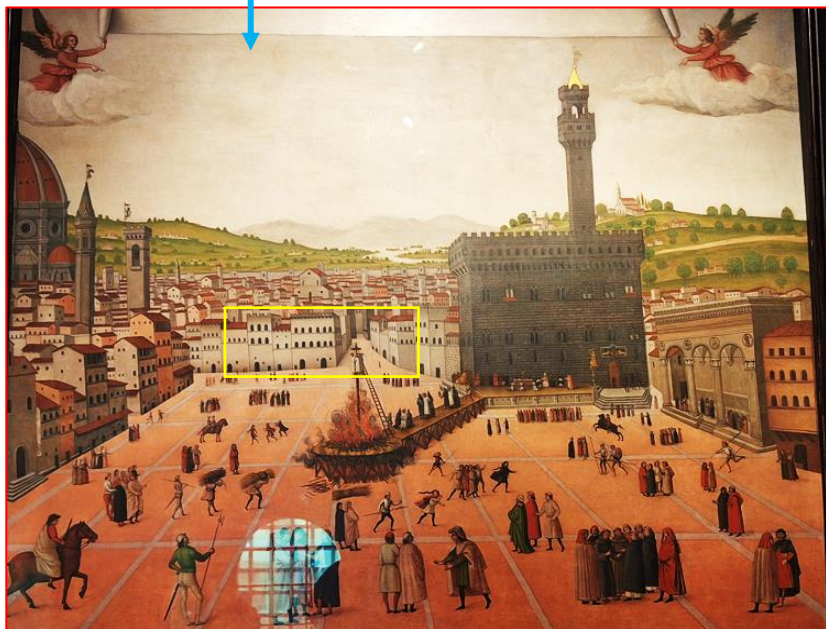
Deposition (36)



Adoration of the Kings (39)



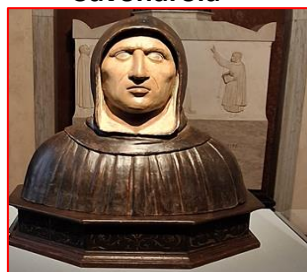
1498, Filippo Dolciati:: Savonarola's Torture in Piazza Della Signoria in 1498. (12-14)



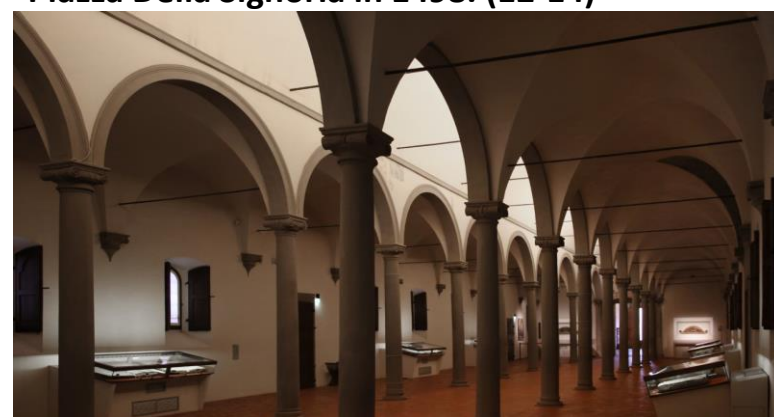
1498, Filippo Dolciati: Savonarola's execution, Piazza Della Signoria in 1498. (12-14)



Bartolomeo,1498 "Savonarola"

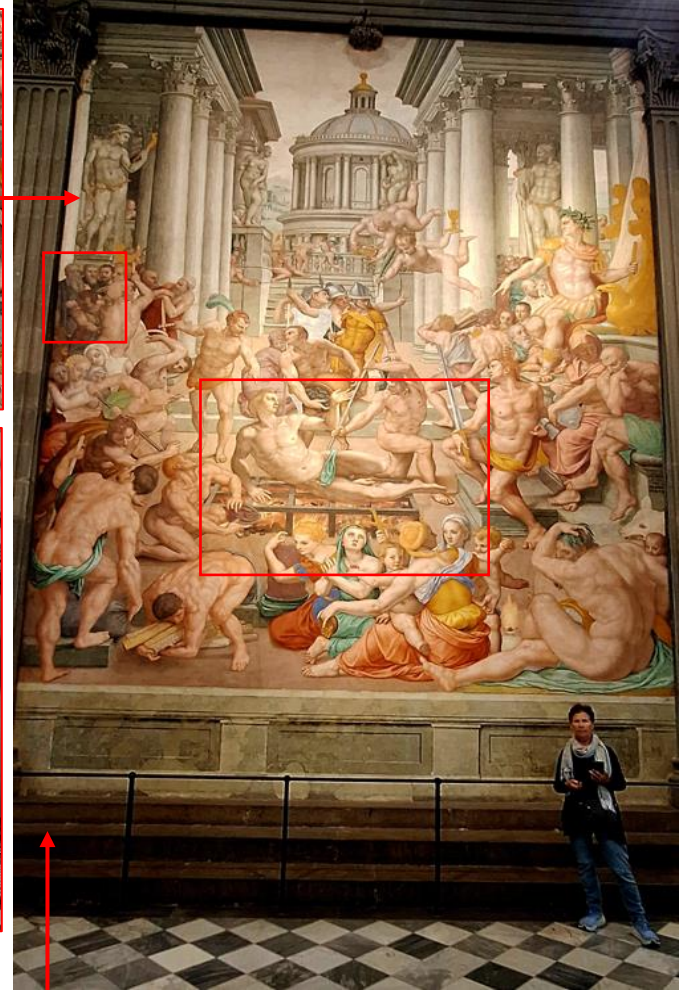
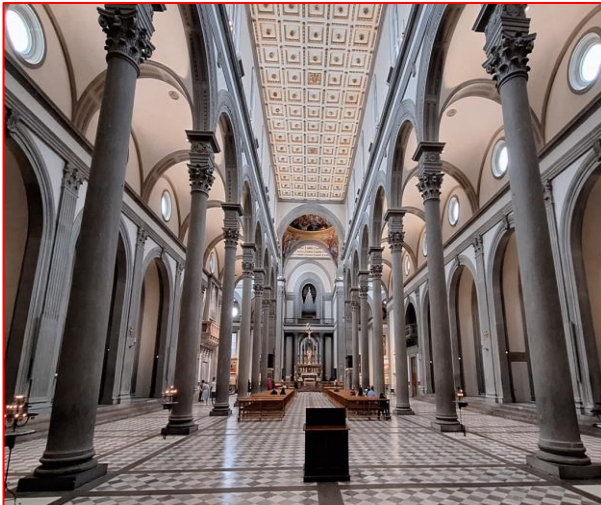


1500, Della Robbia: Savonarola (12)



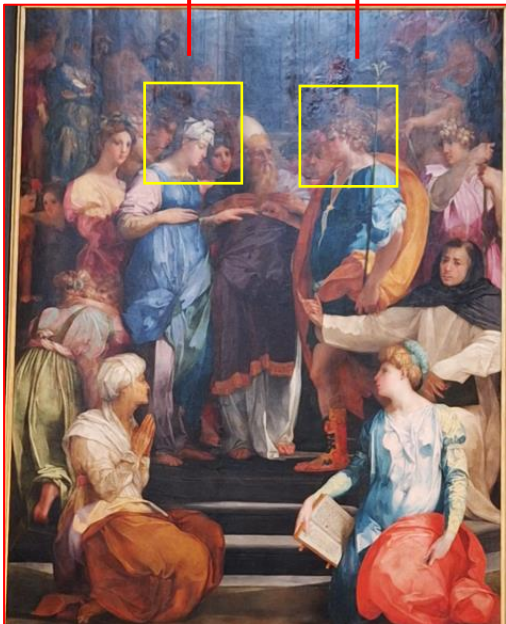
Library)

San Lorenzo, first founded in 393 AD, is the oldest church in Florence. In 1419, Giovanni de' Medici commissioned Brunelleschi to replace the 11th-century Romanesque-Gothic structure, launching a new architectural era. Brunelleschi introduced revolutionary Renaissance principles: linear perspective, Corinthian columns, coffered ceilings, and oculi windows above the arches to let in natural light. San Lorenzo is not only an early example of Renaissance architecture — it is also a symbol of a new alliance between faith, knowledge, and political power. Through this new architectural language, the Medici sought to express cultural and spiritual dominance in the city.



Mary

Josef



**Fiorentino, 1523: Marriage of the Virgin:** Joseph- handsome young man. (Usually portrait as elderly man, incapable of affecting Mary's virginity.)



