Friars in the City:
Mendicant Architecture and Pious Practice in Medieval Verona, c. 1220-c. 1375

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
Art, Art History, and Visual Studies in the Graduate School
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2010
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how the combination of pious practice, economic activity, and religious poverty shaped the architecture of the mendicants in medieval Verona. It also examines how the presence of the friars affected the city. By the thirteenth century, the populated centers of northern Italy were fertile grounds for heretical movements, religious skepticism, and anti-clerical attitudes. The mendicant orders developed as a response to the crisis of the medieval church in the city and provided a new concept of the religious vocation, one committed to voluntary poverty and the conversion of heretics. The most important representatives of the new orders were the Franciscans and Dominicans, who centered their religious mission in an urban context where the growth of commerce and a literate and numerate middle class required a new approach to pastoral care, one that directly addressed both doctrinal and social issues. The friars revolutionized traditional religious practice: they used exterior sites as extensions of liturgical space and their innovative approach to church architecture emphasized function and utility.

Existing studies on mendicant building have traditionally emphasized the formal characteristics of the monuments, examining churches in isolation, with little concern for context, use, and sequence of construction. This dissertation moves beyond this approach to consider the broader circumstances that frame the appearance of mendicant houses. It examines how the Franciscan church of S. Fermo Maggiore, the Dominican church of S. Anastasia, and their respective communities, responded to the dynamics of urban Verona. The study includes revised construction narratives and new dates for S. Fermo and S. Anastasia that emphasize the process of construction—how the friars approached their
building projects—and the role of lay patronage in the configuration of architectural space. As research reveals, the friars began to erect their conventual complexes before instigating construction or reconstruction of the churches themselves, and this sequence had significant implications for how the friars used the spaces in and around their convent for preaching and liturgical celebrations. They planned or reconfigured their architectural space to both appeal to and accommodate the lay public and their pious practices, including sermon attendance, burial, and the veneration of local saints. Modifications to the exterior spaces around the convents likewise indicate their liturgical importance. By investigating the specific interactions between the mendicants and the city of Verona, this dissertation explores how the architecture of the friars expressed aspects of the society in which they operated.
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Abbreviations

Archives

ASVr Archivio di Stato di Verona
ASVic Archivio di Stato di Vicenza
ASVen Archivio di Stato di Venezia

Frequently Cited Works

AFH Archivum Franciscanum Historicum.
AFP Archivum Fratrum Predicatorum
MF Miscellanea francescana


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A Note on Medieval Currency in Verona

Between the ninth and twelfth centuries, the mint in Verona was the most important in northern Italy, circulating money through the Veneto, Trentino, and Friuli regions. In the later middle ages, the “monopoly” of the Veronese mint gave way to more localized production, and diverse currencies emerged. Even the coinage and monetary systems of nearby cities such as Venice, Verona, and Padua varied somewhat; for example, the lira used in Verona and Vicenza was slightly more valuable than that used by the Venetians in the fourteenth century (4 Venetian lire = 3 Veronese lire).

Although the subject of coinage and exchange is vast and well beyond the scope of this study, a basic conversion that is useful for the period of this study is as follows:

12 denari = 1 soldus

20 soldi = 1 libra (lira)

All sums cited in this study are those found in original records, and represent the local currency in the period.

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2 Ibid.
Introduction

By the thirteenth century, the rapidly growing medieval cities of northern Italy were fertile grounds for heretical movements, religious skepticism, and anti-clerical attitudes. The mendicant orders developed as a response to the crisis of the medieval church in the city and provided a new concept of the religious vocation, one committed to voluntary poverty and the conversion of heretics. The most important representatives of the new orders were the Franciscan and Dominican friars, who focused their religious mission on urban centers, where the growth of commerce and a literate and numerate middle class required an approach to pastoral care that addressed both theological and moral issues.

Notwithstanding their austere start at the beginning of the century, by the 1250s, the friars had become important agents of contemporary visual culture. Their patrons, and to some extent they themselves, began commissioning painted and sculptural works and constructing grand churches, many of which appeared incongruous with their profession of voluntary poverty. Religious poverty and humility aside, their contributions to the realms of art and architecture were significant: many of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century convents of the Franciscans and the Dominicans, such as S. Maria Novella in Florence, S. Francisco in Assisi, and S. Antonio in Padua, are among the most celebrated and recognizable medieval monuments in Italy, if not Western Europe. Although the churches in central Italy—particularly in Tuscany and Umbria—are the best known and studied, other regions in the peninsula were also rich sites of mendicant artistic and architectural activity (figure 1). By the mid thirteenth century, the Veneto region in northern Italy had become an important center of art and architecture, most
notably for the Franciscan Order, which could claim Anthony of Padua (canonized in 1232) as their second saint after Francis (figure 2). In terms of architectural scale and ornamentation, only the mother church of S. Francesco in Assisi surpassed the pilgrimage church of S. Antonio in Padua, where the relics of Anthony remain enshrined (figures 3, 4).

Scholars have studied the decorative programs in and the architecture of many of the Franciscan and Dominican churches of the Veneto, but have yet to thoroughly examine the friars’ buildings within the original, historical context of the site and the fraternal community.¹ This study aims to contribute to this missing link in the literature on mendicant architecture by examining the Franciscan and Dominican churches in Verona within the framework of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century city. Here, the friars first settled in humble sites outside the city walls in the early 1220s, but by the mid-thirteenth century, their growing communities had acquired new locations in the urban center. With the help of the papacy, the Franciscans moved into the centrally located Benedictine monastery of S. Fermo in 1260, and the local bishop gave the Dominican community a piece of land nearby in the same year. By the end of the century, the Franciscans had begun extensive renovations to their Romanesque basilica, and the Dominicans had initiated work on their new church, S. Anastasia (figures 5, 6). Part of this study thus seeks to explore how the geographical shift from the periphery into the center of the city affected the friars’ religious mission and their thinking about issues

such as poverty and building.

Because the urban focus of the friars had critical implications for their building practices, a careful examination the social, economic, and historic context of the medieval city can further guide interpretations of Franciscan and Dominican sites. How did the combination of economic activities, pious practices, public preaching, and religious poverty of the mendicants shape the architecture of the medieval city? How did the new type of “architectural thinking” of the mendicants, which emphasized function and utility, transform the urban landscape of medieval Verona and alter the course of religious architecture in the Veneto region? What, in turn, defined the architectural choices of the friars?

In Verona, there was clear and enthusiastic support of the friars by the laity, and this relationship affected both the design of the Franciscan and Dominican convents as well as the sequence and chronology of construction. As I will show, these convents were not only built in part by the laity through their donations, they were also built for the laity: architectural space was specifically planned or reconfigured to both appeal to and accommodate the lay public and their pious practices, including but not limited to, sermon attendance, burial, and cult veneration. By investigating the specific interactions between the mendicant and lay communities of Verona and the physical fabric of the Franciscan and Dominican convents, this dissertation explores how the architecture of the friars expressed various aspects of the local societies in which they operated.

**The Friars and Architecture**

Serious scholarly interest in the artistic contributions of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders began with Henri Thode’s *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der
Kunst der Renaissance in Italien, published over a century ago.\(^2\) In his book, Thode praised Francis as a catalyst for important developments in visual culture, arguing that the teachings and sermons of the saint emphasized a personal relationship with a suffering Christ. According to Thode, this empathetic focus inspired contemporary artists to depict the human aspects of Christ in their artworks for the first time.\(^3\) Significantly, Thode observed that the mendicant orders also provided new and unique opportunities for patronage of the arts. He remarked on the reciprocal relationship between the spread of the Franciscan mission and the production of art, noting that as the number of brethren grew, they required more churches and convents, projects that were often undertaken by the so-called middle class.\(^4\)

Since Thode’s study, scholars have published numerous books and articles on various aspects of the mendicant orders and visual arts. Despite being the main and most visible vehicles for expressing Franciscan and Dominican religiosity, architecture figures as the specific subject of surprisingly few studies, and these works are primarily focused on formalist issues. Literature on mendicant architecture has largely ignored the urban contexts of these churches, failing to consider them within the larger framework of the original conventual complex or site.

What exactly is “mendicant” architecture? Romanini first noted the use of the idiom “mendicant” in literature to refer to a genre of architecture without defining


\(^3\) Thode, Francesco d’Assisi, 11.

\(^4\) Ibid., 62.
precisely what characterizes this type of building.\textsuperscript{5} Indeed, there are no universal, qualifiable, stylistic determinations that distinguish the buildings of the mendicant orders. Instead, as this study will show, the architecture of the friars was highly individualized and often varied according to the respective order, region, and the specific circumstances of the local site. Therefore, in this dissertation, I use the term “mendicant architecture” to refer to the buildings of the mendicant orders—although those of the Franciscans and the Dominicans are the focus of this text—without any connotations of cohesion or unity in plan, design, or decoration. It may, in fact, be useful to consider the concept of “mendicant architecture” as an allegory of the friars themselves rather than a template for design and decoration. While there does not seem to have been a universal prototype or model for mendicant buildings, there were nonetheless common trends and tendencies, and this text will explore some of these consistencies in the Veneto region.

Most scholars who address the architecture of the friars attempt to do so empirically, by tracing individual churches and their characteristics through an ascension of prototypes, plans, and dates, such as the studies by Krönig, Wagner-Rieger, Dellwing, and Schenkluhn.\textsuperscript{6} There is little concern with how these building came to be, including the related issues of patronage and funding, or how they were used: the formal elements


of the monument are studied in isolation. In my view, this methodological approach is problematic, not only for the absence of historical context, but also given the organic, additive nature of mendicant architecture, and the unique and often local circumstances that governed its production, such as labor and materials.\(^7\) These factors make mendicant architecture particularly resistant to analytical systemization as well as pose issues for dating. Bonelli was the first scholar to observe that many Franciscan churches are dated too early; more recently, Villetti expanded many of Bonelli’s observations on mendicant building, significantly noting that traditional means of dating these sites are ineffectual because of the episodic and additive nature that characterized their construction.\(^8\) Both Bonelli and Villetti also observed that construction of the conventual buildings did not normally occur at the same time as that of the church. As I will show, in Verona, the friars began to erect their conventual complexes before instigating construction or reconstruction of the churches themselves, and this sequence had significant implications for how the friars used the spaces in and around their convenst for preaching and liturgical celebrations.

Dellwing, Schenkluhn, Romanini, and Suitner have observed that the architecture of the mendicant orders often looks to that of the older monastic orders, above all, the Cistercians.\(^9\) They, along with others, have proposed that both the religious and

\(^7\) For a discussion on the additive nature of mendicant architecture, see C. Bruzelius “The Dead Come to Town: Preaching, Burying, and Building in the Mendicant Orders,” in *The Year 1300 and the Creation of a New Architecture*, ed. A. Gajewski and Z. Opačić (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 203-224.


utilitarian buildings of the Cistercian Order profoundly affected the aesthetic of Franciscan and Dominican churches, and many of these structures do share a similar organization of interior space and architectural features, such as lateral chapels, cross vaults, transepts, and rectangular choirs.\textsuperscript{10} Yet can one truly distinguish these popular components of mendicant architecture as “Cistercian” when they are, in their most basic sense, the result of a very practical, functional, and economical way of conceiving and building space? Bonelli claimed that mendicant architecture lacks the most essential components of Cistercian architecture, such as the spatiality of the nave and the “static-constructive” system of walls.\textsuperscript{11} He suggested that one of the reasons many mendicant buildings are dated two to three decades earlier than they should might be because of their conservative quality, frequently attributed to so-called Cistercian influences. It is important to note, as Bernard of Clairvaux had articulated, that the Cistercians constructed their buildings with simplicity to avoid distraction from prayer and contemplation, not necessarily with the intention of representing poverty.\textsuperscript{12} This is a very basic but critical distinction between the churches of the two orders.

Scholars have not only looked to the buildings of the Cistercians to help explain some of the aesthetics of mendicant sites. Architectural historians such as Bruzelius, Trachtenberg, and Smith have explored the connection between these buildings and the French Gothic style, while Dellwing, Cadei, and Suitner have identified links between the

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid. Comparisons with utilitarian buildings include granaries and storehouses.

\textsuperscript{11} Bonelli, “Nuovi sviluppi,” 22-23.

churches of the mendicants and the architecture from the Lombard region.\(^{13}\) Other scholars, including Schenkluu and Romanini, have investigated the “internationality” of the friars’ churches, placing less importance on local architectural roots, and greater emphasis on a larger mendicant movement and its architectural expressions.\(^{14}\) Mendicant buildings are also often discussed within the closed context of the religious order, both in terms of architectural choices and practical aspects such as planning, management of labor, and materials, and this approach is frequently associated with the idea of the “friar-builder,” which has been popular among scholars that discuss Veneto architecture.\(^{15}\) Finally, others have suggested that in some cases, there was a “true and proper” regional movement, and Dellwing, Cadei, and Suitner have supported this theory for sites in the Veneto.\(^{16}\)

Essentially, all of these sources—Cistercian, Lombard, local, regional, and mendicant—make it difficult to trace the transmission of certain elements between specific buildings. In addition, as Bruzelius has noted, although literature emphasizes the Cistercian or French Gothic elements in the design of these churches, the result is very different from a Cistercian or French building.\(^{17}\) The flat, spacious wall surfaces, the


\(^{17}\) Bruzelius, “A Rose.”
rectilinear quality of the plans, the treatment of the (sometimes polygonal, often vaulted) choir, the use of small windows in the nave, and the bichromatic coloring frequently found in mendicant buildings indicate that it may be appropriate to rethink the purported connections with the monastic or northern prototypes. Bruzelius further warned that although architectural historians are often trained to think of buildings as “assemblages of ideas,” it must remembered that the new civic culture of Italy and the new mendicant movement required effective architectural statements of “newness” and authority, and this must have played a decisive role in the design and architectural choices of these buildings. As I will show, this interplay of visual cues and aesthetic systems had critical implications for convent design in Verona, particularly for the Franciscans.

The pervasive tendency to approach mendicant architecture as a conglomeration of “parts” creates another set of problems. Bonelli also cautioned that

Quindi l’opera si definisce come un’aggregazione di parti, distinte per tipo e linguaggio, ognuna delle quali trova origine in un diverso edificio, anche se costruito in luoghi lontani ed in epoche remote; essa è un oggetto passivo, composto con l’addizione di apporti esterni, e perciò privo delle qualità che contraddistinguono l’arte.

Along the same lines, Smith suggests that viewing buildings in this way fails to take in to account the consideration that these monuments were constructed over a long period, often with several changes of patrons, masons, architects, and designs.

By exploring how urban dynamics shaped the architectural spaces of the Franciscan and Dominican communities in Verona, this project aims to move beyond the traditional, formalist approach to mendicant sites and consider the broader contemporary

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circumstances that affected their appearance. Lefebvre’s theory of space as a complex social construction that affects spatial practices and perceptions has encouraged a comprehensive approach to these sites and a commitment to examine how the social and religious setting helped generate the physical space of these convents.\textsuperscript{21} A critical concept in the development of this project is his observation that architectural space is neither a “subject” nor an “object,” but rather a “social reality.”\textsuperscript{22} The iconic works of Krautheimer that emphasize the significance of social and economic factors in the creation of architecture and the figural arts have deeply informed the methodology and the framing of this study, as these issues are central to my investigation of Franciscan and Dominican architecture in Verona.\textsuperscript{23} The research of Bruzelius that explores the connections between mendicant economy, preaching, and the practice of lay burial, suggesting that each played significant roles in the configuration of church space, has also profoundly shaped my methodology.\textsuperscript{24} Her observations—particularly her emphasis on the \textit{ad hoc} process of expansion and growth of mendicant buildings—have provided a critical framework with which to approach this study, and part of this text examines some of her ideas against the evidence of the sites in Verona.

By investigating the Franciscan and Dominican churches in Verona in relation to urban topography, social relations, economic structures and sites, and religious practices, I hope to help reframe the approach to the study of mendicant architecture. To better

\textsuperscript{22} H. Lefebvre, \textit{Production}, 116.
\textsuperscript{24} Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
understand the medieval design, character, and construction processes of S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, these churches must be situated within the historical context of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century city, as well as within the wider schemes of mendicant architecture in the Veneto and across the Italian peninsula. As the physical manifestations of their mission, the friars’ buildings can reveal much about the mendicant movement; at the same time, their architecture must also be examined within the framework of their religious principles, practices, and activities.

A Note on the Choice of Verona
Verona is in many ways an ideal city for this kind examination, in that it has much in common with “typical” medieval urban centers. Although the city was a thriving metropolis in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was smaller than some of the larger, more populated Italian centers such as Venice, Florence, and Rome, and it lacked the more elite intellectual culture shared by sites such as Padua and Bologna. It is therefore possible that some of the observations and analysis from this study can apply more usefully and universally when thinking about other Italian sites.

The abundance of surviving documentation on medieval Verona is another reason the city has been an excellent subject for this study. Many of Verona’s medieval monuments, including the Franciscan and Dominican convents, are well preserved, and a rich medieval archive boasts extensive amounts of information about the city and its inhabitants during this period. Because documentation records many of the activities of the mendicants, in some instances it is possible to examine the network of familial, social, political, geographic, and economic ties that linked patrons to building programs. Furthermore, the literature on medieval Verona by local scholars such as Gasparini and
Varanini provides a wealth of accessible information on various aspects of the social, political, and commercial culture of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century city and urbanization issues, such as patterns of settlement and demographics.25 A project such as this that seeks to position mendicant buildings in their historical context is indebted to decades of research on the medieval city and its culture by others. The publications of local historian and Franciscan Friar Sartori (d. 1979) have further facilitated studies on Franciscan communities in the Veneto.26 Sartori’s notation, transcription, and publication of a large number of records related to Franciscan sites in the region, including testaments, contracts, and papal bulls, make a good portion of the surviving primary source material on the Order available outside the archive.

This is not to say, however, that a study on the city of Verona does not present its own problems and challenges. On certain subjects and issues, the material and textual evidence is frustratingly silent. Long ago, in the introduction to his celebrated novel from 1831, Notre Dame de Paris, Victor Hugo lamented the erasure of the history of medieval architecture:

…For it is thus that people have been in the habit of proceeding with the marvelous churches of the Middle Ages for the last 200 years. Mutilations come to them from every quarter, from within as well as from without. The priest whitewashes them, the

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25 These studies are discussed in Chapter 3.
26 A. Sartori, Archivio Sartori: Documenti di storia e arte francescana, ed. G. Liusetto, 4 vols. (Padua: Associazione centro studi antoniani, 1983-1989). The publication of Sartori’s multi-volume series contains his notes, extracts, articles, and full or partial accounts of over 70,000 documents. Although an invaluable resource for scholars studying the Franciscans in the Veneto, some of his interpretations lack critical analysis. In some places, Sartori’s Franciscan influences supersede his historical ones; in others he appears more analytically engaged. I have nonetheless used Sartori’s collection extensively in this study. Scholars must be critically engaged with all sources, however this does not mean that sources which are at times questionable cannot be used or trusted in other capacities or contexts. Whenever possible, I have cross-referenced Sartori’s transcriptions with the original documents. Where his interpretations or translations seem questionable or problematic (or are not supported by other scholarship), I make a note of this potential discrepancy. Otherwise, all references to Sartori’s archive should be treated as any other scholarly citation—valid, but not immune from critical consideration and/or revision.
archdeacon scrapes them down; then the populace arrives and demolishes them.  

His remarks summarize some of the difficulties faced by the modern-day architectural historian. The contemporary appearances of most medieval sites are dramatic departures from their original character, and the churches of S. Fermo and S. Anastasia are no exception. Numerous renovation programs have modified both convents significantly in the centuries since their construction. Changes in taste and style, the repurposing of conventual buildings, the addition of altars and family chapels, the removal of tombs, floods, and other acts of nature and man have compromised, and in many cases completely erased, parts of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century structures. Nonetheless, in S. Fermo and S. Anastasia elements of the medieval architectural fabric and decoration remain, and in some places, are excellently preserved.

Any study attempting to investigate the mendicant convents within their original, historical framework must also address the corresponding movements among female religious and their local communities, as these congregations were often closely incorporated with their male counterparts. However, the situation in Verona severely limits any discussion of the female religious groups. The demolition of the Clarissan convent of S. Maria delle Vergini in the early twentieth century prevents inquiries regarding the design and architectural character of the medieval conventual complex: only rudimentary observations of its fourteenth-century appearance and arrangement can be reconstructed from surviving documentation, such as testaments, convent inventories, and papal correspondence. Where appropriate, these documents will be briefly analyzed.

Although little can be said about the architecture of the medieval Clarissan convent, I will

discuss the development and early settlement(s) of the female community in Verona, which became an important site of religious culture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and was intimately linked to the Franciscan congregation at S. Fermo.

There was also a group of Dominican nuns in Verona. While this community will be occasionally cited for comparison or context, surviving information about these women and their convent in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is scarce, and they are therefore excluded from serious consideration.

My study begins in the 1220s with the entrance of the friars into Verona and concludes at the end of the fourteenth century, with the “completion” of their medieval building campaigns, although in the case of S. Anastasia, the church was still not finished. This period is bookmarked by political upheaval—the tyranny of Ezzolino and the fall of the Della Scala and subsequent rise of the Visconti—but this is merely coincidence. For this project, it was essential that the earliest recorded sites of the friars receive extensive attention, as I believe that the later phases of mendicant buildings—their larger, more monumental construction programs—must be considered in relation to their early, humble sites. I conclude the study in the final decades of the fourteenth century in order to keep the focus on the medieval programs of the churches in Verona, but nonetheless allow enough time between their initial settlement and monumental construction programs to observe how the friars and their roles evolved within the institutional structure of the city.

28 Ezzolino III da Romano (b. 1194, d. 1259) was a close ally of Emperor Frederick II and ruled Verona, Vicenza, and Padua with cruel ruthlessness for the last two decades of his life. When Ezzolino was finally overthrown and killed, his lordship over the city of Verona was succeeded by the Della Scala family dynasty, beginning with Mastino I in 1260. The Della Scala family controlled Verona until 1387, when Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan overthrew them. For further reading, see A. M. Allen, *A History of Verona* (New York and London: G. P. Putnams’ Sons and Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1910), and vol. 2 and 3 of *Verona e il suo territorio* (Verona, Istituto per gli studi storici veronesi, 1960-1969).
This study does not offer a guided formal analysis of every architectural element in these buildings: those kinds of studies have already been written, and although useful in their own right, this approach is not especially conducive to the type of contextual focus I aim to bring to these construction narratives. Furthermore, with the exception of necessary remarks about post-medieval restorations, I limit this study to the thirteenth and fourteenth-century parts of these buildings. An important objective is to explore what these sites would have looked like in the Middle Ages.

**Chapter Breakdown**

The first chapter introduces the reader to the mendicant orders—specifically the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Poor Clares—and briefly considers how their urban focus affected their religious mission. Chapter Two begins with a discussion of legend and myth in the medieval and modern accounts of Veneto mendicant settlements, and explores how these foundation legends shaped the Franciscan and Dominican identities in the region. I then consider the early buildings of the mendicant communities in the primary cities in the Veneto—in Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, and Venice—to provide a context for the investigation of the first mendicant sites in the city of Verona. In the third chapter, I present a brief overview of medieval Verona, discussing some the social, religious, political and economic circumstances of the city. The original locations of the friars, outside the city walls in the poorest parts of town, are considered within the framework of contemporary Franciscan and Dominican writings on architecture and poverty. I then explore how these communities and their early buildings responded to and represented local circumstances, such as population distribution, urbanization, economic practices, religious traditions and rituals, and centers of trade and industry.
Chapter Four examines the friars’ move from the periphery of the city into its center and explores how this shift shaped their religious activities and affected their attitudes towards architecture. I discuss thirteenth and fourteenth-century Franciscan and Dominican legislation in order to consider the orders’ changing ideas about buildings, money, and poverty, and contextualize the increased monumentality of the friars’ building projects in the Veneto.

The fifth and sixth chapters include revised construction narratives and dating for S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, respectively, that emphasize the process of construction—how the friars approached their building projects—and the role of lay patronage and other forms of construction support in the reconfiguration of architectural space. I also examine the relationship between the mendicant churches in Verona and the other Veneto cities of Treviso, Vicenza, Venice, and Padua, considering how the friars created a distinct style by fusing traditional Romanesque architectural elements with “modern” Gothic ones and utilizing local materials and labor.

Chapter Seven examines the some of the dynamics between the Veronese friars and the city, emphasizing that these churches and their decoration attest to an intimate link between the mendicant communities and the city: I examine how the relationships between the friars and the laity, economic practices, social structures, and religious institutions affected aspects of their architecture. I explore how the friars transformed the religious climate and traditional pious practices of Verona by looking at activities such as burial, public preaching, the Inquisition, and cult veneration, insomuch as they helped shape the design of the Franciscan and Dominican convents. This chapter also considers how the mendicants’ revolutionary ideas about preaching, confession, and penance
transformed urban spirituality and provided new opportunities for lay participation in religious life in Verona (through confraternities, the Third Orders, and penitential movements). Finally, two appendices at the conclusion of this study provide an overview of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century decoration of the Franciscan church of S. Fermo and the Dominican church of S. Anastasia.

By examining specific interactions between the mendicant and the city, my research explores the ways in which the buildings of the friars expressed various aspects of the society they served. As I will show, the friars in Verona innovatively used architectural space—both interior and exterior—to further their religious missions, designing or reconfiguring elements of their convents to specifically appeal to or accommodate their pastoral activities and lay pious practices.
1. The Mendicant Mission to the Towns

The economic transformation of medieval towns created numerous anxieties over contemporary social and economic practices, many of which revolved around the use and accumulation of money.¹ Little noted that the adaptation to the medieval profit economy produced new tensions between morality and behavior, many of which manifested themselves in contemporary religious practices, both sanctioned and not.² By the thirteenth century, the Church had become concerned about unauthorized and unorthodox religious communities. There was a new and urgent need for innovative approaches to urban spiritual guidance and pastoral care that also addressed social issues, and the Franciscans and Dominicans evolved as two distinctly different, yet related, responses to the moral and spiritual crises provoked by the commercial revolution.

The setting of the medieval city “created” the need for intervention by the friars on behalf of the Church; as Lawrence claimed, “it was [in the city] that the struggle for religious orthodoxy was to be won or lost.”³ Both the Franciscan and Dominican Orders focused on urban centers as the backdrop for their pastoral mission, reaching out to the laity through their “externalized mission,” preaching in public spaces including piazze and markets.⁴ As Dominican Minister General Humbert of Romans advised in the mid-thirteenth century, “[urban] preaching is much more efficacious…for in the city there is

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² Little, *Religious Poverty*, 41.
³ Lawrence, *The Friars*, 80.
⁴ I wish to acknowledge and thank Caroline Bruzelius for sharing this terminology from her research.
more sin."\(^5\)

Unlike the traditional monastic orders that sought refuge from the material world within the confines of their rural monasteries, the mendicant movement was distinctly and radically urban. Almost immediately upon the conception or their orders, the friars cast their spiritual nets into the landscape of the cities. After receiving approval of his Rule in 1209, Francis and his earliest followers quickly set out to evangelize the towns of central Italy around Assisi. After 1213, the Franciscans began to settle in other parts of Italy and Europe, including Germany, Spain, and the Holy Land. The papacy approved Dominic’s Order in the fall of 1215; within the next two years, he and his early followers launched their own preaching missions, dispatching friars to Paris, Spain, and later Italy, with their first settlement in Bologna.\(^6\) In the mid-thirteenth century, the Benedictine monk Matthew of Paris confirmed the initial and eager focus of the friars on city populations immediately after their confirmation by the pope: “sub eisdem diebus fratres qui dicuntur Minores vel de ordine Minorum, favente papa Innocentio, subito emergentes, terram repleverunt, habitants in urbis et civitatibus.”\(^7\)

The New Testament apostles provided the model of the basic character of Franciscan and Dominican religiosity, which emphasized itinerancy and travel as part of their preaching mission. In a letter to his followers, Dominic relates the missionary activities of Christ and his apostles to those of his Order, accentuating their nomadic


\(^6\) Because of the legislation passed by the Fourth Lateran Council earlier this year that forbade the creation of new religious orders, Dominic and his followers were forced to place themselves beneath the umbrella of the Augustinian Rule instead of creating their own individual religious rule as Francis had done six years before. See, for example, Lawrence, *The Friars*, 72.

\(^7\) Matthew of Paris, *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani: Historia Anglorum*, vol. 2, ed. F. Madden, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer,1866-1869), 109-110. Here Matthew is speaking specifically about the Franciscans, but his observations also apply to the Dominicans.
disposition:

Jesus went *about all the towns* round about, teaching. Then he also laid this job upon his disciples, saying ‘*Go into the world* and preach the gospel.’

Humbert further observed that the prophets, apostles, and Christ himself had labored most frequently in cities: “it should be noted that the Lord, when he sent prophets into the world, more often sent them to a city than to other similar places.”

Francis too encouraged the friars of his Order to imitate the transient nature of the apostles, even outlining specific guidelines for traveling brothers. The Franciscan Rule of 1221, for example, instructs the brethren to “carry nothing for the journey, neither a knapsack nor a purse, nor bread, nor money, nor a staff.” Franciscan Minister General Bonaventure emphasized the practical advantages of urban centers, citing that it was in the city that the friars could best perform their pastoral responsibilities because it provided the material sustenance necessary for them to pursue lives of voluntary poverty. Indeed, in the thirteenth century, cities were the primary places with enough wealth to support religious organizations devoted to apostolic poverty and therefore dependent on alms for survival.

The establishment of the mendicant orders in towns was generally met with support from varying social classes, and this had important implications for their building programs. The Franciscans and Dominicans found special, and often “profitable,”

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8 St. Dominic, “Letter to Dominican Novices,” in *Early Dominicans*, 149. Italics my emphasis.
encouragement from the “middle class,” or the new, non-noble social group tied to the commercial activities of medieval cities, which included professionals such as merchants and bankers. On account of the wealth amassed from their commercial practices, members of this group emerged as major contenders for social and political power in opposition to the older noble and “semi-feudal” elite. Since contemporary culture often linked affluence to moral and socio-religious problems, especially apprehensions about money, the economic practices of this class made them particularly sensitive to the concept of apostolic poverty professed in Franciscan and Dominican religiosity. They were thus a fertile ground for prospective patrons, and the friars sought to create intimate relationships between themselves and this population.

The friars often had a physical, geographic connection to this social group. Early mendicant houses were commonly located in the peripheral borghi of the city, and the middle and upper classes inhabited these neighborhoods as well. This proximity had substantial implications: the research of Rossi has revealed, for instance, that the Franciscan community at S. Fermo in Verona was a magnet for bequests from merchants

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13 Disdain for the merchant class could be particularly severe: theologians and canonists emphasized the merchant’s inevitable dishonesty and challenged the legitimacy of his practices of credit, interest, and professional fees. By the late fourteenth century, however, a more constructive view of the merchant and his activities had developed. Although Wood claims this shift was related to both economic nationalism and individualism, this more progressive view may have also been a product of or encouraged by mendicant influence. For further reading, see for instance Wood, *Medieval Economic Thought*, esp. ch. 5; Little, *Religious Poverty*, 197; M. D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty: The Doctrine of the Absolute Poverty of Christ and the Apostles of the Franciscan Order*, 1210-1333 (London: S.P.C.K., 1961); Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution*; and J. Chiffioleau, “Sur l’usage obsessionnel de la messe pour les morts à la fin du Moyen-âge,” in *Faire croire: Modalités de la diffusion et de la réception des messages religieux du XIIe au XV siècle* (Rome: L’École française de Rome, 1981). K. B. Wolf has proposed that Francis’s religiosity relied on merchant metaphors, and thus an urban popularization. Wolf argues that Francis’s spirituality revolved around (and thus belonged to) the affluent sector, and therefore reflected their particular interests. See K. B. Wolf, *The Poverty of Riches: St. Francis of Assisi Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

and artisans living in the same neighborhood as the church.\textsuperscript{15} The friars’ use of market vocabulary also helped foster the relationship between the mendicants and this population. Chiffoleau noted the friars’ effective use of “market place thinking” in the sacrament of penance, and Little observed that the sermons of St. Anthony were full of references that would have been familiar to a merchant or commercial audience.\textsuperscript{16} The contemporary papal approval of the doctrine of Purgatory meant that the fate of the soul had become a serious concern, particularly for those involved in commercial culture.\textsuperscript{17} To this end, individuals sought to reduce their purgatorial sentences with “credits” from the friars in the form of suffrages, prayers, good works, pilgrimages, pious bequests, and charitable donations. Le Goff proposed that the mendicant orders played a major role in the popularization of Purgatory by providing opportunities for their lay patrons to amass these kinds of “credits.”\textsuperscript{18} By the early fourteenth century, the friars had developed a reputation for more lenient penance to their patrons: they offered practical guidance, penance, and absolution, even for controversial issues such as interest, credit, insurance, and moneymaking, themes that were especially critical to the middle and upper classes.

\textsuperscript{16} See Chiffoleau, “Sur l’usage,” 250. In Bonaventure’s discussion of his order’s importance, he describes the friars as “trustees” for the faithful who, in turn are like “debtors;” it is thus the friars’ job to try to pay off, or at least reduce, this “debt.” See Little, Religious Poverty, 200. For additional discussion regarding how the friars reflected the society they entered by their frequent use of marketplace vocabulary, see also D. L. D’Avray, The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris Before 1300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
\textsuperscript{17} Le Goff has suggested that Purgatory “was of particular interest to the member of certain professions, those that were held in contempt, regarded as suspect…such as the \textit{inhonesta mercurionia}.” See J. Le Goff, The Birth Of Purgatory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 328.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 328. The contemporary writings of Chaucer point out that for the friar, light penance begets a large donation, while for the donor, a large gift can assuage the conscience. (see Chaucer’s “General Prologue,” Canterbury Tales, lines 221-232). The Observant Johann Brugman accused Franciscan confessors of giving absolution with thoughtless abandon and of assigning indiscreet or even scandalous penances, and Erickson noted that Norwegian clerics complained to Benedict III that, among other things, the friars were giving indulgences to those who attended their sermons. See C. Erickson, “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and Their Critics, I: The Order’s Growth and Character,” Franciscan Studies 35 (1975): 122-123; and “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and their Critics, II: Poverty, Jurisdiction, and Internal Change,” Franciscan Studies 36 (1976): 108-147.
The friars also opened the spaces of their convents to the lay public, creating new opportunities for spiritual intercession. Members of the laity could elect burial and commission altars, chapels, or works of art in mendicant churches; in return, the friars provided commemorative masses and perpetual prayers for the soul of the patron and his or her family. In these ways, the friars provided new forms of pastoral assistance, helping the urban laity navigate some of the challenges of a commercial economy and private wealth.

Medieval cities were fertile environments for mendicant theology, but the dense populations of urban centers also provided large and responsive audiences for their public sermons and the recruitment of members, particularly among the educated of the university towns.19 Because their ministry centered on the towns, the distribution of Franciscan and Dominican settlements reflected the general pattern of urban development and expansion in thirteenth-century Western Europe, as Le Goff has noted.20 The earliest mendicant settlements appeared in established centers of commerce and trade, and areas of high urban density generally had larger communities of friars.21 Both Orders grew rapidly: by the year 1303, the Dominicans possessed 590 houses across Western Europe and the Franciscans had established approximately 1,400 communities. The maps of

19 D’Avray, _Preaching_, 31. D’Avray has observed that the friars’ audiences were often composed of educated laymen. He further suggested that the proportion of educated laymen was probably the greatest in Italy. This observation seems closely related to the mendicants’ popularity among the new, non-noble social class, which included educated and literate professions such as merchants, lawyers, and bankers. Although it is difficult to tell who attended sermons, Humbert of Romans noted that “the poor rarely go to church and rarely to sermons; so they know little of what pertains to their salvation.” Cited by A. Murray, “Piety and Impiety in Thirteenth-century Italy,” _Studies in Church History_ 8 (1972): 93.


21 The most important cities boasted the presence of all five mendicant orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Servites. Verona had all five orders: the Augustinians were in the city by 1256 and obtained their church of S. Eufemia in 1262. There was an active Carmelite community in Verona by 1316, inhabiting the church of S. Tommaso. The Servites settled in the city in 1324, and began constructing their new church, S. Maria della Scala, shortly thereafter.
figure 7 illustrate the ubiquitous presence of both orders across the Italian peninsula in the early fourteenth century. 22

1.1 The Development of the Poor Clares

Whereas the Franciscan and the Dominican Orders grew and developed first through the actions of their founder saints, then through missions that established communities in urban centers, the precise origins of the Poor Clares are less clear. Although Franciscan and Dominican ideologies certainly helped shape the character of these early communities of women, so did the influence of lay apostolic groups like the Humiliati and Beguines, monastic foundations such as the Pulsanesi and Cavensi, and even heretical groups like the Cathars. 23 Urban preaching missions attracted populations of devout women who desired personalization of and participation in medieval religious life, and independent female religious groups begin congregating in Western European centers as early as the mid-twelfth century. 24 The Poor Clares were only one offspring of this widespread burst of female piety.

Apostolic poverty was the most striking attribute of the religious groups of women in central and northern Italy that developed over the course of the thirteenth

22 Lawrence, The Friars, 80. As Lawrence noted, in comparison with the Friars Minor, the Dominicans showed a marked preference for larger settlements well above the statutory minimum of twelve friars and therefore large enough to sustain full community life. This, combined with their policy of restricting recruitment to the educated, may explain the slower growth of the Dominicans in comparison with the Franciscans.
24 Other religious communities (both orthodox and not) that developed from the new urban spirituality that either welcomed women or were composed exclusively of them include lay groups (such as mendicant tertiaries and followers of new monastic foundations such as the Pulsanesi and Cavensi), confraternities (attached to monasteries, parish churches, hospitals, or prisons), penitent groups, Premonstratensians, Cathars, Beguines, and the Humiliati.
century. In a letter from August 27, 1218, Pope Honorius III describes the character of such communities to Cardinal Ugolino, Protector of the Franciscan Order:

Many virgins and other women, to whom nobility [of heritage] promises a prestigious standing in the midst of the instable prosperity of the world... desire that some dwellings be built for them in which they may live, since they have no possessions under the sky, except these dwellings themselves and the oratories that are to be built inside them.25

The poverty movement transcended the traditional gender boundaries of religious life, creating new opportunities for female participation. Even so, for the most part, religious choice continued to take place within the wealthy or ruling classes: the first women to embrace radical programs of religious poverty were almost entirely aristocratic.26 For these women, the adoption of religious poverty ruptured established social practices (such as those that “invested” women into advantageous marriage contracts), representing a reaction against conventual landed wealth, the new social elite, and their distinctly urban prosperity.27 Apostolic poverty was more than the basis of a new religious mentality: it provided an outlet for spiritual and moral justification of urban society by creating opportunities for wealthy men and women to “rebel” against the sins of the profit economy. For women of the noble and merchant classes, devotion to poverty, chastity,

25 BF 1.1-2.
26 L. Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience and Society,” in Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religious in Medieval Society (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 97-122; B. Bolton “Mulieres Sanctae,” in Women in Medieval Society, ed. S. Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 141-158. The idea of “cloaking oneself in the robe of poverty” is very much determined by a certain level of prerequisite wealth, as Wolf has thoughtfully argued in his book, The Poverty of Riches. Wolf’s discussion of Franciscan poverty (and apostolic poverty in general) reveals many important points for consideration. First, in order to become voluntarily poor and thus receive the investment from this world in the next, one had to have something to give up. Here, the poor were unable to compete with the rich—they had nothing to give up, and thus were unable (according to this model) to demonstrate their readiness to leave the earthly world behind. Secondly, the fundamental concept behind evangelical poverty was its voluntary quality, meaning that one must be in a position to choose a life of poverty. It is unclear whether someone who was already poor would have been able to meet the requirements for entrance into any of these religious groups. It is thus easy to understand why aristocratic, noble, or wealthy women—rather than those of the lower or marginalized classes—became the protagonists and proponents of this radical religious movement.
and the adoption of the *vita apostolica* represented personal transformation, social renewal, and the release of worldly pursuits in conflict with gospel objectives.\(^{28}\)

Jacques of Vitry’s letters of 1216 describe groups of religious women encountered during his travels through Lombardy and Umbria.\(^{29}\) He observed that some of these women lived ascetic lives in religious communities while others resided at home. All of them, however, participated in routine prayer, exhortation, and manual work, and many adopted some of the constrictions of apostolic poverty.\(^{30}\) In other cases, as in Verona for example, groups of women were associated with hospitals and leper sanitariums, and they devoted themselves to caring for the sick and disenfranchised members of society (a practice that in part provoked Little’s wry observation that “philanthropy held one of the keys to the justification of profit-making.”)\(^{31}\) These early female communities rarely followed a definite religious Rule, sought authorization from Church hierarchy, or imposed lifelong vows upon their community.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{28}\) For more on the ways in which embracing voluntary poverty affected these women, see J. G. Bougerol, “Il reclutamento sociale delle Clarisse di Assisi,” in *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome* 89 (1977): 629-632.

\(^{29}\) Jacques of Vitry, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 72-3; Bolton, “Mulieres Sanctae,” 144. Jacques of Vitry was a powerful preacher, touring France and Germany between 1211 and 1213, preaching primarily against the Albigensians. In 1216, he was named Bishop of Acre and became involved in the Fifth Crusade. Three years later he began writing the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, a history of the Holy Land (only two parts were completed). After his resignation from the Acre Bishopric in 1228, he became Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum and continued to preach against the Albigensians until his death in the early 1240s. In his letters, Vitry seems to refer in particular to the guiding principles of the Damianites.

\(^{30}\) In most cases, these women are associated with some stage of textile production, such as spinning, dyeing, or sewing.

\(^{31}\) Little, *Religious Poverty*, 213. See also Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience,” 111; Jacques of Vitry, *Lettres*, 72-73. Jacques of Vitry’s testimony says that these women lived communally in “various hospices close to the cities,” and survived by the fruits of their labor rather than by donations. Pellegrini notes that in this context, the term “hospital” (hospital) refers to a dwelling place of communal organization of temporary character. This is distinguished from the term *conventuales congregations*, which Vitry uses in his discussion of the Humiliati.

sanction, these women and their “radical” lifestyles were in danger of persecution as heretics. Since the Church forbade women from regulating their own forms of religious life, they were required to attach themselves to an existing male order to guarantee their orthodoxy. Clare herself had avoided this obstacle when Francis placed her in the convent of S. Damiano in Assisi in 1212, giving her a forma vitae and thereby forming the first “official” community of “sorores minores”.

Female communities renouncing property and possessions, embracing voluntary poverty, and calling themselves “sorores minores” quickly developed across the Italian peninsula, despite lacking formal association with Clare and her followers at S. Damiano. Cardinal Ugolino appealed to Honorius III for protection and institutionalization of these independent female communities that shared a common devotion to religious poverty. Since Ugolino advocated strict enclosure, he also proposed the Franciscan Order as the responsible party for the physical and pastoral care of the women. With the exception of Clare and her sisters at S. Damiano, who were associated with the brothers but not fully incorporated under the umbrella of the Order, Francis was reluctant to integrate organizations of women with his male brethren. (Francis viewed the incorporation of these groups of women into his Order as a malignant sickness, lamenting that “up to now the disease was in our flesh and there was hope of healing but

33 Bolton, “Mulieres Sanctae,” 145. Bolton notes that the Beguines, for example, could occasionally be confused with heretics, because of their organic nature and development, their lack of an “official” rule, their unclostered character, and their tendency to share sites or houses with non-clerical religious men.
34 The forma vitae Clare received from Francis essentially mirrored that of the Franciscan men in terms of poverty.
35 As I discuss in the following chapters, one such community was extant in Verona in the early 1220s.
36 For the relationship between Clare (and her early sisters) and the friars, see Knox, Creating Saint Clare, esp. ch. 1.
now it has penetrated our bones and is incurable.”

This opposition may have been primarily an issue of prudence: Thomas of Celano recalls, for example, how Francis’s own visits to Clare became less frequent in order to show the brothers that constant association with women—even religious women—could compromise the chastity and reputation of both the friars and the sisters.

Despite Francis’s fervent opposition, Cardinal Ugolino’s integration was successful for a brief time. Beginning in 1219, Ugolino gathered existing or newly forming female congregations devoted to apostolic poverty into a homogeneous religious organization called Pauperes Dominae de Valle Spoliti sive Tuscia. Under the guidance of Ugolino, these communities of women obtained official papal recognition and were placed under Franciscan care. Ugolino also imposed a strict program of claustration to safeguard the chastity and virtue of the female religious life. His rule of enclosure significantly modified the original character of these female groups by isolating them from the culture out of which they had developed, and from the sick and the poor they had initially pledged to serve. Their confinement within the cloister meant complete

37 Grundmann, Religious Movements, 213.
reliance on the Franciscans for physical, spiritual, and economic sustenance.

Aside from Jacques of Vitry’s early witness, virtually nothing is known of the origins of these early communities. While specific female religious houses may have sprung from Franciscan preaching or the example of Clare herself, other communities seem to have developed independently from the mendicants by embracing popular devotion to the *vita apostolica*. It is therefore impossible to discuss the growth and expansion of the Poor Clares in the same manner as that of the Franciscans and Dominicans. Their ambiguous, organic, and independent development, initial sovereignty, absence of a recognized Rule or Order, and subsequent enclosure and reliance upon others for their spiritual and physical needs prevented the female movement from spreading and developing like that of the male friars. Since the claustration of the women prohibited their direct involvement in missionary and recruitment expeditions that characterized the diffusion of the friars, the initial establishment of these early female communities often arose from inspiring itinerant preachers or general attraction to the poverty movement. On the other hand, the “institutionalization,” or conversion, of these houses into official communities of Clares, was frequently the work of the papacy via cardinal protectors, although this sometimes also occurred through individual Franciscan agents, which, as I will discuss in the following chapter, seems to have been the case with the female community in Verona.

41 As the caretakers of the Clares, one of the responsibilities of the Franciscans included recruitment. In addition to encouraging individual women to join the order, the Franciscans also converted existing groups which, although lacking a specific rule, professed devotion to apostolic poverty and other similar socio-religious ideals congruent to Franciscan ideals. These women were encouraged to adopt the Benedictine Rule along with Ugolino’s prescriptions, thus entering under the framework of the Franciscan/Clarissan program. Knox records a Friar Bartolus who helped establish a female convent in Faenza in 1224, but notes that in general, founding documents indicate a connection with the wider papal effort to reform female religious life Knox, *Creating Saint Clare*, 27.
The Franciscans and Dominicans developed as orders dedicated to social and religious action. Their early communities were characterized by transience and itinerancy; the brothers were free to travel, preach, and establish houses across the urban centers according to their orders’ volition and resources. In contrast, the institutionalization of the Clares forced communities of women to be simultaneously dependent upon and isolated from the friars and the city, the very forces that gave rise to their religious vocation, organization, and formation.
2. Early Franciscan, Dominican, and Clarissan Settlements in the Veneto, c. 1220-1260

2.1 Methodological Problems of Early Settlements: Architecture and Evidence

By the third decade of the thirteenth century, Franciscan, Dominican, and Clarissan communities began appearing in the urban centers of northern Italy. The Franciscans had established communities in the most important cities of the Veneto region—Venice, Verona, Padua, Treviso, and Vicenza—by the early 1220s. By the end of the decade, most major Veneto sites could also claim Dominican and Clarissan convents among their religious establishments.1 Before discussing mendicant settlements in the region more thoroughly, some of the methodological problems associated with identifying and dating early settlements, particularly with regard to the Franciscan Order, must first be considered.

Lack of documentation makes precise dating of the earliest Franciscan, Clarissan, and Dominican settlements in the Veneto difficult, if not impossible. In most cases, there are insufficient records—both textual and material—to firmly chronicle initial sites. That little is known about the friars’ earliest regional activities, character, and buildings is as much a result of their itinerant, begging lifestyle as it is the small number of surviving documents.2 This is especially true of the Franciscans, whose early devotion to total apostolic poverty differed from the priestly order of the Dominicans, who favored

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1 As discussed in the previous section, a lack of documentation recording attempts to incorporate early female apostolic and penitential communities under the umbrella of the Clarissan movement makes this a difficult and complex issue for study. See Grundmann, Religious Movements, and Knox, Creating Saint Clare.

2 The Clares, of course, were excluded from the itinerancy that characterized the early Franciscans and Dominicans. See for example L. Pellegrini, “La prima fraternitas minoritica ed i problemi dell’insediamento,” in Lo Spazio dell’umilità: Atti del convegno di studi sull’edilizia dell’ordine di minori, Fara Sabina. 3-6 Novembre 1982, ed. L. Pellegrini (Fara Sabina: Centro Francescano S. Maria in Castello, 1984), 17-57.
corporate poverty over complete mendicancy. The Franciscan Rule of 1223 clearly expresses Francis’s wishes for his followers:

The brothers shall not acquire anything as their own, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all. Instead, as pilgrims and strangers in this world who serve the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go begging for alms with full trust.

Francis extended these themes of mendicancy and holy poverty to the realm of architecture in his testament from 1226:

…[Let] the brothers beware that they by no means receive churches or poor dwellings or anything which is built for them, unless it is in harmony with [that] holy poverty which we have promised in the rule.

Similar restrictions conditioned the early Dominican communities. The first Dominican Constitutions, written at the General Chapter meeting in Bologna in 1220, ordered that the

…Brothers have moderate and humble houses so that they should neither burden themselves with expenses, nor that others—seculars or religious—should be scandalized by our sumptuous buildings.

This statute required the brothers to uphold poverty in buildings and provided a rationale for doing so: to avoid superfluous expenses, potential debt, and outside criticism,
problems that would plague both orders only a few decades later. These initial restrictions on architecture must have mirrored Dominic’s own feelings towards religious poverty: depositions for his canonization emphasize the saint’s dedication to poverty “in buildings and churches and in the style and ornamentation of church vestments.” As the priestly character of the Dominican Order required the collection and ownership of books and other liturgical items necessary for preaching, education, and performance of the sacraments, their restrictions of poverty were therefore less severe—and less frequently documented—than those of the early Franciscans.

Francis’s rejection of money and subsequent embrace of evangelical poverty were the foundations of his Order. The combination of itinerancy and the rigorous standard of poverty that characterized early Franciscan communities ultimately prevented the kind of stability necessary for generating valuable material or textual documentation for historians. The apostolic character of the early Franciscan Order has resulted in a poverty of sources, reducing and complicating the ability to systematically study and date early settlements in the Veneto and elsewhere. There is little textual documentation of their first sites, such as property rights, rent agreements, or other kinds of legal or personal testimonies, and almost no archeological or material evidence survives of these initial settlements. Of the early mendicant sites in the Veneto, only a few remain, most of which have been so dramatically renovated or transformed that discussion of their

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7 Ibid., esp. 396-397. Sundt suggested part of the motivation behind the precept against sumptuous buildings was also designed to win over skeptics within and outside of the Church who demanded that words be matched by deed. He also likens the need for architectural simplicity as a direct influence of heretical groups (such as the Cathars, Petrobrusians, etc.) who saw material things as immoral.

8 Early Dominicans, 71. The testimony of Brother Amizzo of Milan from August 8, 1233.

9 For more on this divergence between the poverty of the two orders, see R. Lambertini, “Pecunia, possesio, proprietas alle origini di Minori e Predicatori: Osservazioni sul filo della terminologia,” in L’economia dei conventi dei frati Minori e Predicatori fino alla metà del Trecento: Atti del XXXI convegno internazionale, Assisi, 9-11 ottobre 2003, ed. E. Menesto (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2004), 5-42.
original medieval appearance can be only speculative.\textsuperscript{10}

Francis’s desire for his followers to live as “pilgrims and strangers” entailed an existence that was, according to Bruzelius, essentially “anti-architectural.”\textsuperscript{11} Early communities were required to forgo any type of permanent construction for poor, temporary buildings constructed with wood, plaster, mud, or other organic materials; alternatively, the friars used sheds, hovels, and caves for shelter.\textsuperscript{12} Occasionally a patron would invite them into his or her home, but their Rule forbade the friars from accepting this hospitality long term. In all cases, Franciscan literature instructs the early friars to consider these sites as temporary shelters rather than “homes.”

Anecdotes from Francis’s life recount his stringent opposition to luxury in dwellings and churches. Thomas of Celano recalls how Francis and his companions settled in a shed one evening, only to leave it before nightfall so that a peasant could use it to shelter his donkey.\textsuperscript{13} Some of the saint’s earliest followers describe another occasion where, unable to find shelter for the night, Francis “crept into a very dense thicket of thorn and other bushes fashioned after the manner of a lair or a little hut.”\textsuperscript{14} Bonaventure

\textsuperscript{10} In the later Middle Ages, there were approximately eighty-six Franciscan churches in the Veneto region. Today, only about twenty-five survive, and most are so heavily restored that their original architectural character cannot be studied.

\textsuperscript{11} Bruzelius, “Hearing is Believing,” 84.


\textsuperscript{13} Thomas of Celano, “First Life of St. Francis,” in \textit{Francis of Assisi}, vol. 1, 36. This anecdote is also included in the “Legend of the Three Companions,” in vol. 2, 99-100.

\textsuperscript{14} The “Little Flowers,” composed circa 1322, is a collection of memoirs that demonstrates Francis’s sanctity through accounts of his miracles, examples of his Christ-like perfection, and miscellaneous testaments to his sanctity. Composed by Francis’s closest followers, much of the text addresses the
reports that

More often than not, the naked ground was a bed for [Francis’s] weary body; and he would often sleep sitting up, with a piece of wood or stone positioned for his head.¹⁵

These accounts reveal Francis’s zealous desire for poor and humble “architecture,” and additional narratives illustrate his enforcement of these ideals. Early followers recall how a devoted brother once built a special cell for Francis at his favorite hermitage: when the saint discovered the friar’s handiwork, he refused to enter the hut because of its extravagance. The authors note that

The little cell was not made of stone work but of wood, but because the wood was planed, made with a hatchet and axe, it seemed too beautiful to blessed Francis.¹⁶

Francis obstinately refused to use the cell until the friar had covered the entire exterior with ferns and tree branches, concealing the planks of wood he had deemed too attractive.

Another episode cites an annual chapter meeting at Assisi where the brothers built a large house with stone and mortar walls to shelter the visiting friars. His followers clearly record Francis’s reaction to their construction:

[Francis] considered that, seeing this house, the brothers would build or have built large houses in the places where they now stayed or where they would stay in the future. And especially because he wanted this place always to be a model and example for all the places of the brothers, before the chapter ended he got up one day, climbed onto the roof of that house, and ordered the brothers to climb up. And, intending to destroy the house, he along with the brothers, began to throw the tiles covering it to the ground.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., 157-158. Thomas of Celano’s “The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul” also states that the people of Assisi were responsible for the construction of the new house, not the brothers. See Francis of Assisi, vol. 2, 285.
A group of local knights intervened, ultimately saving the building fabric by arguing that the house belonged to the commune and was therefore not Franciscan property. Nevertheless, these narratives clearly reveal the strength of Francis’s devotion to humble, impermanent dwellings.

Thomas of Celano and others also reminisce how Francis “[taught his] brothers to make poor little dwellings out of wood, and not stone, and how to build these huts according to a crude sketch.”18 Many of the early brothers must have followed these instructions in the construction of their houses: in the first half of the thirteenth century, for example, Thomas of Eccleston records that the first friars in London made “little cells, filling in the walls with dried grass” for their shelter.19 He further notes that the first chapel at Cambridge was “so very humble that one carpenter built it in one day, and in one day set up fourteen bundles of planks.”20 Other contemporaries write of friars making “little wicker cots of willow and of brush matting” and using blocks of stone or wood for their pillows.21

The same strict commitment to apostolic poverty that determined the meager and transient character of early Franciscan dwellings also discouraged recordkeeping. Pellegrini observed that extreme fluidity, absolute mobility, and complete disregard for fixed places characterized the earliest groups of Franciscan friars, particularly because they lacked a cohesive legal or hierarchical structure, and were unwilling to accept money or concern themselves with recordkeeping.22 The nature of these early

20 Ibid., 139.
21 “The Little Flowers,” 133.
communities was therefore inherently organic, disorganized, and somewhat spontaneous—all qualities that complicate the historian’s agenda. The most important and useful sources for recovering and reconstructing the character of these early Franciscan communities come from hagiographic texts, early missionaries, and contemporary observers outside the Order. The absence of other types of records such as inventories, chapter proceedings, testaments, and judicial decrees, further reduce available testimony regarding specific early Franciscan sites. Although the Franciscan Order frequently appears in early thirteenth-century ecclesiastical proceedings and papal correspondence, the institutional nature of these documents, directed to the Minister General rather than individual communities, reveals virtually nothing of the particular characteristics of specific houses.

This lack of documentation is unfortunate, as the unstructured quality that characterized these early groups—which is, ironically, largely responsible for the present lack of sources—probably allowed communities to develop distinctive characteristics based on local, site-specific variables such as geography, political climate, and economic activities. It is also reasonable to suggest that the lack of documentation on the early friars in Verona testifies to their rather undistinguished and perhaps even insignificant beginnings within the greater institutional framework of the city. It therefore seems problematic to use terms such as “found” or “establish” to describe the settlement of these early communities, particularly when evidence suggests a “process of becoming,” or a long and protracted movement from informal clusters of individuals to

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institutionalized groups.\textsuperscript{26} Although it is tempting to think about Franciscan or
Dominican arrival in a city as an “event,” instantly acknowledged and perhaps even
celebrated by the local public, in most cases the settlement of these early communities
seems to have been a more evolutionary process—slow and steady, and lacking, perhaps,
any initial fanfare.

2.2 Foundation Legends and the Historical Tradition

The proliferation of local traditions that attribute the “foundation” of the first
Veneto settlements to St. Francis or St. Anthony further compromises accuracy within the
chronological narrative.\textsuperscript{27} The strong Franciscan tradition (which is as much modern as it
is medieval) that credits Francis as the founder of communities throughout the Veneto
seems to be based primarily on Bonaventure’s account of Francis preaching to the birds
(figure 8):

One time when Francis was walking with another friar in the Venetian
marshes, they came upon a huge flock of birds, singing among the reeds.
When he saw them, the saint said to his companions, “Our sisters the birds
are praising their creator. We will go in among them and sing God’s
praise, chanting the divine office.” They went in among the birds who
remained where they were, so that the friars could not hear themselves
saying the office, they were making so much noise. Eventually the saint
turned to them and said, “My sisters, stop singing until we have given God
the praise to which he has a right.” The birds were silent immediately and
remained that way until Francis gave them permission to sing again, after
they had taken plenty of time to say the office and had finished their
praise.\textsuperscript{28}

This episode testifies to Francis’s presence in the Veneto region, consequently
functioning as “evidence” for his foundation of convents in the area. Bonaventure
records the Venetian marshlands as the location of Francis’s sermon to the birds,

\textsuperscript{26} I wish to acknowledge and thank Caroline Bruzelius for sharing the phrase “process of becoming” from
her research.
\textsuperscript{27} See also Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, esp. 16-17, for a discussion of this custom.
\textsuperscript{28} Saint Bonaventure, “Major Legend,” 695.
providing an authentic, physical, and most importantly, local, setting for the miraculous event. Although Bonaventure’s narrative does not suggest Francis established communities in Venice (or elsewhere in the region), his documentation of Francis in the Venetian lagoons provided a critical foundation for subsequent written and oral elaborations on Francis’s regional activities. Seemingly dissatisfied with the limited role of the Veneto in the saint’s life, medieval chroniclers, many of whom were Franciscans themselves, supplemented Francis’s real actions with invented ones, thereby generating what Pellegrini describes as an “institutional-devotional tradition.” These created, mythic, and allegorical accounts associating Francis with Veneto convents must have intensified devotion to and economic support of local Franciscan communities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, it seems no coincidence that an early fresco program in the north transept of the Franciscan church of S. Fermo in Verona once depicted the saint preaching to the birds, of which only fragments remain (figure 9).

The incorporation of this narrative at S. Fermo suggests that Francis’s visit to the Veneto region was an important component in the community’s construction of identity and authority in Verona.

Although attributing the foundation of Franciscan communities in the Veneto to Francis seems to have begun in the Middle Ages, scholarship has continued this tradition with surprisingly little critical revision. The juxtaposition of legend with fact in the chronologies of early Franciscan settlements in the Veneto by authors such as Sartori and

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29 Since the earlier Life of Francis by Thomas of Celano makes no mention of the Preaching to the Birds event occurring near Venice, Bonaventure seems to be responsible for the “invention” of this tradition in the Veneto.
31 D. Blume, Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda: Bildprogramme im Chorbereich franziskanischer Konvente Italiens bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts (Worms: Werner, 1983). Blume was the first to identify this scene; today, only traces of this earlier fresco remain, as an image depicting Francis’s death was painted over it.
Spimpolo, both of whom were, notably, Franciscans themselves, lacks methodological awareness and sensitivity concerning these two types of sources. In his mid twentieth-century history of Franciscan communities in the region, Spimpolo cites a narrative with medieval origins: he records that the Order’s first church in Verona was constructed on the site of a primitive residence given to Francis by the citizens of the city. A recent entry in I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico e cenni sulla chiese veronese presents a similar sequence of events, noting that in 1230, four years after Francis’s death, the commune erected a church over the site of his former Veronese residence.

The friars in Verona are not the only community in the region to receive such an honorable attribution: similar saintly traditions account for the foundations of Franciscan settlements at Vicenza, Padua, Asolo, Sommacampagna, and Largo di Garda. The Franciscan church in nearby Cologna Veneta features a “T” (tau) on one of its wall that was supposedly carved into the stone by Francis’s own hand. In Bassano del Grappa, visitors to the church of S. Donato can visit the cell once occupied by both Francis and Anthony. The city of Venice boasts a similar intimacy with the founder saint: the island of S. Francesco del Deserto once included a 500 year-old pine tree, which legend claims sprouted when Francis planted his walking stick in the island’s soil. Traditional

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32 T. Spimpolo, Storia dei frati minori della provincia Veneto di S. Francesco (Vicenza: Il terz’ordine Francescano Convento di S. Lucia, 1933); Archivio Sartori.
33 Spimpolo, Storia, 15.
34 I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico e cenni sulla chiese veronese, ed. G. Ederle and D. Cervato (Verona: Della Scala, 2002), 58. This text links Francis, who supposedly lived in a tiny house outside the Porta Roliolana in 1220, with the foundation of Verona’s earliest community. There was indeed (as I will discuss in the latter part of this chapter) a church built in 1230 dedicated to Francis. There is not, however, any historical record to support the claim that this church was constructed on the site of the former residence of the saint, or that such a residence even existed, or that Francis had even travelled to Verona.
35 See for example, Archivio Sartori III/1; I vescovi di Verona:Dizionario storico, 17-58; and Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 17.
scholarship dates the establishment of this Franciscan community to 1220, the same year that Francis returned from a missionary trip to the Orient and preached his sermon to the birds referenced above. The desire to maintain the 1220 foundation date of the convent—thereby crediting Francis with its establishment—has been so compelling that only recently have historians acknowledged a previously disregarded document from 1233 that records the donation of this island to the Franciscan Order.37

Father Sartori’s archive, published in 1983, also supports saintly foundation for Franciscan settlements in the Veneto and attributes the establishment of several early convents in the region to Francis.38 By favoring a narrative featuring Francis as founder, many scholars have overlooked historical improbabilities associated with his supposed role in the establishment of these Veneto communities, continuing to safeguard a history based on legend rather than substantiated documentation.39 This tradition complicates the dating of these early sites, but it also reveals much about both the medieval and modern preoccupation with saintly presence in a city.

In addition to Francis, Anthony is another figure commonly cited as the founder of Veneto communities. Whereas the friars seem to have largely invented Francis’s physical association with the Veneto, Anthony’s presence in the region was real and verifiable. His membership in the Paduan community and role as provincial minister between 1227 and 1231 provide adequate evidence for many to credit him with the foundation of various houses in the Veneto, some of which are also attributed to Francis. In the case of Padua, Anthony probably did play an important role in his community’s

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37 Archivio Sartori II/2, 1742; Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 16.
38 Archivio Sartori II/1, 3.
39 Much of this stems from the fact that the history of the Franciscan Order is largely written by Franciscans. See note 42 of this chapter.
transfer from their early settlement outside the walls to S. Maria Mater Domini in 1228. His involvement in Padua notwithstanding, Anthony’s participation with the foundation of other convents in the region seems less likely.

Sartori’s narrative of early Franciscan settlements in the Veneto illustrates how foundation legends continue to linger in current literature. In certain places in his text, Sartori’s Franciscan identity seems to struggle with that of a historian: he positions legend next to historical facts, resulting in a sometimes-inconsistent account of the Order’s activities in the Veneto. For example, reluctant to disregard all potential associations between the region’s Franciscan communities and the founder saint, Sartori proposes a scenario in which Francis visited—rather than founded—the first Franciscan settlements at Verona, Monselice, Padua, Sommacamagna, Brescia, Argnano, Rovigo, and Mantua. Then, ultimately unable to substantiate Francis’s involvement with any of these communities, Sartori cites Anthony (perhaps the second best choice?) as the probable founder of Veneto settlements established between circa 1227 and 1230, a period that corresponds with Anthony’s tenure as Provincial Minister. Sartori’s account of Franciscan settlement in the Veneto proposes a variety of narratives that include either Francis or Anthony, none of which can be historically substantiated.

40 Sartori also admits that there is no evidence to confirm Francis’s presence at these sites, even as a visitor. Archivio Sartori II/1, 3.
41 Ibid.
42 Franciscans have published and documented a large number of records related to the Order, and any scholar working on Franciscan material is indebted to their research. The religious persuasion of many of modern writings and the personal and highly vested interest in the topic by the author sometimes creates a strong sense of subjectivity. As a result, one must approach and use Franciscan sources (as any source) with care. I have used Sartori as an example showing the tendency and desire to credit Francis and/or Anthony with foundation of Veneto sites, but he is perhaps unfairly singled out here, as he is but one in a scholarly community (which also includes the renowned historian Wadding) who holds such views. Indeed, the history of the Franciscan Order is largely written by Franciscans who have their own institutional, personal, and spiritual agendas and investments (although this is not to say that other historians or scholars lack personal agendas). As a result, special problems and biases about the Franciscan institution are more prevalent in texts written by a devoted member: many accounts appear overtly pious and romanticized,
Francis and Anthony are not the only holy figures linked to the foundation of Veneto convents. Tradition also credits Clare’s younger sister, St. Agnes of Assisi, with the establishment of the Clarissan community at S. Maria delle Vergini in Verona, a tribute which also lacks historical basis. Although contemporary documentation links Agnes with the early Clarissan community at Montecelli, there is no evidence of her involvement in the foundation of the Veronese convent, or those at Venice and Mantua, with which she is also credited. It is possible that Agnes travelled to Verona in 1222 or 1223, but even if this visit occurred, it predates the first documented reference to the Clarissan community at S. Maria delle Vergini by a couple of years.

Bourdua has considered some of the problems generated by the so-called historical accounts that place Francis and Anthony in founding roles. She argued that most Franciscan settlements in the Veneto that claim saintly establishment rely on chronological impossibilities that would have required Francis’s presence in multiple places at once and concluded that it was unlikely that Francis even visited these sites, much less founded their religious communities. As I discuss in the following chapter, Friar Caesar of Speyer led a missionary expedition through the Veneto region in 1221, and this campaign, combined with the gradual dissipation and spread of the brethren throughout the peninsula, seems a more feasible account of the early and rapid settlement of the Franciscans in the region.

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often lacking critical analysis. These issues notwithstanding, these kinds of studies can be valuable resources if viewed with a critical apparatus and awareness of personal, religious, or institutional programs that may be motivating the author. Any source should be examined through a critical lens, and those by Franciscans are no exception. See also *Annales Minorum Seu Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco Institutorum*, 3rd ed., ed. L. Wadding, and J. M. Ribeiro da Fonseca (Florentia: Quaracchi, 1931).

43 This community was established circa 1221.


46 With regard to Verona, see *Archivio Sartori* II/2, 2094-2095. Sartori does indeed mention Friar Caesar
Despite these kinds of methodological problems, the placement of Franciscan saints in founding roles for communities in the Veneto region, especially by Franciscan historians, represent attempts to construct a sanctioned—albeit mythic—identity. Although these legends present problems for scholars, their longevity within the Order’s historical tradition is extremely significant. Such accounts reveal medieval (and to some degree, contemporary) mentalities and attitudes concerning the early origins and development of regional Franciscan communities. These legends—particularly those that involved Francis and/or Anthony—were vital to the formation of a convent’s identity and individual distinction, both within the urban fabric and the larger context of the Order.

Le Goff observed that the story of a medieval city—or rather the creation of its story or history—was central to the identity of its residents. Much in the same way that a city’s history served to legitimize the power and position of its inhabitants, a convent’s history justified and sanctioned the socio-religious authority of its members and activities. Remensnyder suggested that foundation legends are products of “imaginative memory,” a type of semi-fantastical reflection upon the past. A foundation based upon “imaginative memory” simultaneously reflects and informs the present: it has power and authority, which produces identity and meaning for the community. Remensnyder proposed that an imagined past

of Speyer’s expedition as one of the sources for the spread of the brethren across the Veneto region, but curiously, he does this without negating his earlier attributions to Francis and Anthony.

47 J. Le Goff, “L’immaginario urbano nell’Italia medievale (secoli v-xv),” in Storia d’Italia. Annali 5: Il Paesaggio, ed. C. De Seta (Torino: Einaudi, 1982), 5-43. Le Goff cites this as one of the reasons for the rise in the number of chroniclers beginning in the early Middle Ages (esp. 33-34).

48 A. Remensnyder, Remembering Kings Past (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 1-15. Remensnyder writes that while the memory embodied in legends is also “social” or “collective,” the term “imaginative” evokes the sense of creativity and the often incredible transformations and interpretations of reality that characterize them. In the present context, the use of the word “memory” rather than “forgery” or “fiction” importantly suggests that the Franciscan communities responsible for the construction of these narratives believed them to be, at some level, true and valid.

49 Ibid., 2.
Can establish and affirm the cohesion of a group. It provides a common set of symbols that help create the boundaries delineating and containing the community or society. Furthermore, as part of this symbolic set of boundaries, the past creates an identity that is relational, differential, even oppositional. Implicitly or explicitly, this identity situates the group in relation to others and defines it as different...finally the past may become legitimating, glorifying—even sanctifying—for the present.\textsuperscript{50}

Remensnyder’s concept of “imaginative memory” suggests that these legends of saintly foundation would have helped early Franciscan communities identify, legitimize, and sanctify their local and probably undistinguished beginnings. As relatively late newcomers to the city, the friars needed to establish their own religious identity and authority by distinguishing themselves from the older, traditional established urban religious institutions, such as the Benedictine monks or the cathedral canons. The foundation of a community by St. Francis himself would have been an immediate and effectual means of authenticating a new site, and would have facilitated the community’s development into a stable and viable organization within the local religious hierarchy. Foundation by or association with a saint would have also provided a community with the necessary confidence to compete with and challenge the local traditional pious practices. Indeed, the popularity of new mendicant orders and their respective saints, such as Francis, Dominic, Clare, and Agnes, presented new challenges to the established veneration of local bishop saints, martyr saints, and even a city’s patron saint.\textsuperscript{51}

With the exception of Padua and its ties with Anthony, Franciscan communities in the Veneto may have viewed themselves as peripheral counterparts to those in the more prestigious “Franciscan” cities such as Assisi, which were central to the creation of the Order and possessed the relics of Francis and Clare. To compensate for their own

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 2-3.
\textsuperscript{51} The implications of this shift could be substantial, and are considered in Chapter 7.
fragmented or nonexistent associations with the founder saint, Franciscan houses in the
Veneto may have embellished existing documents or created their own legends that
accentuated Francis’s presence and role in northern Italy. Communities in Veneto cities
also emphasized their connection with Anthony, the Order’s second—and regional—
saint, and it is possible that the rapid canonization of Anthony in 1232 and the
development of his cult can be viewed in relation to this phenomenon.

Through these legends, Franciscan houses in the Veneto created their own
sanctified status despite a perceived marginalization. Regardless of Francis and
Anthony’s precise physical participation (or lack thereof) in the Order’s settlement of the
region, it is significant that local traditions and historical accounts frequently cite them as
“founder.” Although these foundation legends complicate the dating of early Franciscan
settlements, they are an important source for understanding how these houses viewed
themselves within the larger framework and history of the Order, and how these
communities may have structured their social relations with the urban city. For many of
the early Franciscan communities in the region, the creation of a “hagiography of site”
seems to have been especially important, and propaganda played a critical role in the
establishment of this tradition. The glorification of a saint equaled the glorification of a
site, and the need to establish legitimacy, sanctity, and a historical presence often
manifest itself through a community’s architectural choices.

The better-documented presence of St. Dominic in the Veneto probably served as
another important motivation behind the perpetuation of saintly foundation among early
Franciscan sites in the region. Surviving records note Dominic’s involvement in
preaching missions in various cities in the Veneto and Lombardy, and travel itineraries
from documents indicate his presence in Venice, Padua, Treviso, Mantua, Reggio, and other northern Italian cities shortly before his death in 1221. The Dominican communities of the region were therefore able to document their founder saint’s specific activities in many of the region’s cities, something the Franciscans were unable to do. The competition between the mendicant orders for alms, power, popularity, and prestige is a topic addressed in the following chapters, but it is important to note here that Dominic’s widespread regional presence and his close, and perhaps very personal, associations with the local Dominican houses may have been pressing concerns for the Franciscans. Whereas Francis’s presence in the Veneto was largely constructed, Dominic preached in most of the major cities, and the Franciscan Order’s preoccupation with saintly foundation in the Veneto may have been—at least in part—cultivated in response to the strong and historically verifiable regional presence of Dominic.

2.3 Early Franciscan and Dominican Sites in the Veneto: Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Treviso, and Venice, c. 1216-1250

Sartori claims that by 1216 there were Franciscan friars in Treviso and Vicenza and by 1220, brothers were present in Padua, Verona, and the smaller regional sites of Monselice, Sommacampagna, Brescia, Gargnano, Rovigo, and Mantua; others have proposed that the Franciscans’ first “stable” settlements in the Veneto occurred in the 1230s. What are the criteria that define a community as “stable”? I suggest that assistance by religious or civic institutions of a city (such as donations of land or

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53 Archivio Sartori II/1, 2.
buildings), or the presence of a lay devotional following (preserved in testamentary bequests, for example) provides strong evidence to indicate that a religious organization is not only stable, but also possesses a degree of local legitimacy and validity. Analysis of surviving documentation suggests that the bishop had recognized many of the Franciscan houses in the Veneto by the early to mid 1220s, including those in Verona, Treviso, Vicenza, Padua, and Venice. Regional statistics for the Dominican Order follow a similar chronology: communities in Verona and Treviso were extant by the first years of the 1220s, and documents record friars in Venice and Padua by the end of the decade. The Dominican community in Vicenza was founded significantly later, in the late 1250s, due to circumstances discussed below.

A notable increase in construction activities of the 1230s may be the primary reason most scholars date the “institutionalization” of these Veneto communities to this period: both orders experienced significant growth in this decade, which often coincided with a change in site or the initiation of a new building program. The research of Suitner, however, suggests that most Franciscan and Dominican settlements in the region developed in the 1220s. Her analysis also supports the criterion that I believe are essential for characterizing a community as “stable”: specifically, aid from religious or civic institutions or individuals, such as the bishop or the commune, which was most commonly expressed by the friars’ occupancy of existing buildings.

Although Suitner’s observations focus on the Veneto region, others have noted

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55 Villetti for example, noted that stabilization of the friars was frequently dependent on donations of land given by ecclesiastical or civic authorities. See G. Villetti, “L’edilizia degli ordini mendicanti: Prospettive di ricerca,” in Gli ordini mendicanti e la città negli aspetti architettonici, sociali e politici contributo alle manifestazione francescane dell’anno: Salone della Villa Rufolo, Ravello 25-26 febbraio 1982, ed. J. R. Serra (Milan: Guerini, 1990), 179-180.
56 See G. Villetti, “Quadro Generale dell’edilizia mendicante in Italia,” in Lo spazio dell’umiltà, 225-274.
that in general, the initial stages of Franciscan and Dominican settlement frequently involved the use of extant structures, a practice that usually indicates support and permission by the bishop or commune. Meersseman proposed that a true “Dominican” architecture did not exist during the Order’s “Gestational Stage” (between c. 1216 and c. 1240) because the friars usually inhabited extant or abandoned buildings; Bonelli observed that between 1220 and 1240, the Franciscans most commonly used small existing churches or chapels. Pellegrini and others have also noted that during the earliest phases of mendicant settlement the friars often appeared as guests of local ecclesiastical authoritative figures, congregating in their churches or other religious buildings, but unfortunately many of these communities and their “borrowed” buildings were never recorded.

A critical aspect of the early practice of re-using or occupying existing buildings is that the friars had official permission to do so. In Verona, for example, the bishop gave the Franciscans part of the former leper hospital of S. Croce in 1225, while a local patron subsidized the early Dominican house of S. Maria Mater Domini beginning in 1220. In Vicenza, tradition states that the bishop personally invited the friars into the city and gave them a house near the hospital of S. Salvatore by 1221. A community of Franciscans

58 G. Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine au XIIIe siècle: Législation et pratique,” AFP 16 (1946): 136-190, 142; Bonelli, “Nuovi sviluppi,” 23-25. Although his discussion focuses on the general study of Italian mendicant convents, and does not specifically include Verona or the Veneto, Bonelli acknowledges the common mendicant practice of using existing structures, churches, or chapels after the friars have preached in the streets, the cathedral, or other parish churches. This suggests that occupation of existing structures could be considered as a “second stage” of early mendicant settlement, the first being characterized by “borrowing” spaces for preaching only. Schenkluhn suggested that the early Dominican communities appropriated rather than constructed their first churches, yet conversely the Dominican communities in the major Veneto centers built small churches and oratories, such as those at Verona and Padua, as often as they inhabited or used existing buildings. Schenkluhn, Architettura, 28-30.
60 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2272.
may have occupied the church of S. Francesco della Vigna in Venice as early as 1227.\textsuperscript{61} The donation of a church, hospital, house, or other building(s) to a community represented an important phase in their local settlement and stability.

Cadei noted that the friars’ use of existing buildings during the early stages of mendicant settlement forced them to yield to religious or civic authority.\textsuperscript{62} As invited “guests,” the friars were subject to the inclinations of the local bishop or prelate in charge. Yet significantly, the friars also had opportunities to manipulate their early sites: they often restored or expanded extant buildings based on their community’s spatial and liturgical needs. In Verona, for instance, the Franciscans added to their early location at the former leper hospital of S. Croce beginning in 1225. The renovation of an existing site was one very visible way for early Franciscan and Dominican communities to substantiate their presence and establish their authority within a city. These early modifications were also essential for the development of a community’s architectural aesthetics and practices, which would play out on a more dramatic scale in the new, monumental construction programs of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The early acquisition of churches and other structures was crucial for defining the early social, religious, and economic power of the friars in the city, and this practice indicates that an individual or group other than themselves supported these communities. By the early 1220s, there were Franciscan and Dominican communities in the Veneto that received this kind of support, and these communities, their early sites, and subsequent building programs are outlined below. The following overview is intended to provide a chronological and comparative framework within which to position both the initial

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 1743; Schenkluh, \textit{Architettura}, 126.
mendicant settlements of Verona, and their later building programs at S. Fermo and S. Anastasia.