**Filippo Lippi, 1440: Annunciation.**



**Donatello, 1465: Passion Pulpit:** Christ with the Thieves. Expressionistic and violent.

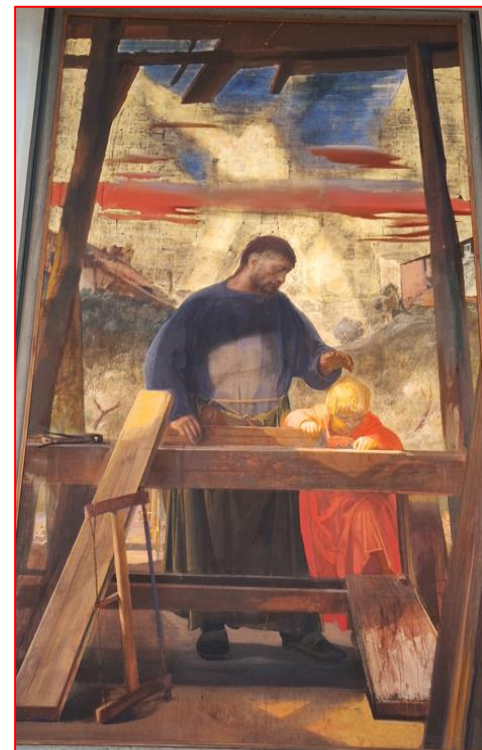
**Donatello, 1465: Resurrection Pulpit: Resurrection; Martyrdom of St. Lawrence.**



**Bronzino, 1569: Martyrdom of St. Lawrence:** Mannerist Fresco: Seated River God; Bronzino's Self-portrait with his master and his pupil.

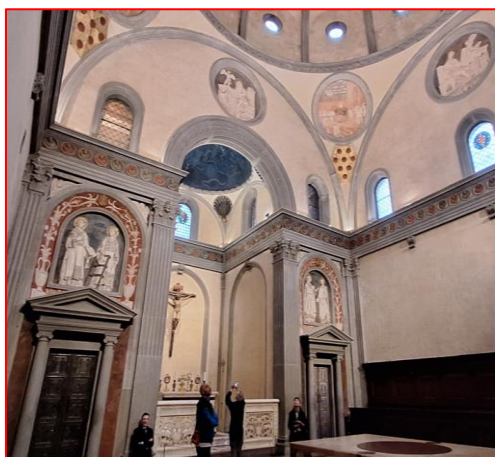


"Tabernacle", 1461.



**1425, Brunelleschi's Old Sacristy – Medici:** Brunelleschi introduced Renaissance mathematical harmony into architecture: geometric spaces, classical proportions, and symmetry that conveyed order, stability, and humanism. A new architectural language that placed man and reason at the center—founding Florentine Renaissance ideals.

**1525, Michelangelo's New Sacristy – Medici Tombs**  
 The sacristy was built to house the tombs of the Medici family. Michelangelo expressed an existential struggle within it: the sculpted figures of Dawn, Dusk, Night, and Day embody inner tension, the passage of time, and anxiety about death.  
 Brunelleschi's harmony here gives way to the image of a body stretched across time—a reflection of the fears, doubts, and existential questions that lay at the heart of the Reformation era.



**Brunelleschi, 1422.**



**Donatello, 1442: Pendentive: St John raise Drusiana**



**Interior dome ceiling**



**Donatello, 1428: John the evangelist.**



**Umbrella dome: Stone radial ribs.**



**Madonna and child group.**



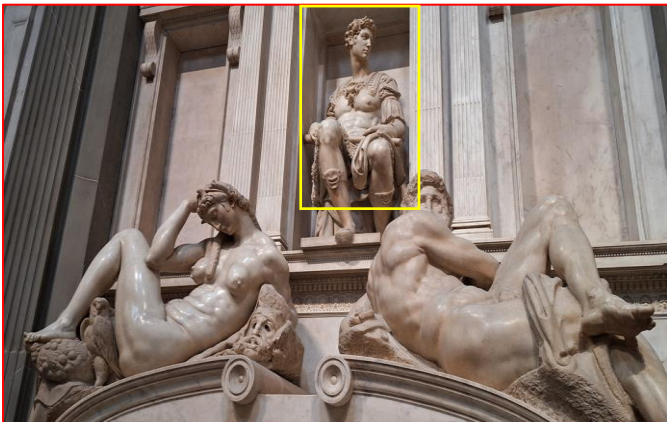
**1525, Baldassare covering of the lantern**



**Donatello, 1442: Bronze door of the Martyrs.**



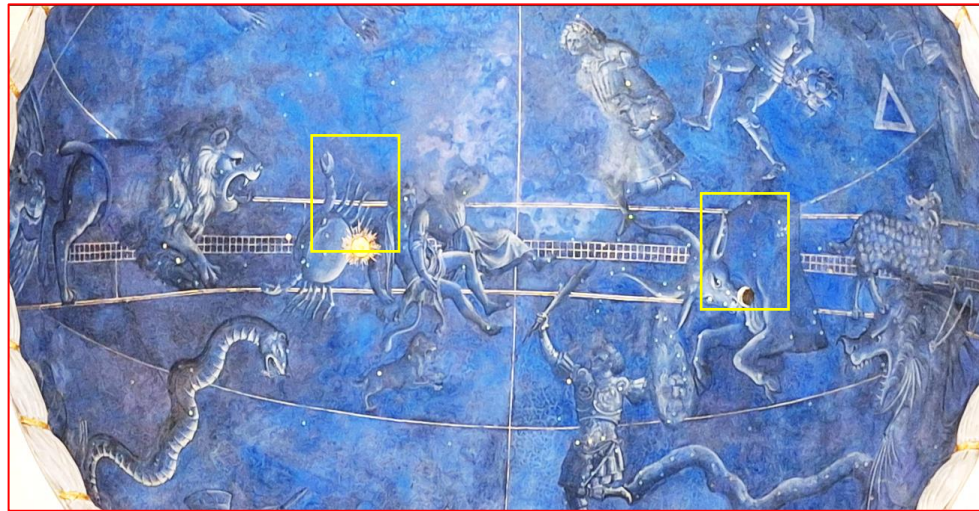
**Donatello, 1442: Lunettes Relief- Stephen and Lawrence**



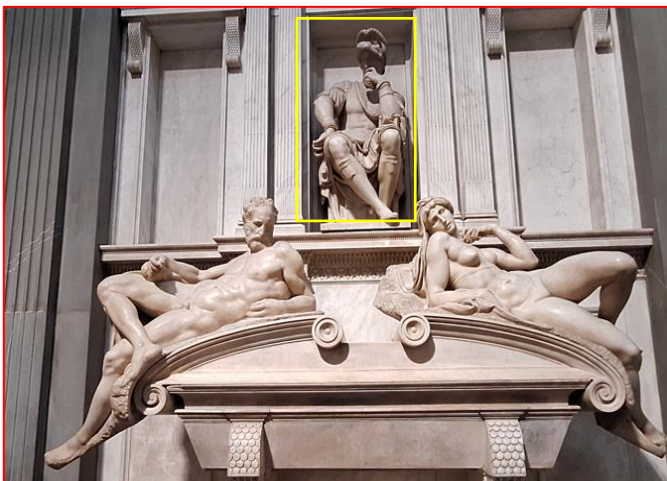
**1525: Giuliano Medici tomb: allegorical figures of "day and night".**



**Giuliano**



**Arrigo (Pesello), 1442: Astrological dome.** Commissioned by Cosimo Medici. Golden moon and sun; enables defining the Date: July 4<sup>th</sup>-- arrival of René of Anjou.  
*Similar Fresco: Pazzi Chapel.*



**1525: Lorenzo Medici tomb: allegorical figures of Dawn and Dusk.**



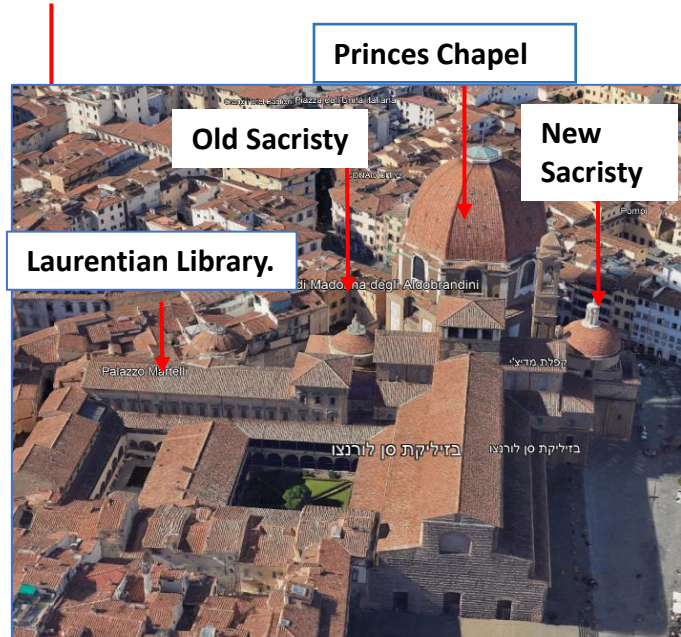
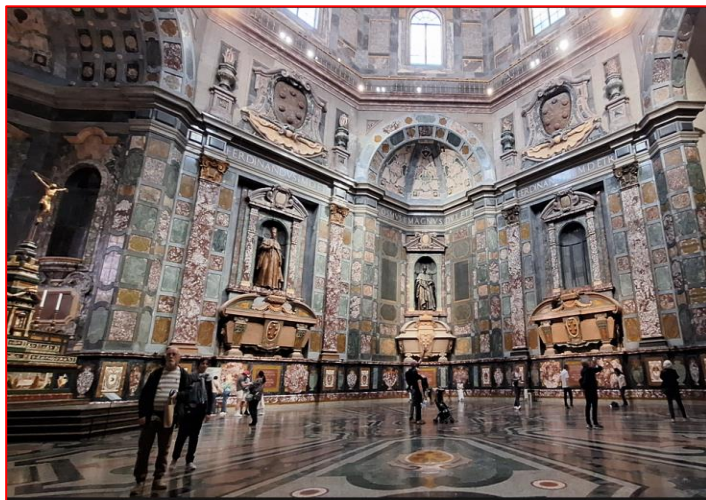
**Lorenzo**



**Princes Chapel**

**1604–1737, Cappella dei Principi**

A dynastic mausoleum and spectacle of Medici power, clad in rare marbles and crowned with a vast dome. The chapel turned San Lorenzo into a civic necropolis—glorifying rule through art, space, and grandeur. Unlike Michelangelo’s spiritual tension, the message here is unambiguous: divine right, dynastic continuity, and human dominance.