2.3.1 Treviso

In Treviso, the Franciscans were first associated with a small church outside the city walls dedicated to S. Maria in 1216. A group of Dominican friars is recorded in the city a few years later, in 1221, at the Oratorio del Cristo (part of the present day complex of the Seminario). In 1231, the podestà gave both communities 1,000 lire for their building programs. Almost immediately, the Dominicans moved from their initial site at the Oratorio and began construction of their new church, S. Nicolò. Although this early structure no longer survives (the friars began to enlarge the original building in the early fourteenth century), scholars have nonetheless suggested that it was an important model for subsequent mendicant design in the region. Dellwing proposed that the early church of S. Nicolò featured a single-nave plan with a rectangular east end and a wooden roof. He also suggested that this was the first church of its type to be constructed by a mendicant community in the Veneto, naming the Benedictine church of S. Giustina at

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Monselice, constructed between 1220 and 1230, as the earliest, non-mendicant example of the single-nave plan in the region (figure 10).  

Although the Benedictine church of S. Giustina may have provided a regional model for the original design of S. Nicolò, mendicant communities in central Italy were already utilizing the rectangular single-nave design by this time: early examples include S. Francesco in Cortona (figure 11) and the Dominican church of S. Caterina in Pisa (figure 12).  

The single-nave church type corresponded to early Franciscan and Dominican building regulations requiring humility and simplicity in architecture, but also had the advantage of being able to adapt to and accommodate the specific spatial needs of a community. In the Veneto (and elsewhere), mendicant communities built variations of the single-nave prototype: they included apsidal chapels (or enlarged the existing chapels), added a transept or transept-like extension, as at S. Francesco in Bassano (figures 13, 14), and often vaulted the eastern space of the church while covering the nave with a wooden roof. The early Franciscan church in Treviso (begun circa 1240) also adopted the single-nave plan, but at an early date the friars added a projecting transept, a rectangular cappella maggiore flanked by two smaller rectangular chapels, and a trilobed wooden roof (figures 15, 16).  

Many scholars have noted that the single-nave church was a popular early architectural scheme among mendicant communities in smaller towns. Dellwing

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68 Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 459-460. Although dating is a problem at every site, Sartori suggests that S. Francesco in Udine was erected by 1269 and S. Francesco in Cortona is thought to have been completed in the 1230s. Schenkluhn dates the completion of the Pisan church between 1253 and 1262 (Archivio Sartori II/2, 1709; Schenkluhn, Architettura, 69.)

69 For issues regarding dating of this early structure, see, for instance, Suitner, “L’architettura,” 574-576; Schenkluhn, Architettura, 184; Dellwing, “Bettelordenskirchen,” 547.
observed that when communities in larger cities—especially those located on major urban thoroughfares—appropriated this plan, innovative variations and developments occurred, such as the case of S. Francesco in Treviso, the first single-nave church plan to add a transept, or the Augustinian church of the Eremitani in Padua, one of the first sites to affix a polygonal apse to a single-nave plan (figure 17).\textsuperscript{70} Dellwing’s observations reveal a powerful relationship between a site and architectural development, a theme discussed at length in the following chapter. His investigation also notes specific instances in which communities incorporated “non-mendicant” architectural elements—such as a polygonal apse—into their own church designs in order to accommodate specific spatial, liturgical, or aesthetic needs and desires. This appropriation of “non-mendicant” elements into Franciscan and Dominican church design would profoundly affect the appearance of mendicant sites in the Veneto.

\textbf{2.3.2 Vicenza}

Surviving documents record a Franciscan community in Vicenza by 1216, but the friars were not associated with a specific place until 1222 or 1224, when they received the small oratory located outside the walls dedicated to S. Salvatore from Bishop Nicolò Maltraversi.\textsuperscript{71} The Franciscans re-dedicated the building to St. Francis in 1227, and began to reconstruct it in the following decade. This early site no longer survives, but a will from 1243 donated 100 \textit{lire} towards the Franciscan building program, thereby

\textsuperscript{70} Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 459-460. These sites reflect the additive process of architectural additions and extensions stressed by Bruzelius in “The Dead Come to Town.” Dellwing also includes S. Fermo in Verona on his list of innovative variations on this type as one of the first sites to employ a polygonal apse. I believe, however, that the addition of a polygonal chapel at S. Fermo requires separate consideration, since the church, unlike his other examples, is an example of a renovation rather than an \textit{ex novo} project.

\textsuperscript{71} Archivio Sartori II/2, 2272.
indicating that reconstructions were still in progress at this time.\textsuperscript{72} The brothers remained at S. Francesco until 1280, when they transferred to the small site of S. Lorenzo, one of seven chapels annexed to the cathedral inside the city walls, and began to renovate their new building in the same year.\textsuperscript{73} This was an important move for the community, and I consider the advantages and implications of central locations in the following chapter.

In contrast to their earlier establishments in other Veneto cities, the Dominicans arrived in Vicenza relatively late. The earliest record of the friars in the city is 1259; given the death of the tyrant Ezzolino in the same year, it seems political unrest and instability probably prevented or at least discouraged their earlier settlement.\textsuperscript{74} Significantly, even before their arrival, plans for a Dominican community in Vicenza were already in the works: the last testament of Bishop Manfredo from 1253 left the friars an impressive legacy that included a major part of his library and a generous contribution for a future construction project.\textsuperscript{75} Although Bishop Manfredo was the Dominicans’ first major patron in Vicenza, even predating the arrival of the friars, his successor, Bartolomeo Breganze—a Dominican friar and the nephew of pro-mendicant bishop of Verona, Jacopo Breganze—is traditionally credited with the foundation of the Dominican church. His repute as primary benefactor is largely because of his generous donation to the church that included a thorn relic from the Crown of Thorns, along with other significant financial contributions to the building campaign.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{72} ASVic, S. Lorenzo, b. 843, perg. 12; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2280. The testator left funds “ab honorem dei et religionem fratum minorum debant emere terram in leonico ubi eis melius visum fuerit in qua domus et ecclesia ad receptionem fratum minorum debeant edificari.”

\textsuperscript{73} Archivio Sartori II/2, 2275-2276; Menesello, \textit{I francescani}, 34. The transfer to S. Lorenzo is recorded on July 13, 1280. The friars received “ecclesiam seu capellam Sancti Laurentii saepe dictam cum omnibus aedificijus suis, et Appendicijus, Cimiterio, Platea, et Cassibus domorum.”

\textsuperscript{74} Hinnesbusch, \textit{History of the Dominican Order}, 255.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. This construction project began in 1260 and is discussed in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{76} For this attribution, see for example, Hinnesbusch, \textit{History of the Dominican Order}, 25; and D. Bortolan,
Significantly, two separate bishops as well as the commune patronized the early Dominican community in Vicenza. This indicates that although they were relative latecomers to the city, the friars already possessed a certain amount of power and prestige. Bourdua proposed that in Vicenza, the Dominicans were more popular than the Franciscans, and their favor with the local laity seems to have been, at least in part, tied to their acquisition of the highly venerated thorn relic.\textsuperscript{77}

\textbf{2.3.3 Padua}

The Franciscan community at Padua was by far the most illustrious in the region because of its associations with St. Anthony. Their earliest site was the double monastery of S. Maria d’Aracella, established around 1220 and located outside the city walls near the Porta di Codolonga.\textsuperscript{78} Around 1228, under the leadership of Anthony and perhaps at the request of the bishop, the friars transferred to the chapel of S. Maria Mater Domini inside the city.\textsuperscript{79} After Anthony’s death and rapid canonization in 1231, the friars began to reconstruct the small chapel of S. Maria Mater Domini into the impressive Convento del Santo dedicated to Anthony. The present-day structure is the result of numerous enlargements and modifications, but scholars have suggested that the plan of the first

\textsuperscript{77} L. Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage of the Arts in the Veneto During the Later Middle Ages” (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1991), 113-114. In addition to the number of important burials that occurred at S. Corona (most of which occurred in the fourteenth century), Bourdua cites the relationship between the bishop and the Dominicans and donations from the \textit{collegio notarile}, which were five times greater to the Dominicans than to the Franciscans, as evidence for their popularity.

\textsuperscript{78} Archivio Sartori II/2, 5. Some traditions claim that Francis founded this first house on his way back from the Holy Land. See for example Menesello, \textit{I francescani}, 33; J. Moorman, \textit{Medieval Franciscan Houses} (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 1983), 638-639.

\textsuperscript{79} Although the friars were later installed in S. Maria Mater Domini, which later became S. Antonio, the early convent of the Aracella continued as a community of both friars and sisters, until 1509, the year the convent was abandoned. The friars’ role here, however, was minor in both size and duties; they were probably in residence primarily to administer the sacraments to the women. For more on the circumstances of this kind of arrangement, see Knox, \textit{Creating Saint Clare}, 89-97.
church emulated the basic, single-nave design of the upper church at Assisi, perhaps as a way of associating the sanctity of Anthony with that of the founder saint.\textsuperscript{80} Similarities between these plans notwithstanding, the church of S. Antonio was constructed on a much larger scale than S. Francesco and probably once featured a wooden rather than a vaulted ceiling (figure 18). Records reveal that work on the church had begun by 1240, and a large portion of the early church was probably complete by the mid 1250s.\textsuperscript{81}

Surviving documents record a Dominican community in Padua at a site near the church of S. Giovanni in 1226.\textsuperscript{82} In 1229, the Dominican friars constructed a simple church dedicated to S. Agostino, which no longer survives; the first phase of work was finished by 1237.\textsuperscript{83} Probably due in part to the volatile political situation under Ezzolino, construction progressed slowly until circa 1258, when a plenary indulgence from Alexander IV to the members of the confraternity of the Holy Virgin of S. Agostino revived work on the building program.\textsuperscript{84} Towards the end of the century, communal contributions funded a substantial part of the friars’ enlargements to this early space, as discussed in the following chapters.

2.3.4 Venice

The earliest reference to the Dominican Order in Venice appears in a document

\textsuperscript{80} Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 459; Schenkluhn, Architettura, 59-61. A few studies have expressed doubt that the first church plan featured a unified nave and transept, such as G. Lorenzoni, “Cenni per una storia della fondazione della basilica,” and F. Zuliani, “Alcune note sul ruolo della scultura ornamentale al santo,” both in L’edificio del Santo di Padova, ed. G. Lorenzoni (Vicenza: Neri Pozza 1981), 29 and 180, respectively.

\textsuperscript{81} Schenkluhn, Architettura, 59. See also M. Salvatori, “Costruzione della basilica dall’origine al secolo XIV,” in L’edificio del Santo, 31-81.

\textsuperscript{82} L. Gargan, Lo studio teologico e la biblioteca dei Dominicani a Padova nel tre e quattrocento (Padua: Antenore, 1971), 3. The Dominicans are recorded in October 1226 “in viridario sive broilo quondam dominii Dainsii canonici Paduani, sito apud civitatem Padue supra flumen, non longe ab ecclesia Sancti Iohannis.”


\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
from S. Agostino in Padua dated to 1226. This text mentions a certain “Martinus prior fratum predicatorium Venetiarum comorantium,” indicating that by this time there was a community of Dominican friars living in the lagoon. This early group was associated with an oratory dedicated to S. Martino until 1234, when Doge Jacopo Tiepolo gave the friars an enormous piece of land near the Grand Canal (although it most of it was submerged in the lagoon) that contained the oratory of S. Daniele. Almost immediately, the friars began to erect their new convent Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, with financial help from the lay public, perhaps motivated in part by Innocent IV’s bull of 1246 that extended an indulgence to all who helped with construction. Ghedini suggested that the early Dominican church featured a simple single-nave design and wooden covering (perhaps with vaulting in the east end), and may have resembled the first church of S. Nicolò in Treviso.

Documents attest to the presence of several Franciscan communities in Venice in the first half of the thirteenth century. One community may have settled at the peripheral site of S. Francesco alla Vigna as early as 1227. In 1233, Venetian citizen Giacomo Michiel gave the Franciscans an island in the lagoon that would later bear the name of S.

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87 Ibid. See also Schenkluhn, Architettura, 187. Both Schenkluhn and Lorenzoni agree that construction of the first Dominican complex began around 1246. Already beginning in 1234, however, the friars were receiving testamentary bequests for their building program (see for example the testament of Bartolomeo Barozzi, ASVen, Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, b.B, fasc. I, 1234). Lorenzoni, “Le chiese”; Merotto Ghedini, “San Giovanni e Paolo,” 115 (she does not cite the original source).
88 Ibid.
89 Annales Minores, vol. 2, 138; Moorman, Franciscan Houses, 503; Archivio Sartori II/2, 1742. Wadding mentions a Franciscan house in Venice in 1220, but gives no firm evidence of its existence. Moorman suggests that this site was very small, with approximately six friars in residence. Sartori dates this community later, suggesting that the oldest Venetian sites are S. Maria Gloriosa (begun by 1236) and S. Deserto.
Francesco del Deserto. The following year, another lay patron, Giovanni Badoer left the Franciscans a piece of property in the *contrada* of S. Tomà, to the east of the Grand Canal and next to the ex-Benedictine convent that the friars were already occupying. Adjacent acquisitions of land in 1236 and 1238 enlarged this original donation, and construction of the new convent of S. Maria Gloriosa began on this site within the next two decades. The Franciscans drastically rebuilt and enlarged their convent in the fourteenth century, but excavations and archeological analysis reveal that the original church was approximately 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. Valenzano proposed that the first structure may have also evoked the plan of the early church of S. Nicolò in Treviso (and thereby perhaps that of the local Dominican church begun only a few years earlier), featuring a single nave and a rectangular apse. Despite the modest proportions of the church, however, the friars may have required financial assistance with their building project, since Innocent IV granted a forty-day indulgence in 1252 for those contributing to the new Franciscan construction program.

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91 Archivio Sartori II/2, 1744 and 1742-1243. The land was “de confinio S. Iacobi di Luprio toto Ordini Fratrum Minorum, et eorum successoribus proprietatem iuxta aedes et Ecclesiam ubi habitabant ipsi Fratres Minores.” See also Lorenzoni, “Le chiese,” 105-107.
92 Archivio Sartori II/2, 1752-1753; Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 177. The 1236 addition was purchased by Daniele Foscari, the community’s procurator. Dellwing, Schenkluhn, and Valenzano believe most of the early building of the church was in the 1250s. See Dellwing, *Die Kirchenbauten*, 91; Schenkluhn, *Architettura*, 186-187; and G. Valenzano, “Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari,” in *L’architettura gotica veneziana*, 123-130. Alternatively, Moorman has proposed an earlier date, suggesting work was largely complete by circa 1234, and that rebuilding occurred between circa 1248 and 1251. Moorman, *Franciscan Houses*, 503 (Mooreman’s conclusions are drawn from *AFH* 25 (1932): 395, and *BF* I, 528, 580).
93 Valenzano, “Santa Maria Gloriosa,” 124. Excavations conducted under A. Scolari in the early twentieth century determined that the original façade was located at the present-day site of the lateral portal.
94 Ibid.
95 ASVen, S. Maria Gloriosa de Frari, b. 106; Archivio Sartori II/2, 1824. The indulgence stated: “...cum igitur sicut accepimus dilecti filij minister et fratrês minores Venetijs Ecclesiam domos et edifical alia ad opus fratrum vel sufficentiam inceperint edificare et ad consumationem horum edificiorum nec non ad vite necessaria consequence cum non nisi de fidelium elemosinis (praedicta civitatis venetiarium) et aliorum xpsi fidelium indigentis subsidiis adivari Universitatem vestram rogamus monemus et hortamur in domino ac in remissionem vobis iniuangimis peccatorum quatenus de bonis vobis a deo collatis pias elemosinas et
2.4 Early Clarissan Settlements in the Veneto

In contrast to the Franciscans and Dominicans whose settlement of the major cities of the region was contemporaneous, the “foundation” of Clarissan communities in the Veneto occurred slightly later and somewhat more sporadically. These foundations are also significantly less documented and studied than their male counterparts, in large part because none of these sites survive.

As I discuss more thoroughly in the following chapter, the earliest reference to a Clarissan community in Verona is 1224; two years later, the sisters are recorded at the convent of S. Maria delle Vergini, located outside the city walls. In Padua, the earliest Clarissan house is traditionally dated to 1220, although the group does not appear in documentation until 1231. As noted above, the sisters shared the double monastery of S. Maria d’Aracella (later named S. Antonio d’Aracella) with the Franciscans until the friars’ departure for S. Maria Mater Domini in 1229. Almost nothing is known of this early double monastery, with the exception that the monastic complex included a church building that contained numerous altars. The sisters remained at the Aracella until its destruction in 1517.

A group of Poor Clares may have been in Venice as early as 1224, but an official
community was not founded until ten years later.\textsuperscript{100} In 1233, a group of sisters settled in Treviso at S. Maria Mater Domini de Cella outside the city walls.\textsuperscript{101} A Clarissan community was established in Vicenza slightly later: the women were first recorded in the monastery of S. Maria della Cella, founded in 1244.\textsuperscript{102}

Knox has recently proposed that “the female movement needs to be understood broadly as centered on connections with the friars…[that] the participation of the friars was a critical marker of Franciscan identity to these medieval women.”\textsuperscript{103} As the following chapters will demonstrate, an important element of the religious life of the Clarissan community in Verona was indeed their relationship with the Franciscans, and this connection may have developed even prior to their formal institutionalization and claustration. Significantly, the affiliation between the Clares and Franciscans in Verona seems to have exceeded the traditional roles of material and pastoral care by the friars: evidence from surviving documents reveals that the Clares were also important agents of the Franciscan economy, suggesting that their relationship was characterized by a certain amount of reciprocity and perhaps even collaboration or partnership.

\textsuperscript{100} Moorman, \textit{Franciscan Houses}, 681.
\textsuperscript{101} D. Rando, “Minori e vita religiosa nella Treviso del Duecento,” in \textit{Minoritismo e centri veneti nel Duecento}, ed. G. Cracco (Trent: Gruppo Culturale Civis, 1983), 63-91. Rando noted that in the case of Treviso there is not enough surviving documentation to trace the development of the Clarissan community aside from their occupation of the existing convent of S. Maria Mater Domini (re-named S. Maria Mater Domini de Cella after 1236), located outside the walls, by 1232. Moorman and Wadding say that the community was later moved to a site within the city and was called S. Maria de Jesu, although he does not give a date for this relocation. The convent was reformed in 1439 and completely rebuilt in 1509. See Moorman, \textit{Medieval Franciscan Houses}, 674; \textit{Annales Minorum}, vol. 3, 123.
\textsuperscript{103} Knox, \textit{Creating Saint Clare}, 16.
3. The Early Franciscan, Dominican, and Clarissan Sites in Verona

3.1 Verona: The Medieval City

3.1.1 A Growing Population

Prior to an extensive discussion of the early mendicant settlements of Verona, it is important to consider some aspects of the medieval city to provide a contextual framework. At the beginning of the twelfth century, the city underwent a rapid economic transformation that not only dramatically increased its wealth, but also fostered the creation of new social groups, such as the non-noble elite mentioned in the first chapter. Despite the fertile agricultural land surrounding the city, economic activities of Verona centered on commerce, industry, and trade; by the end of the twelfth century, Verona had emerged as a bustling, thriving, and affluent metropolis. Local urban industries quickly developed, the most lucrative being the manufacture and export of fine woolen textiles, and Verona’s strategic location on the two trade routes of the Adige River and the Brenner Pass facilitated its rapid commercial growth.

The flourishing economy resulted in a dense medieval urban center, highly populated by merchants, artisans, and craftsmen. At the beginning of the twelfth century, there were approximately 10,000 people within the city walls, but by the 1250s, the population had more than doubled, with the number of inhabitants estimated between 20,000 and 25,000.\(^1\) In 1254, 6,464 Veronese citizens swore to uphold a treaty with

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Vicenza and Padova. This turnout may represent a reaction to the despot Ezzolino, but it also suggests that Verona was more heavily populated (or perhaps more patriotic?) than Pisa, Pistoia, and Bologna in the same period: in oaths taken in between 1219 and 1228, only 4,271 Pisans, 3,206 Pistoians, and 2,187 Bolognese signed treaties in their respective cities.

After the death of the tyrant Ezzolino in 1259, the political climate began to re-stabilize under the Della Scala rule beginning in 1262, which coincided with another surge of immigration into the city. By the 1320s, there were between 35,000 and 40,000 people living in the city, and this figure does not include the tens of thousands residing in *borghi* outside the walls. In the mid-fourteenth century, Verona was the same size as Padua, and these two towns seem to have consistently competed for the position as the second largest city of the Veneto. Venice was the largest: population estimates between 1336 and 1338 suggest 120,000 people in the city. The city of Treviso, in comparison, had approximately 10,000 people living within its walls in the middle of the fourteenth century.

The dramatic increase in Verona’s population was largely the result of immigration from the countryside, which was so frequent and overwhelming that the local government conceived various tax exemptions and credits as incentives to reverse

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3 Ibid. The figure for the Pisan populations comes from an oath taken in 1228; those of Pistoia and Bologna come from treaties from 1219.
5 Ibid., 94. Padua is also estimated to have had between 35,000 and 40,000 inhabitants in the mid fourteenth century.
6 Ibid., 93, 95. Herlihy positions this number in a wider Italian context: Verona was approximately half the size of Florence, whose population between 1336 and 1338 was comprised of an estimated 89,000 inhabitants.
7 B. Betto, “Topografia e società a Treviso nel Trecento” in Tommaso da Modena nel suo tempo, 89-106. This figure is based on documents from 1384, 1396, and 1397.
some of the population flow.\textsuperscript{8} The communal statutes from Verona from 1228 required immigrants from rural communes to pay the taxes of their original commune as long as they maintained property there.\textsuperscript{9} If, on the other hand, a townsperson left the city for the country, they were exempt from all Veronese taxes for five years. These edicts reveal that the rate of immigration into the city must have been, at periods, rather alarming to city officials.

\textbf{3.1.2 A Growing City}

Although there was a persistent, ongoing emphasis of the “old” city center and its associated economic and political powers, there was a simultaneous interest in and expansion of the city across the river and beyond the existing walls. The center lacked adequate space to accommodate the demographic swell, and Verona’s city walls were rebuilt several times between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries to accommodate these outlying zones and their inhabitants (figure 19).\textsuperscript{10} Once these formerly \textit{extra muros} lands

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\textsuperscript{8} Chiffoleau’s study on Avignon wills illustrates the massive numbers of people flooding into medieval cities at this time: he notes that in the mid-fourteenth century, sixty percent of Avignon testators were recent immigrants who had come to the city from other parts of France and Flanders. See J. Chiffoleau, “Perché cambia la morte nella regione di Avignone alla fine del medioevo,” \textit{Quaderni storici} 50 (1982), 459.


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were included within the city walls, they were quickly settled and urbanized. The incorporation of these outlying suburbs and *borghi* within the city proper had critical economic implications: a larger urban population increased the size of the labor force and the number of people from whom the city could collect taxes, but it also meant an increased consumption of resources.

During this period, despite its expansion well beyond the footprint of the antique city, the plan of Verona maintained the quadripartite organization established by its Roman predecessor (figure 20). Urban space on the right (west) bank of the Adige was separated into four quarters—Maggiore, Chiavica, Ferro, and Capitani—which were established in Antiquity but enlarged and subdivided into *contrade* in the Middle Ages (figure 21). Between 1134 and 1178, the construction of a new wall on the left (east) bank of the Adige enclosed a new quarter, Castello, within the urban space of the medieval city. This previously marginalized area became an important site for growth and development, particularly due to the influence of members of the new non-noble class, such as artisans, merchants, and aristocratic *milites*. Because these less populated, vast expanses of land held special appeal for those desiring large plots on which to build *palazzi* or religious houses, expansion of the left bank continued even beyond the walls of the quarter Castello. One of these suburbs, Campomarzo, became a preferred site for religious groups focused on abject poverty and charitable works, such as the Humiliati, by the late twelfth century. Campomarzo was also a secondary center of civic and economic activities: here the city established a fair and a market and used the

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11 Cangrande della Scala’s later expansion of the walls in 1327 was less motivated by population and more so by military defense and security, a response to the contemporary war with Padua.
13 Maccagnan, *Le clarisse*, 38. Between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Humiliati could be found in S. Paolo; beginning c. 1214, they were located in S. Cristoforo, also in Campomarzo.
open fields between the present day Ponte Navi and Ponte Aleardi for military exercises. Consequently, the left bank of the Adige—including the newly established Castello quarter and the areas outside its walls—developed into popular residential and religious sites over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Although the left side of the river experienced the most dramatic growth and urbanization in the Middle Ages, the more urban right bank also underwent significant expansion and development. As the city became more densely populated, areas initially outside of the walls—particularly around S. Fermo and S. Zeno—developed into major residential areas for the upper and merchant classes.\(^{14}\) Under communal and Della Scala rule, between 1134-1178 and 1323-1325 respectively, enlargements of the city walls incorporated these prestigious *borghi* within the civic nucleus.

In Verona, the processes of urbanization required certain adaptations and extensions to the city’s original Roman plan to accommodate the growing population, new needs, and functions of the medieval city. Much of the Roman plan was destroyed through the process of medieval “modernization”: new medieval centers, streets, and monuments imposed themselves over those of the antique city, and the ordered geometry of the Roman city gave way to a more irregular arrangement. These transformations notwithstanding, elements of the earlier Roman regularity were preserved, including the east-west and north-south thoroughfares of the Decumanus maximus and the Cardo maximus respectively. The civic and economic center of the medieval city, Piazza Erbe, was built on the site of the original Roman forum, which had served a similar function in its own time. Largely configured by twentieth-century renovations, Verona’s modern

centro storico very much follows the footprint of the Late Antique city (figure 22). The present grid-like configuration of the city and its streets is neither Roman nor medieval, but was instead imposed by post-World War II urban renovations attempting to return the centro storico to a cohesive, simplified, and legible space reminiscent of the orderly Roman grid.\textsuperscript{15}

Medieval Verona was probably radial in plan, but like its Roman predecessor, was arranged around the space of Piazza delle Erbe, the former site of the forum. Very little of the medieval plan survives, despite the medieval appearance of many buildings and piazza, which are also largely products of often deceptive modern restorations.\textsuperscript{16} The medieval deviation from the regularized Roman grid into a more “irregular” appearance does not, however, seem to have been indiscriminate or accidental. Frugoni’s description of a medieval city challenges traditional preconceptions of its urban space as a haphazardly arranged entity. He writes:

The cliché Italian city of the Middle Ages would include a circle of walls pressing tightly against small houses made of dark stone, jammed together and overshadowed by towers made of the same dark stone and laid out with whimsical disorder along tortuous narrow streets. In a word: picturesque. We can start by correcting a few things: the houses certainly did not present so dark a hue then, for their blackness is only the result of oxidation over time. Nor were they so crowded right from the start: often they got that way only in the late Middle Ages, the vitality that had once

\textsuperscript{15} For more on this topic, see D. Medina Lasansky, \textit{The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. 2004). Lasansky notes, however, that the restoration of Medieval/Renaissance buildings did not automatically occur upon establishment of Fascism. Before the Fascist regime, cities were undergoing monumental and architectural restorations. With Fascism, however, these restorative projects became institutionalized by the government and therefore directly served as political propaganda for the regime. Moreover, not all Italian cities were restored at the same time. Certain cities—arguably the more famous ones, or those with the most “potential,” such as Florence and Siena—were transformed almost immediately. Other cities, however, (and I would place Verona in this category) were slower to actually put the program into action. In Verona, the massive flooding of the Adige in 1882 combined with wartime destruction presented mid twentieth-century Verona an opportunity to restore historical monuments and reconfigure its urban landscape.

driven the cities to expand their circle of walls was exhausted, and the inhabitants preferred to use ground inside the walls previously occupied by gardens and courtyards to build new houses on. The irregularity of the street plan was sometimes forced upon the builders by the unevenness of the terrain...Another cause of the irregular street plan in some cases was an obstruction that has since vanished, like a stream that was later covered over, or a grove of trees that was cut down, or a garden or courtyard later filled with houses. So is that picturesque disorder an illusion? Is there really an authentic medieval science of urban design? Yes, of course—provided that certain factors are born in mind.  

Frugoni’s account suggests that the irregularity of a city’s medieval urban plan was neither accidental nor haphazard. He proposes that urbanization followed an “authentic medieval science of urban design” but notes that the topography of the land, including “unevenness of terrain” or other landscape “obstructions,” and patterns of growth and expansion largely controlled this design. Although certainly influenced by the earlier Roman city plan, geographical contours and limitations also affected the development of the medieval city. In addition to its fortified walls, the twisting Adige and its tributaries, the adjacent marshy, low-lying fields subject to flooding, the surrounding foothills of the Dolomites, and the bordering valleys played crucial roles in the shaping the city’s urban spaces. Frugoni emphasizes the role of geography in the configuration of the plan of a medieval city, and I will return to this concept as a critical factor in the design of mendicant convents in the following chapter.

In Verona, the combination of a quickly developing city plan and dense population must have resulted in narrow streets packed with houses, civic buildings, religious structures, and social spaces, at least in the urban center. Medieval town planning also appears to have been highly influenced by purpose: communal/civic, economic, residential, military, social, and religious functions manipulated spatial

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organization and use, and the medieval plan of Verona probably developed in ways to accommodate these specific purposes and activities.\(^{18}\) In addition to the contemporary population increase, earthquakes, like the one that leveled much of the city in 1117, and other acts of nature also provoked expeditious development of new areas and rapid construction of buildings.

A view of Verona from the end of the tenth century illustrates the congestion of the medieval center (figure 23). The city is portrayed as a jumble of towers, palazzi, and church facades, all surrounded by an imposing set of crenellated walls. The Adige River, which rages diagonally through the city center, is the most prominent feature.\(^{19}\) The image is not intended to function as a legible, representational guide to the city, as monuments and sites are placed in relationships that are purely fictional; instead, it offers a schematic rendering of the city’s urban character. The image is especially valuable for its depiction of important characteristics of the early medieval city that no longer survive, such as the fortified houses and towers that dominate the panorama of the illustration. (For example, although there were an estimated 700 towers in the city by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, only a handful of these structures remain today.\(^{20}\)) The view also accentuates the vertical quality of the architecture of the medieval city, an emphasis that is no longer a component in the present day.

The Adige was Verona’s primary “commodity,” around which the city’s trade-based economy revolved, and the central, unrealistic placement of the river in the image explicitly expresses its importance to and relationship with the city and its inhabitants.

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\(^{19}\) In the image, the Adige is passable only by a single bridge, which scholars have commonly identified as the Portus Veronensis, the early medieval precedent (in terms of location) to the Ponte Navi.

The river served as the principle route of transportation for goods and people, the center of the city’s economic activities, and a determiner of urban development. Verona’s renowned cloth production, for example, developed largely because of the city’s proximity to the river. Many of the processes of textile production including dying and washing required large amounts of water, and a major waterway was necessary to export the finished material. Practitioners of many other professions were also dependent upon the Adige for their livelihood, including fishermen, fish vendors, millers, merchants, tradesmen, and wood workers. Boat conductors would navigate their vessels up and down the river, importing groceries, house wares, and more expensive products such as salt, wood, weapons, fine fabrics, olive oil, cheese, and precious metals for Verona’s wealthier citizens. At the port located near the Ponte Navi, local merchants and producers would re-load the barges with large quantities of cloth and other locally grown or produced luxury items intended for foreign cities and territories. In the view of the medieval city, the untamed, animated Adige also conveys the potential for violence and destruction, reminding the viewer that the very source of Verona’s prosperity carried the latent potential for devastation.

The image of Verona also portrays numerous monumental forms of churches and towers, suggesting a city of first-rate, large-scale architecture and staunch civic pride.

Surviving records of beautification and improvement programs throughout the period

21 R. Brenzoni, “I mulini a Verona dall’alto medio evo al secolo XIV,” in Atti dell’Accademia d’agricoltura, scienze e lettere di Verona 1 (1924): 2-6; L. Castellazi, “Uomini e attività urbane in rapporto all’Adige tra XV e XVIII secolo,” in Una città e il suo fiume, 211-241. Mills are recorded in Verona as early as the ninth century. In the Middle Ages, most mills were located in the contrada of Chiavica, near S. Anastasia; in the fourteenth century, S. Zeno had at least nineteen mills in operation in the city, most of them were likely in this area.


23 Ibid.
attest to Verona’s high standards of aesthetics in city planning and building. In the twelfth century, the city initiated a period of intense construction, renovation, and repair of many of its civic buildings, palazzi, and churches. The renovation of important monumental sites continued into the following centuries, and by 1225, the commune had established the ufficio dei procuratori, whose sole responsibility was to encourage urban growth and safeguard and preserve local sites. The communal statues from the years 1228, 1276, and 1328 also declare that important roads must be paved, a high standard of cleanliness be maintained, and important antique monuments be repaired. The edicts specify that the following roads must consistently receive maintenance and remain in excellent condition: 1) from the market to the Ponte Navi; 2) from Porta Borsari to S. Anastasia, corresponding with the Roman Decumanus maximus; and 3) from Ponte Nuovo to the lower part of the piazza. These roads were clearly the major thoroughfares linking the city and the piazza, and as I will show in the following chapters, it is significant that the “second round” of Franciscan and Dominican settlements in the city were located along these important and carefully maintained arteries. The heaviest traffic into and through the city followed the routes between the Porta Borsari and Piazza Erbe (the Decumanus maximus or the present day Via Corso Porta Borsari) and from Piazza Erbe to the Ponte Navi (the Cardo maximus, or present day Via Capello). These thoroughfares encompassed the two most important poles of the

24 Marconi, “Verona: Lo sviluppo storico,” 50. This program included renovations on the churches of S. Zeno, S. Lorenzo, and S. Eufemia.
26 Ibid. The 1228 Statues, for example, designated 500 lire for repair and restoration of the Arena. For commentary on and transcription of the statutes, see Sancassani, “Aspetti giuridici,” 171-198.
economic activities in the city: Piazza Erbe and the Ponte Navi, the bridge and location of the main port.

The same statutes and other contemporary civic acts also provided financial assistance for the construction of new churches and the restoration of religious sites in disrepair. The state of these monuments and thoroughfares were visible, physical signifiers of the city’s status, wealth, and power. These kinds of beautification programs were not only symbolic evidence of the growth of the city (both economically and in the number of residents), but they indicate high aesthetic standards and a surplus of wealth, as such projects were costly. These projects also reveal that the citizens of Verona had a great sense of civic pride for their city and its monuments.

3.1.3 Piazza Erbe: The Center of Economic Life

As noted above, the economic emphasis of medieval cities created a new division of space to distinguish among manual labor, professional work, residence, agriculture, and—perhaps most importantly to the mendicant orders—mercantilism and trade. In Verona, Piazza Erbe was the center of economic, social, and political activities, as well as a site for religious ritual and ceremony. As noted above, the plan and location of Piazza Erbe were based on the Roman forum, but modified in the Middle Ages according to the changing needs of contemporary urban and civic life. The piazza assumed the typical configuration of a communal square when it became the seat of the commune in the late twelfth century, combining economic and civic functions within a single space (figure 24).

29 Di Lieto, “Una piazza comunale,” 245. The earliest descriptions of Piazza Erbe are found in the late eighth-century text, Versus de Verona (see Chapter 5, note 4.) References to Verona’s earlier markets are scattered and fragmented, although there were smaller markets and annual fairs held near S. Zeno, S. Michele in Campagna, and in the piazza of the Duomo.
As the center of civic and economic life, Piazza Erbe was the site of some of Verona’s most important buildings (figure 25). The city constructed the communal palace in the 1190s, which, like most Italian civic buildings, features a rectangular plan, a portico on ground level, an internal courtyard, and an imposing tower.\(^\text{30}\) Constructed by 1254 and enlarged in 1273, the Domus Nova was constructed as the principle residence and office of the podestà and his associates, as well as the seat for assembly of the minor counsels; here, all laws and statues governing the city were debated and passed. Connected to the Domus Nova by an overhead walkway was the Domus Bladorum, built between 1277 and 1301. The Domus Bladorum was primarily a site of shops and vendors, although part of the building functioned as the public granary by the early fourteenth century.\(^\text{31}\) A variety of goods were sold in the stalls here, including hay, wood, coal, animals, cloth, food, household wares, spices and bread. The image of the shopkeepers from Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fresco *Good Government* in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena may provide a comparative illustration of daily life among these stalls (figure 26).

At the head of Piazza Erbe was the loggia of the moneychangers, and the area directly in front of these booths was reserved for vendors of produce, meat, and oil.\(^\text{32}\) The Torre della Stadera, located opposite the Domus Nova, became the seat of the customs in the second half of the fourteenth century and the place where prices and

\(^{30}\) Di Lieto, “Una piazza comunale,” 248.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 252-253. There were two types of counters or booths used by vendors: those that were fixed and those that were mobile. Both of these types were governed by rules regarding placement (distance between stalls, size, etc.), and covering type.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 248-249 and 251-253. This site was enlarged and renovated by the Maffei family, who constructed their home in the upper loggia of the building in the 1390s. The configuration of the market and its featured goods changed slightly over time according to perceived health or fire hazards. For example, the butchers were established across from S. Tomasio towards the end of the thirteenth century and by 1298, they were prohibited from selling meat anywhere else.
weights were controlled and adjusted.\textsuperscript{33} Next to the Torre and across from the communal palace was the Domus Mercatorum, the official seat of Verona’s legal and commercial activities.\textsuperscript{34}

Despite the economic functions of the medieval city, Tagliaferri argued that it was the religious buildings that primarily defined the topography of Verona in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{35} Tagliaferri’s point seems particularly explicit in the tenth-century view discussed above, in which churches of varying sizes and heights dominate the panorama of the city; the research of Miller has identified a building boom of ecclesiastical institutions in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, attesting to Verona’s great religiosity in the period.\textsuperscript{36} The Duomo, the seat of the bishop and his canons, located just beyond Piazza Erbe, dominated the city’s pre-mendicant religious topography. The Benedictine monasteries of S. Zeno, S. Maria in Organo, Santi Nazaro e Celeso, and S. Fermo Maggiore were other prominent religious sites. Together, these churches served as the nuclei of Veronese religious life until the arrival of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the 1220s.

The recent studies of Varanini and Gasparini have revealed that medieval Verona was a city rich in religious initiatives, including those organized by lay individuals.\textsuperscript{37} The late twelfth and early thirteenth-century religious topography included foundations of the Humiliati, numerous lay confraternities, and hospital initiatives, which indicates that the

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 250.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. The upper spaces of the building were managed by the Ribaldi family beginning in the mid-thirteenth century and these spaces also served as lodging for foreign merchants doing business in the city. The Ribaldi family was not only responsible for their lodging; they were likewise accountable for the merchants’ behavior while in the city.

\textsuperscript{35} A. Tagliaferri, “Per una tipologia degli insediamenti ecclesiastici a Verona,” in Chiese e monasteri a Verona, 3.


citizens of the city, like those of so many others, were already somewhat predisposed to the idea of organized religion in support of humility and voluntary poverty. Thus, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Veronese were already “experimenting” with new religious enterprises and opportunities, and it was precisely this openness towards new religious groups, especially those with a distinctly lay character, that may have encouraged the Franciscans and Dominicans to settle in the city in the 1220s.

Although religion was an important element of medieval public and private life, Verona’s religious sites and activities were geographically decentralized. While a large proportion of ecclesiastical institutions were found in the urban center, some of the city’s most powerful churches were located beyond its walls, such as the Benedictine monastery of S. Zeno. Other religious-based charitable institutions, such as hospitals or leper houses run by pious laymen and women, were also relegated outside the walls for sanitary reasons. Whereas Verona’s economic activities occurred within a centralized sector, its religious ones were dispersed throughout the city.

As Le Goff has noted, the medieval city was both a space of inclusion and exclusion. The presence of fortified walls and the act of locking the gate at night served to protect the city’s inhabitants while keeping out the “undesirables.” The liminal space beyond the walls was a place of danger and marginalization: it was outside the walls where thieves lurked and pillagers ransacked homes and property. The sick and the extremely poor were kept outside the city’s fortifications in order to reduce exposure and

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38 The first Humiliati foundation was at S. Maria della Ghiara (outside the city walls); the community was already flourishing by the 1220s. See for example, Castagnetti, “Aspetti politici,” 78. Early lay confraternities included those associated with the canons of S. Marco di Mantova, S. Spirito, S. Maria dell’Arcarotta, S. Martino al Corneto, and S. Filippo in Sacco. See De Sandre Gasparini, “Itinerari duecenteschi.”

decrease the potential health hazard for the enclosed residents. The boundaries that served to safeguard the residents likewise excluded the other, marginalized members of society.

It was in this peripheral realm beyond the city’s walls that the first Franciscan, Dominican, and Clarissan settlements in Verona occurred. Although the Franciscans and Dominicans would eventually move to sites within the city center and change the urban landscape through the construction of their own monumental convents, their early locations outside the walls reflected their initial association with the disenfranchised members of society. To better understand the later phases of mendicant buildings in Verona, the monumental construction of the mid-thirteenth century must be contextualized with a close study of the friars’ initial settlements. The friars’ humble beginnings in Verona and elsewhere testify to their early commitment to apostolic poverty, humility, and simplicity, and provide a marked contrast to their later architectural developments within the city center.

3.2 The Early Franciscans in Verona

3.2.1 A Note on Terminology

There are numerous difficulties one confronts when attempting to construct and organize a narrative of early Franciscan settlement in Verona (or elsewhere), the first being the informal organizational structure of the institution. As previously noted, the first Franciscan communities were characterized by an informal, “unincorporated” quality, and thus the term “founding” seems too concrete to describe the kind of developmental and sequential processes by which the friars arrived and settled in a city.

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40 Frugoni, A Day in a Medieval City, 77. Lepers were among those permanently excluded from the urban nucleus.
Further complicating an investigation of the beginnings of the Franciscan movement in Italy—in addition to the aforementioned lack of material and textual records and the persistence of foundation legends—are references testifying to the presence of “fratres” (and “sorores”) in the city without specifically designating them as Franciscan.\footnote{Pellegrini, “La prima fraternitas,” 17.} Pellegrini suggested that despite perceivable, historically significant differences between the Franciscans and other apostolic groups such as the Humiliati, there was probably little distinction between these organizations in their early stages from the perspective of the lay public.\footnote{See note 37.} It is thus entirely possible that the earliest Franciscan friars in Verona could have been confused with other “new” religious initiatives. On the other hand, Jacques of Vitry’s testimony from 1216 presents the Franciscans as a radically distinctive religious movement. His letters record the presence of

Men and women, giving up everything to flee the world for Christ; these people are called Lesser Brothers (“fratres minores”) and Lesser Sisters (“sorores minores”). They are held in high esteem by the Pope and the cardinals; they have no concern whatever for worldly matters, but with fervent desire and vehement striving they work every single day to draw souls that are in peril away from the vanities of the world and to bring these along with themselves.\footnote{Jacques of Vitry, Lettres, 107-114. See also Little, Religious Poverty, 150.}

The combination of papal sanction and the term “lesser” is especially important here, as these qualities separated them from earlier groups with similar expressions of piety. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the terms most commonly used to identify members of the Franciscan Order most frequently contain additional references to their state of poverty or humility, such as “fratres minores,” or “pauperes minores.” The more simple terminology, “fratre,” may instead indicate membership in a confraternity or another apostolic or charitable congregation. Although this word could
also suggest a Franciscan presence, it is nearly impossible to identify a community as specifically “Franciscan” without a reference such as “fratres minores” that clearly denotes it as such. The following study of the settlement of the Franciscan Order in Verona focuses on the sites where surviving documentation indicates an expressly Franciscan presence.

3.2.2 Early Franciscan Missions and the Church of S. Gabriele in Verona

Although the earliest Franciscan brothers, their sites, and their activities in Verona are difficult to survey, surviving documents record two distinct communities outside the city walls in the 1220s, as seen in the map in figure 27.\textsuperscript{44} The most commonly discussed early Franciscan settlement in Verona is the former leper hospital of S. Croce, given to the Franciscans by the bishop in 1225. Approximately five years later, the friars constructed a church on this site dedicated to St. Francis, and they seem to have maintained this site until their relocation to S. Fermo in 1260.\textsuperscript{45} I will return to the church of S. Croce/S. Fermo in the following section.

Although scholars have traditionally considered S. Croce as the “first” Franciscan community in the city, testamentary evidence indicates at least one additional settlement of friars active through the mid 1240s. In addition to the group at S. Croce/S. Francesco, I discuss these documented communities as “early,” rather than “the first,” groups of Franciscans. As I noted above, the lack of records combined with the transient nature of Francis’s earliest followers leaves open the possibility that small groups of homeless friars might have been present in Verona prior to their documentation in the 1220s.\textsuperscript{45} A few references to the post-Franciscan uses of and activities at S. Croce/S. Francesco and S. Gabriele in the mid thirteenth century survive. The Franciscans presumably maintained the convent of S. Croce/S. Francesco until their official occupation of S. Fermo. Once abandoned by the Franciscans, the complex was given to the brothers and sisters of the Order of S. Marco di Mantova (the specific date of their occupation is unknown). In 1276, provincial minister Friar Albrigetto di Padova passed the church to the Humiliati. That the Franciscan provincial minister was the one to transfer this church to the Humiliati suggests that the Order still maintained the rights to the convent at this time. The precise arrangement is unclear, but the Franciscans may have been renting or “lending” their early site to the Mantovan canons of S. Marco, while the larger body of the Order (Province) maintained the property. For further reading, see Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093, 2100; Menesello, I francescani, 32.
there was a community associated with the church and convent of S. Gabriele by 1229, although this may have occurred as early as circa 1221. The last explicit reference to a Franciscan presence at S. Gabriele is from the year 1253, although references to “fraters” not specifically designated as Franciscans appear throughout the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, the convent itself does not survive: the date of its construction, architectural plan, and the religious identification of the male and/or female congregation who occupied the space prior to the Franciscans remain unknown. However, documents have allowed scholars to identify its location on the left bank of the Adige, outside the city walls up on the hill of S. Pietro, an area that overlooks the city center.

The small amount of surviving documentation on this site and its early Franciscan community is perhaps one explanation for its rare appearance and lack of critical consideration in the literature. Alternatively, scholars may simply have found S. Croce more interesting: its connection with the bishop, the later architectural modifications of the friars, and the surviving, although heavily restored, church building provides more “substance” with which one can analyze the character of this early community. The few studies that refer to S. Gabriele usually mention the site only in passing, and frequently minimize or dismiss its associations with the Franciscan Order.

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46 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093. Sartori believes this community was almost assuredly in place by 1221.
47 Ibid., 2100; G. Sandri, “Un ‘locus’ francescano a S. Gabriele di Verona, nel 1229,” *Le Venezie francescane* 2 (1933): 60; O. Menesello, *I francescani*, 32; and Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi,” 145, n. 112. Although the last explicit reference to a Franciscan community at S. Gabriele is from 1253, some have suggested that the Franciscan Order retained possession of S. Gabriele (and perhaps shared the site with another religious group) until their transfer to S. Fermo in 1260. In the late thirteenth century (1281), the Dominicans of S. Anastasia seem to have received control of S. Gabriele, but a document from 1295 cites a friar named Tommaso, a member of the Benedictine Order, as the prior of S. Gabriele (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Nunziatura veneta*, n. 6295).
48 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093.
49 There are a few exceptions to this. Varanini discusses S. Gabriele, but he frames the convent as secondary to S. Croce, and suggests that rather than being a community of friars, it perhaps housed confraternity members related to S. Croce (“Per la storia,” 106-108). Sandri also discusses S. Gabriele, but only as a *locus* or temporary place of residence rather than relatively enduring settlement. See Sandri, “Un
describes S. Gabriele as a short-term *locus* rather than a permanent settlement, or suggests that its occupants were confraternity members rather than Franciscans.\textsuperscript{50} In his analysis of early Franciscan writings, however, Short observed that in the earliest texts of the Order’s tradition (between circa 1220-1244) every early Franciscan settlement is described as either a *locus* (place) or *eremus* (which translates as both “wilderness” and “hermitage” in this context).\textsuperscript{51} The modern use of the term to imply a “lesser” or secondary Franciscan community is therefore historically inaccurate. The marginalization of S. Gabriele is perhaps best summarized in Sandri’s claim that the early friars resided “exclusively” at S. Croce, a conclusion that has curiously become an undisputed part of the narrative of Franciscan settlement in Verona.\textsuperscript{52} Given the often provisional and fragile nature of early Franciscan settlements, this is an unsupported assumption.

Is it possible to reconstruct the arrival of the friars to Verona? Thirteenth-century chronicler Parisius de Cereta recorded that *Podestà* Guillelmus Rangonus welcomed members of the Franciscan Order into the city in 1219, but he does not indicate where these friars were living at this point, if indeed there was a community in the city in this year.\textsuperscript{53} In 1221, Friar Caesar of Speyer purportedly led a religious mission of at least

\textsuperscript{50} Many scholars including Sandri, Gasparini, Varanini, and Pellegrini use the term *locus* in their work, but Pellegrini is the only one who has provided a useful definition of the term in its modern (ahistorical and problematic) context. He states that the word *locus* distinguishes between various categories or types of settlement, describing a place where, according to Pellegrini, one might find friars rather than a place of friars (Pellegrini, “Gli insediamenti,” 565). For further reading see also Sandri “Un ‘locus’ francescano”; Varanini, “Per la storia”; and Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi.”


eleven ministers and fifteen lay brothers through northern Italy into Germany. On this mission, Friar Caesar and his companions probably traveled through the Veneto, depositing brethren in the major urban centers of the region to organize new communities and recruit members. Sartori suggested that although the original intention of Friar Caesar was to establish a convent in Trento, the mission passed through Verona in 1221 and decided to found a community there first. According to Sartori, this early community would have been located at S. Gabriele.

If the first Franciscan community in Verona did indeed result from this missionary expedition, it is impossible to determine how large this initial settlement would have been, although it seems probable that the initial group was small, perhaps around five or six friars. Documents name three of Friar Caesar’s early companions: Friar Guiseppe of Treviso, Friar Giacomo of Treviso and Friar Emmanuele of Verona. Significantly, these companions are all men from the Veneto region, indicating that at least some members this missionary expedition were from the areas the friars sought to evangelize. One must also assume that the relatively small size of the missionary team meant that any communities “founded” by this group probably depended heavily on local recruitment, as indeed the name of Friar Emmanuele suggests.

The associations between the missionary expedition of Friar Caesar and the site of

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54 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093; L. Wadding, “Nuovi documenti su Fra Gabriele da Verona,” Le Venezie francescane 2 (1932): 108-114. This expedition is thought to have attempted to establish fraternal communities in the major northern Italian and German cities.
55 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093. Although more a feasible explanation for settlement than intervention by Saint Francis, the narrative of Friar Caesar contradicts Sartori’s earlier claim attributing Veronese foundation to Francis.
56 Ibid.
57 Freed, The Friars, 26-27. Friar Caesar of Speyer was a German cleric who had been converted in the Holy Land and appointed as provincial minister. He chose from ninety volunteers a select group of eleven clerics and fifteen laymen, including Thomas of Celano, John of Piancarpino, Jordan of Giano, German clerics Barnabas and Conrad, and laymen Benedict of Soest and Henry of Swabia.
S. Gabriele are purely speculative: no documentation survives to link concretely the missionaries with this early site.\textsuperscript{58} The first documented reference to the group of friars at S. Gabriele appears in a will from February 4, 1229 which records a bequest of 10 soldi to the “fratribus minoribus Sancti Gabrielis” by a woman named Bellissima.\textsuperscript{59} This and another donation from 1244 are the only surviving records of a specifically Franciscan community at S. Gabriele. Despite the scarce documentation of this site, the community at S. Gabriele nonetheless played an important role in the process of Franciscan settlement in Verona, and therefore deserves consideration, along with S. Croce, within the larger context of the Order and its contemporary growth and expansion.

The missionary expedition led by Friar Caesar—during which the establishment of the community at S. Gabriele may have occurred—began in 1221, the same year that Francis’s first Rule was approved by the papacy. Even before Francis’s Order received official papal sanction, the number of his followers was rapidly increasing. By 1217, Franciscan communities had developed in many cities of northern and central Italy, such as Cortona, Foglino, Gubbio, Milan and Bologna. Significantly, most of the early recruits to the order were Italian. This factor combined with the peninsula’s urban predisposition towards “new” penitential and devotional movements, assured recognition and acceptance in most Italian towns for Francis’s followers.\textsuperscript{60}

The administration of fraternal communities was not yet fully organized, nor could those in charge keep up with the Order’s rapid expansion. The absence of an institutional framework initially resulted in significant setbacks for the friars as they attempted to establish communities beyond the familiar Italian territories of Umbria and

\textsuperscript{58} Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093
\textsuperscript{59} February 4, 1229, ASVer, S. Maria delle Vergini, reg. 2; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100.
\textsuperscript{60} See for example, Lawrence, The Friars, 43.
Tuscany. Between 1217 and 1219, groups of friars sent to Germany, France, Spain, and Hungary were met with hostility or disinterest; in Germany the brothers, unprepared for the local language, eventually abandoned their mission and returned to the General Chapter.\textsuperscript{61} Five friars sent to Morocco suffered martyrdom under the local Moslem ruler.\textsuperscript{62} Although one member of Friar Caesar’s party, Brother Jordan of Giano, lamented “the time to send them had not yet come,” Lawrence reasoned that the early Franciscan missionary failures had less to do with divine timing, and more to do with a general lack of information and elementary planning.\textsuperscript{63} Lawrence instead suggested that Francis lacked the foresight to seek contacts in the proposed areas of settlement, ensure traveling parties had proper accreditation, or account for linguistic problems.\textsuperscript{64} Expeditions dispatched after 1220, including the group led by Friar Caesar, occurred under the practical guidance of Minister General Elias and Cardinal Ugolino. These missionaries carried official letters of recommendation from Pope Honorius III and included at least one brother who knew the language spoken in the territory of destination; with prudent planning, friars were eventually welcomed in Germany, France, England, and other established western European centers.\textsuperscript{65}

Despite their acceptance in new cities and territories, the physical journey and process of settlement remained a grueling experience. Friar Jordan of Giano, recalling

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 43-44, 159; Little, \textit{Religious Poverty}, 159. There was not a single German speaker on the Franciscan mission to Germany: quickly realizing that the word “\textit{ja}” produced instant results when begging for food, the friars’ repetition of the term in response to suspicious questioning lead to imprisonment, corporal punishment, and expulsion from the city as heretics. Little cites the fact that they were sometimes mistaken for “heretical Lombards” is a point worth noting, emphasizing the very fine line that separation the actions and appearance of the Franciscans from those of heretics. He also states that in France the earliest Franciscans were confused with Albigensians.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{65} Lawrence, \textit{The Friars}, 44.
the arduous trials of the route into Germany, wrote of the excruciating hunger suffered by the traveling brothers. In the mid-thirteenth century, curiosity about the mendicant formae vita encouraged Thomas of Cantimpré to accompany a group of Dominican friars through France to observe and understand how they lived and worked. He recounts:

I arrived on foot in some town which I did not know, so tired from the journey that I thought my heart would soon fail from my excessive weakness. The friars went to the priest’s house, but could not get even a crust of the very black bread which the servants of his household were using. From there they went far and wide through the town and got nothing, except for a piece of grain bread from a poor little lady who lived on the edge of the town.

As both anecdotes reveal, medieval travel was arduous and physically draining; for the mendicants, acquiring the necessary provisions for sustenance and survival created additional challenges.

It is in the context of new and improved missionary efforts after 1220 as well as the physical hardships of contemporary travel that one must examine the beginnings of S. Gabriele, S. Croce, and their fraternal communities. These early Veronese convents must also be considered within the framework of St. Francis’s own directions for settlement, recorded prior to his death in 1226. These instructions provide additional insight as to how early communities like these would have been established:

When the brothers go to any city where they have no house and they find someone who wants to give them enough land for them to build a house and have a garden and what is necessary for them, they ought first to consider how much land will suffice, always bearing in mind the holy poverty which we have promised and the good example which we are bound to show to others in all things...afterwards, they ought to go to the bishop of that city and say to him: “My lord, such a man wants to give us,

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66 Ibid.; Jordan of Giano, Chronica, 7. The brothers must have been less proficient at the art of begging than their founder, for Friar Jordan lamented that no one offered them any bread for days. Famished and weak from hunger, he recounts that the group survived by drinking from mountain streams.

67 Thomas of Cantimpré, “Defense of the Mendicants,” in Early Dominicans, 133. Thomas was originally member of the St. Augustine Canons at the Abbey of Cantimpré, but joined the Dominican Order in 1232.
for the love of God and the salvation of his soul, some land where we can build a friary. So we have come first to you...for we would like to build there with God’s blessing and with yours.” When they have received the bishop’s blessing, let them go then and have made a boundary ditch around the land which they have taken as their building site, and let them plant there a good hedge instead of a wall as a sign of holy poverty and humility. Afterwards let them have poor hovels prepared, made of loam and wood, and some other small cells where the brothers can sometimes pray...let them also have small churches built. The brothers ought not to have large churches made for preaching to the people, or for any other reason, since it is more humble and gives a better example when the brothers go to other churches to preach.68

This excerpt describes Francis’s four “steps” to a new urban establishment, the first of which describes the brothers’ arrival in the city. One might image a group of weary friars arriving in an unfamiliar place, where they would erect temporary huts or tents if they were unable to find a willing townsperson to provide them with short-term accommodations. The friars would have performed manual labor in exchange for food; if work were not available, they would have begged for provisions. The early brothers would have endured these kinds of itinerant conditions until they could procure a patron to donate a building or funds for new construction, the defining characteristic of Francis’s second “phase.” The third “step” is characterized by the bishop’s permission for and blessing of the friars’ proposed move or building project. Once the bishop granted his consent, the brothers could then construct “poor hovels,” “small cells,” and a “small church” for themselves on the donated land, all the while ensuring that their buildings maintained a proper degree of humility and poverty.

As noted above, thirteenth-century Verona was heavily populated and lacked sufficient space inside its walls for construction. Thus, the early friars at Verona followed what Lawrence has termed a “recognizable pattern of mendicant settlement,”

68 Scripta Leonis, 14.
characterized by assembly outside the walls on the outskirts or the suburbs of the city. Although many early mendicant communities lived outside the city walls, their sites were frequently located outside of a primary gate where a borgo had formed, or alongside a busy road—in other words, places characterized by steady traffic. While most early communities settled beyond the city walls, some were able to acquire locations within them, or later move into the center, a phenomenon to which I return in the following chapter. Although early settlements in the center benefited from security and higher population density, they were usually in unhygienic and slum-like areas prone to flooding. In Cambridge, for example, Friar Thomas of Eccleston recalls “the brethren were first received by the burgess, who made over to them an old synagogue near the prison…the prison, however, was intolerable to the brethren, since both they and the [jailers] had to use the same entrance.”

The early friars at S. Gabriele probably served the city informally. Unlike S. Croce, there are no surviving references from the local government or church recognizing the S. Gabriele friars in any “official” capacity. This lack of official association is perhaps one of the reasons scholars such as Sandri, Gasparini, Varanini, and others have continued to view S. Gabriele as a temporary, pre-institutional, and unapproved settlement of friars. Gasparini, for example, suggested that the Franciscans established a community in Verona by 1223, but that the brethren occupied an unknown location.

69 Lawrence, The Friars, 105. Lawrence discusses how the general preference for settling outside the city’s walls or near the gates has led some historians to argue that the friars’ choice of location was the outcome of a deliberate missionary strategy—part of a plan to evangelize the newly arrived and socially deracinated populations around the periphery of the expanding city, for whom the established parishes failed to give adequate pastoral provisions. Lawrence responds with the obvious explanation: that the friars could only settle where they were offered land or buildings.
70 Guidoni, “Città e ordini mendicanti,” 77.
until their transfer to S. Francesco, the church built on the site of S. Croce, in 1230. Bourdua noted that the Franciscans were not officially affiliated with the city of Verona until around 1237 when they are recorded at S. Francesco. Furthermore, Varanini, Pellegrini, Rigon, and others have questioned the religious affiliation of the friars at S. Gabriele, inquiring whether the 1229 donation of 10 soldi to the “fratribus minoribus S. Gabrieliis” discussed above can unquestionably refer to a Franciscan community, since the same document refers to the friars at S. Croce as “pauperibus minoribus.” Although the difference in terminology used to distinguish the community at S. Gabriele from that at S. Croce needs an explanation, it is important to note that three years earlier Bishop Breganze’s donation referred to the Franciscans at S. Croce as “congregationi fratrum minorum.” It is possible that, at least at this early point in mendicant history in Verona, all of these terms were somewhat interchangeable. Indeed, a larger survey of early thirteenth century documentation across the Italian peninsula suggests that many names were used to refer to the Franciscans, including “pauperes minores,” “fratres minores,” “fratres laboratories,” “Patres Minores,” and so forth. Alternatively, the two terms that appear in the 1229 testament may distinguish between two communities that reflected two distinct ways to live a Franciscan life. Although evidence for this kind of division does not survive in Verona in this period, viewed in light of the two poles of

73 De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convenuto,” 109. Gasparini’s dating is based on a 1223 reference from the Regulata Bullata that records a priest named Agostino as the prior of the Veronese congregation of the Friars Minor.
74 Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 17
75 ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini, perg. 2; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 106. Varanini suggests that the community at S. Gabriele could have merely been a confraternal community assimilated with the Franciscans at S. Croce. It is also worth noting that other instances show that the Franciscans were noted by terms other than “minores”: in the testament of the Venetian doge Pietro Ziani from 1228, for example, Rigon noted that the Franciscans are referred to as “minimi.” See A. Rigon, “Frati Minori e società locali,” in Francesco d’Assisi e il primo secolo di storia francescana, ed. F. Consolino (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1997), 264.
76 For the text of this donation, see note 80.
Franciscanism developing in the early thirteenth-century—itinerant preachers living in absolute poverty and ordained clerics in stable convents—this interpretation should not be completely disregarded.

The precise character of S. Gabriele seems less important than its historical position as one of the earliest recorded communities of Franciscans in the city, even, perhaps, a product of Friar Caesar’s missionary efforts. Like other early settlements founded in the course of similar expeditions, the community at S. Gabriele was probably small and lacked sufficient communication with the larger network of the Order, and must be viewed in light of Pellegrini’s emphasis of the “organic” quality of these early settlements, which, unconcerned with cohesiveness or hierarchy, developed individually with distinctive activities and characteristics.77

Yet the early community at S. Gabriele must have been recognized within the local civic or religious hierarchy. Whereas some of the early friars in England are recorded as renting houses or rooms, it is noteworthy that the early brothers at S. Gabriele in Verona inhabited an extant church and convent, revealing that a local ecclesiastical official must have intervened on their behalf.78 If S. Gabriele was indeed “founded” by Friar Caesar’s expedition, the brethren would likely have brought with them official papal letters of recommendation to facilitate settlement in a new city or territory and perhaps also opportunities for “official” patronage by the commune or bishop. Further discussion on the situation at S. Gabriele can be only speculative, as no written documents survive to record the transfer of the convent to the friars or to discuss their activities, religious or otherwise.

77 Pellegrini, “Gli insediamenti.”
78 Thomas of Eccleston records friars renting a house in the parish of Northampton, a room in a school house at Canterbury, and a house in London (The Friars, 136-140).
In 1256, the will of Federico Manfredino Bartassoro left 50 lire to the Franciscans at S. Francesco (S. Croce), but the testator also gave 24 lire to an unspecified group of “fratres” living at S. Gabriele.\(^79\) Because there is no specific term such as “pauperes” or “minores” used in conjunction with the “fratres” at S. Gabriele, it is impossible to determine precisely if the friars occupying S. Gabriele were Franciscan by this year. The apparent abandonment of S. Gabriele by the Franciscans sometime between 1253 and 1256 can perhaps be understood in light of the 1249 papal bull that granted the friars permission to transfer to the centrally located Benedictine monastery of S. Fermo. Unfortunately for the Franciscans, a combination of Benedictine recalcitrance and Ezzolino’s banishment of Bishop Gerardo (1254-1259) delayed the friars’ occupation of their new site until 1260, as I will consider in detail in Chapter Five. Nevertheless, it is feasible that the friars at S. Gabriele planned to move to S. Fermo in 1249, the year the papacy authorized this transfer. The friars may have therefore given their convent to another religious organization, perhaps a confraternity or penitential group, which would explain the subsequent use of the generic term “fratres.”

3.2.3 The Community at S. Croce and Construction of S. Francesco al Corso

As noted above, the community at S. Croce has been the more thoroughly discussed and documented of the two early Franciscan communities in Verona, and indeed it constitutes an essential part of the early Franciscan history in the city. In May of 1225, the Franciscans received part of the former leper hospital of S. Croce from Bishop Jacopo di Breganze (1225-1252) (figure 27).\(^80\) Two months after his election in

\(^79\) Archivio Sartori II/1, 2100; Sandri, “Un ‘locus’ francescano,” 59-60.
\(^80\) The text of the donation states: “De circuito autem dicte ecclesie sancte Crucis et domibus, assignamus et concedimus Congragationi Fratrum Minorum tam presentium quam futurorum in ipso circuitu habitare volentium, in solita et debita religione commorantium, habitationem hospitalis ubi commorabantur infirmi
the same year, Breganze combined all of the lepers from various hospitals across the city into the single infirmary of S. Giacomo. The timing of this merger was fortunate for the Franciscans, who received part of the former property of the hospital for their use.

Bishop Breganze permitted the friars to use some of the buildings at S. Croce, including the kitchen, infirmary, and a portion of the gardens, but they did not receive complete dominion over the property: some of the buildings, including the church and collegio, remained in the hands of the rectors.

Little information survives about this ex-leprosarium, located outside the city walls on the right bank of the Adige, slightly south of what would be the future Franciscan convent of S. Fermo Maggiore. Although beyond the city’s fortifications, S. Croce was located on a heavily travelled street in a well-populated area, thereby providing the brethren with easy access to the city center and preaching audiences.

Eighteenth-century chronicler Biancolini suggested that by 1141, the church of S. Croce

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cum toto biridario ipsorum et cellario quod est in capite ipsius hospitalis et domus coquinaria cum furno et partem viridarii quondam conversorum ipsius loci, designando illis fratribus minoribus a porta qu est iuxta viam versus Atesim et inde procedendo usque ad tegetem eiusdem ecclesie, ubi nunc est ara, relinguendo portas versus ecclesiam, secundum quod per nostrum nuntium eis designari et faciemus. Et si stare ibib noluerint predicti Fratres vel religio illa defecerit, predicta omnia eis concessa libere et expedite ad Ecclesiam Sancte Crucis revertantur et hanc habitationem concedimus, salvo dominio et proprietate et rerum substantia dicte Ecclesie et collegio S. Crucis et exceptis tot possessionibus et bonis extra dictum positis que valeant usque quinque mille libras denariorum veronensium, que omnia exceptata Ecclesie Sancte Crucis et collegium fratrum ipsius presentis et futurorum relinquimus, concedimus et assignamus, arbitrio Rectorum utriusque Ecclesie sancti Jacopi et Sancte Crucis extimanda.” ASVr, Esposti, r. 120; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100; Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 106. Miller’s research on early medieval patterns of patronage in Verona suggests that the church and leper hospital of S. Croce, founded in the 1140s, was the city’s most innovative religious institution in the early medieval period. S. Croce’s supporters were drawn from all levels of Veronese society, from counts and captains to members of mercantile families and nameless almsgivers. See M. Miller, “Donors, Their Gifts, and Religious Innovation in Medieval Verona,” Speculum 66 (1991): 32. 

81 Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 102. Bishop Breganze was elected bishop of Verona on March 1, 1225 under Honorius II.
82 Ibid., 102-103; Biancolini, Serie cronologica dei vescovi e governatori di Verona (Verona: Ramanzini, 1760), 94.
83 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100.
84 Varanini, “Per la storia,” 113.
had fallen into disrepair. Restoration attempts had occurred in the previous century under the bishopric of Tebaldo (1135-1157), yet the site was probably rundown and bereft by the time of the friars’ initial occupation.

Bishop Breganze’s invitation to the friars to inhabit part of this former hospital complex suggests that the community was already established and recognized in the city by 1225. Whereas settlement of the early Franciscan communities at Treviso, Venice and Padua was initiated by acts of communal or civic support, in Verona the episcopacy provided the earliest significant patronage: the bishop not only installed the brothers at S. Croce, but he or another ecclesiastical official may have also organized the friars’ occupation of S. Gabriele. Over the course of next few decades, Bishop Breganze would become an important figure in the “institutionalization” of not only the Franciscans, but also the Dominicans and the Clares in Verona. His assistance of mendicant settlement in the city suggests a personal admiration for the friars and their mission, and may indicate that the bishop viewed the friars as potential allies in the resolution of local socio-religious problems, such as heresy. Church officials had been fighting the spread of heretics since the late twelfth century, and Catharism was particularly prevalent in Verona and the Veneto region. A letter from 1199 from Innocent II to Bishop Adelardo

85 Biancolini, Notizie storiche delle chiese di Verona (Verona: A. Scolari, 1749), II, 592.
86 De Sandre Gasparini, “II convento,” 109; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2093.
87 The terms “institutionalization” and “systemization” are used by Sandri, Pellegrini, Varannini, Gasparini, and others to describe the “official” settlement of the Franciscans into the fabric of the city. Regarding the general role of bishops as instruments in this process, see L. Pellegrini, “Mendicanti e parroci: Coesistenza e conflitti di due strutture organizzative della ‘cura animarum’,” in Francescanesimo e vita religiosa dei laici nel ’200: Atti dell’VIII convegno internazionale, Assisi, 16-18 ottobre 1980, ed. Società internazionale di studi francescani (Assisi: Università degli studi di Perugia, 1981) 129-167. As Pellegrini notes, the general consensus among historians is that there was competition, conflict, and opposition towards the mendicants on the part of the bishop and secular clergy. Examples of hostile and sometimes even violent behavior support this, as I will discuss in Chapter 7.
88 D. Savoia, “Verona e Innocenzo III: Nuovi documenti sulle chiese veronese (part 1),” Studi storici Luigi Simeoni 35 (1985): 92. In the Council of Verona in 1184, Lucio II pushed for excommunication of heretics, especially the Cathars, but also against the Arnaldisti, the Poor Men of Lyons, and even the
di Biço of Verona reveals various communities of different heretical denominations, including Cathars and Waldensians living in the thirteenth-century city. The communal statutes also attest to the presence of heretics in the city: statutes from 1228, 1276, and 1328 specifically address disciplinary actions for those accused of heresy, indicating that heretical presence persisted to jeopardize the religious stability of the city and posed a serious problem for the bishop. Varanini suggested that by the mid-thirteenth century, the territory of Verona had become “a sort of Eden” for Catharism. The great threat of heresy may have caused Bishop Breganze to seek alliance with the new papal-approved, religious order looking to settle in his city.

Cries involving the traditional monastic houses and secular clergy members also resulted in attempts at discipline and reform. The intensity of Ezzolino’s tyranny significantly heightened the gravity of contemporary social and religious challenges, further encouraging Bishop Breganze to recognize and utilize the potential power of the friars in his struggle to maintain orthodoxy in the thirteenth-century city. The friars’

Humiliati. For more on local struggles with heresy, see G. Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori nella marca trevisana (1280-1308),” Archivio Veneto 11 (1932): 148-180. 89 G. De Sandre Gasparini, “Movimenti evangelici a Verona all’epoca di Francesco d’Assisi,” Le Venzie francescane 2 (1985): 152. These heretical communities, as well as a community of Humiliati, were partially under excommunication by the archpriest of the local cathedral chapter, Guido, although Innocent did not approve the excommunication of the Humiliati. In 1203, disregarding the pope’s disapproval, the same Archpriest Guido once again grouped the Humiliati along with the Cathars and Waldensians—without distinction—as those disobedient to the Church. 90 See Sancassani, “Aspetti giuridici,” 171-198. 91 G. M. Varanini, “Minima hereticilia: Schede d’archivio veronese (secoli XII-XIII),” Estratto da reti medievali rivista 6 (2005): 8. 92 Varanini, “Dal Castrum a ‘Veronetta’,” 45; Miller, Formation, esp. ch. 2, “The Secular Clergy,” 41-62. This “crisis” was based on criticisms of excessive wealth and decadence, and resulted in the loss of their preeminent position in Western culture, society, and government. In Verona, however, Miller suggests that there is little evidence of this kind of decadence or decline in the city’s monasteries. Regardless of whether or not this decline was widespread in Verona, there are at least some references to crises among individual institutions. For example, at the Benedictine convent of S. Maria in Organo, the abbot was accused of a grave offense that resulted in his monks fleeing the city and the commune capturing the monastery’s patrimony. In the case of Verona, Miller suggests that gradual clerical reform had begun as early as the tenth century and addressed complaints such as concubinage, wives, bearing of arms, and frequenting taverns. References to such reform also appear in the statutes, particularly in those of 1228 and 1276. See Sancassani, “Aspetti giuridici.”
rising favor among the laity and their popularity with the papacy made them useful collaborators and allies, not only in the combat of heresy, but also local religious reform, as I will discuss in Chapter Seven. Along with evangelical poverty, the mendicant religious model emphasized humility and peace, and these ideals might have also encouraged harmony and stability in a community depressed by the volatility and instability of Ezzolino’s rule. Bishop Breganze’s charity towards the friars might have also helped secure reciprocal future support of the bishopric.

Although Bishop Breganze was the initial figure to assist with the Franciscan settlement of Verona, five years later, the local government also played an important role. In 1230, the friars began construction of a new church building on the site of the hospital of S. Croce, a project largely financed by the podestà of the city, Ramerius Zeno di Venezia, and the commune. The friars dedicated the church to Francis, as evident by an inscription noted by Biancolini commemorating its construction and civic patronage:

“Anno Domini 1230 Dominus Ranerius Zeno Potestas Verone pro comuni Verone fecit fieri hanc Ecclesiam Beati Francisci.” Sandri, however, has questioned the authenticity of the inscription and the 1230 date, suggesting a slightly later building date. In any event, a significant portion of the new church seems to have been complete by 1249, as a document from March of this year confirms the existence of the building and its dedication: “extra muros civitatis Verone in loco quod dictur circulus ante ecclesiam sancti Francesci.” This text records the purchase of a plot of land near the convent by a

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94 Biancolini, Notizie storiche III, 107. Biancolini notes that the inscription was carved into a stone above the door of the convent.
95 Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 103. It is possible that the epigraph may refer to Gregory IX’s bull Quo elongati, which authorized the Franciscans to construct a “proper” church, not only for their own liturgical use, but also for the pastoral care of the laity.
tertiary named Friar Corrado, and this transaction may represent the intention to further expand the Franciscan site, perhaps to complete or enlarge the church or conventual buildings.97

In addition to the generous patronage of the commune, contributions from the laity were also important to the building program, and surviving records attest to local support of this early site. On October 4, 1256, for instance, testator Frederico Manfredino Bartassaro granted 40 lire to “ecclesie Sancti Francisci di Verona de Ordine Fratrum Minorum.”98 Furthermore, by the 1250s the friars had begun to bury members of the laity in their church, although few surviving documents attest to burials. The last testament of Roberto Scoto di Conegliano from 1253, for example, requests “corpus suum iacere volut, et ordinavit si obierit in Verona, ecclesie S. Franceschi fratum Minorum,” in addition to donating 40 soldi to the community.99

Without further documentation, it is impossible to determine a more precise chronology of the building program at S. Croce/S. Francesco. As noted in the introduction of this study, Bonelli has suggested that many mendicant buildings are dated too early and the research of Villetti and Bruzelius has further noted that the additive nature of mendicant construction makes it especially difficult to date Franciscan and Dominican buildings.100 Without adequate records, the chronology of mendicant buildings is, in general, speculative and often contested, and the early church of S. Francesco in Verona is no exception. Furthermore, because numerous transformations have drastically changed the character and function of this building, serious study of its

97 Ibid.
98 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100; and Sandri, “Un ‘locus’ Francescano,” 59.
99 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2106.
100 See Bonelli, “Nuovi sviluppi”; Villetti, Studi sull’edilizia; and Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
medieval space is extremely difficult. Extensive post-medieval renovations significantly altered the original aesthetic of the interior, and the repurposing of the church for various uses has erased the medieval character of S. Francesco al Corso. Post World War II renovations converted the ex-convent into the Museo degli Affreschi, most famous for housing the supposed tomb of Shakespeare’s Juliet in the adjacent crypt (figures 28-31).

Despite these alterations, a few observations can be made about this early site. The present-day façade features a simple rounded-arched portal crowned by a modern semicircle window; white stucco covers most of the elevation, although in places the under layer of brick masonry is exposed. The plan includes side aisles, a transept, and a wooden roof. Adjacent to the south flank of church building is a cloister that includes a subterranean crypt (figure 31). Despite restorations that have rebuilt a significant portion of the church and convent, it nonetheless seems that the early ex novo building of the Franciscan community in Verona featured brick construction, was simple, small, and utilized predominately wooden roofing. Like the nearby and contemporary Franciscan projects in Bassano and Udine, the Veronese church may have employed vaulting in its east end (figures 13, 14, 32, 33). The unusual inclusion of a crypt also indicates an early practice of lay burial (as seen in the example of Roberto cited above)

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101 It was, for example, used for military barracks during the Second World War.
102 In his account of the Franciscan Order in the Veneto region published in 1933, Franciscan Friar Spimpolo included a photograph of the “antica chiesetta di S. Francesco” in a section about the friars in Verona. This photo is not dated, and looks very different from the present-day structure known as S. Francesco al Corso. The church façade published by Spimpolo features a single-nave church with an oversized round-arched portal centered in the brick fabric, a set of bifold windows directly above the entrance, and a contrasting motif Lombard banding arches span the triangular shape of the cornice, elements which seem to evoke the sensibility of “medieval” restorations of the nineteenth century. Although both facades employ brick construction and share a basic shape, it is difficult to make sense of these two images. Could Spimpolo’s photo have been mislabeled? Or did the restorations of the 1930s (which are poorly documented) attempt to create a “historic” twentieth-century structure? See Spimpolo, Storia, 16, tavolo II.
103 It is very possible that the transept was added later.
and may have also been utilized for burial of the community.\textsuperscript{104}

By constructing a new church, the Franciscans manipulated their donated space into a religious complex better suited to their needs. They enlarged and modified the original endowment from 1225 into a “proper” convent by transforming former hospital into conventual space and constructing a new church. As the following chapters show, the friars’ resourceful approach to modifications of S. Croce/S. Francesco would present itself again in the community’s occupation and subsequent renovation of S. Fermo in the second half of the thirteenth century. The construction of a church at the site of S. Croce suggests both an increasing number of Franciscan members and lay followers, and this addition of a lay liturgical space must also be viewed within the context of the contemporary clericalization of the Order, a process which I discuss in the following chapters.