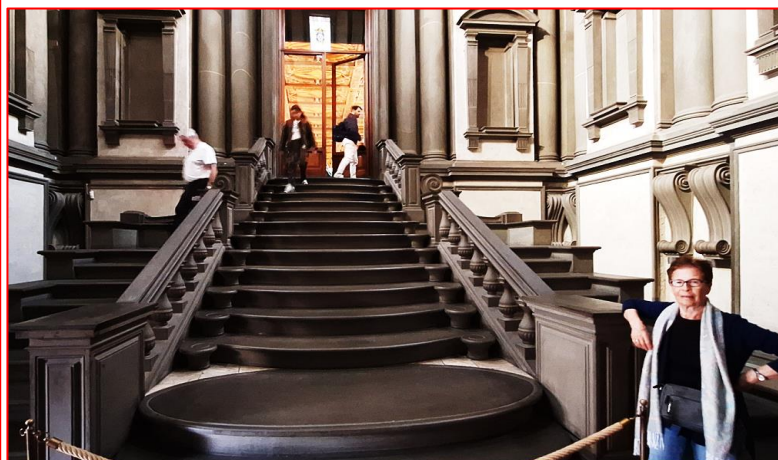


**Laurentian (San Lorenzo’s) Library**

**Michelangelo Laurentian Library**, commissioned in 1523: known for its mannerist style dramatic vestibule (entrance room): columns that don’t support and stair flowing like frozen lava.



Laurentian Library.



Reading room with Medici’s collection of books.

Michelangelo’s Staircase

Michelangelo’s vestibule and Staircase.

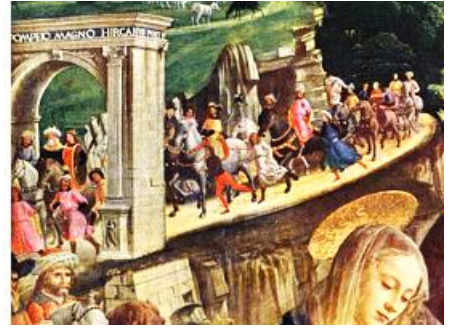
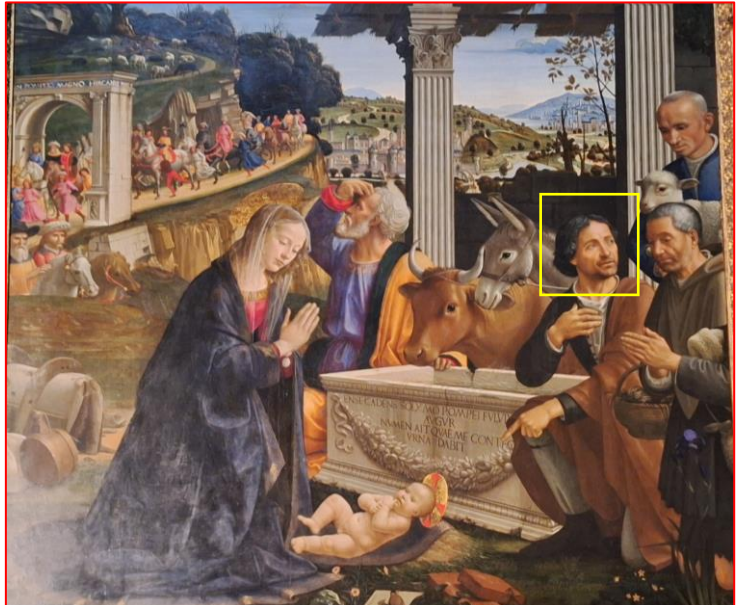


# Santa Trinita Church (2)

Santa Trinita was built by the Vallombrosans, 11<sup>th</sup> Century religious order struggling against the “Simony” of Florence’s Bishop, of selling churches offices for profit. **This church became a showcase for noble patronage.**

## Sassetti chapel

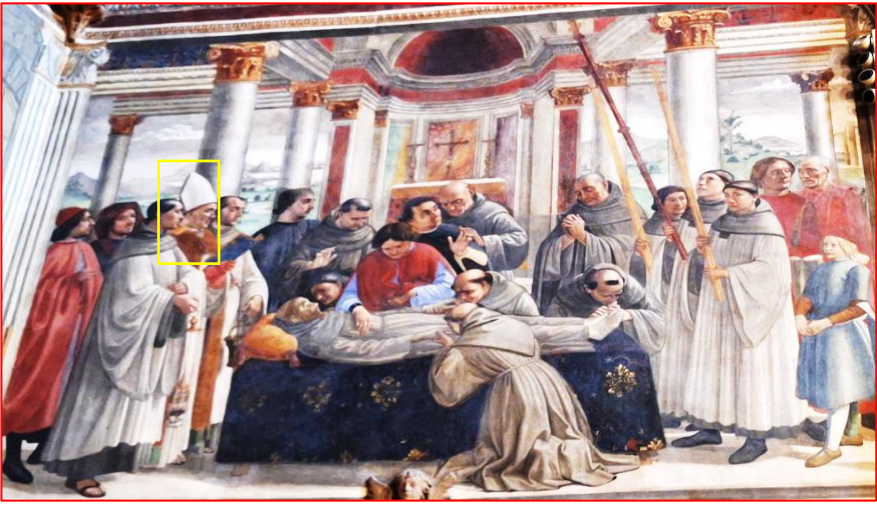
Sassetti chapel, frescoed by Domenico Ghirlandaio in 1483, shows the life of St. Francis in 6 scenes with portraits of real citizens, buildings and the Medici merging sacred and civic pride. Sassetta, the Donnor, was a banker, representative of the Medici family in Genoa.



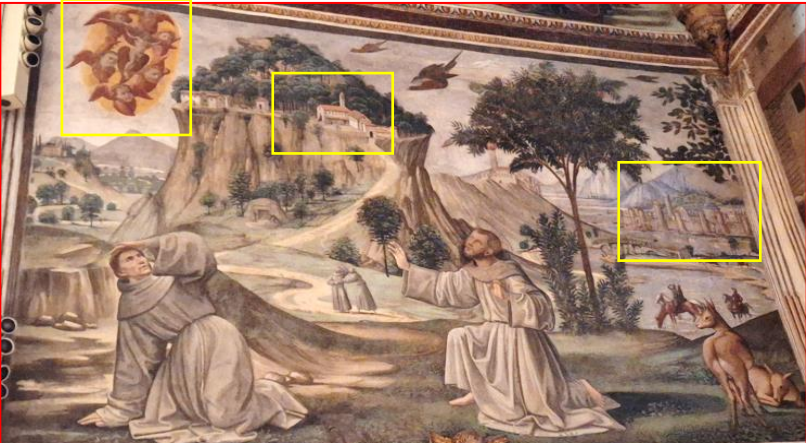
**Main Altar: Ghirlandaio, 1482: “Adoration of Shepherds”** Framed: painter portrait.  
**Holy Trinity Bridge: World’s Oldest elliptic arch bridge. 1958:** Rebuilt with original stones after being demolished in WWII.



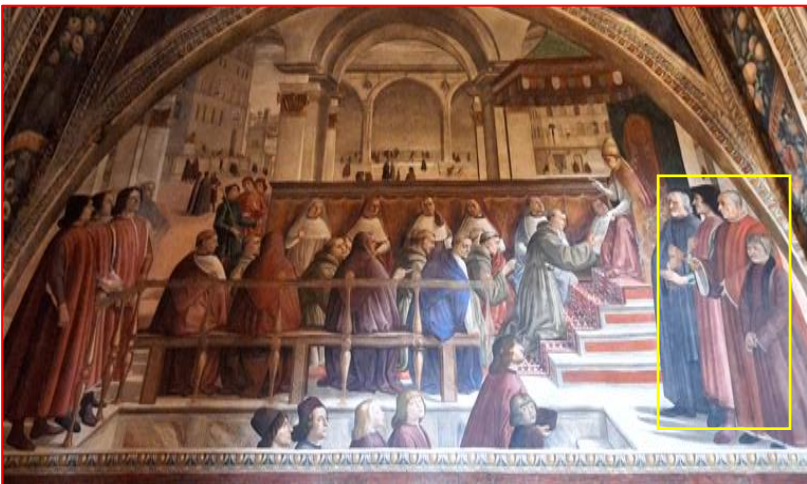
1. **“Renunciation of Worldly Goods”** Of St. Francis: Laying down clothes; churchman takes him.