In addition to the communities at S. Croce/S. Francesco and S. Gabriele, there is evidence of at least one additional group of Franciscan friars in the city at this time. On November 9, 1244, testator Uliveto Setille left 10 soldi to the “fratribus minoribus…in loco Sancte Marie de Campmarcio,” revealing that Franciscan friars were living with the Poor Clares at S. Maria delle Vergini at least at the time his testament was written.\textsuperscript{105} As this is the only record of brothers living at the Clarissan convent, it is impossible to know how long the friars maintained this arrangement. Since documents suggest that after their installation at S. Fermo, the friars visited the women instead of living there, this seems to have been a temporary situation.\textsuperscript{106} Nonetheless, at least in the year 1244, there were

\textsuperscript{104} This crypt may have been part of the original hospital complex.
\textsuperscript{105} ASVer, S. Fermo, rotoli, b. 1 perg. 47; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2102.
\textsuperscript{106} The friars were not, for example, mentioned in the text of Bishop Breganze’s donation of land to the Clares in 1226, so it must be assumed that the friars’ presence was a later occurrence. See Knox, Creating
three distinct communities of Franciscan friars in the city of Verona: at S. Croce/S. Francesco, S. Gabriele, and S. Maria delle Vergini. The existence of separate sites during this period probably provided an important missionary advantage, particularly given their dispersion throughout the territory of the medieval city, as seen in the map of figure 27. S. Croce/S. Francesco was located on the right bank of the Adige whereas S. Gabriele and S. Maria degli Vergini were on the left; friars were thus spread among three distinct quarters of the city and could therefore more widely serve the city’s population. This multiplicity probably provided Verona with an increased Franciscan presence despite their locations outside the walls, an important advantage given the large and growing population at this time.

The presence of multiple Franciscan communities in a city is not unprecedented, but it is unusual enough to be noteworthy. In Rome, there were at least two distinct Franciscan groups in the first half of the thirteenth century: one community occupied the former Benedictine Church of S. Biagio in Trastevere by 1229 and another seems to have resided at S. Maria del Popolo near the Porta Flaminia, just within the city walls. By 1248, the friars of both convents had requested to move to a more central location. Each cited various “inconveniences” of their houses as the motives for their relocation: the community at S. Maria del Popolo complained of its distant location (“locorum in remotis”) from the urban population, and the friars at S. Biagio protested that the “pestilentis aeris corruptela” surrounding the swampy lands of the convent was spreading

\[ Saint Clare, \text{ for a more general discussion of the difficulties of maintaining Franciscan brothers at Clarissan convents.} \]

\[ 107 \text{ C. Bolgia, “The church of S. Maria in Aracoeli, Rome: From the Earliest Times to circa 1400” (PhD diss., University of Warwick. 2003), 71-72.} \]
illness.108 Their petitions were successful, and in the following year the two communities merged at the Benedictine monastery of S. Maria in Campidoglio, also known as the Aracoeli.109 The unification of two early Franciscan groups into a larger, more central monastery in Rome, indicates that these communities were probably linked to one another even in their earlier, separate sites. Other examples exist: I noted in the previous chapter that there were at least three separate Franciscan sites in Venice in the mid 1220s; there may have also been two distinct Franciscan groups in Vicenza.110 The Franciscan communities in Venice, unlike the situation in Rome, retained distinct sites and identities throughout most of the Middle Ages.111

Although surviving records attest to continued patronage to the communities at S. Gabriele and S. Croce/S. Francesco through the 1240s, and in at least one instance, the friars at S. Maria degli Vergini, it is unclear how these sites were connected. Although these groups of friars were probably related to one another, there is no documentation of their relationship, nor any indication that they operated together under a single guardian, custodian, or other authoritative figure.112 As noted above, it is possible that the communities in Verona also represented different factions of the Franciscan Order, with one perhaps more strictly observant or “clerical” than the other(s). This arrangement may also reflect a degree of institutional disorder or the absence of a cohesive program or plan of settlement and mission. On the other hand, the circumstances at Verona may have

108 Ibid.
109 Ibid. This transfer had to be confirmed more than once.
110 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2273, 2280. The last testament of Pietro Gualperto da Lumignano from April 17, 1241 left 20 soldi to the church of S. Francesco in addition to 5 soldi to the “chiesa di Frati Minori del Vicentino,” suggesting that there may have been two communities at this time.
111 Ibid.
112 Varanini, “Per la storia,” 113. Varanini notes that there is a general lack of documentation between 1250 and 1260, probably in part because of the tense political situation under Ezzelino. It is not just documentation on the Franciscans that is missing; there are also noticeably fewer records of other religious organizations in Verona at this time.
been similar to those at Rome, since the fraternal populations at S. Gabriele, S. Croce/S Francesco, and S. Maria delle Vergini (if there was still a group of friars there by circa 1260) seem to have ultimately combined at S. Fermo to form a larger, cohesive group.

3.3 The Early Dominicans in Verona

The Dominicans were first recorded in Verona in 1220, when, according to tradition, Bishop Noradion (1214-1224) and the magistrates of the city personally welcomed them to the city.113 This early community may have been small, as seventeenth-century Dominican Friar Pellegrini suggested the initial presence of only a few Dominicans (“alcuni padre”) and their goods.114 Between 1220 and 1222 the friars constructed a new house, S. Maria Mater Domini, outside the city walls in the *contrada* of S. Stefano with the help of a donation of 900 *lire* from a lay patron, Rodolfo Malavolta (figure 27).115 The settlement of Verona by the Dominicans thus occurred very differently than that of the Franciscans: whereas the Franciscans acquired existing buildings, the Dominicans began a new building program. In Verona, the early predilection of the local community for new structures and the re-use and re-configuration of existing buildings by the Franciscans appeared again in late thirteenth century with the Dominican construction of Santa Anastasia and the Franciscan renovations to S. Fermo.

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115 Cipolla’s proposes an earlier date than most scholars. He dates the beginning of construction to 1220, when the Dominicans received a donation of 900 *lire* through Rodolfo Malavolta. Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 279. This date is accepted by Ambrogio Teagio, Historian of the Order, who writes: “Per idem tempus [1220] Fratres primo Veronae habitare ceperunt B.P. Dominico ibidem missi, [et] conventum construere ceperunt apud ecclesiam, quae Sancta Mariae Matris Domini dictur.” The date of Teagio’s text, quoted in Biancolini’s *Notizie storiche* (II, 553-554), is unknown. If the 1222 date is to be accepted, their location(s) during the two years between their arrival and construction of S. Maria Mater Domini is (are) unknown.
A steady acquisition of property by the Dominicans occurred throughout the 1220s, probably in response to the desire to expand their church, conventual buildings, and gardens. In 1225, for instance, the Dominicans purchased a plot of land adjacent to S. Maria Mater Domini; three years later, they acquired more property.\(^{116}\) In 1238, under the guidance of Bishop Breganze, Bishop Hermann of Würzburg, and thirteen other bishops, some of whom were from Germany, consecrated their church.\(^{117}\) The range of dioceses represented by these bishops attests to the “international” character of the Order at this early point, as well as their institutionalization within the religious panorama of the city. As with the Franciscans, the Dominicans enjoyed the active participation of Bishop Breganze in the processes of settlement in Verona.

S. Maria Mater Domini was destroyed in 1517. The rapid rate of construction suggests, however, that the structure was probably of modest size, and may have therefore reflected the early Dominican architectural ideals of poverty and humility. Although there are notable exceptions, the majority of Dominican buildings from the first half of the thirteenth century utilized simple plans and elevations: early construction frequently featured a single nave and square apses and apsidal chapels, employed timber roofing, and contained little or no interior or exterior decoration.\(^{118}\) The plan of S. Maria Mater Domini may have embodied many of these common early characteristics, and its design was perhaps similar to that of the original church of S. Nicolò in Treviso, which probably featured a single nave and square apse.\(^{119}\) Since most of the bulls and charters

\(^{116}\) Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 279-280. The 1228 donation was made by Giacobina del fu Ubizino.
\(^{117}\) I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico, 59.
\(^{118}\) On early Dominican architecture, see, for example, Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine”; Sundt, “Mediocrates domos”; and Schenkluhn, Architettura.
issued from the first two decades of the Order’s existence describe Dominican churches as places of worship for the fraternal community, S. Maria Mater Domini perhaps only served as a church and residence for the friars. Most of the early interactions between the friars and the local laity probably occurred in public, central spaces such as piazze, or in other parish churches.

Despite an initial resistance of Veronese testators to fund religious initiatives outside the parameters of traditional monasticism, by the early decades of the thirteenth century there was a progressive shift to support new clerical initiatives, and the Dominican community at S. Maria Mater Domini was a popular beneficiary. Between 1225 and 1250 eight rather substantial bequests to the Dominican community at S. Maria Mater Domini survive, which included gifts of at least 610 lire in cash and several parcels of land. In contrast, the Franciscans received only four bequests, and the sums of these donations were paltry in comparison. This may reflect the earlier predilection of lay donors towards established religious institutions; testators may have perceived the clerical character of the new Dominican community as a more “legitimate” beneficiary

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120 See Sundt, “Mediocres domos.”
122 In general, Veronese testators maintained their ties to traditional institutions, such as the cathedral and Benedictine monasteries. See Miller, “Donors.”
123 From ASVr, see: Esposti, perg. 124 (1225), 135 (1227) 214 (1234), 253 (1237); SS. Guiseppe e Fidenzio, perg. 99 (1226); S. Maria delle Vergini, perg. 2 (1229); Santo Spirito, perg. 172/a (1234); S. Leonardo in Monte, b. 23, perg. 18 (1236); Santa Maria in Organo, perg. 440 (1237). Excerpts from these wills have been published or discussed in: Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi”; Varanini, “Per la storia,” and “Primi contributi”; De Sandre Gasparini, “Il francescanesimo a Verona,” and “Movimento evangelici”; Sandri, “Un ‘locus’ francescano”; and Archivio Sartori II/2, 2100. The research of Rossi reveals that between c. 1239 and c. 1259, the Dominican community at S. Maria Mater Domini received twenty bequests while the Franciscans received fourteen (her analysis consists of approximately ninety-six testaments written between 1239 and 1259). She also notes nine bequests for the Augustinians, fourteen bequests to the “fraters” of S. Gabriele, ten bequests to the monastery of S. Cassiano, eight bequests to various Humiliati congregations, and other bequests to foundations of the canons of S. Marco, such as S. Maria Maddalena in Campomarzo and S. Martino d’Avesa. See Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi,”119.
than the Franciscans, who were still largely composed of lay members in this period. Indeed, the Franciscans and other lay religious groups do not seem to have begun to appeal to local testators in any significant way until the early 1240s; as this period corresponds with the construction of S. Francesco, the increase in bequests to the Franciscans may reflect a perceived stability associated with their building campaign.

The completion, consecration, and patronage of S. Maria Mater Domini seems to have encouraged an increase in membership for the Dominican community. Cipolla suggested that by the 1240s—only two years after the church’s consecration—the convent may have already been at capacity. In 1244, the Dominican Order selected S. Maria Mater Domini as the site for their General Chapter meeting, confirming the importance of the Veronese community within the larger organization of the Order. This decision also indicates that the church and its conventual space must have been substantial enough to accommodate a significant number of visitors. Nevertheless, the need for a larger space may have become a pressing issue, as Bishop Manfredo (1260-1268) donated a large piece of land in the center of the city to the Dominicans in 1260. The property was located near Piazza Erbe and contained the tiny parish church of S.

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124 Miller, “Donors.”
125 Although much has already been written about the friars in the realm of last testaments (even for Verona), these documents have not yet received definitive study within the wider context of architectural practices. Rather than explore how the friars “measured up” against other religious organizations in testamentary giving (a topic that Rossi has already investigated), I have examined last testaments to better understand the practices of the “mendicant friendly” testators who patronized the Franciscans and Dominicans in Verona. I have surveyed over 160 wills dated between 1225 and 1395 that specifically include donations to these communities. Whenever possible, I studied the original document or full transcription; nonetheless, a consequence of the fragmentary nature of these records is that approximately half of these testaments are partial documents or extracts. Although this certainly has the disadvantage of incompleteness, even these portions provide important insight into the practices of contemporary, mendicant testators and the fraternal communities themselves. The conclusions drawn from this study, along with those by Rossi, are cited throughout this text. See, for example, Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi.”
126 Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 280. Cipolla does not note the evidence for this hypothesis, but the choice of Verona for the General Chapter meeting in 1244 suggests at the very least a stable and well-populated local community.
127 Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 158.
Anastasia, the nearby *chiesetta* of S. Remigio, and the various houses and gardens associated with these churches. At the end of the thirteenth century, the friars began construction of their new basilica, S. Anastasia. Much like the Franciscans and their new central site of S. Fermo, the Dominicans’ new location within the walls greatly increased their lay following and socio-religious authority in the city.

Before discussing the settlement of the Poor Clares in Verona below, the contemporary community of Dominican nuns deserves brief attention. In the same way that the Clarissan convent at S. Maria delle Vergini was dependent upon and associated with the local Franciscans, the Dominicans in Verona also had a sister order in the city. In 1240, the Dominicans, with the help of a lay patron named Gilbertino and his son Bolcebocca, founded a monastery for the nuns of S. Domenico near the Dominican convent of S. Maria Mater Domini (figure 27). In 1245, Bishop Jacopo Breganze conceded privileges to the community, again demonstrating his dedication to the establishment of the mendicant orders in his diocese. Unfortunately, surviving information about their community, their convent, or its architecture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is scarce. Therefore, although I occasionally refer to this community for comparison or context, I have excluded it from this study.

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128 Ibid., 152, 555, and 558; Cipolla, “Richerche storiche I,” 275; *I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico*, 59; G. M. Rossi, *Nuova guida di Verona e della sua provincia* (Verona: Frizierio, 1854), 1. Alternatively, a donation date of 1261 is made by some historians (see, for example, G. Cappelletti, *La basilica di Santa Anastasia*, Verona, 1970). The earliest reference to the church of Santa Anastasia occurs on October 20, 890 (“actum Verona ad ecclesiam Sanctae Anastasiae”). The next record of the church does not appear until May 12, 1082, where it is mentioned in the context of a parish church. Santa Anastasia later functioned as a church and home for the parish clergy through the 1220s.
129 *I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico*, 61; Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 98; Biancolini, *Notizie storiche II*, 554. This house was located in the area of the city named Acqua traversa near the church of S. Giorgio.
130 *I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico*, 66.
131 See Pellegrini, “La religione.”
132 This is not to say, however, that this community was an insignificant part of religious life in the city; indeed surviving wills from this period testify to a dedicated lay following.
3.4 The Development of the Clares in Verona

3.4.1 The Community of S. Agata

The earliest reference to “sorores minores” in Verona is from the year 1224. Significantly, however, this early community of religious women developed independently of the Franciscan movement.133 Around 1210, a woman named Garzenda received a gift of land from a patron named Garardo Pecoraro “de Nova,” on which she, with financial assistance from her daughter and son-in-law, constructed lodging for local lepers.134 The donated property was adjacent to the church of S. Agata, which was located outside the city walls near the Adige in a swampy area known as Sub Aquario. Over the course of the next decade, this religious initiative, which initially included both genders, evolved into an all-female group living with and serving the lepers in residence.135

As noted above, the bishop consolidated the leper population of Verona in the hospital of S. Giacomo alla Tomba in 1223. At this time, the city evicted the lepers from the site in Sub Acquario, and the female community appropriated these homes and the church of S. Agata for their own use.136 In the following year (1224), the women received an additional piece of property near their current site (donated by Gerardo Pecorano “de Nova,” the same benefactor who had given Garzenda the original plot of

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133 For a discussion of the processes of institutionalization of the Clarissan Order across the Italian peninsula, see Knox, Creating Saint Clare.
134 Varanini, “Per la storia,” 93-97; Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 98; and Biancolini, Notizie storiche IV, 682-683.
135 Varanini, “Per la storia,” 93-95; Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience,” 109. The church was located between S. Giocomo alla Tomba and Ss. Trinità. Because land was available and cheap in this area, beginning in the mid twelfth century, Sub Aquario became the home to numerous new charitable institutions, small convents, churches, hospitals, and leper colonies all seeking the advantages of inexpensive property. For further reading, see V. Fainelli, Storia degli ospedali di Verona dai tempi di San Zeno ai giorni nostri (Verona: Ghidini e Fiorini, 1962). There is an interesting parallel between this situation and that of the friars at Milan (as recounted by Jacques of Vitry). See Knox, Creating Saint Clare.
136 Fainelli, Storia degli ospedali, 65.
land near S. Agata 14 years earlier). The document recording this transaction contains the earliest surviving reference to a community of “sorores minores” in the city, noting that the land was transferred from the patron to the “Congregationis Sororum Minorum” residing “sub Acquario non multum longe ab Ecclesia Sancti Jacobi a Tumba in quadam domo.”

Although the women at S. Agata were calling themselves “sorores minores” by 1224, it is impossible to determine precisely when these women began to use this term to describe their community, and whether any kind of religious “transition” coincided with the appropriation of this name.

Significantly, the donation from Gerardo Pecorano to the women occurred through a friar named Luca da Baone. The religious affiliation of Friar Luca is unclear, but his procuratorial role may indicate membership in the Franciscan Order (if so, was he one of the friars responsible for the physical and spiritual care of the women?). It seems unlikely that this early community of “sorores minores” was a formally recognized Clarissan community, and there are no surviving documents that link Franciscan friars or their sites with the community at S. Agata. It is doubtful that Friar Luca was a tertiary, since the earliest reference to a lay penitential movement that is distinctly Franciscan is several decades after the friar’s involvement with the women. However, he may have

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137 Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience,” 97-122. Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 32. Maccagnan suggests that the term “sorores minores” at S. Agata may not have referred to a Clarissan congregation since the early Clares at S. Damiano preferred the name “sorores paupers.” Later references to the Clarissan community at S. Maria delle Vergini, however, also use the term “sorores minores.”

138 “Ibique Donus Gerardus Pecorarius filius qu. Mazani, qui moratur in Hora de Foris a Ponte Rofioli, pro bono, et melioramento, et amore Dei, et remedio suae animae, et remissionem omnium suorum peccatorum, et intuit pietatis, nomine donationis inter vivos, ut amplius revocare non posit, investivit Fratem Lucam, qui suit de Baono pro se et vice ac nomine totius Collegii, sive Congregationis Sororum Minorum congregataturum sub Acquario non multum longe ab Ecclesia Sancti Jacobi a Tumba in quadam domo, seu domibus inferius scripta, seu scripsis ad proprium. De una pecia terae aratoriae, quae jacet sub Acquario non multum longe ab Ecclesia Sancti Jacobi a Tumba juxta domum in qua habitant praedictae Sorores Minores.” ASVr, S. Eufemia, perg. 85; G. B. Biancolini, Notizie storie IV, 682. See also Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 104, and Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 375.

139 As I discuss in Chapter 7, the earliest reference to a tertiary community comes from 1249.
belonged to a local confraternity, which would explain the use of “fratre” in conjunction with his name.\textsuperscript{140}

Little is known about this early community of pious women at S. Agata and whether this female community of “sorores minores” followed a distinctly Franciscan or Clarissan program.\textsuperscript{141} Although they seem to have lived in abject poverty, the women remained uncloistered, favoring a life of charitable aid to the poor, sick, and disenfranchised of the city over one of pious contemplation. Much like other contemporary female apostolic groups and confraternal organizations such as those discussed in the first chapter of this study, this group of “sorores minores” in Verona embraced a life of service not limited to the confines of the cloister. Given the absence of documentation, the lack of a firmly recognizable Franciscan program, and the general organic, disorganized character of these early houses, it is doubtful that these women had any formal associations with the Franciscan sites at this time; however, the involvement of Friar Luca—if he was indeed a Franciscan—could suggest otherwise. Yet the appropriation of the term “sorores minores” in legal documentation indicates, as Varanini has noted, that this religious initiative was, although perhaps not Franciscan, nonetheless a “legitimate” organization in the eyes of the city.\textsuperscript{142}

A document from 1224 records the entrance of a woman named Benvenuta into the community at S. Agata, which reveals that the organization was already attracting and


\textsuperscript{141} Varanini, “Per la storia,” 95; Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience,” 109. Both Varanini and Pellegrini believe that this community was conceived and realized outside of any relationship with the Franciscan movement. However, they do note that the community began as a group of pious women devoted to care of the sick and poor, and developed into a congregation that had some connections with the Franciscan movement, although the degree to which these early women were affiliated with the friars is uncertain.

\textsuperscript{142} Varanini, “Per la storia,” 95.
accepting new members in its early stages.\textsuperscript{143} As Varanini noted, the arrival of Sister Benvenuta seems to have been an important moment in the history of the group: she was probably installed as leader or abbess (perhaps replacing Garzenda?), since subsequent documents speak of Benvenuta “et alias sorores,” indicating her prominent role within the community.\textsuperscript{144}

Shortly after her arrival, in either 1224 or 1225, a certain Friar Leone—who, according to later testimonies, was probably a Franciscan—conducted a visit or inspection of the community at S. Agata.\textsuperscript{145} Two surviving reports testify to his presence and activities: one sister, Agnese, writes:

\begin{quote}
…Interogata si frater Lionus de hordine fratrum minorum ex delegacione d. pape et qui tunc erat visitator illarum sororum absolvit illam Benevenutam et alias sorores ab offercione quam fecerant in illo loco S. Agathe, [discovering that Friar Leone did not, in fact, have]…licentiam d. pape, set ipse dixit ‘sicut possum absolve vos a regula, capientes vos hinc ad medium annum si potestis regulam S. Benedicti.’\textsuperscript{146}
\end{quote}

Another account by Sister Angela records that:

\begin{quote}
…Ipse absolvit de hobediencia et regule secundum quo potiuit, quia erat noster visitator, set non habebat delegationem absolvendi nos, quod s[c]io et intelexi quod ille frater Leonis abuit verba a d. papa de eo quod fecerat de nobis quia non fecerat quod debebat.\textsuperscript{147}
\end{quote}

The exact purpose of Friar Leone’s visit is unclear. Varanini suggested that in addition to serving a generic disciplinary, counseling, and/or inspective role, the friar

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{143} ASVr, S. Antonio dal Corso, perg. 12, 16; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 94-96. The 1235 testimony of Sister Biatesina makes a direct temporal connection between the arrival of Benvenuta and the visit by Friar Luca: “…nescio nisi quod illa d. Beneventua venerit ad S. Agatham et obtulit se et illam terram huic loco et fraternitati que aderant tunc ibi et d. fratri Luche, et ipse frater Luca et sorores qui aderant tunc ibi receperunt illam; verumtamen bene intelexi quod fruies illus anni debebant esse de illis a Tumba et postea sororum istius loci.”\textsuperscript{144} Varanini, “Per la storia,” 95.

\textsuperscript{144} ASVr, Esposti, perg. 253; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 95-96.

\textsuperscript{145} From Varanini, “Per la storia,” 96. Varanini does not site the original source, nor the date of Sister Agnese’s testimony. There are indeed additional documents that testify to the presence of Friar Leone at S. Agatha, but Varanini notes that they are not as clear as those by Agnese and Angela, thus making it difficult to understand or accurately analyze them.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid. Varanini does not cite the original archival source or date of Sister Angela’s deposition.
\end{footnotesize}
probably also encouraged the women to adopt Ugolino’s Rule and embrace a more “Franciscan” program, specifically one of enclosure. Friar Leone therefore may have been recruiting the sisters to abandon their life of public service in favor of contemplative enclosure. Maccagnan suggested that the friar issued an ultimatum demanding that the sisters must accept Ugolino’s Rule if they wanted to continue considering themselves “sorores minores.” In any event, Friar Leone was apparently very persuasive and influential: in October of 1225, seventeen of the twenty-nine sisters chose to enter into a cloistered monastery. Macagnan proposed that nearly all of these women joined the cloistered Clarissan community in Campomarzo although he does not cite any evidence to support his claim; at least one sister elected transfer to the newly established Benedictine convent of S. Cassiano di Valpantenea. The remaining twelve women remained at their original site of S. Agata in Verona, adherents to an unspecified Rule.

The precise circumstances surrounding the division of the S. Agata community are frustratingly unclear. There are numerous possibilities for the transfer of these women into another community. Religious ideology must have played a critical role in this split since over half of the women exchanged S. Agata for a fundamentally different religious model, one that upheld a program of strict enclosure. Varanini interpreted the

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148 Ibid.; Pellegrini, “Female Religious Experience,” 108. Both Varanini and Pellegrini note the possibility that Friar Leone was perhaps the same Friar Leone Perego who acted as intermediary in 1224 when the “pauperes sorores ordinis de Spolito” took possession of the church of S. Apollinare in Milan.
149 Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 35.
150 ASVr, S. Silvestro, perg. 51; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 97; Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 35. The transfer occurred on October 30, 1225. Although there is no documentation to support his claim, Maccagnan has suggested that the sisters who transferred from S. Agata went to the cloister of S. Maria delle Vergini in Campomarzo (adopting the more rigorous rule of S. Clare).
151 See, for example, Knox, Creating Saint Clare; Grundmann, Religious Movements. This is a very interesting example of the papal attempt to “domesticate” pious women and enclose them in the 1220s. It is possible that the remaining women might have established some kind of Beguinage or continued their religious/charitable initiative under a different name; Lambert has defined a beguine community as a group of “pious women leading a religious life without a rule or vows, singularly or in convents, often linked to the mendicant orders.” M. Lambert, Medieval Heresy, Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishing, 1977), 140.
separation at S. Agata as a manifestation of the two conflicting monastic ideals—enclosure and service—in direct opposition with one another. He suggested that doctrinal differences divided the sisters into two communities: one that practiced strict enclosure, and one that encouraged worldly participation. Maccagnan further observed that the basic schism in this group reveals that there was, in fact, a vein of distinctly “Franciscan” religiosity that had developed within the community, as is reflected by the number of women who chose a life of enclosure. However, Maccagnan also noted that the women remaining at S. Agata may have been practicing a different “model” of Franciscanism in their embrace and care of society’s outcasts.

The transfer of approximately half of the women into another convent must have been encouraged by Friar Leone’s visit and what seems to have been his “Franciscan” program. Not unlike the early Franciscan sites, S. Agata may have experienced spatial limitations that contributed to this division. The size of the S. Agata site may have been insufficient for a population that had grown from three lay individuals and a small group of lepers around 1210 to twenty-nine women by 1225. This division may have also been economically motivated: supporting a community of nearly thirty women would have required a significant amount of charitable revenue. The citizens of Verona may have been unable or willing to take on this additional economic challenge, particularly for a relatively new and perhaps unincorporated religious organization. Indeed, the research of both Miller and Rossi has shown a marked hesitancy among Veronese testators before the middle of the thirteenth century to fund new evangelical or apostolic groups.

152 Varanini, “Per la storia,” 94-97.
153 See Miller, “Donors”; and Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi.” As I will further discuss in Chapter 7, lay benefactors in this period preferred to patronize traditional, established religious institutions such as the Benedictines and the Cathedral canons.
With the majority of their community perhaps installed in the Clarissan site in Campomarzo, the remaining twelve sisters continued their charitable acts at S. Agata, which was consecrated as a church in 1227 or 1228. In the following year, another group of women from the community transferred to a Benedictine convent, presumably one which followed Ugolino’s version of the Rule, leaving only nine sisters at S. Agata. Their adoption of a formal rule may reflect a combination of Friar Leoni’s earlier recruitment efforts, papal pressures for the widespread unification of poor women’s communities under the guidance of Ugolino, the influence of Clare and her community at S. Damiano in Assisi, or specific internal problems at S. Agata. At any rate, the female community that remained at S. Agata continued to shrink: a document from 1246, one of the last references to this community, names only three sisters in residence.

As Varanini observed, despite the disintegration of their group, the women at S. Agata seem to have maintained a link—albeit one that may have been minimal and sporadic—with the Franciscan community at S. Croce. For example, in 1246 a document composed “iuxta ecclesiam S. Crucis in qua morantur sorores ecclesie S. Agathe site foris a muris civitatis Verone” records a “frater Ceno de Armenao de scueçolis” present at its execution (the term “scueçolis” is a common Veronese term for a tertiary or a penitent). Significantly, the sisters at S. Agata are described “sorores” rather than “sorores minores,” suggesting that despite any connection with the Franciscan community at S. Croce, these women were not considered part of the Franciscan movement. Pellegrini observed that despite their “slow dissolution, [the female

\[154\] ASVr, S. Antonio al Corso, perg. 13 and 12a; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 89. It is unclear if these women joined the community at S. Maria delle Vergini or went elsewhere.

\[155\] Ibid.

\[156\] ASVr, S. Antonio dal Corso, perg. 35. See Varanini’s detailed discussion of this relationship in “Per la storia.”
community] succeeded for about thirty years in maintaining [their] own identity, resisting even the normalizing intervention of the Minorite Friar Leone.”

3.4.2 The Female Community at Campomarzo

On March 3, 1226, Bishop Breganze once again assisted with the establishment of the mendicants in his city by donating a piece of land in Campomarzo to a group of women living according to Ugolino’s Rule for the Pauperes domine de Valle Spoleti sive Tuscia. The bishop clearly specified that the property was to be used for the construction of a new convent. The association of this female group with the rule of Ugolino marks these women, as others have noted, as the first “official” female Franciscan community in Verona. Although the official sanction of the group by the

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158 Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 39. Although most scholars accept this date, some see the possibility of such a donation in 1226 as problematic. Arrighi questions the acceptance of this date since between 1226 and 1228 Verona was in the middle of a civil war and the city was under an interdict. Maccagnan thinks that the interdict can be overlooked as a potential problem because of the earlier (1225) references to the existence of the community in the area. He further suggests that the few recorded testamentary bequests between 1225 and 1227 suggests that the presence of the sisters was not minor; they most likely already had a small monastery, and the donation of the bishop would have secured prosperity and growth to an already expanding monastery. See S. M. Arrighi, Cenno storico intorno al monastero di Santa Maria delle Vergini in Verona (Verona: Libanti, 1845), 17-18.
159 ASVr, Archivi del Comune di Verona, b. 53, n. 721 a c. 3; ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini; Biancoli, Notizie storiche IV, 684 and II, 750; Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 95, 104, see also appendix, 106 (doc. II), and “Scaligere francescane in S. Maria delle Vergini di Campomarzo a Verona,” Le Venezie francescane II/3(1969): 135. March 3, 1225: the land in Campomarzo given to the poor women was confined by 1) the Benedictine convent of S. Maddalena built in 1211; 2) the old (city? convent?) wall; 3) “Rio” (one of the tributaries of the Adige); 4) another small piece of land the commune had given to the women. The text of the donation is as follows: “Ibique Dominus Jacobus Dei gratia Veronensis Episcopus videlicet de mera liberalitate nostra divina pietatis intuitu, donamus et concedimus tibi Venerabili Hostienso et Velletrensi Episcopo locum ubi dicitur in Campomarcio, ab uno latere Campomarcius, ab alio latere Campomarcius, ab uno capite iura Ecclesie Sancte Marie Magdalene, ab alio Riddus Campimarcii, pet predictus Campomarcius quem Comunitas civitatis Verone ordini pauperum dominarum inferius memorato donavit cum omnibus perinentiis suis ad construendum ibi monasterium in honore (sic) Virginis Marie in quo virginies deodicate et alie ancille Christi in Paupertate Domino famulentur iuxta formam vitae seu religionis pauperum dominorum de Valle Spoleti sive Tuscia per Dominum Ugolimum Venerabiliem Episcopus Hostiensem auctoritate domini Pape eisdem sororibus traditum.” The donation was written and notarized in the Palazzo Vescovile in Verona. As Navolta has noted, the bishop makes no reference to Clare or Francis, both still alive at this time. See L. Navolta, “Per la storia del monastero di S. Maria delle Vergini in Verona nel medioevo: Inventari e registri (1282-1353)” (Tesi di laurea, Università degli studi di Verona, 1990), 7-8.
160 See, for example, Varanini, “Per la storia,” 101; Sandri, “Il vescovo,” 104-107; Navolta, “Per la storia
bishop (through this original donation of land) occurred in 1226, a testament from 1225
records a group of “sororibus minoribus” living in the area of “Campo Martio.”\footnote{ASVr, Esposti, perg. 124; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 101, 108; Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 39-40. The
testator, a certain Frugerio from the contrada of S. Michele alla Porta, left 25 lire to the “sororibus
minoribus de Campo Martio” in addition to providing pious bequests for the Humiliati, the lepers at S.
Giacomo alla Tomba, and funds for the construction of the Dominican convent.} This
document, along with the reference to an extant community in the text of the 1226
donation, suggests that by 1225 there was already a group of women in living in
Campomarzoz following the Franciscan rule for women.\footnote{ASVr S. Antonio dal Corso, perg. 117; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 97; Biancolini, Notizie storiche IV, 749. Biancolini’s testimony says that there was a female convent called S. Maria delle Vergini in
Campomarzoz that built around in the late eleventh century. Is it possible that the community of sisters at
Campomarzo referred to in the 1225 testament occupied this site? A surviving inscription found on a bell
that is thought to have hung in the monastery’s campanile reads “Vox domini an[no] MLXXXI hoc monas
terium inceptum est.” References to earlier abbesses secure the identification of the convent as female, but
the original religious affiliation of the women is unknown, although Biancolini suggests it may have
housed Benedictine nuns. If this eleventh-century convent was extant in the 1220s and the was indeed the
site of the female Franciscan community, it was probably in poor condition, which could account for
Bishop Breganze’s very specific instructions for construction of a new convent in his 1226 donation.
} It is difficult to speculate on the relationship between the communities of “sorores
minores” at S. Agata and the group in Campomarzoz. It is unclear, for example, how
many (if any) of the women residing at the Campomarzo convent originated from the
group at S. Agata, who were using the name “sorores minores” in 1224 and continued to
refer to themselves in this way at least until 1235.\footnote{ASVr S. Antonio dal Corso, perg. 117; Varanini, “Per la storia,” 97. In a document from 1235, the
sisters at S. Agata are still referred to as minor sisters: “ex dixit quod fecit datum sororibus minores que
tunc habitabant in ipsis domibus secundum quod continetur in una carta ex quo malsani exierunt de dictis
domibus et ex quo ille Planus habuit et non istic mulieribus qui modo sunt in illus domibus.”} It is possible that in 1225 the sisters
at S. Agata—before their division that year—and the community in Campomarzo
represented two “branches” of sorores minores, perhaps not unlike the friars at S.
Gabriele and S. Croce/S. Francesco. The subsequent division and transfer of over half of
the sisters from S. Agata into a cloistered and thus more “Franciscan” program indicates
that if there was a period in which two distinct groups of “sorores minores” were active in

\textit{del monastero},” 7.
Verona, this duration was brief.\textsuperscript{164} Maccagnan has proposed that the first women of the Campomarzio community may have been sisters at S. Agata who left their original site for a cloistered convent under the guidance and supervision of Franciscan Friar Leone in 1225.\textsuperscript{165} Nonetheless, by the mid-thirteenth century, the community at S. Agata had largely dissipated, and it is possible that the remaining members joined the cloistered women at S. Maria delle Vergini.

3.4.3 The Construction of S. Maria delle Vergini, c. 1225-c. 1250

In 1243, Innocent IV signed the Second Rule of the Franciscan Nuns; within two years, a bull confirming this rule and its privileges was addressed to the female convent at Campomarzio.\textsuperscript{166} Like other communities living under Ugolino’s Rule, the community of S. Maria delle Vergini was under the jurisdiction of the Holy See, but the Franciscans served as their spiritual and material agents. In 1234, Bishop Breganze voluntarily released the Clarissan community at Campomarzio from his jurisdiction, allowing the Franciscans to officially assume this role.\textsuperscript{167} The friars thus became responsible for the religious and material care of the sisters, which included preaching, administration of the sacraments, and collection of alms on their behalf; a papal letter from August 12, 1238, for instance, instructs the friars to preach to the sisters on the second Sunday of the month.\textsuperscript{168} Although a small number of Franciscan friars were living at S. Maria delle Vergini around this time, this arrangement seems to have been short-lived, since there are

\textsuperscript{164} See the work of Sensi (cited in note 32, Chapter 1). Sensi notes, for example, that there were at least two female communities at Spoleto, and indeed the situation here may be an interesting parallel to that in Verona.
\textsuperscript{165} Maccagnan, \textit{Le clarisse}, 39-40. There is, however, no documentation to confirm or support his hypothesis.
\textsuperscript{166} Biancoli, \textit{Notizie storiche} II, 751.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., IV, 267; Sandri, “Seeligere francescane,” 137.
\textsuperscript{168} Biancoli, \textit{Notizie storiche} IV, 691.
no indications that this practice continued after the friars were installed at S. Fermo.

It is nonetheless significant that Bishop Breganze transferred his jurisdiction over the Clarissan community to the Franciscans twelve years before Innocent IV mandated that bishops and ecclesiastic officials do so. By providing opportunities for the friars to increase their self-sufficiency, Breganze expanded their roles in the city, thereby demonstrating his support of the early mendicant communities. This may have also been a clever move on the part of the bishop, who by relinquishing control of the female house also divested himself the financial burdens of their poverty.

A number of papal privileges granted to the monastery between 1229 and 1263 directly affected their economic situation, steadily reducing the sisters’ restrictions of poverty by providing indulgences and concessions to assist them. In 1229, a special indulgence rewarded charitable donations given to the cloistered women who “sufficentiam suam in paupertate posuerunt ita quod fidelium tantum helemosinis sustentarentur.” Innocent IV’s Dilectis in Christo filabus of 1243 further relaxed their rigid standards of poverty, and two years later the papacy permitted the sisters of S. Maria delle Vergini to enjoy wine with meals, consume animal broth, and sleep in comfortable straw beds. In 1246, Innocent IV allowed the women to possess goods and revenue: wealthy women could now join the convent with their dowries and receive generous bequests from family members. A few years later, in 1260, Alexander IV’s

169 Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 373-374. Innocent’s bull, Cum sicut ex parte vestra of June 27, 1246, officially placed the sisters under the care of the Friars Minor. Fourteen years later, a bull from Alexander IV further confirmed the Franciscan’s responsibility for the Clare’s spiritual and temporal guidance by granting them permission to enter the convent in a few specific instances such as to treat ill sisters, give last rites, or remove the deceased (Vestris piis supplicationibus, June 6, 1260).

170 July 4, 1229, ASVr, Antichi archivi veronesi, S. Maria delle Vergini, VIII, n. 11. See also Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 41.

171 November 20, 1245. Biancolini, Notizie storiche IV, 692.

172 June 27, 1246. G. B. Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 8; see also Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 373.
bull *Exibita nobis vestra petito* confirmed Bishop Manfredo’s forty-day indulgence for those attending mass at the convent on the second Sunday of the month, so long as they continued to visit the church for eight consecutive days after the service. In 1263, Urban IV reconfirmed and expanded the convent’s common ownership of goods and possessions: under this new policy, the sisters could freely accept donations and own goods and property without violating their vow of poverty. Liberties such as these dramatically reduced the standard of poverty of the women, and were granted in strict opposition to the original principles of Ugolino’s Rule which, among other things, prohibited the possession of any goods—even those to be kept in common—other than a church and conventual buildings.

The papacy may have issued many of these papal bulls to help the women support themselves. By the mid-thirteenth century, the Clarissan community in Campomarzo was sizeable: the first documented chapter from 1247 records thirty-nine sisters in attendance and a text from 1262 names at least thirty-two sisters. Local Franciscans were thus faced with the substantial burden of meeting the needs of a considerable community. Subsidizing a group of this size—notwithstanding additional costs associated with construction of a new convent—required significant funding and resources.

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175 Navolta, “Per la storia del monastero,” 9. According to Mueller, papal relaxation of the sisters’ original Rule seems to have been a direct consequence of the initial failure of the Clarissan poverty experiment: nuns across Italy were suffering in monasteries too poor to sustain them. The Franciscan brothers responsible for these women were devoting enormous amounts of time and energy to the fulfillment of the enclosed women’s material needs, which diverted them from the services they performed for the lay community. Although papal decrees like those discussed above essentially transformed the ideal of radical poverty into mere rhetoric, papal intervention essentially prevented the Clarissan monasteries from shutting down completely. See Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty*, esp. 33-52.
176 For the 1247 figure, see ASVr, S. Leonardo, b. 11, perg. 22; Navolta, “Per la storia del monastero,” tav. I, 20. For the 1262 number, see ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. IV, perg. 69; Archivio Sartori III/2, 1461.
Although construction of the new convent of S. Maria delle Vergini probably began around 1226, work on the church was still underway in 1247 since a papal bull from this year for instance states that the convent is not yet “ready” for consecration. Little is known about the medieval design and architectural character of the church and convent that was destroyed in 1926. A few photographs of the monastery survive, but from these it is nearly impossible to distinguish the original parts of the complex from those added or renovated in the following centuries; the only part of the church fabric that appears to be medieval is the lower polychromatic construction of brick and stone of the campanile, seen in figure 34. What they do reveal, however, is that (at least in the twentieth century), the convent included a large two-story cloister around a central garden (figure 35). The cloister featured series of round arches with cross vaults in the lower storey and a wooden roof on the upper level. Adjacent to the cloister was the church itself, which contained an exterior entrance for the lay public and ingress from the cloister for the nuns. This arrangement also reveals two distinct interior spaces for the laity and the Clares, who may have had their own nun’s choir in the east end. It may be useful to think about the way that early surviving Clarissan convents such S. Damiano and S. Chiara in Assisi approached the separation of public and private spaces in their designs to speculate how this division occurred in Verona.

Construction proceeded slowly and intermittently, probably due to economic difficulties. The papal interventions outlined above were probably necessary for completion of their convent, but other incentives were also given to encourage assistance.

177 Religiosam vitam, August 30, 1235. Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 42.
178 See, for example, Bruzelius, “Hearing is Believing,” and M. A. Filipiak, “The Plans of the Poor Clares’ Convents in Central Italy From the Thirteenth Through the Fifteenth Century” (PhD diss. University of Michigan, 1991).
A bull of November 8, 1239, for example, conceded a forty-day indulgence to those helping with the church.\footnote{Biancolini, 	extit{Notizie storiche} IV, 690-691; Maccagnan, 	extit{Le clarisse}, 42, 32. This bull, 	extit{Quoriam ut ait Apostolus}, was composed by Gregory IX, and reads: “…cum igitur Abatissa, et Sorores Monasterii Sanctae Marieae in Campo Martio Veronensis, Ordinis Sancti Damiani Monasterium ipsum aedificare inceperint, nec ad tantam consumationem operis fibi propriae suppetant facultates, Universitatem vestram rogandam duximus attentius, et hortandam in remissionem vobis peccaminum injungentes, quatenus ipsis, vel earum nuntiis cum propter hoc ad vos accesserint beneficia petiti de bonis a Deo vobis collatis pias eis elemosinas, et grata caritatis subsida erogatis…”} Only fourteen days later, those providing additional contributions to the building program were rewarded with an additional indulgence.\footnote{November 22, 1239. Maccagnan, 	extit{Le clarisse}, 42.} On April 29, 1241, the papacy authorized Bishop Breganze to use fines collected from usurers or bad business dealings to aid the sisters at Campomarzo; one month later, Innocent IV conceded another indulgence to those who visited the church and helped with construction costs.\footnote{Nos studentium mereri gloriam (1241) and 	extit{Quoriam ut ait Apostolus} (May 13, 1246). Maccagnan, 	extit{Le clarisse}, 42.} This series of papal legislation demonstrates that, at least for the first half of the thirteenth century, construction progressed slowly and the community faced serious funding challenges. Papal intercession and assistance was apparently necessary for the completion of the building program of S. Maria delle Vergini.

In addition to financial contributions generated by these indulgences and papal decrees, the sisters were also the recipients of testamentary bequests made by local patrons. In 1227, for example, a widow named Aldisa left an offering to the women for their general necessities.\footnote{Ibid., 40.} The same Bellissima who patronized the Franciscans at S. Croce and S. Gabriele in 1229 also contributed to the Clares at Campomarzo; whereas Belissima left each Franciscan convent 10 soldi, she gave the Clares 20 soldi, supporting what appears to be a common predilection among female Veronese testators to patronize
female organizations.\textsuperscript{183} In 1235, a certain Fulcherio gave the convent all of his goods in Roverchiera.\textsuperscript{184} The previously noted will of Ulivetus Setillis from 1244, who was himself a resident of the Campomarzo neighborhood, left 10 \textit{lire} to the female community, and 40 \textit{soldi}, 10 \textit{minali} of wheat, and 2 \textit{minali} of wine to his Clarissan daughter, Sister Angelica.\textsuperscript{185} On April 16, 1260, Friar Ottone, procurator and syndic of S. Maria delle Vergini (perhaps a tertiary?) took possession of a piece of land in Valpantena along with other goods left to the sisters by a widow named Thomasina.\textsuperscript{186} The sisters even had patrons from within the Order: a friar of the Third Order, Bonaguisa del fu Bracco, left his daughter and abbess of the convent, Costanza, a generous portion of land in 1252, and in 1265, the Clares received several pieces of land in nearby Zevio from a female tertiary named Belsandra.\textsuperscript{187}

Despite the support from the both laity and members of the Order, the economic situation of the Clarissan convent remained unstable. During the entire course of the construction—perhaps partially as a result of an overly ambitious building program—there were insufficient funds to provide for both the fabric of S. Maria delle Vergini and

\textsuperscript{183} As per my observation in the study of surviving documents. I will discuss this mentality further in Chapter 7.
\textsuperscript{184} Sandri, “Scaligere Francescane,” 138. According to Sandri, this is the first important bequest to the Clares in Verona.
\textsuperscript{185} ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, rotoli, b. I, perg. 47.
\textsuperscript{186} ASVr, S. Fermo, b. IV, perg. 63; Archivio Sartori III/2, 1261. This is perhaps the earliest reference of a procurator working for the sisters at S. Maria delle Vergini. Beginning on August 18, 1264, a layman and notary by the name of Ognibene de Zimplorio (who appears to be Friar Ottone's replacement), appears in this role. Ognibene is followed by Friar Girardo (probably a tertiary) beginning at the end of the 1200s until circa 1311. Friar Guglielmo di Gabriele da Zevio (also probably a tertiary) is the next recorded procurator and syndic at the convent after Girardo. Another friar, Porceto, a tertiary and a baker who resided in the contrada of S. Maria Maggiore, performed numerous administrative duties that included administration and/or management of goods and donations for both the Franciscans and Clares between 1275 and 1320, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7. See also Sandri, “Scaligere francescane,” 138; and Maccagnan, \textit{Le clarisse}, 63.
\textsuperscript{187} See Navolta, “Per la storia del monastero,” 80; Archivio Sartori II/2 2100; and G. Sandri, “Scaligere Francescane,” 138. Bonaguisa also left his son, Friar Leone, and nephew, Friar Francesco, both members of the Veronese Franciscan community, some of his earthly goods. All of Bonaguisa’s five daughters were members of Clarissan communities in the region.
the necessities required for its growing community. For several decades the convent seems to have been barely able to survive, but in the mid to late thirteenth century, S. Maria delle Vergini began to acquire economic security, prestige, and stability as a religious institution.\textsuperscript{188} By the second half of the decade, it had evolved into one of the preferred beneficiaries among Veronese testators. The records of chapter attendance from this period read rather like the guest list to a della Scala \textit{festa}: by the end of the century, almost every prestigious Veronese family had a daughter in the monastery and at least four future abbesses would come from the city’s most wealthy and powerful homes. What began as a struggling community in the mid 1220s remarkably came to symbolize prestige, power, and wealth by the second half of the century.

\textsuperscript{188} This occurred after Clare’s death in 1253.
4. Friars in the City

The arrival of the friars in Verona began in the humble margins of the city (figure 27). By the mid 1220s, the Franciscans were primarily divided between two sites outside the city walls: the old church of S. Gabriele located east of the Adige River, and S. Croce, a former leper hospital south of town. The Dominicans were settled in their modest convent of S. Maria Mater Domini, also outside the city’s fortifications. With the combined help of the papacy, the bishop, and lay patrons, however, these growing communities sought and acquired new locations within the city walls and quickly began the constructing new convents (figures 22, 27). The Franciscans moved into the centrally located Benedictine monastery of S. Fermo in 1260, and by the end of the century had begun renovations to the old Romanesque basilica. In the same year, Bishop Manfredo gave the Dominican community a piece of land that included the tiny parish church of S. Anastasia and the nearby chiesetta of S. Remigio. Shortly thereafter, the friars began to construct the conventual buildings, and by the early 1290s they had initiated work on the new Dominican church of S. Anastasia.

How did this shift to the center affect the religious mission of the friars and the architectural character of their convents? The migration of the Franciscans and Dominicans into central Verona coincided with a general relaxation of attitudes towards poverty, and this new spirit expressed itself in their buildings. The Veronese sites can be viewed within the larger framework of contemporary modifications to Franciscan and Dominican architectural legislation, which indicate a clear evolution of ideas about buildings, money, and poverty. After the 1260’s, the monumental mendicant projects
began to reflect a new sense of identity and self-definition, one that seems far removed from the small and poor buildings they first inhabited.

### 4.1 The Location of Early Mendicant Communities and Urbanization

Most studies that address the relationship between the friar and the city focus on the role of the mendicant orders in—rather than their response to—urban growth and development. Numerous institutional interactions, pressures, and values shaped the convents and activities of the friars in Verona and in other cities. The relationship between the friars and city was one of reciprocity: the friars affected the growth and development of the city as much as it and its expansion helped shape the architectural character of their convents and develop their religious mission.

The research of Le Goff first examined the relationship between urbanization and the mendicant orders, suggesting that the distribution of mendicant convents corresponded to the general process of urbanization in medieval France. Other scholars have furthered some of Le Goff’s original observations by exploring how the location of mendicant convents affected the growth of specific medieval towns. Thus, a narrative of late medieval urbanization has formed that credits the establishment of mendicant convents on the periphery of a town as a primary stimulus for the formation of new borghi and residential expansion beyond the city’s fortifications. This model

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1 Le Goff, “Apostolat mendicant,” 335-352; see also “Ordres mendiants,” 924-946. Le Goff has argued that for France, the number of mendicant orders established in a town was a measure of its social and economic importance, and that ultimately, the mendicant movement was crucial to the expansion of urbanism in later medieval Europe. Pellegrini also observed what he believed to be a significant pattern: that the friars were quick to settle in cities that were also episcopal seats. He suggested that by the early fourteenth century, the mendicant orders could be found in at least fifty percent of the bishoprics. See L. Pellegrini, “Territorio e città nella dinamica insediativa degli ordini mendicanti in campania,” in *Gli ordini mendicanti e la città*, 50-51.
2 Guidoni, “Città e ordini mendicanti,” 76-77. An alternate version of this scheme maintains that fraternal foundation on the urban fringe occurred at the same time of outward civic expansion.
emphasizes, and may indeed exaggerate, the role of the mendicant orders in the outward expansion of a city and its population, and has been used to describe the processes of urbanization in “mendicant cities” in Italy such as Florence, Rieti, Montefalco and Pistoia.\(^3\) In many such cases, scholars have assumed that the new mendicant concentration on the outskirts of the towns provoked a rivalry with the “old” center formed by the cathedral, baptistery, and the market, thereby provoking the secular clergy.\(^4\) The abstraction of the relationship between the city and the mendicant orders is a misleading consequence of this historiographic tradition.\(^5\)

The rise of the towns as centers of commerce and exchange and the population boom of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries resulted in a dramatic increase in number of inhabitants as well as in physical size. Geography permitting, the natural inclination of a growing city was to expand outward, as it arguably still is in the present-day. The continuous rebuilding of civic walls to extend a city’s fortified boundaries and incorporate outlying suburban communities confirms outward expansion as a common, if not universal, medieval tendency. Consider the case of Verona, for example, whose situation is consistent with that in other Italian cities: by the end of the eleventh century, the city had an estimated population of 10,000. By the early fourteenth century, however, the number of inhabitants had quadrupled to an estimated 40,000 residents and the city walls had been rebuilt a number of times to accommodate the increased number of residents, as seen in figure 19.\(^6\) The outward extension of Verona’s urban territory was a

\(^3\) See Guidoni “Città e ordini mendicanti” for the term and characterization of “mendicant city.”
\(^4\) See for example Guidoni “Città e ordini mendicanti” and Pellegrini, “Territorio e città.”
\(^5\) The tendency to use the mendicants and their settlements in this capacity can be seen, for instance, in the works of Le Goff (“Apostolat mendiant” and “Ordres mendiants”) and Freed (The Friars).
logical consequence of a dramatic population increase.

Although the settlement of the mendicant orders on the periphery of the city is the most commonly discussed model, another, less frequently cited, pattern exists. As seen in cities such as Bologna, Perugia, Siena, and Verona, this narrative is characterized by the transfer of a mendicant community from an earlier settlement located outside the city to a new site in its center.⁷ For the Franciscans, movement into the city center may reflect the profound change in the Order that replaced lay brothers with educated clerics.⁸ As priests, the friars took on parochial duties, and these roles required a more intimate relationship to the lay public.⁹ A study of site transfers among Franciscan communities indicates that by the mid-thirteenth century there was a significant increase in requests for new locations: whereas from 1228 to 1240 there were only ten Franciscan relocations, between 1244 and 1257 over one hundred chapters were authorized to move to more central or larger sites.¹⁰ Relocation seems to have been especially popular among communities in the Veneto region: in Padua, the Franciscans left S. Antonio d’Aracella

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⁷ For the mendicant move toward the center of cities see Guidoni, “Città e ordini mendicanti”; Pellegrini, “Gli insediamenti”; Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 212-213; Le Goff “Franciscanisme et modèles culturels du XIIIE siècle,” in Francescanesimo e vita religiosa dei laici nel ’200, 87-88; and E. Paztor, “La chiesa dei frati minor tra ideale di S. Francesco ed esigenze della cura delle anime” in Lo spazio dell’umilità, 59-75.
⁸ Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine.” Meersseman observed that before 1240, the Dominicans were the first to construct new, larger churches in the city center, later followed by the Franciscans. He notes that prior to 1240 the Dominicans favored existing structures. This illustrates the importance of clericalization on the choice of site: since the Dominicans were established as a priestly order from their conception, they sought central locations (and instigated new building programs) before the Franciscans, whose clericalization occurred slightly later. Unlike the Dominicans, the Franciscans accepted large numbers of uneducated laymen into their order in the 1220s and 1230s, a practice which had largely come to an end by the mid thirteenth century.
⁹ Bruzelius for instance has noted that the clericalization of the Franciscans required communities to move closer to the center of town in order for the friars to reach the lay public more effectively, and indeed their new clerical role must have been a critical stimulus for relocation. See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 212-213.
¹⁰ D. Monti, “Commentary on Bonaventure’s First Encyclical Letter,” in Works of Saint Bonaventure, 60. In addition, Lambert has noted that many of the papal bulls authorizing property transfers were granted in response to the petitions of provincial ministers or even local superiors (Franciscan Poverty, 94).
for S. Maria Mater Domini around 1229, and a few years later the Dominicans in Treviso moved from their early location at the Oratorio del Cristo to S. Nicolò (1231). In Venice, the Dominicans replaced S. Martino with Ss. Giovanni e Paolo after 1234, and several decades later (1280), theFranciscan community in Vicenza moved from their peripheral location of S. Salvatore to the centrally located site of S. Lorenzo. These examples suggest that both Franciscan and Dominican communities in Veneto cities had a distinct preference for locations in or near the city center.

Despite repeated expansions of a city’s walls, in some instances immigration and rapid population growth surpassed a town’s ability to enclose its inhabitants within its walls. In Verona, extra muros suburbs continued to develop and thrive beyond the expanding fortifications of the town well into the fourteenth-century. In the case of Verona and other cities with centrally located mendicant communities, such as Padua and Treviso, the friars—already situated more or less in the city center—do not seem to have played a substantial role in the city’s continued outward expansion. In these instances, it appears that the reverse may have been more accurate: that the city and its “urbanized” center affected the friars’ choice of site rather than the friars encouraging a city’s growth and development.

The mid-thirteenth century often witnessed a steady move of the friars away from the peripheries of cities towards their centers, and (at least initially), Franciscan and Dominican administrative officials appear to have supported and encouraged this process. In the 1250s, Franciscan Minister General Bonaventure defended his Order’s preference for central sites, arguing that a central location encouraged service to the community, facilitated the friars’ quest for alms and food, and helped to safeguard the brothers from
attack and pillage.\textsuperscript{11} Aside from the issues of physical and economic security, however, why had central sites become so coveted? The social and religious authority of a community was closely tied to location, and centralized positions became the single most important factor for cultivating relationships between the friars and the laity, especially the wealthier and more powerful citizens. Relocation to a more central site significantly increased the friars’ visibility—and therefore their popularity—through public religious activities such as preaching, confession, and performance of the sacraments. Laymen offered oblations in return for the sacraments and as the friars acquired an even greater clerical mission, gifts and contributions increased in equal measure. These “payments” supported the friars and largely funded their building programs. Because they often preached outdoors, proximity to highly trafficked zones such as a city gate, market, primary road, or important bridge, provided a steady flow of passersby whom the friars could evangelize. The new Franciscan and Dominican sites in Verona provided precisely these advantages.\textsuperscript{12}

Central locations, however appealing, were difficult to procure. Medieval cities were often crowded within their walls, and rapid population growth meant that little space was available. Urbanization patterns, population density, the location of a city’s walls, and geography—particularly rivers, floodplains, mountains, or valleys—determined the amount of available land within a city. City lots were significantly more

\textsuperscript{11} Bonaventure, “Determinationes questionum circa regulam fratum minorum,” in Opera omnia S. Bonaventurae, VIII, ed. A. Lauer (Quaracchi: Collegio di San Bonaventura, 1898), 341-342. An intra muros location certainly provided military protection, but the city’s constant circulation of goods through commerce and trade also offered a greater sense of economic security. Bonaventure specifically notes the abundance of goods found in urban environments: “In oppidis autem seu villis ubi abundant victualia plures possunt confluer e melius sustentari.” See also Pellegrini, “L’ordine francescano,” P.II, q. XIX, 370b.

\textsuperscript{12} Guidoni, “Città e ordini mendicanti,” 78-79.
expensive than property in the periphery. Another problem was the overabundance and excessive density of mendicant houses: in 1268, the papal bull *Quia Plerumque* specified that mendicant churches must be located a minimum distance of 140 *canne* from one another, a provision that placed even more restrictions on mendicant communities wanting to settle within the city limits.\(^{13}\)

In Verona, the shortage of city space combined with these papal restrictions created tensions between the mendicant orders. Between 1324 and 1327, the Franciscans at S. Fermo protested the construction of the Servite convent of S. Maria della Scala, claiming it violated the minimum distance established by the papacy (figure 36).\(^{14}\) The bishop employed a team of mathematical experts to calculate the distance between the two churches, and this panel determined that the distance between the convents was between 152 and 155 *canne*, well above the minimum established by the papacy. The Franciscans continued their bitter protest against the Servite community for three more years, and even commissioned additional measurements which did, in fact, indicate the Servite convent encroached upon their “territory” (although these findings were never officially substantiated and did not affect the Servite building program).

\(^{13}\) An ruling by Clement IV in 1265 (*Clara merita sanctitatis*) specified that 300 *canne* was to be the minimum distance between mendicant convents.; this figure was revised in 1268 to 140 *canne*.

In many cases, the friars had little or no control over the location of their communities: communities usually accepted land or buildings offered by generous benefactors regardless of the desirability (or lack thereof) of the location. This is well illustrated in Verona, where one of the early Franciscan communities in Verona occupied a former leper hospital, and an early initiative of “sorores minores” received property in Sub Acquario, an area aptly named for its swampy lands. In Venice, the land given to the Franciscans by patron Giovanni Badoer was in a sparsely habituated, low-lying area subject to flooding, whereas most of the Dominican site was submerged in the lagoon.15 As noted in the previous chapter, a Franciscan community at Rome cited the “pestilent air” around their marshy site as a primary reason for their request for transfer into the city center.16 Early communities frequently accepted land in uninhabited zones or in the poorest parts of town, and this would have been in keeping with the original concept of apostolic poverty. However, the expense and shortage of urban land presented significant obstacles for groups wishing to leave their sites on the periphery for central locations.

Land availability also affected the size and design of the mendicant convents. In the mid thirteenth century, Dominican Minister General Humbert of Romans observed the lack of uniformity in Dominican buildings, lamenting:

Established religious orders…show uniformity not only in their observances, but also in their habits and in their buildings and such like. It makes me groan to think how far from achieving this we are, for they have churches and conventual buildings of the same shape, organized in the same way, while our churches and buildings are of all types and arrangements.17

17 Humbert of Romans, Opera de vita regulari, ed. J. J. Berthier (Rome: Befani, 1935), vol. 2, 5. See also J. Cannon, “Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy, the Provincia Romana c. 1220-c.1320”
Although Humbert refers here specifically to Dominican buildings, this lack of “uniformity” characterized Franciscan churches as well. This haphazardness was, in part, a consequence of site, which conditioned the physical and geographical character of a community’s capacity to build. Communities seeking locations in the city center often had to adapt to small, fragmented, or irregularly shaped plots of land. Unlike the traditional rural monastic complex built on massive countryside estates, the mendicant convent was often constrained by its urban location, forced to accommodate special challenges, such as a city’s grid plan and its crowded terrain.

The additive nature of mendicant church building also contributed to the construction of buildings of “all types and arrangements.” The recent research of Bruzelius has examined the ad hoc “process” of mendicant architecture as an alternative to the traditional concept of buildings conceived in terms of a final “project.”

She suggested that an incremental process of expansion and growth—the addition of aisles, altars, cloisters, and chapels—resulted in buildings that were constantly under construction and often eccentric in design. As Bruzelius has noted, the “episodic”

(Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1980), 57. In this quotation, Humbert seems to be comparing his Order to the Cistercians. Although there was never Dominican architectural “program” which imposed a particular type of church throughout the Order or even within a single province, Cannon suggested that the emergence of a specifically Dominican ground plan could be a result of Humbert’s intervention. But is there really a sense of “unification” and, if so, can we attribute it to Humbert? Indeed, Schenkluhn noted that because of their urban locations, mendicant convents are less regularized than their Benedictine or Cistercian counterparts (Architettura, 231-233). Cannon proposed that the presence of a transept and oftentimes a double choir (a solution to the “need for more room in the choir”) were elements that marked a Dominican plan. She claimed that a lack of apsidal space was likely more noticeable in the average Dominican church than in its Franciscan counterpart. Since there were far fewer Dominican churches in Italy and, unlike Franciscan houses, they were bound to maintain a minimum number of friars (all of which were priests), there was a more stringent need for space in a Dominican church choir. Despite Cannon’s compelling explanation for enlarged choir space and the addition of a transept in Dominican convents, these architectural elements feature in other mendicant and secular religious buildings as well, and therefore I do not believe that they can be designated as uniquely Dominican.

18 Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” esp. 203.
19 Although the orders often had to build new structures ex novo, even these buildings were conceived with
character of mendicant architecture responded to economic pressures and circumstances, but I also suggest that convent expansion—what she compellingly describes as “amoeba-like”—was fundamentally site-dependent. In order to accommodate to the shape of a site, available space, and preexisting urban structures, buildings were often squeezed together in innovative or unusual combinations. Sundt’s study of the Dominican convent at Toulouse proposed that the unusual double nave plan of the church was “inextricably linked both to the size and configuration of their original land donation”; at Toulouse, therefore, the size and eccentric configuration of the Dominican site generated an atypical design for the church (figure 37). Some structures were even pressed against the city’s fortifications in order to adapt to the size and shape of a site: the Dominican church in Paris abutted the medieval wall and the convent at Toulouse actually straddled the city’s fortifications (figure 38). Similarly, the location of the city walls and the steep terrain of the site in Siena shaped the design and configuration of S. Domenico (figure 39). In other towns, the churches themselves became the urban boundary, like S. Francesco at Assisi, whose monumental fabric came to mark the western border of the medieval city’s urban space (figure 40). Economic circumstances and the spatial constraints of cities were thus critical factors in the creation of an architecture that, as Humbert of Romans lamented, lacked “uniformity.”

There were thus multiple influences on and consequences of a community’s choice of site and its relationship to urban growth and development. Restricting the study

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21 In addition to the physical characteristics of the site, other subjective factors such as climate, availability of materials, accessibility of skilled labor, local or regional disposition, and individual function likewise affected the configuration and architectural character of mendicant convents, resulting in designs and decoration that varied city by city.
of mendicant settlements and their urban environments within the traditional parameters—such as those noted at the beginning of this section—minimizes the importance of individual factors and circumstances that were unique to—and therefore distinguished—specific locations. Guidoni suggested that the foundation patterns of the mendicant orders reveal a remarkable awareness of urban space on behalf of the friars, proposing that the different mendicant orders settled in separate areas of the city in order to avoid undue competition and maximize efficiency. Yet his concept assumes that mendicant convents were 1) always built on the periphery; 2) that this peripheral location was a self-conscious decision; and 3) that the friars had much choice in site. As I have shown, fraternal settlement did not follow a strict “type,” “standard,” or a set of “rules,” but was instead governed by and highly sensitive to site-specific variables, idiosyncrasies, and pressures. These factors also shaped the friars’ accompanying architectural projects.

4.2 Mendicant Building Programs: Criticism and Reform, c. 1250-1300

Franciscan and Dominican emphasis on apostolic poverty and their public preaching in the vernacular distinguished them from other religious institutions and accounted for their enormous popularity. A series of papal bulls composed between 1231 and 1253 significantly expanded the friars’ privileges and their pastoral mission. Many of these rulings, however, also promoted economic well-being, thereby threatening the vows of poverty. For example, beginning in the 1230s the friars began to bury the lay

22 To this end, Guidoni offers a triangulation theory to illustrate his analysis, which supposes that if a city’s Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian convents are “connected” via imaginary lines, the center of the resulting triangle will fall on the main piazza, cathedral, or communal palace (“Città e ordini mendicanti”). Dal Pinto also discusses the “triangulation” of mendicant sites in Verona (“I servi di Maria a Verona,” 435).

23 Here I use the term “site” to refer to both the city and the convent’s specific location within it.
dead and receive associated burial fees, preach in public, hear confession, and receive
money and commodities through third parties. In order to resolve the conflicts over
property ownership, the papacy assumed responsibility over all Franciscan possessions in
1245 except in cases where a donor expressly reserved control. This important ruling
released the brothers from the legal liabilities regarding ownership of property and
justified their acceptance of valuable land and buildings.

One of the most striking characteristics of the mendicant movement was the
creation of intimate relationships with the urban laity, which developed largely through a
series of “spiritual transactions,” or services performed by the friars for their lay patrons,
such as confession and burial. By the late thirteenth century, the friars had often become
the prevailing choice of the lay public for the performance of religious services. This
preference led to the uneven distribution of oblations to the urban clergy and created a
great deal of tension and conflict between the secular clergy and the friars. As the
mendicants grew increasingly rich, the income of the secular clergy and of monastic
communities declined proportionately, which stimulated a backlash against the friars. In
the face of conspicuous patronage from lay patrons and the construction of increasingly
large churches and convents, the friars’ claims to poverty seemed ever more
hypocritical.

24 See, for example, Nimis Iniqua (Gregory IX, 1231), Ordinem Vestrum (Innocent IV, 1245), and Cum a
nobis (Innocent IV, 1250). See also Chapter 7 for further discussion of these issues.
25 Ordinem Vestrum.
26 This growing wealth is reflected in Cannon’s observation that by the 1240s the Dominican Order had
become wealthy enough for some bishops to attempt to force local convents to tithe, whereas previously,
the friars had been the beneficiaries of this tax (“Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy,” 321).
By the mid-thirteenth century, the “hypocritical friar” (such as Chaucer’s character, Friar Hubert) had
become a familiar object of ridicule and contempt in contemporary literature. For further reading, see
Erickson, “Fourteenth-century Franciscans and Their Critics. I,” and P. R. Szitty, The Antifraternal
The growing wealth of the friars manifested itself most visibly in architecture. Communities began to design their churches according to their specific needs and those of their followers; the first Franciscan and Dominican churches built *ex novo* commonly featured uncluttered and open spaces to accommodate large crowds and the tombs of the dead.\(^{27}\) Ironically, the friars’ shift towards larger convents seems to have grown from the new building programs at the mother houses of Assisi and Bologna in the 1220s, which memorialized the orders’ respective founders with impressive architectural monuments (figures 40-45).\(^{28}\) Conceptualized in part to promote the founder saints and their respective cults, the scale and grandeur of these projects seems to have justified a trend towards monumental building in mendicant architecture that equated bigger with better.\(^{29}\)

Initially, even Bonaventure defended the friars’ erection of tall churches for their effective and economical use of expensive urban land and encouraged the use of stone and brick because of their resistance to fire.\(^{30}\) The mother churches at Bologna and Assisi thus gave birth to a new generation of mendicant architecture characterized by grandeur and opulence. No longer satisfied with the humble huts and hovels inhabited by their predecessors, the friars began to build extravagant churches and convents to testify

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\(^{27}\) Pellegrini, “L’ordine francescano,” P.I, q. VI, 314b. Bonaventure’s *Determinations* also notes the scandal associated with his Order’s opulent building: “Quia vero intra ambitum civitatis, ut dictum est, cariores sunt areae, quod non possemus facile sufficientiam congrue latitudinis habere, ut omnes officinae deorsum collocarentur iuxta se invicem, oportet aliquando, ut una super alteram in altum locetur, ita quod utraque aeris respiraculo non careat, et ex hoc domos nostrae magis apparent excelsae ac sumptulsae et paupertati dissimiles, cum tamen hoc paupertas magis efficiat, quia, ne circa dilatemur, inferius angustamur.” Meersseman has also observed that for the Dominicans, the most common additions/renovation to existing churches included the appendage of a cloister and/or cells. See Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine,” 143.

\(^{28}\) Dominic’s death in 1221 prompted preparations for the substantial enlargement of the Bolognese convent while construction of the grand basilica of S. Francesco at Assisi began immediately after Francis’s canonization in 1228. For S. Domenico, see V. Alce, “Il convento di S. Domenico nel secolo XIII,” *Culta bononia* 4 (1972), 127-174.

\(^{29}\) It should also be remembered that S. Francesco in Assisi was constructed as papal church, and this certainly affected the scale and magnificence of its design.

to their missionary success.

These new architectural practices became a specific point of contention for criticism of the friars. Critics equated relocation in the city center with increased wealth, which expressed itself in splendid buildings and extravagant decoration; the new architectural projects were physical manifestations of the friars’ hypocrisy and their failure to adhere to their original goals of poverty, simplicity, and humility. As Lambert observed, the cost of construction was the single greatest pressure on the friars’ commitment to apostolic poverty.\(^{31}\)

While large-scale construction and renovation projects found many critics, some, such as legal expert and lay preacher Albertanus of Brescia, defended Franciscan architectural practice on the basis of necessity. In the mid-thirteenth century he wrote:

> The Lord rules out neither need nor utility but desire...for if these Friars Minor do not have adequate churches, and if they do not have a place suitable for a kitchen or refectory, then they [should] add to their house.\(^{32}\)

For Albertanus, poverty could no longer impede “need nor utility” in the friars’ buildings. This and similar lines of reasoning justified—at least in the eyes of some of the friars—continued architectural expansion. The Franciscans found another outspoken supporter in Archbishop Visconti of Pisa.\(^{33}\) In a sermon preached in the local Pisan Franciscan church in 1261, Visconti pleads for funds for the church’s enlargement:

> Men do not like staying to hear offices and sermons in such small churches, and still less do they want to return a second time. They say to

\(^{31}\) Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty*, 94. The ongoing research of Bruzelius suggests that the new architectural monumentality of the friars may have been was the result of their victory over the seculars in the 1250s.


each other, ‘I don’t want to go there, because the other day I was so squashed that my head (or foot) still aches’ et cetera.\textsuperscript{34}

Murray noted that all of the archbishop’s sermons given at mendicant churches included appeals for economic support such as food, clothing, and books, “treasures” for their churches, and tiles and mortar for their buildings.\textsuperscript{35} According to Visconti, the pitiful state of the Dominican and Franciscan churches was a disgrace to Pisa. The friars were, he argued “honorable men…[who should] have an honorable church;” he even granted an indulgence for those who contributed to the new Franciscan building program.\textsuperscript{36} Clearly not everyone opposed large-scale mendicant construction, and civic pride seems to have often imposed itself as an influential consideration in reconstruction projects, as may have been the case with the Dominican project in Verona.

In addition to relocation, another important stimulus behind the dramatic shift from small, humble buildings to monumental convents was the growth of the both orders by the 1240s.\textsuperscript{37} The Franciscans in particular multiplied at an astonishing rate: in 1260 there were an estimated 30,000 Franciscan friars, and by 1330 this number had jumped to approximately 40,000 friars in some 1,453 convents (figure 7).\textsuperscript{38} Their rapid expansion

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. See Folio 82v-Folio 83r: “Tales esse debent ecclesie tantorum sanctorum ut scilicet delectetur ad eam animus ire et stare et etiam frequenter reverti. Si enim sunt breves sicut ista male libenter ibi morantur homines audire divina et predications et peius revertuntur alia vice, dicentes adinvicem, “nolo illuc venire, quoniam talem stricturam ibi alio die habui, quod ad huc doleo caput vel pedem,” et huiusmodi talia.” Sermon 58, MS 57, preached in the vernacular at S. Francesco in 1261. See also Sermon 44.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 60.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. see Sermon 31, preached in the vernacular at S. Caterina, Pisa.

\textsuperscript{37} Another stimulus behind the shift to larger buildings is the clericalization of the Franciscan Order, which I discuss further in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{38} Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine,” 136. For the statistic regarding the number of Franciscans in 1260, see Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 7. In comparison, in 1277 the Dominicans had 404 houses; by 1303, their number had risen to 582. In 1358 the Dominicans boasted 642 convents in Western Europe. The growth of both mendicant orders was due in large part to pastoral success with the laity, who tended to prefer the friars over the secular clergy for confession, penitence, and burial. The supportive laity became a pool from which the friars could draw new recruits as well as funding. For the 1330 figure, see M. Salvatori, “Quadro storico geografico,” in Francesco d’Assisi: Chiese e conventi, 18. Salvatori has
required larger, more spacious convents to accommodate the brethren and their lay followers. The growing number of friars also required a significant increase in revenue for their support: small scale alms-giving and begging were no longer sufficient means of sustenance, and large donations from the laity, especially merchants and wealthy burghers, became especially critical.\textsuperscript{39} Not coincidently, this urgent need for additional funding often coincided with new construction projects.\textsuperscript{40}

A new building program was therefore a logical consequence of a growing community requiring a large church for religious services and other fraternal activities. The Dominican convent at Paris illustrates the rapid rate of expansion the brethren experienced in the mid-thirteenth century and the difficulties such growth could provoke. In 1219, only two years after its foundation by seven friars from Toulouse, the Parisian community had approximately thirty members. By 1225, the population had quadrupled to a community of one-hundred and twenty friars.\textsuperscript{41} It is perhaps not surprising that around this time, the Dominicans began construction of a new church to replace their original hospital chapel of St. Jacques.

For some decades, the popularity of the new orders had created rivalry and tension with other clergy. In the early 1250s, this sentiment erupted into a violent conflict, driven by the cathedral school of Paris, which provided an authoritative

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\textsuperscript{39} The development of pious confraternities in the mid thirteenth-century created important opportunities for lay men and women to support the religious communities to which they were intimately devoted. See for instance Lambert, \textit{Franciscan Poverty}, 95-96.

\textsuperscript{40} Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine,” 136.

\textsuperscript{41} Jordon of Saxony, “On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers,” in \textit{Dominican Sources: New Editions in English}, ed. and trans. S. Tugwell (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982), nos. 51, 52, and 59. The figure of one-hundred and twenty is given in a bull by Honorius II from September 15, 1225. See also Sundt, “Mediocres domos,” 397. The convent in Paris is one of the few mendicant houses for which population records are available.
opposition to the friars at the highest level of the ecclesiastical system.\(^{42}\) Realizing that there were some legitimate grounds for complaint, which included among other things the construction of large new buildings, Franciscan and Dominican leaders attempted to defend their orders’ actions. In 1254 or 1255, Bonaventure composed a written response to an unknown university master seeking clarifications on the Franciscan Rule.\(^{43}\) In this letter, Bonaventure addresses the issues of property ownership and the apparent divergence between current buildings and Francis’s original desire for poverty, simplicity, and transience in buildings. He firmly defends contemporary architectural practices, especially the permanence and monumental scale new Franciscan construction by providing his own interpretation of Francis’s Rule of 1223, which ordered that “the brothers shall not acquire anything as their own, neither a house nor a place nor anything at all. Instead, as pilgrims and strangers in this world who serve the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go begging for alms with full trust.”\(^{44}\) Bonaventure writes:

> Now if you say that ‘as pilgrims and strangers’ our brothers ought to move from house to house, may God forgive the person who came up with such a stupid idea! Didn’t St. Francis build places? Or do you think that like a pilgrim he tramped the roads all day long? Or do you believe...he actually intended that everyone should physically move from house to house? ...Rather you should understand this phrase in the Rule, not in a

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\(^{42}\) Just as the friars’ entrance into the domain of preaching and confession reduced the authority of the secular clergy, the secular masters of the University also saw their teaching positions threatened by the growing popularity of Franciscan and Dominican schools and teachers among university students. In 1254, William of St. Amour, a prominent secular master, sought to prove that anyone who willingly renounced all property and chose to live on alms as the friars did, was not only unethical, but un-Christian (he argued, amongst other things, that this lifestyle invited suicide, encouraged hypocrisy, mocked the behavior of Christ who had himself carried a purse, disobeyed Paul’s command to live by manual labor, and encroached upon the rights of those unable to work who really need alms). For more on this controversy, see the work of O. Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools: Wealth, Exchange, Value, Money, and Usury According to the Paris Theological Tradition, 1200-1350* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), and Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition*.


\(^{44}\) See Bonaventure, “A Letter in Response to an Unknown Master, 1254-55” in *Works of Saint Bonaventure*, 48; see also “Rule of 1223,” in *Francis and Clare*, esp. 141 and ch. 6.
crudely literal fashion, but as meaning that we are not to cherish the houses we live in nor think of them as home, just as a pilgrim traveling towards his homeland does not love a half-way house as his own, but uses it as something which belongs to someone else. Whoever thinks differently shows by his own stupidity that he understands nothing at all. For how could there be any discipline or chain of command, which is definitely required in the Order of St. Francis, if none of us had an assigned place but roamed the world at will? Nobody thinks like that, except someone who has no concept of an order.45

In his rather patronizing and "defensive” defense of the Order’s contemporary activities, Bonaventure focuses on two primary points: 1) architecture and the use of buildings as they relate to Franciscan prescriptions on poverty and ownership; and 2) the departure from foundational values of physical itinerancy. He claims the notion of friars “tramp[ing] the roads all day long” is a “stupid idea” as well as a “crudely literal” interpretation of Francis’s original intentions, thereby ignoring the physical practices of mendicancy practiced and promoted by Francis and his early followers. He argues instead for a mental—as opposed to physical—transience, where the brothers consider their homes as “half-way house[s].” Bonaventure’s defense stresses the importance and necessity of fixed sites in the friars’ ministry and dismisses literal interpretations of the Rule as counterproductive and absurd.

A few years after this initial response, however, Bonaventure faced a growing concern for his Order’s reputation. Mid-century Franciscan architectural projects were frequently criticized as unnecessarily extravagant, and critics interpreted this display as a sign of the brothers’ pretense and hypocrisy. In an internal letter to the Order, Bonaventure confronted the Franciscan community over the issue of buildings in his First Encyclical Letter of 1257. Here, Bonaventure referred to problems and criticisms

associated with and provoked by their architecture. He notes that

The construction of buildings on a lavish and extravagant scale is upsetting many brothers, becoming a burden to our friendly benefactors, and leaving us prey to all sorts of hostile critics.\(^46\)

Bonaventure also observed that “the residences of the brothers are being changed frequently and at great expense, often impetuously and with considerable disturbance to the surrounding territory,” thereby identifying current building practices as a cause for outside hostility and inter-order frustration.\(^47\) Despite these warnings, the Franciscans continued with their new and grandiose construction projects, further compromising themselves and their standard of poverty in the eyes of critics.

As Monti observed, a general problem facing the Franciscan Order was the lack of a systematic collection of the Order’s existing legislation.\(^48\) The General Chapter and the papacy had passed numerous decrees between 1240 and 1260 that revised or supplemented the Franciscan Rule with additional regulations, privileges, liberties, and prohibitions. Because there was little by way of organized institutional regulations, however, these documents were difficult for the brothers to remember or consult (which, as Monti notes, may help explain why they seem to have been regularly ignored).\(^49\) In 1260 Bonaventure presented an organized list of the Order’s statutes to the General Chapter of Narbonne.\(^50\) These constitutions sought to correct instances of misconduct

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\(^{47}\) Ibid., 60. Importantly, in addition to acknowledging extra-Order criticism of the Franciscan’s “lavish and extravagant” buildings, Bonaventure also notes the presence of internal discontentment, an indication of the diverging attitudes on poverty among the brethren that would eventually rupture the Order in two. Ubertino da Casale was another outspoken Franciscan critic of the increasing frequency of “edificia excessiva” practiced within his Order. For his position, see for example Pasztor, “La chiesa dei Minori,” 71.


\(^{49}\) Ibid.

\(^{50}\) According to Brooke and Cenci, Bonaventure probably inserted little that was new in the Constitutions.
more rigorously and explicitly, and they specifically addressed construction and its financial consequences. For example, the Order

…Firmly prohibits any contract or loan to be entered for the purpose of constructing buildings, or for relocating or enlarging a friary...However, if there are sufficient funds held or offered by spiritual friends without entering any contract or debt, and where it is necessary, construction may take place with the permission of the provincial minister and according to his directives, not exceeding the limits of poverty.\(^{51}\)

The specific prohibition of loans for construction purposes indicates that ambitious building programs had burdened many convents with massive debt and other economic liabilities. It is noteworthy, however, that construction and relocation were indeed permitted, provided that there were sufficient funds, proper permission, and adherence to the specific “limits of poverty.” To this end, the Constitutions of Narbonne strictly and precisely forbade certain buildings practices, such as vaulting in the nave, figural stained glass in the nave or side chapels, and tower-like belfries:

Since both curiosity and superfluity are directly opposed to poverty, we ordain that any ornamentation in our buildings, whether in paintings, sculptures, windows, columns and the like, as well as any excess in their length, width, and height, beyond what is appropriate to the needs of the place be very strictly avoided…Churches shall not be vaulted except for the apse; and in the future their belfries may nowhere be constructed in the shape of a tower….No figural stained glass windows may be installed, except for the principle window of the choir, behind the main altar, where only the images of Our Crucified Lord, Our Lady, Saint John, Saint Francis, and Saint Anthony may be allowed.\(^{52}\)

Other prohibitions are less explicit: it is, for example, unclear what the Order precisely

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\(^{52}\) Ibid., 85-86, rubric III, nos. 15, 17, and 18.
meant by their ban on “excessive” length, width, and height in building, and their restriction on decoration “beyond what is appropriate to the needs of the place” is likewise vague. In the face of increasing numbers of brethren and the need for financial support, the failure to define precisely the principles to which Franciscan buildings must conform left room for interpretation and ultimately, violation.  

In addition to outlining building standards, the Constitutions of Narbonne dictated penalties for violation of these criteria. Inappropriate decoration or architecture was ordered to be removed immediately and restored to a form that complied with legislative standards. Brothers who disobeyed the rulings would be subject to severe punishment. Those deemed responsible for the breach could be “permanently evicted from these buildings” unless they received the mercy of the general minister. Although in some places the Constitutions did not specifically define what constituted architectural excess, they nonetheless imposed a series of regulations to which Franciscan buildings were required to conform.

In any event, the Franciscans continued their ambitious building programs. The combination of their new centralized locations and growing support of the lay public

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54 Ibid., no. 18.
55 Ibid., no. 16.
56 Despite the overwhelming documentary and material evidence of indifference among Franciscan brothers regarding building restrictions and their enforcement, a few surviving examples records provincial ministers who did indeed address the issue of architectural luxury in their jurisdiction: under William of Nottingham’s request (Provincial Minister, 1240-1254) the roof and cloister ornament from the church in London were removed for not complying with Franciscan standards of poverty. Thomas of Eccleston also records that at Gloucester, Agnellus of Pisa “acted with great severity because of the [decorated] windows in the chapel…moreover, he deprived a brother of his hood because he had decorated a pulpit with pictures, and inflicted the same penance upon the Guardian of the place because he had permitted the pictures to be painted.” Surviving instances of this “grass roots” enforcement are rare, and almost exclusively occurred within the English provinces, suggesting that perhaps (at least initially), English communities approached architecture with greater prudence than those on the Italian peninsula. See for example, Thomas of Eccleston, The Friars, 173-174. Regarding William of Nottingham, see A. R. Martin, Franciscan Architecture in England (Manchester: British Society of Franciscan Studies, 1937), 177.
resulted in the inevitable relaxation of poverty, which encouraged architectural opulence. Mendicant churches were products of popular devotion, yet popular devotion was a direct result of their large and splendid churches. As Erickson noted, “blame for extravagance in building seems to have rested as much with the friars’ loyal supporters, great and small, as with the religious themselves.”

Lay patrons and confraternities may very well have pressured communities to build larger and more ostentatious churches, and the following chapters explore how lay pious practices, such as cult veneration, public sermons, and burial, helped shape the designs of the convents in Verona.

Large-scale construction created problems aside from popular criticism. The friars were able to erect their earliest small buildings quickly, but construction of the churches and convents begun in the mid-thirteenth century onwards often dragged on for decades, draining the economic resources of a convent: the “completion” of S. Anastasia in Verona, for instance, took nearly 200 years (the façade still remains unfinished).

Although the friars frequently had funds to initiate grand architectural projects, they often ran out of resources as construction crept on. Franciscans and Dominicans legislation tried to encourage limitations to and rapid completion of building projects. Hoping to curb overly ambitious architectural programs that would take decades to complete, the Franciscan Constitutions of Narbonne from 1260 forbade loans for construction purposes, and in 1290, the Dominican General chapter issued a formal plea to speed the completion

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57 Erickson, “Fourteenth-Century Franciscans and Their Critics, I,” 120.
58 The papacy regularly provided incentives to encourage lay contributions to construction. The papal interventions for the sisters at S. Maria delle Vergini discussed in the previous chapter are excellent examples of how indulgences were offered in return for the local lay community’s assistance in the completion of the Clarissan convent. Since papal involvement often suggested financial need, the indulgences in the case of S. Maria degli Vergini probably indicate a slow down or halt in construction, likely because of economic difficulties and maybe an overly ambitious design.
of cemeteries and churches. The friars themselves also occasionally received personal incentives to help finish construction projects. During work on the new dormitory at S. Maria Novella in Florence in the 1330s, those in charge promised any friars who provided financial or physical assistance would receive one of the newly finished cells for his quarters. In some instances, mendicant leaders may not have been the only ones bothered by slowly progressing construction: in 1265, the Franciscan convent of S. Antonio at Padua received an enormous annual subsidy of 4,000 lire from the local commune. Not coincidentally, around this time the structure began to undergo a series of significant modifications, many of which the civic authorities controlled or supervised.

In 1275, 1296, and 1301, the commune in Padua also gave 400 lire to the Dominicans at S. Agostino to encourage completion of their convent. In 1290, the government of Vicenza helped finance construction of the Franciscan church of S. Lorenzo, and this assistance continued through the end of the fourteenth century. The Dominican community at Treviso also received substantial civic assistance: beginning in 1313, the commune pledged an annual sum of 500 lire for the next ten years for work on the new church of S. Nicolò, and city officials in Verona were largely responsible for the advancement of S. Anastasia in the late fifteenth century. These examples may reveal more than a sincere desire to contribute to local works; they may also suggest unfinished

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64 Valenzano, “Suddivisone,” 103.
buildings could be a nuisance to the city and an affront to civic pride.

Despite the economic hardships that could plague a community during the course of a construction project, the threat of serious financial consequences did little to discourage the practice of large-scale building. In 1266, Bonaventure once again returned to the topic of architectural reform and the need for enforcement of previously established Franciscan standards. His Second Encyclical Letter from 1266 confronts

…Specific abuses that have to be uprooted because they are infecting our Order’s integrity, lowering our high standards of perfection, and darkening the radiance of our holiness. Until recently, the height of evangelical perfection we practiced captured both the attention and hearts of the world, making us worthy of every respect and honor. But now, what do we see? Large numbers of brothers on a downward trend, an ever increasing laxity towards these tendencies by those in charge, abhorrent deviations springing up like briars. These are the things that are causing many people to see this holy and venerable brotherhood as something despicable, burdensome, and odious.65

Bonaventure was concerned by these undesirable tendencies that, despite his efforts, had become more widespread and serious during his tenure. According to fellow friar Peter Olivi, at a Paris chapter meeting Bonaventure stated “that there was no time since he became minister general when he would have not consented to be ground to dust if it would help the Order to reach the purity of St. Francis and his companions.”66

In the same letter, Bonaventure complains that “the extravagant construction of walls is breeding the destruction of morals.”67 For Bonaventure, “extravagant construction” was the primary cause of the Order’s moral decline, as well as their compromise of apostolic poverty. He writes:

…When we are no longer content with little and start putting up costly buildings, what we are really doing is directing our whole attention on base things, while foolishly missing out on the truly higher realities.  

Bonaventure clearly cites “costly buildings” as a distraction from the heavenly kingdom, the “higher reality” on which the brothers’ earthly lives should be centered. For Bonaventure, sumptuous architecture had not only moral, but mortal, consequences.  

Subsequent thirteenth and fourteenth-century General Chapters often returned to the subject of building reform, but their statutes—often fragmented—were largely reiterations or “tightenings” of the earlier regulations established in the Constitutions of Narbonne. The building restrictions from the 1279 General Chapter at Assisi, for example, remained almost identical to those of Narbonne; the 1292 Chapter at Paris edited these Constitutions slightly, requiring permission from the General Minister for a vault over the apse. In Assisi in 1316, the General Chapter declared that buildings or elements violating the statutes would be removed according to the discretion of the provincial minister, and that violators would face grave punishment or possible expulsion. The Perpignan Chapter from 1331 issued a strict warning against material

68 Ibid.
69 Bonaventure’s Second Encyclical Letter provides more specific instructions for resolution than its predecessor. He instructs the brothers to uphold their commitment to poverty by eliminating the “increasingly lavish style of our buildings and books, clothing and food.” Since earlier reform attempts revealed legislation without enforcement lacked authority, Bonaventure proposes a severe disciplinary policy for offenders. He calls for just punishment of delinquency (although what exactly this is remains undefined and presumably subjective). He warns that when discipline is neglected, insubordination will increase; according to Bonaventure, disobedience that stems from leniency is directly related to scandal and the Order’s damaged reputation. See Bonaventure, “Second Encyclical Letter,” 227-228.
71 “Ecclesias autem et quocumque alia edificia que, considerato fratum habitantium numero, excessiva merito debantem reputari, fieri de cetero firmiter prohibemus. Sintque fratres deinceps et ubique edificijis temperatis et humilibus conventi secundum decentiam sui status, in quibus curiositas in picturis, celaturis, columnis, fenestris et huiusmodi, ac superfluitas in longitudine, latitudine et altitudine, secundum loci
abuses in artistic works, including the prohibition of figural representations of the Trinity, and any abuses required immediate correction or modification. Frequent legislative statutes concerning debt prevention reveal that the accumulation of debt was a serious reality facing both Franciscan and Dominican communities during construction projects. In the mid-thirteenth century, for instance, the liabilities of the Dominican convent in Paris were such that Bishop William of Auvergne urged the French Queen Blanche of Castile to forfeit her pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and donate the 1500 pounds she had set aside for her journey in order to ease the friars’ liabilities. The General Chapter of Assisi in 1354, for example, strictly forbade any changes of site or building enlargements that could create debt.

Like the Franciscans, the Dominicans also attempted to regulate excessive architectural practices. The original 1220 Dominican legislation had promoted construction of “moderate and humble houses” for the brethren, but the vagueness of this rule—combined with the increased need for larger churches and conventual buildings—required further clarification of these initial building regulations. The Order revised their


Stephen of Bourbon, Anecdotes historiques, legends et apologues: Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Librarie Renouard, 1877), 381, no. 1. William was bishop between 1228 and 1249. See also Sundt, “The Jacobin Church,” 196, n. 49.

original standards around 1228 to read:

Let our brothers have moderate and humble houses in such a manner that the walls of the house without a loft should not exceed 12 feet in height and with a loft of 20 the church should not exceed 30. Neither should it (the church) be vaulted in stone, except perhaps over the choir and sacristy. If anyone contravenes these regulations in any way, he will be subject to punishment corresponding to the constitutional category of infractions known as the more grievous fault. 75

Unlike contemporary Franciscan legislation, this modified Dominican statute left little room for interpretation, clearly outlining acceptable sizes and materials. The Order added an additional stipulation in 1235 that required the election of “three friars of discretion” per convent who would be responsible for all architectural decisions; this “building committee” was intended to serve as the responsible party for decision-making and compliance to Order-wide standards on construction. 76 In 1252, the Dominicans reissued a reminder of appropriate building dimensions and warned against all sculpture and painting, which suggests potentially widespread non-compliance within the Order. 77

Perhaps in part motivated by the Franciscan reforms of 1260 and the conflict with the seculars in the 1250s, the Dominicans produced additional amendments to their constitutions on building between 1258 and 1263 under Minister General Humbert of

75 Sundt, “Mediocres domos,” 398-399. According to Sundt, these statutes are traditionally attributed to the General Chapter of 1228, which met in Paris to approve a new edition of the Order’s general constitutions. The constitutions passed at the Paris chapter are known only from a single manuscript (originally in the Dominican convent at Rodez and now in the Order’s archives at S. Sabina in Rome). Sundt noted that within the last century this traditional date has been challenged, as scholars have begun to realize these statutes are probably not the work of a single chapter and thus not all from the same date. It is now generally concluded that the constitutions in the Rodez codex are a mid fourteenth-century transcription of an original early thirteenth-century document containing all of the statutes approved under the 1228 chapter, as well as subsequent changes made until 1241. Sundt argued that these constitutions must have been adopted by 1235 since they do not appear in any of the extant constitutional and legislative acts of the general chapter, the first set of which belongs to the chapter of 1236. Meersseman argues the change in this statute was primarily a response to the negative reaction against the enlargement of the Bologna convent. See also Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine,” 146-147.
76 Sundt, “Mediocres domos,” 400.
77 Ibid.
Romans (1254-1263). This new legislation further restricted architectural freedoms and declared that the order would no longer tolerate architectural violations. Around 1258 Humbert issued a provision to ensure adherence to prior legislation,

…Expressly order[ing] priors and brothers not to erect buildings unless they be humble and moderate and in conformity with the constitution. And we desire this year’s visitors to make known at the general chapter where they have discovered anything done on the contrary.78

As Sundt observed, Humbert encouraged provincial administration to take corrective measures seriously: in 1261, for instance, the Barcelona convent was disciplined for constructing a dormitory that was too tall, and at the church at Cologne, the choir walls were razed in order to bring the church down to its legal height.79

Additional art and architectural legislation was approved by the general and provincial chapters during latter part of the thirteenth century, warning the Dominicans against infraction, forcing adherence to the rules by requiring nonconforming structures to be rebuilt or modified, and disciplining the disobedient.80 Like the Franciscans, the Dominicans faced an increasing frequency of architectural violations, which the general and provincial chapters were unable or unwilling to correct. Although architectural abuses continued, the General Chapter stopped enforcing architectural legislation after 1276.81 In 1300, the Dominican Order abolished the restrictions on height and vaulting, but maintained the 1263 regulations on painting and sculpture. Sundt suggested that this

78 Ibid., 401.
79 Ibid. Also in 1261, the chapter of Provence required the convent of Limoges to “correct diligently” its lavish vaulted choir ceiling. See Acta capitulorum provincialium ordinis Praedicatorum: Première province de provence, province romaine, province d’Espagne (1239-1302), ed. C. Douais (Toulouse: Privat, 1894), 84.
80 For more on these later statutes see Sundt, “Mediocres domos,” esp. 404, and Meersseman, “L’architecture dominicaine.”
81 Sundt, “Mediocres domos,” 404 and appendix c. The only known chapter to have attempted enforcement after this date is that of Provence, who attempted to correct abuses in 1279 and again in 1298.
was not as contradictory as it may seem, as stone vaulting required less maintenance than a wooden roof and had the advantage of being fireproof—even Bonaventure had rationalized these benefits in his defense of Franciscan construction—but painting and decorative ornamentation held no practical advantages. Despite continued infractions, the Dominicans seem to have made no further attempts to enforce or modify their architectural constitutions after 1300.

For both orders, architecture represented a constant source of difficulties. Despite attempts to uphold original doctrinal values, elaborate construction and renovation projects continued, and already by the late thirteenth century it had become logistically impossible to return to the original concept of poverty in buildings. The minimal architectural “requirements” of Francis (practiced to a lesser degree by Dominic) proved inadequate for the growth and expansion of the orders. Increases in membership required larger church and conventual spaces: Meersseman suggested that in general, by the 1240s Dominican choirs, the liturgical space of the friars, had become cramped and insufficient for the expanding priestly Order. By this time, a larger choir space may have become a basic necessity for the friars, and many churches seem to have been planned or reconfigured accordingly. Cadei suggested that for the Franciscans, the Statutes of Narbonne encouraged architectural development and innovation to be contained within the east end; likewise, Schenkluhm proposed that a major architectural contribution of the

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82 Ibid., 404. Not all Dominican legislation on the arts was negative: as early as 1247, churches were encouraged to furnish their churches with images of Dominic and Peter Martyr, a directive that would not only honor the saints, but also help promote and diffuse their cult. This seems to have been well applied in the case of S. Anastasia, as I discuss in Appendix 2.
83 Ibid. Sundt suggests the post-1300 legislative absence indicated a shift towards acceptance and appreciation in Dominican attitudes towards art, architecture, and their roles the daily life and mission of the Order.
85 Ibid.
mendicant orders was the new enlarged space of the choir.\textsuperscript{86}

The friars’ relocation to the urban center frequently coincided with an increase in the number of brothers and a rise in popularity with the urban laity. By the mid-thirteenth century, mendicant churches had become especially susceptible to lay pressures, and this relationship between the friars and the public created new spatial needs and challenges. An encyclical letter written by Humbert of Romans in 1255 reveals his Order’s growing lay following: “another [complaint by the clergy] is that on Sundays and feast days the friars receive parishioners to divine service and as a result they do not go to their own parishes.”\textsuperscript{87} By the mid-thirteenth century, the friars’ right to perform the sacraments combined with an increased lay devotion demanded larger public, lay space within the body of the mendicant church.\textsuperscript{88} Church design now needed to accommodate both the laity and a growing population of friars, and mendicant communities began to construct monumental programs \textit{ex novo}, or to renovate and expand existing buildings.

Schenkluhn suggested that “no other order has produced an architecture as remarkably diverse as [that of] the Franciscans and Dominicans,” and the mendicants did, in fact, create, as lamented by Humbert of Romans, buildings of “all types and arrangements.”\textsuperscript{89} Numerous factors, pressures, and circumstances were responsible for the enormous range in design, character, and style in thirteenth and fourteenth century

\textsuperscript{86} Cadei, “Si può scrivere,” esp. 342, 350-354; and Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 239-240.
\textsuperscript{88} This happens under Gregory IX in 1231, with the bull \textit{Ninis Iniqua}.
\textsuperscript{89} Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 12: “Nessun altro Ordine ha prodotto un’architettura così spicciamente multiforme come i domenicani e francescani.”
mendicant architecture. Mendicant buildings were part of a social process, shaped and affected not only by their own institutional practices and the physical fabric of the city, but also by local social, religious and economic structures, including the secular clergy, the commune, and the merchant class. Legislation and avowal of evangelical poverty notwithstanding, the looming mendicant churches in Veneto cities of Verona, Venice, Vicenza, and Treviso attest to the futility of reform and the immense social and economic power of these institutions.

4.3 Mendicant Architecture in the Veneto, c. 1250-1350

Because the designs, scale, and plans of extant mendicant churches in the region share qualities with S. Fermo and S. Anastasia in Verona, a brief discussion of mid thirteenth and fourteenth-century mendicant architecture in the Veneto is necessary to provide a regional context for the Veronese sites. The following section therefore offers a general overview of mendicant construction programs in the region from the second half of the thirteenth century through the middle of the fourteenth century. As noted in previous chapters, because of the sparse documentation on and episodic nature of mendicant buildings, discussions of chronology and sequence are fraught with difficulties.90 Further complicating matters is the fact that the “internal” church of the friars, which loosely corresponded with the space of the choir, and the “external” church of the lay public—often visibly different in both concept and structure—were not always built simultaneously.91 Comparative study of these sites must therefore be approached

90 For more on the problems associated with dating mendicant buildings see Bonelli, “Nuovi sviluppi”; Villetti, “Studi sull’edilizia”; and Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
91 For more on this division of space, see for instance J. Hubert, “La place faite aux laïcs dans les églises monastiques et dans les cathédrales aux XIe-XIIe siècles,” in I laici nella ‘società cristiana’ dei secoli XI e
with care so as not to accept the “old system” of dating; however a contextual discussion of these convents without a chronological framework is both overly cautious and impractical. In an attempt to confront—and avoid—some of the methodological problems associated with dating mendicant buildings, the section below employs the following two guidelines. First, when documentation and/or careful architectural study provides a clearer picture of building sequence, then these dates are noted and the records cited appropriately. Second, where sources are silent, I use the earliest documented date of construction—the “beginning” date—with the understanding that this date must be understood as part of a larger construction process that more often than not spanned several decades and was then revised in later centuries. The dates provided below are intended to facilitate the survey of Veneto sites in a more systematic and organized manner, yet they must be approached with both care and flexibility.

In the mid-thirteenth century, mendicant communities in the Veneto began to transition from simple, single-nave churches with predominately wooden roofing to a Latin cross basilica plan with vaulted covering. In the thirteenth century, many of the extant non-mendicant churches of northern Italy—such as those of the Cistercians, Humiliati, and many parish churches—were unvaulted and featured thick, massive walls. The large scale of these churches appealed to the friars in part because of their simplicity, but also for large crowds they could accommodate. Thus, the friars began to appropriate the basilica church plan, but did so in a more “modern” way, adding vaults and reducing the volume of the walls. In the Veneto, the “mendicant basilica” was usually constructed

with three naves, employed vaulting (at least over the east end), and featured a projecting transept. As Dellwing observed, because there was not a long or extensive tradition of vault construction in the Veneto, the friars probably looked to the experience and techniques of other regions to achieve their vaulted spaces.\(^{92}\) In spite of their expansiveness, many of these later medieval programs preserved the fundamental spatial concepts of functionality and simplicity that had characterized the earlier, predominately single-nave construction projects in the region, but expressed these qualities on a much more monumental scale.

Late thirteenth and fourteenth-century mendicant building programs in the Veneto featured a combination of renovations and *ex novo* construction projects. The growing popularity of S. Antonio in Padua as a pilgrimage site resulted in the urgent need for more space; by the early 1260s, work to expand the early single-nave plan was already underway.\(^{93}\) To widen the interior space, the friars added side aisles and constructed a second transept with longer arms to the west of the existing transept (figure 18). They also reconfigured the apse into a polygonal shape, a transformation that Cadei and Dellwing attributed to a desire to create a more “cathedral-like” choir that would better represent the importance and prestige of the community and its relics.\(^{94}\) These initial additions were probably finished by 1263, but they still failed to provide a sufficient amount of space for the Franciscan community and its visitors.\(^{95}\) Further enlargements

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\(^{92}\) Dellwing, “L'architettura,” 462. Dellwing also suggests that these projects may have also used foreign architects.


resumed, and the friars transformed the wooden trussed basilica into an enormous vaulted basilica featuring six cupolas and two campaniles. By the first decade of the fourteenth century, the friars once again reconfigured the apse, this time to include a spacious ambulatory and chapels for visiting pilgrims, enlargements and modifications that must have also been conceived as a way to promote the popularity of Anthony’s cult.96 Additional renovations continued into the fifteenth century: between 1394 and 1448, the friars rebuilt the apse and covered it with a system of cross vaults, reconfigured the campaniles into octagons, and completed the upper part of the façade, thereby giving S. Antonio its present form (figure 4).97

In Vicenza in 1260—only one year after the Dominicans arrived in the city—the commune provided funds for the construction of their new church, S. Corona, the first basilica-plan structure to be constructed ex novo in the Veneto for mendicant use. Work proceeded quickly, and a large portion of the church was probably complete between 1268 and 1270.98 The interior space is divided into a larger central nave and two flanking aisles by a combination of robust circular and octagonal supports (figures 46, 47). Above these piers, an arcade of pointed arches spans the length of the nave. The projecting transept provides an important transition from the nave to the luminous east end, where an apse (probably originally rectangular in form, but extended and reconfigured into a polygonal shape in the fifteenth century), and two chapels correspond to the longitudinal divisions between nave and aisles.99

96 Ibid.
The design of S. Corona seems to have drawn from many different architectural sources. Cadei and Dellwing have cited the single-naved Humiliati church of Follina near Treviso, begun in the early thirteenth century, as an early reference for S. Corona as well as the later churches of S. Lorenzo in Vicenza and S. Anastasia in Verona (figure 48). For Suitner, however, S. Antonio in Padua provides another important visual cue for the Dominican church: she suggested that the Franciscan church served as a “propagandistic” model for S. Corona in Vicenza, since both churches were founded and constructed as monumental reliquaries. Dellwing and Schenkluhn have also proposed S. Domenico in Bologna as an important architectural model for S. Corona (figure 44). The tripartite division of interior space, the presence of the transept, the original rectangular apse, the combined use of massive columns and octagonal piers to support a system of pointed arches at S. Corona reproduce elements of S. Domenico, especially those in the east. In Bologna, the type of covering distinguishes the space of the laity from that of the friars: a wooden trussed ceiling covers the western part of the church (lay space) while the eastern part (fraternal space) is vaulted. At S. Corona too, architectural elements correspond to or differentiate between lay and fraternal liturgical space: the octagonal supports denote the zone of the friars’ choir, and the round columns coincide with the lay space. Wagner-Rieger and Dellwing have proposed that the different supports at S. Corona may have originally corresponded with different systems of covering, with the

101 Suitner, “L’architettura,” 569. Suitner does make the distinction that the church of S. Corona introduced a new type of architectural language into Vicenza’s urban panorama, whereas the design of Il Santo borrowed visual cues from other regional churches, such as S. Agostino in Padua, S. Lorenzo in Vicenza, and S. Nicolò in Treviso.
102 Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 462; Studien, 38-40, 43-44; and Schenkluhn, Architettura, 51.
round columns of the nave supporting a wooden roof.103 Using differently shaped piers and perhaps once even different coverings, S. Corona replicates the conceptual approach to the division of lay and fraternal space employed at the mother church in Bologna.

The construction of the Dominican church in Vicenza introduced the aisled basilica into the repertoire of mendicant architecture of northern Italy. Equally significantly, the design of S. Corona also utilized elements of Gothic architecture such as rib vaults, pointed arches, and double lancets into the visual language of Vicenza and in the Veneto. Only a few decades later, certain features of S. Corona’s “Gothic” plan and elevation were applied to the design of the local Franciscan church of S. Lorenzo (as well as the local Augustinian church, begun around 1323, and the renovations to the cathedral, from the end of the fourteenth century) (figures 49-51).104 S. Lorenzo, begun approximately twenty years after S. Corona, expresses many of the basic design principles of the Dominican plan but applies the elements of the northern Gothic visual language much more liberally than its Dominican predecessor. As Dellwing observed, it was in large basilicas such as S. Corona and S. Lorenzo that the mendicants began to experiment with northern Gothic forms and elements.105

In 1280, the Franciscan friars moved from their convent outside Vicenza’s walls to a small chapel near the cathedral dedicated to S. Lorenzo. By the following year, their

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103 See R. Wagner Rieger, “Zur Typologie italienischer Bettelordenkirchen,” *Römische historische Mitteilungen* 2 (1957-1958): 266-298; and Dellwing, *Studien*, 19. Initially, the round piers in the nave may have supported a wooden roof and the octagonal piers in the nave supported a system of cross vaults (the same vaulting seen today).

104 Suitner, “L’architettura,” 658-659. Cadei, on the other hand, proposed S. Corona was heavily influenced by Lombard architecture, such as the church S. Pietro di Viboldone, begun in 1176 (“Si può scrivere,” 344-350). Dellwing compared both the façade design of S. Corona and its spatial plan with S. Domenico in Bologna, and also cited Cistercian influences—particularly in the rendering of the sculpted capitals—such as the church at Follina. See Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 458-459; *Studien*, 45-59; and “Bettelordenskirchen.”

new church was under construction. In 1290, the Commune granted the community 500 \textit{lire} “pro costruzione et edifici- 
one Ecclesie Beati Laurentii de porta nova,” and twenty years later, a testament granted 100 \textit{soldi} “in edificationem loci sive ecclesie sancti Laurentij predicti,” indicating that work on the church was still underway in the early fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{106} Like S. Corona, the plan of S. Lorenzo features a nave flanked by aisles and a projecting transept; it also features rib vaulting throughout. In the apse, two smaller chapels flank a large \textit{cappella maggiore}; these spaces were originally rectangular, but reconfigured into polygonal form around 1330.\textsuperscript{107}

The plan and elevation of the Franciscan church in Vicenza utilizes many of the Gothic architectural and spatial concepts from S. Corona, yet articulates these ideas in a more “mature” way: the walls of S. Lorenzo are slimmer, the arches are more steeply pointed, the vaults swell more dramatically, and the interior space is more open and voluminous. Cadei suggested that the rectangular character of S. Lorenzo’s plan, the use of round supports, and quadripartite vaulting indicate an important shift in the narrative of mendicant architecture in the Veneto; indeed, Cadei proposed that S. Lorenzo represented the “beginning of stabilization” of mendicant architecture in northern Italy.\textsuperscript{108}

Notwithstanding the thirteenth-century transition to the larger aisled basilica, the single-nave church plan nonetheless maintained a presence in late thirteenth-century church design. The Augustinian and Carmelite churches of Padua (begun c. 1275 and 1295, respectively) and the Augustinian church in Vicenza (begun circa 1320), all featured this basic plan, although on a larger, more monumental scale than those of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{106} Archivio Sartori II/ 2, 2316 and 2318.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Suitner, “L’architettura,” 571.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Cadei, “Si può scrivere,” 349.
\end{footnotes}
previous generation of single-nave churches (figures 17, 52). Modifications to the church of S. Francesco in Treviso, begun at the end of the thirteenth century, also maintained the basic character of the original single-nave structure. Here, the friars transformed the apse from a rectangular shape to a polygon, added two additional eastern chapels to the arms of the transept, and affixed a series of lateral chapels to the south side of the nave (figures 15, 16, 53). These examples show that even despite the growing popularity of the basilica, some mendicant communities in the Veneto favored the single-nave plan. The desire to preserve a standard of architectural austerity, the restrictions imposed by contemporary legislation on building, or the financial situation of a particular site may have profoundly shaped this preference.

After 1300, Franciscan and Dominican construction in the region occurred on a much more monumental scale. Building programs begun in the fourteenth century are almost exclusively basilicas, and vaulting frequently replaced wooden ceilings. Church plans grew increasingly longer and more slender, a shift that Dellwing attributed to a northern, specifically French, influence and the growing popularity of the Gothic style. Extant churches or those under construction, including S. Fermo and S. Anastasia in Verona, served as important models to some of these subsequent projects and the continued development of a regional mendicant architectural language, which is considered in more detail in the next chapter.

In Treviso, the construction of the present-day church of S. Nicolò began around 1303. Work began in the east end, with the transformation of the rectilinear apse into a

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polygon (figures 54-58).\textsuperscript{111} Construction proceeded at a steady rate, largely due to the financial support of the local laity and the commune, which, as noted in a previous section pledged an annual gift 500 lire beginning in 1313 intended to continue for ten years.\textsuperscript{112} Surviving sources suggest that by 1318 the friars had erected and vaulted the eastern end, the transept, and the first two bays of the nave.\textsuperscript{113} Around this time, Treviso was annexed to the Veronese state under Cangrande della Scala, and subsequent revolts provoked the first of a series of conflicts that interrupted work on S. Nicolò for approximately thirty years.\textsuperscript{114} When construction resumed around 1348, the friars completed the nave and its corresponding wooden roof.\textsuperscript{115} In the nave, massive brick columns support an arcade of pointed arches, reminiscent of the elevations at S. Corona and S. Lorenzo in Vicenza.

In 1330, the doge of Venice gave the Franciscan community at S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari land for the construction of “cappella ecclesie nova.”\textsuperscript{116} Almost immediately after the donation from the doge, the Franciscans began to rebuild their church around the existing structure, beginning at the right transept and proceeding towards the apse; this building sequence allowed them to continue to use the building for liturgical celebrations.\textsuperscript{117} The six-bay vaulted basilica has three naves and an expansive transept

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.; Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 184-186.
\textsuperscript{113} Valenzano, “La suddivisione,” 102-103; Dellwing, \textit{Studien}, 83-86; Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 185-186.
\textsuperscript{114} Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 184. Guccello Tempesta was proclaimed ruler and liberator of the city (1328), but after four years he induced the citizens to recognize the supremacy of Cangrande; Treviso later became involved in a war with Venice, and was ceded to the city in 1338.
\textsuperscript{115} Only after 1854 was the clerestory of the three western bays completed.
\textsuperscript{116} Valenzano, “Santa Maria Gloriosa,” 124. The friars received additional gifts of land expressly for “in auxilio operis ecclesie” in 1333, 1334, and 1336.
\textsuperscript{117} Both Schenkluhn and Dellwing support a similar dating/sequence. Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 187;
that opens up to a vast choir and six apsidal chapels, all designed with polygonal terminations (figures 59-61).\textsuperscript{118} Much of the work in the nave was not complete until the fifteenth century, but the medieval east end in particular seems to have modeled itself on many regional sources.\textsuperscript{119} The placement of the apsidal chapels along the transept is reminiscent of S. Anastasia in Verona, and like at S. Corona in Vicenza, the Frari uses a change in the type of support for the nave arcade to distinguish between the lay and fraternal spaces in the church.\textsuperscript{120} In the first bay of the nave from the east, square supports denote the liturgical space of the friars; the remainder of the nave piers are composed of thick, robust stacked drums reminiscent of those at S. Nicolò in Treviso, correspond with the lay church.\textsuperscript{121}

Like the nearby Franciscan church, a complex series of work radically changed the character of the thirteenth-century Venetian church of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, popularly known as Zanipolo. The early Dominican church was transformed by a series of successive renovation and enlargement programs, begun around 1333.\textsuperscript{122} By 1368, modifications to the choir and the transept were probably complete, and the new vaulted

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Dellwing, Studien, 98-137. See also Valenzano, “S. Maria Gloriosa,” 123.
\end{flushright}
eastern end featured a larger, more elevated version of the polygonal apse at S. Anastasia in Verona (figures 62, 63). Work proceeded to the nave, where the friars increased the length, raised the perimeter walls, and constructed a vaulted covering. With a length of 85 meters, the Dominican church is exactly the same length as S. Nicolò in Treviso and about 3 meters longer than the Frari. The Venetian church also employs massive, stacked masonry columns similar to those at S. Nicolò, and mimics the arrangement of the apsidal chapels and the spatial relationships between the nave, aisles, and transept bays of the Trevisan church, indicating its importance as a regional architectural model.

Mendicant construction projects in the Veneto begun in the second half of the thirteenth century and onward introduced new architectural ideas into the urban panorama that were utilized in subsequent church designs—both mendicant and non mendicant—across the region. Dellwing has claimed that in the Veneto, the mendicants were responsible for shaping the ecclesiastical architecture of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century city and in some cities—such as Venice, Vicenza, and Verona—mendicant buildings influenced the later re-commissioning and renovations to local cathedrals in similar styles. Bruzelius has noted an analogous tendency in central and southern Italian cities, such as Orvieto, Florence, and Naples, suggesting the grand scale of the mendicant projects may have been an important stimulus to update the local

124 Ibid., 121. In 1395, Friar Tommaso da Siena recorded that “ecclesia Sanctorum Ioanni et Pauli pro media parte inferior constructam.” Schenkluhn dates the completion of all of the structural work on the church to circa 1420. Schenkluhn, Architettura, 188.
125 Dellwing, “L’architettura,” 457. In the thirteenth century, the cathedral of Vicenza was renovated, as was that in Udine. In Venice, S. Marco was renovated between 1290 and 1330, and again in the late fourteenth/mid fifteenth century; the cathedral of Verona underwent significant modifications beginning in 1444.
cathedrals that were outdated and small by comparison.\textsuperscript{126} By the end of the thirteenth century, the construction of the friars had profoundly transformed the urban panoramas of the major Veneto cities.

As cited in the introduction to this dissertation, the relationship between the architecture of the mendicant orders and the Cistercians has been a popular theme for discussion. Significantly, Cadei has noted the individualism of mendicant churches in the Veneto in terms of their plans, decoration, and architectural elements, suggesting that there was a strong conformity to local and/or regional architectural traditions and that the friars juxtaposed this “conservatism” with their own expressive originality.\textsuperscript{127} Mendicant convents in the Veneto borrowed from a variety of sources, including Humiliati churches, Lombard and French architecture, traditional Veneto styles and plans, as well as local idioms. They also include elements of innovation, as I discuss in the following chapters with regard to the sites in Verona.

In Verona, by the early 1260s, the Franciscan and Dominican communities had transferred into the city center. This move coincided with new building programs begun shortly thereafter: the Franciscans initiated a series of renovations to an existing convent, and the Dominicans began a new construction project. These new churches transformed the local landscape, injecting a distinctively new architectural aesthetic into the urban panorama. The friars’ innovative architectural approach emphasized function and utility, featured brick construction, and utilized the exterior sites around their convents, such as the piazza and adjacent roads, as legitimate extensions of their religious space. These

\textsuperscript{126} Bruzelius, “A Rose,” 100.

buildings stand as testaments to the religious authority of their respective orders, their enormous lay support, and the splendor and wealth of the medieval city.
5. The Franciscans and S. Fermo Maggiore

This chapter explores the Franciscan renovations to the convent of S. Fermo in three parts. My initial focus is the site: I begin by examining the history and development of the convent from Antiquity to the thirteenth century. I then outline the Franciscans’ transfer to S. Fermo, considering the geographical boundaries of the original conventual landholdings and the site’s proximity to surrounding infrastructure and economic centers. Finally, I explore the motivations behind the friars’ choice of S. Fermo with regard to the convent’s position in the physical and historical landscape of the city.

The second part of the chapter concentrates on the built environment. I first provide an overview of the restorations, interventions, and additions that have transformed the church since the fourteenth century. Formal analysis of the present-day church and the surviving structures of the conventual complex follow; a discussion of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century decoration is located in Appendix 1. I then present a succinct review of the literature on the Franciscan renovations to provide a scholarly context in which to position my own research, which proposes a revised building narrative that considers sequence of works and emphasizes factors that conditioned the processes of design and construction, such as function and patronage.

The third and final part of this chapter analyzes the Franciscan architectural projects, exploring some of the factors and visual cues that helped shaped the friars’ architectural choices.
5.1 The Site

5.1.1 From Antiquity to Benedictine Construction

In 1261, the Franciscans in Verona received full dominion over the former Benedictine monastery of S. Fermo Maggiore, a basilica founded in the fifth century in honor of two locally martyred saints, Fermo and Rustico. Hagiographic tradition records Fermo and Rustico as noble citizens of Bergamo, targeted by one of the anti-Christian campaigns of Emperor Maximian (285-310) and arrested for their Christian beliefs and practices, which included “proto-mendicant” activities such as distributing goods to the poor. After imprisonment and torture in Milan and then Verona, soldiers beheaded the men along the bank of the Adige River, outside the city gate of Porta Leone (figure 20).

A fellow Christian discovered their bodies and placed them in a boat, where tradition

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1 See G. M. Varanini, “L’area di San Fermo nel Medioevo: Le vicende urbanistiche” in I Santi Fermo e Rustico, 84-85. Although the church of S. Fermo Maggiore is traditionally dated to the fifth century, the first record of the cult (and probably also the first record of one of the three early churches dedicated to the saints) appears in a testament of 774 and refers to the guardians of the relics (“i custodi dei corpi dei santi Fermo e Rustico”). Other documents from the eight through the tenth centuries provide little information on the specific site of S. Fermo Maggiore since these texts fail to differentiate between the churches dedicated to the martyr saints. Only with the institutionalization of S. Fermo Maggiore as a Benedictine monastery in the late eleventh/early twelfth century do documented distinctions between the churches dedicated to Fermo begin to appear.

2 Hagiographic tradition presents that upon Fermo’s arrest, his neighbor, Rustico (either a relative or a friend of Fermo, according to various accounts), also turned himself in so that he could accompany Fermo to martyrdom. Maximilian’s guards then took the two men to Milan, cast them into prison, and tortured them for their Christian beliefs. The guards then transferred Fermo and Rustico to the house of soldier Caius Ancarius in Verona, detaining them there without food or water. During their incarceration, angels brought them food and drink, saving them from starvation; Caius and his family witnessed this divine intervention, which prompted their conversion. When Maximian’s men discovered that Fermo and Rustico had survived their imprisonment, they ordered the Christians to be tortured again, and summoned the people of Verona to the Arena witness the display. The guards subjected Fermo and Rustico to various afflictions, yet they remained unscathed; this terrified the townspeople who, fearing sorcery, demanded that Fermo and Rustico be banished from the city. Fermo and Rustico were martyred between circa 290 and 305 AD under Emperor Maximian, a ruler with a vicious reputation for persecuting Christians in order to subsidize his rule. The earliest narrative account of the lives and martyrdoms of Saints Fermo and Rustico appears in the sixth-century text, Passio sanctorum martyrdom Firm et Rustici. Subsequent report on the saints (often with varying details) circulated throughout Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, finding a place in popular early modern literature with the text of Maffei, whose account of the lives of Saints Fermo and Rustico is the most cited, popular report of their martyrdom. See S. Maffei, Verona illustrata (Verona: Vallersi, 1732). For additional accounts of the saints’ martyrdom, see for example, I. Zenti, I santi martiri Fermo e Rustico in Verona: Notizie raccolte (Verona: Bibliotecario Comunale, 1879); and A. Weil, The Story of Verona (London: J. M. Dent & Co, 1925).
maintains that the corpses floated to Precones, a Carthaginian province in Africa, and were buried by angels. A few centuries later, their remains were transferred to Capri, then again to Trieste. In the late eight century, Veronese Bishop Annone (750-772) traveled to Trieste, recovered the martyrs’ bones, and returned them to Verona.

Three separate texts refer to the recuperation of these relics by Bishop Annone, two of which, the *Atti* of martyrdom and *Versus de Verona*, cite the enclosure of the venerated bones in a vault below one of the existing churches dedicated to Fermo and Rustico. At the time of the relics’ translation, at least three churches in Verona were dedicated to these locally martyred saints—S. Fermo Maggiore, S. Fermo di Cortala and S. Fermo al Ponte Navi—indicating the local popularity of their cult at this time. The *Atti* and the *Versus* specify that the church that received Annone’s gift was located right outside the southern wall of the city, thereby pointing to S. Fermo Maggiore as the privileged beneficiary of the precious relics.

With the exception of these texts that link S. Fermo Maggiore with the relics, few records of the first church survive. Archeological excavations have determined that the original building followed a common Early Christian basilica plan and featured a thick-walled rectangular nave approximately 44 meters long and 11 meters wide (figure 64).

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3 According to tradition, Caius Ancarious, the Roman soldier who had imprisoned the men in his home, found their bodies.
4 One such text is the *Atti* of the saints’ martyrdom, written in the eight century on the occasion of the acquisition of their remains. Another is the *Versus de Verona* dated between 796 and 805, and the third is the *Velo de Classe* (from Ravenna, dated to the eight century). See the following chapters in *I Santi Fermo e Rustico* for further reading: P. Golinelli, “Passione e traslazione del Santi Fermo e Rustico,” 13-23; P. Frattaroli, “Il Velo di Classe,” 45-56; and R. Avesani, “Il re Pipino, il vescovo Annone e il Versus de Verona,” 57-68.
5 In addition to S. Fermo Maggiore, S. Fermo di Cortala (now destroyed, but also referred to as S. Fermo Vecchio) and S. Fermo al Ponte Navi were in existence by the seventh century (although S. Fermo al Ponte Navi was named for its location near the bridge much later, and is now a private residence, located at Via Leoni, 19). All three churches were located near the Adige, probably to honor the site of martyrdom. For further reading, see V. Fainelli, “Chiese di Verona esistenti e distrutte,” *Madonna Verona* 4 (1910): 55.
Although little else is known about the church structure or its design, excavations have recovered valuable information about the site surrounding the early building.

Archeological surveys have revealed that the area around the present-day cloister and apse of S. Fermo functioned as a necropolis between the fourth and seventh centuries, as an excavation map of this area illustrates in figure 65. Varanini and others have suggested that this practice was responsible for the development of the corresponding thoroughfare along the bank of the Adige River that connected with the Roman roads to Ostiglia and Mantua.

Beginning in the mid-eighth century—the period that coincides with the acquisition of the relics—documents indicate several phases of urban growth around the convent of S. Fermo. The church appears to have already been a prominent religious site by this time, but its receipt of the relics in the eight century seems to have further increased its standing. By the mid-ninth century, the terms “Sancti Firmi” and “Porta Saneti Firmi” began appearing in documents as synonyms for “Porta Leone” and its surrounds, revealing the church’s status as an important landmark, even to the extent that contemporary records identify the neighborhoods located around the church in terms of their proximity to it.

Secular clergy inhabited S. Ferno until the Benedictines became the residents and

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9 See, for instance, Varanini, “L’area.”
10 Ibid., 84. By the mid-ninth century, despite its extra muros location, S. Fermo was considered part of the city proper, at least from a judicial point of view. Legal documents from 833 and 843 refer to “de civitate Verona da Porta Sancti Firmi” and “da Porta Sancti Firmi testis,” respectively, indicating residents of this neighborhood around the church held the same civic status as those who lived inside the walls. Varanini has suggested that there was not a significant legal distinction between residents around the Porta Sancti Firmi, whether they resided within the city walls or beyond them.
guardians of its relics in the mid-eleventh century, a transition resulting from efforts within the Veronese church probably connected with the Gregorian reform.\footnote{Miller, \textit{Formation}, esp. ch. 2, “The Secular Clergy,” 41-62. Miller’s work on the early medieval Veronese church has suggested that instead of participating in a “moment” of religious reform (such as the Gregorian reform), the Veronese church underwent a gradual change across the tenth, eleventh, and early twelfth centuries. She considers some of the primary abuses addressed by local reform legislation in these centuries, which included “hastening” (accepting untrained or un-ordained clerics into positions in the diocese), a general lack of rudimentary knowledge required for priestly duties, the clergy’s fondness for marriage, and lack of discipline.} Beginning around 1065, the monks instigated a series of major reconstruction projects that demolished most of the church’s fifth-century foundations, replacing the simple Late Antique structure with a significantly larger double basilica in the Romanesque style (figures 66, 67).\footnote{The date that the Benedictines acquired San Fermo is unknown. When they began renovations in 1065, the Benedictines were referred to as those who “for a long time had been call to guard the reliquary,” as noted in \textit{San Fermo, le tre chiese: Storia e guida}, ed G. Zivelonghi and C. Zantedeschi (Verona: Express Foto, 1999), 6. The Benedictine church is traditionally dated by two inscriptions. The first, dated to 1065, is most frequently cited as commemorating the beginning of construction of the lower church. It reads: \textit{MILLESIMUS SEXAGESIMUS QUINTUS FUIT ANNUS QUO MANSIT LATUM PRINCIPIUMQUE SACRUM}. The second is from 1143: \textit{ANNI DOMINI NOSTRI IESU CHRISTI MILLESIMO CENTESIMO QUADRAGESIMO TERTIO OC OPUS FECIT ANNO MURARIOS}. Unlike its predecessor, the 1143 inscription specifically refers to construction, but it has been variously interpreted as a commemoration of the termination of building work, the construction of the campanile, or the erection of the façade. Trevisan has published several important studies on the design and decoration of the Benedictine basilica: see Trevisan, “L’architettura (secoli XI-XIV),” in \textit{I Santi Fermo e Rustico}, 169-183; “La chiesa S. Fermo Maggiore a Verona tra Venezia, Lombardia e Europa e alcune considerazione sulla scultura veronese di secolo XI e XII,” in \textit{Medioevo: Arte Lombardia, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Parma, 26-29 settembre 2001}, ed. A. C. Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2004), 247-259; and “L’architettura della chiesa San Fermo Maggiore a Verona (secolo XI)” (Tesi di dottorato, Università degli studi di Udine, 1999).} Sixteenth-century Veronese chronicler Dalla Corte suggested that a key stimulus for this building program was the residential development of the local neighborhood, which coincided with the contemporary physical and economic growth of the city.\footnote{G. Dalla Corte, \textit{Dell’istorie della città di Verona} (Verona: Discepolo, 1596), V, 233. See also Simeoni, \textit{Studi sul Verona nel medioevo}, vol. 1, appendix, 35.} The condition of the church may have also stimulated the eleventh-century reconstruction; by this time, it was 600 years old and probably in need of significant repair; indeed, Dalla Corte suggested the extant building was an embarrassment to the
expanding city. The existing church may have also been too small for the Benedictine community, which would have required additional and adjacent conventual spaces for the monks. The transformation of the site may have thus sought to better reflect or represent the contemporary progress and prosperity of the city and accommodate the spatial needs of the monastic community. But the project may have also been related to the development of the cult of Fermo and Rustico, which seems to have been gaining popularity: in the mid-eleventh century, a fourth church, S. Fermo del Crocifisso, was erected in honor of the martyrs. The monks may have therefore envisioned a new building program that would better honor the importance of the holy relics associated with their new site.

Documents indicate that the Benedictine community of S. Fermo was a popular recipient of lay donations. Yet in spite of the new church and the special favor it continued to enjoy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, by the mid 1200s, the monastic community seems to have suffered a decline in financial resources and membership, as supported by a document of 1257 that notes “pauci Monachi” in the church at this time.

15 Miller, Formation, 66. The size of the Benedictine community at this time is unknown. Miller suggests that even the city’s most prominent houses, S. Zeno and S. Maria in Organo, probably had about a dozen monks; if this figure is a reliable estimate, the community of S. Fermo may have been significantly smaller. However, in documents recording the transfer of S. Fermo to the Franciscans in the thirteenth century, the dwindling number of monks—there were five—at the church is cited as a reason for their eviction. Thus, perhaps a number around nine or ten may have been considered an “acceptable” size. But regardless—as Miller notes—“even doubling or tripling the numbers…still indicates monasticism on a modest scale.”
16 This church no longer survives; it was demolished in 1898.
18 Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 329; Miller, Formation, 65. In the early Middle Ages, most Veronese donors left gifts of land (and other immovable bequests, such as houses or mills) to one or two institutions. Miller noted a clear preference for Benedictine monasteries: a large percentage of testators patronized established communities or, in some cases, helped fund new ones. For a study on testamentary giving in this period, see Miller, “Donors,” 24-42.
19 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2095; BF t. II, 196, n. 298; Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 334.
In the face of Verona’s larger and more powerful Benedictine communities of S. Zeno and S. Maria in Organo, which continued to receive considerable support and perhaps diverted patronage away from the smaller monastic congregation at S. Fermo, the monks were able to maintain neither their position nor their church by the middle of the thirteenth century.  

5.1.2 Franciscan Occupation

On May 10, 1249, Innocent IV evicted the remaining Benedictine monks from S. Fermo and authorized the Franciscans to transfer from their site of S. Francesco al Corso (S. Croce) outside the walls to the more centrally located monastery. The Benedictine community refused to leave. As the tyrant Ezzolino had forced the local bishop out of the city, the friars lacked the necessary jurisdictional support or ally to enforce their move. On February 25, 1257, Alexander IV—formerly Cardinal Ugolino—wrote to bishop-elect Gerardo of Verona authorizing him to relocate the remaining Benedictine

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20 The specific politics and dynamics of the local Benedictine communities and their cults of saints is beyond the scope of this study. For further reading on the Benedictine communities in Verona, see Miller, *Formation*, esp. ch. 3, “The Religious Life,” 63-95.

21 "Innocation Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei Venerabili Fratri Episcopo Veronensi salute, et apostolicam benedictionem. Cum sicut ex parte dilectorum filiorum Guardiani, et Fratrum Minorum Veronen nobis extitit intimatum; Abbas, et Conventum Sancti Firmi Veronen velint Monasterium ipsum cum loco in quo idem guardianus, et fraters habitant commutare, Fraternitati tue per Apostolica scripta mandamus quatenus loca ipsa, dummodo ad id praedictorum Abbatis, et Conventus, ac Guardiani, et Fratrum Consensus accedat, inter eos commutari procures; Contradictores per censuram Ecclesiasticam appellation postposita compescendo.” Archivio Sartori II/2, 2095, 2101; *BF*, t. 1, 530, n. 302. This process probably began earlier, with a Franciscan petition to transfer, but no previous documentation survives. Sütner states that the friars had desired to move as early as 1232, but she does not cite a source. Sütner, “L’architettura,” 582.

22 Bolgia, “The church of S. Maria in Aracoeli,” 71-75, n. 8. A Franciscan precedent for taking over Benedictine houses had occurred in Rome a few decades earlier: in 1229, Pope Gregory IX ordered the Benedictine Order to give their “derelict” church of S. Biagio in Trastevere to the friars. In 1249, the Franciscans at Rome were once again authorized to occupy yet another Benedictine convent, that of S. Maria in Capitolio (also known as the Aracoeli). Like the monks at S. Fermo, the Benedictines at the Aracoeli did not go quietly. The Roman Franciscans were engaged in similar battle with respective Benedictine community, and their transfer had to be confirmed multiple times.

23 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2095. According to Sartori, Bishop Gerardo left Verona in 1257 to save himself from the wrath of Ezzolino. The following year, he was taken prisoner and he probably remained incarcerated until Ezzolino’s death in 1259, when he returned to Verona.
monks so that the Franciscans could inhabit their convent. On April 11 of the same year, Bishop Gerardo sent a letter to the Benedictine community from his temporary residence in Venice that assigned the church and convent of S. Fermo, including all of the related buildings and gardens, the cemetery, and the piazza, to the current Franciscan Minister General, John of Parma. Nevertheless, the Benedictine monks refused to surrender the conventual buildings and continued to affirm their rights over the church and its holdings. While Bishop Gerardo remained in exile, the Franciscan community lacked a local religious authority to implement this ruling; to break the impasse, on July 9, 1257, Alexander IV endowed Franciscan Friar Alberto, Bishop of Treviso, with the authority to grant the friars the entire complex of S. Fermo (“cum omnibus apendiciis suis delectis filiis fratibus de ordine minorum veron[ae] concedere ac assignare curaret”). Although the Benedictine monks continued to resist, the friars ultimately

24 Ibid.; BF t. II, 196, n. 298; Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 334. There are no surviving documents that testify to the Franciscan claim to dominion over S. Fermo between 1249 and 1257, but the process clearly involved a significant struggle between the friars and the monks. Biancolini records an additional letter by Alexander IV, sent to the papal legate, bishop-elect of Ravenna, probably as reinforcement of the text sent to Gerardo of Verona: “Sincerae dilectionis affectus, quem ad dilectos filios fratres Minorum inter alios religiosos specialiter, ipsorum ordinem gerimus, nos induct, ut praecipua eos interdum benevolentiae ac faboris fratri profequamur: Cum igitur dilecti filii fratres ipsius ordinis apud Veronensem civitatent morantes, minus comode sicut ex ipsorum significacione acceperim, sint in loco ute consistunt ad praesens, nos super hoc tranquilliati, et consolationi ipsorum providere volentes, dilectum filium electum Veronensem rogamus et hortamur attente nostris ei dantes litteras firmiter in praeceptis, ut Monasterium et Ecclesiam Sancti Firmi maioris Civitatis praedictae, in quo pauci Monachi ordinis Sancti Benedicti morari dicuntur, cum domibus, orto, et alii appenditiis suis, am dictis Monachis in aliis Monasteriis suae civitatis et dioecesis sui ordinis collocatis, praefatis fratibus ad opus ipsorum auctoritate nostra libere concedere et assignare procures, ipsos vel alium alem ipsum nomine in corporalem ipsins possessionem inducens, et defendere inductos, contrafactores quoslibet et rebelles monitione praemissa per censuram Ecclesiasticam sublatos appellatio obtiuscompensando, quocirca discretionis tuae per Apostolica Scripta mandamus, quatenus si dictus Electus praeceptum nostrum neglexerit adimplere, tu super hoc illud exequi non postponas.” See also C. Perez Pompei, “Una data e un documento nella storia di San Fermo Maggiore,” Studi storici Luigi Simeoni 6-7 (1955-1956): 120.
25 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2195; Biancolini, Notizie storiche V, 7. See also G. Gaudini, “Studio di approccio per la rilevazione e la catalogazione dell’organismo architettonico di S. Fermo nel suo contesto urbano e nella sua consistenza formale, architettonica e decorativa,” in Inorno a S. Fermo Maggiore, 29-30.
26 “Alexander Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei Venerando Fratri Alberto Episcopo Tarvisino Salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem. Insinuavit nobis dilectus filius Minister Provincialis Ordinis Fratrum Minorum in Marchia Tarvisii, quod nos olim dilecto filio electo Veronensi per litteras nostras sub certa forma dedimus in mandatis, ut locum Sancti Firmi maioris Veronae cum omnibus apendicitis sui dilectis
prevailed. A now-lost document from 1260 records them conducting business in the cloister of S. Fermo and names Friar Florasio as the guardian of the convent, indicating that by this year they were installed there. The Benedictines had not fully vacated or released control of some of the conventual properties, however, and on July 2, 1261, Bishop Alberto instructed Prior Bennato of the monastery of S. Giorgio in Verona to grant the “appendiciae” of the convent to the friars. Ten days later, Prior Bennato, acting on behalf of Alexander IV, conferred the monastery “et de omnibus et singulis appenditiis” to the Franciscan community via Guardian Giovanni dal Borgo.

27 Most historians have suggested that the Franciscans inhabited the church in 1261. See for instance, De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 113; Perez Pompei, “Una data e un documento,” 121; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2095-2096; Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 335. The date of 1260 is based on a document described in the register of the Archivio di Stato in Verona, which has now been lost. Bourdua supported this date for Franciscan occupation first in her Ph.D. dissertation, then in her book, The Franciscans and Art Patronage. Still, others have suggested that the transfer was still contested in the early fourteenth century, since documents indicate that the Benedictines continued to petition for repossession over some of the properties of S. Fermo until the early 1300s. See, for instance, G. Sancassini, “I documenti” in Dante e Verona, ed. G. Sancassini, 78; and M. T. Cuppini, “L’arte gotica a Verona nei secoli XIV-XV,” in Verona e il suo territorio, vol. 3, 225.

28 “Religioso Viro et Domino Benenato Priori Sancti Georgii de Verona Frater Albertus Dei Gratia Episcopus Tarvisinus salute in Domino, facientes notum iamdudum recepisse litteras Apostolicas in hac forma: Alexander etc. Hinc est quod dum Nos Fratrem Rodulphum Ministrum Fratrum Minorum Provinciae Marchiae Tarvisinae auctoritate huissimae mandate Apostolici sub millesimo duecentisimo Indictione secondo die tertio intrantis Decembris, investivimus cum annuolo nostro de appenditis Sancti Firmi maioris de Verona secundum quod mandaverunt, confecto per manum Alberti Gaiae notarii plenius continetur et ad majorem declarationem negotii, Frater Rodulphus praedictus instanter a nobis petierit, ut in possessionem corporalem dictarum appendiciarum ipse seu fraters sui nomine ordinis per Nuntium Nostrum speleacem corporaliter inducat, idcirco authoritate, qua in hac parte fungimur vos mandate aucteritate, et mandamus, quatenus praedictum ministrum, vel Fratres quoscumque nomine eiusdem ordinis antedictarum appendiciarum possessionem corporaliter inducatis, declarando et exprimendo, quae sint istae appendiciarie, et quantum circumquaque Monasterium se extendat.” Archivio Sartori II/2, 2096-2097; Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 335.

29 “In Christi nomine, die martis duodecimo intrante Julio in civitate Verone in capitulo Fratrum Minorum de Sancto Firmo maiori de Verona presentibus Domino Joanne de Schala, Magistro Leonardo Medico Fisico, Thebaldo Doctore, Domino Henverardo Notario de Magistro Pezola, Benedicto Notario de Moro,
5.1.3 The Conventual Property

In 1261—aftler over a decade of dispute—the Franciscans finally assumed full custody over the “monasterium et ecclesia…cum domibus, orto, et aliis appenditis,” a roughly trapezoidal plot of land that included the church, its conventual buildings, gardens, a hospital, a cloister, and a cemetery. The approximate boundaries of the new Franciscan convent, represented in figure 68, can be determined from the Episcopal correspondence discussed above. The former Benedictine hospital, located off the

Benenato Notario de Brayda, testibus, rogatis et aliiis Ibiue Frater Joannes de Burgo Guardianus Conventus Fratrum Minorum de Verona praeasentavit quasdam litteras Domino Benenato Priori Sancti Georgii de Verona ex parte Fratris Alberti Dei Gratia Episcopi Tarvisini…sigillo sigillatas, tenor quorum talis est…Item die Martis suprascripto et praesentia eundo per infrascriptas appendicias. Ibiue dominus Benenatus Prior Sancti Giorgii de Verona, de licentia et mandato Domini Alberti Dei Gratia Episcopi Tarvisini, q. ab ipso receperat sub hac forma, sicut ego Notarius infrascriptus vidi praedicti Domini Episcopi litteram non canzelatam, nec viciatam, nec aboliitam, non in aliqua parte sui lesam cuiusdam sigilli cerei munimine roboratum, in quo sigillo littere tales errant: Religioso Viro Domino Beneato Priori Sancti Georgii, de Verona Frater Albertus Dei Gratia Episcopus Tarvisinus salutem in Domino. Noveritis Nos jam dudum recepisse litteras Apostolicas in hac forma: Alexander Episcopus…Praedicta igitur Dominus Benenatus, quia sic reciperat in mandatis, Fratrem Jacobum de Plee custodem Fratrum Minorum costodia Veronensis et Fratrem Joannem Guardianum conventus Fratrum Minorum costodia ad hoc per Ministrum et Capitulum specialiter deputatos, per manum in possessionem corporalem induxit praedicti Monasterii Sancti Firmi majoris in et de omnibus et singulis appenditiis ejusdem Monasterii, et de, cum et omnibus ispsi monasterii et de jure et ratione, quae pertinere et pertinere poterunt ad illus Monasterium Sancti Firmi majoris, et ad illas appenditiis inter cohaerentias infrascriptas, et de rivatico ad passativi, et de domo toloeno pertinentialibus, et quae usu esse pertinent ad illud Monasterium Sancti Firmi majoris. In primus petia terra cum domo, quae est Super Athesim et apud Athesim versus mane, apud terram ubi hospitale vetus erat, et postea per ordinem et toloeno, rivarici, et passativi, et portu navium, et de jure toto ipsi portui, et toloeni, rivateci, et passavi, et de domibus omnibus et singulis, et petiae terra, et domorum incipiendo a cursio eundo jousm usque ad domum ubi jacent infirmi, que appellatur hospitale nun factum de novo in capite versi super angulum usque domum Martini de Mayello et de ipsa domo usque ad vian, ut ita veniendo per alias et singulas domos ab illa dicta domo hospitalii usque ad domum magnum illorum de Bonet, que est super Stratum Brentarium, et de ratione ipsius domus et domorum haredum quondam ipsius Boneti, ita veniendo per illas et singulas domos que sun super illa Strata Brentariorum usque ad januas dicti Monasterii; cui dicte Monasterio, et dictis appenditiis, et juribus eorum, de quibus nunc posita sunt in tenutam, ut supra est declaratum cohaerent versus mane flumen Athesim intem domorum Martini de Mayello et dictam domus…de novo a certis annis citra in capite cursus usque ad dictam domum magnam Boneti, versus sero via Brentariorum magna, quae vadit a latere cimiterii Sancti Firmi Majoris usque ad pontem Navium, capientes de terra et aqua, et catena cum ostio more folito. Salvo tamen jure comunis Veronae et conductorum. Et hoc factum fuit praesentibus Domino Duplino Ottobono Abate Sancti Firmi Minoris, et Fratre Francisco Baldino quandam Monacis Sancti Firmi Majoris non contraddicentibus, immo asseverantibus, et consensum suum expresse praestantibus sua propria et spontanea voluntate renuntianibus pro se et suis successoribus onmi jure, si quod habent in dicto loco et appenditiis ejus, vel uti ipsi vel possessores eorum actum habuerunt, et jurantibus ad Sancta Dei Evangelica licet irrequisits sponte non contravenire, et nunquam huic investiturae seu traditioni contradicere, immo promittentibus pro se susque successoribus et rata et firma habere, et in perpetuum quod actum est conservare.” Archivio Sartori II/2, 2097; Biancolini, Notzie storiche I, 335-337.

July 12, 1261. Archivio Sartori II/2, 2097.
present day Stradone S. Fermo near the Adige River, marked the northernmost part of the conventual lands. The property line continued along the bank of the Adige to the present-day site of the Soprintendenza Patrimonio Storico Artistico, located off the present-day Via Filippini. The Via Vento Satiro or the Via Torcoletto probably marked the southernmost boundary of the convent, which then intersected with western border of the “Strata brentariorum,” or the present-day Stradone S. Fermo.

The Franciscans thus acquired a sizable tract of property along the bank of the Adige, adjacent to the Ponte Navi and the Porta Leone (also known as the Porta S. Fermo), and a short distance from the market and civic buildings located in Piazza Erbe (figures 22, 69). The conventual property was adjacent to major thoroughfares and the river, elements that were essential to the economic activities of the city and the convent itself, and which determined (and constrained) the direction of future expansion.

The new, central location of S. Fermo with its regular pedestrian traffic must have provided a critical boost to the Franciscan mission in Verona. The steady flow of passersby around the convent—particularly that of merchants, who after arriving by boat at the port at Ponte Navi would transport their goods along the Stradone S. Fermo past the convent to Piazza Erbe—would have offered continuous opportunities for the friars to attract audiences for their public sermons. The thoroughfares around the convent were not only crucial to the friars’ mission, but they would also play a role in the configuration of their architectural space: the Franciscans seem to have planned elements of their renovations to capitalize on these traffic patterns.

The papal bull of 1261 assigned the friars the legal rights to parts of: 1) the

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31 Ibid. This boundary is described “aput terram ubi hospitale vetus erat,” and seems to correspond with the current seat of the Soprintendenza Patrimonio Storico Artistico.
thoroughfare alongside the Adige (the present day Via Leoni-Via Dogana); 2) the river port “delle Navi,” located near the present day bridge of the same name; 3) and the tolls associated with this port.\textsuperscript{32} Although the structure of the Ponte Navi has undergone significant transformations since the Middle Ages, a painting from the seventeenth-century may provide an idea of what this crossing and its related tollhouse looked like in this period (figure 70). It is unclear precisely what duties or privileges accompanied the rights to the toleneo, but as the legal “owners” the friars may have been responsible for collecting transportation tolls and levies, although this would have occurred through a third party, probably a tertiary.\textsuperscript{33} Miller noted that in the early twelfth century, the bishop received all of the fees and tolls collected at the river port and the city’s busiest gates, the Porta S. Zeno and the Porta Leone, and a document from 1389 published by Simeoni confirms a similar arrangement for the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{34} It is thus feasible that the friars, vis-à-vis their agents, collected tolls on behalf of the local episcopacy. Regardless of the details of the arrangement, the friars probably received a portion of these fees through their collection activities or their legal dominion over these sites. Although it is impossible to estimate how much money the friars would have received from the toleneo, this revenue would have been a steady and reliable component of their economy and may have helped fund the cost of their new building program.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item For text, see note 29.
\item See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the economic roles of the tertiaries.
\item C. B. Bouchard, \textit{Holy Entrepreneurs: Cistercians, Knights, and Economic Exchange in Twelfth-Century Burgundy} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 114-117. A precedent for this kind of activity exists among Cistercian communities, which often acquired rights to the revenues of mills and ovens, especially in the later twelfth century. In the case of the Cistercians, the monks usually received an income paid in flour from mills under their jurisdiction. The situation of the tolls and the S. Fermo community may
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The strategic location of the monastery and its legal rights to the road along the bank of the Adige, the port, and the tolls were advantages the Franciscans quickly leveraged to their benefit. In 1280, for instance, they granted permission for construction of a salt warehouse on their property near the river. Yet documentation also reveals serious and frequent challenges to their rights over some of the more valuable conventual landholdings, such as the road along the riverbank. In response to the advances on their territory made by the commune, Franciscan syndic Johannes Sellano requested legal protection of the community’s landholdings in 1270; Judge Jacobus de Telcio ruled in their favor, declaring that the city could not interfere with the lands given to them in previous acts. Even with this judicial support, the friars continued to defend their claim over this thoroughfare in the following decades. In 1281, they effectively petitioned Alberto della Scala and the head of the Arti to reaffirm their rights to the riverside passageway and confirm the other boundaries of the convent expressed in the papal bull from 1261. Outside parties continued to contest their ownership and further

have been similar to that of the friars at Orvieto, who seem to have controlled some of the city’s tolls, in addition to performing maintenance work on the roads and bridges around their convent. See P. Salonius, “Orvieto and its Cathedral: The City, the Curia and the Artistic Context” (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2008).

Varanini, “L’area,” 87. The friars may have been compensated in cash or in quantities of salt (the Cistercians, for example, commonly received annual rents in salt). This example shows that at least in some cases, the Franciscans were recognized as the owners of the riverside thoroughfare (Via Leoni-Via Dogana) and those wanting to use this land were required to seek their permission.

Such challenges seem to have primarily come from the commune and the former Benedictine community.

May 12, 1270. ASVr, S. Fermo; Trevisan, “L’architettura della chiesa,” 323, doc. 82.

interventions were required. In 1312, a bull by Clement V reconfirmed their landholdings, and a letter written to Cangrande della Scala from Emperor Enrico VII in the same year urged the Veronese ruler to persist safeguarding the property rights of the “religiosi viri fratres minores de Verona” along the river. Even in the face of what appears to have been a constant struggle to maintain jurisdiction over their original landholdings, the friars seem to have ultimately protected the property and rights of their original landholdings throughout the Middle Ages.

5.1.4 The Choice of S. Fermo

Shortly after their occupation of the monastic complex in 1260, the Franciscans...
began to renovate the former Benedictine convent. The following sections will discuss these works in detail, but a central and critical question must first be explored: why did the Franciscans request relocation to an existing and occupied church instead of petitioning the Order for permission to construct a new building? As Franciscans often preferred locations near major urban arteries, the central and strategic position of S. Fermo was perhaps one of the most attractive qualities of the monastery. The location of the Inquisition office next door to the convent must have also presented an enticing arrangement, as proved by the Franciscan leadership of local inquisitorial duties beginning around 1260.

The location had additional advantages: in the second half of the twelfth century, the city had enlarged its walls to incorporate the monastery of S. Fermo, which had previously been outside these fortifications. With the inclusion of the monastery and its surrounding neighborhoods within the city walls, there was a rapid and concentrated residential settlement of the *contrada* of S. Fermo, particularly by members of the new, non-noble social elite. The convenience of the neighborhood to the river, port, city

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42 Schenkluhn, *Architettura*, 45. Another nearby example is the church of Ss. Nabore e Felice in Milan. Here, the Franciscans constructed a medieval church on top of a proto-Christian basilica beginning in 1233. Schenkluhn suggested that this church (now completely baroqued) probably featured a tripartite nave and a polygonal apse.

43 This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

44 Although the area of Porta Sancti Firmi had been recognized as a legitimate district of the city in legal documents since the mid-ninth century, the inclusion of the neighborhood inside the city walls made it a physical part of the urban fabric. Organization of the city’s urban spaces into *contrade* gave the neighborhood of Porta Sancti Firmi additional recognition and distinction: the church and its immediate surrounds were designated as an individual *contrada*, appropriately called “S. Fermo.” The *contrada* system is noted in the Communal Statutes of 1228, but was likely in place much earlier, at least by the late twelfth century, since one of the earliest references to the *contrada* of S. Fermo appears in 1198 (ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, perg. 2, 3, 7; 1198-1207). It is also important to note that the terminology used to refer to a *contrada* varied place by place (in some cases, “waite,” “ora,” or “hora” were used in documentation). See G. M. Varanini, “L’espansione urbana de Verona in età comunale: Dati e problemi,” in *Spazio, società, potere nell’Italia dei comuni*, ed. G. Rossetti (Naples, Liguori 1986), 23-24.

45 The Porta Leoni (or Porta Sancti Firmi) separated the neighborhood of S. Fermo from that of the Corte Regina, which was directly adjacent to Piazza Erbe where important figures, nobility, and royalty stayed when visiting the city. The proximity of the church to this prestigious area of town—which Miller has
gate, and market were added attractions, especially to mercantile families. By the mid 1200s, an estimated 477 residents are thought to have lived in this *contrada*, including many families of affluence and importance, such as the Da Palazzo and the De Comite.46 These families and their social status played important roles in the development and character of the urban space of this neighborhood.

By the mid-thirteenth century, the *contrada* of S. Fermo had not only become part of the city proper, but a residential center favored by the middle and upper classes. Given that this population was generally sympathetic to the mendicant religious mission, the friars may have viewed their neighbors as potential donors. Indeed, evidence from fourteenth-century testaments in Verona indicates that geographical proximity to and frequent contact with a church were critical factors in decisions regarding burial and bequests, and records reveal that many of the individuals who patronized the Franciscan community did, in fact, live in the same *contrada* as the convent.47

As scholars have already noted, the double basilica of the Benedictine church may have been another important reason for the Franciscans’ selection of S. Fermo. The Franciscan community had an opportunity to acquire a building similar to the mother church at Assisi (and like their early church-crypt combination at S. Francesco al Corso) without experiencing the financial burdens associated with an *ex novo* construction project.48 Since the reuse of older, dilapidated structures better corresponded to the Franciscan standard of poverty than a new building, the choice of S. Fermo probably also

46 Varanini, “L’area,” 85. Varanini notes that important and figures such as Tebaldo Musio Turrisendi, Godo Avvocati, and Count Guiberto da Palazzo were listed as “civitate in Verona in suburbio Sancti Firmi” in a document from 1141.

47 Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi.” This will be further discussed further in Chapter 7.

48 The connection between Assisi and San Fermo as has already been noted by scholars such as Bourdua (*The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 33.)
signified a certain level of economic prudence—even Francis himself had sanctioned the restoration of existing structures by repairing the abandoned churches of S. Damiano and the Porziuncula outside Assisi. In general, transfer to an existing monastery was often a more desirable and less criticized alternative to new construction for the Franciscan Order.\textsuperscript{49}

The reuse of an existing, historical church was probably also crucial for establishing and elevating the religious and economic position of the Franciscan community in the thirteenth-century city. The friars’ occupation of and association with a basilica of ancient foundation may have helped them clarify their role as “new Apostles.” Their choice of S. Fermo may also represent an attempt to cultivate a kind of “historical” authority, which was expressed in a highly visible way upon their transfer to the Early Christian site.

Because the church of S. Fermo was previously a Benedictine monastery, its occupation by the Franciscans may have helped the community forge link between themselves and an established religious institution.\textsuperscript{50} The small number of monks may have been another factor in the friars’ choice of S. Fermo: they may have assumed that the outnumbered Benedictines lacked the power necessary to dispute their request for custody of the antiquated, but prestigious, church. Yet, as the Franciscans discovered, the Benedictine community was tiny but resilient. The duration of the transfer proceedings demonstrate remarkable resistance on the part of the outnumbered monks, as

\textsuperscript{49} This is not to say that the move to San Fermo was not without objection or criticism. Gasparini states that Brother Florasio, who was elected guardian of the community in 1260, oversaw the “controversial transfer” from San Francesco to San Fermo. It is unclear, however, whether the conflict was within or outside of the order, or with the Benedictines, and if critics objected to the move to San Fermo itself or relocation in Verona’s center. See De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 113.

\textsuperscript{50} Miller, Formation, 65.
well as reveal a matched determination and perseverance by the friars. Rather than pursue another location, the Franciscans continued to challenge the monks for their site, which suggests their specific goal was to occupy S. Fermo rather than a generic move into the center.