4. **“Death of St Francis”:** First time: Glasses on the Cardinal's nose.



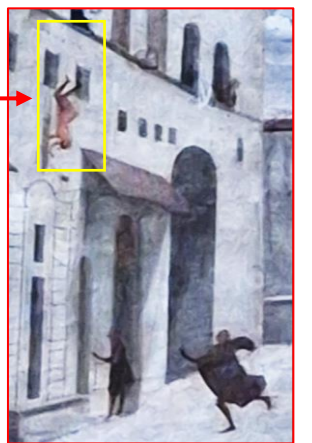
2. **“Stigmata of St Francis”:** Receiving the divine sign from Christ in Verna; Pisa Tower and Duomo.



5. **“Confirmation of the Rule” in 1223:** Francis Receiving the Rule from Pope Honorius III in Lateran Church, Rome. The scene include (260 years gap..) contemporary figures: (right) Lorenzo de Medici and Sassetti with son.



3. **“Trial by Fire before the Sultan”:** To prove his faith, St Francis is walking barefoot through fire.



6. **“Resurrection of the Boy”:** In 1478 Sassetti’ boy fell out the Palazzo Spini’s window- following a red ballon. Francis resurrect the boy.

### The Bartolini Salimbeni Chapel

This chapel features a rare cycle of International Gothic frescoes by Lorenzo Monaco (1420s), narrating the Virgin's life with lyrical grace and clarity. Commissioned by the powerful Bartolini Salimbeni family—wealthy merchants based across the piazza—it preserves its original altarpiece and railings, offering a glimpse into pre-Renaissance artistic vision and private devotion.

*\*International Gothic* combines elegant lines and vivid color—bridging medieval spirituality with emerging Renaissance sensibility.



1420, Lorenzo Monaco: "Annunciation". One of few surviving Gothic Frescoes in Italy: moment of transition between Gothic and Renaissance styles. **Bartolini Salimbeni Chapel**



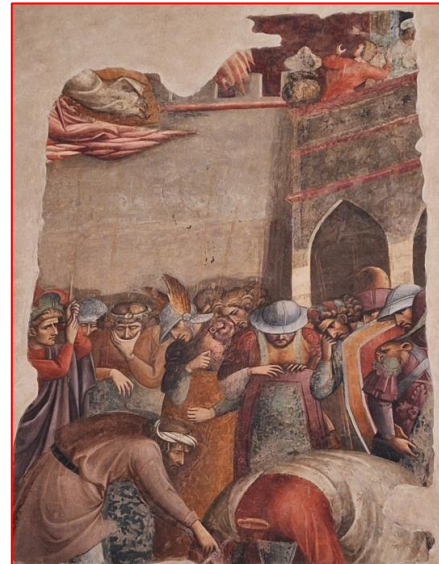
1430, Bicci di Lorenzo: Madonna and Saints. **Cialli Chapel**



Arezzo Spinello: Mystical Marriage of Saint Catherine. **Cialli Chapel**



1434, Da Ponte and di Giovanni: flaying of St. Bartholomew. **Scali Chapel**



1434, Giovanni da Ponte and Smeraldo di Giovanni: Beheading of St. Bartholomew. **Scali Chapel**



Neri di Bicci: Annunciation **Compagni Chapel**



1568, Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio: St. Jerom (and the lion) **Bombeni Chapel**



1570, Michele Tosini: Annunciation **Bombeni Chapel**



1593, Passignano: Louis IX of France adores the arm of St. Gualberto. **Chapel of the relics of San Giovanni Gualberto**



1609, Gamberucci: funeral of Saint Alexis. **Strozzi Chapel**



1609, Pompeo caccini: martyrdom of saint lucia. **Strozzi Chapel**

Founded in 1250 as the Augustinian church of Florence, it was rebuilt from 1444 based on Brunelleschi's design. His plan embodied Renaissance principles: clarity, symmetry, and precise proportions—reflecting the belief that mathematical beauty expresses divine truth. The church marks a shift from the mysterious Gothic style to a new spatial vision, where architecture became a vehicle for reason, order, and human faith.



**Brunelleschi, 1435:** 38 Niche chapels.



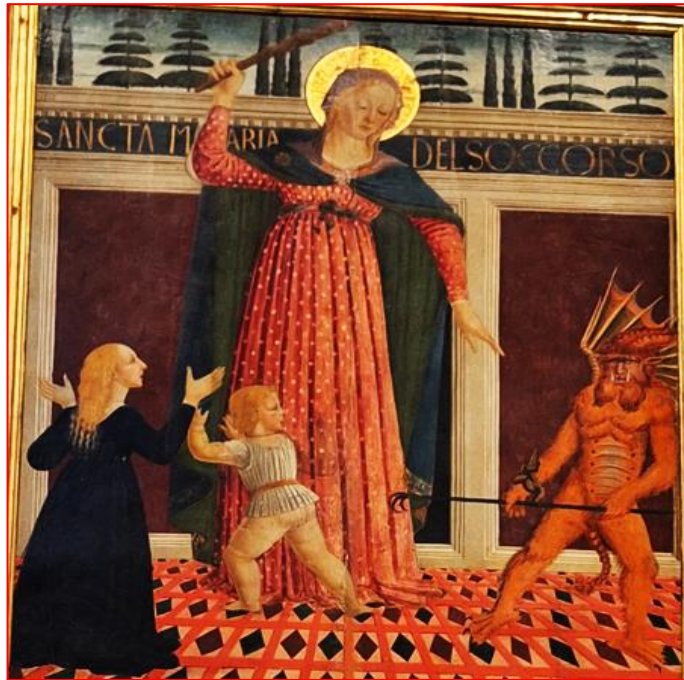
**1483, Andrea Del Verrocchio:** "St. Monica Establishes the Rule of Augustinian Nuns"



**1544, Foschi:** Visualizing of Immaculate dispute: Was Mary conceived without the "original Sin". **Torrigiani Chapel**



**1485, Botticelli:** Mary on the throne prepares to breastfeed Jesus with John the Baptist and John the Evangelist.



**Zanobi, 1485:** "Madonna del Soccorso": Mary thrashes the devil out of a child. Mother of the child kneeling.



**Filippino Lippi, 1488:** "Madonna and Child Saints".



**Lorenzo di Credi, 1480:** "Virgin with child, st Matthew and st Jerome".



**Michelangelo, 1492:** Crucifix given in exchange of his studies of the bodies who came from a hospital. **Sacristy.**



Alessandro Allori, 1577: "Christ and the Adulteress"



**Alessandro Allori, 1574:** **Martyrdom of Ten Thousand Christians**— Ordered by Emperor Hadrian: Nass execution in dramatic Mannerist style: muscular figures, chaos, and divine vision turn violence into a testimony of faith



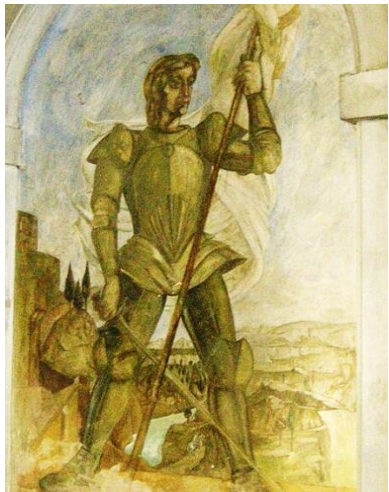
**Donzello, 1498:** "Annunciation".

Cloister and Refectory

**The Cloister and Refectory – Santo Spirito**  
 This cloister served as Florence’s first unofficial medical school. Within its quiet walls, Michelangelo studied human anatomy and dissected cadavers in the spirit of scientific curiosity. It reflects key Renaissance ideals: a sacred space transformed into a site of both spiritual contemplation and empirical discovery. The merging of faith and reason embodies the humanist view that studying the human body was not defiance of God—but a path to truth.



1597, Bernardino Poccetti: Three suppers: Wedding of Cana; Last Supper and Supper at Emmaus. Cloister Refectory.



Knight. Cloister entrance



1597, Bernardino Poccetti: Baptism of Saint Dionysius. Cloister Refectory.



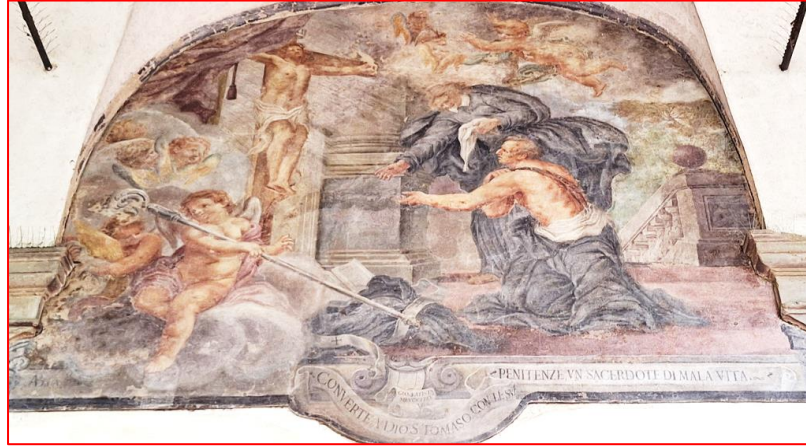
1597, Bernardino Poccetti: Baptism of Saint Augustine. Cloister Refectory.