By replacing the Benedictines as guardians of Fermo and Rustico’s relics, the Franciscans appropriated a legacy of legitimacy and authority through the Early Christian history and subsequent monastic associations of the site. As custodians of the relics, the relatively new community of friars became the proprietors of a piece of Early Christian heritage and local history, a role that probably helped strengthen the weight of their influence with the laity and their position within the local religious hierarchy. This does not mean, however, that the friars used the historical richness of their new site in order to jump into the clerical and monastic “shoes” of the previous inhabitants; instead, the radical socio-religious programs of the Franciscans offered new, distinctively “mendicant” alternatives to many of the city’s traditional religious practices.\textsuperscript{51}

Nonetheless, the monastery of S. Fermo was inextricably connected to the local martyr saints Fermo and Rustico, the establishment of Christianity in Verona, and the local power of the Benedictine institution.\textsuperscript{52} The Franciscan choice and tenacious pursuit of S. Fermo appears to reflect an awareness of these important connections, and may have therefore been a conscious attempt to align themselves with the historical and religious aura of the site. These associations find visual expression in their decorative program,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{51} This will be discussed further in Chapter 7. \textsuperscript{52} Tradition has placed the Christian conversion of Verona early in the course of Christian history. According to Wiel, one legend even declares Saint Peter himself responsible for appointing the first bishop of the city, Saint Euprepio. The accounts of the martyrdoms of Fermo and Rustico, however, suggest that in the fourth century Verona still maintained a large pagan population. Conversion of the city probably occurred over the course of the next several decades, since by the fifth century—the time of S. Fermo Maggiore’s foundation—Fermo and Rustico had gathered a large cult following. Wiel, \textit{The Story of Verona} 17; Varanini, “L’area,” 84-85.}
which included figural imagery of Fermo, Rustico, and Benedict, as well as in their architectural choices (see Appendix 1). The Franciscan community at S. Fermo was not just renovating a church; the friars were also constructing a religious identity.

5.2 The Church and Conventual Buildings

5.2.1 Post-Medieval Additions, Restorations, and Interventions

Before discussing the church of S. Fermo, it is necessary to note some factors that complicate the study and dating of the medieval architectural fabric. The first is the small number of documents that refer to construction: neither contemporary descriptions of the site nor specific accounts of projects survive. Existing records are primarily real estate transactions and wills, which reveal little about artistic or architectural commissions. Furthermore, subsequent events and construction programs have transformed the spaces of the church and convent. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), for example, required a significant reconfiguration of churches in order to accommodate new liturgical functions and changing artistic tastes, and the fabric of S. Fermo was not left unscathed. Natural disasters provoked further transformations: in 1757 (and again in 1882), the Adige River flooded its banks, and rising water caused significant damage to the lower church. During the earlier flood, the relics of Fermo and Rustico were rescued from the altar in the lower church and moved into the upper space, where they were re-installed in a new altar in the apse. This resulted in the general abandonment of the lower church, which quickly fell into disrepair.

Extensive renovation and restoration programs, many of which are unrecorded, have further altered the original medieval fabric. In some places, these works have

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53 Exceptions include major restoration programs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as A. Da
modified the architectural and decorative fabric to such a degree that dating based on style or technique is no longer possible. Later structures built against exterior walls prevent detailed study of sections of the perimeter, while subsequent altars and chapels erected in the interior have covered or destroyed portions of the original walls. Other discrepancies in parts of the fabric traditionally dated to the thirteenth century further complicate the processes of chronology and sequence.\footnote{Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 175-182. Trevisan notes, for example, variations in window type (biforium, monoforium, etc.), the change in decoration (the frieze of the north transept is not decorated with the same cross and circle or “XO” motif found elsewhere on the building), and the fact that the northern spires are less pronounced and less “Gothic” than those on the south as discrepancies that complicate dating. He has suggested, however, (and I agree) that these differences should be interpreted as part of the process of decoration and embellishment during the course of the work, as opposed to indications of additional campaigns.}

In 1806, S. Fermo was converted into a parish church and parts of the former monastic complex became the office of the Regia Intendenza di Finanza.\footnote{This occurred as part of the execution of the Decreti Vicereali. The conventual complex remained the seat of the Regia Intendenza di Finanza until the Second World War.} Consequently, these structures underwent significant modifications to adapt to their new functions. Many of the specifics of these early nineteenth-century transformations to the conventual complex are poorly recorded, making it extremely difficult to reconstruct details aside from its general plan.

Beginning in 1905, the church underwent extensive restorations under the direction and supervision of engineer Alessandro Da Lisca.\footnote{Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali.} This program—which was greatly influenced by the ideals and aesthetics of “restauri di liberazione” as practiced by Viollet-le-Duc and other contemporaries—was concerned with repairing the façade, exterior walls, campanile, and the roof, cornice, and pinnacles. One of the most

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Lisca’s Studi e ricerche originali sulla chiesa di S. Fermo Maggiore di Verona, con le notizie dei restauri recentemente compiti (Verona: Società cooperativa tipografica, 1909), and the records preserved in the office of the Soprintendenza, some of which are transcribed in the appendix of the Trevisan’s doctoral dissertation, “L’architettura della chiesa.”
controversial components of Da Lisca’s work was the destruction of most of the antique cloister and the later buildings constructed against the apse and southern perimeter wall (figures 71-73).\textsuperscript{57} The successive processes of erecting and then demolishing these structures have compromised the earlier architectural fabric, making it difficult in some cases to distinguish between that which is original and that which was added in the early twentieth century.

Later damage caused by World War II bombardments, and subsequent repairs, further transformed the convent. After the war, the office of the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti moved into two of the three cloisters that formed the conventual complex, and once again, these structures were reconfigured to accommodate their new purpose. The central space of the antique cloister, located against the south flank of the church, is primarily used as a parking lot, and most of the surrounding rooms have been converted into a music conservatory.

5.3 Formal Analysis

5.3.1 A Note on Construction Materials

Centuries of intervention have made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the materials used by the Benedictines, the Franciscans, later additions, and modern restoration. Without rigorous scientific and microscopic analysis of material data, any discussion of building material at S. Fermo must rely heavily on the testimony of Da Lisca, who excavated parts of the fabric during his program of restorations.

The church and cloisters of S. Fermo are constructed primarily of brick and tufa, although courses of rubble are occasionally used in the walls of the church and antique cloister.\(^58\) The tufa of the Benedictine program, seen for example in the perimeter walls of the lower church, is cut into regular blocks that measure approximately 12 x 20 x 30 centimeters; close inspection of this masonry reveals diagonal striations from the tools used to dress the stone (figure 74). Analysis of the color and mineral composition of this material led Da Lisca to suggest a provenance of Valpantena, a paese approximately fourteen kilometers north of Verona.\(^59\) In comparison, the “Franciscan” tufa, used, for example, in the upper courses of the perimeter walls, is darker in color and softer in composition.\(^60\) Da Lisca proposed that this stone probably came from quarries in nearby Avesa or Quinzano, or from the hills within the city walls.\(^61\) According to Da Lisca’s analysis, both the Benedictines and the Franciscans utilized locally quarried stone for their projects, and the benefits of economy and convenience almost certainly outweighed the less-than-superior quality of the material.

Based on several observations, Da Lisca proposed that the bricks of the perimeter wall of the Benedictine church (visible, for example, in the both the interior and exterior of the flanking semi-circular apses) were reused from local Roman ruins.\(^62\) He noted that the bricks of the Benedictine fabric vary widely in their dimensions: average lengths range between 25 and 35 centimeters, with heights between 6 and 8 centimeters.\(^63\) In rare cases, fragments no more than 7 centimeters in length are utilized. This discrepancy is

\(^{58}\) Tufa is a type of limestone, sometimes referred to as meteogene travertine. The “rubble” courses here are characterized by round, dark stones.


\(^{60}\) Da Lisca, *Studi e ricerche originali*, 20.

\(^{61}\) Ibid. Avesa and Quinzano are approximately seven kilometers north of Verona.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 17-18.

\(^{63}\) Ibid. See also Trevisan, “L’architettura della chiesa,” 178-179.
particularly evident in the exterior fabric of the *cappella maggiore*, where the irregular brickwork of the Benedictine program contrasts with the more regular sizing of the Franciscan fabric (figure 75). Da Lisca also observed that the fine grain and texture of the masonry used in the Benedictine fabric closely resembles that of local Roman monuments such as the Arena and the Theater. From these observations, as well as a conspicuous absence of documentation on a local brick-making industry in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Da Lisca hypothesized that there were no brick kilns in Verona during the period in which the monks were constructing their church, hence the re-use of Roman materials in the Benedictine structure.

Da Lisca proposed a revival of the brick-making industry at the end of the twelfth century, suggesting that only then did local construction begin to utilize materials not produced in Antiquity, and thereby concluding that the majority of the bricks of the Franciscan fabric are probably from the end of the thirteenth century. These bricks (visible, for example, in the fabric of the polygonal apse) are more uniform in size than their earlier counterparts, but slightly smaller (the average dimension is approximately 7 x 14 x 28 centimeters). They are also rougher in texture, containing a substantial amount of sand and limestone particles mixed in with the clay base. There is also a visible variation in mortar: that used to bind the masonry of the Benedictine construction includes large particles of sand and gravel, whereas the mortar used by the Franciscans is slightly finer.

Both the Benedictine and Franciscan programs employ sections of alternating courses of brick and tufa, reflecting the longevity of this aesthetic in Veronese

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64 Ibid., 18-19. It is possible that the friars and their building projects were a force behind the revival in brick-making in Verona, but there is no concrete evidence to support or refute this hypothesis.
65 Ibid.
architecture. Local religious and civic construction projects used polychrome banding extensively between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, as seen at the Duomo, S. Zeno, and the communal palace.

### 5.3.2 The Lower Church

The present-day church of S. Fermo Maggiore is composed of two superimposed spaces: the lower church (also called a crypt) and the upper church (figure 76). The lower church retains many elements of the Benedictine structure, which remained virtually untouched by the Franciscans during their renovations (figures 77-79). The space features a typical Benedictine plan 43.5 meters long and 15.5 meters wide, that includes a nave, two aisles, three rounded apses, and a pair of transept “arms” which project outward from the nave 4.5 meters. The original structure included a two-storey atrium to the west, which no longer remains. Alternating rows of cruciform and square piers divide the interior into the wider central nave and the more narrow flanking aisles; additional square supports further bisect the central space of the nave. The piers, which support a system of quadripartite vaults above, are composed of blocks of Veronese limestone or calcare. The size and shape of the capitals vary according to the type of support.

The orientation of the three apses, which are elevated approximately 60 centimeters from the level of the nave by two steps, corresponds with the axes of the central nave and the side aisles (figure 79). This ordered and controlled alignment, combined with the heavy volume of the nave supports, the low vaulted ceiling, and the

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66 Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 170. Although archeological excavations (parts of which are visible in the floor of the apse of the lower church) reveal that the perimeter walls of the antique church do not coincide with those of the eleventh-century building, Trevisan believes that the Benedictine church incorporated aspects of the plan and configuration of the Early Christian basilica, such as its orientation.

67 Capital types and shapes include abachi, listelli, and gole.
small size of the windows and their positioning within the thick lateral walls, contributes to the austere and solemn atmosphere that characterizes the space of the lower church.

While fresco and plaster fragments on the west and east perimeter walls suggest that the entire lower church was once completely painted, extensive losses have rendered the wall construction of brick, tufa, and rubble visible. Although the masonry is laid in uniform, horizontal layers, there is no strict or regular formula in the pattern of material (figures 80-81). For example, one section may utilize a course of tufa followed by a course of brick, while an adjacent segment of wall features one course of tufa, two courses of brick, and a course of rubble. Since frescos probably covered the interior perimeter walls, these materials were not intended to be visible, which may explain this irregularity. Subsequent interventions have also contributed to the variable arrangement of masonry types in the lower church.

Even though the frescos of the perimeter walls have suffered extensive losses, the piers in the nave retain most of their painted decoration, which allows for some speculation about the Benedictine decorative program. Extant painting suggests that the space once included a narrative cycle of the life of Christ, seen in the scenes of Baptism and Crucifixion, as well as figures of angels and New Testament saints, such as John the Baptist and Christopher (figure 82). Ornamental friezes and decorative geometric motifs accompany each image, and the vaults include similar stylized geometric and floral frescos. Although the dating of these pier scenes and figures, as well as the fragments of wall frescos, is highly disputed, analysis of style and iconography suggests

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their execution around the mid-twelfth century. Conversely, other piers featuring Franciscan saints, such as Francis, Anthony, and Clare, were clearly added to the program by the friars after their occupation of the church, and these later paintings may have covered earlier images from the Benedictine program (figures 82, 83).

Pavers of local pink Veronese marble, or marmo rosso, installed in the early 1960s, cover the floor of the lower church. Traces of previous marble flooring are visible at some of the bases of the nave piers, as seen in figure 84. The level of this earlier pavement is approximately 1.5 centimeters below the current pavers, suggesting that the present day level of the floor of the nave may closely correspond with that of the original. The upper and lower spaces of the Benedictine church were once connected by eight sets of stairways built within the thick perimeter walls (figures 66, 67). Most of these are no longer accessible, but traces of these corridors are still visible in the lower church, as seen in figure 85.

5.3.3 The Upper Church

The archeological investigations of Da Lisca and the more recent architectural studies of Trevisan both provide strong evidence to suggest that the design of the Benedictine upper church followed the footprint of its lower story. The church

69 For further discussion on this decoration and issues of dating, see M. T. Cuppini, Pitture murali restaurate (Verona: Soprintendenza ai monumenti, 1971), 25-27; E. Arslan, La pittura e la scultura veronese dal secolo VIII al secolo XIII (Milan: Università degli studi di Padova, 1943), 116-120; F. Flores D’Arcais, “La pittura nelle chiese e nei monasteri di Verona” in Chiese e monasteri a Verona, 443-532; and Trevisan “L’architettura della chiesa,” 166-169.
70 Stylistic analysis would suggest that these saints were painted in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.
72 Ibid., 76-82.
73 Ibid, 82-83. At least one of these passageways, which links the southeastern wall of the lower church with the “Castelbarco Chapel” above is still operational, but closed to public use.
74 See Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 21-30; W. Arslan, L’architettura romanica veronese (Verona:
probably featured a traditional Latin cross plan with stone vaulting throughout, and included an atrium at its west end, as seen in the three-dimensional model by Trevisan in figure 66. The monks probably conceived the upper and lower churches as separate parts of a cohesive and integrated design: both spaces were constructed from the same materials, shared similar plans, and featured an analogous approach to the division of interior space. There were, however, probably some important differences in dimension and architectural elements. Trevisan and others have proposed, for example, that the elevation of the upper church was significantly higher and used different shapes and scales for the windows and interior supports.

Trevisan suggested that French monastic architecture, specifically convents in Burgundy (such as the abbey church of Bernay, completed by 1025) and Cluny, played a role in shaping the eleventh-century plan of S. Fermo. He also observed similarities between the plan of S. Fermo and Italian sites such as S. Benigno at Fruttuaria (1003), the cathedral of Acqui (late tenth or early eleventh century), the cathedral of Bobbio (1014), and S. Giusto at Susa (1028). Furthermore, he and others have concluded that the Benedictine design of S. Fermo also closely corresponded to those of contemporary Veronese churches such as S. Lorenzo (early twelfth century), Ss. Apostoli (consecrated 1194), and S. Giovanni in Valle (eight-century church rebuilt in the mid-twelfth century).


Ibid.

Ibid. Trevisan notes that the upper and lower churches probably also had similar functions, providing spaces for liturgy, gathering, and meditation.

See note 54.


century).\textsuperscript{80} Both Arslan and Trevisan have described the plan of the local church of S. Lorenzo as a “reproduction” of the upper church at S. Fermo, and indeed the similarities between the two designs—seen in figures 67 and 86—are striking.\textsuperscript{81}

The present-day interior of the upper church is the primarily the result of profound renovations by the Franciscans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The upper church features a large, single nave 67 meters long and 18 meters wide in its eastern half; to the west of the Madonna Chapel, the exterior wall jogs inward and the width of the nave narrows to 15.5 meters (figures 87-89). A wooden lobed ceiling spans the entire length of the nave, measuring 17 meters high at its apex. Rectangular tiles of pink and grey marble, added during twentieth-century restorations, pave the floor.

Wide, thick semi-circular arches separate the wooden covering of the nave from the vaulted transept “arms,” which extend 4.5 meters from either side of the nave (figure 90). Between them, a large frescoed triumphal arch creates a visual focus on the east end and transitions between the lobed ceiling and the rib vaults of the choir (figure 91). The eastern zone of the church, elevated approximately 40 centimeters above the floor of the nave by a set of stairs, is the focal point of the architectural program: here, a large, rectangular choir terminates in a five-sided polygonal apse.\textsuperscript{82} Five slender lancets illuminate this space, creating an intense concentration of light in the east that literally


\textsuperscript{81} Arslan, \textit{L’architettura romanica veronese}, 13-24.

\textsuperscript{82} The current semi-circular arcade was added during restorations. Given the elevation of the side chapels above the level of the nave floor, it is reasonable to conclude that the floor of the choir was also slightly raised from that of the nave (similar to its present state). However, the “entrance” to the choir was probably flush with that of the side chapels rather than extended out in a semi-circular shape as seen today.
highlights the architectural and liturgical importance of this zone.

As illustrated in the model represented in figure 92, two chapels flank either side of the choir, arranged one behind the other. As this image shows, under the Benedictine plan, these back-to-back chapels once formed a single, united, and elongated space. In the fourteenth century, the Franciscans constructed a wall that bisected the space latitudinally, forming two separate chapels. The front (western) two chapels open into the nave below the triumphal arch and are rectangular in shape (4 meters wide by 5 meters deep): the north (left) chapel is dedicated to St. Anthony and the southern (right) one is dedicated to the Passion. To the east, hidden from view and accessible through doors in the choir, is the second set of corresponding rooms. These spaces share nearly identical dimensions with the St. Anthony and the Passion chapels, yet feature a semicircular eastern wall. The north room, located directly behind the S. Anthony chapel, contains the foundations for and access to the campanile, while the south room, today referred to as the “Spogliatoio dei Chierici” almost certainly functioned as a devotional chapel for the patron Guglielmo Castelbarco in the fourteenth century.

5.3.4 The Exterior

The polygonal apse and two flanking semi-circular chapels are constructed almost entirely of brick. Contrasting white tufa highlights decorative elements, such as the gables, cornice decoration, and portions of the buttressing at the top of the *cappella maggiore* (figure 93). The eastern wall above the choir, visible above and to the side of the polygonal apse, features alternating courses of brick and tufa (in a 3:1 brick to stone ratio). The rectangular campanile rises from the structure of the northeastern chapel; here, two sections of brickwork flank a middle zone of tufa construction.
To the west of the semi-circular apsidal chapels, the transept arms project outwards (figure 94). The rounded apses of the eastern face contrast with the flat surfaces of the adjacent walls, which are crowned with steeply-pitched gables. Although both transepts feature brick construction, include small sections of banded masonry, lateral buttress piers, gables, and pinnacles, they are not symmetrical (figures 95, 96). Slight variations are apparent in the slope of the gabling and the type of cornice decoration, as well as in the window designs: three lancets pierce the north transept and a biforium and an oculus—both of which were sealed during the construction of the Alighieri altar on the interior wall—once illuminated the south transept.

A substantial portion of the northern perimeter wall is concealed by the later additions of the Della Torre family mausoleum and the Madonna chapel, constructed of brick in 1510 and 1613, respectively. Nonetheless, an upper section of (restored) medieval brickwork is visible between the exterior projection of the mausoleum and the campanile (figure 97). A brick cornice characterized by an X and O motif above a row of interlocking arches runs along the top of the wall.

To the west of and adjacent to the outcrop of the Madonna chapel is the platform of the north portal into the nave of the upper church. This podium measures 8.4 meters wide, 2.8 meters deep, and is elevated 2.5 meters above the present-day ground level, connected to the street by a wide marble staircase (figures 98, 99). At the top of the platform is the double portal entrance, circumscribed by a stair-stepped series of pointed-arched Gothic archivolts and covered by a vaulted portico. To the west of the portal platform, a blind arcade of trefoil arches in tufa embellishes the lower portion of the adjacent brick wall.
On the south side of the church, the present-day configuration of the antique and south cloisters conceals most of the perimeter fabric. Only the upper portion of the brick wall is visible, which incorporates the same cornice decoration of the north flank.

The Facade

The surface of the west façade is relatively flat, with sculptural and architectural elements projecting only slightly from its volume (figure 100). The tripartite division of the structure by cornices and the use of polychrome banding in the upper portion create a strong horizontal emphasis. The base is constructed entirely of tufa and consists of a blind arcade of trefoil arches, nearly identical to those of the adjacent wall of the south flank. The elevated and recessed portal, circumscribed by a series of rounded archivolts of marmo rosso, is the focal point of the facade (figure 101). Above the entrance, a marble statue of Francis from the fifteenth century partially obscures the lunette fresco of the Virgin and angels painted circa 1330. To the left of the portal, the canopied effigy tomb of Doctor Aventino Fracastoro, the physician to the Della Scala family (d. 1368), is affixed to the blind arcade. On the opposite side of the portal is another late fourteenth-century baldachin, which once covered the Da Tolentino family sarcophagus.

A decorative cornice separates the lower blind arcade from the upper gallery, which is also constructed of tufa. Four lobed arches (two of which are windows) flank the central portal on each side. The blind arches preserve traces of frescoed figures, attributed to the Maestro del Redentore between 1325 and 1330; scholars have identified

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84 L. Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico-artistica della città e provincia (Verona: Vita veronese, 1909), 242-243; T. Franco, “Tombe di uomini eccellenti (dalla fine del XII alla prima metà del XV secolo),” in I Santi Fermo e Rustico, 253, 260; Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 62-63. The inscription identifying Giovanni da Tolentino was added to the pavillion along with the decorative frieze by Giovanni da Tecacino di Terrazzo in 1592. The 1425 last testament of doctor Giovanni da Tolentino requested burial in the façade tomb where his mother and some of his sons were interred (Archivio Sartori II, 2120).
these figures as St. Francis (or Anthony?), St. John the Baptist, St. Fermo and St. Rustico.85

Another sculpted cornice above the portal zone marks the transition from tufa construction to alternating courses of stone and brick (featuring a 1:4 stone to brick ratio). Four large lancets and a smaller, three-lanced window flanked by oculi pierce the upper volume, which is crowned with a decorative trefoil-arch border in tufa along the cornice (this design also appears on the pointed elements pediments and gables of the east end and transept). Conical brick pinnacles rise from the top of the triangular pediment.86 This unusual façade composition will be discussed further in the final sections of this chapter.

The Cloisters

The monastic complex of S. Fermo includes three cloisters (figure 102). Since all of these spaces have undergone significant alterations in the centuries since their construction to adapt them for new and different uses, there is little medieval fabric to analyze.

The Benedictines built the earliest cloister, often referred to as the “antique cloister,” into the south flank of the church. Although this space has been heavily restored, three bays of the eastern cloister arcade survive perpendicular to the southern apsidal chapel (figures 103-105). The extant arcade features quadripartite masonry groin vaults supported by semi-circular transverse arches that spring between pilasters integrated into a thick wall of brick and rubble and short square piers.87 Pointed-arched

85 For iconography and attribution, see for instance, De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 215-217.
86 The decorative metalwork of these pinnacles was replaced in the early twentieth century. Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, esp. ch. 10.
87 The brickwork above these piers, and probably a significant part of the vaulting in this section, does not
windows pierce the exterior wall.\textsuperscript{88}

Tombs pave the covered walkway between cloister and church, some which date to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (figures 106, 107).\textsuperscript{89} A painted Annunciation scene under the stairs to the upper church, a fresco of the Virgin and Child enthroned with saints above the tomb of Antonio Pelacani, and faint traces of colorful coats of arms in the west attest to the presence of fourteenth-century votive decoration in the antique cloister (figures 108, 109).

The western two cloisters now belong to the office of the Soprintendenza (figure 102). Both cloister designs feature the typical arrangement of a square courtyard surrounded by a covered walkway, include a two-storey elevation, and feature rounded arches supported by simple Corinthian columns (figures 110, 111). Construction of these cloisters probably began at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.

5.4 The Franciscan Renovation Program

5.4.1 Scholarship on the Franciscan Renovations

The Franciscan renovations to S. Fermo remain largely unexplored. Only a handful of studies have addressed the architecture of the church in any significant detail, and most of these emphasize the earlier church of the Benedictines. Reasons for this neglect may include the lack of documentation regarding the architectural and decorative programs and the fact that S. Fermo is little known outside of the city; until now, scholars from Verona or the surrounding region have produced most of the research on the church. Although patronage of and financial transactions concerning the community are well

\textsuperscript{88} Their pointed shape and the variations in masonry around them indicates that the Franciscans probably added these openings.

\textsuperscript{89} These will be discussed further in Chapter 7.
documented in contemporary testaments and notarial records, few specifically refer to the renovation program; furthermore, there are no surviving accounts, such as receipts or commissions, detailing the thirteenth or fourteenth-century works.\textsuperscript{90}

The earliest description of the site appears in a late fifteenth-century poem by humanist writer Francesco Corna da Soncino, who devotes a few stanzas of his enthusiastic praise of the city to the Franciscan church.\textsuperscript{91} Aside from recording relics and liturgical elements, his verse reveals little about the specifics of the architectural fabric of the church in this period. What the poem does convey, however, is the author’s regard for S. Fermo as a site of great artistic value. Da Soncino notes, for example, the quality and magnificence of the painted decoration and the beauty of the lobed ceiling.\textsuperscript{92}

Early chronicles of and guides to Verona—including Dalla Corte’s \textit{Dell’istorie della città di Verona} (1592), Biancolini’s \textit{Notizie storiche delle chiese di Verona} (1749), Lanceni’s \textit{Ricreazione pittorica} (1720), Maffei’s \textit{Verona illustrata} (1732), and Marini’s \textit{Indicazione delle chiese, pitture, e fabbriche della città di Verona} (1797)—bear more detailed witness to elements of the church that are no longer there, such as altars, tombs,

\textsuperscript{90} Vows of poverty notwithstanding, money was a critical and integral part of mendicant life in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For the Franciscans, the use of the \textit{amicus spiritualis} to handle the financial affairs of the convent makes tracing specific transactions and therefore studying the economic practices of a mendicant convent in this period especially challenging.

\textsuperscript{91} Francesco Corna da Soncino, \textit{Fioretto de le antiche croniche de Verona}, 1477, ed. G. P. Marchi (Verona: S.N., 1973). Stanzas 181 to 185 refer to S. Fermo: “Dei Servi ven chiamato quel convento / ma poi, seguendo pur a quella mano / forse dui stadi, dico, che non mento, / se trova un altro tempio più soprano / el quale è fatto con più ornamento, / che ha si bel coperto per certano, / che mai non vidi al mondo, s’io non erro, / nisun più ricco de legnami o ferro. Questo a Santo Fermo è dedicato, / e sotto terra l’ha de gran lavoro / sopra forte colonne rilevato, / et ha più pregio assai che non è d’oro. / el g’è San Fermo e Rustico; costoro / martirizzati fórno in sta citade, / e deliberòla da la sicitade. / E sta in questa gesia di valore / quattro altri santi martiri beati, / cioè al martir San Marco e prete ancore, / San Lazaro e San Primo collocati / e santo Apolinaro con onore, / che fórno da Maria comperati / sin a Triesti, la suor de Santo Anno; / poi li condusse qui e ancor ge stanno. / Egli ha sta gesia magne sepolture / e più capelle de gran devozione, / lo adorno coro e le magne penture, / otto colone de marmore bone / sol per beleza de le ornate mure, / El loco magnò è degno de onore, / ed è convento de’ fratri Minore. / Trovasi ancora nel degno convento / molte relique de gran devozione / in un tabernaculo d’argento: / el g’è riposto per contrizione / del märtiro arrostito San Laurento / e di San Bartolomio con affezione; / el g’è reliquie degne, e g’è ancora / de l’apostol San Iacomo Magiore.”

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
and the tramezzo.\textsuperscript{93} Yet with the exception of Biancolini’s text, which is especially valuable for its transcription of documentation, these guides are useful for recording inscriptions, important events, or individual works of art, but are largely silent when it comes to specific observations on the building itself.

In 1905, Simeoni published the first scholarly study on the church’s architecture.\textsuperscript{94} His discussion centered on the Benedictine plan and structure, devoting little space to the Franciscan renovations to the complex. A few years later, Da Lisca provided the first in-depth architectural analysis of the site based on observations made during his program of renovation, repair, and excavation.\textsuperscript{95} Although he discusses the modifications of the Franciscans, like Simeoni, Da Lisca seems more interested in the construction of the Benedictines. This emphasis notwithstanding, his text offers important observations about the friars’ use of material and hypotheses about their approach to construction.

Subsequent publications have continued to focus on or emphasize the eleventh- and twelfth-century Benedictine church. In 1917, for example, Kingsley Porter included the lower (Benedictine) church in his multi-volume work on architecture in Lombardy; approximately twenty years later, Arslan studied the church more thoroughly in his treatise on Romanesque architecture in Verona.\textsuperscript{96} Both authors focused on formal comparisons between the plan and architectural decoration of the Benedictine church in

\textsuperscript{93} Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie; Biancolini, Notizie storiche; G. B. Lanceni, Ricreazione pittorica, ossia notizia universale delle piture nelle chiese e luoghi pubblici della città e diocesi di Verona (Verona: Berno, 1720); Maffei, Verona illustrata; and G. Marini, Indicazione delle chiese piture e fabbriche della città di Verona (Verona: Erede Merlo, 1797).

\textsuperscript{94} Simeoni, “L’opera.” Four years later, Simeoni again revisited the topic of S. Fermo, this time providing a more comprehensive overview of the structure and its decoration. Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico-artistica, 239-254.

\textsuperscript{95} Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali.

\textsuperscript{96} Kingsley Porter, Lombard Architecture, vol. 3, 484-489; Arslan, L’architettura romanica veronese, 9-18.
Verona and other structures, most notably sites in Lombardy and in France, such as
Cluny. In 1964, Romanini furthered many of the observations and ideas proposed by
Arslan in a chapter that explored the connections between the Veronese site, Cluniac
architecture, and a handful of Lombard churches from the late eleventh and twelfth
centuries.\footnote{Romanini, “L’arte romanica.”}

In 1954, Perez Pompei wrote the first modern guide to the S. Fermo.\footnote{C. Perez Pompei, \textit{La chiesa di San Fermo Maggiore} (Verona: Vita veronese, 1954).} Although
her text offered no new scholarly observations or insight, it combined formal analysis and
a synthesis of the literature to discuss the site and its works of art.\footnote{San Fermo:Le tre chiese (1980) offers an updated guide to the church.} In the following
decades, some of the volumes on various aspects of local and regional history included
sections on art and architecture, some of which devoted short notices to the building.\footnote{Suitner, “L’architettura”; F. D’Arcais, “Aspetti dell’architettura chiesastica a Verona tra alto e basso medioevo,” in \textit{Chiese e monasteri a Verona}, 347-383.}

In 1990, the office of the Soprintendenza published a collection of essays on the convent
and its history, yet only a few submissions addressed the specific topic of architecture.\footnote{Intorno a S. Fermo Maggiore. See the following studies: G. Guadini, “Studio di approccio per la rilevazione e la catalogazione dell’organismo architettonico di S. Fermo nel suo contesto urbano e nella sua consistenza formale, architettonica, e decorativa,” 21-37; and Soragni, “S. Fermo Maggiore e l’insediamento conventuale servita di S. Maria della Scala,” 29-46.}

Dellwing dedicated a little over a page to the Franciscan building in \textit{Die Kirchenbaukunst
des späten Mittelalters in Venetien}, although his focus is restricted to formal elements of
the church’s plan and design.\footnote{Dellwing, \textit{Die Kirchenbaukunst}, 21-22.} In 2004, the \textit{parrocchia} of S. Fermo published a book
on S. Fermo that featured contributions on the history of the church, its site, and its
related cult by distinguished medievalists such as Gasparini, Varanini, De Marchi,
Trevisan, and Franco.\footnote{I Santi Fermo e Rustico.} Although more than a third of the book is devoted to aspects of
the physical fabric such as painting, sculpture, tombs, and altars, only the chapter by Trevisan addresses the convent’s architecture.\textsuperscript{104} Indeed, Trevisan has done the most to advance the architectural study of S. Fermo in the last decade, from his doctoral dissertation on the church (1999) to more recent publications; he is the first scholar since Da Lisca to have investigated the architectural fabric of the church in a systematic and rigorous manner.\textsuperscript{105}

A recent publication by De Marchi in \textit{Arredi liturgici e architettura} proposed a reconstruction for the \textit{tramezzo} of S. Fermo based on evidence from the surviving fresco decoration (see figure 134).\textsuperscript{106} Along with Trevisan, he has used this information to consider some of the spatial implications of this division may have affected decoration, liturgy, and use of the upper church.\textsuperscript{107} Although focused on one specific aspect of the church—the \textit{tramezzo}—this work nonetheless represents an early and important contribution towards re-framing the approach to the study of S. Fermo (and indeed, any mendicant church) in relation to the larger network of the Order, as well as contemporary urban topography, social relations, economic structures and sites, and religious practices.

Architectural studies on S. Fermo are thus few, and most of them emphasize the construction of the Benedictines. Moreover, the existing literature is primarily focused on formal issues, and has yet to thoroughly examine the material and textual evidence of the convent within the original historical context of the site and Franciscan community.

\textsuperscript{104} Trevisan, “L’architettura.” Other chapters deal with the history of the site, such as De Sandre Gasparini’s “Il convento,” and Varanini’s “L’area.” The final four chapters in the book deal with aspects of later (after 1500) architecture, such as the construction of chapels and the altar.

\textsuperscript{105} Although his work addresses both the Benedictine and Franciscan programs, his focus is on the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See, for example, Trevisan, “L’architettura della chiesa”; “Cum squadra”; and “S. Fermo Maggiore.”

\textsuperscript{106} De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti e il problema del tramezzo in San Fermo Maggiore a Verona,” in \textit{Arredi liturgici e architettura}, ed. A. C. Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2003), 129-142.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.; Trevisan, “L’architettura della chiesa.”
How did the friars approach their renovations? What factors defined their architectural choices? In what ways did pious practices—such as preaching, burial, and cult veneration—physically shape their renovations? How did the specific characteristics of the Franciscan site and its position within the larger context of the urban center affect the configuration of church space? How were these elements tied in to issues of funding and patronage? These kinds of questions have not been explored and are the focus of the remainder of this chapter, as well as Chapter Seven.

Both Da Lisca and Trevisan proposed that the Franciscan renovations to S. Fermo primarily occurred in two distinct phases or campaigns, the first beginning in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and the second, which included the most dramatic modifications, commencing around 1314. In the following sections, I offer an alternate reading of the physical fabric, one that supports the premise that the friars conceived of and carried out these renovations as a single, continuous project. Although they may have revised their architectural designs during the construction process, perhaps according to the influence of new artists or patrons, evidence indicates that some of the friars’ earlier projects were specifically constructed to anticipate later works. It may therefore be useful to view the modifications to the church as an “interconnected” and “interlocking” enterprise of “successive stages” unified beneath a master vision rather than as a series of separate events.

108 Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 37-38. Da Lisca also proposed another, earlier stage, which he suggested occurred in the middle of the thirteenth century and included the enlargement and reconfiguration of windows in the choir and the foliate frieze in this zone. As he was doubtful whether or not this work was executed by the Franciscans or the Benedictines, I have specifically noted above that he proposed two phases of construction for the Franciscan works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although it would also be accurate to state that he proposed three phases for thirteenth and fourteenth-century works in general (not limited to those undertaken by the friars). In his doctoral dissertation, Trevisan also suggested that these renovations occurred in three phases (“L’architettura della chiesa,” 19). However, his more recent chapter emphasizes a two-part narrative (“L’architettura,” 178-182).
than two distinct campaigns.  

While respecting earlier works, one of the goals of this chapter is therefore to challenge the current understanding of the friars’ renovations and critically re-think the ways that they may have approached their architectural projects. The following discussion emphasizes the ongoing and successive character of the Franciscan renovations, thereby presenting a construction narrative that may more accurately reflect the intentions behind the friars’ modifications. Although I use the terms “first campaign” or “second campaign” throughout this chapter to refer to these works, organize my discussion of documentation and individual renovation projects according to the century in which evidence indicates they were executed, and consider architectural elements (such as the apse and the façade) under individual headings, I do so to position my own observations within the parameters of the traditional narrative. These divisions exist to systematize architectural analysis and provide clarity and organization to the discussion, but must be understood as part of a larger, continuous process.

5.4.2 The Thirteenth Century Documentation: Expansion of Landholdings and the Beginning of the Renovation Program

Even though the papal bull of 1261 awarded the friars a large plot of desirable land, they began to acquire property for future expansion almost immediately upon their transfer to the convent. A document of October 1276 names fifteen friars, ten of whom appear to be from the Veneto, and a chapter meeting from 1352 records seventeen friars present. Whether these numbers represent the total members of the community at this

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109 Smith, “Santa Maria Novella.” Smith uses these terms to describe and characterize the construction process at S. Maria Novella in Florence.

110 October 19, 1276. ASVer, S. Fermo, Rotoli, b. II, perg. 97; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2108. September 9, 1352. Fermo, Rotoli, b. II, perg. 344; De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 121, n. 63. Freed notes that it is nearly impossible to determine whether a friar who has used the name of a town as his surname belonged to...
time is not entirely clear; however, Gasparini has estimated that there were between fifteen and twenty friars at S. Fermo in the late 1200s and early 1300s.\textsuperscript{111} The community at S. Fermo therefore seems to have been of modest size, particularly in comparison to other sites such as the Aracoeli in Rome, which had had fifty friars in 1320, or even nearby Treviso, with thirty-three friars in 1315.\textsuperscript{112} The number of brothers in Verona corresponds with figures for the nearby Franciscan community in Vicenza, which recorded nineteen members in 1346.\textsuperscript{113} Although Da Lisca proposed that many of the modifications to S. Fermo resulted from the need to house “monaci numerosi,” the moderate number of brethren suggests instead that the incentive behind their expansion and renovation of the existing convent was to attract and accommodate the lay public rather than the Franciscans themselves.\textsuperscript{114} This important observation is supported by their addition of specific architectural features intended to increase access to or facilitate the use of the church by the laity, as I discuss below. Attracting and appealing to the lay public should not be overlooked as essential objectives of the friars’ renovation program, and it is likely that the friars also planned for pictorial cycles and burial space from an early stage.

In addition to property donated by lay supporters, surviving real estate transactions record steady purchases of land from 1261 to 1297: several of these parcels

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 115.
\item For the figure at the Aracoeli, see Bolgia, “The church of S. Maria in Aracoeli,” 83, n. 52. For that at Treviso, see Archivio Sartori II/2, 1637. In a document from 1315 (which records the commune of Treviso giving money to the convent of S. Francesco), thirty-three friars are listed, most of which appear to be from the region.
\item October 20, 1342. Archivio Sartori II/2, 2295.
\item Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 38. Da Lisca writes, “Così il presbiterio ampliato per la comodità dei monaci numerosi...”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
were adjacent to the convent.\textsuperscript{115} Documents produced between 1260 and 1280 note some of the earliest rental transactions between the friars and their lay tenants, the income from which may have helped fund their new building program and cover the increased expenses of a larger convent.\textsuperscript{116} In a few cases, the friars themselves are documented as tenants: in 1280, for example, the commune granted a charter ("livello") to S. Fermo allowing them to use (and build on) a piece of land near their convent for an annual payment of five soldi.\textsuperscript{117}

The speed with which the friars began expanding their landholdings after transferring to S. Fermo suggests that they envisioned renovations and expansions early on. Yet specific references to the Franciscan program are sparse, as the probable use of a
third party *amicus spiritualis* to manage their affairs meant that financial transactions were poorly documented. One surviving record is a contract from 1275, which records guardian Friar Francesco receiving 70 *lire* in exchange for a piece of property. The document specifies that the sum was earmarked for construction of the friars’ dormitories and other buildings around the church: “dictum procuratori debet converti in construcione et hedificacione domus dormitorii predictorum fratrum conventus minorum de Verona neun incepti, et in refectione aliarum domorum loci sui Sancti Firmi maioris.”  

It is thus reasonable to conclude that work on the dormitories had begun by this time and that other conventual spaces were also underway.

Another specific reference to construction is a transaction between the friars and a local doctor named Baldassare from 1278. The doctor donated land and money to the Franciscans with the stipulation that his gift contribute to the renovation program: “...tali modo et pacto...quod habitem seu receptum fuerit disponatur pro guardianum dicti loci qui pro tempore fuerit in edificamento dicte ecclesie et loci Sancti Firmi predicti vel alio ubi ei melius videbitur.”  

In 1287, the testament of lay patron Giacomo de Berno set aside 10 *lire* in his will for the building project (“operi sive laborerio”) at S. Fermo.  

These documents lack specific details about the earliest construction efforts, but they signify that the Franciscan renovations to the church itself may have been underway as early as 1275. Equally significant is that these records demonstrate that lay donors had

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118 August 11, 1275. ASVr, Santo Spirito, b. IV, n. 390; Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 183, n. 29. This document was composed “in domibus fratrum minorum” in Verona.  


begun to subsidize the renovations by the last quarter of the thirteenth century.

In the thirteenth century, the papacy issued two indulgences rewarding visitation to the relics housed in the lower church. In 1265, Clement IV granted an indulgence of one year and 40 days to those who visited on the feast day of Fermo and Rustico. In 1291, Nicholas IV expanded this indulgence to include visits to the church on principal feast days. Some scholars have surmised that Nicholas IV’s indulgence may represent a need for funding, which could indicate that at this time work had slowed significantly or stopped all together (and did not resume until the involvement of patron Guglielmo Castelbarco by 1314). Though reasonable to infer that by encouraging the laity to visit (and donate to) the church these indulgences helped stimulate fundraising, one must be cautious in linking these bulls to economic need or the advancement of a building campaign. Unlike other indulgences that specifically encouraged construction (such as the bull granted by Innocent IV for patrons of the Frari in Venice in 1252, or that conceded by Alexander IV for donors to the works at S. Antonio in Padua in 1256),

121 Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 325-326 and VIII, 152; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2196; BF, III, 28, no. 30. The bull “Licet is” from August 12, 1265, states: “Cupientes, igitur ut Ecclesia dilectorum filiorum Fratrum minorum Veronensium congruis honoribus frequentetur, omnibus vere penitentibus et confessis, qui eamdem Ecclesiam in festo Sanctorum martirum Firmi et Rustici, quorum in dicta Ecclesia Corpora ut dicitur requiescunt, annis singulis cum devotione et reverentia visitaverint, de omnipotentis Dei misericordia et beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum eius auctoritate confisi, unum annum et quadraginta dies de inuncta sibi penitentia misericorditer relaxamus.” Cannon notes that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was no specified correlation between the number of days of an indulgence and the sum of money that an individual might contribute to a building program, and thus the precise financial success of indulgences are nearly impossible to gauge. She has nonetheless noted some trends in indulgences granted in a fund-raising capacity for a building program: the number of days of remission in connection with contributions to construction normally varied between twenty-five and one hundred days. During the thirteenth century, indulgences of forty days were standard, with higher rates of one hundred days, or up to one year and forty days. Indulgences for building works generally had a duration of two or three years, but they could be valid for up to seven. Cannon, “Sources,” 246-247, n. 102.

122 Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 325-326; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2196. The phrasing of this bull is reminiscent of Clement IV’s 1265 indulgence: “quorum corpora in eadem Ecclesia dictuntur requiescere.” Like that of Clement IV, Nicholas IV’s bull also provided one year and forty days remission from purgatory.

these texts do not specifically mention the renovation program at S. Fermo. 124

5.4.3 The Thirteenth Century Renovations

Trevisan proposed that the friars used the lower church for many of their liturgical and preaching needs during early renovations to the upper church that rendered it unusable.125 The addition of independent entrances for both the friars and the lay public into the lower church in the last quarter of the thirteenth century supports his hypothesis (figures 124, 125).126 Although the friars would have used the lower church for preaching and liturgical celebrations, they probably also relied on the outdoor spaces of their convent, such as the piazza, for these purposes.127 Although I will revisit the significance of public preaching more thoroughly in the seventh chapter, at S. Fermo, the exterior, public spaces of the convent such as the piazza and later, the north portal, were

124 November 22, 1252. Innocent IV’s indulgence states: “…cum igitur sicut acceperimus dilecti filij minister et fraters minores Venetijs Ecclesiam domos et edificial alia ad opus fratrum vel sufficentiam inceperint edificare et ad consumationem horum edificiorum nec non ad vite necessaria consequence cum non nisi de fidelium eleemosinis (praedicta civitatis venetiarum) et aliorum xpsi fidelium indigeant subsidiis adiuvari Universitatem vestram rogamus monemur et hortamur in domino ac in remissionem vobis inungimus peccatorum quatenus de bonis vobis a deo collatis pias elemosinas et grata eis devotionis intuit caritatis subsidia erogetis ut per subventionem vestram eorumdem consulatur inopie et vos per hec et alia…” ASVen, S.M. Gloriosa de Frari, b. 106; Archivio Sartori II/2, 1824. Alexander IV’s bull requested “a helping hand” in the construction project in return for an indulgence of one hundred days. See also Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 190, n. 17.


126 Ibid. This entrance linked the lower church and the south (antique) cloister. Renovations in 1947-1948 closed this door and removed the corresponding staircase. Based on stylistic analysis of the sculpted capitals, this door is dated to the last decade of the thirteenth-century. Previously the crypt was not accessible from the exterior as it is today; the monks or friars could only entered it from the upper church, via one of the eight staircases inserted in the thick walls.

127 While the lower church may have held the occasional public liturgical celebration, it is reasonable to suggest that the friars most often used their upper church, piazza, and other outdoor public spaces for the majority of their preaching and religious services as I will discuss more thoroughly in Chapter 7. At S. Francesco at Assisi, Robson and Cook have determined that both the friars and the lay public used the lower church in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but Cooper has compellingly suggested that the primary function of the lower church at Assisi was for pilgrimage and cult veneration rather than to celebrate the liturgy. There are of course important distinctions between the churches at Assisi and Verona that may have affected the uses for their respective lower churches (the most noteworthy being S. Francesco’s possession of the relics of Francis and its papal affiliation), but the lower church at S. Fermo may have also primarily served as a space relic veneration and private devotion. See W. R. Cook, “‘In loco tutissimo et firmissimo:’ The Tomb of St. Francis in History, Legend and Art,” and J. Robson, “The Pilgrim’s Progress: Reinterpreting the Trecento Fresco Programme in the Lower Church at Assisi,” in The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy, ed. W. R. Cook, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 1-37 and 39-70, respectively.
probably put to extensive liturgical use both during the course of construction and even after the works were complete.

Since the first surviving mention of the construction program from 1275 refers to the “dormitorii,” the enlargement and systemization of the conventual buildings appear to have been early construction priorities. Even though the community at S. Fermo was of modest size, they were more numerous than the previous Benedictine inhabitants, and would have therefore benefited from additional conventual space. Work on the fraternal spaces probably even preceded that on the upper church, a prioritization that had critical implications regarding the friars’ conceptualization and use of their outdoor, public spaces.

5.4.3.1 Sequence of Work in the Upper Church

Elevation of the East End

One of the earliest objectives of the Franciscan renovation program included raising the perimeter walls of the church, as illustrated in figure 112. As both Da Lisca and Trevisan have suggested, workers probably began in the choir, where they first increased the height of the walls and added a window to the south wall (now blocked in) (“Wall A” in figures 113, 114). Inside the church, a change in building material below the vaults marks this vertical addition: whereas most of the wall elevation is constructed of tufa blocks, the uppermost (Franciscan) zone features alternating bands of brick and tufa (figure 115).

Bichromatic courses of masonry (3:1 brick to stone ratio) also characterize the new addition to the choir elevation on the exterior, as seen in figure 113. It is unclear,

however, whether the increase in the height of the choir walls coincided with the blocking-in of the arched passageways below (which linked the choir with the side chapels in the Benedictine plan), or if this work was done later (figure 92).

After raising the height of the choir walls, the friars probably erected the transverse wall (“Wall C”) between the nave and the choir, which corresponds with the triumphal arch (figure 113). On the exterior, a misalignment of the masonry courses at the juncture between this wall and the perpendicular walls of the choir reveals that “Wall C” was erected subsequently (figure 116).

Did the friars raise the walls of the lateral chapels (“Wall D”) and elevate the wall to the east of the choir (the “eastern wall,” or “Wall B”)—which intersects with the rounded apses of the Romanesque chapels—as part of this initial sequence? Da Lisca and Trevisan suggested that the elevation of the chapel walls occurred slightly later, probably when the friars vaulted the choir. They further proposed that the elevation of the eastern wall (“Wall B”) probably also occurred at this time. Although my reading of the architectural fabric agrees that the work on the chapel walls occurred slightly later, I believe that the friars raised the elevation of the eastern wall “B” as part of the initial project that increased the height of the choir walls (“Wall A”). This conclusion is supported by evidence of an earlier wooden roof, which seems to have been built over the newly raised space to protect the work in progress. The presence of dripstones on “Wall C” indicate that a wooden roof preceded the present vaults of the east end (these are visible in figures 116 and 119). Traces of the trussed supports for this covering are still

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130 Ibid.
visible in the painted frieze in the choir, indicated by arrow “A” in figure 117.\textsuperscript{131} As the structure of this wooden roof would have been tied into (and supported by) the fabric of the eastern wall, it is logical to conclude that this wall was already in place by the time the friars erected the wooden covering over the choir. It seems that the friars constructed the eastern “Wall B” after completing work on the choir elevation, as the eastern wall abuts that of the choir and the masonry courses of these structures are neither continuous nor aligned (figure 118).\textsuperscript{132}

It is unclear where the elevation of the side chapel walls fits within the larger chronology of east end elevations. Da Lisca and Trevisan have proposed that this work occurred after that in the choir, and several observations support their reading.\textsuperscript{133} First, the dripstones appear only above space of the choir, which suggests that at the time of the roof’s installation, the friars had not yet raised the walls of the side chapels (i.e., because the chapels retained their Benedictine configuration, they did not require the protection of the wooden roof). Furthermore, the use of solid brickwork on the vertical additions to the chapels, instead of the polychrome banding of the lateral and perpendicular walls, and the different cornice decoration may signify that the friars conceived of the chapel elevation as a separate and distinct project. On the other hand, analysis of the juncture between the eastern wall (“Wall B”) and the south chapel is confusing: in some places, the new fabric of the chapel abuts the eastern wall, which could further support a hypothesis that the friars increased the height of the chapels subsequently. In other places, however, the

\textsuperscript{131} See Da Lisca, \textit{Studi e ricerche originali}, 56-7.
\textsuperscript{132} From ground level, it impossible to survey adequately the juncture between the choir and the east wall. Furthermore, extensive damage to the visible portion of this fabric makes it difficult to determine how these structures are related (whether masonry courses align, etc.). Da Lisca published a photo of this juncture taken from the roof prior to restorations, but even from this angle, the extensive damage to the wall fabric prevents adequate analysis. Da Lisca, \textit{Studi e ricerche originali}, figure 5.
\textsuperscript{133} See note 129.
fabric of these structures is dovetailed together, as seen in the arrows in figure 119. The bonded, interlocking quality of this masonry could indicate a single structural unit, and thus coeval construction.

The ambiguous structural relationship between these two components notwithstanding, the most logical explanation seems to be that the friars raised the height of the chapel walls slightly later, at the same time they vaulted them. Moreover, this work probably occurred as part of the same project that constructed the vaults of the choir, which would have required the higher elevation and vaulting of the adjacent side chapels to act as buttresses to counter the horizontal thrust produced by the newly erected choir vaults.

A narrative of the initial construction projects in the east seems to emerge in spite of the lack of documentation and some unresolved problems. After first elevating the walls of the choir, the friars appear to have built the eastern wall (“Wall B”) and the wall between the choir and nave (“Wall C”), and then spanned this space with a wooden roof. Scholars have dated the foliate frieze along on the upper part of the north and south choir walls around the last decade of the thirteenth century, indicating that the new elevation was complete by this time (see Appendix 1, 1.5 and figures 89, 135, 142).\textsuperscript{134}

**The Triumphal Arch and Transept Arms**

Since the triumphal arch incorporates openings for the lateral chapels in its structure, it follows that its erection corresponded with the construction of 1) the exterior wall between the nave and the choir (“Wall C”) and 2) the elevation of the chapel walls (Walls “D”), as illustrated in figure 113.\textsuperscript{135} A bifore window, now closed and visible

\textsuperscript{134} For more on these friezes, see De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti.”

\textsuperscript{135} See also Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 182, n. 25.
only in the space between the wooden-lobed ceiling and the roof, originally pierced the apex of this arch (figure 120). Trevisan suggested that this window was included to decrease the weight and the thrust of the arch on the supporting walls in addition to providing an additional light source to the interior. Although this may have been the case, the presence of the biforum also indicates that a simple trussed roof (without a ceiling below) covered the nave during the early stages of renovations (like that over the choir).

Around the same time of the construction of the triumphal arch, the friars also erected the arches that separate the transept “arms” from the body of the nave (figure 121). These arches spring between corbels integrated into the structure of the triumphal arch and the perimeter wall. Because frescos conceal the architectural fabric underneath and later renovations to the side chapels have damaged some of the decoration in this area, it is difficult to determine precisely how these arches are tied into the structure of the triumphal arch. Nonetheless, the clean union between the upper part of the triumphal arch frescos and the adjacent decoration of the transept arches may indicate coeval construction.

Along with the construction of these arches, the friars also raised the height of the transept walls. This increase in elevation is especially evident on the exterior of the north transept, where the solid brickwork above the alternating courses of brick and tufa distinguishes the Franciscan addition (figure 94). Examination of the exterior transept

136 As I was not permitted entry into the space above the ceiling, some of these observations must rely on the notes and photographs of this space by Da Lisca and Trevisan.
137 Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181. For more on the triumphal arch design see G. Gerola, “Il ritratto di Guglielmo Castelbarco in S. Fermo di Verona,” Madonna Verona 1 (1907): 89, n. 1. Gerola has noted, for instance, the analogous placement of this window with several other triumphal arches in Veronese churches.
138 Ibid.
walls suggests that this project followed the corresponding work in the east. As seen in figure 122, the masonry courses of the eastern wall of the south transept do not correspond nor are they flush with the wall between the choir and nave (“Wall C”). These conditions indicate that the raising of the transept walls occurred as part of a distinct, successive stage.\(^\text{139}\)

After elevating of the walls of the side chapels and transept and constructing the triumphal arch and adjacent transverse arches, restorations continued westward. The friars began to dismantle the Benedictine interior divisions and raise the perimeter walls of the nave, work which may have begun at the very end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century.\(^\text{140}\) Although contiguous structures conceal a good portion of the exterior walls of the nave, a section of brickwork above the Della Torre Mausoleum (between the north transept and the Madonna Chapel) provides a visual approximation of how much the Franciscans raised the existing Benedictine elevation (figure 97).

In the same way, the Franciscan additions to the campanile, seen in figure 123, are distinguished by the upper section of solid brickwork. The friars also added “Gothic” elements, such as pinnacles and the pointed, conical roof.\(^\text{141}\) It is unclear when these modifications to the campanile occurred: Da Lisca proposed that the tower received its present form in the early fourteenth century under the patronage of Guglielmo Castelbarco, discussed below. Simeoni, however, dated the work to the end of the

\(^\text{139}\) This juncture, although clearly visible through binoculars, is difficult to decipher from photographs. The same discrepancies in fabric exist on the north side.

\(^\text{140}\) Trevisan’s reading of the structure supports similar conclusion. Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 179-180.

\(^\text{141}\) Even in spite of these additions, the campanile nonetheless retains a distinctly Romanesque aesthetic. It closely resembles the local eleventh-century towers at Ss. Trinità and S. Zeno. Since all have undergone significant restorations, however, it is difficult to determine how many of these similarities (particularly with regard to decorative elements) are the product of analogous renovation programs.
thirteenth century, suggesting that the campanile would have been an early priority, lest the increases to the choir and nave elevations make it appear short. Simeoni’s reasoning notwithstanding, work on the campanile may have indeed coincided with the early projects that increased the height of the adjacent choir and transept.

In the final years of the thirteenth century, the friars added an entrance into the lower church from the antique cloister for their community and two doors in the north wall that connect the lower church with the adjacent thoroughfare, the Stradone S. Fermo (figures 124, 125, 98). The northern entrances allowed the laity to access the lower space—and the precious relics kept there—from the public street for the first time. This addition is an early example of how the friars manipulated their built environment to facilitate and encourage public access to their church space.

5.4.3.2 A Pause in Construction?

As noted above, some scholars have interpreted Nicholas IV’s indulgence of 1291 as a plea for financial assistance, inferring that work on the church slowed to a standstill at this time. There is, however, both textual and material evidence to support a master-planned construction of successive phases rather than separately conceived campaigns. Research on surviving wills indicates that a steady flow of testators patronized the community at S. Fermo in this period. Although these testaments do not specifically refer to construction, they do demonstrate that the friars received continuous donations

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143 These entrances have been dated to the end of the thirteenth century by their crocketed capitals, which feature simple, broad-ridged leaves ending in curled tips.  
144 These two entrances were probably constructed a few years apart. Each is executed in a different style, suggesting that they were not part of the same program. Based on stylistic analysis, it is reasonable to suggest that the rectangular entrance with a round tympanum above was constructed first. For whatever reason, a single entrance proved to be insufficient, and shortly thereafter another doorway was added, this time featuring a pointed-arched opening. The capitals on this entrance seem closely related in terms of style to those on the friar’s entrance to the lower church from the antique cloister, but they are slightly more ornate, which may indicate the construction of this entrance after that of the friars.
from the laity in the 1290s and early 1300s. While most bequests from this period are small, some are generous: in 1297, for example, one testator left several pieces of land to the convent.\footnote{December 10, 1297. ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. II, perg. 147; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2110.} The following year, Judge Lazzaino gave the friars 1,000 lire worth of property, and in 1301, Alberto della Scala contributed 1,000 lire to the community.\footnote{January 18, 1298. ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, reg. 2, perg. 113; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2109-2110. January 6, 1301. Archivio Sartori II/2, 2110; G. B. Biancolini, Serie cronologica dei vescovi e governatori di Verona (Verona: Ramanzini, 1760), 101, doc. xxv.} In addition, two requests for burial in the convent survive from 1307, and the friars would have received substantial fees from these and other appeals.\footnote{March 22, 1307. Testament of Cecilia, ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. II, perg. 176; August 4, 1307, Testament of Lidonia, ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, b. II, perg. 178; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2111.} In light of evidence that demonstrates continued lay patronage in this period, it seems unlikely that financial difficulties interrupted the work on the church or that Nicholas’s indulgence of 1291 represented an urgent need for funding.

Trevisan observed a vertical fissure in the southern exterior wall of the church and suggested that it provides material evidence for an interruption in the building process (this is marked by arrow “X” in figure 126).\footnote{Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 179-180.} When medieval walls remained unfinished for a period of time, the joint was frequently marked by a thicker mortar bed to temporarily protect the exposed, incomplete part of the wall.\footnote{Bolgia “The church of S. Maria in Aracoeli,” 92.} The absence of a thicker mortar joint on the southern flank may therefore suggest that a different interpretation of this fissure is required. Indeed, closer inspection of the area surrounding this fracture reveals another vertical fissure to the east, just west of the adjacent window (marked by the “Y” arrows in the image). Several observations converge to conclude that these two seams mark the outermost boundaries of a section of wall (Wall Section “A”), which appears to have undergone subsequent repairs or renovations. First, the
brick that flanks Section “A” is laid in a regular pattern of alternating headers and stretchers, whereas the masonry inside Section “A” is less uniform. In some places, between three and seven consecutive headers precede a stretcher (see “Z” for example). Secondly, there is also a slight color variance between the lighter masonry of “Section A” and the darker flanking brickwork. This evidence suggests that the fissures on the south flank were created from a successive rebuilding of this section of wall due to later reconstruction, damage, or degradation, rather than a pause in construction.

This reading of the masonry and the demonstrated financial support by the laity at the end of the century challenges the view that a pause in construction interrupted the renovation program. That S. Fermo was the site of Provincial Chapter meetings in 1282, 1288, and 1296 may further support this reading since the research of Seidel, Cannon, and Bourdua has suggested a correlation between hosting a Provincial or General Chapter meeting and the creation or commissioning of artworks. It would thus be reasonable to suggest that these meetings provided immediate and powerful incentives for the friars to continue (and complete) their restoration works.

Although the friars certainly carried out their modifications to the upper church sequentially, evidence seems to indicate that they conceived these works as a single, continuous project. The following discussion of the fourteenth-century works will further support the Franciscan renovations to S. Fermo occurred as a united and interconnected

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151 Archivio Sartori III/1, 266 (Bibl. Antoniana, ms. 205 f. volante, ms. 590, c. 24v). The next provincial chapter to be held at Verona was in 1386, and then again in 1388. After the chapter of 1388, the next chapter to occur at S. Fermo was in 1428.
architectural enterprise.

### 5.4.3.3 Summary of Thirteenth Century Projects and Continuation of Works

By the year 1300, the Franciscan renovation program was well underway. The friars had constructed some (or all) of their conventual buildings and the transformation of the upper church was in progress. Workers had raised the choir and transept walls, added entrances into the lower church for the friars and the laity, constructed a triumphal arch between the nave and the east end, and may have begun to increase the height of the nave walls and demolish the interior divisions. That most of the preliminary work of the upper church focused on the east end suggests that an early goal of the friars was to complete the renovations of the choir and put their liturgical space into use as quickly as possible.

Testamentary evidence indicates that these modifications attracted the attention and finances of the local laity, and special additions such as the public entrance into the lower church were included to facilitate their use of the convent. In the fourteenth century, lay patronage to S. Fermo increased significantly, and this surge must have had substantial implications for their building program. Although the topic of lay support is considered more thoroughly in Chapter Seven, it is important to note for the following discussion of the fourteenth-century works that the community experienced its “peak” in lay benefaction, especially in terms of burial requests, between circa 1305 and 1335. The continuous flow of income from these collective bequests, which began in the final quarter of the thirteenth century and intensified in the first half of the fourteenth, meant that work on the church could proceed at a steady, constant rate.

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152 See Chapter 7.
Da Lisca and Trevisan have classified the fourteenth-century modifications to S. Fermo as a second campaign, one which Trevisan suggested represents “una vera a propria variante in corso d’opera.”\textsuperscript{153} They—along with most scholars—suggest the most notable transformations to the convent began around 1314 under the partnership between Friar Gusmerio, Guardian of the convent, and patron Castelbarco, both of whom are memorialized in the decoration of the triumphal arch (figure 91; see also Appendix 1, 1.3). On the right side of the arch in the top register is the kneeling profile of lay benefactor Guglielmo Castelbarco. The donor offers a model of S. Fermo heavenward, his coat of arms displayed prominently behind him (figure 127). Opposite Castelbarco is the corresponding portrait of Friar Gusmerio, recorded as guardian of the convent in 1318 and 1319, who is depicted kneeling in prayer (figure 128). Inscriptions that are mostly effaced accompany the figures: above Castelbarco is the epigraph, “Susipe, Sancte Deus, munuscula, que pater meus de mei fisco Gulielmi, dat tibi Christo.”\textsuperscript{154} The inscription behind Friar Gusmerio declares, “Vitras, picturam, navem, corum, et alia plura offert tibi Criste Dani et pauperibus iste,” and includes the date 1314 (“mille trecente quatorde”).\textsuperscript{155}

The tradition of attributing the bulk of the Franciscan renovations to the benefaction of Castelbarco goes back to the sixteenth century. In 1594, Dalla Corte wrote:

\begin{quote}
Guglielmo Castelbarco…ne’ primi giorni dell’anno, che segui milletrecentotredici…diede cominciamento a far alzare le mura di quella; e poi vi fece fare sopra quel superbissimo coperto, che o nessuno, o certo pochi pari ha in Italia di magisterio, di spesa, e di bellezza, sotto il quale fece dipingere il fregio che fin ora vediamo; e nell’ antipetto dell’altar
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{153} Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 92. “Windows, painting, nave, choir, and other things, I, Daniel the pauper of Christ offer to you Christ.”
Despite this tradition, it is perhaps more accurate, to view the projects of the fourteenth century as part of a continued enterprise rather than an individual campaign tied solely to the patronage of Castelbarco and direction of Friar Gusmerio, and the following sections will explore this further. While evidence demonstrates that these two individuals played important roles in the fourteenth-century program, the collective gifts of numerous other, less well-documented individuals were also essential components for the completion of the renovations. The influences of Castelbarco and other patrons on these modifications are considered below.

5.4.4 The Fourteenth-Century Documentation

Despite the fact that the Franciscan community witnessed a surge in lay donations and bequests in the first half of the fourteenth century, records that specifically refer to the construction program are virtually nonexistent. In her testament of July 6, 1331, a certain Ziglia left the community 20 lire “pro redificando et aptando dictam ecclesiam.” This reveals that some of the renovation projects were still underway at this time. In 1339, the will of military-noble Bailardino donated 500 lire to the Franciscans to use for the church, the convent, or other necessities, but without a specific reference to construction, one cannot determine if this large sum was intended for the advancement or completion of works, general maintenance, or other uses.

156 Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie, I, 625. Dalla Corte appears to have instigated the tradition that links most of the works to the patronage of Castelbarco. Similar conclusions appear in the works of Biancolini (Notizie storiche V, 332), Da Persico (Descrizione, 190), and Belviglieri (Guida alle chiese, 149), and more recently, Suitner, “L’architettura,” 582-584. See also Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 33-70.
158 ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini, reg. 2, perg. 17; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2112.
According to Biancolini, in 1345, a Veronese official granted an “authentic privilege” for visitors to S. Fermo (“in die S. Firmis maioris, cuius corpus ibidem requiescit”). Sartori has understood this privilege as a local initiative to raise funds for the final stages of the construction, but as the document does not specifically mention construction, it cannot establish with any certainty that building works continued at this time. Twenty years later, a plenary indulgence of 1365 awarded to visitors to S. Fermo on various feast days included a “bonus” forty days of purgatorial relief for those contributing “ad fabricam, luminarium, ornamenta, et alia dicte Ecclesie necessaria manus porreixerint adiutrices.” Sartori noted that this indulgence was intended to raise funds for the decoration (“ornamenta”) of the church rather than its construction; however, the specific reference to “fabricam” requires consideration with regard to building chronology.

As later structures and fresco painting conceal an extensive portion of the architectural fabric, parts of the building are impossible to survey. Furthermore, many of the extant structural elements, such as column capitals, do little to help establish chronology. These challenges notwithstanding, some general conclusions about sequence and dating can be determined, and these are presented below.

5.4.5 The Fourteenth-Century Renovations

As noted above, the work that raised the perimeter walls of the nave and dismantled the Benedictine interior divisions may have begun at the very end of the

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159 Biancolini, Notizie storiche VIII, 33.
160 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2195. Sartori notes that this indulgence was intended to promote work on the “fabbrica,” even though the text of this document does not support this conclusion.
161 Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 325-326; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2197. The indulgence was granted on April 17, 1365 by “Lodovico Patriarca.”
162 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2195.
thirteenth or in the early years of the fourteenth century. This effort transformed the three-aisled upper church into a single, unified hall better suited to accommodate large groups of lay followers. In comparison to the east end, where there are frequent instances of irregularity in the brickwork, the continuous, bonded course masonry and uninterrupted cornice frieze on the perimeter walls suggest that the friars completed the elevation of the nave relatively quickly.

The window in the triumphal arch noted above, and another set of dripstones—this time on the western side of “Wall C” between the choir and nave (figure 113) and on the eastern side of the west façade wall—demonstrate that a wooden roof covered the new elevation of the nave (figure 129). Da Lisca proposed that the construction of this trussed roof nave began in the west at “Wall C” and moved eastward until it covered the length of the former Benedictine church. Later, when the friars extended the nave and built the façade, they continued the structure of the roof to correspond with the new length of the church. As Da Lisca suggested, work on the roof was probably mostly complete by 1314, the date on the triumphal arch, since it seems unlikely that the friars would have commissioned a large-scale decorative program without a roof above to protect it. The elevation of perimeter walls must have also been complete by this time, as this work would have had to precede the construction of the roof.

The Polygonal Apse

One early fourteenth-century project was the construction of the new polygonal apse (figures 93, 130). The friars dismantled the upper zone of the cappella maggiore

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163 Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 53.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 Both Da Lisca and Trevisan proposed that work on the apse was initiated in the early fourteenth century.
(the part of the fabric that coincides with the upper church) and replaced it with a five-sided polygon. The new, elevated brick apse includes Gothic architectural components such as lancet windows, conical pinnacles, and rayonnant gables; these elements will receive further attention in a following section. On the exterior, the slight misalignment of masonry courses and the visible seam between the cappella maggiore and the east wall “B” (figure 113) may indicate that these structures were built as two separate units, with construction of the east wall preceding work on the apse (figure 131).

The simple rounded crocket capitals of the interior supports can help establish a date in the early part of the century since the portal design of S. Maria del Gradaro in Mantua, executed by Veronese sculptors Jacopo Gratosoia and Ognibene in 1295, employs identical capitals with broad ridged leaves ending in curled hook-like tips (figure 132). The foliate capitals in the apse also resemble the slightly earlier crocket types used at the entrances into the lower church from the cloister and the public road, added at the end of the thirteenth century (figures 98, 124, 125). The supports of the eastern vaults in the Dominican church of S. Anastasia, also dated to the final years of the thirteenth century, utilize this capital type as well (figure 203). Although it is tempting to date the apse at S. Fermo to the end of the thirteenth century based on these comparisons, local architectural projects used this capital type between the late thirteenth and early decades of the fourteenth centuries, and indeed, the same capital design appears on the façade of S. Fermo, probably begun in the 1320s. Thus, while reasonable to suggest that construction of the polygonal apse was underway by the early years of the 1300s, it is

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167 Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 42; Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181.
difficult to determine a more precise date. Nonetheless, prior work in the east end—specifically the increase of the choir elevation and the construction of the east wall—demonstrates that the friars had established plans for, and perhaps even the specific design of, a new apse early on.

The Vaults of the East End and the Transepts

The vaulting of the choir and side chapels probably coincided with the construction of the polygonal apse. The structural work of the vaults was complete around the end of the first decade of the fourteenth century, as scholars have dated the corresponding decoration between 1314 and 1325; the reference to the “corum” in the dated triumphal arch inscription may also indicate that the new apse was complete in 1314 (see Appendix 1, 1.1).\textsuperscript{169} Prior to this, however, the friars had to first increase the elevations of the lateral chapels and construct the bisecting partition wall, illustrated in figure 92. This division created four distinct back-to-back spaces: the entrance to the campanile and the St. Anthony chapel on the north side, and the “Castelbarco” and Passion chapels to the south. After the elevation of these walls, the friars removed the temporary wooden roof over the choir and replaced it with quadripartite rib vaulting, a process that destroyed the lateral extremities of the frieze in the choir, as shown by “Arrow B” in figure 117.

The presence of this frescoed frieze and its subsequent damage generates many questions about the plan for the covering of the choir in the late thirteenth century, as it seems unusual that the friars would have decorated a space that was still under construction. Did the friars intend for this early wooden covering to be permanent?

\textsuperscript{169} See note 155.
Could the vaulting in the east reflect a change in design? Or, alternatively, did structural complications force the friars to lower the height of an earlier vaulting plan? It is difficult to speculate on these issues without corresponding documentation, although the prior construction of the triumphal arch may signify that the friars anticipated vaulting the east end from an earlier period: the triumphal arch was probably intended to transition between the vaults in the apse and the wooden covering over the nave.

The vaulting of the transepts probably coincided with the vaulting of the east end. The erection of these rib vaults almost certainly occurred after 1) the construction of the transverse arches and 2) the installation of the corbelling. Discrepancies between the size of the ribs and the corbels (the rib profiles extend beyond the corbels) indicate that the construction of these components was not coeval (figure 133). The earlier (perhaps by the end of the thirteenth century?) construction of the arch and corbels, essential components for supporting the system of vaults, may represent a “setting up” of the space for future vaulting. It seems reasonable that the friars intended to complete all of their vaulted spaces at the same time, and this plan may have had logistical and economic advantages. Many of the previous projects—such as the raising and/or construction of the walls of the east end and the transept, the reconfiguration of the apse, and the erection of the triumphal arch and the transverse arches—may therefore represent a series of “preparations” to ready the structure for future vaulting.

**The Extension of the Nave and the Erection of the Tramezzo**

Following the construction of the new apse and the vaulting of the choir, chapels, and transept, the friars turned their attention back to the nave, extending the length of the nave. This damage could also be explained by Da Lisca’s speculation that the Benedictine monks painted this frieze before their eviction from the convent. In this scenario, the vaulting damaged extant decoration, not the newly painted frescos of the friars. Da Lisca, *Studi e ricerche originali*, 37.
upper church approximately seven and a half meters to the west and absorbing the
Benedictine atrium in the process.\footnote{The length of the Benedictine upper church ended approximately at the present-day site of the Morano
pulpit, as indicated in figure 134.} Prior to and during this expansion, the friars
probably used the former Benedictine subdivision between the nave and the atrium (the
“atrium façade”) as an early tramezzo to divide the upper church into two distinct
liturgical spaces until they installed a permanent choir screen in the mid century (figure
134).\footnote{Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181; De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti,” 138.} The dating of the Martyrdom fresco scene on the westernmost part of the south
core corresponds to the edge of the Lignum Vitae fresco on the south wall of
the nave, painted between circa 1320 and 1330, following the installation of the structure
(figures 134, 135; see Appendix 1, 1.5).\footnote{De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti,” 138-139. See also “La prima decorazione,” 206-212.}
The structure was considerable enough to
incorporate altars and tombs within its depth since the sixteenth-century testimony of
Dalla Corte noted altars, including the one commissioned by Barnaba da Morano at the
end of the fourteenth century, integrated into its fabric.\footnote{“Finché fu poi per accomodar la chiesa tolo via...insieme con molti altri, che sotto un ponticello, che
qua traversava, si trovavano; il qual ponticello era quasi rincontro laddove oggi è l’altare della famiglia Saraina.” Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie, V, 223.}
The final testament of the
patron from 1411 requested that the lamps at his altar remain lit, indicating that this
structure was extant by this time.\footnote{Archivio Sartori II/2, 2136-2137.} The design of the tramezzo at S. Fermo may have
been similar to the rare surviving example at S. Domenico in Bolzano, or Valenzano’s

Although the opening of the Brenzoni chapel in 1495 destroyed the tramezzo,
aspects of its design and appearance can nonetheless be determined. Based on damage
and discontinuities to the extant fresco program, De Marchi proposed that the west side
of the tramezzo corresponded to the edge of the Lignum Vitae fresco on the south wall of
the nave, painted between circa 1320 and 1330, following the installation of the structure
(figures 134, 135; see Appendix 1, 1.5).\footnote{De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti,” 138-139. See also “La prima decorazione,” 206-212.}
reconstruction of the screen in S. Francesco at Treviso, seen in figures 136 and 137, respectively.\footnote{176}{Regarding the screen in these and other Veneto sites see Valenzano, “La suddivisione.”}

A sealed-in opening in the southern wall above the present-day sacristy, visible only above the wooden ceiling, led Trevisan to propose a two-story \textit{tramezzo}, suggesting that this doorway allowed to friars to access the upper level for preaching and practicalities, such as lighting and extinguishing candles or hanging liturgical vestments (figure 138).\footnote{177}{Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181. Similar two-story designs have been proposed for the Franciscan churches in Treviso, Venice, and Bolzano and the Augustinian church in Vicenza, amongst others. See Valenzano, “La suddivisione.”}

The location of the door within the fabric of the wall and the seamlessness of the surrounding masonry demonstrates that the friars constructed this doorway as part of the same late thirteenth/early fourteenth-century project that increased the elevation of the nave walls.\footnote{178}{Ibid.} This suggests that the friars had established the location and design of their \textit{tramezzo} well in advance of its realization, further supporting the argument for the continuous and comprehensive character of the renovation program.\footnote{179}{That the \textit{tramezzo} was part of the early—if not original—Franciscan renovation plan is highly probable, particularly in light of Valenzano’s recent findings that attest to the presence of a \textit{tramezzo} in every medieval Franciscan, Dominican, Servite, and Augustinian building in the Veneto. See Valenzano, “La suddivisione.”}

The Façade

The construction of the façade coincided with or followed the westward expansion of the nave (figure 100). Da Lisca proposed that the friars began work on the façade in the early fourteenth century and finished the structure by mid-century; Perez Pompei supports a similar date of completion.\footnote{180}{Da Lisca, \textit{Studi e ricerche originali}, 63-67; Perez Pompei, \textit{La chiesa di San Fermo Maggiore}, 30.} Trevisan has proposed that its basic
form was extant by 1324. Others have suggested completion dates around 1350, or have proposed 1368—the year the tomb of doctor Avventino Francastoro was affixed to the front—as a *terminus ante quem*. Is it possible to establish a more precise chronology?

The frescos of the triumphal arch offer important evidence for dating the façade. The painted model of the façade held by Castelbarco includes crowning pinnacles, cornice decoration, framing buttresses, trefoil and ocular windows, and rounded portal similar to those of the actual structure (figure 139). There are, however, significant variations: the arrangement, shape, and size of the lower and central windows, the polychrome banding, and the blind arcades are all conspicuously absent from Castelbarco’s painted offering. These inconsistencies may represent alterations to a preliminary model or design that developed between 1314 and the completion of construction. Da Lisca has suggested, for example, that the friars probably added the lower arches of the façade—one of the elements absent from the fresco—slightly later.

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181 Trevisan, “Cum squadra.” Using documentation from the episode between the Franciscans and Servites in 1327, discussed in previous chapters, Trevisan has recently proposed that the basic structure of the façade was extant by the start of this controversy in 1324, and that work was probably complete by 1327, the date the final measurements were taken. His investigation produced two possible sets of parameters from which officials may have calculated the distance between the two convents, the first of which is most relevant for the current discussion of the façade. His reconstruction of these calculations suggests that the measurement occurred between 1) the exterior corner of the Guantieri chapel at S. Maria della Scala (under construction at the time), and 2) a point on S. Fermo’s façade, just south (to the right) of the main portal. His second hypothesis, however, proposes that officials calculated the distance between: 1) the southern interior wall of the Guantieri chapel, and 2) a point in the piazza of S. Fermo, approximately four meters west of the façade. Yet significantly, Trevisan also noted that any mention of the façade—whether new or under construction—is conspicuously absent from the documentation of these proceedings. The document of May 4, 1327 records that the distance between the convents was calculated between “inter locum sive cimiterium Fratrum Minorum et locum Servorum Sancte Marie de Verona.” This document has important implications for the piazza as a site of burial (an issue to which I will return in Chapter 7); the lack of a reference to the façade makes it more difficult to use this text (at least on its own) to date the structure. San Fermo: Le tre chiese, 11; Gaudini, “Studio,” 30; Da Lisca, *Studi e ricerche originali*, 65-66.

182 It is possible that the painted model of the façade was intended to be a schematic rendering of the church rather than an exact replica or model of a current or planned design. However, in my opinion, the model shares too many similarities with the actual façade to represent anything but an earlier design.

It is reasonable to suggest that by 1314 (the date in the accompanying triumphal arch description), work on the façade was underway, even if the initial plan evolved in its design. 185

Analysis of the paintings on the interior and exterior walls of the façade support a completion date in the mid 1320s. De Marchi proposed a date around 1320 for the fresco frieze that runs below the wooden ceiling, which would indicate that the structure of the façade was extant, even if its decoration was not complete, by this time (see Appendix 1, 1.5). 186 He dated the frescos of saints in the arches on the exterior of the façade slightly later, attributing them to the Maestro del Redentore between 1325 and 1330. 187 This analysis demonstrates that both the structural and decorative elements of the façade were finished by this period.

The Wooden Ceiling

Several decades before, the Constitutions of Narbonne had restricted the use of vaulting in Franciscan churches to the apse, and this prescription probably affected the decision to cover the new nave with a wooden ceiling. Although wood was a favored material because of its cost-effectiveness and primitive, humble quality, the intricately carved ceiling at S. Fermo, decorated with painted busts of saints along its perimeter, does not evoke these visual associations.

Scholars have proposed a considerable range of dates for the wooden roof. In the late sixteenth century, Dalla Corte ascribed the ceiling to the patronage of Castelbarco;

185 Trevisan suggested that this model represented an earlier design of the façade and hypothesized that work on the structure probably begun before Castelbarco’s death in 1320. Trevisan, “L’architettura (secoli XI-XIV),” 181.
186 De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti.”
Belviglieri’s nineteenth-century guide proposed a date of 1319.\(^{188}\) The Associazione Chiese Vive suggested a completion date around 1350, and Simeoni dated the wooden ceiling much later, to the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century.\(^{189}\) None of these authors, however, offers any evidence for their conclusions.

The absence of documentation that attests to the commissioning or erection of the ceiling makes dating this structure a significant challenge. A testament from November 16, 1333 records a bequest of 50 lire to the friars “pro copertura ecclesia et dicti conventus manutenenda.”\(^{190}\) Is this a reference to the ceiling? If so, its construction was almost certainly underway at this point, but it is impossible to determine precisely what “copertura” represents in this context. Insufficient records notwithstanding, some important observations help position this project within the larger scheme of renovations. Gerola, Da Lisca, and Trevisan noted that the construction of the ceiling occurred after the execution of the triumphal arch imagery, since the ceiling encroaches on part of the decorative program (this is visible only in the attic, as seen in figure 140).\(^{191}\)

Furthermore, the construction, or at least the completion, of the ceiling must have followed the structural work of the façade, since the east and west walls of the nave support part of its mass. The corbels along the nave walls that help support the ceiling are superimposed on top of the frescoed frieze that runs along this zone, indicating that the installation of the roof occurred after this decoration, which, according to De Marchi,

\(^{188}\) For Dalla Corte’s attribution, see note 174; see also Belviglieri, _Guida alle chiese_, 149.


\(^{190}\) ASVer, S. Fermo, reg. 2, 143v; _Archivio Sartori_ II/2, 2112; Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 183, n. 52.

\(^{191}\) Da Lisca, _Studi e ricerche originali_, 58-59; Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 178-179; Gerola, “Il ritratto.” Gerola suggested that the beams and the lower parts of the roof could have been installed earlier and therefore precede the triumphal arch decoration; the more ornamental parts of the ceiling (curving bands, arches with painted saints’ busts, etc.) were done later.
was painted around 1320 (see Appendix 1, 1.5). Da Lisca observed stylistic differences between the upper and lower rows of saints on the perimeter lobes of the ceiling, suggesting that these variations indicate two distinct workshops and periods of execution. He dated the more stylized portraits of the lower register to circa 1340, and proposed that the more sophisticated figures of the upper gallery are from the second half of the fourteenth century. Yet a discrepancy between the placement of the painted saints’ busts and their wooden trefoil frames may indicate that the painted imagery predates the wooden frames, which, according to Da Lisca’s reading, would place the completion of the ceiling in the second half of the fourteenth century (figure 141). This incongruity between image and frame may also suggest that this portion of the ceiling was constructed in an offsite workshop, and then installed at the church.

Based on the dating of the frieze decoration, one could conclude that construction of the ceiling began after 1320 at the earliest; from the analysis of the saints’ busts, however, it is also possible that the project was initiated several decades later, perhaps around 1340. Even Da Lisca noted the difficulty in dating the ceiling, observing that the project required “una fortissimo spesa e una lunga durata di tempo.” Duration and cost notwithstanding, his analysis of the fabric reveals a consistent quality in the wood and iron materials, which indicates that work on the ceiling proceeded at a steady and constant rate.

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192 In some places, the installation of these corbels has damaged the surrounding painting.
193 Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 59.
194 Simeoni claimed that these saints were painted before 1396, although he offers no evidence to substantiate his hypothesis. Simeoni, Verona: Guido storico-artistico, 247.
195 Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 58.
196 Ibid., 59.
The North Portal

Da Lisca proposed that the opening of the portal entrance and the corresponding platform and stairway occurred in the first years of the fourteenth century, but that the sculptural and painted decoration of the archivolts and tympanum happened several decades later.\(^{197}\) Although there are no surviving records of this project, some chronological parameters can nonetheless be established. For example, while the structural components of the platform and the physical aperture in the wall for the door may have been in place since the early 1300s, the friars seem to have completed the sculptural and painted decoration by 1363, the date that appears in the Crucifixion scene in the corresponding interior lunette (figure 142).\(^{198}\) Based on stylistic analysis, Simeoni suggested that the artist responsible for the interior fresco was the same painter of the faded Adoration of the Magi scene in the exterior lunette and that both scenes were executed at the same time (figure 143).\(^{199}\)

Stylistic analysis of the accompanying sculptural decoration supports this narrative. The Corinthian capitals of the trumeau and jambs feature stylized, feather-like vegetal forms evocative of bird wings (figure 99, 143). Compared to the smooth, simplified late thirteenth/early fourteenth-century crocket capitals of the interior apsidal supports and the entrances into the lower church, the complex textures and advanced modeling of vegetation suggest a later date. In the architrave, tightly twisting vines form roundels that frame acanthus leaves, evoking traditional *Lignum Vitae* iconography: the vine originates from the midsection of a reclining figure on the left side and terminates in

\(^{197}\) Ibid., 69-71.  
\(^{198}\) Ibid., 72. The original stairs were re-worked in 1523 into their present-day configuration.  
\(^{199}\) Simeoni, Verona: *Guida storico-artistica*, 243. The jamb statue of St. Anthony was added in the fifteenth century. See also S. Fermo: *Le tre chiese*, 47.
the mouth of a lamb on the right. Another foliate relief—nearly identical to the friezes of the interior—runs across the lintel. The striking similarities in style, treatment of foliage, and patterning between the lintel sculpture and the interior decoration suggest a close imitation of the painted decoration, which would date the lintel sculpture after circa 1320. These observations support the hypotheses that 1) the sculptural work of the portal occurred in the mid-fourteenth century; and 2) that this decoration preceded the fresco work (and given the potential for damage to the painting by chisels and drills, this seems a logical conclusion).

Da Lisca observed that many of the stone blocks used for the column bases bear some characteristics of Roman masonry work, and thus proposed that the Franciscans collected and reused Benedictine materials dismantled during earlier projects. Da Lisca also proposed that the corbel supports for the vaulted portico—two are carved as human faces and two feature simple floral forms—were originally part of a portal program in the Benedictine church because of their strong stylistic connections with local sculpture from the middle of the twelfth century, such as that at S. Zeno.

The portal program seems to feature other examples of spolia in addition to the corbels and column bases. For example, whereas the column shafts and capitals of the portico share identical designs, dimensions, and material, carved of Veronese marmo rosso, the impost blocks and column bases are fashioned from whitish-grey stone; this distinction in material is one clue that the imposts, in addition to the bases, may also represent Benedictine spolia. The difference in dimension between the larger impost

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200 Da Lisca proposes a slightly later date for the interior frieze (after 1325) based on a similar analysis, but I find the more recent dating of this fresco by De Marchi more convincing. Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 70.
201 Ibid., 70-71.
202 Ibid., 71.
blocks and the smaller capital profiles further indicates they were not specifically carved or commissioned for their corresponding capitals (figure 99, 144). The simple dentil molding of these imposts also evokes earlier decorative styles, further confirming that the impost blocks are not original to the portal program. I am also convinced that the four carved panels along the architrave base, which feature a wolf, horse, dog, and a human-serpent monster, are *spolia* from the earlier church (figure 143). The treatment of the dog and wolf in particular recall the twelfth-century canine creatures of the cathedral facade, while the fantastical beast corresponds to the more pervasive interest in the grotesque that characterizes elements of Romanesque iconography.

Given the volume of eleventh and twelfth-century sculpture that survives in the Benedictine church of S. Zeno, the friars’ demolition of the previous nave arcade, atrium screen, and west façade must have yielded an assortment of ornament and materials that they could integrate into their own construction projects. This use of *spolia* not only had economic advantages, but it cultivated visual links between the friars’ new church, the local history, and the architectural traditions of the city.

There is strong evidence that indicates that the construction of the portico occurred later, probably towards the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. Da Lisca’s restorations discovered dripstones embedded horizontally in the south wall above the portal: although now concealed with masonry, Da Lisca reported that these slabs extended approximately 1.2 meters from the wall and suggested they once formed a preliminary porch over the entrance.¹⁰³ Stylistic analysis of the Corinthian capitals of the portico columns also suggests a date after the end of the fourteenth century: the soft, naturalistic treatment of the foliage seems several decades removed.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 69-71.
from the mid-century stylized foliate forms around the portal. The decorative relief along the portico arches also features a more sophisticated rendering of foliage than the stylized and geometric design of the architrave relief, further supporting the erection and decoration of the vaulted covering occurred at a later date.

Additional evidence for a late fourteenth/early fifteenth-century date of the portico lies in the attribution of a coat of arms depicting the head of an eagle found on the boss of the vault and the keystone of the portico (figures 145, 146). The same eagle shield appears in the pediment of the façade of the local Augustinian church of S. Eufemio and both in the interior and on the exterior fabric of S. Anastasia. Significantly, the arms at the Dominican church include initials (figure 147). Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers including Dalla Corte, Friar Pellegrini, and Biancolini interpreted these initials as the letters “D” and “M,” and linked this coat of arms—and thus the parts of the churches on which they appear—to local citizen Domenico Merzari, thought to have patronized these sites from around 1320 until his death in 1323.

Few existing studies have challenged this identification and its related implications for patronage and dating at S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, although Biancolini did muse with some perplexity that the arms of the tomb of another Merzari family member, once installed in the cloister of S. Anastasia, were different that those on the exterior of the church. In the early twentieth century, archivist Zenti suggested that

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204 Ibid., 71.
205 See Chapter 6, section 6.5.5 for discussion of this shield at S. Anastasia.
206 Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie; Pellegrini, “La religione,” esp. ch. 4; Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 556, and VII, 173, 297.
207 B. Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 173. Biancolini writes “Se questi fossero parenti di quel Domenico Merzari, che fece una gran parte della Chiesa, no ‘l saprei dir io, mentre lo Stemma, che è sopra del Sepolcro è differente da quello del ditto Dominico sopra le imposte de’ volti della Chiesa.” One example of this continued attribution is the chapter on S. Anastasia by Dellwing (Studien) which attributes large parts of the façade fabric to Merzari.
the traditional reading of the initials was incorrect, transcribed them as “D,” “A,” and “N,” and hypothesized these letters represented an abbreviation for “Dive Anastasie.”

As Cipolla noted, however, coats of arms were traditionally reserved for family names rather than those of churches; moreover, this interpretation does not explain the insignia’s appearance at S. Eufemia or S. Fermo without initials. In 1905, Simeoni argued that the attributions to Merzari or S. Anastasia were incorrect. He accepted Zenti’s transcription of the letters, but proposed that they stand for “Daniele pezariol,” another wealthy citizen who was an active patron of these three churches between circa 1370 and circa 1425. The situation at S. Fermo seems to further support this attribution to Daniele. The eagle coat of arms appears on the portico rather than the portal itself, demonstrating that the patron’s contributions likely focused on this particular structure. The evidence that signifies execution of this porch in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century—a period that corresponds more closely with the patronage activities of Daniele than Merzari (d. 1323)—offers further verification that the eagle coat of arms belongs to

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208 Zenti’s hypothesis is recorded by Cipolla, but he does not cite any specific work or publication. Cipolla notes that Zenti was the librarian of the communal library (presumably during a period in the first few decades of the twentieth century, when Cipolla is writing). See Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 100.

209 Ibid., 100-101. Cipolla also notes that even if this would have been the case, the initials should be “D” and “P” for “Dive Pietri,” after Peter Martyr, to whom the church was officially dedicated.


211 Ibid., 9-10. The name Daniele pezariol first appears in records in 1370; wills survive from 1422 and 1424, and by 1429, Daniele was dead. Curiously, Zenti or Simeoni’s interpretations do not adequately explain the interlocking character of the “A” and “N,” the unusual cross that rises from the shared down stroke of the two letters, or the horizontal tract of the letter “A.” Moreover, neither Zenti, Simeoni, nor Cipolla have emphasized that the initials appear only on the shields at S. Anastasia; the letters are conspicuously absent from those on the Augustinian and Franciscan churches. Napione has recently accepted Simeoni’s reading based on surviving documentation that links Daniele to these three churches. In the year 1402, Daniele gave gifts of cash and property to S. Fermo, S. Anastasia, and S. Eufemia: on June 26, 1402, Daniele gave 40 lire and a piece of property to the Dominican community. In August, he donated money to the Franciscans (via the Clares) and in November, he gave the Augustinians two houses. The recent research of Napione has further confirmed Simioni’s theory that eagle shield belonged to the benefactor Daniele. See E. Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco: Da Guglielmo il Grande a Guglielmo di Avio,” in Una dinastia allo specchio: Il mecenatismo dei Castelbarco nel territorio di avio e nella città di Verona, ed. E. Napione and M. Peghini (Rovereto: Via della terra, 2005), 198.
him.

Even though the Franciscans erected the portico decades after they had completed the construction and decoration of the portal, evidence nevertheless reveals that the friars anticipated a grand covering much earlier. The column bases and the massive stone blocks below them appear fully integrated into the brick masonry, which suggests that rather than tacking these elements on to the platform as added “afterthoughts,” the friars envisioned a large, monumental porch as part of their original design for the northern entrance, the specifics of which likely evolved over the decades (figure 144). Indeed, the installation of the earlier slab supports this reading, and suggests that the friars required a temporary solution to shelter the entrance and protect the painted tympanum until they had raised enough money to build a more substantial, monumental covering.

For the lay community, the addition of an entrance to the upper church was perhaps one of the most important renovations made to S. Fermo in the fourteenth century, providing a more direct way for the laity to access the upper church from the busy road below. As I discuss in Chapter Seven, there is strong evidence that indicates the friars planned and oriented this new northern entrance to attract passersby travelling to and from the port and the market along the adjacent road, and that this monumental platform had an important liturgical function.

5.4.6 Summary of the Franciscan Renovations

The document of 1275 that specifically mentions work on the dormitories suggests that the earliest renovations focused on the friars’ conventual complex. By the end of the century, transformations to the upper church were underway: the friars raised

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212 This observation is based on the current state of this wall section, which has been heavily restored and damaged from the removal of tombs and other interventions.
the walls of the east end and transepts, constructed a triumphal arch across the interior, added new entrances into the lower church for themselves and the laity, and began to remove the Benedictine interior divisions and increase the height of the nave walls. By the early fourteenth century, the reconfiguration of the semi-circular apse into a five-sided polygon was underway, and this work probably coincided with an increase in the elevation of the side chapels and the construction of the partition wall to bisect these lateral spaces. The vaulting of the choir, new apse, side chapels, and transept, seems to have followed. Subsequent projects included extending the perimeter walls to the west, which ultimately required the demolition of the “atrium façade” and the erection of a new tramezzo, constructing a new façade and a wooden roof, and completing the northern entrance into the upper church. Bonelli observed that the Franciscans often resolved architectural and spatial problems with imagination and improvisation, and the renovation program at S. Fermo well exemplifies these qualities: figure 148 illustrates what the plan of the church would have looked like in the mid-fourteenth century.²¹³

The lack of documentation about the specific building works of the fourteenth century makes it difficult to determine a precise construction narrative of these modifications. The final text to mention the renovations is Ziglia’s testament of 1331, and given the dating of the interior decorative program, it seems likely that the friars had completed most of their structural modifications around this time, with the exception of the portico over the north portal.²¹⁴ The smooth, continuous appearance of the masonry frieze along the top of the perimeter walls and the continuously bonded coursed masonry

²¹⁴ For the testament of Ziglia, see note 157. As Da Lisca, Trevisan, and others have suggested, projects after 1330 seem to have mostly consisted of architectural and painted decoration. See for example Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181-182; De Marchi, “La prima decorazione”; Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, esp. ch. 6-7.
suggests a steady progression of uninterrupted work, thereby indicating that a large amount of work was accomplished quickly, a pace that presents additional challenges for dating individual projects or clearly establishing the order of sequential works.

My discussion of the Franciscan program has emphasized the ongoing, progressive character of these renovations, proposing that the works at S. Fermo were both conceived of and carried out as a series of interlocking steps beneath a single, continuous, and united “master vision” or enterprise. As I have shown, evidence suggests that at least in some cases, projects were arranged and ordered as sequential steps meant to prepare the structure for future works, such as the construction of the polygonal apse or the erection of vaulting. This is not to say that there were not deviations from the original design during the course of construction. As the decades unfolded, certain factors—such as economy, the influence of patrons, skills of the labor force, or issues of real construction, including structural problems and challenges, trial, and error—probably forced those in charge to revise and modify some of the initial design concepts and visions. The differences between the painted model of the façade in the triumphal arch and the façade itself, for example, suggest that the friars approached their renovations with a certain degree of flexibility.

While there may have been an element of “openness” and willingness to adapt and respond to certain factors inherent to the processes of construction, the consistent use of architectural and visual elements, styles, and cues indicates a deliberate construction of architectural identity. The fusion of the “new” Gothic aesthetic with that of traditional Romanesque forms and sensibilities seems to have been emblematic of Franciscan

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215 For a similar discussion on the construction sequence of the Dominican church in Florence, see Smith, “S. Maria Novella,” esp. 625.
religiosity and theology as expressed by the local community, an important distinction to which I will return in the concluding section.

5.5 Patronage

The donations of the laity—both large and small—funded the works of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Despite the numerous religious organizations in the city, the research of Rossi reveals that both the Franciscans and Dominicans were extremely popular with Veronese testators.\footnote{See the work by Rossi: “Orientamenti religiosi,” and “I frati minori di S. Fermo nel Trecento: Da un’indagine sui testamenti,” in I Santi Fermo e Rustico, 123-129.} Some of the most powerful figures in the city showed a specific or exclusive interest in the community at S. Fermo, including Guglielmo Castelbarco, Judge Pietro da Sacco, Vicar Pietro Occhidicane, Dolceto della Seta, and Doctor Antonio Pelacani.

Many circumstances probably affected a testator’s decision to donate to or be buried in a mendicant church. In Verona, individuals often lived in the same contrada as the mendicant convent in which they requested burial, indicating that geographical proximity to a church and frequent contact with its community were critical factors for directing the choices of local testators.\footnote{Rossi proposed that the tertiaries also wielded a significant influence over a testator’s decision on burial place, but in the case of Verona, this seems less likely given the documentation of this community, which suggests both the group (and thus their sphere of influence) was smaller than the those in other cities such as Padua. Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi,” 125. For studies on the tertiary community (discussed in Chapter 7), see the work of Gasparini, especially: “Movimento dei disciplinati confraternali e ordine mendicanti,” in I frati minori e il terzo ordine. Problemi e discussioni storioografiche: Atti del convegno, Todi 17-20 ottobre 1982 (Todi: L’Accademia Tudertina,1985) 79-114; “Il movimento delle confraternite nell’area Veneta,” in Mouvement confraternel au moyen âge: France, Italie, Suisse. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l’Université de Lausanne avec le concours de l’École française de Rome et de Unité associée 1011 du CNRS. L’institution ecclésiale a la fin du Moyen Age, Lausanne 9-11 mai 1985, ed. École française de Rome (Rome: Publications de l’École française de Rome, 1987) 361-394.} For example, in 1307, a certain Cecilia from the family of the Magistrate Albertino del fu Gerardino from the contrada of S. Fermo requested burial with the Franciscans, as did a woman named Lidonia who also lived in
the neighborhood. In this way, the situation in Verona seems to have been different from that in Padua, where Bourdua concluded there was little or no sense of loyalty to a particular neighborhood and that patrons were not especially concerned with establishing financial, political, or material ties within their own contrada.

As the decoration of the triumphal arch reveals, although there were numerous lay donors who contributed to the renovation program, Castelbarco is the most visibly documented of the S. Fermo patrons, and his contributions—along with those of his “partner,” Friar Gusmerio—are the focus of the following sections.

5.5.1. Guglielmo Castelbarco and the Franciscans

The portraits of Castelbarco and Friar Gusmerio in the triumphal arch decoration have led scholars to link the works of the fourteenth century, or the “second campaign,” to the partnership between these men (figures 127, 128 and Appendix 1, 1.3). Aside from this striking visual evidence, the connections between Castelbarco and the Franciscan community are poorly documented. As Bourdua observed, Castelbarco’s portrait evokes the kneeling image of Enrico Scrovegni holding a model of his own chapel that was painted on the west wall of the Arena Chapel in Padua only a few years earlier (figures 127, 149). Yet the image of Castelbarco must be considered within the more prominent and public setting than the private Scrovegni chapel. The Franciscan

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218 See at ASVr: S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. II, perg. 176 and S. Fermo Maggiore, b. 2, perg. 178. 
219 This may be, however, because S. Antonio housed relics of a major, contemporary saint, and people all over the city/region wanted to be associated with it; it thus presents a very different situation than the churches in other Veneto centers. See Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage.” 22. 
222 Ibid.
church at Lodi offers another useful comparison, this time in a mendicant context. In the south transept, patron Antonio Fissiraga kneels in front of an enthroned Virgin and Child and offers a replica of S. Francesco to the holy figures (figure 150). The benefactor, encouraged by Francis and a bishop, holds the church model outward to the Christ Child. Despite the visual similarities, the Castelbarco portrait in S. Fermo is remarkable for its scale and explicit position in the church, illustrating that his patronage exceeded that of a “typical” lay benefactor.223

Scholars have largely assumed that Castelbarco’s role—and the reason for his commemoration in the decorative program—was financial. This seems an obvious conclusion given both the iconography of the triumphal arch and the information known about Castelbarco’s personal wealth. Documents reveal Castelbarco as a man of great personal and family affluence.224 His family controlled a significant portion of the northern route of the Brenner Pass, and their power over this important trade route fostered a lucrative economic and political alliance with the Della Scala, a favorable relationship that must have influenced the appointment of Castelbarco as podestà by Alberto della Scala in 1285.225 Surviving records of the patron’s expenditures and assets indicate tremendous private wealth, including a sizable investment in the Venetian Grain Exchange and substantial bequests in his testaments for a family chapel in Trent, a tomb at S. Anastasia, altars in S. Anastasia and S. Fermo, a new Franciscan foundation near

223 Ibid.
224 The recent publication of Una dinastia allo specchio includes the most recent analysis and transcriptions on Castelbarco family documents, including Guglielmo Castelbarco’s two surviving testaments. See G. M. Varanini, “Alcune osservazioni sui due testamenti di Guglielmo Castelbarco (1316 e 1319),” 130-141. For full transcriptions of both these documents, see A. Vedovello, “Il testament di Guglielmo il Grande del 1316,” 142-165, and “Il testament de Guglielmo il Grande del 1319,” 167-181.
225 Varanini, “I Castelbarco dal duecento al quattrocento,” 17-39. The two families were further united through various marriage alliances, including Castelbarco’s union with Speronella Vivaro, a descendent of one of the region’s most loyal families to the Della Scala.
Lizzano, and other impressive donations.\textsuperscript{226} Power and affluence notwithstanding, his surviving wills from 1316 and 1319 also reveal a man of great generosity (or, perhaps, one who had much to be anxious about).\textsuperscript{227} Although originally from nearby Trent, his patronage of the local Franciscan and Dominican building programs and his request for burial at S. Anastasia indicates that by the end of his life, Castelbarco felt considerable loyalty towards and attachment to the city of Verona.\textsuperscript{228}

Although the date on the triumphal arch suggests that Castelbarco was associated with S. Fermo by the year 1314, it is difficult to determine precisely when he became an active patron of the Franciscan community and for how long this relationship continued. Further complicating the chronology of Castelbarco’s patronage of the Franciscans is a missing document from 1295 that, according to Biancolini, linked the donor to the financial support of the Franciscan convent in this year.\textsuperscript{229} Therefore, aside from the evidence of the triumphal arch, the only verifiable documentation connecting Castelbarco to S. Fermo are his testaments. His will of 1316 leaves two significant legacies to the

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\begin{enumerate}
\item Castelbarco’s first will (preserved in the Archivio Parrocchiale di Lizzana, ms. 13.2/2), was composed on June 28, 1316. His second testament dates to August 13, 1319 (ASVer, Mensa vescovile, perg. 17). In his testament of 1319, he specified 5,000 lire for a family chapel in the cathedral of Trent and 3,000 lire for the establishment of a Franciscan community in his hometown (see esp. 169-170; 173-174). For the deposit made to the Venetian Grain Exchange, see R. C. Mueller, “La camera del frumento: Un “banco pubblico” veneziano e i gruzzoli dei signori di terraferma,” in \textit{Istituzioni, societè potere nella marca trevigiana e veronese (secoli XIII-XIV) sulle tracce di G. B. Verci}, ed. G. Ortalli and M. Knapton (Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1988), 321-360, 325-327. For the altars and chapels in the Veronese churches, see the below discussion and note 230. For other studies on these documents, see J. Hormayr, \textit{Geschichte der gefursteten Grafschaft Tirol} (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1808), vol. 2, 600-620; and G. M. Varanini, “Il testamento di Guglielmo Castelbarco ‘il grande’,” in \textit{Gli Scaligeri}, 197-198.
\item I will return to this point in section 7.1.3 of Chapter 7.
\item Bourdua suggested that Castelbarco’s charitable attention to the mendicant houses in Verona probably reflected a range of motives, including reinforcing his connection with the city and his local allies, impressing his family and peers, sincere piety, and devotion to the city and its institutions. Bourdua, \textit{The Franciscans and Art Patronage}, 64.
\item Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche} I, 342. Biancolini, writes, “E che da Guglielmo e non da Aldrighetto sia stato questo tempio veramente rifabbiricato, da una sua carta di procura scritta nel 1295 a favore de’Minori Conventuali raccoglielsi che assegnò loro certi effetti di sua ragione da Bartolomeo Girardi e Compagni mercanti in Firenzi.” Biancolini did not cite the source of this information, however, and researchers have been unable to find or verify the existence of this document. See also Trevisan, “L’architettura,” 181, n. 40; and Bourdua, \textit{The Franciscans and Art Patronage}, 65, n. 94.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Franciscan community: 1,000 lire for the “adaptione et melioramento” of their church and another 1,000 lire for “dessignare unum altare.”

Significantly, the Dominicans at S. Anastasia received identical bequests. The situation three years later, however, is different: while his testament of 1319 records Friar Gusmerio and another Franciscan as executors, the Franciscans are conspicuously absent from the list of beneficiaries.

The traditional narrative of Castelbarco’s patronage, established largely by writers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries such as Dalla Corte, the Dominican chronicler Pellegrini, and Biancolini, names Castelbarco as the primary patron of the Dominicans at S. Anastasia between 1307 and 1310, when an unknown “misunderstanding” with the Dominicans caused the patron to shift his benefaction to the Franciscans. Beginning in 1310, Castelbarco supposedly financed a significant amount of the fourteenth-century renovations at S. Fermo until 1317, when he made “peace” with the Dominicans, thereby leaving the Franciscan project, and spending his remaining years as the major donor at S. Anastasia. Scholarship has maintained this account of flip-flopping patronage with virtually no revision. Analysis of Castelbarco’s will from

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230 “Item relinquuo fratribus predicatoribus de Verona predictis mille libras denariorum Veronensium parvorum que debent expendi in adaptatione et melioramento ecclesie sue de Verona et quod predicte mille libras teneantur et debeat ipse fratres designare unum altare in dicta ecclesia, ad quod altare continet et in perpetuo dicatur missa pro anima mei testatoris... Item relinquuo fratribus minoribus de Verona mille libras denariorum Veronensium parvorum que debeat expendi in adaptatione et melioramento ecclesie sue de Verona et quod pro dictis mille libris teneantur et debeat designare unum altare in dicta ecclesia, ad quod altare continet et perpetuo dicatur missa pro anima mei testatoris.” Vedovello, “Il testamento di Guglielmo il Grande del 1316,” 146-148.

231 See Vedovello, “Il testament de Guglielmo il Grande del 1319.”

232 According to Friar Pellegrini, whose narrative is almost certainly based on the nearly identical conclusions drawn by earlier authors, Castelbarco began to patronize the Dominican program in 1307 and was their primary benefactor for three years. In 1310, “stanco” of the Dominicans, Castelbarco changed his patronage to the Franciscan project where he remained for seven years. In 1317, Castelbarco then ended his patronage of the Franciscans and returned to the Dominicans, funding their project until his death. Pellegrini, “La religione” See also Biancolini, Notizie storiche I, 342-343, and II, 556; Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie, I, 625.

233 Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 556. Biancolini notes the occasion of “pacificatosi” between the religious community and the patron.
1316—written towards the end of the period in which he is believed to have exclusively patronized the Franciscans—reveals his simultaneous involvement with both communities. This early testament left cash gifts to erect altars in both churches and fund their respective building programs. Further evidence of Castelbarco’s patronage of the Dominicans in this period exist: two members of the S. Anastasia community, Inquisitor Nicolò da Pastrengo and Prior Giovanni da Mantova, appear as witnesses and executors in the 1316 testament, none of whom, incidentally, are friars at S. Fermo. Perhaps most significantly, the 1316 document includes the patron’s request for burial with the Dominicans.

The patronage choices of the 1316 testament not only demonstrate Castelbarco’s involvement with both orders at this time, but also suggest a special affection towards the S. Anastasia community. (In light of this favor, could the prominent Castelbarco portrait in S. Fermo represent a strategy to woo the patron away from the Dominicans?) Cohn’s research on patterns of testamentary giving from this period demonstrates that testators often left multiple bequests in their wills, sometimes to more than a dozen or so religious foundations. Given that Castelbarco’s overlapping patronage of both communities seems to have been part of this mentality to “diversify investments,” the traditional account of his vacillating between the communities in Verona appears both overly

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234 See note 230 for this text.
dramatic and misleading.\textsuperscript{238}

Most scholars have interpreted the omission of the bequests to the Franciscans in the 1319 testament as evidence that their renovation program was largely finished at this time.\textsuperscript{239} De Marchi, for example, proposed that the funds earmarked for the Franciscans in 1316 were intended to complete the work begun under his patronage, and that by the time his second will was written in 1319, these works and Castelbarco’s patronage were probably complete, hence the absence of Franciscan bequests.\textsuperscript{240} Napione also suggested that Castelbarco would not have summoned Franciscan friar Gusmerio to serve as executor without contributing to the building project unless the friars had already finished their renovations.\textsuperscript{241} In light of Ziglia’s testament of 1331 that specifically refers to construction, it is difficult to accept that the end of Castelbarco’s patronage coincided with the conclusion of the renovations, especially considering that with careful management, funds given to the Franciscans by Castelbarco during his lifetime could have sustained work on the church for several years.\textsuperscript{242}

The omission of the Franciscan community from Castelbarco’s final testament may reflect another arrangement. Napione and others have suggested that the painted remnants of the Castelbarco shield in the intrados of the arches in the “Castelbarco Chapel” probably represent the fulfillment of the 1316 request to “dessignare unum altare” in the church (figures 92, 151).\textsuperscript{243} As the 1319 testament does not repeat the

\textsuperscript{238} Bourdua too suggested that this narrative reads like a “tabloid tale” and seems over dramatized. See The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 64.
\textsuperscript{239} Others have suggested that by around 1317—the year of his “return” to S. Anastasia—Castelbarco’s patronage at S. Fermo may have already been complete. See for instance, Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 79.
\textsuperscript{240} De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 200-201.
\textsuperscript{241} Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 200.
\textsuperscript{242} See note 157 for this testament.
\textsuperscript{243} See, for example, Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 200; and De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,”
request the previous bequests for altars in S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, these structures may have already been installed by the time Castelbarco updated his will.\textsuperscript{244} Alternatively, Castelbarco may have given both the Franciscans and Dominicans the cash gifts earmarked for them in the 1316 will while he was still alive. It seems reasonable that the practice of leaving multiple bequests in testaments would have also applied to charitable contributions given during one’s lifetime.

Cenci has offered an alternate hypothesis, proposing that as one of Castelbarco’s executors, Friar Gusmerio would have controlled the distribution of part of the patron’s estate.\textsuperscript{245} Thus, according to Cenci, it would not have been necessary for Castelbarco to provide supplementary bequests to the building program in his will because he would have assumed (and trusted) that Friar Gusmerio would use his position as executor to “take care” of his community. The absence of Friar Gusmerio (or any Franciscan for that matter) among the list of executors of the 1316 testament—which incidentally included generous cash donations for the Franciscans—could support Cenci’s reading. Yet the inclusion of Dominican Friar Nicolò da Pastrengo as an executor in the 1319 will, along with the multiple bequests to the S. Anastasia community—admittedly most of which Castelbarco directed towards burial and funeral expenses, earmarking nothing specifically for construction—reveals that little is known of the scope of executor powers in fourteenth-century Verona. It does, however, appear that a certain amount of power and personal or communal benefit accompanied the role of executor, especially for a

\textsuperscript{214.}
\textsuperscript{244} Vedovello, “Il testament di Guglielmo il Grande del 1316,” 146-148, and “Il testament di Guglielmo il Grande del 1319,” 169-170; Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 200. The clause from 1316 that provided funds for the construction of a chapel and altar in the Duomo of Trento appears again in the 1319 testament, but records reveal that these projects were realized after Castelbarco’s death in 1320.
\textsuperscript{245} Cenci, “Verona minore,” 8-10.
wealthy testator, and in some cases, these advantages may have been substitutions for individual bequests. Without a better understanding of precisely how executors participated in contemporary testaments and the roles that testators assigned them, Cenci’s interpretation can only be speculative.

5.5.2 The Contributions of Friar Gusmerio

The details of Friar Gusmerio’s contributions are less clear. The friar first appears as the guardian of the convent in a document dated August 18, 1318; the following year he served as an executor to Castelbarco’s will. In 1321 (one year after the patron’s death), Friar Gusmerio, acting as Castelbarco’s executor, attempted to collect on an unpaid debt of 20,000 florins owed to the patron’s estate. (Documents note that the debtor made a partial payment on this occasion, and one assumes that they eventually paid Castelbarco’s estate in full; perhaps, as Bourdua suggested, this repayment was used to help fund the renovations at S. Fermo.) Although documents that link the friar with Castelbarco reveal nothing more than an ordinary relationship between a testator and his executor, their joint appearance in the triumphal arch imagery and the implication of the accompanying epigraphs, suggest collaboration in part of the Franciscan works.

Bourdua observed that the inclusion of a “regular” friar, as opposed to a saint such as Francis or Anthony was extremely rare in any kind of decorative cycle,

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246 Gusmerio’s father was a local burger and his family had a proclivity towards religious service: Gusmerio had a Benedictine sister and possibly an older Franciscan brother. See A. S. Bianchi, “Frater Daniele Gusmerio: Cenno biografico,” in Gli Šcaligeri, 462; Cenci, “Verona minore,” 7-17; Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 67.

247 This was a sum of 20,000 florins that Castelbarco had invested in the Venetian Grain exchange four years earlier. Gusmerio then moved on to other business transactions, including serving in the roles of procurator for the Clares at S. Maria delle Vergini (he received land on their behalf in 1332) and that of vicar of the Franciscan inquisitor Ugo d’Arquà in 1324. See Cenci, “Verona minore,” 7-17; Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 67-68, n. 102 and n. 105.

248 Ibid.
particularly in such a visible, monumental representation.\footnote{249} She notes that one precedent is the apse mosaic in the Lateran church in Rome, which includes two portraits of sculptors commonly identified as Friar Jacopo Torriti and his assistant, Friar Jacopo da Camerino (figure 152).\footnote{250} Although the mosaic apse cycle at S. Giovanni in Lateran is a focus of the decorative program, the friar-sculptors are only small figures in the foreground, and as Cannon noted, the accompanying inscription credits them with supervising, rather than specifically designing or executing, the mosaic work.\footnote{251}

Is it possible to determine more specifically the nature and extent of Friar Gusmerio’s involvement? As the research of Cannon and Bourdua has shown, the most common roles in the commissioning of decorative arts in the mendicant church were those of the patron or financer, artist, and supervisor.\footnote{252} Thirteenth and fourteenth-century records cite numerous examples of friars who paid for manuscripts, metalwork, paintings, and architecture, despite rules that prevented them from keeping or receiving money.\footnote{253} Cannon noted instances of Dominican friars storing money and jewels in their cells, owning property and possessions outside the convent, selling books, accepting money in exchange for hearing confession, convincing testators to bequeath money to themselves rather than their community, and sometimes even selling or pawning objects.

\footnote{249} Ibid.
\footnote{250} Ibid. There is conflicted bibliography regarding the identification of Torriti and his membership in the Franciscan Order. See the recent contributions of V. Pace, “Per Iacopo Torriti, frate, architetto, e pietor,” in Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz 40 (1996), 212-221; and A. Tomei, Iacobus Torriti pictor, una vicenda figurativa del tardo duecento romano (Rome: Argos, 1990).
\footnote{251} Cannon, “Sources,” 257.
\footnote{252} See the following works of Bourdua: “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage”; The Franciscans and Art Patronage; “I frati minori”; “The 13th and 14th century Italian Mendicant Orders and Art”; and “Committenza francescana.” See these works by Cannon: “Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy: The Provincia Romana, c.1220-c.1320” (Ph.D. diss., The Courttauld Institute of Art, 1980), and “Sources.” For a more general discussion on the Franciscan attitude towards labor, see D. Flood, “Franciscans at Work,” Franciscan Studies 59 (2001): 21-62.
\footnote{253} For examples of this, see the studies of Bourdua and Cannon referred to in the previous note.
belonging to the convent for personal revenue. The Franciscans were guilty of similar breaches: frequent legislative warnings against involvement with finances indicate that prohibitions against handling money were often broken.

By the mid-thirteenth century, worldly affairs and money had become a common and even necessary part of Franciscan life. Testamentary giving in Verona from this period illustrates this clearly: by in the early 1300s, testators had begun to single out individual friars—usually their executor or confessor, or a member of the family—as beneficiaries of cash donations. This practice meant that some friars could potentially amass a sizable amount of personal wealth, which they could use for artistic commissions. One notable example is Friar Jacopo Donati (d. 1327), the Dominican prior of S. Caterina in Pisa, who initiated construction of his convent’s new façade.

Records reveal that he procured the money for the work as well as negotiated the gift of

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254 Cannon, “Dominican Patronage,” 115. Cannon shows that Dominican Chapter proceedings attempted to control or regulate the holding of money by friars rather than strictly forbidding it. Since the Dominicans maintained a less stringent standard of poverty than the Franciscans, one might assume that the Franciscan breaches in this area were less severe. On the other hand, because the Franciscans professed to follow a higher degree of poverty, participation in these kinds of activities would have been more serious, since the handling of money was expressly forbidden in the Franciscan Rule.

255 Franciscan legislation addressed these issues: the Constitutions of Narbonne forbade valuable money, articles of gold, silver, gems or other precious material to be kept in the convents of the brothers which suggests these kinds of occurrences were causing problems (“The Constitutions of Narbonne,” 82-88). The 1337 Constitutions at Cahors required the two most important papal interpretations of poverty, Nicholas III’s Exiit of 1279 and Clement V’s Exivi of 1312, be read twice a year; the sections on poverty were required to be read four times annually. Similar rulings were passed at Lyons in 1351 and at Assisi in 1354, and additional references in the Franciscan constitutions note friars selling habits to fellow members for profit, copying books to sell, owning jewels or valuable objects, and allowing precious metals or other treasure to be stored in their convents. See AFH 30 (1938): 131, 161; AFH 35 (1942): 90; Erickson, “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and their Critics, II,” 113.

256 Erickson, “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and their Critics, II,” 113; Rigon, “Frati minori e società locali,” 273. In 1266 in Perugia, for example, a Franciscan friar consulted with civic authorities as an expert on money and market practices.

257 The role of confessor appears to have had the potential to be especially lucrative, as many friars who receive individual donations are recorded in this role. This tendency corresponds with the larger survey of Veronese wills of the thirteenth and fourteenth century by Rossi, which reveals that by the second half of the fourteenth century, there was a general increase in individual bequests to particular members of a mendicant convent. See Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi,” esp. 127.
marble from a local family.\textsuperscript{258} Would Gusmerio have been wealthy enough to help subsidize the program at S. Fermo? Records show that the friar acted as both confessor and executor to members of the laity, and on at least one occasion he was modestly compensated 100 \textit{soldi} for his services.\textsuperscript{259} Other friars at S. Fermo also received personal rewards for performing these duties. In 1312, Friar Nascimbene received a new tunic for his role of confessor, and in 1371, testators awarded two friar-executors 5 \textit{lire} for their services.\textsuperscript{260} If these records reflect a “standard” amount for a Franciscan confessor or executor in Verona, it is unlikely that the revenue from these roles would have been substantial enough to fund to artistic or architectural works. Moorman suggested that although some friars were able to accumulate enormous amounts of individual wealth from the confessional and the deathbed, this kind of compensation was unusual and noteworthy.\textsuperscript{261} Given his family’s moderate standing, even if Friar Gusmerio were to have supplemented his personal “income” from the convent with an inheritance, it is unlikely that the total amount would have been substantial or impressive enough for the Franciscan community to reward his contribution with a portrait on the triumphal arch.\textsuperscript{262}

Does an artistic role for Friar Gusmerio seem more plausible? Francis’s own dedication to repairing dilapidated churches set a precedent within the Franciscan Order for physical participation in architectural restoration projects, and he encouraged his

\textsuperscript{258} Cannon, “Sources,” 230-231.
\textsuperscript{259} A testament from 1318, for example, granted Gusmerio 100 \textit{soldi} for acting as confessor to a woman named Lidonia. August 24, 1318. ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. III, perg. 200; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2111.
\textsuperscript{260} February 12, 1312, ASVr, S. Fermo, b. 2, perg. 190; November 27, 1371, ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. III, perg. 262.
\textsuperscript{262} Friar Gusmerio’s father was a burgher, which suggests his family was probably financially stable but not especially wealthy. See note 246.
brothers to work with their hands, advocating manual labor as the highest sanctioned means for receiving alms. Subsequent Franciscan leaders also promoted this foundational emphasis on physical work: Bonaventure encouraged friars to develop skills and engage in manual labor to avoid idleness, and the 1331 General Chapter of Perpignan required friars not participating in divine offices to study or perform “honest” manual work, such as writing, painting, gardening, weaving, sewing, carpentry, or tailoring.

Physical work—including that related to the visual arts—was clearly encouraged within the Franciscan Order as a way to avoid the dangers of idleness.

For the Franciscans, a discussion of friars as architects or artists must be considered within the context of the Order’s clericalization. By the late 1230s, almost all of the friars entering the Franciscan Order were ordained clerics. Leaders granted exceptions to men who possessed certain technical or practical skills, and these individuals could join as lay brothers or conversi. In 1224, four out of the five novices to enter the English community of Cornwall were ordained clerics; significantly, the only

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263 In his testament, for example, Francis encouraged his brothers to assume honest labor (which would promote exemplary living) and to avoid idleness. He also pointed out that he had worked with his hands. See Francis’s “Testament” and “The Rule of 1223,” in Francis and Clare; Langholm, Economics, 149.


265 Langholm, Economics, 147-149, 159. Langholm specifies that the first surviving Franciscan Rule states that friars who “know how to work” (“qui sciant laborare”) should do so. In the Regula Bullata, this was altered to state that those “to whom the Lord has given the grace to work” (“quibus gratiam dedit Dominus laborandi”) should work “faithfully and devotedly” (“fideliter et devote”). According to Bonaventure, this meant that those who work with their hands must make sure that their labors do not distract them from devotion. In his First Encyclical Letter Bonaventure complains “certain brothers have succumbed to idleness…” and commands the “lazy brothers to work”; the Constitutions of Narbonne furthered this sentiment, ordering that the “brothers, both clerical and lay, be put to work by their superiors at copying books, studying, or other occupations at which they are competent.” See “First Encyclical Letter, 1257,” and “The Constitutions of Narbonne,” in Works of Saint Bonaventure.

266 The processes of the clericalization of the Franciscan Order are far too complex to be detailed here. For the purpose of the current discussion, it is important to note that by the mid thirteenth century, the Order was almost fully clerical and lay membership was discouraged. For further reading, see C. L. Landini, The Causes of the Clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor (Chicago: Pontificia Universitatis Gregoriana, Facultas Historiae Ecclesiasticae, 1968); and R. Manselli, “La clericalizzazione dei minori e San Bonaventura” San Bonaventura Francescano: Convegni del centro di studi sulla spiritualità medievale 14 (1974): 181-208.
lay brother was a well-known sculptor. The growing clerical character of Franciscan communities was “legalized” and defined in the 1260 Constitutions of Narbonne:

No one may be received into our Order unless he is the kind of cleric who has received competent instruction in grammar or logic, or unless he is the sort of cleric or layman whose entrance would bring renown to the order and be a great source of edification among the people and clergy…if it should seem opportune to receive someone outside the above norm in order to perform domestic tasks, such a one may not be received without urgent necessity and then only with the special permission of the general minister.

Thus, lay brothers who joined the order beginning in the mid to late thirteenth century were admitted solely because of a special expertise, such as building or sculpting. Of the one hundred and forty-four friars who died in England between 1328 and 1334, only nine (approximately 6%) were laymen, a figure that reflects the growing dominance of the clerical culture within the Franciscan Order.

Although manual labor was still widely encouraged by Franciscan leaders in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the nature of and motivations behind this work were fundamentally different from those originally advocated by Francis. Francis and his early lay brothers intended for manual labor to be a way of life for the brethren; the clerical friars conceived of physical work as an activity to fill spare time not occupied with preaching, confessional, or liturgical duties. As Pellegrini noted, the process of

268 “The Constitutions of Narbonne,” 76-77.
270 Artistic projects were not only a means of developing skills or avoiding idleness. In some cases, they generated income for either the convent or the individual, although the circumstances surrounding such transactions are often unclear. For instance, in the case of a Cambridge friar who received money for illuminating a book in the mid-fourteenth century, it is impossible to determine whether this money benefited the convent community or the individual friar. At S. Lorenzo in Vicenza, the modest payments received by friar-sculptor Nicolò for his work on the portals were used to purchase some of his personal necessities, and this provoked criticism. A letter by the supervisor of the decorative program, Friar Pace da Lugo, defended Friar Nicolò for receiving payment for his work on the portal: “I am very surprised that some people have complained about Brother Nicolò who has received provisions for his work. He worked for two years on the door both summer and winter; it was therefore necessary for him to have clothing and
clericalization of the Franciscan institution largely eliminated, or at least drastically changed the character of, the practice of manual labor.\textsuperscript{271}

Numerous records of friars performing architectural, design, engineering, and construction duties survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Art historians have variously described Franciscan Minister General Elias as designer, director, and visionary for the entire Assisi complex, while his colleague, Friar Filippo, is traditionally celebrated as the architect of both S. Francesco and S. Chiara at Assisi.\textsuperscript{272} The inscription of the apse mosaic of the Lateran church in Rome describes Friar Jacopo Torriti as an architect, mosaicist, and painter, and the instruments depicted around his body illustrate these roles.\textsuperscript{273} The necrologio of the Dominican convent of S. Maria Novella in Florence records, among others, a Friar Borghese del Maestro Ugolino “carpentarius” and a Friar Mazzretto, “carpentarius peritus et architectus.”\textsuperscript{274} Smith’s research on S. Maria Novella has proposed that the master builders were lay brothers, a conclusion supported by the entrance of at least thirty-seven conversi into the community around the time building

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\item[271] Pellegrini, “Territorio e città,” 29.
\item[272] Moorman refers to Elias as “supervisor” of building operations and writes that “Elias planned three separate but coordinated buildings [church for the friars, church for the laity, and conventual space]…the vast platform which had been prepared was adequate for a church and convent, but left no room for the second church…Elias, therefore, decided to place this on top of the conventual church, thus creating a magnificent structure.” Brooke speaks more vaguely of Elias’s role, loosely discussing his associations and involvement with the building campaign. With regard to Friar Fillipo, Bigaroni specifically names him as the architect of these sites. Bourdua however suggests that Fillipo’s principle roles more likely involved fundraising and other administrative duties. Mooerman, \textit{History}, 87; Brooke, \textit{Early Franciscan Government}, 35-36; M. Bigaroni, “Origine e sviluppo storico della chiesa,” in \textit{La basilica di S. Chiara}, ed. M. Bigaroni (Perugia: Quattroemme, 1994), 21-22. See also Bourdua, \textit{The Franciscans and Art Patronage}, 82.
\item[273] See note 250.
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\end{footnotesize}
began, most of whom were highly experienced and trained in the field of architecture. Cannon confirmed the contributions to Dominican convents by lay brothers serving as builders, carpenters, sculptors, stained-glass makers, and illuminators. Although friars seem to have most frequently worked on their own convents, occasionally others requested their expertise. In Florence, for example, a group of friars—including Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians—joined a committee of lay masters to advise construction of the cathedral. Records indicate that Friar Giannino di Marcoiano (d. 1348), a lay brother at S. Maria Novella described as “lignorum faber” and “carpentarius,” also helped with the structural work at Old St. Peter’s in Rome. In southern Italy, Bruzelius suggested that friars supervised building works at both S. Maria Donnaregina and S. Chiara in Naples, and that some of the smaller Franciscan churches of Campania may have been the work of itinerant friar-builders. There thus seems to have been, at least in some instances, an element of mobility associated with these workers and their projects.

In other cases, civic projects contracted friars, such as Franciscan Friar Alberto, who helped design and build some of the aqueducts and at least one fountain in Perugia. Documents record Friar Benvenuto della Cella’s involvement with the

275 Smith, “Santa Maria Novella,” 626, n. 34.
279 C. Bruzelius, Stones of Naples: Church building in Angevin Italy, 1266-1343 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 60, 158. Bruzelius cites the similarities in molding profiles as evidence for the presence of itinerant friar architects in the churches of Campania.
280 Rigon, “Frati minori e società locali,” 274; Bigaroni, “Origine e sviluppo storico della chiesa,” 21; and Bourdieu, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 81-82. In 1266 in Perugia, a group of “fraters Minores notos

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communal palace in Padua in 1307 and describe him as “capomaestro” for the construction program on the river in Piave in 1314; another friar, Giovanni da Treviso, supervised the construction of a bridge on the same river four years later. Scholars have linked Friar Benvenuto to the design of S. Nicolò in Treviso, and in nearby Padua, an Augustinian named Giovanni helped replace the roof on the Palazzo della Ragione (and then resourcefully re-used the discarded roofing on his own convent). In some instances, friars worked in conjunction with or under the supervision of lay architects or designers. Bettini suggested that the lay architect Leonardo Zise Bocaleca, whom he associated with numerous mendicant programs, including the designs of S. Corona and S. Lorenzo in Vicenza, S. Nicolò in Treviso, and the façades of S. Antonio in Padua, collaborated with Dominican friar Benvenuto della Cella (on S. Nicolò) and Franciscan friar Jacopo da Pola (at S. Antonio).

The research of Bourdua on the production of art and architecture by mendicant communities in the Veneto reveals the friars’ active involvement with the visual arts through a variety of roles. Records from 1339 describe a member of the Franciscan community in Vicenza, Friar Bonifacio da Verona, as “autentico maestro ingegnere.” Another friar, Alberto de Verona, helped build the Augustinian church of S. Eufemia in Verona, and Friar Jacopo da Pola is recorded as “suprastans deputatus ad fabricam in illo opera de aqua concucenda” is associated with the construction of a fountain in the city. By 1279, documents referred to Friar Deodato as “magister fontium” for his work on local fountain projects.

For these attributions, see Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 82, n. 78; and “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 47, n. 28. See also Cenci, “Verona minore,” 14; and Suitner, “L’architettura,” 561, 576.

Salvatori, “Metodologia di ricerca,” 66. Salvatori does not cite his source for this information.

S. Bettini and L. Puppi, La chiesa degli eremiti (Vicenza: Nerri Pozza, 1970), 7-10. Bozzoni has also advocated the theory of a “friar architect” who designed and built churches that catered to and expressed the specific ideals of his order. See Bozzoni, “Il ‘Cantiere Mendicante,’” 143-152.

See Bourdua, “I frati minori al Santo” and “Committenza francescana.”

Numerous scholars have attributed the plan of S. Anastasia to two Dominican friars, Benvenuto da Bologna and Nicolò d’Imola, who are associated with the projects of with S. Agostino in Padua, S. Nicolò in Treviso, and Ss. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, and Cesare proposed that the Frari in Venice was designed by an anonymous friar-architect. Bourdua also proposed that at S. Antonio in Padua, some of the local friars assisted in the workshops of secular masters: a document of 1264 cites a group of local Franciscans assisting with construction, suggesting that collective, physical labor may have also been a common occurrence.

As Bourdua has observed, the precise duties associated with these roles are unfortunately unclear. Even when a friar is labeled as the “maestro” of a project, such as Friar Andrea at S. Francesco in Bologna, or the “capomaestro,” like Friar Jacopo Talenti at S. Maria Novella in Florence in the 1350s, the exact duties or responsibilities encompassed by these positions in this period are unknown. The definitions of these terms also seem to be somewhat site-specific and therefore highly subjective: in some cases, the titles of “maestro” or “capomaestro” refer to construction activities but in

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286 Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 81, n.76. Friar Alberto da Verona is recorded as “superstes laborerii fiendi ad ecclesiam S. Heufemiae de Verona” (ASVr, Istituto Esposti, b. 85, perg. 4715). See also “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 16. With regard to friar Jacopo, Bourdua has noted that he could not have been the designer or architect of S. Antonio because of the late date of this document (1302); her observation is also supported by Dellwing’s proposal that the designer of S. Antonio in Padua was from Lombardy. Dellwing, “La costruzione del coro.” With regard to both Friar Alberto and Jacopo, see also Cenci, “Verona minore,” 14-15.

287 See, for example, Bettini and Puppi, La chiesa degli eremitani, 3-52; Gasparotto, Il convento e la chiesa; Sutiner, “L’architettura”; and J. Giadego, G. Ricotti, and G. Giordani, Informazione dei restauri eseguiti nel tempio monumentale di Santa Anastasia in Verona: Dall’anno 1878 a tutto 1881 (Verona: Collegio artigianali, 1882).

288 See Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 81, n. 76; “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 16; and “I frati minori al Santo.” Bourdua noted that a document of August 30, 1264 cites a group of friars working collectively alongside secular murari to construct S. Antonio: “…presentibus Benedicto murario…Zambono murario…qui laborat cum fratribus minorus et alis…” Significantly, she observes that nowhere on the church’s fabric are these friars commemorated for their work. See also B. Gonzati, La basilica di S. Antonio di Padova, vol. 1 (Padua: A. Bianchi, 1852), xiii, doc. XIV.

289 See Bourdua, “Committenza francescana.”
others, they appear to denote administrative tasks. While some did serve as architects or artists, the majority of friars associated with building works probably performed physical labor or administrative duties, as the research of Bourdua and Cannon suggests.

How can these accounts of architect or artist-friars contribute to a better understanding of Friar Gusmerio’s possible contribution(s)? The friars’ portrait in S. Fermo must also be considered in light of its accompanying inscription: the use of the verb “offer” (“of[f]ert”) followed by references to parts of the church (“vetras, navum, chorum”) could indeed imply that he played a physical role in the renovations; one cannot, after all, “offer” something that is not theirs to give. This evidence has led several scholars to propose that Friar Gusmerio was, in the words of Simeoni, the “rinnovatore della chiesa.” Gerola, expanded this interpretation, hypothesizing that the friar was the creator (“artifice”) of the architectural projects (specifically those of the nave and apse) as well as the decorative program. Cenci too suggested the friar served as an architect or the director of works. A potential challenge to the interpretation of Friar Gusmerio as artist is (perhaps ironically) the portrait itself. Unlike the friars in the Lateran mosaic, whose instruments and inscriptions portray them as skilled artisans (the figure of Jacopo da Camerino, for example, kneels with a chisel in hand), Friar Gusmerio is depicted in a pose of prayer rather than artistic activity. Furthermore, in light of the contemporary clericalization of the Franciscan Order, it seems unlikely that the guardian of a convent—an important, clerical role—would have been trained in architecture or decorative arts, as lay brothers most commonly practiced these skills. Given the growing

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290 Ibid.
clerical culture within the Franciscan Order, Friar Gusmerio’s position as guardian and
the absence of visual evidence to support artistic involvement in these works, an artistic
or architectural role seems less likely.294

A possible parallel to Gusmerio’s role may lie in the better-documented portal
program of S. Lorenzo in nearby Vicenza, executed between 1342 and 1345 (figures 153,
154).295 The Franciscan community appointed local Friar Pace da Lugo to supervise the
project and assigned him three assistants, friars Nicolò, Jacopo, and Domenico.296
Documents indicate that Friar Pace’s responsibilities included tasks such as: 1) managing
the works, including collaborating with the master sculptor, Andriolo de Santi and his
workshop; 2) procuring the stone and other materials; 3) acquiring funding from the
patron, Pietro Nan da Maranno; and 4) work-related travel, as the artist and the executors
of Pietro’s estate lived in Venice.297 Bourdua suggested that Friar Pace may have
collaborated with both the artist and the patron on parts of the portal project: records
show that friar and sculptor worked together to set the prices of the sculpted works, and
that Friar Pace was an executor to Pietro’s will of 1340, which could suggest a personal
relationship.298 The friar’s interactions with both the patron and artist signify his
involvement with the program from its financing to its completion, and a small
inscription on the portal honors his contribution.299

294 Varanini has described Gusmerio as the “partner” in Castelbarco’s building initiatives, inferring that the
works at S. Fermo were primarily patron-driven. The research of Cannon, however, indicates that even
though patrons paid for architectural works, they rarely had a say in their appearance. Varanini, “Alcune
osservazione,” 135: “Gusmeri, priore del convent Veronese di San Fermo e ‘partner’ delle iniziative edizie
295 This program has been well-discussed by Bourdua in The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 71-88.
296 Ibid.
297 Ibid., 71-82
298 Ibid., 86. Friar Pace is recorded as early as 1312 as guardian of the convent and witness and/or executor
to several testaments, including that of Pietro’s.
299 Ibid., 85. The inscription notes that the program was completed under Friar Pace as gift to the city and
Pace’s role in the decorative program at S. Lorenzo is more clearly documented, but the visual evidence of the triumphal arch indicates that Gusmerio’s contribution was more important. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that Friar Gusmerio performed many of the same roles at S. Fermo as Friar Pace did at S. Lorenzo, including locating materials, supervising workshops, and managing funds. Bourdua has proposed that Friar Gusmerio was the conceptual force behind and supervisor of the fourteenth-century renovations, providing the vision for both the structural modifications and the Franciscan-themed decoration. She observed that the decoration of the upper church at S. Fermo exhibits an overtly “Franciscan” message, which she suggested signifies a strong internal influence in its design (see Appendix 1). The cohesiveness of the thematic “Franciscan” program could suggest that Friar Gusmerio was indeed a creative force behind the decorative scheme and the architectural renovations of the fourteenth century, perhaps most specifically the “vitras, picturam, navem, corum et alia plura” noted in the inscription. These roles would have required collaboration with artistic workshops and builders in addition to procuring funds, which could clarify at least one aspect of the friar’s relationship with the patron Castelbarco.

paid for by Pietro. As Bourdua observed, the inscriptions at S. Lorenzo and S. Fermo lack a certain humility that might be expected from Franciscan friars: neither notes other likely contributors, such as the chapter, additional lay support, or in the case of Pace, his assistants’ names. See also Cenci, “Verona minore,” 13.

300 Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 86. Bourdua has observed many parallels exist between the patrons of the two projects: Pietro and Castelbarco had both amassed their fortunes from connections with the Della Scalas and they were both actively involved in political service for the ruling family. The two men were also related by marriage. It is possible that these similarities caused great competition between the two men, a rivalry that might have manifest itself in patronage.

301 Ibid., 65-70; Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 82.

302 See Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 33-70, for a description of these frescos, which include narrative cycles of the Order’s origins and founder, its current roles, themes of conversion, the Order’s position in church hierarchy, its missionary focus, and its general success. She proposes that the local chapter, led by Gusmerio, may have determined or directed the subject(s) of the decoration themselves.

303 Ibid., 69-70. Since some of the scenes depict historical events that occurred after Gusmerio and
Friar Gusmerio may have also been depicted in the triumphal arch decoration not because of his position of supervisor or artist, but because of his role as “intercessor.” Cenci has proposed that in the triumphal arch image, Castelbarco gives the church model to Friar Gusmerio, who, as an intermediary figure, presents it to Christ on the patron’s behalf. According to this reading, the fresco thus represents the friar as a “spiritual father” of and intercessor for Castelbarco, an interpretation supported by Gasparini’s suggestion that as guardian, Friar Gusmerio would have been responsible for the community’s spiritual and material direction. Like the image from S. Francesco in Todi noted above, the frescoed lunette above the tomb of Cardinal Matteo (d. 1302) at the Aracoeli in Rome depicts a similar scene of patron and intercessor (figures 150, 155). Here, the figure of Cardinal Matteo kneels before an enthroned Virgin and Child. Francis stands behind the cardinal, guiding the humbled patron towards the seated Virgin in a gesture of blessing with his left hand; Francis’s right hand extends towards the Virgin, appealing to Mary on behalf of Cardinal Matteo. An interesting aspect of Cenci’s interpretation is the unprecedented depiction of a “regular” friar as an intercessory figure, a role customarily reserved for saints, as seen in the corresponding position of Francis in the Aracoeli fresco.

The choice to include large-scale portraits of Friar Gusmerio and Castelbarco in the central decoration of the triumphal arch may also be read as a kind of “marketing campaign” or “advertisement” meant to stimulate a demand for the spiritual benefits or

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“services” the friars could provide for those who contributed to their renovation program. In addition to commemorating the patron and his role, the iconography of the arch decoration demonstrates that “investments” made to the building program would yield dividends of Franciscan intercession and Godly favor. There is a clear visual relationship of exchange between patron and friar, of financial offering in return for spiritual arbitration: the position of Friar Gusmerio on his knees with clasped hands in prayer illustrates the oblations and prayers the fraternal community could provide for a donor. I do not wish to infer that the friars were using their imagery outright to “sell” spiritual benefits, but the visible correlation between donations and salvation could not have eluded the economically minded lay public, particularly members of the professional or merchant class, whose guilty consciences over questionable business practices could be assuaged by donations to the friars.306

There are many possible explanations for Friar Gusmerio’s involvement in the renovation program at S. Fermo. A role of an advisor, a “visionary,” or perhaps even a spiritual intercessor seems most plausible, although without documentation his precise contributions remain open for speculation. What is clear, however, is that the inclusion of his portrait in the decorative program indicates he played a key role in the works of the upper church, as the accompanying inscription suggests. And given the proposed chronological sequence of renovations I outlined above, Gusmerio almost certainly enjoyed the fruits of his labor—regardless of what particular duties this may have included—before his death on May 25, 1332.307

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306 Both of Castelbarco’s wills, for example, donated sums of cash and property earned from questionable business practices. See Chapter 7, note 39.
307 Gusmerio may have been buried in the lower church, where his effigy slab-tomb is now installed vertically on the wall of the north transept.
5.5.3 Collective Donors

While there is no denying that Castelbarco’s patronage provided an important source of funding for the fourteenth-century renovations, other lay patrons also contributed to specific works, such as the marble pulpit paid for by Barnabo da Morano, the portico over the north portal, probably commissioned by Daniele pezariol, or the number of votive frescos along the north and west walls of the nave. Despite the fact that few documents directly refer to the renovation program, surviving wills reveal generous donations by the lay public, and the friars would have used these contributions to help fund their construction. Many of these donors were socially elevated, prominent individuals, including members of the Bona, Ciserchi, Banda, Bevilaqua, Menabuoi, Montorio, Rinaldi, Sartori, Zordano, Dalla Torre, De Parixio, Nichesola, Servidei, Da Sacco, and Della Scala families, and their participation in the Franciscan works must have encouraged the patronage of members of the middle classes, particularly those who aspired to upward social mobility. Although other patrons and their gifts may have been modest, the corporate power of lesser donors should not be underestimated: the collective sum of what may individually appear as an unimpressive gift was also a critical component in the execution, continuation, and completion of the Franciscan project.

I will return to the topic of the laity more specifically in Chapter Seven, but it is important to note that with few exceptions, families did not begin to commission private chapels or altars at S. Ferro in any significant sense until the fifteenth century. The now-faded Castelbarco coat of arms in the southeast chapel probably represents the fulfillment of the patron’s request for an altar in his 1316 testament, a bequest that was likely realized during his lifetime. Domenico della Torre’s testament of 1357 expressed desire to be buried “in loco fratrum minorum” and earmarked 600 lire for the
construction of his tomb and chapel, completed in 1394 (“ad faciendum dictum sepulcrum et capellam sexcentum libras begnatinorum non computando lapides laborates quos ipse testator laborare fecet”). In the mid to late 1390s, Barnaba da Morano also endowed an altar that, according to Dalla Corte, was located on the front of the tramezzo. Aside from these three examples I am not aware of any other records of private chapels or altars in the Franciscan church in the fourteenth century. This seems curious given the public support of the convent and its popularity as a site for burial in the fourteenth century, in addition to evidence that reveals that this practice was well underway by the middle of the century at mendicant churches elsewhere in the peninsula, such as S. Lorenzo in Naples, S. Croce in Florence, S. Caterina in Pisa, S. Fortunato in Todi, and S. Antonio in Padua. This “delay” may directly relate to the double church design at S. Fermo, as the addition of lateral chapels required unusually tall foundations in order to have them open flush into the nave (this is seen, for example, in the Madonna chapel on the north flank). Additionally, the space of the lower church may have also served as one enormous “burial chapel,” as I discuss in Chapter Seven, therefore making the addition of burial chapels less urgent.

5.6 Synthesis and Interpretation

The processes that accompany restoration—as opposed to new construction—created a unique situation in that the existing structure(s) strongly conditioned the ways in which the friars could build and expand. These restrictions and conditions notwithstanding, it seems clear that the friars used stylistic elements to express and

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308 December 14, 1357. ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, Processi, b. 527; Archivio Sartori II/2, 1114.
309 Della Corte, Dell’istorie V, 223. His will from 1411 requested that his executors continue monthly donations of oil to keep its lamp burning, demonstrating the altar had already been constructed by this date. Archivio Sartori II/2, 2137.
promote certain qualities of their local community and its mission. In this way, they created an architectural “identity” characterized by both complexity and “inconsistency.” On one hand, the friars wished to express their “Franciscanism,” or their status as a new religious order. At the same time, however, there seems to have been a desire to connect to the local history, both that of their specific site and of the city of Verona. These seemingly contradictory objectives are revealed through a combination of, interplay between, and experimentation with “Mendicant,” “Gothic,” and “local” (or Romanesque) architectural sources.

In the beginning of this chapter, I outlined some of the reasons why the friars thought it important to look to and incorporate elements of the local and the historical within their contemporary theology, and I will return to this point in the conclusion of this chapter. This section explores how this occurs architecturally: what is particularly “Franciscan” or “mendicant” about the design of S. Fermo? In what ways did the friars experiment with “Gothic” architectural forms and ideas? How do their renovations reflect or evoke local building traditions in Verona?

To explore these questions, the following sections analyze the individual projects of the triumphal arch, the apse, and the façade to better understand how the friars used these different visual cues and what they may have meant. Although the designs of other elements such as the exterior cornice decoration or the north portal also draw from various sources, the triumphal arch, apse, and façade are especially important because of their scale and visibility. Furthermore, since most of the Franciscan works were renovations, these three projects—although certainly shaped by the existing site and structure—represent elements of new construction. Each of these components presents a
unique and different prioritization and combination of visual styles and aesthetic
elements, well representing the larger range of influences. Exploring some of the visual
sources utilized in these projects can facilitate greater insight regarding the community’s
architectural choices.

Some clarifications of methodology and terminology are necessary for further
critical discussion. In the Introduction to this study, I suggested that there is no
recognizable genre of “mendicant architecture”: the convents of the friars are highly
individualized and vary according to order, region, and site. Nonetheless, there are
common trends, and features shared by Franciscan and/or Dominican buildings, such as
the polygonal apse or the projecting transept, although these tendencies may be more a
product of “regional sensibility” than a specifically Franciscan or Dominican aesthetic.
Lest the following discussion appear inconsistent with my initial statement that a
categorical “mendicant architecture” does not exist, the description of an architectural
component as “mendicant” (or “Franciscan”/“Dominican”) in the present context refers
to an element of design or decoration frequently utilized by the mendicant orders.
Despite evidence that supports the diffusion of a wider, international application of
certain architectural idioms, this discussion focuses on the sites of the Italian peninsula,
most specifically those in the Veneto region.

One final note or warning: stylistic descriptors such as “mendicant,” “Gothic,”
and “local” falsely present the complex and the nuanced as uncomplicated, and this is
misleading. Categorization implies simplicity, and mendicant buildings are anything
but; I use these terms to clarify and systematize my analysis, but they should not be

310 E. M. Gombrich, “Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and Their Origins in
83-94.
understood as either rigid or all encompassing. Furthermore, any analysis of individual architectural elements runs the risk of portraying these sites as a conglomeration of parts. I do not wish to present the friars at S. Fermo as “picking and choosing architectural features from a variety of sources, almost as if ordering from a catalogue,” a representation that is both void of meaning and removed from the inherent processes of design and construction.\footnote{Smith, “Santa Maria Novella,” 625.} While a certain amount of architectural “dissection” or dismemberment is inevitable in a study of sources and models, this investigation ultimately seeks to understand the visual criteria with which the Franciscans may have approached their renovations. Rather than exhaustively examine the formal similarities between buildings, I am interested in the \textit{types} of influences, pressures, and factors that were most instrumental in shaping the larger architectural vision of the community in Verona. Individual details and sources must always be understood as part of a larger initiative.

\subsection*{5.6.1 The Triumphal Arch}

The arch design at S. Fermo suggests an awareness of both Franciscan and local examples. The Romanesque churches of S. Giovanni in Valle and Ss. Trinità in Verona both employ triumphal arches as important visual and structural divisions between their respective wooden-trussed nave coverings and barrel-vaulted apses (figures 156, 157). However these earlier arches are smaller in scale and simpler in design, lacking both the dimensions and scalloped profile that characterize the arch at S. Fermo.

Within the context of the Order, the church of S. Francesco al Prato in Perugia may have been an important, early architectural source. Like S. Fermo, the church of S.
Francesco al Prato, underway by 1250, shares many similarities with mother church of S. Francesco, including a single-nave plan, polygonal apse, projecting transept, and vaulting throughout. Indeed, Schenklühn described it as “un’altra Assisi.”\textsuperscript{312} In the Perugian church, a significant departure from the Assisi model is the addition of a triumphal arch between the vaults of the crossing and the first bay of the nave (figure 158). According to Cooper, this arch represents “a significant break in the progression of the gothic vaults from the nave into the transept and would have provided a powerful framing device for the high altar below.”\textsuperscript{313} Did the incorporation of a triumphal arch in the Franciscan church in Perugia—a church that also shared many of the basic design principles with Assisi—encourage the use of this element in Verona?

Given its similarities in plan with S. Francesco in Assisi, it is reasonable to conclude that the Perugian church was an influential source, yet there are other Franciscan models closer to home, ones that, like S. Fermo, also utilize a wooden roof. The Franciscan churches at Brescia, Mantua, and Udine include triumphal arches that transition between an eastern system of vaults and a wooden covering of the nave (figures 159, 160, 33). The Augustinian church in Padua and S. Francesco in Treviso also employ triumphal arches, but significantly, their designs feature scalloped profiles similar to that at S. Fermo and in both instances they transition to lobed ceilings that are also evocative of that in the Veronese church (figures 16, 17).

Although local sites may have influenced the initial inspiration for the triumphal arch, the particulars of its design—the scalloped contours and the pairing with the lobed

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{312} Schenklühn, \textit{Architettura}, 56-59: “S. Francesco al Prato rappresenta in qualche maniera un’altra Assisi” (59).
\item \textsuperscript{313} D. Cooper, “Franciscan Choir Enclosures and the Function of Double-Sided Altarpieces in Pre-Tridentine Umbria” \textit{Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes} 64 (2001): 17 and n. 56. The presence of this triumphal arch was first noted by Cooper.
\end{itemize}
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roof—seem to be specifically Franciscan (and regional Franciscan at that). This combination must have resonated with the contemporary aesthetic in Verona since the later renovations to the apse of S. Zeno between 1386 and 1398 adopted an almost identical design for the triumphal arch there (figure 161). At this time, the apse of S. Zeno was also reconfigured into a polygon, which suggests that S. Fermo may have created a local “prototype” for the combination of a polygonal apse preceded by a scalloped triumphal arch.

5.6.2 The Apse

As the apse was the most visible part of the convent from the vantage point of the river and adjacent thoroughfare, its reconfiguration was powerful statement of Franciscan authority and architectural innovation. More than any other architectural feature at S. Fermo, the east end exemplifies the tripartite experimentation with and fusion of Franciscan, Gothic, and local sensibilities. The polygonal shape of the cappella maggiore, the unique design of the exterior elevation—which includes rayonnant gables and conical pinnacles—and the semi-circular shape of the apsidal chapels each represent different and specific decisions regarding aesthetics and design (figures 93, 130, 162).

The Polygonal Shape

Cadei suggested that in Italy, the polygonal apse design evolved from Northern Gothic architectural vocabulary, and may have first been used at the Cistercian abbey of S. Martino al Cimino around 1220.314 The first mendicant, or, more specifically Franciscan, application of this design occurred at S. Francesco in Assisi, begun in

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314 See Cadei, “Si può scrivere,”350-351. Cadei notes the absence of the polygonal choir in thirteenth century Lombardy, citing that churches that do have this feature (such as S. Francesco at Brescia, S. Giovanni in Canale at Piacenza, S. Marco at Milan) were renovated to include this shape later.
Its five-sided apse is both an early and obvious precedent to that at S. Fermo (figures 41-43). There is no denying that upper church at Assisi was an influence for some of the modifications to S. Fermo, and one stimulus for the friars’ transformation of the semi-circular, Romanesque apse into a polygon must have been to create a further likeness between the two plans.

In the second half of the thirteenth century, Franciscan churches of central and Southern Italy, such as S. Francesco al Prato in Perugia, S. Croce in Florence, S. Fortunato at Todi, and S. Maria in Aracoeli (figures 163-166), began to incorporate polygonal-shaped choirs into their plans. By the year 1300, this shape was a common substitution for the rectangular “Cistercian” and rounded “Benedictine” choirs that had previously dominated church design in Italy. In the Veneto region, the first mendicant church design to feature a polygonal apse was S. Antonio in Padua, begun in the 1260s and renovated in the first half of the fourteenth century (figure 18). Both Cadei and Dellwing believed that the apse at S. Antonio profoundly affected subsequent both mendicant and non-mendicant church design in the Veneto, suggesting that all of the region’s polygonal choirs are reductions or interpretations of the early apse in Padua.316 Although the friars in Verona almost certainly looked to nearby S. Antonio during the process of planning their own choir, the architectural sources for the design at S. Fermo

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315 There are many possible French influences for the plan and design of S. Francesco at Assisi, including Sainte-Chapelle, the Cathedral of Angers, and French episcopal chapels (such as those near Notre-Dame in Paris and Reims), among others. For a discussion of architectural sources (both French and otherwise), see W. Schenkluhn, La basilica di San Francesco in Assisi: Ecclesia specialis. La visione di Papa Gregorio IX di un rinnovamento della Chiesa (Milan: Biblioteca Francescana, 1994), esp. ch., 3, “Osservazioni storico-architettoniche,” 123-164.
316 Cadei, “Si può scrivere” and “Secundum loci conditionem.” Cadei suggests that the “importation” of the polygonal apse to the Veneto came via mendicant churches in Bavaria, such as the Dominican church at RatisBon (c. 1246) and the Franciscan church at Cologne (c. 1248). S. Francesco at Messina is also thought to have had a polygonal choir by c. 1250. See also Dellwing, “L’architettura”; and R. Branner, St. Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture (London: A. Zwemmer, 1965).
seem too varied and complex to be considered merely an “interpretation” of the apse at Padua.

By the mid-fourteenth century, the polygonal apse had become a common element of church plans in the Veneto, largely due to the mendicant orders. Beginning in the early 1300s, the Dominicans in Treviso constructed an impressive nine-sided choir at S. Nicolò (figures 54-55). In Venice, the Dominican church of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo and the Franciscan church of S. Maria Gloriosa di Frari feature six and seven-sided apses respectively, and in the 1330s the Franciscans in Vicenza reconfigured their rectangular apse into a polygon (figures 59-63).\(^{317}\)

In Verona, the contemporary construction of the apse at S. Anastasia must have also been a critical model for S. Fermo. Both choirs share numerous formal and stylistic similarities, including the number of sides (five), general scale and proportions, treatment of windows and supporting piers, and identical capital types (figures 87, 88, 93, 130, 167, 200-206). These commonalities suggest a process of visual exchange and communication between the local Franciscan and Dominican communities, and this will receive further attention in the following chapter. Later mendicant and non-mendicant projects imitated specific qualities of the Veronese apses, such as that at S. Zeno in Verona and S. Lorenzo in Vicenza, demonstrating contemporary appreciation for these designs (figures 161, 49-51).\(^{318}\)

While aesthetics certainly played a critical role in the choice of the polygonal shape, the design may have also featured practical advantages. A polygonal choir may

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have facilitated both liturgical practices and a functional arrangement of choir stalls.\textsuperscript{319} Cooper observed that by corbelling the shafts of the apsidal vaults directly above the cornice, the friars could place their stalls flush against the fabric of the wall.\textsuperscript{320} His research has revealed that this was a common scheme among Franciscan churches in Umbria, such as S. Francesco in Assisi, S. Francesco al Prato in Perugia, and S. Fortunato in Todi, and that this configuration permitted the friars to accommodate a retrochoir within their polygonal apse.\textsuperscript{321}

At S. Fermo, the vaults of the apse spring from columns instead of corbels, but the slender profile of these supports and their integration into the wall surface would have also facilitated the flush installation of choir stalls against the apsidal walls (not unlike the present-day arrangement of a more modern set of stall furnishings) (figure 167). This may have been another way that the friars in Verona modeled their design on S. Francesco at Assisi and other Umbrian churches with similar configurations. Since the spatial restriction of the site—specifically the location of the river and its adjacent thoroughfare—prevented the friars from expanding their convent to the east, the incorporation of a retrochoir within the polygonal apse would have held significant spatial and practical advantages.