Cloister of the dead



large cloister of the Ammannati



Cosimo Ulivelli: Cloister of the dead, lunette

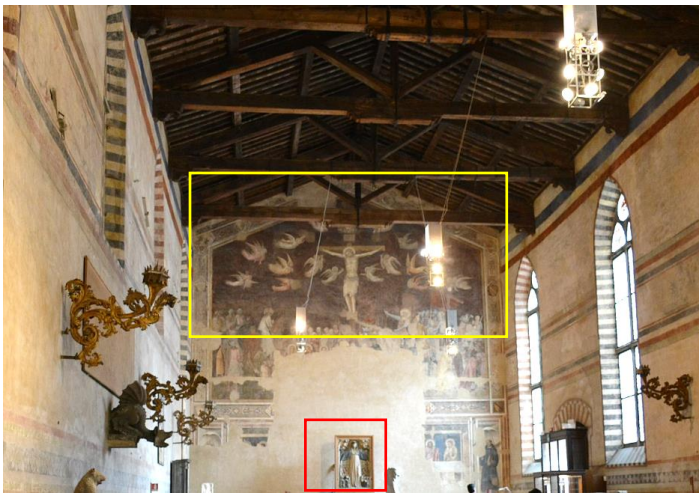
Cenacolo Gothic Refectory

**The Refectory:** the only surviving Gothic wing of the ancient Augustine convent built in 1350. Brunelleschi’s intention to rebuild the refectory was refused by the Monks.

\*Entrance on the left side of the Churches' façade.

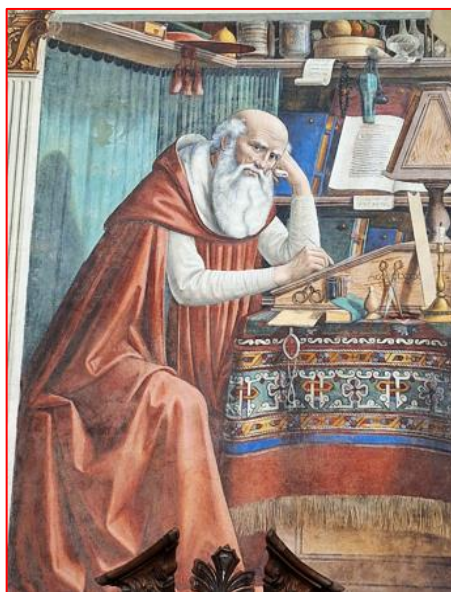


1354, Refectory: Andrea Orcagna: Last supper and Crucifixion

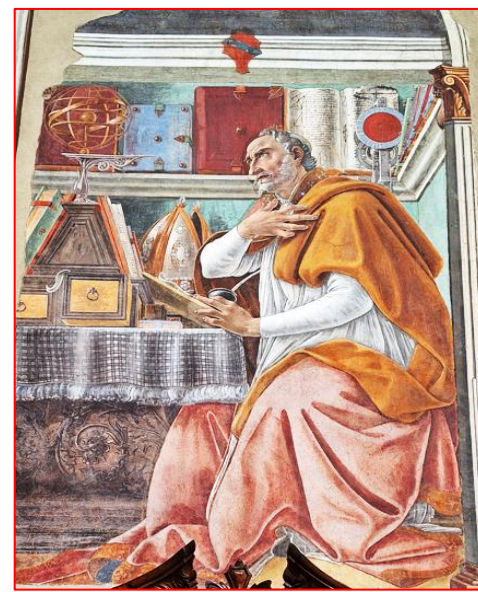


Francis of Assisi and st. Clare

Founded in 1250 by the Umiliati—a lay Catholic order specializing in textile work and integrated into Florence’s economy. It includes a refectory with a *Last Supper* fresco from 1480, and Botticelli’s *St. Augustine* from the same year is displayed inside the church. In 1571, the site passed to the Franciscan Order. The Vespucci Chapel, associated with the influential merchant family, connects spiritual devotion to Florence’s maritime expansion—Amerigo Vespucci, the explorer after whom America is named, is buried here. Religious institutions thus also served as a form of cultural investment for merchant families seeking to commemorate their faith, prestige, and legacy.



1480, Ghirlandaio: "St Jerome in his Study". Church



1480, Botticelli: "Saint Augustine in his study".



Botticelli Tomb: 1510



Amerigo Vespucci: 1512.



Ghirlandaio, 1472 : "Pietà". "Madonna Della Misericordia", protecting members of the Vespucci family, Young Amerigo under the Madonna's right arm. Vespucci chapel.



1769: Giuseppe Benucci , :Vertigo-inducing trompe l'oeil architectural,



Battista Lorenzi (Altar): pulpit



1310 ,Giotto: Christ Mary and John. Large traveling cross.



1310, Giotto: "Ognissanti Madonna". Revolutionary; 3D painting; human. In the Offizi now.



1620, Nicodemo Ferrucci: Stigmatisation of Saint Francis by



1369, "Annunciation with the patron Pietro Mazza".



"Resurrection and Ascension"

The refectory was a communal dining hall, and the *Last Supper* fresco linked monastic meals with Christ's — blending daily life with sacred meaning.

Painted during the Counter-Reformation, the **cloister frescoes** defended Catholic ideals: miracles, saintly grace, and Franciscan compassion.

Funded by the Vespucci family, they reflect the union of faith, civic pride, and family prestige.



1480, **Domenico Ghirlandaio**, "Last Supper": Cloister's Refectory: Linear Perspective; botanical accuracy; domestic realism- Clear water jugs; Embroidered with Dragons. Judas: on a lower stool. **Cloister refectory.** (\*Similar Fresco: in San Marco, Florence)



1615, **Jacopo Ligozzi**, Saint Francis Abducted to Heaven by a Chariot of Fire. **Cloister.**



1615, **Jacopo Ligozzi**, Pope Innocent III approves the Franciscan Rule. **Cloister.**



1620, **Nicodemo Ferrucci**: Saint Francis Heals a Flock from the Plague, **Cloister.**



1619, **Ulisse Ciocchi**: Saint Francis Converts Water into Wine. **Cloister**



1615, **Jacopo Ligozzi**, the "Chapter of mats"- \*General assembly of Franciscans sitting on Mats in 1221- sign of Poverty.



1620, **Nicodemo Ferrucci**: Meeting of Francis, Dominic and Carmelite Angel at Lateran church. **Cloister.**

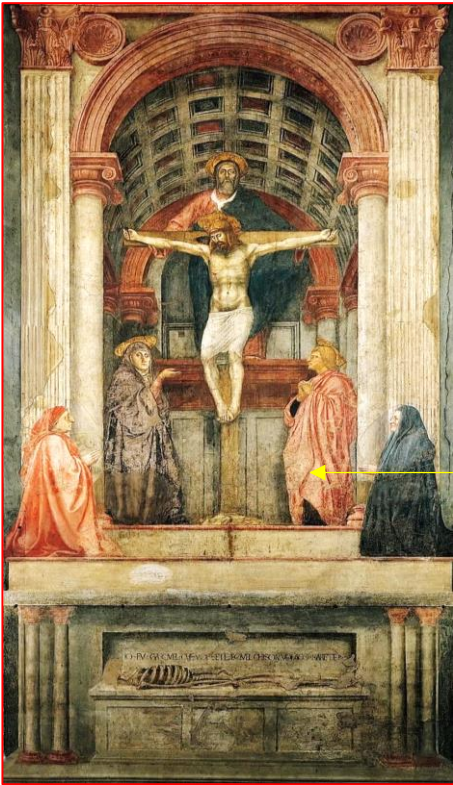
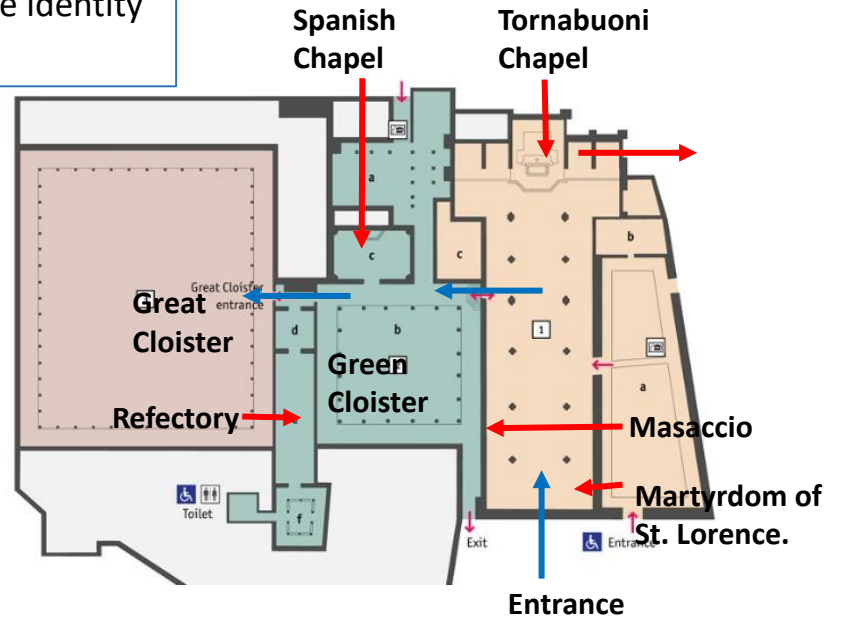


1615, **Jacopo Ligozzi**: Saint Francis Gives His Cloak.



1620, **Nicodemo Ferrucci**: Death of Saint Francis. **Cloister.**

Santa Maria Novella presents a unique blend of architectural innovation, clear theological messaging, and civic patronage. Alberti's 1470 façade was the first in Florence to articulate Renaissance ideals of geometric harmony while preserving its Gothic base — a model for reworking the past through design. Inside, the Dominicans developed a methodical system of visual theology: art served doctrine, and frescoes became tools for teaching. Masaccio, Ghirlandaio, and others created accessible visions of sin, redemption, and resurrection. Florentine families like the Strozzi, Tornabuoni, and Rucellai turned their chapels into spaces of elite memory and political assertion. The church became a site where faith, education, and social prestige shaped the identity of Renaissance Florence.



**Masaccio, 1428: Holy Trinity:** First fresco to apply true linear perspective, using mathematical perspective. vanishing point at Christ's feet. Faith becomes spatial and measurable: a fusion of theology, math, and Roman form. God holds Christ; Mary aged; donors at sides.



Neri di Bicci, annunciation of saint remigio.



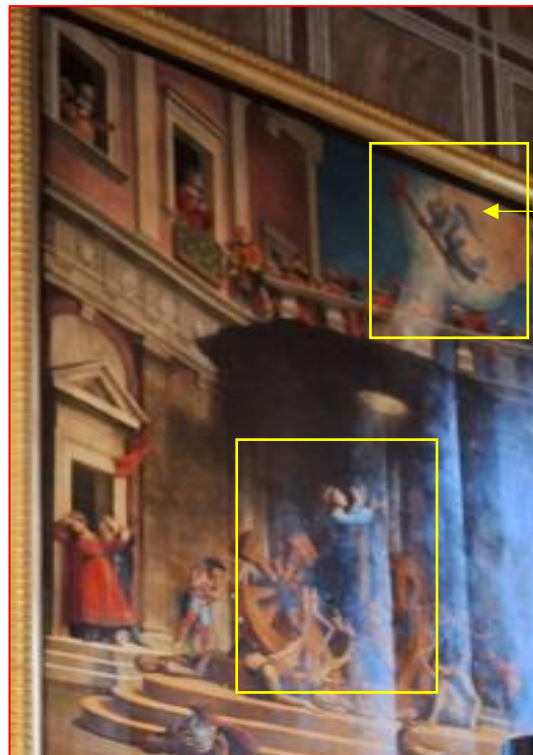
1415, Brunelleschi: Crucifix. Gondi Chapel.



Giotto, 1290: "Crucifix": move towards naturalism.



1573, Girolamo Macchietti: Martyrdom of St. Lorence.

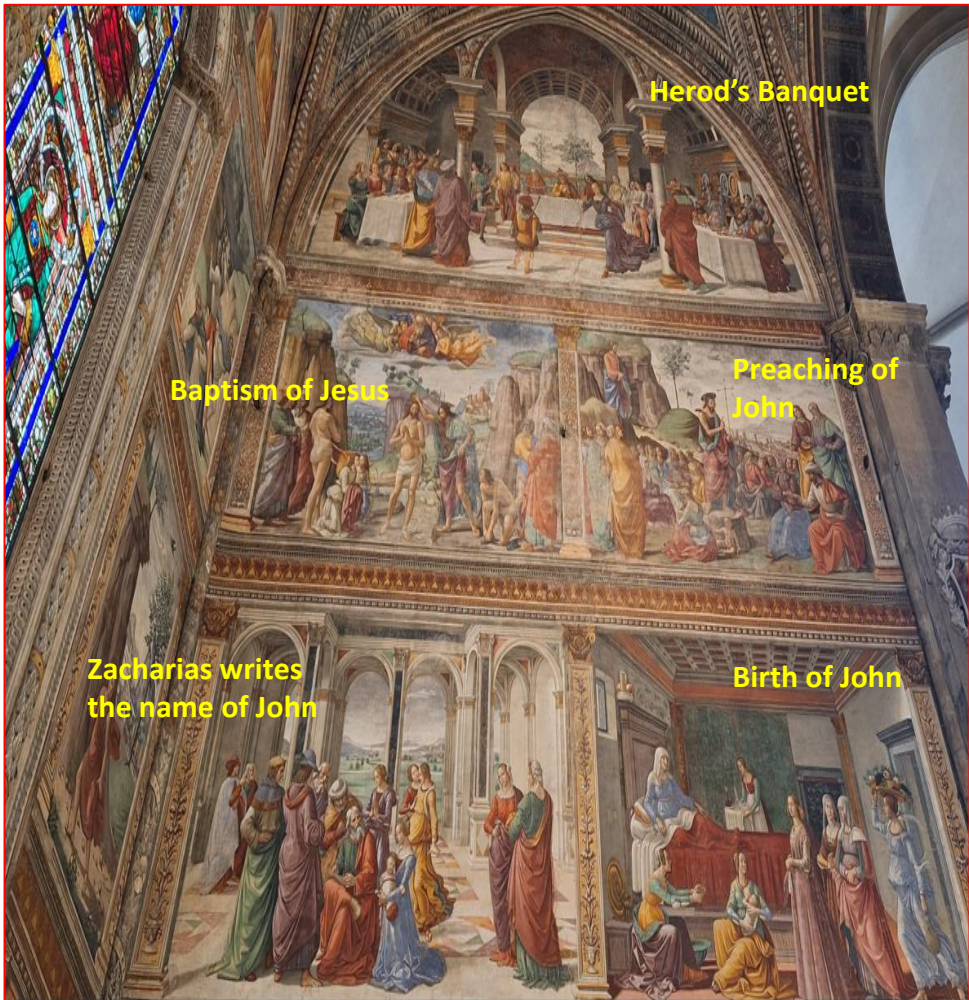
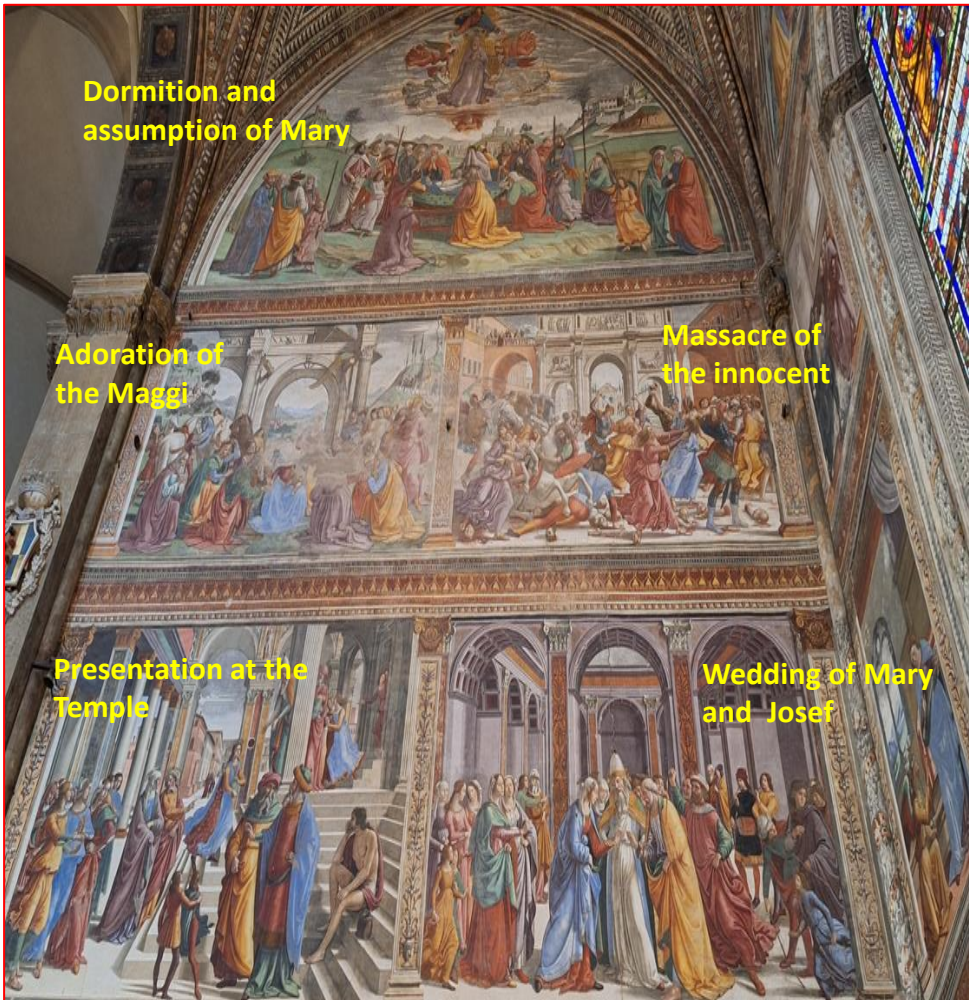


1530, Giuliano Bugiardini : Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria.