**The Elevation and the Rayonnant Gable**

The rayonnant gable, usually embellished with sculpted crockets, is a common decorative element of thirteenth-century French Gothic architecture, as seen in the late twelfth/early thirteenth cathedral projects at Laon, Amiens, and Reims, figures 168-170. Architectural projects in Italy rarely employed these gables; notable and well-known

\textsuperscript{319} Cooper, “Franciscan Choir Enclosures,” esp. 30-32.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{321} Ibid, 30-39.
exceptions include the cathedral facades at Siena and Orvieto, where crocketed gables were incorporated onto these structures in the mid-fourteenth century (figures 171, 172).

This gable type was probably first used on an Italian apse elevation around 1290, at the Franciscan church of the Aracoeli in Rome. As the Roman apse was completely re-worked in the mid-sixteenth century, the medieval polygonal structure no longer survives; nonetheless, its appearance can be reconstructed from sixteenth-century drawings of the city (figure 166). According to Bolgia, the former apse of the Aracoeli was an important model for the slightly later Franciscan designs at S. Croce in Florence (begun after 1295) and S. Fermo (figures 173, 162). A preliminary survey indicates that these three Franciscan churches were the only Italian sites to use rayonnant gables in apse elevations in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. This suggests that exposure to a wider set of architectural influences may have shaped the aesthetic choices of these communities, or that they may have developed their own set of unique visual cues.

Why did Italian architecture never fully embrace the rayonnant gable? Was this element too “flamboyant” to emerge as a common feature of Franciscan architecture, which was supposed to emphasize simplicity and humility? Or did the overt visual association with the French Gothic style stifle its application on Italian buildings?

Bruzelius has suggested that there was “something about the Italian social, political, and

322 Bolgia has convincingly proposed that construction of the medieval apse of the Aracoeli began in 1290, and therefore represents the first church in Italy to feature Gothic rayonnant gables in the apse elevation. Bolgia, “The church of S. Maria in Aracoeli,” 288.
324 Ibid.
325 Ibid. Crowning triangular tympana are also found in the later choir of the Augustinian church in Bologna, S. Giacomo Maggiore (1311-1343), but its east end features a very different plan with an ambulatory and radiating chapels.
psychological climate, north, central, and south, that made the imitation or reproduction of northern gothic uninteresting, unacceptable, or politically unwise." At S. Fermo, the choice to embellish the brick gables with contrasting bands of tufa rather than sculpted crockets may reflect an attempt to both “Italianize” (or “de-Frenchify”?) this element and tone down its ostentation. The gables at S. Croce and those depicted in the Aracoeli drawing are likewise simple and unadorned, which could also support a deliberate effort to moderate, control—perhaps even “re-design”—the rayonnant gable in these Italian and Franciscan settings.

Even reduced and unadorned, the use of this gable type at S. Fermo, S. Croce, and the Aracoeli indicates a willingness on the part of the friars to boldly experiment with new and foreign styles of decoration. Whereas the gables on the cathedral facades at Siena and Orvieto appear tacked on as superficial decorative ornament, material analysis of the apse at S. Fermo suggests that the design included these gables from an early, if not original, point in construction. The integration of the gables into the adjacent fabric of the pinnacles, the continuous coursed alignment of the masonry, and the seamless juncture between the gables and lower wall structure support the conclusion that these gables are structurally unified with the apse, rather than retroactively added as embellishments.

Although the larger opus of thirteenth and fourteenth-century Italian architecture never fully embraced the rayonnant gable, it nonetheless became a popular feature of contemporary sculpture and painting programs. In Verona, the frequent use of this element may have stemmed directly from the design of the new Franciscan apse. In their local painted and sculpted versions, the rayonnant gables of S. Fermo are transformed

into a more ornate, more “French” expression of the Gothic. This transfer is well illustrated in examples from the church itself: in the polygonal canopy of the Morano pulpit (1396), the apse elevation of the church is exaggerated by the application of ornate sculpted crockets along the slopes of the crowning rayonnant gables, trefoil arches, and a central, pointed spire (figure 174; see Appendix 1, 1.5). A similar “Frenchification” occurs in the frescos of the nave, where various architectural settings are embellished with steeply-pitched, crocketed gables and slender elongated pinnacles (figure 175, 176).

The rayonnant gable was not restricted to the decorative program in the Franciscan convent. Fourteenth-century Veronese tombs sculpture frequently incorporates baldachins of steep, crocketed gables, as seen in the carved tombs of Guglielmo Castelbarco at S. Anastasia, sometimes alongside slender pinnacles and trefoil arches, like the examples of the sarcophagi of Mastino II (d. 1341) and Cansignorio della Scala (d. 1375) at S. Maria Antica (figures 177, 178). At S. Anastasia, a notable feature of the walled city in the background of the celebrated Pisanello fresco of Saint George and the Princess (c. 1430) is the polygonal apse of a church crowned with diaphanous, ornamental gables and pinnacles (figure 179). Plastic, sculpted rayonnant gables also dominate the architecture of the painted cityscape of the Cavalli chapel (1390s) (figure 180). The incorporation of these gables in the painted Dominican decorative program may seem unusual given that S. Fermo was the only site in Verona to include this element in its architecture, and for a contemporary view, these images—especially the apse elevation in the St. George fresco—may have evoked a visual association with the Franciscan apse. This, however, may further indicate a free exchange of visual references between the orders in the city.
The Local Romanesque Influence

Given the incorporation of characteristics common to contemporary mendicant buildings, such as the polygonal shape of the apse, and elements from the Gothic architectural vocabulary, like the rayonnant gables and pinnacles, the decision to maintain the rounded, Romanesque form of the apsidal chapels seems especially significant. Economy cannot be overlooked as a possible motive for this choice, but in light of the forthright use of Gothic forms in the elevation, this decision may represent an attempt to temper the more “modern” qualities expressed in the apse design with traditional forms. It may be useful in this instance to apply Trachtenburg’s theory of “active choice,” which suggests that building designers reinterpreted and played with antique forms juxtaposed alongside current or less conventional elements. At S. Fermo, however, there is not so much active “reinterpretation” of antique forms but active “preservation” of them, even in the face of a predilection towards the more contemporary idioms that characterize the eastern zone of the church. A similar conclusion can be drawn in the interior, where the flat, rectilinear surfaces and solid volume of the Benedictine walls help moderate the prism-like, diaphanous, and vaulted Gothic space of the choir.

A defining characteristic of Romanesque church plans in Verona is a semi-circular apse, as seen in the cathedral, which was frequently flanked by semi-circular chapels, as seen in the churches of S. Lorenzo, S. Giovanni in Valle, and Ss. Trinità, among others (figures 181-183, 86). Preservation of the original chapel configuration, as well as the shape of the apse of the lower church, visible below the polygonal Franciscan addition, may represent a gesture of homage to the architectural traditions and history of

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327 Trachtenberg, “Gothic/Italian “Gothic.”
both the site and the city (figure 75). The friars’ reuse of Benedictine *spolia* in the northern portal further indicates a desire to forge visual connections with the past.

### 5.6.3 The Façade

The unusual combination of materials and motifs on the façade includes elements from Mendicant, Gothic, and local Romanesque architectural vocabularies (figure 100). Its structural form recalls numerous Franciscan sites from a wide range of regions, including those at S. Francesco at Assisi and nearby S. Lorenzo at Vicenza, as well as the local Dominican church and its adjacent oratory, S. Giorgio (figures 184, 153, 216).

The upper cornice arcade of trefoil arches executed in white tufa is a motif used extensively in Romanesque architecture in Verona, as seen on the churches of S. Giovanni in Valle, S. Zeno, Ss. Trinità, S. Stefano, and the cathedral (figure 185). Yet significantly, this decoration is also shared by other mendicant churches of the Veneto, such as S. Antonio in Padua, S. Lorenzo and S. Corona in Vicenza, as well as those in more central regions, such as S. Domenico in Bologna.

Pinnacles are common elements of Gothic architecture in France, but are unusual additions to Italian facades of the fourteenth century. Two exceptions are the contemporaneous façade at S. Francesco in Pavia and the local Dominican oratory of S. Giorgio (figures 186, 216). (A possible early local precedent for pinnacles on a façade is

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328 The lower zone of the cornice decoration that features the brick design of interlocking arches also appears on Franciscan churches in northern and central Italy from the second half of the thirteenth century, such as those in Parma, Brescia, and Pavia. S. Fermo may have been the first church to introduce this motif in the Veneto, and the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century projects of S. Anastasia in Verona and the Frari in Venice utilize it as well. Above this row of interlaced arches is another cornice, distinguished by an unusual X and O design. This decoration may have been included as part of the project that raised the perimeter wall, but the presence of a horizontal fissure below the cornice may indicate that the friars added this later. This combination also appears on the east wall of the south transept, but the XO motif is conspicuously absent on the corresponding fabric of the north transept.

329 An identical cornice embellishes the triangular pediments of the eastern zone of the church, the walls of the side chapels, and a more steeply graded variation appears on the transepts.
the church of S. Maria di Gazzo from the mid-twelfth century, seen in figure 187; architectural analysis of the surrounding masonry suggests these were added later, but it is unclear if this occurred in the fourteenth century or during modern restoration work). Significantly, by the mid-fifteenth century, other Veronese sites had begun to incorporate pinnacles into their designs: conical pinnacles were added to the façade pediment and perimeter walls of the cathedral, and to the nave walls at S. Anastasia, although they were never included on the Dominican façade (figures 188, 209). It is possible that the pinnacles at S. Fermo had some influence in the application of these elements on both the cathedral and the Dominican church.

On the façade, the application of Gothic elements such as trefoil arches, lancets, and pinnacles are juxtaposed with features popularized in Romanesque architecture such as the rounded-arch of the portal, the flat surface, and the alternating courses of brick and tufa. Any attempt to evoke a sense of verticality by the use of the pointed, triangular elevation, centralized and elongated lancet windows, and the pinnacles is somewhat mitigated by the strong horizontal lines of the cornice and the polychrome banding. Significantly, the unusual or “original” qualities of the S. Fermo facade are imitated in design the later façade design of S. Bernardino in Verona, constructed in the first half of the fifteenth century (figure 189). The simple, triangular profile, the lateral buttressing, the decorative cornice, the articulation of the central lancet window and oculus, and the presence and placement of the pinnacles on façade of S. Bernadino directly reference the structure of the Franciscan church completed less than a century before.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

The use of new and traditional forms may been encouraged, either directly or
indirectly, by the Franciscan Order itself. The reuse of an existing building and many of
the friars’ renovation projects seem to have respected the Order’s architectural
requirements in terms of style and material. In 1316, the General Chapter at Assisi
approved a statute that required Franciscan buildings to conform “secundum loci
conditionem et morem patriae.”330 As this statute emphasized the importance of building
according to local customs and techniques, it may be possible to view some of the
Romanesque references and choice of materials within the context of this directive.331

As should be recalled from the previous chapter, legislation and practice did not
always coincide, and this too is true at S. Fermo. Cadei proposed that the restrictions of
the Narbonne Constitutions encouraged architectural development and innovation to be
contained within the zone of the choir, and this is supported by the unique design of the
apse of S. Fermo.332 Although it is difficult to imagine that the gables and pinnacles of
the polygonal apse at S. Fermo were what officials had in mind when they drafted their
legislation, the Franciscan design does not necessarily violate the Order’s rules on
architecture although it may stretch them to their limits. Other projects are more
controversial. Elements such as the fresco program and the additions to the campanile
are outright prohibited in Franciscan statutes; the ornate wooden ceiling, although
compliant with the Order’s preferred system of covering, is hardly congruent with the
intended sentiments of humility and simplicity. Although contemporary legislation may
have been a factor behind their design choices, it was by no means a central guiding

330 AFH 6 (1911), 527-536. This was a slight modification of a similar ruling passed by the constitutions of
Narbonne that stated “secundem loci conditionem arctius evitentur.” This requirement was reaffirmed in
subsequent chapter statutes, such as those in Assisi in 1279, Paris in 1292, and Assisi in 1316. See Cadei,
“Secundum loci conditionem.”
principle.

The Franciscans at S. Fermo seem to have been especially responsive to the idea that certain styles and principles of design could visually empower their communities. The friars were in a unique position: as the “New Apostles” they formed a new religious movement, but one that was also linked to the history and the institution of the Church. As relative newcomers to the religious landscape, they lacked the historical aura that characterized monastic orders such as the Benedictines and Cistercians; architecture was the most visible means of countering this deficiency. For the Veronese, the language of the Romanesque was synonymous with sanctity, tradition, and religious power. The friars used and preserved these forms during the course of their renovations to cultivate their own historical presence and legitimacy, not unlike their promotion of foundation legends featuring Francis. The need to connect with the local past seems a critical characteristic of the identity of the Veronese community, as supported by prominent representations of Fermo, Rustico, and Benedict in the Franciscan decorative program (see Appendix 1). This desire may have been a factor in the friars’ initial pursuit of the Benedictine convent of S. Fermo and probably governed the choice to preserve aspects of the Romanesque building (such as the lower church and side chapels), revive antique motifs and techniques (such as the exterior cornice decoration and polychrome banding), and incorporate *spolia* in new projects. These decisions reveal that “historicist” references—at least those still considered appealing, meaningful, useful, or economically advantageous—played a critical role in defining the architectural vision of the Veronese community.  

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333 Smith, “Santa Maria Novella,” 625. Smith proposed this criteria of historical influence with regard to the project of S. Maria Novella in Florence.
At the same time, the friars’ architectural choices reflect the desire to emphasize their new and unique qualities. As much as they wished to link their Order into the historic genealogy of Christianity, the friars adamantly sought to distinguish themselves from traditional monasticism, as well as parochial and canonical clerical culture. To this end, the community used elements from Gothic architecture, such as lancets, pointed arches, rib vaulting and trefoils, to enliven and update their church. Bruzelius has suggested that the friars required effective architectural statements of “newness” and authority, and indeed the concept of “newness” seems to have been an important guiding principle in the restoration program at S. Fermo.

Schenkluh and Romanini have emphasized the influence of a larger, “international” mendicant movement upon individual Franciscan and Dominican projects. For specific buildings in the Veneto, Dellwing observed a keen interest in and experimentation with northern “Gothic” elements, especially among the more ambitious mendicant projects of the fourteenth century. Conversely, Cadei has suggested that mendicant churches in the Veneto strongly conformed to local and regional architectural histories and traditions. The reconfiguration of S. Fermo, however, suggests that a single design could synchronize these seemingly conflicting models.

By fusing these various architectural vocabularies, the renovations to S. Fermo reflect what seems to have been an important aspect of their missionary character: to complement the existing physical, social, and religious landscape without being absorbed

335 Romanini, “L’architettura degli ordini mendicanti”; Schenkluhn, Architettura.
337 Cadei, “Secundum loci conditionem,” and “Si può scrivere.”
into it. Evidence suggests that they wanted to create, in other words, an architectural vision radical enough to express their revolutionary religiosity, but one that nevertheless remained rooted in the orthodoxy of local tradition. The grafting of new architectural ideas and forms onto established idioms formed a unique mixture of visual cues and references, one that was recognizably distinct, but—importantly—recognizable.
6. The Dominicans and S. Anastasia

This chapter follows a similar format as the previous chapter on S. Fermo: the first part examines the conventual site of S. Anastasia in relation to the geography of the city, surrounding infrastructure, proximity to economic and social centers, and issues of access and visibility. The second part of the chapter focuses on the architecture, beginning with a synthesis of restorations, interventions, and additions that have transformed the church since the fourteenth century, followed by formal analysis of the present-day church and conventual complex; an overview of the medieval decorative program is presented in Appendix 2. A historiographic account of studies on S. Anastasia provides a framework for my own scholarly analysis, which considers the both the sequence of construction and other factors that conditioned the architectural process. The final section of this chapter offers interpretation, analysis, and synthesis regarding the design of the basilica.

6.1 The New Dominican Site in Verona

In 1260, Bishop Manfredo donated to the Dominican Order a large, centrally located piece of land that contained the tiny parish church of S. Anastasia, the church of S. Remigio, and their associated houses and gardens (figures 22, 27, 190, 191). Although the original 1260 record of this gift was lost in a fire, other documentation verifies the community’s receipt and occupation of the property in this year. On May 12, 1281, Bishop Bartolomeo della Scala (1278-1290) reconfirmed the donation by

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1 Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 158; II: 552, 555; I vescovi di Verona, 59. See also Rossi, Nuova guida, 1; and Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 95. Alternatively, some historians believe the donation occurred in 1261. See, for instance, G. Cappelletti, La basilica di Santa Anastasia (Verona: Vita veronese, 1970), 9-10.

2 Salimbene mentions a fire in the Dominican convent in Verona, noting that the convent “burned down...and [the friars] were injured beyond measure for their books and chalices were burned up.” He dates this fire to 1283, which may indicate his chronology is slightly off or that yet another fire that affected the convent in this year. Salimbene, The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam, ed. J. Baird (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1986), 535.
Manfredo, noting that at the time, the Dominicans had possessed the property “per viginti annos et amplius.” In addition, the testimony of Biancolini notes an inscription at the former Dominican site of S. Maria Mater Domini commemorating the friars’ transfer to their new site in this year: “FRES VERO VENERVNT HABITARES S. ANASTASIA MCCLX.”

The new Dominican property was located along the bank of the Adige, between the Ponte Pietra and the present-day crossing of the Ponte del Popolo, with Piazza Erbe to the southwest and the Duomo to the northwest (figures 22, 27). One of the principal Roman roads of the city, the east-west Decumano massimo, which connected the Porta Borsari to the Ponte Postumio, bordered the site along its south side. The plot of land was thus in the center of the Roman city, off a major artery of traffic, and strategically situated near important sites of economic and religious activity.

Despite the proximity of the new Dominican site to these important points of reference, the area around the church was sparsely populated. As noted in Chapter Three, the medieval city of Verona was divided into five quarters, and estimates propose that in the mid-thirteenth century, the Quartiere Ferro, where the church and contrada of S. Anastasia were located, contained only 4.4% of the city’s population, approximately 1,800 people. In contrast, the Quartiere Maggiore, which included the convent and neighborhood of S. Fermo, contained 33% of the total urban population.

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3 F. Ughelli, Italia sacra, sive de episcopis Italiae, et insularum adiacentium, rebusque ab iis praecclare gestis, 5. Complectens patriarchales in Italia singularis dignitatis ecclesias, earumque suffraganeos episcopatus, qui in Foro-Julii, Venetorumque dominio enumerantur (Venetiis : Sebastian Coleti, 1720), 846; Cipolla, “Richerche storiche II,” 95. See also Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico-artistica, 47.
4 Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 552, 555.
5 The bridge no longer exists, but it crossed the Adige at approximately the same location of the present-day apse of S. Anastasia.
The estimated populations of the respective contrade further illustrate this population discrepancy: despite being approximately the same size, the contrada of S. Fermo had more than twice the number of inhabitants (477) than that of S. Anastasia (194).

Several factors seem to have accounted for this lower population density. Beginning in the mid-eleventh century, Verona experienced a significant building boom of religious sites, many of which were constructed in the Quartiere Ferro and its immediate surroundings. Consequently, the quarter and its neighborhoods contained a large number of religious communities. The Quartiere Ferro was also the site of numerous economic activities, many of which centered around Piazza Erbe or along the bank of the Adige: mills and their groups of workers, for example, had occupied the stretch of river that corresponded to the new Dominican site for over a century.

The location of S. Anastasia in the midst of zone dominated by sites of religious and economic activities may therefore have meant that there was little space available for serious residential growth and development. Indeed, the impenetrability of the city center seems to have forced the largest part of medieval residential settlement towards more “suburban” or peripheral urban neighborhoods like those of S. Fermo and S. Zeno. Despite the sparse residential population in the neighborhood, the new Dominican property was nevertheless highly desirable due to its location on the Adige River and its proximity to important thoroughfares and sites of commerce.

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7 Ibid.  
8 Miller, Formation, 22. See also Varanini, “Spazio urbano.”  
10 Varanini, “Spazio urbano,” 33. Beginning in the fourteenth century, however, there was a general re-settling of the urban center by aristocratic families moving from peripheral, suburban locations inward (like the Maffei, who moved from Castrum to the city center). As I discuss at the end of this chapter, by the 1400s there was a major residential transformation/revival of the city center (and thus area around S. Anastasia) by especially wealthy families, through construction of aristocratic palazzi in the center.
Little is known about the church of S. Remigio or the original building of S. Anastasia. Scholars have proposed that the present-day basilica of S. Anastasia coincides more or less with the original location of the church, although there is no real evidence to support (or deny) this claim.\(^{11}\) The earliest surviving mention of the church dedicated to the virgin martyr Anastasia is October 20, 890 (“actum Verona ad ecclesiam Sanctae Anastasiae”).\(^{12}\) The next reference to S. Anastasia is 1082 and notes the presence of an “archipresbiter, custos et rector;” other early documents confirm its status as a parish church, consisting of a small church building, courtyard, gardens, and a *domus* for the clerics.\(^{13}\) Although nothing survives of the original building, it was probably small and perhaps in poor condition, since at the end of the thirteenth century the Dominicans began to entirely reconstruct, rather than renovate, the antiquated building. Although their *ex novo* building project would have eventually razed all existing structures, the friars almost certainly used some of these old buildings prior to and during the construction of their new complex.

### 6.2 Restorations, Interventions, and Problems of Dating

Evidence—both material and textual—clearly demonstrates that the construction of S. Anastasia occurred in two campaigns spanning a total of more than one hundred years. The friars began work on their new church building towards the end of the thirteenth century, but by the middle of the fourteenth century, work had come to a standstill and the structure remained largely incomplete.\(^ {14}\) As construction did not resume in any major capacity until the early fifteenth century, only a portion

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\(^{11}\) See Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 1; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 92. According to tradition, the chapel formerly dedicated to St. Anastasia but presently known as the Cappella del Crocefisso—located on the south side of the church, just before the transept—is thought to correspond with the apse of the primitive church of S. Anastasia.

\(^{12}\) Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 275, n. 2.

\(^{13}\) May 12, 1082. Ibid., 275, n. 3, and 276. According to Cipolla, the site functioned as a parish church until the 1220s. See also Biancolini, *Notizie storiche* II, 552.

\(^{14}\) See section 6.5.7 of this chapter.
of the present-day church dates to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and this chapter primarily focuses on these parts of the building. Although the following sections will consider these phases and their supporting documentation in detail, this chronology provides a critical framework for the following discussion of restorations to the site. In the cases of most fourteenth-century mendicant churches, later projects modified a relatively “complete” church by attaching chapels, altars, and other architectural appendages to its corpus “like barnacles to a pier.”\footnote{Bruzelius, “The Dead come to Town,” 210. Bruzelius uses this phrase with regard to burial, to describe the “sense of medieval churches as encrusted inside and out with the paraphernalia of death,” but this analogy also visually represents the additive process of mendicant building.} At S. Anastasia, however, the friars constructed many of these components as part of the fifteenth-century campaign that “completed” their church, rather than retroactively adding them to or expanding the fabric of a finished structure. These fifteenth-century projects thus do not fit well under headings of “interventions” or “restorations” because of their coeval relationship with the completion of the building. Nonetheless, these works of the second campaign must be viewed apart from the “original” design or plan, particularly since this phase of construction was largely managed by the city rather than the friars, and may reflect a significant change from the initial thirteenth and fourteenth-century vision, as I will discuss below.

Significantly, many of the works of the later campaign erased or compromised earlier fabric. When construction resumed in the fifteenth century, individuals began to commission private chapels, altars, and sepulchers at the Dominican church, a practice that continued into the early nineteenth century.\footnote{Early project included the large Cappella Giusti, the Cappella Crocefisso, and the Cenquego, Miniscalchi, Bonaleri, and Maffei altars.} Many of these projects were constructed along the interior walls of the nave, and some of them required the demolition of earlier fourteenth-century altars and decoration. In other cases, these additions sealed up the windows and doors of the exterior or required outward
extensions of the original walls to create new devotional spaces.

Here also the rulings of the Council of Trent instigated a series of changes in the interior, the most dramatic being the removal of the *tramezzo*, which is discussed in detail in a following section. Under the Napoleonic suppression, S. Anastasia was transformed into a parish church, and the conventual buildings of the former monastic complex were appropriated to serve new, civic functions. In 1807, for example, the north cloister was renovated into a public *liceo*, and by the second half of the nineteenth century, the southern cloister was operating as an orphanage. By the 1960s, this asylum had been converted into a music conservatory.

S. Anastasia has also been subjected to numerous restoration programs, beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing to the present day. From 1878 to 1881, the Commissione Conservatrice dei Monumenti d’Anticità e Belle Arte enlisted local engineer Giuseppe Manganotti to lead restoration efforts that focused on, among other tasks, repairing the roof, exterior walls, and campanile, and systematizing the interior pavement. As at S. Fermo, the apse at S. Anastasia received significant attention under these works. Over the course of the previous centuries, buildings had been erected against the exterior of the *cappella maggiore* and the side chapels (figure 192). To restore the east end back to its “original” medieval arrangement, workers demolished the contiguous structures, reopened the corresponding windows, and repaired and replaced the brickwork of the exterior wall. Later bombardments of

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17 A photograph of the Castelbarco tomb outside the convent from 1870 (attributed to Riccardo Lozze, from the archives of the Soprintendenza) shows a sign outside the entrance to the cloister that reads “Asili di carità per l’infanzia.” Cipolla also refers to this in “Ricerche storiche I,” 286.
18 Correspondence between the Sindico and Soprintendenza of Verona from April 2, 1962 discusses the restoration of the “saletta trecentesca scoperta nella ex sede della Bentegodi adiacente ad uno dei choistri di Sta. Anastasia” and indicate plans to use the space as a “liceo musicale.” Archives of the Soprintendenza, Verona.
19 Indeed, an extensive cleaning and repair of the façade and interior has been underway during the last seven years.
20 Biadego, Rigotti, and Giordani, *Informazione dei restauri*. These works also repaired and cleaned artworks in addition to addressing structural concerns.
21 Ibid., 19-20.
World War II severely damaged parts of the nave, apse, façade, and campanile, and repair of some of these structures began as early as 1945.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite these numerous and significant changes, parts of the medieval fabric of the former Dominican church are remarkably well preserved. This level of conservation, combined with the primary textual documentation on the order in Verona—which, unfortunately, is less complete than that which survives on the Franciscans—allows for a partial reconstruction of the building narrative, including issues of patronage.

\textbf{6.3 Formal Analysis}

\textbf{6.3.1 A Note on Construction Materials}

The basilica of S. Anastasia is constructed almost entirely of brick. Surviving portions of the fourteenth-century north cloister reveal that the Dominicans used alternating bands of brick and tufa for some of their works, although this seems to have been restricted to the conventual buildings, including the cloister (figure 193).\textsuperscript{23}

Exterior variations in masonry distinguish the work completed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from the later fifteenth-century campaign. The fabric of the earlier work—visible for example in the east end and on the lower half of the elevation of the nave walls—utilizes bricks similar in dimension and composition to the “Franciscan” bricks at S. Fermo. These bricks measure approximately 6.5 x 13 x 27 centimeters, and the course, rough texture and extensive pitting of the outer surfaces indicates low quality. These preliminary observations suggest that the masonry used for the Franciscan renovations and the first campaign at S. Anastasia

\textsuperscript{22} These works were partially subsidized by the “Governo Militare Alleato,” as noted in letter from the local Soprintendenza to S. Anastasia dated to October 6, 1945. Archives of the Soprintendenza, Verona.

\textsuperscript{23} Polychrome banding may have also been used in the construction of some of the other fraternal buildings such as the refectory or the dormitory, none of which survive.
came from the same local brick kiln. The mortar used in this part of the wall fabric contains a considerable amount of sand and stone particles.

The upper portion of the perimeter nave wall was constructed in the fifteenth century: the overall coloring of the masonry of the later campaign is noticeably lighter than the earlier, darker brickwork below, as seen in figure 208. The later bricks also appear to be of higher quality, as the sizes of sand and clay granules are finer and the overall texture more even. Whereas these bricks have approximately the same dimensions as the earlier ones, the mortar joints are visibly thicker. Areas of repair notwithstanding, the masonry of both campaigns follows precise horizontal courses of alternating headers and stretchers.

6.3.2 The Present-Day Church

6.3.2.1 The Interior

The church of S. Anastasia is a building of enormous proportions, both in breadth and height (figures 194, 195). It features a Latin cross plan 87.5 meters long with a nave, two aisles, a crossing, and a projecting transept. Six pairs of robust columns, 4.3 meters in circumference and approximately 11 meters tall, divide the interior into six bays and separate the volume of the wider central nave from the narrower side aisles. Stacked drums of Veronese marmo rosso are used for the construction of the columns. Each column rests on a square marble base that measures approximately 106 x 106 x 70 centimeters and features an octagonal

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24 This is especially evident on the south perimeter flank (along the Via Don Basso), where the lower half of the wall is darker than its fifteenth-century counterparts. See figure 208.
25 This may indicate an overall improvement in the quality of local brick production between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, perhaps due to the development of new manufacturing techniques or another source for the requisite clays and subsoils.
26 These observations were conducted with binoculars from ground level.
27 The central nave measures 9.7 meters across (from column base to column base). The side aisles are 5.7 meters wide each (from column base to perimeter wall). This column height represents the total measurement of the column, base, and capital.
28 The thickness of the individual drums vary between circa 30 and 60 centimeters in height.
Corinthian capital of white limestone.\textsuperscript{29}

The nave arcade features pointed arches and a regular, measured quality. Pointed transverse arches spring from pilasters embedded in the wall above the columns, spanning the width of the nave and providing a frame for the quadripartite rib vaults above.\textsuperscript{30} The lower height of the vaulting in the side aisles accentuates the verticality of the vaults in the nave. These variations in elevation contribute to the sense of undulating volumes that characterize the interior. Wooden tie-beams below the arcade and transverse arches help counteract the horizontal thrust of the vaults.

Whereas the addition of later altars and tombs conceal most of the perimeter walls of the nave, the first two bays west of the crossing retain their early elevations on the north side (figures 196, 197).\textsuperscript{31} Twin lancets pierce the walls of the side aisles and oculi appear at the clerestory level (the lower aperture opens into the attic space between the vaulting and the roof). There is little interest in opening up the expanse of the clerestory, but any sense of heaviness produced by the solid quality of the elevation and the thick proportions the columnar supports is relieved by the soaring stature of the vaults and the rhythmic patterning of the nave volume.

Between the nave and the east end is the crossing and the projecting transept.\textsuperscript{32} Windows provide the only interruption of the flat expanses of the transept walls: three slender lancets and an oculus illuminate the north transept, while a (shorter) pair of lancet windows and an oculus pierce the end wall of the southern transept (figures 198, 199).\textsuperscript{33} The space of the crossing and transept terminates with the structure of

\textsuperscript{29} There is some slight variation in dimension: the shortest base, for example, is 65 centimeters (Column 1-S), while the highest is 76 centimeters (Column 5-N).

\textsuperscript{30} This arrangement that increases the elevation of the vaulting. These pilasters, as well as the those that support the transverse arches in the crossing, are painted in alternating red and black stripes (\textit{fresco al regalzier}) to evoke polychromatic marble facing.

\textsuperscript{31} Many of these additions blocked in earlier window openings.

\textsuperscript{32} The space of the crossing measures 9.75 x 10 meters; the projecting transept extends outwards from the crossing 10 meters in each direction.

\textsuperscript{33} The positions of both windows are offset slightly from the center of their respective vaults.
the east wall, which includes openings into the choir and the eastern chapels. There is a palpable contrast between the solid mass of the eastern and transept walls and the spatial “voids” created by the nave arcading.

The *cappella maggiore* is clearly the focus of the Dominican architectural program with its vast dimensions (10.5 meters wide by 16 meters long), elegant prism-like design, and intense concentration of light from the lancets. The diaphanous quality of the central apse is emphasized by the flat, solid, expansive surface of the eastern wall (figures 200-202). In the choir, square pilasters support a system of quadripartite vaults, and a pointed transverse arch transitions between the rectangular space of the choir and the five-sided polygonal apse. Five-part vaulting springs from slender round columns with crocket capitals engaged within the wall fabric; these supports frame the five corresponding lancets below (figure 203).

On either side of the central apse a pair of chapels mimic elements of the plan and design of the central chapel (figure 200). Each chapel features a rectangular vestibule with quadripartite vaults that terminates in a four-sided polygon. The vaulting springs from nearly identical supports that utilize the same crocket capital type, and two lancet windows illuminate each space. Slightly different dimensions characterize each chapel: the southern Cappella di Sant’Anna, the largest of the four, measures approximately 5.5 meters wide by 7.5 meters deep. The adjacent Cappella Salerni, whose thick walls support the mass of the campanile above, is the shortest at 5 meters wide and 4.5 meters deep. On the north side of the apse are the Pellegrini

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34 The width of the crossing corresponds with the axis of the *cappella maggiore*, elevated approximately 1 meter from the level of the nave floor by five stairs.
35 The level of these chapels is approximately 30 centimeters above that of the nave pavement.
36 Brick supports topped with simple limestone foliate capitals are used in the vaults in all of the chapels except for the Pellegrini Chapel, which features supports constructed of alternating courses of brick and stone (4:1 ratio).
37 I use the term “approximate” here because the lateral walls are not entirely square. This discrepancy, combined with the polygonal terminations, results in variable calculations depending on where the measurement occurs.
and Cavalli chapels, which are approximately 5.5 wide by 6 meters deep, and 4.5 meters wide by 7 meters deep, respectively.

6.3.2.2 The Exterior

The *cappella maggiore* and flanking chapels of the east end are constructed entirely of brick. On either side of the apse, heavy buttresses spring from the fabric of the adjacent chapels to abut the vaults of the apse (figures 204-206). A cornice of interlocking, overlapping arches, identical to that which appears at S. Fermo, runs along the top of the apse and chapels. A different arcade of rounded arches decorates the eastern wall above the apse, the adjacent buttressing, and the transept walls. A rectangular brick campanile towers above the northern Cappella Salerni.

Both the erection of the Cappella Giusti in the mid-fifteenth century and subsequent reconfigurations of what is presently a music conservatory significantly altered the adjacent cloister. Only a portion of this wall, constructed from alternating courses of brick and tufa (2:1 ratio), remains (figure 193). The present configuration of this cloister conceals most of the exterior walls of the northern transept and nave; only the upper zone of the church is visible above the cloister and buildings of the conservatory (figure 207). The southern flank is accessible from the adjacent road, Via Don Bassi, however the narrowness of this street and the close proximity of the buildings on the opposite side, make comprehensive study of this wall challenging at best (figure 208). Like the apse, the nave walls utilize brick construction and feature an exterior buttressing system of piers integrated into the wall fabric to help counter some of the horizontal force of the interior vaulting. Conical pinnacles crown the tops of these buttress piers and a cornice of interlocking arches—similar to that on the east end—runs along the top of this wall.
The Facade

The west façade is articulated into three vertical sections that correspond to the interior nave and two aisles (figure 209). The central triangular zone rises above the west portal and features a small oculus in its fabric. Twin lancets pierce the fabric on both sides, and thick buttress piers act as “bookends,” providing visual and structural framing at the lateral extremities.

The focus of the structure is the wide double portal entrance set within a sculpted gothic archivolt of banded red, white, and grey-blue marble. A painting of the Crucifixion from the early fifteenth century occupies the central, larger tympanum.38 This narrative unfolds further within the lunettes below: above the left door, the Dominican saint Peter Martyr—a formidable inquisitor from Verona assassinated by a Milanese Cathar in 1252 to whom the church is officially dedicated—leads a group of Dominican friars towards the Crucifixion scene above. Above the opposite entrance, St. Zeno guides a crowd of Veronese citizens in the same direction (figure 210).

Sculpted lintels of marmo rosso offer the earliest contribution to the larger decorative scheme of the portal, attributed to the Maestro di S. Anastasia and dated to circa 1315.39 The left lintel features episodes from the life of Christ, including the Annunciation, Nativity, and Adoration of the Magi, while the reliefs on the right depict scenes of the Crucifixion and Resurrection (figure 211). To the left of the lintel, a statue of St. Anastasia holds the palm of martyrdom beneath a gothic canopy; St. Catherine with her wheel attribute occupies an identical niche on the opposite side.40

The twisted column of the trumeau separates the doors of the portal; at the top

38 Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico-artistica, 50.
39 Ibid., 49. The same sculptor credited with Castelbarco’s tomb.
40 Both figures are also identified by inscriptions carved into their bases.
of the corresponding capital is a statue of the Virgin holding the Christ child, added in the early fifteenth century. On the front of the trumeau is a tonsured and nimbed friar, probably Dominic; to his left is another friar-saint, who may be Peter Martyr based upon the gospel book he holds in one hand and what appears to be a palm of martyrdom in the other. A friar-saint holding a model of the church and an open book stands in a corresponding position on the right side of the trumeau with a kneeling friar (a donor?) below (figure 212). These figures are also attributed to the Maestro di S. Anastasia around 1315.

On the extremities of the façade, flanking the double portal scheme, are sculpted rectangular frames intended for relief slabs. Only the niches on the right contain sculpture: the lower register illustrates Peter Martyr preaching to an outdoor crowd from a portable pulpit, and the scene above depicts his martyrdom (figure 213). Both reliefs were carved around 1436 by an unknown sculptor.

6.3.4 The Conventual Complex

The Oratory (“Chiesetta”) of S. Giorgio

On the left side of the piazza is the brick oratory originally dedicated to St. George, rededicated to Peter Martyr in 1424 (figure 190, 214). The interior is a simple rectangular plan two bays long, covered by rib vaults springing from pilasters

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41 Simeoni suggests this sculpture is added after 1422. Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico艺术家ica, 49.
42 Napione has identified this figure as Peter Martyr based on the model of the church he holds. Is it possible that both side figures of the trumeau represent different aspects of Peter Martyr, to whom the church was officially dedicated? Napione also suggested that the kneeling friar may depict friar Nicolò da Pastregno (whose name was included among the list of executors to Castelbarco’s will discussed in the previous chapter). Friar Nicolò was an important figure—he was the prior of the convent between 1307-1307, but also an inquisitor, a “funzionario” to the court of Mastino della Scala II, and a friend of Petrarch. Napione suggests that Nicolò is represented here because he was the prior of the convent at this time, but the dates of his tenure predate that of the decoration by about six years. Even though he may not have been prior when the decoration was carved, he could have been prior when it was commissioned; or, he may be depicted here because (prior or not), he was probably the most important leader and member of the community at this time. Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 222-223. See also Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 14.
Three slender lancets and a round oculus pierce the south wall; the north wall may have featured similar openings, but later modifications have filled and covered any apertures with masonry and plaster. Small oculi in the east and west elevations provide additional illumination to the interior.

The south flank of the oratory faces the piazza and is divided into four vertical sections by buttress piers crowned with pinnacles; an arcade of rounded arches, identical to that used on the apse of S. Anastasia, embellishes the top of the walls (figure 214). A single, pointed-arched portal links the oratory to the adjacent piazza; a fresco of Peter Martyr is painted below its triangular canopy. Like S. Anastasia, the façade of the oratory is divided into three vertical sections. A central pointed-arch portal connects the church with the street in front, the Vicolo due Mori, and features a lunette fresco of St. George below the portico (fig 216). To the left of the entrance is the tomb of the doctor Bavarino de Crescenzi (d. 1346).

The eastern wall of the oratory composes part of the walled cortile or courtyard, a spatial “preface” into the cloister and the former convent. Castelbarco’s testament of 1319 included cash donations to the Dominicans for his funeral and his tomb, which is installed above the entrance into the cortile (figures 177, 217). His tomb was once the crowning element of an ornate sculpted entrance into the cloister, and this arrangement—which allows viewing from both the public space of piazza and the more private confines of the Dominican cloister—is one of the most unique.

45 Only the shape of one bricked-in lancet is discernable; any other windows are concealed behind layers of plaster.
46 The nave walls at S. Anastasia, completed in the fifteenth century, also include similar pinnacles. It is unclear whether these elements were part of the original fabric of S. Giorgio, or if they were added to the exterior at the same time the pinnacles were incorporated to the design of S. Anastasia.
aspects of its design. The tomb of illustrious Bolognese resident, Giuncello de Principe, local attorney Leonardo da Quinto, and Veronese citizen Bartolomeo Suxaimi (figure 218). Less elaborate than the Castelbarco tomb, these sepulchers are also covered with decorative gothic baldachins.

The Cloisters

To the east of this courtyard is the first cloister, which is adjacent to the north flank of the nave, as seen in the aerial view of the convent in figure 219. As noted previously, this space has been heavily restored, but fragments of earlier walls suggest construction of brick and tufa courses (figure 193). The design features the typical arrangement of a two-storey square courtyard surrounded by a covered, groin-vaulted walkway (figure 207). Simple ionic columns support the rounded arches of the arcade. Faint traces of frescos testify to the presence of votive paintings and coats of arms in this space in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A second cloister, today part of the liceo, is located directly to the north of the first, and is nearly identical in dimension and design (figure 220).

6.4 Scholarship on the Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Dominican Works

Late thirteenth-century Franciscan chronicler Salimbene mentions the Dominican community in Verona in passing, but his comments reveal virtually

nothing about the character of the convent or community at this time. Here too, the early chronicles and guides to the city’s monuments by Dalla Corte, Biancolini, Lanceni, Maffei, and Marini, are valuable records of inscriptions, altars, tombs, and decoration that no longer remain, and occasionally transcribe relevant documentation, such as papal privileges or transfer of land. Although these works are useful for their early observations and annotations of historical documents, they say little about the architectural or physical space of the convent itself.

Friar Pellegrini’s seventeenth-century testimony is another early, important account of the Dominican community in Verona; his text includes an overview of the church and its treasures, although he does not seem particularly interested in architectural details. Given his membership in the Order, his approach is clearly more religious than scholarly, and he offers little in the way of documentation or evidence to support his claims and observations. Nonetheless, his testimony includes important descriptions of structure or elements no longer present and reports of the Order’s local activities.

Modern studies of the site are few. Although arguably better known than S. Fermo, S. Anastasia has received little international attention, if only because of the celebrated Pisanello fresco in the east end. Because a large portion of the building and its ornament dates to the fifteenth century and later, and because these successive projects are usually better documented and preserved, the thirteenth and fourteenth-century phases of the building program remain sparsely examined and largely unresolved. The works of early chroniclers, especially Dalla Corte, Biancolini, and

50 See note 93 from Chapter 5.
51 Pellegrini, “La religione.” Pellegrini’s original text is not dated; the only date that survives is a *terminus ante quem* of 1676, the year of the author’s death. This manuscript is preserved in the Biblioteca Civica as two nineteenth-century copies. For more on these copies, see G. M. Varanini, “Gli affreschi della cappella Pellegrini nella descrizione di Giovanni Maria Pellegrini,” in *Pisanello*, 183-184.
Friar Pellegrini, have continued to shape the narrative of construction and patronage at S. Anastasia, which subsequent scholarship has maintained with surprisingly few revisions.

The first technical analysis of the architectural fabric appears in the restoration accounts published in 1882, although this study lacks the depth and rigor of Da Lisca’s corresponding report of the S. Fermo restorations published a few decades later.\textsuperscript{52} Between 1879 and 1916, Cipolla published a series of studies on S. Anastasia that examined the church from its antique origins until his own time.\textsuperscript{53} Contemporary documents such as wills, property transactions, notarial records, and papal bulls provide the foundation for his investigations of the building and its decoration, which also consider issues of dating and patronage. Although in some instances he fails to cite his primary sources, Cipolla’s work remains the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study on the church to date, and the subsequent studies of and guides to the church by Simeoni (1906), Cappelletti (1970), Marchini (1982), and Giardini (1999) relied heavily on his research and interpretations.\textsuperscript{54}

In 1970, Dellwing devoted a chapter of his book on mendicant architecture in the Veneto to S. Anastasia; years later, he revisited the church briefly in subsequent studies on the same topic.\textsuperscript{55} His focus is on the architectural relationships between Veneto churches, and his chronological narrative of S. Anastasia’s construction, based largely on formal analysis, has not been seriously challenged until now. Although he offers some useful and important observations, his studies are based on formal analysis and largely ignore issues of context and function, such as the use of church

\textsuperscript{52} Biadego, Rigotti and Giordani, \textit{Informazione dei restauri}.

\textsuperscript{53} See Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche,” I-IV.


\textsuperscript{55} Dellwing, \textit{Studien}, 64-81; \textit{Die Kirchenbautkunst}, 29-33; “Bettelordenskirchen”; and “L’architettura.”
space or the relationship between site and city.\textsuperscript{56}

A formal focus has continued to characterize scholarship on the church. While Cadei, Suitner, and Schenkluhn have devoted short notices to the church, they consider S. Anastasia only within the larger framework of fourteenth-century mendicant architecture, exploring how specific elements such as window shape, apse design, capital sculpture, and ground plan relate to and developed from other sites.\textsuperscript{57}

Until now, literature has been concerned with how S. Anastasia “fits” within a larger group of Dominican buildings of the region, rather than exploring the site in its individual and local Veronese socio-historic context.

In the last decade, however, a few studies have begun to widen the methodological lens with which to view the Dominican convent. In 2000, an article by Rama used S. Anastasia as a case study to explore how fourteenth and fifteenth-century Dominican writings on liturgy could be interpreted architecturally.\textsuperscript{58}

Although his work largely repeated observations made by scholars about the division of lay and fraternal space, contributing little to the specific understanding of space at S. Anastasia, it was nonetheless a critical methodological shift away from the dominating formal emphasis. Three years later, Franco published an article on the \textit{tramezzo} at S. Anastasia.\textsuperscript{59} Pulling from a wide range of primary source material and architectural evidence, she reconstructed its location and appearance, and considered the liturgical and spatial implications of this screen at the church.

Although the studies of Rama and Franco focus on specific aspects of the

\textsuperscript{56} For example, Dellwing does not considers the spatial implications of choir screens in any of the churches he describes.

\textsuperscript{57} Cadei, "Si può scrivere?"; Schenkluhn, \textit{Architettura}, 185-189; Suitner, “L’architettura,” 580-582.


\textsuperscript{59} T. Franco, “Appunti sulla decorazione dei tramezzi nelle chiese mendicanti: La chiesa dei Domenicani a Bolzano e di Santa Anastasia a Verona,” in \textit{Arredi liturgici e architettura}, 115-128.
church—interior liturgical space and the tramezzo—they represent important initiatives to reframe architectural study of S. Anastasia within a larger social, religious, and urban context. The following sections aim to advance this endeavor, considering how the mission of the fraternal community and the patronage of the lay public helped shaped the narrative and sequence of construction, as well as the physical configuration of conventual space.

Unlike the situation at the S. Fermo, documentation of S. Anastasia clearly reveals two distinct campaigns of construction separated by a pause that lasted for almost a century. Just as the ongoing and successive character of the restorations at the Franciscan convent affected the appearance of S. Fermo, the slow pace of construction at S. Anastasia likewise shaped the design and configuration of the Dominican church, as well as how the friars used their conventual space. Although my focus is the construction projects of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, I will briefly consider the works of the later campaign in order to consider how the works of the second phase may reflect a departure from the friars’ initial architectural vision.

6.5 Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Construction at S. Anastasia

6.5.1 Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Documentation: Expansion of Landholdings and Early References to the Building Program

The Dominican community seems to have begun planning for their new convent immediately upon receiving the donation of property from the bishop in 1260. Between 1260 and 1278, the friars amassed a large amount of property in the area—approximately 2,300 lire worth—thanks to generous donations from the bishop, the commune, and the lay public.60

Although numerous real estate transactions survive, specific references to the

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60 See for example, Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 158-160 for summaries of some of these transactions.
Dominican program are less common. The earliest mention of construction is a document from 1269 that records the sale of the friars’ former convent of S. Maria Mater Domini to the nuns of Cassiano di Valpantena for 1,500 lire.61 The text of this transaction suggests that the income from this sale was earmarked to purchase property for the construction of the friars’ conventual buildings: “presertim in acquisitione terreni pro constructione loci sancta Anastasie et preparatione et edificatione domorum in ipso loco.”62 This early record demonstrates that preparations for the new complex were underway by 1269, but the accumulation of land at the beginning of the decade seems to indicate that the community had anticipated expansion and construction much earlier.

As the friars accumulated properties around their original plot, members of the laity, including figures of notability and affluence, began to contribute specifically to the Dominican project. In 1287, the final testament of Giacomo da Berno left 10 lire to “fratrum predicatoribus et conventui eorum Sancta Henestaxia occasione laborerii diusdem ecclesie ad hoc ut ipsi fraters dicant missas et orationes pro anima mea.” 63 A few years later, the will of a certain Bartolomea from 1291 donated 20 soldi to the friars “sicilicet ad levandum murum dicte ecclesie.”64 The following year, Dominican Bishop Pietro della Scala (1290-1293) gave the friars a house near the church, “quam fratres Domenicani edificant in civitate Verone,” confirming construction was underway at this time.65

In 1301, the testament of Alberto della Scala left the community the generous

61 Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 282; Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 159. This transaction was executed by Friar Avanzo.
62 Ibid.
64 S. Silvestro b. 8, perg. 658; Castagna, “Testamenti veronesi,” doc. 114.
65 Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 555; Da Persico, Descrizione, 12; Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 1. Pellegrini records a slightly different language, substituting “Fratres Predicatores” for “Dominicani.”
sum of 1,000 lire for construction (“ad facendum”) of their church.\textsuperscript{66} As noted in the previous chapter, Castelbarco’s will from 1316 also included funds for the building program, although the absence of this bequest in his later will may indicate that the patron gave the friars this cash donation during his lifetime.\textsuperscript{67} Two years later, in 1318, the will of another lay patron left 18 soldi for “opera e fabric ecclesie beati Petri Martiris de Verona.”\textsuperscript{68} (In addition to donating to the building fund, this testament is the first mention of the friars’ intention to dedicate their new church to Peter Martyr.)

A couple of decades later, a nobleman named Bailardino gave a donation for “rehedifficationem” the Dominican church in his testament of 1339.\textsuperscript{69} Almost a decade later, the testament of Catarina da Lezze pledged 300 lire to the convent, a sum which according to Biancolini was intended to subsidize the construction of the refectory.\textsuperscript{70}

In the fourteenth century, the papacy extended several indulgences to visitors to the Dominican church. Scholars have interpreted these as acts for fundraising, but the

\textsuperscript{66} January 6, 1301. “Item relinquimus mille libras denariorum Veronensium parvorum Conventui Fratrum Predicatorem de Verona ad facendum fieri Ecclesiam ipsorum Fratrum solummodo expendendas.” Archivio Sartori II/2, 2110.


\textsuperscript{68} ASVr S. Anastasia, perg. 11; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 284.

\textsuperscript{69} May 6, 1339. ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini, reg. 2, p. 17; G. Sandri, “Bailardino Nogarola e le sue ultime volontà (1270-1399),” in Scritti di Gino Sandri, ed. G. Sancassini (Verona: Istituto per gli studi storici veronesi, 1969), 311-364. See 350-360 for full transcription of his testament; the following excerpt comes from page 352: “Item relinquuit et iudicavit conventui fratrum predicatorum de Verona quingentas libras denariorum parvorum pro anima sua et remissione suorum peccatorum...Quas quinque quantitates denariorum rellicatas suprascriptis conventibus fratrum predicatorum et heremitarum expendi voluit et iussit per in scriptos suos fideicomissarios in rehedificationem suarum ecclesiarum sive in alios usus necessarios conventuum antedictorum, sicut dictis suis fideicomissariis visum fuerit.” The use of the verb “rehedificationem” here may suggest that the new church of S. Anastasia “grew up” around the antique building, perhaps not unlike the situation at the Frari in Venice, or may indicate that some members of the public viewed the new Dominican project as a “rebuilding” of the earlier site.

\textsuperscript{70} June 25, 1343, for Catarina’s will see Biancolini, Notizie storiche, II, 556-558. Biancolini notes that “nel 1347 fu stabilito il Refettorio con trecento Lire (il cui prezzo sarebbe Lire tremille cira piccole Veneto) lasciate da Catarina da Lezze Cittadina Veronese, on di lei testamento; il qual danaro avea essa da Lezze depositato in mano dei Frati il 26 Giug. 1343.”
documents themselves reveal little to support this conclusion. In 1306, papal legate Cardinal Orsini granted an indulgence to those who visited the church under construction (“que de novo construitur”) on the feast days of the Virgin, Peter, Paul, John the Baptist, Augustine, Dominic, and Peter Martyr. In 1343, Clement IV gave two additional indulgences to those who visited the “ecclesia fondata in honohere sancti Petri Martyris de Civitate Verone Ordinis Praedicatorum civitatis predicte”.

While these indulgences may have fostered donations to the friars, it cannot be said with any certainty that they were intended to encourage contributions to the building program. Notably, however, a later document was issued to raise funds for construction: in April of 1380, papal legate Cardinal Agapito Colonna granted an indulgence specifically rewarding the faithful who contributed “ad fabricam ipsius ecclesie manus porrigant adiutrices.”

It is unclear exactly how many friars were in residence during the early phases of construction. A later document of 1343 names thirty-eight friars in the convent, which suggests that at least in the mid-fourteenth century the Dominicans were more numerous than the Franciscans. Since earlier figures do not survive, however, it is difficult to estimate the population of the community around the time construction began.

6.5.2 Construction of the Conventual Buildings

The documentation noted above reveals that work on the conventual buildings may have begun as early as 1269, the year that the Dominicans allocated funds from the sale of their former convent for “edificatione domorum.” Much like the

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71 See for example, Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 556; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 101.
72 ASVr, S. Anastasia, doc. 22; Biancolini, Notizie storiche, II, 556; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 290.
74 Ibid.
75 See Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 558.
76 See note 61.
situation at S. Fermo, the fraternal spaces of the convent such as the dormitories, refectory, chapter hall, and cloister were probably early construction priorities.

Because later restorations and additions have concealed the juncture between the north wall of the church and the adjacent cloister, the structural relationship between these two components is not entirely clear. Nonetheless, it is possible to establish a more specific chronology for the early conventual buildings of the complex. The friars had almost certainly completed work on the cloister by the time of Castelbarco’s death in 1320, since his tomb was placed over the entrance. Furthermore, the construction of the first cloister seems to have either preceded or been tied into the erection of the dormitory. Friar Pellegrini stated that the stairs to the dormitory were located near the door of the second cloister and Simeoni noted that the Cappella Rosario (completed in 1596 and located just to the west of the transept) was built in the place where the friars’ first dormitory was located. Was this dormitory one of the buildings planned for in the 1269 document? If so, then the early dormitory probably occupied the eastern portion of the second level of the cloister (a traditional position for this building), indicating that the cloister was also present at this time. This reading suggests that the construction of the cloister, along with some of the conventual buildings, were among the friars’ earliest projects. Focusing their initial construction energies on their own conventual spaces would have had the practical advantage of allowing them to live on site when the work on the church began, as well as facilitating interactions with the laity.

Along with this early work on the conventual buildings, the friars seem to

77 A late fourteenth century (1380) testament references a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, which was on the left part of the church, towards the cloister. See Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 293.
78 Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 9; Simeoni, Verona: Guido storico-artistica, 62. Simioni does not cite his source.
79 Given the location of the Rosary Chapel, the dormitory structure may have also extended along part of the southern wall of the cloister (that which abuts the north flank of the church).
have initiated construction of the oratory dedicated to St. George at least by 1283, the year the tomb of Giunicello dei Principi was affixed to its eastern wall (figure 218). Certain aspects of the architectural decoration of S. Giorgio, such as the cornice decoration of rounded arches, are similar to the east end of S. Anastasia, further supporting late thirteenth-century construction. The friars almost certainly used this structure for preaching, celebrating mass, and distributing the sacraments while the church was under construction; the double entrances into the space from the both the adjacent piazza and street suggest a principal use by the laity and that public accessibility was a high priority in its design.

As at S. Fermo, the exterior spaces of the Dominican site appear to have also held immense liturgical importance, even to the extent that they were carefully and purposefully manipulated. As noted above, in 1292, Bishop Pietro della Scala gave the friars his house in the adjacent *contrada* of S. Maria in Chiavica. Significantly, the Dominicans razed the house in order to widen the part the street leading to their convent, which, according to the document of this donation, was frequently crowded (―…in tali loco liberos non abeant, ned ad eam largum iter, seu largos aditus abere posit propter frequente multitudinem Populi Veronensis.‖) This move illustrates that increasing the visibility of and accessibility to their new site were early and important objectives. This reconfiguration supports the importance of an “outdoor church” for certain religious activities such as preaching and even burial. Napione hypothesized that in the last decades of the thirteenth century, Dominican burial of the laity occurred in the renovated sections of their new monastery, which in addition to the friars’ buildings, seems to have consisted of exterior spaces such as the cloister.

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80 The oratory has been variously dated between 1285 and 1346, but it was consecrated 1354: see Simeoni, *Verona: Guido storico-artistica*, 69.
81 See note 65.
82 Ibid.
and piazza.\textsuperscript{83} This arrangement would have provided an early solution to the need for burial space for the laity prior to and during the early stages of work, when the disarray of materials and constant presence of workers on-site probably made the interior an unappealing site for interment.

\textbf{6.5.3 The East End}

Work on the church itself seems to have been underway by circa 1290, as the testaments of Giacomo da Berno (1287) and Bartolomea (1291) noted above specifically directed funds towards the construction program.\textsuperscript{84} The following decade, Alberto della Scala gave 1000\textit{lire} to the building program in his testament of 1301, and the friars commemorated his contribution by painting the family coat of arms above the entrance to the\textit{ cappella maggiore} (figure 221).\textsuperscript{85}

The location of the Della Scala insignia has led scholars to conclude that Alberto’s donation of 1301 funded a significant part of the construction of the apse and side chapels, as well as the lowest portions of the campanile, which may have begun at the same time (figure 204).\textsuperscript{86} Considering the location of these shields, this seems a logical supposition. Yet if Alberto did indeed fund a significant portion of the\textit{ cappella maggiore} and flanking chapels, this would mean the east end was still largely incomplete by 1301, the year of his testament and a full decade after construction had begun. This pace seems exceptionally slow, particularly considering that the regular appearance of scaffolding holes, the straight, continuous horizontal courses of brickwork, smooth junctures of masonry, and the continuity of the

\textsuperscript{83}Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 195.
\textsuperscript{84}See notes 63 and 64. Cipolla and Simeoni indicate that work on the church began in the 1290s; alternatively, Belvigioni maintains that construction began in 1261, and Dellwing places it between 1281 and 1292 (\textit{Studien}, 64).
\textsuperscript{85}See note 66.
\textsuperscript{86}The campanile was not finished until 1420. Alberto della Scala also left the Augustinians at S. Eufemia 1,000\textit{lire}. See Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche} II, 555; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 283; Simeoni, \textit{Verona: Guido storico-artistica}, 51-52.
corresponding cornice decoration demonstrates that this work progressed rapidly. This evidence may indicate that most of the structural work of the east end was already complete by the time Alberto composed his final testament; given this chronology and the position of the Della Scala coat of arms at the springing of the vaults, Alberto’s bequest may have funded the vaulting rather than the completion of the eastern chapels.

Since construction of the east end appears to have occurred quickly and without interruption, it may have been necessary for the friars to erect a temporary wooden covering to protect the work in progress while they sought donations for the vaulting. Sealed windows, visible on the interior wall above the *cappella maggiore* and the flanking side chapels as well as on the exterior wall between the choir and apse, could indicate that a wooden covering preceded the system of vaults in the east (figures 200, 201, 206). Were these apertures open under a wooden covering, then closed when the vaults were constructed? Did the pilasters between the apsidal chapels that terminate strangely at mid-wall once support a provisional covering (figures 201, 222)?

The hypothesis of a temporary timber roof does not, however, adequately explain or account for the fact that these sealed windows correspond to the attic space between the vaulting over the chapels and the roof rather than the outside.87 Did an earlier design anticipate vaulting of a lower elevation? Or, perhaps these openings had a practical function, serving as a type of relieving arch built into the masonry to relieve downward pressure and thrust on the opening below. Another explanation may be that the friars included these openings for ventilation—to inhibit decay or rot of the space to preserve the structural integrity of timbers and masonry. Oculi in the

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87 The window above the opening of the *Cappella di Sant’Anna* is the only window of the group not blocked in: it opens into the interior space between the roof and the vaults.
nave elevation that also open into the attic space above the vaults of the side aisles may support the hypothesis that these openings were intended to facilitate the circulation of air through the building (figures 196, 197). Alternatively, these windows may have once corresponded with an inter-wall passage, allowing for workers to enter and access parts of the building for repair.\textsuperscript{88} Exterior doors on either side of the choir demonstrate that access into these spaces was necessary, but multiple openings into the same space seem unusual (figure 206). Without investigation of the space between the vaults and roof, this issue remains open for speculation; however, given that contemporary Dominican construction usually employed vaulting in the east, if there was indeed an earlier timber roof, the friars almost certainly intended it as a temporary solution.

6.5.4 The Crossing, Transept, and First Bay of the Nave

After the erection and vaulting of the polygonal apse and chapels, work proceeded to the crossing and the transept. The appearance of the Castelbarco coat of arms at the top of the first two pairs of columns in the nave has led scholars to name him as the primary benefactor responsible for the construction and vaulting of the transept, crossing, and the first bay of the nave (figures 196, 223).\textsuperscript{89}

Castelbarco’s involvement with the Dominicans is better documented than his activities with the Franciscans. The earliest reference linking Castelbarco to the S. Anastasia community is his testament of 1316, which as noted in the previous chapter, names several Dominican friars as his executors, requests burial in the church, and donates funds for the building works at S. Anastasia and the erection of an altar.\textsuperscript{90} His final testament of 1319 included cash donations to the Dominicans for his funeral and...
his tomb, and the additional gifts of his best horse, banner, shield, and his finest silver belt (which he requested be refashioned into a chalice).\footnote{91} Napione’s recent study of surviving Castelbarco family documents suggests that Castelbarco may have had a special relationship with or fondness for the Dominicans from an early age.\footnote{92} In his testament from 1265, Azzone Castelbarco, the father of Guglielmo, requested burial at S. Anastasia and donated 20 lire to the Dominican community, a sum that may have helped fund the early building works.\footnote{93} Although he also left cash gifts to the Franciscans and Augustinians, the choice of S. Anastasia as his final resting place signifies that Azzone privileged the Dominicans over the other religious organizations in the city, a preference that according to Napione may have been passed down to his son.\footnote{94} Indeed, the burial choice of Azzone should not be underestimated as a factor in Guglielmo’s own selection of the convent as the site for his tomb by 1316, and his father’s predilection for the Dominicans may have also been an important stimulus behind Castelbarco’s patronage of their building program.

That Castelbarco funded the construction of the transept, crossing, first bay of the nave, and the respective vaulting of this zone seems a logical conclusion given the

\footnote{91} “In primis eligo sepulturam meam aput fratres predicatores de Verona et ibi vollo corpus meum honorifice portari et seppeliri debere. Item relinquo et iudico quod in funere meo et eius occasione in vestimentis, cera et alliis necessaritis expendantur duo milia libras denariorum Veronensium parvorum ita tamen quod de vestimentis et alliis apparmentis de seta et auro fiant apparamenta ad divinum et pro divino officio celebrando, et omne id quod suprahabundabit de dictis duobus milibus libris quod non fuisset expenditum in predicto funere expendantur in dicto loco fratrum predicatorum in dictis paramentis. Item relinquo dictis fratribus predicatitoribus de Verona meliorem destrarium seu equum quem tunc temporis habuero qui sit ibi cum baneria mea et scuto meo tempore funeris mey. Item relinquo et iudico quod mille libras denariorum Veronensium parvorum ultra quingentas iam datas et solutas expendantur ibi ad fatiendum unam archam cum nobili apparmento in qua ponatur corpus meum honorificet et cum expensibus decentibus usque ad dictam sumam et pecunie quantitatem. Item relinquo fratribus predictis predicatitoribus de Verona melius cingulum de argento quod habuero tempore mortis mee ad calices fatiendos pro divino officio celebrando.” Vedovello, “Il testamento di Guglielmo il Grande del 1319,” 167-168.
\footnote{92} Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 192-199.
\footnote{93} July 7, 1265: “In primus fratribus Predicaturibus ecclesie Sancte Anastasia de Verona viginti libras predicte monete, apud quo sibi eligi sepulturam.” Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 192. (Napione does not list the archival source for this document.)
\footnote{94} He also left 100 soldi to the Franciscans and Augustinians. Napione, “Le arche dei Castelbarco,” 192.
donations earmarked for the friars in his testaments and the appearance of his family crest on the first two pairs of columns. A reading of the corresponding interior and exterior fabric also reveals that these parts of the church were constructed as a structurally unified and cohesive project. The corbelled supports for the vaults of the eastern chapels and the transepts share identical designs, and the bases of the first two pairs of columns in the nave—those with the Castelbarco shield—feature the same acanthus leaf sculpture (figure 224). Stylistic analysis of the paintings in the vaults reveal that the stylized, geometric foliate frescos above the apse, crossing, transept, and the first bay of the nave were executed earlier, probably at the beginning of the fourteenth century, than those to the west, which feature more organic, natural, vegetative forms (figure 225; see Appendix 2, 2.1). The alternating pattern of tufa and brick that frames the oculi of the first two bays of the perimeter is distinguished from the solid brick borders that enclose the apertures to the west (figure 226). In addition, the exterior buttress pier between the first and second bays features a different type of crowning ornamentation than the (later) piers to the west (figure 227). These observations demonstrate that the transept, crossing, and the first bay of the nave were conceived as a unified, single phase that appears to have erected quickly, and probably largely under the patronage of Castelbarco.

Some scholars have also attributed the construction of the tramezzo and the lower portions of the nave walls and façade to the patronage of Castelbarco. Although there is no evidence that explicitly connects Castelbarco with the projects of the perimeter wall or the façade, the sixteenth-century testimony of Della Corte noted the Castelbarco family shield embedded in the fabric of the tramezzo. The tramezzo no longer survives, destroyed by the joint efforts of the architectural mandates of the

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95 See for example, Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 289; Dellwing, Studien, 64-81.
96 Dalla Corte, Dell’Istorie I, 652.
Council of Trent and the construction of the Cappella Rosario at the end of the sixteenth century. Its demolition left a void in the floor that was filled in with marble tiles different in color and shape from those in the rest of the nave (figures 228, 229). The resulting differentiation in pavement, still visible today, reveals that the *tramezzo* was a wide, substantial structure that traversed the width of the nave between the second and third pairs of columns, the area that coincides with the part of the church traditionally attributed to Castelbarco. The physical evidence of this “silhouette” in the pavement of the nave coincides with Padre Pellegrini’s testimony from the seventeenth century, written a few decades after its demolition:

Nel mezzo della chiesa fra le seconde e le terze colone si trovava un gran pontile che attraversava tutta la chiesa, sopra del quale vi era il coro, ed era illuminato da due finestroni al dirimpetto l’uno dell’altro...Sopra del coro vi era il bel crocefisso che si vede nella cappella di S. Anastasia [this corresponds approximately with the present-day Cappella del Crocefisso]. Sotto il pontile alla colonna seconda verso il convento vi era l’Altare di S. Domenico dedicato ancora alla Beata Vergine del Rosario e vicina quello vi era la sepoltura de Dabili. Alla colonna verso Sottoriva [the street to the east of the church], credo, vi fosse l’Altare di S. Caterina da Siena...Vi era ancora sotto la scala del pontile nella muraglia l’immagine della Beata Vergine della Pietà.

The location of the structure and the testimony of both Pellegrini and Dalla Corte support the conclusion that Castelbarco’s patronage included the construction of the *tramezzo*. Yet can a precise date be established for its installation?

The earliest specific reference to the *tramezzo* at S. Anastasia comes from Tomaso Pellegrini’s testament from 1392, which leaves money “in reparation et
utilitate dicte ecclesie per la costruzione di unum pergulum lapideum.”¹⁰⁰ (Franco has noted that *pergulum* was a regional term that referred to a *pontile* or a *tramezzo* in a church.)¹⁰¹ A few years later, in 1398, a testator provides money for a daily mass to be performed at the altar of the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, which he notes is located “a latere sinistro introitu ipsius ecclesie iuxta pergulum.”¹⁰² While the language of Pellegrini’s bequest implies that the *tramezzo* was not yet erected, other evidence may indicate it was in place by the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1348, the testament of Dolcetto de Seta donated a gift of wax to an altar dedicated to John the Baptist.¹⁰³ Did this donation go to the same altar mentioned by the testator from 1398 noted above that was dedicated to the Virgin and John the Baptist and located on the left side of the *tramezzo*? Or, was her gift offered to another altar, dedicated solely to John the Baptist and described by a 1460 source as “sub pontile in parte versus clastrum”?¹⁰⁴ In either case, it is likely that the wax bequest of 1348 was intended for an altar located on or next to the *tramezzo*.

A votive panel dated to circa 1359, attributed to Lorenzo Veneziano and currently on display in the Pellegrini chapel, offers further evidence for dating the *tramezzo* (figure 230). According to Friar Pellegrini, this painting was originally installed on the *tramezzo* over the altar of S. Dominico, which, as noted in the excerpt above, was located near the second column “verso il convento,” which probably refers to the conventual, or northern, side of the nave.¹⁰⁵ The date of this panel and the location of its installation would therefore indicate that the *tramezzo* was extant by

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¹⁰² Ibid., 119. Testament of Inida di Solarolo, 1398. The slightly earlier will of Giovanna, the wife of Giovanni da Montechiaro, made a donation to the same altar in 1380, although she did not specify its location within the *tramezzo* structure.
¹⁰³ Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche III,” 163; See also Franco, “Appunti,” 122, n. 49.
¹⁰⁴ ASVr, S. Anastasia, b. 68; Franco, “Appunti,” 122, n. 47.
¹⁰⁵ See note 99. Pellegrini also indicated the image was transferred to the Cappella del Rosario around 1590 when the *tramezzo* was dismantled. See also Franco, “Appunti,” 122.
c. 1359.

While evidence seems to support the conclusion that the friars had installed their *tramezzo* by the 1340s or 1350s, it is also possible that they erected the structure as part of the work of the second bay of the nave, which would suggest an earlier date, perhaps even around Castelbarco’s death in 1320. As the statutes of Dominican Order required strict separation between the friars and the laity, this division would have been an important construction priority at S. Anastasia, and almost certainly an integral element to the design of the friars’ choir.

Although the *tramezzo* no longer survives, a combination of material and textual evidence allow for a partial reconstruction of its form. The distinctive floor pavers noted above determine the position and width of the structure (approximately 2 meters), and surviving records reveal tombs and altars encrusted its fabric, including, for example, the previously cited testament from 1398 that subsidized daily masses at an altar dedicated to the Virgin and St. John the Baptist. Later documents from the fifteenth century further confirm the presence of altars and tombs beneath, in, and around the *tramezzo* structure: the research of Cipolla, has revealed at least four altars on the front (lay side) of the *tramezzo* prior to its destruction in at the end of the sixteenth century. Documentation supports a two-story design, perhaps similar to that at S. Fermo: records note the location of the fifteenth-century tomb of Pietro di

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106 Traces of a door in the southern exterior wall that correspond with the third bay of the nave (bricked in by the construction of an interior altar in 1542) may represent an early public entrance into the lay part of the church during the construction of the west façade.
107 “Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum. Ab anno 1220 usque ad annum 1303,” in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum*, vol. 1, ed. B. M. Reichert (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1898) 162. As early as 1249, the Dominican General Chapter demanded the use of a *tramezzo* to divide the lay and fraternal populations and described the required characteristics:

“...Intermedia qua sunt in ecclesiis nostris inter seculars et fratres—sic disponantur ubique priores—quod fratres egredientes et ingredients de choro non possint videri a secularibus—vel videre cosdem. Poterunt tamen aliqua fenestre ibidem aptari—ut tempore levationis corporis dominici possint aperiotor.” See also Rama, “Spazio e liturgia.” Franco has also proposed that a provisional wooden division may have preceded the construction of the permanent structure (“Appunti,” 119).
Cumus “sub scala qua ascendit pontile ecclesie.” Pellegrini’s description of an altar “sotto la scala del pontile nella muragli” confirms this arrangement, and the friars probably put the upper level to use as a podium or pulpit for preaching.

The panel painting by Lorenzo Veneziano noted above that originally hung on the tramezzo at the altar of S. Domenico may provide additional clues to the design and appearance of the tramezzo (figure 230). The image depicts a seated Virgin and nursing Child in front of an architectural screen composed of three ornate gothic trefoil arches. Flanking the Virgin and Child are the kneeling figures of Mastino II della Scala, Lord of Verona (d. 1351), and his wife, Taddea da Carrara. At the edge of the painting, saints Dominic and Peter Martyr direct the couple towards the seated holy figures. Franco has recently proposed that the backdrop behind the figures may be a replica of or a visual reference to the actual structure of the choir screen at S. Anastasia. If this is an accurate reading, then artist Lorenzo Veneziano must have deliberately depicted the kneeling Veronese rule and his wife, the Order’s founder-saint, the martyr saint to whom the friars dedicated their new church, and the Virgin and Child in a setting intended to specifically evoke the tramezzo structure for which the painting was commissioned. The installation of the painting that featured the tramezzo on the tramezzo itself would have created a very real, participatory experience for the viewer. By kneeling before this painting at the altar of S. Domenico, the viewer would be imitating the same act of genuflection as Mastino II and his wife. Franco’s reading is compelling, and given the tripartite division of

109 Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 3. The fifteenth century tomb of Pietro di Cumus is recorded as being located “sub scala qua ascendit pontile ecclesie.” See also Franco, “Appunti,” 119-122.
111 An inscription surrounds the image: “MARIA MATER (sic) GRACIE MAPTER MISERICORDIE TU NOS AB HOSTE PTEGE ET IN ORA MORtis SUSIPE / O MARIA DVLCE COMERTU3 ITA TVU3 CELESTI GEMU3 QVO SALVITIS REIS ReMeDIU3 IDULGET / VIRGINIS INTACTE DUM UENERIS ANTE FIGURA3 PRETEREONDO CAUE NE SILEATUR AUE / NEC ABORES PECCATOORES SINE QVQVE3 (sic) FORES TANTO DIGA FILIO.” Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 284.
interior space and the use of trefoil arches (seen, for example, in the lancet windows) at S. Anastasia, it seems feasible that the screen depicted in Lorenzo Veneziano’s painting may have indeed mimicked elements of the actual structure.

6.5.5 The Lower Courses of the Nave and Façade

In view of the architectural evidence of structural unity and the Castelbarco coat of arms on the first two columns in the nave and the tramezzo, it seems almost certain that Castelbarco was responsible for funding the completion of the crossing, the transept, the first bay of the nave, the respective vaulting, as well as the tramezzo. But what can be made of the claims that he also paid for the “setting out” of the perimeter walls of the nave and the façade? Unfortunately, details regarding dating and the funding of these specific projects are unknown. Since Castelbarco’s final testament did not leave a bequest for the Dominican building program, could donations given to the Dominicans during his lifetime have been substantial enough to finance these parts of the building in addition to the transept and first bay of the nave? Even with careful management, funds could have probably only sustained work for a few years, which would mean that the lower zones of the nave and façade would have had to be completed around the time of his death in 1320. Does this date correspond with these parts of the church?

According to the traditional narrative of patronage at S. Anastasia, Veronese citizen Dominic Merzari took over as the primary benefactor of the building program after the death of Castelbarco. As very little documentation of Merzari survives, this narrative is based on attributing the coat of arms with an eagle and initials—noted in the previous chapter—to Merzari. The eagle shield is found multiple times on S. Anastasia. It appears twice on the southern perimeter walls, once on the northern exterior flank, and five times on the façade: twice on each lateral buttress and once on
the base of the statue of the Virgin at the top of the trumeau (figures 147, 209, 211, 234). In the interior, a small coat of arms, lacking (perhaps significantly) initials, is carved into the pilasters that support the aisle vaults on both sides of the last four bays to the west (figure 231).

Sixteenth and seventeenth-century chroniclers are responsible for establishing a scholarly tradition that both ascribes the shields at S. Anastasia to Merzari and names him successor to the Dominican works after Castelbarco. Biancolini, for example, noted that after Castelbarco’s death in 1320, the friars began building the walls of “tutto il resto del ricinto della chiesa, cingendola da ogni parte fino alle imposte de’ volti” thanks to the patronage of Merzari. Even in light of the early twentieth-century challenges to the conventional attribution of these arms to Merzari, subsequent studies of S. Anastasia have maintained this tradition without any critical revision. As the location of the shields on the interior pilasters and the exterior perimeter walls correspond with the part of the fabric constructed in the fifteenth, rather than the fourteenth, century—a problem Dalla Corte resolved by proposing that the friars affixed Merzari’s arms to the church after his death—this interpretation requires re-evaluation.

According to Dellwing, the friars erected the lateral extremities of the façade and the central portal under the patronage of Merzari. His reconstruction, seen in figure 232, proposes that by the middle of the fourteenth century the friars had constructed the façade in the shape of a “U”: the lateral buttress piers and the portal were extant, with a significant portion of the central zone absent. There is, however,

113 Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 272.
114 For references to these studies, see the subsection titled “The North Portal” in Chapter 5, section 5.4.5.
115 Dalla Corte, Dell’istorie. See also Cipolla, “Ricerche intorno I,” 291. Dalla Corte does not, however, cite the source or basis for his claim nor indicate how long after his death this may have occurred.
116 Ibid.
strong evidence to contradict these conclusions. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the construction—or rather the completion—of the upper portion of the perimeter walls occurred in the fifteenth century. In light of this chronology, the proposal that the friars built the lateral parts of the façade before they completed the contiguous walls of the nave is not only illogical, but also contrary to the physical evidence. The regular bonding of the masonry courses at the juncture between the upper half of the façade and the corresponding fabric of the adjacent fifteenth-century walls indicate that the construction of these two components occurred at the same time (figure 233). Further examination of the structural relationship between the upper portion of the façade extremities and the adjacent flank of the nave reveals a distinct shift in the color of masonry. This variation is difficult to distinguish in photographs, but the horizontal boundary between the darker masonry of the earlier campaign and the lighter brickwork of the latter is clearly visible below the put-log hole on the northern side of the facade pier (marked by arrows in figures 233 and 234). These observations confirm that the top half of the façade—including the fabric that bears the “Merzari” coats of arms—was constructed as part of the works of the second campaign in the fifteenth century, not before 1350 as proposed by Dellwing.