Between 1486–1490, Ghirlandaio painted scenes from the lives of John the Baptist and the Virgin, adding portraits of contemporary Florentines. Their presence was not marginal — they stand at the forefront of the scene, dressed in modern attire, nearly equal to the holy figures.

Tornabuoni Chapel



Filippo Strozzi Chapel

Between 1489-1502, Filippino Lipi painted stories of St. Philip and St. John.

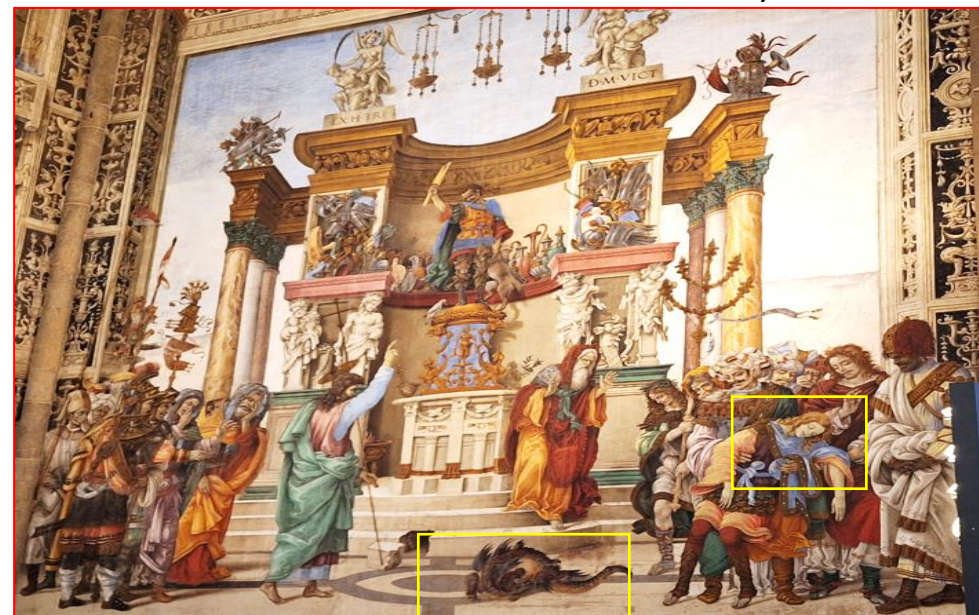
Banned with his family from the city in 1434 by the Medici, Filippo Strozzi returned to Florence from exile in 1466 with foreign contacts and money: Built a palace and purchased the Chapel in Novella church.



**Crucifixion of St. Philip** In Hierapolis, Asia Minor, after converting many to Christianity. A martyr's death seals his mission.



**Torture of St. Philip:** Domitian watches. A soldier recoils from fire; Philip remains untouched.

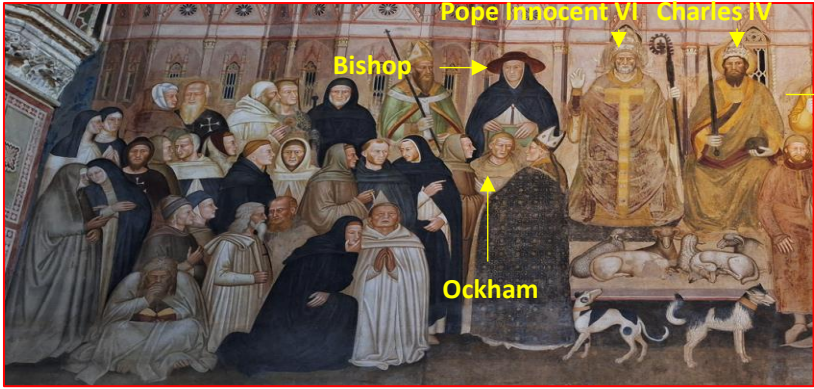
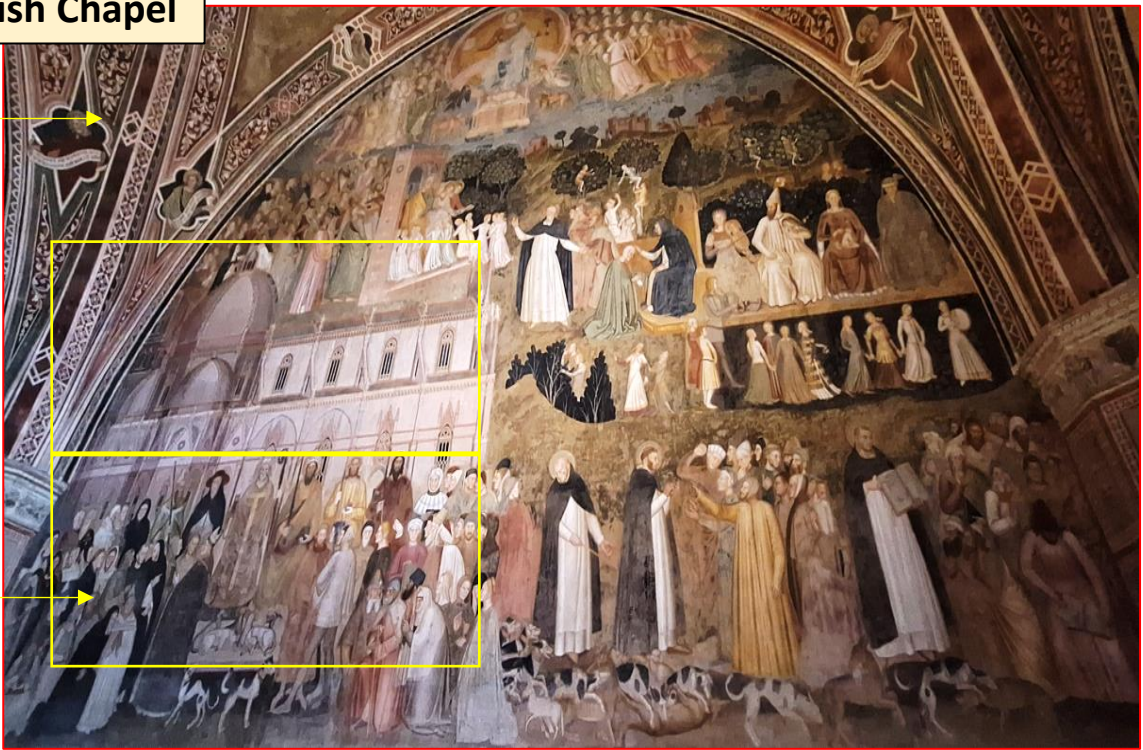


**Apostle Philip driving the Dragon from the Temple of Hierapolis.** A direct clash between Christian faith and pagan worship — symbolized by Mars's statue and the dragon. Inset: Dragon and poisoned youth



**“St John Resuscitating Drusiana”:** Banished to Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation. The miracle evokes fear, doubt, and awe — a human response to the supernatural.

Located in the Green Cloister, this chapel was built in 1350 as the Dominican chapter house. Frescoed by Andrea Bonaiuto in 1365-68, just after the 1348 plague, it reasserted Church authority and the Dominicans' role in guiding souls to salvation. Named the Spanish Chapel in 1566, after it became a worship site for Florence's Spanish community. The frescoes depict Dominican teaching, heresy trials, and celestial reward.



**Hierarchic order:** Top high: Pope; Left: Emperor; Right: Bishop. Second row: Left: friars; Right: laymen, noblemen and knights, merchant, scholar, finally women.

**1366, Andrea di Bonaiuto:** "Way of Salvation: Allegory of the Active and Triumphant of the Dominican". Bottom right: Thomas Aquinas debating with Heretics. Fiore cathedral of first architect, Arnolfo di Cambio before Brunelleschi, can be seen. **Painting the Duomo's Dome as if it was there.**



"Descent to Hell".



Thief twisted; Soldiers "Bearing the Cross". confront people.



Andrea di **Bonaiuto, 1365:** "Bearing the Cross, Crucifixion and Descent of Christ to Hell to release the souls of the righteous who died before."



Moses with 10 commandments



Heretics: **Sebelius, Averroes, and Arius** at the feet of **Thomas Aquinas**.



**Andrea di Bonaiuto,** "Triumph of Thomas Aquinas and Allegory of the Sciences". The Church celebrates Christian reason as supreme uniting philosophy, theology, and the arts against heresy.

**Green Cloister:** Paolo Uccello painted the Stories from Genesis in green and reddish colours; and Creation stories. Under restoration (shown in Images).

**Great Cloister:** Frescoes of the life of St. Dominico and Dominicans saints.

**Refectory:** 14<sup>th</sup> Century currently houses restored Uccello Frescoes during conservation



1560, Plautilla Nelli: last supper. **Refectory**

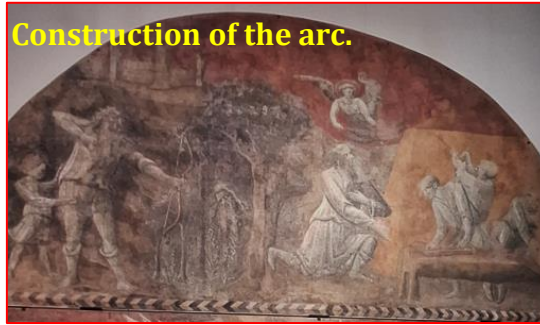
**Universal Flood**



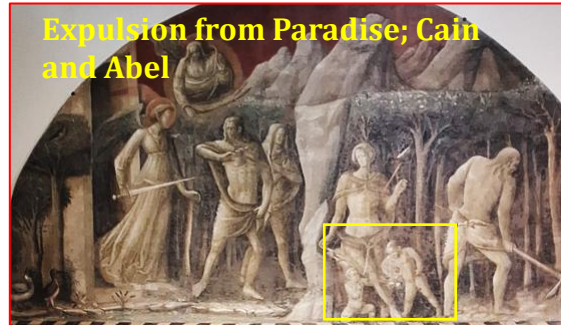
**Temptation**



**Construction of the arc.**



**Expulsion from Paradise; Cain and Abel**



1355, Agnolo Gaddi workshop: "Madonna and Saints". **Refectory.**

1425, Paolo Uccello: Old Testament fresco cycle on Genesis.  
**Museum of Green Cloister in the Refectory.**



**Abraham and Lot**



**Isaac and Ishmael**

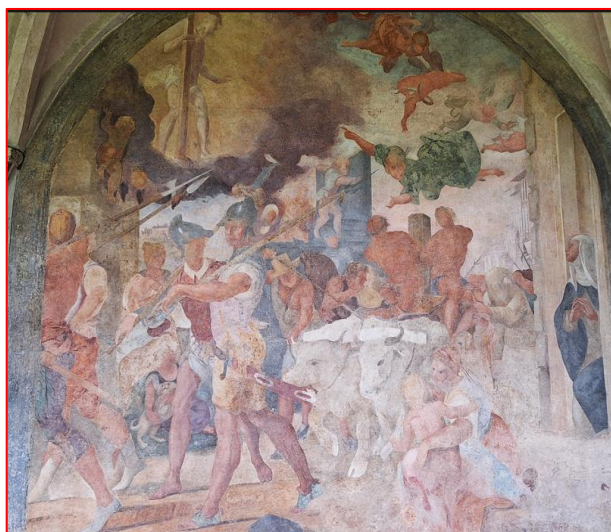
1425, Paolo Uccello: Stories of Abraham.  
**Museum of Green Cloister in the Refectory.**



1360-1367, Andrea Orcagna: Left- Nativity and right- Crucifixion with disciples. **Chapel of Annunciation: Green Cloister.**



1584, Santi di Tito: St. Dominico Saving 40 shipwreck survivors. **Great Cloister.**



1584, Giovanni Battista Paggi: St. Caterina of Siena prays for condemned to death.

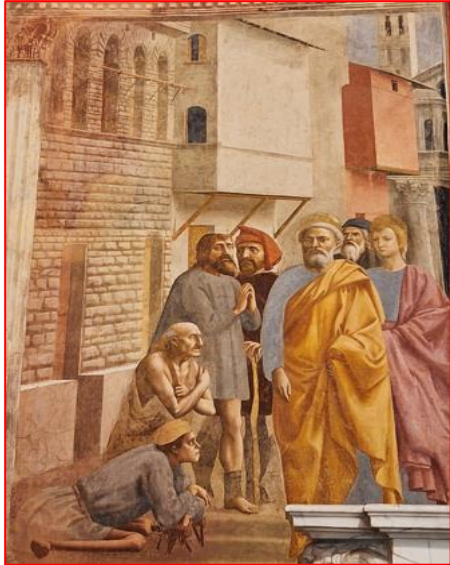


1581, Aessandro Allori: transport of the body of Christ. **Great Cloister**

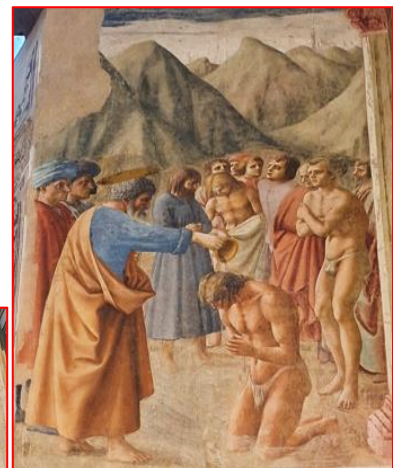


# Carmine Church- Brancacci Chapel

**A Turning Point in Renaissance Art**  
 The Brancacci Chapel, within the 13th-century Carmine Church, was redesigned in 1420 by merchant Felice Brancacci. Its frescoes—painted by Masaccio and Masolino—depict the life of St. Peter and mark a revolution in Western art. The chapel blends sacred narrative with human reality: expressive faces, architectural depth, and directional light. Inspired by Carmelite tradition and linked to the prophet Elijah, it became a model for Renaissance masters—from Michelangelo to Raphael.



**Massacio, 1425: "St Peter Healing the Sick with His Shadow"**.



**1427: "Neophytes' Baptism"**.



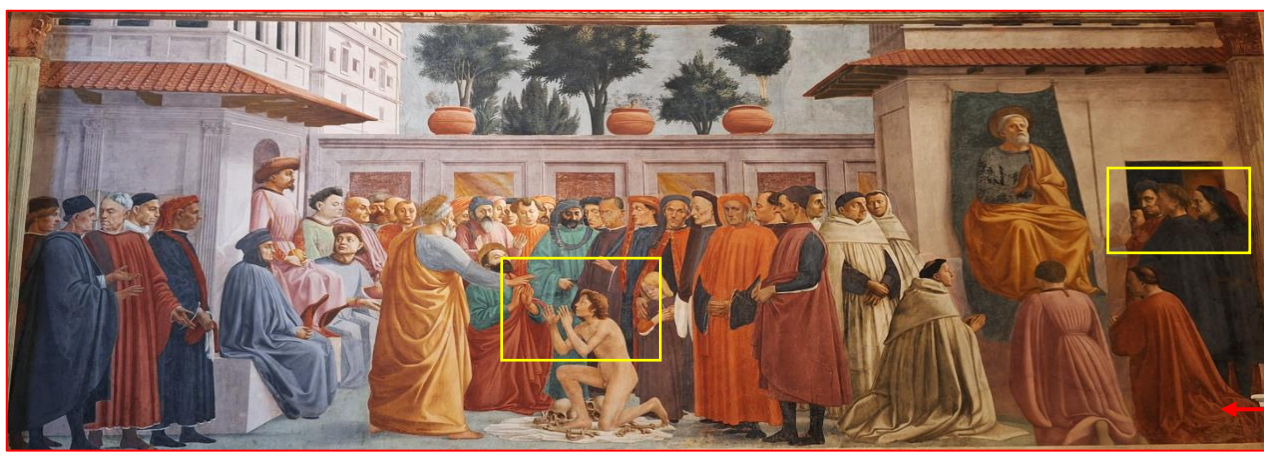
**Masaccio, 1425: Anania's death (refused to donate).**



**1427: Healing of the cripple and raising of Tabitha.**



**Masolino, 1425, Temptation**



**Masaccio, 1420, "Raising of the Son of Theophilus" and "St Peter Enthroned"**



**Masaccio, 1427: "Tribute Money".**



**Masaccio Masolino Masolino Brunelleschi**



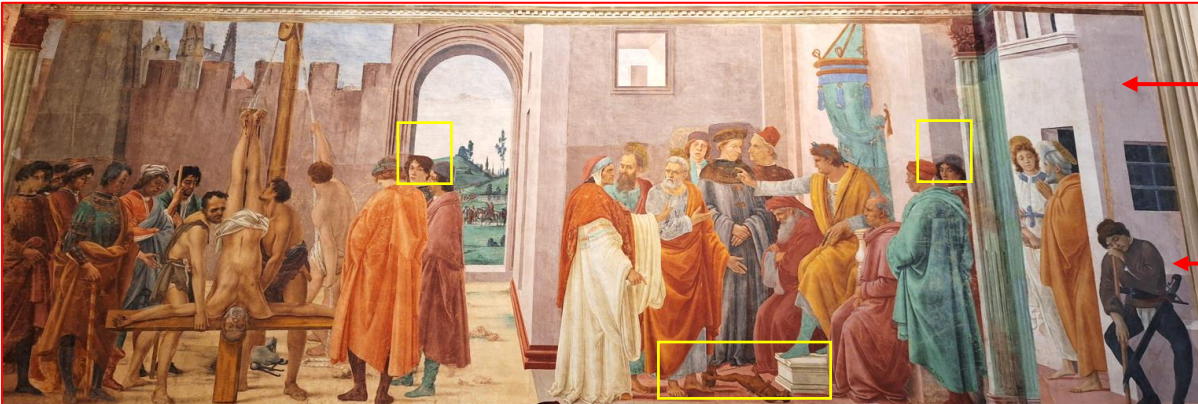
**Fish for the tribute**



**Masaccio**



**Masolino, 1425, Expulsion**



**Filippino Lippi, "St. Peter Disputation with Simon Magus" in front of Niro.**



**Botticelli Filippino Lippi**



**Pagan idol lying at Niro's feet.**

**St Peter Freed From prison**