This reading further verifies that the eagle coat of arms belongs to the later benefactor Daniele pezariol, whose patronage activities in Verona between circa 1370 and 1425 better coincide with the dating of this part of the church. Elsewhere on the church, these shields appear on parts of the building constructed in the later campaign: on the south perimeter wall, the coat of arms is integrated into the fabric of the lighter brickwork associated with the fifteenth-century work. And while the sculpture of the west portal is dated to the mid-fourteenth century and attributed to the Maestro di

117 This shield appear just to the left (west) of the vertical transition between the darker masonry that characterizes the fourteenth-century work on the eastern part of the church and the lighter, later work of the second campaign (visible in the upper half of the nave walls).
S. Anastasia, the Virgin and Child statue on the trumeau—which bears the eagle insignia on its base—is stylistically later than the other works, and was probably added in the early fifteenth century (figure 211).\textsuperscript{118}

Even though evidence supports that the eagle shield belongs to Daniele pezariol, it would be a mistake to disregard Merzari as a possible patron, either during his lifetime or in his testament, which does not survive. Biancolini did note, after all, that at least one member of the Merzari family was buried in the cloister at S. Anastasia, even though the coat of arms of on this tomb did not include an eagle, and this could demonstrate familial devotion to the Dominican community in Verona.\textsuperscript{119} Nonetheless, it is clear that Merzari can no longer be cited as the financier of the lower portion of the perimeter walls. Placing Castelbarco in this role would necessitate that the erection of these walls occurred around 1320, given the circumstances surrounding his patronage of the friars and the evidence in his will. This chronology is feasible: the regular coursing of the exterior masonry on the southern perimeter wall attests to continuous construction rather than a bay-by-bay process, which not only supports Castelbarco as the patron of this part of the building, but also establishes that the basic skeleton of the church was “set out” by the mid-fourteenth century.

\textbf{6.5.6 Summary of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Works}

Work on the cloister and conventual buildings had begun by the late 1260s, as the 1269 document suggests, and initial projects focused on the conventual complex and the oratory of S. Giorgio. Construction of the church itself followed a few decades later, around 1290; like most medieval \textit{ex novo} projects, work began in the

\textsuperscript{118} Simeoni suggests this occurs after 1422, which would be towards the end of Daniele’s known patronage activities. Simeoni, \textit{Verona: Guida storico-artistica}, 49.

\textsuperscript{119} Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche} VII, 173. See note 207 in Chapter 5 for this text.
east and moved westward.

With the exception of the public spaces of the piazza and the oratory of S. Giorgio, the thirteenth and fourteenth-century building campaign focused primarily on the parts of the church used almost exclusively by the friars, both their own conventual buildings and the liturgical space of their choir. They first erected the polygonal apse and flanking chapels. A temporary wooden roof may have covered this early work until the vaults were built, perhaps under the patronage of Alberto della Scala in 1301. The friars then proceeded to the construction and vaulting of the crossing, transept, and the first bay of the nave. Next, they erected approximately half of the present height of the remaining perimeter walls and began raising the structure of the west façade, including the double portal. At this point, the Dominicans would have built a provisional wooden roof over the unfinished nave to protect the building in progress and allow them to hold services inside.\textsuperscript{120}

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the friars’ choir at S. Anastasia was finished and vaulted, and the remainder of the church was partially enclosed and planned, but—significantly—still incomplete, as illustrated in the reconstruction of figure 235. This sequence may indicate that the friars conceived of and constructed their own choir as a typologically different space from the church of the laity. The vaulting and the decoration of the friars’ choir prior to completing the nave walls further supports the conclusion that they conceptualized, and perhaps even designed, their own liturgical space separately from that of the laity.

Contemporary Dominican legislation clearly demonstrates that the eastern and western zones of their churches served different populations and liturgical functions,

\textsuperscript{120} During this construction, the nave may have remained open like at S. Nicolò in Treviso or S. Francesco at Siena, examples of buildings that Bruzelius has suggested may have functioned for a period as an “open air enclosure” with only the lower walls of the nave completed. See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 208.
and these two spaces were sometimes distinguished architecturally. The “two church” design of S. Domenico in Bologna established a powerful architectural precedent for distinguishing between the respective spaces of these populations through different types of covering and supports, in addition to the physical barrier of a tramezzo. In the friars’ choir, quadripartite vaults spring from octagonal piers; in contrast, thick round columns support a wooden-trussed roof over the western portion of the church reserved for the laity (figure 44). Other Dominican churches in Northern Italy that use architectural or decorative elements to discern between lay and fraternal spaces include S. Domenico in Genoa, S. Giovanni a Canale in Piacenza, and S. Nicolò in Treviso (figures 236-238, 54-56). Because the nave vaulting at S. Anastasia west of the tramezzo was not erected until the fifteenth century, it is possible these later vaults represent a departure from an earlier design, which may have intended for vaulting only in the eastern part of the church, perhaps like S. Nicolò in Treviso. In this way, the friars may have originally planned to create an important visual distinction between the space of their own choir and the area of the church designated for the laity.

By the end of the first campaign, it is unclear whether the friars had installed all of the columns in the nave, or if the only ones in place were the first two pairs, or the “Castelbarco columns.” There is evidence to suggest that the friars established the design and dimensions of the columns, capitals, and bases in advance, purchased the necessary materials, and may have even commissioned certain elements en masse from a single workshop at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.

121 See for example, Rama, “Spazio e liturgia.”
122 See the works of J. Hubert, cited in Chapter 4, note 91. See also Rama, “Spazio e liturgia.”
123 The friars’ choir in Genoa utilizes robust cruciform supports, whereas slender columns designate the lay part of the church.
124 This arrangement would have also meant that the church plan complied more closely with contemporary Dominican building statutes.
century. The columns, bases, and capitals feature nearly identical dimensions and follow a standard “formula” regarding material: the drums, bases, and plinths are carved from Veronese *marmo rosso*, while the capitals are sculpted from limestone.  

This shift in material may reflect both an economic and practical decision: the softer composition of the (less expensive) limestone would have been more conducive to the intricate sculpture of the capitals. Furthermore, study of the base profiles indicates that all twelve column-bases feature analogous designs, although with slight variations in dimensions, as seen in figure 239.  

Other evidence suggests these elements were carved by multiple workshops, perhaps over an extended period of time. Although the square bases share identical profiles, each corner is embellished with a carved relief. The sculpted decoration of these corners varies widely from base to base, and in some instances, even between individual corners of the same base. Furthermore, while all of the capitals feature Corinthian capitals, there are numerous subtle differences in pattern. As seen in figure 240, the twelve columns of the nave feature eleven different capitals designs and nine variations of bases decoration. Only two capitals—the second pair, 2-N and 2-S—share identical sculpted decoration, while the first two pairs of column bases utilize the same ornament in the corners (1-N, 1-S, 2-N, and 2-S).  

The common dimensions and shape of the capitals indicates that the friars commissioned them specifically for S. Anastasia rather than re-used them from other buildings; these variations in design therefore cannot be explained by *spolia*.  

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125 There are slight variations (only a few centimeters) in the lengths and widths of the bases. All of the stacked-drum columns have identical circumferences.  

126 One obvious different in these profiles is the height of the plinths below the bases. I have nonetheless included them in the profile, even though they are composed of a separate block of marble. In addition to these variations, there are slight discrepancies regarding angles and/or sizes of certain contours, but this was probably caused by individual characteristics of the materials, such as dimensions of the original blocks or location of veins.  

127 Simeoni and others have said that there are two orders of capitals at S. Anastasia, but closer analysis reveals that there are more. Although some capitals share similarities in the shape and type of vegetation, there are acute differences.
Multiple workshops and/or execution over a period of time may account for the hodge-podge of both capital design and base decoration, however evidence from the contemporaneous "Castelbarco columns" seems to contradict this reading. As illustrated in figure 240, between the four columns that bear his shield, only the second pair of capitals (2-N and 2-S) feature the same capital type; the first pair of capitals (1-N and 1-S) utilize two different foliate motifs. In contrast, all four bases share identical acanthus leaf designs in their corners.

It is not entirely clear how to account for the discrepancies in base decoration and capital type in relation to shared elements, such as the consistency in materials, dimensions, and base profiles. Viewed within the more general framework of the two-campaign construction narrative, it is possible that the last four pairs of columns (3-N/S to 6 N/S) and the corresponding materials for the bases and capitals sat (either carved or un-carved) on-site during the initial works of the fourteenth century, but were not installed until the second campaign. Although it is difficult to form a clear picture of the sequence of construction and the narrative of workmanship, these elements may reveal an aspect of the local Dominican aesthetic. The consistency in materials, dimensions, and base profiles may attest to a more rigid and structured approach to and standardization of architectural form and composition. At first glance, these elements appear identical: only after careful study are the variations apparent. This may reveal that for the Dominicans, a general perception of unity and harmony was important with regard to architectural components. In contrast, there seems to be more flexibility and freedom regarding the details of ornament and decoration, as supported by the hodge-podge of capital designs and base embellishments.
6.5.7 The Pause in Construction

Soon after the death of Castelbarco in 1320, progress on the Dominican project lost significant momentum. In 1339, the last testament of military noble Bailardino left an unspecified amount to the Dominicans for construction of their church, and according to Biancolini, a few years later (1347), the testament of Catarina da Lezze pledged 300 lire for construction of the refectory. These testaments indicate that some work was in progress in the 1340s, but that the Dominican project had slowed significantly or stalled. By the following decade, work had come to a standstill. In April of 1380, Cardinal Agapito Colonna granted an indulgence specifically rewarding the faithful who contributed “ad fabricam ipsius eclesie manus porrigant adiutrices.” This indulgence was apparently unsuccessful, as no significant progress on the project followed. Construction did not resume in any major capacity until the early fifteenth century. This prolonged suspension of work had a profound impact on the appearance of the church, and may have coincided with a shift in the friars’ original architectural vision.

What prompted such a significant halt in the building program? A reduction of resources or a financial crisis would seem an obvious conclusion, as has often been assumed. Had the Dominican community begun to lose the economic support and favor of the laity? Significantly, evidence from surviving testaments suggests not: between 1320 and circa 1390, the friars received at least fifteen bequests from lay patrons. Yet curiously, while some testators reveal a marked preference for or

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128 See section 6.5.1 for these documents. For Bailardino’s testament, see ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini, reg. 2, p. 17, May 6, 1339.
130 In addition to the testament of Bailardino (see note 128), examples include: ASVr S. Domenico di Acquatraversa, perg. 429, June 16, 1328, testament of Dialor; ASVr S. Maria della Scala, b. 1, 14-15, January 5, 1331, testament of Giovanna di Allegro; ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. III, perg. 266; reg. 2, p. 123, June 2, 1338, testament of Simeoni del q. Bonomo da Pigna; Biancolini, Notizie storiche, IV, 109, testament of Federico della Scala from 1339; August 9, 1339, testament of Pietro de Sacco (see C. Cipolla, “Un amico di Cangrande I della Scala e la sua famiglia,” Memorie della Reale
devotion to the Dominicans, gifts earmarked for the building program are conspicuously absent from their wills.\textsuperscript{131} The testament of a certain Anna from February 26, 1386, who requested burial in S. Anastasia and left money for masses on behalf of her soul, illustrates this inclination well.\textsuperscript{132} Although her choice of burial reveals a special affection for or “confidence” in the Dominican community, her will does not include a provision to advance their incomplete building program. This omission is even more perplexing given her bequest of 2 ducas for the construction of the Augustinian conven of S. Eufemia (“duos duchatos auri in auxilio fabric ecclexie nove dicti conventus”).\textsuperscript{133} Perhaps Anna gave cash donations to the program during her lifetime, which could explain her exclusion of the Dominican project in her will? Alternatively, her testament may reveal that one result of a stagnant construction program was a decreased interest in, or at least a reduced sense of urgency for, funding the works.

Although Anna’s testament is one of only a few surviving requests for burial at S. Anastasia in this period, a handful of contemporary tombs, such as those affixed to the east wall of S. Giorgio, reveal that the friars were interring the laity in and

\textit{Accademia delle scienze di Torino} 51 (1902): 1-72; Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche} II, 556-8, June 25, 1343, testament of Caterina del fu Orso; ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, b. 5, perg. 369, February 4, 1359, testament of Bartolomea “de Parixio”; ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, b. 5, perg. 371, December 26, 1359, testament of Beatrice; Biancolini, \textit{Serie cronologica}, 110, doc. 29, November 24, 1359, testament of Cangrande II della Scala; ASVr \textit{Processi} di S. Anastasia (see also Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 293), September 3, 1371, testament of Azzzone da Sesso; “Ricerche storiche I,” 293, February 27, 1374, testament of Ginevra Rigolina; ASVr Esposti, dipl. 119, October 17, 1375, testament of Cansignorio della Scala; ASVr Esposti, b. 47, perg. 4686, August 18, 1381, testament of Gioco “scapizator”; ASVr, S. Anastasia, perg. 51, January 9, 1384, testament of Costanza; ASVr Esposti, b. 40, perg. 4033, February 26, 1386, testament of Anna de Gabaldianis; ASVr S. Eufemia, b. 8, perg. 517, September 14, 1390, testament of Judge Olivio Campagna.

\textsuperscript{131} Testators chose instead to earmark donations for purposes other than construction, such as masses for their souls or gifts to individual friars.


\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
around their church in the fourteenth century. Even though the number of donations to and burial requests with the Franciscans was considerably higher at this time, documents nonetheless demonstrate that Dominicans received enough funding in the second half of the fourteenth century to continue, although perhaps not complete, their building works. This conclusion is especially palpable given Allen’s research, which determined that the fixed wages of a master mason in Verona were 4 soldi a day in the summer and 3 soldi in the shorter days of winter in the 1250s, and that these rates probably varied little during the following century. Despite continued support of the Dominicans in the second half of the fourteenth century, specific gifts to advance the building works seem to have been, for whatever reason, unappealing to their patrons.

Although individual donors appear to have been silent when it came to the completion (or continuation) of construction, there was, on the other hand, a clear enthusiasm for and effort to “colonize” and decorate the existing spaces. Around 1340, the Last Judgment scene was painted in the choir, and votive paintings from this period appear throughout the transept and first bay of the nave. Between 1380 and 1390, patrons Giovanni Salerni, Tomaso Pellegrini, and Federico Cavalli claimed chapels around the choir for their respective burials, and commissioned fresco decoration to accompany their grand tombs (see Appendix 2, 2.2).

Even during the interruption of construction, the Dominican community continued to obtain land around the church for expansion of their convent. Many of these acquisitions were substantial: in 1381, for example, the city gave the S.  

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134 Another testator to request burial at S. Anastasia was Azzone da Sesso, whose testament dates to September 3, 1371 (ASVr Processi di S. Anastasia; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 293). Friar Pellegrini also notes tombs (although he does not specify where in the church or cloister they are located) from 1312, 1313, 1351, and 1362. Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 9. See the following chapter for more on burial.

135 Allen, The History of Verona, 38.
Anastasia community the Palazzo di Sanbonifacio, which the friars quickly transformed into a second cloister by the end of the century. It is not entirely clear why the friars chose to focus their construction efforts on this new cloister rather than the church, but the presence of an additional cloister may have provided important conventual space for the brethren, including a school as well as future burial space for the laity. Despite the fact that no substantial architectural progress occurred on the church in the second half of the 1300s, evidence from testaments, the decoration of the church by the laity, and the expansion of the friars’ conventual buildings in this period clearly contradict the theory that unpopularity among the laity or a lack of funding prompted the interruption of work.

It may also be tempting to attribute this pause, at least tangentially, to the economic and psychological effects of the recurrent plague epidemics in Verona from 1340 onwards. General devastation of the city and its population, which meant a reduction in both benefactors and laborers, accompanied the plague years in Verona. Local testimony from *Notae Veronenses* recalls “in 1348, there was a grave sickness: one-third or more of the population—male and female, rich and poor—perished…and no one could say that this disease or *peste* was divine punishment [but] no doctor could have saved anyone with this affliction.” As Herlihy noted, “the chief short-term repercussion [of the plague] was shock…and shock in turn broke the continuities of economic life and disrupted established routines of work and service.” Contemporaries confirm the impossibility of

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136 As I will discuss in the next chapter, the multiple cloisters at S. Fermo, Ss. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, and S. Maria Novella in Florence may be viewed in relation to the friars’ burial of the lay public. There was indeed a *studium* or school associated with the convent at least by the mid-fifteenth century, as the Dominicans requested a communal subsidy to purchase books and donate to their new library project in 1468 (Cipolla, Ricerche storiche I, 302).


maintaining an organized community and economy: workers either died, fled the city, or refused to perform their tasks. Boccaccio wrote that townspeople became “feckless in their habits, neglecting their affairs and their possessions…as though they were simply awaiting the day on which they could see they were going to die.”

Did the significant labor shortage associated with the plague make it difficult for the friars to find local laborers to continue with their construction project? By circa 1375, the most fatal outbreaks had passed and a rise in the cost of labor and materials probably coincided with the recovery of the local economy. Did inflated prices of labor and materials prevent the Dominicans from resuming, forcing them to wait until prices had stabilized? This seems unlikely given that other local projects continued without delays: work on both the local Carmelite church of S. Tommaso and the Augustinian church of S. Eufemia progressed steadily during this period. The effects of the plague alone cannot therefore sufficiently account for this pause in construction.

Was the incompletion of the Dominican convent in the fourteenth century a purposeful, intentional move on the part of the friars? The recent work of Bruzelius has observed that in many of their building programs, the friars constructed the liturgical choir to put into use as quickly as possible, while completion of the nave was frequently and deliberately delayed while the friars sought funding from future donors, sometimes in the form of burial commitments. By leaving a substantial part of the building unfinished, Bruzelius suggested the friars could demonstrate to

140 Ibid.
142 Herlihy, Black Death, 50.
144 Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 208.
potential patrons that burial space was ready and available, and that in some way the
church “awaited” and “expected” their participation.\textsuperscript{145} At S. Anastasia, this strategy
of “speculative construction” may help explain, for instance, why the decoration of
the east end and the construction of the second cloister were prioritized over progress
on and completion of the nave.\textsuperscript{146}

The idea that the incompletion of the church was an intentional move on
behalf of the friars to attract donors is further supported by the contemporary surge of
patronage that accompanied the return to the project in the fifteenth century.
Beginning in early 1400s, the commissioning of a chapel, altar, or tomb in the
Dominican church became a kind of status symbol for the elite families of Verona,
such as the Bevilaqua, Montanari, Pompei, Da Sesso, and the Serego. This
outpouring of distinguished patronage also coincided with a general re-settling of the
urban center by aristocratic families like the Maffei and Bevilaqua moving inward
from peripheral, suburban locations and constructing aristocratic \textit{palazzi} in the center,
many of which were near the Dominican convent.\textsuperscript{147} Was the incomplete state of the
church—with ample space for tombs, chapels, and altars—an important factor in
attracting illustrious patrons in the fifteenth century? Can one attribute the growing
importance of the convent as a religious site for the local elite, at least in part, to its
unfinished condition?

The hypothesis that the friars purposefully left S. Anastasia incomplete may
have further implications for the way the Dominicans used their church space during
the fourteenth century. Bruzelius has suggested that for the friars, the concept of
“church space” might have had a different meaning than to the other clergy, and this

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{147} Varanini, “Spazio urbano,” 33.
may have included a more flexible approach to the use of inside and outside space. I will discuss this permeability between the interior and the exterior spaces in the following chapter, but given the unfinished state of the church, the exterior spaces around the convent must have been especially crucial to the mission of the Dominicans in Verona during the fourteenth century.

The incompleteness of the Dominican project—whether purposeful or not—seems to have been, on at least a few occasions, a source of aggravation for the laity and the local government. In 1371, the testament of lay patron Azzone da Sesso selected interment in S. Anastasia “ubi sepulta sunt corpora maiorum difunctorum meorum,” and this request was accompanied by a generous endowment for a family burial chapel. As later documents reveal, despite the (deceased) patron having paid for his chapel, its construction was delayed for over a century, sparking a long controversy between the Da Sesso family and the Dominicans until the completion of the chapel in 1489. This episode suggests that slow-moving construction could be a nuisance in some cases, or worse, provoke serious conflict; it may be possible to view the “takeover” of the Dominican project by the commune in the early fifteenth century as a response to a growing frustration over the enormous presence of the unfinished church in the center of town.

6.6 The Second Campaign

Despite continued lay contributions and incentives provided by indulgences, work on S. Anastasia did not fully resume until the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century. In the 1420s, the church was still missing a large portion of its upper exterior walls, façade, and lacked a permanent covering over the nave. To

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148 See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
149 Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 104.
150 Ibid.
encourage the laity to help complete construction, in 1422 Martin V granted an indulgence to reward contributors to the project.\textsuperscript{151} Two years later, a confraternity in honor of Peter Martyr emerged at S. Anastasia with the common goal of advancing the church fabric.\textsuperscript{152} Whereas the private offerings of the laity funded the first construction campaign, in the early fifteenth century, the commune was responsible for a large portion of the financing of and control over the works of the Dominican church.

In 1423, the commune-appointed Consiglio dei Dodici pledged an annual sum of 10 gold ducats to the Dominican community for continuation of their building program.\textsuperscript{153} Three years later, the Consiglio established an official feast day for the local saint Peter Martyr, probably in hopes that this action would encourage devotion to his cult and thus to the convent that would be consecrated in his name.\textsuperscript{154} On March 2, 1434, the friars at S. Anastasia recorded the miraculous appearance of holy water at the base of one of the interior columns; the following celebration of this miracle may have been another stimulus to encourage devotion—and thus donations—to the building program.\textsuperscript{155}

Among the contributions to the building campaign made by the commune, the façade received special attention (figure 209). In 1428, apparently dissatisfied with the existing façade design, the Consiglio ordered a change in its appearance and commissioned its completion from local architect Giovanni Matolino.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{151} Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche II}, 557; Giardini, \textit{Santa Anastasia}, 10; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 181; Simeoni, Verona: \textit{Guida storico-artistica}, 48; an unsubstantiated note in a text in the Biblioteca Castelvecchio notes that this indulgence was for those who helped “with their hands”—thus those who contributed physically.

\textsuperscript{152} The confraternity’s rule states “incepta pro fabbrica dictae Ecclesia...” Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche II}, 530.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 560; Giardini, \textit{Santa Anastasia}, 10; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 181.

\textsuperscript{154} Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche II}, 560; Giardini, \textit{Santa Anastasia}, 10; Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 183.

\textsuperscript{155} Biancolini, \textit{Notizie storiche II}, 560.

\textsuperscript{156} The “Atti del Consiglio” reads: “...An dicta facies debeat fieri, prosequi et construi secundum
Consiglio increased the elevation of the original fourteenth-century plan, and in
general sought to enhance the beauty of the structure (“in pulcriori decentiori ac
meliori modo”). Matolino raised the central volume, included a round window, and
added large twin lancets to the lateral parts of the façade. To mark their contribution,
the city affixed its crest at the top of the façade pier, directly above the arms of
Daniele pezariol (figure 234). It is difficult to determine precisely what the earlier
design may have looked like. There are two fourteenth-century models of a church
represented in the decorative program: one is a relief carving on the right side of the
trumeau, and the other is a votive fresco on the southern wall of the nave, just west of
the transept (figures 212, 241; see Appendix 2, 2.3). As neither image resembles the
current structure nor one another, it is impossible to establish how radically the
communal revisions may have deviated from an earlier design.

The Consiglio also supervised the completion of the perimeter walls and the
vaulting of the nave, which was finished by 1437. The communal coats of arms on
the three pairs of columns to the west of those bearing the insignia of Castelbarco
(columns 3-N/S – 5 N/S), identify the city’s involvement with these works. The
insignia of the commune was once affixed to the third pair of columns; traces of an
earlier coat of arms underneath may indicate that the city added its crest retroactively,
perhaps even replacing that of an earlier patron (Castelbarco?) (figure 242). Although
the corbelling on the west façade that supports the arcade arch of the final bay is also
decorated with the city’s shield, the final pair of columns to the west previously

morem et opus inceptum de lateribus, an debeat aliter refici, construi et reformari, scilicet in pulcriori
decentiori ac meliori modo et opere de lapide vivo, quam nunc est, prout melius videbitur deputandis
super dicta tota fabrica ecclesie...Et presentim de lapide vivo et figuris quam nunc est melius
videbitur...” Biancolini, Notizie storiche II, 560. See also Giardini, Santa Anastasia, 10. Another
project was begun in 1522 to decorate (with marble revetment) the pilasters of the facade. Simeoni,
Verona: Guida storico-artistica, 49.

Ibid.

This date is commemorated in the fresco decoration of the westernmost vault.
displayed the crest of the fifteenth-century Boldieri family, indicating their contributions to the completion of the nave.\textsuperscript{159} This illustrates that even though the communal role in this building phase was significant, as the copious appearance of the civic coats of arms in the vault decoration attests, lay patrons also helped advance the architectural fabric.

The bishop consecrated the church on October 24, 1471, almost two centuries after the beginning of construction. In 1481, the commune, considering the project “complete” concluded its annual financial obligation to the Dominican community, even though the façade remained unfinished, lacking regular brick facing and sculptural reliefs for the empty niches to the left of the portal.\textsuperscript{160} The communal involvement in the project at S. Anastasia may reflect several possible motives, one of which may have been a genuine desire to contribute to the Dominican building program; Varanini proposed that this process solidified the relationship between the city and the Dominicans, creating a firm alliance between the two institutions. It is also possible that the unfinished church in the center of town had become an eyesore and annoyance to the city, which prided itself on its high aesthetic standards; it should be recalled from Chapter Three that the communal statutes expressed a specific aesthetic standard that the city was required to maintain. The “improvement” of the façade design may also indicate that the visual appeal of the building in progress was a concern to the officials in charge.

6.7 Patronage

The generous patronage of the laity was essential for the construction of both the Franciscan and Dominican monumental building programs in Verona. Rossi has

\textsuperscript{159} These coats of arms were visible in the nave when I first began my on-site research in S. Anastasia in 2005. The insignia from the last three pairs of columns was removed in 2008.  
\textsuperscript{160} Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche I,” 305-306.
identified a verifiable change in religious sentiment in Verona, as expressed in testamentary giving, in the second half of the thirteenth century: as the Franciscans and Dominicans became a much more visible, concrete presence in urban life, their new prominence manifested itself in generous bequests. Not coincidently, this shift corresponded with the growth of the Franciscan and Dominican communities in Verona, their transfer to the center, their beginning of their new construction programs, their role in the local Inquisition, and their entrance into the episcopacy. By the year 1300, both the Franciscan and Dominican building campaigns were well underway and they the friars were intimately involved with the pastoral care of the laity. Public support of the Dominican community at S. Anastasia is not only apparent in surviving testaments that contribute to the building works but is also expressed in votive decoration (see Appendix 2, 2.3). Benefactors may not have always been single individuals: the figure of St. Eligius near the entrance to the Salerni chapel was a patron saint to artisans, and may therefore represent collective support from a local guild (figure 222). Other evidence may suggest patronage from within the Order. The kneeling friar on the right side of the trumeau may represent an instance of internal patronage or commemorate an individual friar’s role in the building works; unfortunately, lack of documentation prevents resolution of this question (figure 212).

The construction narratives of this study may unfairly emphasize the contributions of highly visible and wealthy patrons such as Alberto della Scala and Castelbarco because they are better documented, but the assistance of numerous small-scale donors who, en masse, played an important part in these projects should not be underestimated. The testaments of powerful figures such as these probably

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161 Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi.”
162 See note 42.
prompted subsequent bequests and giving from smaller donors; analysis demonstrates that the friars attracted donors from every level of society, including widows, doctors, lawyers, professors, soldiers, and bakers. In this way, the friars were both “class-less” and extraordinarily class-conscious at the same time: they recognized the collective power of small-scale almsgiving and donations from the lower and middle classes, but they also very purposefully sought the patronage of powerful, wealthy donors.

Evidence from contemporary testaments demonstrates extensive support of the building initiatives of the friars from the local community, and additional means of funding are considered in the next chapter. The survival of the friars (and their construction projects) relied on urban support. Patronage and architecture forged a reciprocal relationship: the elaborate buildings funded by donors attracted congregation members, which ultimately resulted in an increased number of donations and bequests. Architecture was perhaps the most important investment in the social and economic future success of a mendicant community, and significantly, these buildings reflected a new and distinct approach towards proportion, scale, beauty, material, and decoration in the city.

6.8 Interpretation and Synthesis: The Design of S. Anastasia

Whereas the Franciscan renovations to S. Fermo incorporated in nearly equal measure elements of “mendicant” (specifically Franciscan), Gothic, and local architectural vocabularies, S. Anastasia is much more single-minded in its architectural program. While the Dominican convent incorporates visual concepts from both local and Gothic architectural vocabulary, it uses them in more traditionally “Dominican” ways. As patrons of an ex novo construction program, the Dominicans had the advantage of a “clean slate” with which to express their architectural vision; although the “Dominican” influence was clearly a powerful impact, how did the friars
approach the design of their convent? It is possible to pinpoint more precisely the factors that shaped their architectural choices?

Bettini, Suitner, Dellwing and others have supported the possibility that friar-architects Nicolò da Imola and Benvenuto da Bologna may have designed S. Anastasia; scholars have also credited these friars with the designs of the Dominican convents in Padua, Treviso, and Venice (figures 243, 54, 62). A comparison of these sites reveal many common elements: all feature similar dimensions, proportions, and an arrangement of interior space: a tripartite division of the interior by twelve columns, a projecting transept, and four apsidal chapels arranged in flanking pairs around the *cappella maggiore*. S. Nicolò, Ss. Giovanni and Paolo, and S. Anastasia also incorporate polygonal apses, and the side chapels at S. Anastasia and Ss. Giovanni e Paolo are configured as polygons.

The similarities between these nearby Dominican sites are too great to be coincidental. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that attributing their designs to a common architect is best explanation for these likenesses. Even in light of some of the complications surrounding the dating of mendicant buildings, the “beginning” date of these churches reflect a range of at least fifty to sixty years; given this chronology, it is doubtful that the same friar or pair of friars designed each of these churches. Furthermore, although the research of Cannon and Bourdua reveals that friars were often physically involved in art and architectural projects, surviving documentation suggests the most common arrangement was that of a friar-architect working on his “own” convent.¹⁶³ Examples of friars working outside their own communities indicate a certain amount of mobility, yet there is little evidence that

¹⁶³ See section 5.5.2 of Chapter 5.
supports groups of itinerant workers wandering from one building to the next.164 This combined with chronological impracticalities suggest it is wise to look elsewhere for a common thread.

Alternatively, a friar (or group of friars) may have designed the “prototype” of this group—perhaps S. Agostino in Padua because of its earlier date of 1275—and this template was circulated through verbal descriptions and visual sketches and reproduced (with variations) by other communities (figure 243).165 It is also possible that there was a “genealogy” of friar-workers: that “original” friar-architects, designers, and sculptors trained other members as apprentices to succeed them in future regional works. Both of these scenarios could account for similar plans and designs being “passed down” through generations of architects and designers.

The proximity of the mendicant communities in the Veneto and the frequency with which they interacted must have facilitated a rich architectural and artistic exchange, as proved by the architecture of the orders. Therefore, the role of a recognizable, regional mendicant “identity” should not be underestimated as a source for Dominican architectural choices, not just between sites in Verona, Padua, Treviso

164 A notable exception seems to be the Campania region in southern Italy, where Bruzelius has suggested that “the startling consistency of moldings in the smaller Franciscan churches of Campania…can most sensibly be explained as the work of itinerant Franciscan architectural builders.” Although this practice may very well account for the similarities between the smaller sites in southern Italy, to my knowledge no surviving texts nor material evidence exists to support a more widespread diffusion of this practice. Bruzelius, The Stones of Naples, 60.

165 In 1275, the Dominican community in Padua began to enlarge its church, S. Agostino (destroyed in 1819). In 1275, the friars received 1500 lire for their building program from the commune; in 1293 and again in 1301, the city further contributed to construction with financial gifts totaling approximately 4,000 lire, and the church was completed and consecrated in 1302. Merotto Ghedini has proposed that the building begun in 1275 was not the effort of ex novo reconstruction. She suggested the church was begun in 1226, and that this three-naved church was then enlarged after 1275, with the construction of two transept arms, that extended 6.9 meters. Gasparotto, however, has proposed the construction of two separate buildings: the first, of smaller dimensions, approximately 26 meters long and 12.5 meters wide, would have been constructed between circa 1226 and 1229. This church would have been then enlarged with the addition of lateral naves. See M. Merotto Ghedini, La chiesa di Sant’Agostino in Padova: Storia e reconstruzione di un monumento scomparso (Padova: I. T. I., 1995); C. Gasparotto, Il convento e la chiesa di S. Agostino dei Domenicani in Padova (Padua: Edizioni Memorie Domenicane, 1967). See also Valenzano, “La suddivisione,” 103-104; Dellwing, Studien, 60-63; Gargan, Lo studio, 3-4.
and Venice, but also among other convents in northern Italy. The conceptual model of S. Corona seems to have been a powerful model for subsequent mendicant and non-mendicant building programs in the region, which replicated or reinterpreted certain aspects of the Vicenzan Dominican church according to the respective needs of individual communities and sites. By using rib vaults, pointed arches, and bifore windows in the elevation, the Dominican church of S. Corona introduced some important elements of northern “Gothic” into the visual language of Vicenza and the Veneto (figures 46, 47). The “regional” component may also be responsible for the recurrence of certain features, such as the polygonal apse or the projecting transept, included in the plans of S. Francesco and S. Nicolò in Treviso, S. Corona and S. Lorenzo in Vicenza, S. Antonio in Padua, Ss. Giovanni e Paolo and the Frari in Venice, and S. Anastasia. This factor also may have encouraged the repetition of conceptual elements: the immense lateral expansiveness and the soaring vaults of S. Anastasia, for example, are qualities shared by many of the other Dominican churches in the region.

While it is important to explore the cohesion between these sites, I wish to do so in a way that avoids the typological classifications of the “old” system, which categorizes groups of similar buildings into “family units.” In my opinion, this arrangement supposes a linear development from early sites to later ones without accounting for other non-mendicant influences or local pressures. It seems clear that certain churches seem to have sometimes “set the pattern” that later projects emulated with revisions and that this practice could create “pairs” of churches, such as S. Corona and S. Lorenzo, or S. Anastasia and Ss. Giovanni e Paolo. Yet these groups or pairs of sites must be also considered within a larger, more permeable framework.

166 See for example Cadei, “Si può scrivere” and “Secundum loci conditionem.” Regarding the interactions between houses, see Chapter 7.
167 See, for example, the work of Dellwing, Schenklhun, Romanini, and Cadei.
of architectural influences and exchange. While no one could deny the influence of S. Corona upon the developing plan of S. Lorenzo, for example, there was also a flexible incorporation of other sources and ideas into the new Franciscan design. The reconfiguration of the apse, for example, adheres closely to the newly built structures at S. Anastasia and S. Fermo in Verona, and Dellwing’s analysis of the capitals reveals that the architects of S. Lorenzo were familiar with the earlier, sculpted vegetal capitals of the Humiliati church of Follina; similar forms also appear on those at S. Anastasia and S. Nicolò (figures 224, 244). This indicates that communities also looked beyond the typological models of their Order in the development of their plans.

Local models could also affect decisions to include certain elements as well as provide conceptual models for their configuration. This transmission seems especially obvious in the double portal scheme of the west façade at S. Anastasia, and that of the northern portal at S. Fermo. Both feature pointed arches, an analogous treatment of the lintels and jamb columns, and use similar patterns of colored marble for the archivolts (figures 209, 99). Yet there are also noteworthy differences: at S. Anastasia, the larger frame of the tympanum is subdivided into lunettes corresponding to each doorway, whereas at S. Fermo, the two entrances are united beneath a single tympanum. The Franciscan portal is also smaller than its Dominican counterpart, which is logical given its function as a secondary entrance.

It is unclear which portal was constructed first: neither is documented, and both are more or less contemporary to one another, perhaps with the entrance at S. Anastasia preceding that at S. Fermo by a few years. In any event, I do not wish to incite the “chicken or the egg” question, especially given that what is most interesting

168 See for example, Dellwing, Studien, 80-81.
within the framework of the present discussion is the diffusion and transmission of visual cues. While the double portal is a common feature of medieval architecture north of the Alps, it was rarely used in Italy, which makes the contemporary appearances of this unusual scheme in the Franciscan and Dominican churches in Verona even more noteworthy. Both the use of the unique double portal and the likeness between their programs reveals a level of visual exchange between the two communities. Other details, such as the crocketed gables in the Dominican painted decoration and the design of the exterior cornice seem to confirm that the Franciscan and Dominican communities not only exchanged visual ideas, but that they did so freely, with seeming willingness. This may suggest that the traditional view of ferocious rivalry and competition between the mendicant orders may need to be rethought on a city-by-city basis.

6.9 Towards a Conclusion: The Franciscan and Dominican Convents in Verona

Despite the obvious differences in appearance between the Franciscan and Dominican churches in Verona, there are nonetheless common elements, particularly with regard to site. The two churches sit directly on the right bank of the Adige River, near major bridges, and on opposite sides of Piazza Erbe. There is also a shared concept of the treatment of interior and exterior space. Both churches feature a large, monumental interior (although at S. Anastasia this space is divided into a nave and flanking aisles), a strong predilection for flat wall surfaces, a general rectilinear plan, well-lit, prism-like apses, and smaller windows in the nave.

What may have defined the architectural choices of the Franciscans and Dominicans in Verona? In a general sense, the Franciscan and Dominican Orders in Italy shared an architectural repertoire. This developed at least partially from the
respective mother houses in Assisi and Bologna and included open and simplified architectural plans, expansive wall surfaces, and vaulting in the east end. Although the wider influence of these inaugural buildings seems to have been more powerful among Dominican projects than Franciscan ones, the renovations at S. Fermo illustrate that elements of S. Francesco at Assisi—such as the open, undivided plan and the polygonal choir—could also profoundly affect Franciscan church design.

Along with the influences of the respective orders, there was a strong architectural “dialect” active among mendicant buildings in the Veneto region. This includes, for example, a predilection towards polygonal apses and apsidal chapels and a projecting transept. There is also a shared vocabulary of ornamental elements, seen in the arched cornice decoration, utilized by most of the Franciscan and Dominican regional sites.

Although the diversity of these sites makes analytical systemization difficult, it is nonetheless possible to draw some broad conclusions. In the Veneto, the architecture of the Dominican Order exhibits a greater sense of cohesive continuity than the churches of the Franciscans. The Dominican plans of S. Corona in Vicenza, S. Nicolò in Treviso, S. Anastasia in Verona, S. Agostino in Padua, and S. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice share many important similarities: all of these buildings (except for the Paduan church), for instance, include polygonal apses and chapels (figures 54, 62, 194, 243,). Furthermore, the interiors of each church feature a tripartite division of space that (with the exception of S. Nicolò) is completely vaulted, and (with the exception of S. Corona) is divided into six bays. It may be useful then to think of the basilica plan popularized by the mendicant orders and specifically embraced by Dominican communities in the Veneto—characterized by a large, open plan, vaulting in the east, and a simplified elevation—as a kind of template or guide to which local and Gothic elements could be introduced. In comparison, the architectural plans of
the Franciscan churches in the region are much more varied, and this may be due to their tendency to re-use and modify existing structures, as in Verona, Venice, and Padua.

The common qualities of the Dominican churches in the Veneto may suggest that the Order attempted to control—at least to some degree—the way its buildings looked, and this could explain the Dominicans’ predilection for *ex novo* construction in the region. This may have occurred, as Cannon has proposed, via networks of friars that circulated “preferences” or “suggestions” for building designs and plans.169 Yet the fact that elements shared by Dominican churches in the Veneto are not necessarily the same collective features expressed in Tuscany or Umbria may suggest that this “network” or “control” occurred at a regional, rather than international level, or that the larger architectural principles of the orders were interpreted and clarified within more localized spheres. As I will discuss in the following chapter, surviving documentation indicates frequent communication and collaboration between communities in the region in areas of common interest such as patronage or the Inquisition, and it is reasonable to suggest that this type of cooperation also applied to architecture.

Significantly, the Franciscans and Dominicans were not just looking inwards to their respective orders for architectural inspiration. In Verona, the friars—especially the Franciscans—experimented with some of the elements common to the French Gothic style. Franciscan convents never imitated or revised the plan of S. Francesco in Assisi to the same degree that Dominican buildings looked to S. Domenico, but the Assisi church did establish a precedent for using Northern Gothic

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forms and idioms in Franciscan construction. I have already noted how the Franciscans used a moderated version of the Gothic rayonnant gable along with pinnacles in the design of their apse, and both orders employed pointed and trefoil arches, rib vaulting, and lancet windows in their respective projects, all characteristics expressed in contemporary architecture north of the Alps. Although S. Fermo’s predisposition towards and experimentation with Gothic ideas may have been born of Assisi, the use of elements not incorporated in the mother church, like the apse gables and pinnacles, points to a wider, and independent corpus of sources. Through the application of these features, the Franciscan and Dominican sites offered the first monumental, architectural manifestations of the Gothic vocabulary in Verona.

The incorporation of these elements indicates a perceptive awareness of new architectural language, one the friars utilized to help create a “new” and distinctive style for their local buildings. Indeed, one must image that in fourteenth-century Verona, the Franciscan and Dominican convents were notably different in appearance from other religious sites (and this was probably true for their structures in other Veneto cities as well). At the same time, however, since these projects also included idioms from the traditional, local Romanesque vocabulary—such as thick, flat, expansive wall surfaces, foliate capital types, and cornice decoration—there seems to have been a desire to assimilate or coordinate these sites with the structures of the previous centuries. This is further expressed with the use of materials: the Veronese marmo rosso, the locally produced brick, and locally quarried tufa.

Bonelli has suggested that mendicant buildings exhibit a type of “cause and effect” relationship, one that both balances and expresses historic and contemporary

\[\text{Schenklhnh, Architettura, 42-43}\]
In Verona, the friars’ incorporation of the local architectural traditions, through elements of design, decoration, and choice in materials, helped shaped the appearance of their buildings, more so at S. Fermo, where homage to the architectural past is particularly overt and seems to carry special meaning. Indeed, the design of the Dominican church features neither the bold experimentation with Gothic forms nor the strong visual Romanesque connections that characterize S. Fermo.

Another element that played an important role in the physical shaping of church space in these convents were the relationships between the friars and the city—both its institutions and its people. Evidence suggests that in Verona, the friars designed or reconfigured elements of their convents in order to appeal to or accommodate specific lay practices, such as cult veneration, sermon attendance, and burial: these very critical influences are the subject of the following chapter.

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This chapter explores how local dynamics, economic activities, and social and religious institutions affected the design and appearance of the Franciscan and Dominican convents in Verona. I examine the relationship between the mendicant orders and the other clergy, discussing the friars’ roles as bishops and inquisitors and considering how their position in the local hierarchy may have influenced their architectural vision. I then explore the ways the friars used established local cults to promote devotion to their own communities, and how this practice manifested itself in the configuration of conventual space. The local tertiary congregations and their activities are also investigated, with special focus on their contributions to the friars’ economy and their roles in their building programs. I conclude with a study of the two most important “spiritual transactions”—preaching and burial—and consider how these practices affected the conceptualization and use of religious space.

Many of the themes discussed below—such as preaching, burial, patronage, cult veneration and the Inquisition—are vast and complex topics on which large amounts of literature have already been generated. It is not my purpose to discuss the broad and multifaceted themes of social and religious practice independent of the Franciscan and Dominican convents in Verona. My remarks are primarily confined to the local circumstances of these convents; however, where comparisons are particularly illustrative, other sites in the Veneto region or in Italy are considered. The relationship between the mendicant orders and local structures was one of fluctuation, sometimes characterized by subtle nuances, and in other cases by dramatic shifts of power. Nonetheless, some common currents emerge, and these reveal much about how the friars
designed and used their conventual spaces. Although it is significantly easier to formulate questions about the specific activities and building practices of the friars than to answer them, this chapter can nonetheless illuminate some of the dynamics and pressures that helped fund and shape their monumental construction programs.

7.1 The Friars and the Religious Climate of Verona

7.1.1 The Friars, the Bishop, and the Secular Clergy

Even during his lifetime, Francis realized the potential for conflict between his Order and the secular clerics: his testament from 1221 specifically urged the brothers to love and honor the clergy, and not to preach against their will. In the mid thirteenth century, the papacy granted numerous privileges that allowed the friars to enter into the domain of pastoral activities traditionally held by the parish priests, such as confession and burial. A consequence of these privileges was a perceived loss of spiritual authority on the part of the secular clergy and the diversion of economic resources away from parish churches into mendicant convents, situations that created tensions between the two groups.

Both Orders took measures to alleviate the growing hostility against them. Dominican General Chapters between circa 1240 and 1280 advised the friars to avoid quarreling with parish priests and cathedral canons, particularly in the realm of hearing confessions. Bonaventure addressed these issues in his First Encyclical letter of 1257, remarking that the brothers’ invasion into the area of legacies, burials, and confession

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1 St. Francis, “Testament,” in Francis and Clare, 153-156.
2 See section 7.4 of this chapter for discussion of these bulls.
4 See for example, Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis Praedicatorum, ed. B. M. Reichert (Rome, 1898), 1:15, 24, 63, 143, and 164.
was “causing no small annoyance to the clergy, especially parish priests.” His letter of 1266 provides a harsher reprimand, noting that the

Contentious and greedy intrusion into the domains of burials and legacies, to the exclusion of those to whom the care of souls properly belongs, has made us exceedingly hated by many clergy. We have come to see this from our own experience, and his Holiness Himself…Pope Clement, has expressed the desire to warn all brothers, through me, to be especially careful in this regard.

Despite cautions such as these, friction and hostility continued to brew between the friars and the other clergy, and this occasionally erupted in violence. Late thirteenth-century chronicles record episodes where strife and tension between the friars and the secular clergy even developed into physical conflict, such as the vicious protests of the bishop and clerics of Piacenza against the construction of the local Franciscan convent beginning in 1278. In Salerno in the late 1280s, the cathedral canons interrupted the funeral of a Florentine merchant at the Franciscan church, attacked the friars, and took the corpse to the cathedral for the funeral and burial. Once the ceremony was over, the canons returned to S. Francesco, broke into the church, knocked over the host, stoned the friars, and then dragged some of them naked through the streets.

As Pellegrini has observed, these kinds of sensationalized episodes have created the perception of bitter hostility between the mendicant friars and the bishop and his local clergy. In Verona, however, relations appear to have been consistently harmonious—as far as surviving documentation reveals—and this may suggest that the interactions

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5 Bonaventure, “First Encyclical Letter,” 60.
7 See for example, BF 3, n. 142, 432-435.
8 BF 4, 38. See also Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 204.
between ecclesiastical, parochial, and fraternal communities need to be understood in the context of each city. Despite records of dramatic tensions and discord between the secular and regular clergy, in other cases (such as Verona), there seems to have been coexistence and perhaps even collaboration between these institutions. How did the Franciscans and Dominicans in Verona avoid the serious conflict and discord experienced by friars in cities like Piacenza and Salerno? Is it possible to characterize their relationship with the local secular clergy more specifically? And how did this dynamic affect their architecture?

In Verona, the harmony between these institutions and the mendicant orders seems to have begun with the bishop’s early recognition of their “usefulness,” both to assist with the eradication of heresy and the reform of local clerics. It should be recalled that the cities of northern Italy were fertile grounds for heretical movements in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In Chapter Three, I noted some of the ways that Bishop Jacopo Breganze supported and encouraged the initial processes of settlement of the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Clares in Verona; I suggested that this assistance indicated his cooperation in the spread of orders and perhaps even reflected a genuine collaborative effort between the friars and the traditional clergy. Significantly, the friars’ initial role as “helpers” of bishops developed into the friars themselves becoming bishops; this shift, as well as their increased presence in Inquisition activities, had a profound effect on their status in the city and their economic situation, and these issues are the focus of following sections.

A brief overview of the reform activities among the local clergy and episcopacy can further illuminate the friars’ role as agents of reform and some of the
accompaniments to this dynamic. Miller’s study of religious life in early medieval Verona has revealed that reform of the secular clergy occurred gradually, over the course of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, and sought to correct problems such as the acceptance of untrained or unordained priests and clerical relations with women.\textsuperscript{10} Significantly, records indicate that many of these issues, particularly those related to celibacy, continued into the thirteenth century: in 1219, Bishop Norandinus forbade priests to have concubines, and the bishoprics of Dominican Friar Pietro della Scala (1290-1295) and Augustinian Friar Tebaldo (1298-1331) addressed the issue of clerical celibacy again during their tenures as bishop.\textsuperscript{11}

In the early 1260s, Bishop Manfredo asked the Dominican prior of S. Anastasia to serve on a reform committee for local churches, which also included a cathedral canon and the Franciscan provincial minister.\textsuperscript{12} This may recall the situation in Pisa, where Archbishop Visconti described the mendicants as models for the secular clergy and agents for their reform.\textsuperscript{13} Although little is known about specific Franciscan or Dominican sermons given in Verona, their preaching may have been another key contribution to religious reform. The sermons of St. Anthony were circulated between the cathedral canons and the secular clergy of Padua, suggesting that mendicant models

\textsuperscript{10} Miller, \textit{Formation}, 41-62.
\textsuperscript{12} A document from the early 1260s notes that the prior of S. Anastasia, together with a Veronese canon named Giacomo and the Franciscan provincial minister, Friar Rodolfo, were asked by the bishop to organize and reform the local clerics and churches in the diocese of Verona. ASVr, S. Silvestro, perg. 39. See also Cipolla, “Ricerche storiche II,” 95.
of preaching may have influenced the local secular clergy. A similar transmission of mendicant homilies and teachings, as well as the sermons of local Franciscan or Dominican preachers, may have assisted clerical reform in Verona.

Pellegrini has observed that in some cases conflict between the bishop and the friars did not occur until a community had transferred into the heart of the city, when their physical proximity to the local cathedral (and their construction of large convents) became a more tangible threat to the religious status quo. In Verona, the bishop directly facilitated the relocation of both the Franciscan and Dominican communities from their peripheral sites into the center (as indeed was the case for most of the mendicant communities in the major Veneto centers), thereby encouraging their new building programs. Local bishops also assisted the mendicants by granting indulgences or privileges to assist with construction projects and consecrating their churches and altars.

15 L. Pellegrini, “Vescovi e ordini mendicanti,” in Vescovi e diocesi in Italia dal XIV alla metà del XVI secolo: Atti del VII convegno di storia della chiesa in Italia, Brescia, 21-25 settembre, 1987, ed. G. De Sandre Gasparini (Rome: Herder, 1990), 190-192. Cases of the bishop, clergy, and civic government attempting to thwart the friars’ settlement in the city are especially common in England, as recorded by Thomas of Eccleson, but they also occurred in Italy. At Ascoli Piceno, for example, the Franciscans first settled outside the city in the church of S. Antonio di Campo Parignano. They then tried to move into the city proper, to a location within the walls, but were met with opposition not only from the bishop and his clerics, but also by the commune. In 1257, Alexander IV had to appeal to the government of Ascoli and its people to help the Franciscans construct their new convent, not to be an obstacle in the friars’ sale of their earlier site, and not to oppose their transfer into the city. He also ordered the bishop to protect the friars from the violence of the commune. For more on this episode, see A. Rigon, “Conflitti tra comuni e ordini mendicanti sulle realtà economiche,” in L’economia dei conventi dei frati Minori e Predicatori fino alla metà del Trecento: Atti del XXXI convegno internazionale, Assisi, 9-11 ottobre 2003, ed. E. Menesto (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 2004), 345.
16 Salimbene notes other examples of bishops who expressed favor for the Franciscans. He mentions how Obizzo of San Vitale, bishop of Parma, “rose up in defense of the Minorites and Preachers…and he said that none of those things the two orders were accused of was a hindrance whatsoever to the regular clergy, but rather a help and assistance to them.” In Padua, Rigon has demonstrated that the request for Anthony’s canonization was not only supported by the friars, but by the bishop and his clergy, the podestà, and the “militibus et pololo” of the city. This shows that in Padua there was wide support for the friars (as well as a strong desire for an illustrious local saint). Chronicle, 404. See also Rigon, “Appunti per lo studio,” 185.
17 Bishop Manfredo granted forty-day indulgence for those coming for mass at the Clarissan convent on the second Sunday of the month, so long as they continued to visit the church for eight consecutive days after the service (June 6, 1260; see Maccagnan, Le clarisse, 373).
The situation in Verona suggests that the customary view of constant friction between the friars and the clergy was not always the case. However, although episcopal-mendicant relations in Verona were good, the parochial clergy were not necessarily enthusiastic supporters of the orders, particularly concerning the friars’ role in their reform, which may have understandably created feelings of resentment.

7.1.2 Friars as Bishops

Not only did the bishops initially support the friars, but after several decades, the friars themselves became the bishops, a role that critically shaped their position in the city. The first mendicant elected bishop in Verona was the Franciscan Inquisitor, Timideo Spongati (1275-1279). Timideo was followed by the Humiliati friar, Bartolomeo (1279-1290), the Dominicans Pietro de Scala (1291-1295) and Bonincontro (1295-1298), the Augustinian friar, Tebaldo (1298-1331), and finally, the Dominican Giovanni de Nazo (1349-1350).\(^\text{18}\) The relatively constant presence of friars in the bishopric of Verona beginning in the late thirteenth century indicates that by this time, the orders were fully integrated into the religious life of the city; as Pellegrini observed, the election of a friar to the episcopal throne represented the ultimate verification of their local community.\(^\text{19}\)

In Verona, the activities of the friar-bishops were critical to the vitality of the local mendicant communities. Gasparini in particular has emphasized that the bishops were committed to organizing and creating solidarity between the institutions of their office, the cathedral canons, the parish clergy, and the friars.\(^\text{20}\) The election of mendicants to the bishopric also suggests an agreeable relationship between the friars and the local clergy and may demonstrate collective collaboration on issues such as reform.

\(^{18}\) See Pellegrini, “Vescovi,” and De Sandre Gasparini, “Istituzioni ecclesiastiche.”

\(^{19}\) Pellegrini, “Vescovi,” 198-228.

and the eradication of heresy. Historians frequently credit Franciscan bishop Timideo, for example, with reorganizing the city’s ecclesiastical structures and repairing the relationship between Verona and the papacy post-Ezzolino, perhaps facilitated in part by the massive executions of heretics under his reign.

In the late Middle Ages, the bishop of Verona had jurisdiction over more than eighty towns and settlements around the city. The office thus held an immense amount of ecclesiastical and political power, and the election of friars to this seat says much about their authority in the local religious hierarchy. Indeed, the inclusion of painted busts of local bishops along the ceiling decoration at S. Fermo and the representations of the locally venerated bishop-saint Zeno in S. Anastasia may have been ways for both orders to visually express their connections with this office (figure 210).

7.1.3 The Friars and the Inquisition

In the early 1230s, Gregory IX created the Office of the Inquisition, a special tribunal for eradicating heresy; by the early fourteenth century, the Franciscans controlled this office in the Veneto. In Verona, Franciscans began to combat heresy in the 1260s, a period that, not coincidently, coincided with their transfer to S. Fermo; the community’s involvement in and leadership of local anti-heretical activities was directly related to the

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21 See Pellegrini, “Vescovi,” 222.
22 De Sandre Gasparini, “Istituzioni ecclesiastiche,” 393-404.
23 For the appearance of S. Zeno in the Dominican decoration program, see Appendix 2.
24 In 1308, for example, there were six Franciscan inquisitors (in comparison to one Dominican official) in the region. L. Paolini, “Le finanze dell’inquisizione in Italia (XII-IXV sec.),” in Gli spazi economici della chiesa nell’occidente mediterraneo (secoli XII-metà XIV). Sedicesimo convegno internazionale di studi, Pistoia, 16-19 maggio, 1997 (Pistoia: Centro italiano di studi di storia e d’arte, 1999), 478; A. Vauchez, Ordini mendicanti e società italiana: XIII-XV secolo (Milano: Saggiatore, 1990), 165 (see also the chapter, “Genesi e funzionamento dell’Inquisizione medievale,” 162-170). The thirteenth-century testimony of heretic Armano Pungilupo indicates that in Verona, at least some of the city’s heretical communities were located in the center. In 1267, Pungilupo cites a “domus pro hereticis” or “domus catharorum” in Verona; his description suggests that this house was located off the present day Via S. Anastasia, near Piazza Erbe and the Dominican church. Cipolla also suggested that the contrada of S. Nicolò was an especially popular area for heretics towards the end of the thirteenth city. C. Cipolla, “Il patarenismo a Verona nel secolo XIII,” Archivio Veneto 25 (1883): 268-270.
close proximity of the Inquisition office to S. Fermo, which was literally located next door.

This participation also created an important source of revenue for the S. Fermo community, some of which must have helped fund their renovations. Regional evidence reveals a correlation between the advancement of mendicant building projects and involvement in local inquisition activities: according to a seventeenth-century chronicler, the Franciscans in Vicenza constructed portions of S. Lorenzo with money collected from usurers and heretics, a situation confirmed by the research of Biscardo. The S. Lorenzo community even profited from its own members: after convicting tertiary Federico da Montebello of heresy in the mid 1280s, the Franciscan inquisitors earmarked the money from the sale of his property for their building program. In the case of Padua, Rigon has observed similar correlations between mendicant participation in the local Inquisition and the progress of their respective construction works. Although these kinds of specific records do not survive for Verona, the revenue generated from the Inquisition probably also formed an important source of funding for the renovations of S.

25 Benedetti observed that local inquisitorial activities could directly benefit religious communities—sometimes through legitimate means, other times illegally—including the mendicant orders and the lay confraternities that supported them. M. Benedetti, “Le finanze dell’inquisitore,” in L’economia dei conventi, 390-393.

26 Biscaro has suggested that documentation does in fact confirm the claim by Pagliarini, the seventeenth-century chronicler: the Franciscan community did indeed receive a substantial amount of capital from the sale of confiscated goods and properties and “unjust” gains remitted by usurers. Paolini has calculated that during a two-year period in Vicenza (1300-1301, under the direction of Friar Boninsegna da Trento) the Inquisition tribunal collected 25,524 lire, but gave only about 1,000 lire to the commune. B. Pagliarini, Croniche di Vicenza (Vicenza: Giacomo Amadio, 1668), 151; G. Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori nella marca trevisana (1280-1308),” Archivio Veneto 11 (1932): 151-159; Paolini, “Le finanze,” 474-478. The research of Paolini reveals occasions across the Italian peninsula where friars used inquisition funds to finance their building campaigns, purchase habits, capes, and shoes for the brothers, and help remedy their debt. As Bourdua observed, however, the absence of litigation between the friars and the secular clergy suggests that even in the face of scandal and misconduct, the mendicant orders seem to have been well tolerated in Vicenza. Bourdua, “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage, 113.


Fermo and, perhaps to a lesser degree, S. Anastasia.

There is insufficient documentation regarding the variety of roles that Franciscan or Dominican inquisitors performed in Verona or the specific amounts of income this participation generated. Benedetti has suggested that even “regular” friars assisted inquisitor-friars with administrative duties, and given the proximity of the tribunal office to S. Fermo this seems a practical arrangement, especially for the Franciscans. In at least one instance, the Franciscans converted a piece of land and a house donated by a lay supporter to house inquisitors and conduct investigations and trials. This not only suggests the larger, collaborative involvement of the community, but also reveals the scale of the local Inquisition, which at least in this period exceeded the capacity of the original office.

In a region where the threat of Catharism and other heretical movements was great, local attempts to eliminate unorthodoxy from the city seem to have been equally widespread. In the second half of the thirteenth century, two Franciscans emerged as important inquisition figures: Friar Florasio entered the office in the 1260s followed by Friar Timideo in the following decade. Timideo’s success as an inquisitor may have played a role in his election to the episcopacy in 1275, and he utilized the power and resources of this position to more effectively remove and suppress heretical organizations. Only three years after his appointment, Timideo organized the largest execution of heretics ever recorded in the city of Verona in a major spectacle that

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29 See Benedetti, “Le finanze.”
30 July 31, 1277 and February 22, 1278, ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, b. II, perg. 99-100; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2108. The donation was from doctor Baldassare; it is unclear how long the inquisitors would have used this property. See also Varanini, “L’area,” 88.
included the burning of approximately 200 accused men and women in the Arena.\footnote{Under the leadership of Bishop Timideo (and other officials including Alberto della Scala) these heretics were executed “iverunt Sermionum quod steterat domus ipsorum [hereticorum] longissimo tempore, situm in lacu Gardensi, et ceperunt CLXVI inter hereticos et hereticas et conducti fuerunt Veronam de Voluntate et beneplacito domini Mastini qui tunc erat dominus Verone”….Feb. 13, 1278: “in Arena Verone combusti fuerunt cira duecenti patareni, de illis qui capti fuerunt in Sermiono, et frater Philippus filius domini Pinamontis erat executor.” Many of those executed were brought into the city from nearby Sirmione and Cerea, which were seats of heretical activity in the diocese in the early thirteenth century; Vicenza also had a notorious Cathar house, or a “domus paterinorum.” See Varanini, “Minima hereticilia,” 2, 8-12; Cipolla, “Il patarenismo”; and I vescovi di Verona: Dizionario storico, 60. An earlier execution of heretics preceded that orchestrated by Tebaldo. The execution occurred in 1233 and lasted three days (July 21, 22, and 23), and resulted in the 60 deaths (both men and women, some of which were members of conspicuous families in the city)}

In light of evidence that testifies to an aggressive pursuit of heretics during the same period of the renovations to S. Fermo, did the Franciscans’ role as inquisitors give them a particular power over the lay public, possibly stimulating (or perhaps extorting) donations and bequests? The orchestration of the massive execution of 1278 by Franciscan bishop and inquisitor Timideo must have profoundly affected public perception of the Order.\footnote{For a broad study of how Inquisitors and their activities could instigate intense anger and tension, see G. Geltner, “Mendicants as Victims: Scale, Scope and the Idiom of Violence,” \textit{Journal of Medieval History} 36 (2010): 126-141.} Some probably applauded his hardnosed efforts, but others must have feared the possibility of unjust persecution, a concern not entirely unfounded. Varanini has emphasized that heretical accusations in Verona permeated social boundaries: even important social or political figures were not immune from serious indictments and persecution.\footnote{Varanini, “Minima hereticilia,” 8-12; see also Cipolla, “Il patarenismo.”} Records further reveal that Veronese inquisitors often targeted people whose activities were merely unfavorable, not necessarily heretical, such as usurers or individuals from opposing political factions.\footnote{Varanini, “Minima hereticilia,” 1.} Although cruel, this practice must have been profitable: accused heretics were required to post bail to avoid incarceration, and suspects were often forced to pay fines to prevent formal accusation or
imprisonment. Many local heretics were accused post mortem, when they were conveniently unable to defend themselves; the goods and property of the condemned were then confiscated and resold.

Was the ferocious targeting of usurers or unfavorable political figures by Franciscan inquisitors, at least in part, a (rather draconian) fundraising tactic? This could explain testamentary donations or retributions earmarked to absolve unscrupulous business practices. Both of Castelbarco’s wills, for example, donated cash and property earned from questionable means: “iudico et volo quod omnia que habuissem et haberem de alieno pro usuries, male ablantes et per quemcunque modum habuissem et haberum seu tenerem vel possiderem sive per me sive per alium indebite vel iniuste, solvi restitui et satisfacere debeantur.”

Although these kinds of specific bequests or compensations are not directed to the Franciscan community, they nonetheless reveal a need to confess, correct, and rectify profits made from unfavorable business dealings. This practice may represent a way to “protect” oneself from Inquisition investigations that often also targeted usurers and creditors.

It is perhaps not surprising given the instances of Inquisition “malpractice” in Verona that regional allegations of misconduct occurred. In 1302, the commune and

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36 Ibid. See also Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori”; and Paolini, “Le finanze.”
37 Ibid.
38 Any related fees would have been divided between the local communal government, the bishop and his clergy, and the inquisition tribunal, which, in Verona, was largely controlled by the Franciscan Order. These activities generated an enormous amount of money, making the eradication of heresy a particularly lucrative pursuit. Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori,” 168; Paolini, “Le finanze,” 442.
40 For an understanding of some of these issues play out in Florence, see Trexler, “Death and testaments.”
41 The situation in the region was not unique: numerous Franciscan and Dominican chapters sought to combat excesses and abuses of the Inquisition Office, which suggests corruption was widespread. Both the
the bishop of Padua accused the Franciscan inquisitors at S. Antonio of embezzlement, extortion, and conspiracy. Charges were brought to the papacy, and Paolini suggested that this might reveal larger tensions regarding the division of Inquisition revenue. A few months later, the pope arrested the accused friars and removed them from their roles; he also suspended all Franciscan communities in the Veneto from Inquisition activities, a ruling that suggests a wider investigation into regional abuses of the Office. The following year the papacy reinstated inquisitorial privileges to the Franciscan communities in the Veneto with the exception of the cities of Padua and Vicenza, where Dominican friars appropriated Inquisition responsibilities.

7.2 The Friars and Local Devotional Cults

7.2.1 The Franciscans

As noted in Chapter Five, Bourdua has observed that that the narrative cycle in the upper church at S. Fermo depicts Franciscan-themed subject matter, proposing that the iconographic focus suggests the involvement by the friars themselves. The friars seem to have conceived their ideological program not only to express critical elements of their theology, but also to stimulate devotion to the cult of Francis and the Franciscan

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Dominican general chapter in Florence in 1321 and the Franciscans general chapter at Cahors in 1337 addressed these issues with grave concern. See Paolini, “Le finanze,” 476.

42 See Rigon, “Frati minori, inquisizione e comune a Padova” and Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori.”


44 The accused friars were Boninsegna da Trento and Pietro Bono dei Brusemini, both Franciscans in the Paduan community. In the first part of Boninsegna’s term in the office of Inquisitor (January to June 1302), approximately 9,000 lire (about 2000 of which came from the sale of “heretical” lands) was put into the register. See Biscaro, “Eretici e inquisitori,” 151.

45 Apparently abuses and scandals continued also under Dominican reign; some specific accusations made towards both orders concerned the confiscation of goods from accused heretic and use of their money. Biscaro suggested that the Franciscans were behind the accusations made against the Dominican inquisitors beginning in 1308. For further reading, see Biscaro, “Eretici ed inquisitori,” 151; and Rigon, “Confitti.”

46 According to Bourdua, the unusual portraits of Franciscan friars and scenes from the Life of Francis in the foliate roundels of the Tree of Life (rather than the traditional Christocentric arrangement), was probably intended to promote both the cult of the founder saint and the local Veronese community. Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 51-54. See also Appendix 1.
A unique aspect of this traditional veneration of Francis is the cultivation of a “relationship” between the Franciscan founder and the local saint, Fermo, which the friars accomplished by promoting the “proto-mendicant” or “proto-Franciscan” qualities of Fermo, visually representing the two saints together in their decorative program, and configuring architectural space to encourage public veneration of his relics. This connection seems to have been a critical component of their pursuit of historical legitimacy, which directly affected the friars’ architectural and stylistic choices.

A small number of surviving manuscripts record devotion to the cults of Saints Fermo and Rustico in the fourteenth century. One such manuscript contains meditation or song dedicated to the martyrs and concludes with a mass dedicated to St. Francis, which suggests a Franciscan provenance. Another book, filled with devotional hymns to Fermo and Rustico, features a beautifully illuminated miniature of St. Fermo distributing goods to a poor man along with the accompanying lyrics: “Distribuebat beatus Firmus substantiam suam pauperibus” (figure 245). The context for which this second songbook was commissioned is unknown. While there is nothing in the manuscript to connect it explicitly to the local Franciscan community, the themes of “poverty” and “renunciation” on this page could indicate Franciscan origin, or at least influence. As the guardians of Fermo’s relics and inhabitants of a church founded in his

47 Besides the traditional veneration of Francis, Anthony, and Clare, there was also a specific devotion to St. Louis of Toulouse, to whom the decoration of the south transept cycle (of which only fragments remain) was dedicated. See Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 43-56 for a discussion of this transept imagery.


honor, the creation or invention of a relationship between Fermo and Francis would have been an effective means for the community to connect to the history of their site while, significantly, promoting their own founder saint at the same time.

Since Fermo’s renunciation of his goods to the poor—one of the “offenses for which he was persecuted according to hagiographical tradition—prefigured Francis’s own rejection of wealth, it seems reasonable that the friars would have emphasized this shared connection, promoting his “Franciscan” qualities (perhaps even to the extent that it became a frequently expressed element of Fermo’s fourteenth-century iconography, as illustrated in the manuscript page). This association is illustrated in the Franciscan decorative program, where representations of Francis (and Anthony) are juxtaposed with Fermo and Rustico, in the frescos of the façade and the apsidal vaults (which feature St. Benedict as well) (figure 246; see Appendix 1, 1.1).51 Linking these figures also required the community’s promotion of Fermo’s cult: one of the earliest and most important ways the friars encouraged this veneration was by constructing a public entrance into the lower church off the adjacent street (figure 125). Previously the laity could only access the lower church, where the relics of Fermo were enshrined, by a staircase in the upper church. This new entry therefore granted them easier and more direct contact with the relics and, of course, the Franciscans who guarded them. 52

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51 See also Chapter Five, section 5.3.4.
52 Although Franciscan efforts may have promoted devotion to Fermo by facilitating access to his relics and connecting him with the popular figure of Francis, there does not seem to have been any significant “revival” of his cult, as evidence suggests a continued and steady affection for the martyr-saint throughout the Middle Ages. The construction of two new churches dedicated to Fermo from this period—S. Fermo Minore (1139) and S. Fermo in Braida (1389)—attest to continued devotion during this period. S. Fermo Minore was the church where the Benedictine monks were begrudgingly transferred when the Franciscans acquired S. Fermo Maggiore; S. Fermo Minore in Braida was the third Benedictine convent, the home of the monks after the demolition of the conventual buildings of their second site, S. Fermo Minore.) See F. Segala, “Documenti liturgici del culto dei Santi Fermo e Rustico (secoli VIII-XIII),” in I santi Fermo e Rustico, 25-38.
7.2.2 The Dominicans

As revealed in their architectural choices, the Dominicans seem to have been less concerned with establishing connections to the local religious history and more focused on promoting the visual cues associated with their own Order. As expected, material evidence supports a strong devotion to the cult of the Peter Martyr, although there is also some indication of the veneration of local saints such as Zeno and Anastasia. The early fifteenth-century pairing of Peter Martyr with Zeno above the west portal may represent an attempt to stimulate devotion to the cult of Peter Martyr, which does not seem to have gained any significant momentum with the laity until the very end of the fourteenth century (figure 210). The pairing of Zeno and Peter Martyr in an interior votive fresco also reflects this emphasis; even though a lay patron commissioned this work, the representation of these figures may suggest a little Dominican direction (see Appendix 2, 2.3 and figure 247).

The friars elected to dedicate their new convent to former Inquisitor Peter Martyr by the early fourteenth century, a move that was surely related to the friars’ own fight against heresy. But the dedication must have also been a way for the Dominican community to associate itself with a canonized Dominican friar who was from the city of Verona. Even though the church was officially consecrated in honor of Peter Martyr, the friars continued to refer to the church by its original name of S. Anastasia. This may have been another way to affiliate the new Dominican convent and its community with the local religious history, a reading supported by multiple representations of St. Anastasia in the interior votive decoration (see Appendix 2, 2.3 and figures 241, 275, 276).

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53 Peter Martyr was not given an official feast day (April 29) until 1427.
7.3 The Friars, Penitential Communities, Confraternities, and the Third Order

The arrival of the mendicants in Verona in the first part of the thirteenth century profoundly transformed the pious practices of the laity. By developing a distinctly urban spirituality that included pastoral activities, spiritual guidance, and preaching in the vernacular, the mendicant orders encouraged the public to participate more directly in religious life. In addition to visiting the churches and attending the sermons of the friars, giving alms, and making confessions, laymen had opportunities to experience religious life on a more intimate level by joining a lay religious order. Inasmuch as the friars created occasions for spiritual growth and religious participation for members of their lay communities, these organizations provided special assistance to the friars, particularly with regard to financial affairs. The following section considers the development of penitential and tertiary communities in Verona, emphasizing their role in the friars’ economy. As the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, based loosely on the model of the Franciscan Third Order, did not receive papal approbation until 1406, my focus is on the lay community affiliated with the Franciscans.54

Groups of tertiaries, penitents, and confraternities are often indistinguishable from one another in documents, and a lay congregation associated with the Franciscans (or Dominicans) frequently developed or evolved into a tertiary group with official ties to the convent, as was the case in Verona.55 Although the Order of Penitents received an

54 Although the Dominican lay order had forerunners in the thirteenth century, very little documentation of their early activities in Verona or in the Veneto survives.
55 D’Alatri, for example, is convinced that Francis and his brothers, with their preaching, promoted a penitential movement, for which Francis and/or the papacy, ordered a forma vitae, which was the penitential order recorded by Bonaventure. Thus, D’Altri (and Gasparini, in the case of Verona) argue for an “evolution” of the penitential movement into that of the Third Order (marked by an “official” link with the Franciscans). M. D’Alatri, “Il terzo ordine,” in Francesco, il Francescanesimo e la cultura della nuova Europa, ed. I. Baldelli and A. M. Romanini, (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1986), 123. See
official rule from Nicholas IV in 1289, Francis himself is usually credited with the concept of its organization. In a letter dated to about 1214, Francis expanded the notion of religious life to include lay people and married couples, and medieval sources such as Jordan da Spira, Thomas of Celano, and Bonaventure speak of the “Three Orders” founded by Francis. Because the principal theme preached by Francis was penance, the lay men and women who entered into formal association with the Franciscans were frequently referred to as brothers and sisters of penance. These groups attended mass together, confessed their sins at least twice a year, and observed the same fasts as the friars. They also carried out cooperative works of charity: the tertiary group in Verona, for example, managed a hospital throughout the fourteenth century.

The precise origins of the penitential movement in Verona are unclear. The research of Gasparini had determined a group of “fratres de penitencia” living near the early Franciscan convent of S. Croce/S. Francesco by 1249, intimately linked to the community at this time, but probably not formally affiliated with the friars. In the

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Also De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti a Verona.”

56 Supra montem of 1287.

57 Thomas of Celano for example records how a woman from Cortona sought help from Francis to live a religious life in her married state. Celano writes that the friars advised married men and women to live lives of penance together in their own homes; this concept sometime included vows of celibacy within marriage. D’Alatri, “Il terzo ordine,” 120-121.


59 On April 9, 1337, Antonio di Giascomino, a shopkeeper in the contrada of the Fratta—right outside the Porta Romana of S. Zeno, near the Arena—gave the brothers “a scheduzolo tertii ordinis domus Sancti Francisci de Verona” a house that had been built as a hospital for the sick and pilgrims three years earlier, in the contrada of S. Maria della Fratta, near the church of Ss. Apsotoli—Via Fratta, 12—no longer in existence. See De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti,” 279-281.

60 As Gasparini has noted, terminology creates problems for the study of confraternities, penitential movements and congregations, and the tertiaries; many terms can be used for denote these groups besides the traditional “collegiums” “congregation,” “consorciurn,” and “fratalea,” including “pinzocari” (used around Florence and Rome), “de Bechetis” (a term from Perugia), “scueçolo” (for Verona), “de schudezolo” (Ferrara), and “fraters a scheuto” (for Padova). Gasparini also suggests that the term “scueçolo” also carries the connotation of a flagellant. See De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti,” 271-272.

61 Document from March 2, 1249. See De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti,” 270, and “Il
surviving documentation of Verona, members of the “fratres de penitentia” are most usually recorded as representatives of or “assistants” to Franciscan friars, helping them with administrative duties and handling money. For example, a tertiary named Corrado, “frater...de ordini fratum de penitencia a sceuçolo,” served as procurator for the community during their acquisition of the property next door to their convent in 1249.

The size of the group is unknown, but Gasparini has suggested that it was probably small, since the presence of “frater Iacobus” from Vicenza, and “fratres Johannes Pocapaia et Iacobus” from Venice were recorded at the General Chapter meeting in Bologna in 1289,

c convento,” 115. Tertiaries often arranged themselves within proximity to mendicant churches; between 1250 and 1260, women in Florence became especially attracted to the concept of the lay penitential life. They dedicated themselves to charity, penance, and prayer, and began to gather around S. Croce. By 1299, an abbess was appointed to govern the women. See A. Rigon, “I laici nella chiesa Padovana del duecento: Conversi, oblati, penitenti,” Contributi alla storia della chiesa padovana nell’età medioevale 11 (1979): 68.

De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti,” 278. Rigon’s study of the better-documented penitent community in Padua may be a useful comparison for thinking about similar groups in Verona. In Padua, a group of “fratrum de penitencia” associated with the Franciscans was active at least by 1245. By the 1260s, documents regarding the penitents were usually written “in capituolo monasterii fratrum Sancti Antonii di ordini minorum,” demonstrating that throughout the thirteenth century, the penitents were closely tied to the Franciscan community. In 1268, fifteen members were recorded in the congregation; in 1296, there were thirteen lay men and women. The social background of the tertiaries seems to have been fairly uniform: members were artisans, merchants, and other various “middle-class” professions including wool workers and shopkeepers, and in general, they lived near the Franciscan convent, in the contrada of S. Antonio. D’Altri suggests, however, that in the more general sense, the social background of penitents was extremely diverse, ranging from members of the nobility, merchants and bankers, to barbers, cooks, manual laborers, and even the poor. He also notes that they occasionally held various civil service positions, including those dealing with administrative, political, or diplomatic tasks—both Onorio III and Gregory IX extended their freedoms, allowing them to work in administrative, urban, political, diplomatic, civic services, or charitable fields. In Bologna and Perugia, the brothers worked administrative jobs within the communal administration; at Siena, they were associated with the customs office; in Perugia they supervised the construction of city walls, bridges, gates, religious buildings, and the repair of the city walls (See D’Altri, “Il terzo ordine,” 126-127). Rigon noted that about half of the members were originally from Padua, while the other half were either from the surrounding countryside or nearby cities such as Trento, Verona, and Milan. This not only illustrates the large movement of people from the countryside into the city, but may also suggests that that lay religious initiatives helped outsiders integrate into local urban life. In the convent, friars frequently appointed confraternity members to the role of “custodian” to assist the friars with administrative duties and represent the community in its affairs. Of the approximately five known names of Franciscan custodians in Padua in the thirteenth century, at least two of them were members of the “congregatione fratrum de penitentia.” Documentation reveals a close network of collaboration between the Franciscan and penitent communities in Padua, especially in financial and administrative affairs, and a similar partnership seems to have also characterized the relationship between the friars and their lay members in Verona. See Rigon, “I laici nella chiesa.”

De Sandre Gasparini, “Per la storia dei penitenti,” 271.
but there is no corresponding representative of the penitents of Verona.  

Because the Franciscan Rule forbade the friars’ involvement with money, a third party was required for financial transactions: the Rule of 1223 created this practice by inventing the *amicus spiritualis*, an agent who would physically handle money and related financial transactions on behalf of the friars. Subsequent papal legislation expanded this original vision, loosening the restrictions on the position and its activities, and thereby the standard of poverty practiced by Franciscan communities. In 1230, for example, Gregory X’s *Quo Elongati* introduced the figure of the *nuntis*, who was an agent of the almsgiver.  

A lay penitent or tertiary most frequently fulfilled the positions of the *amicus spiritualis* and the *nuntis*.  

After the friars’ transfer to S. Fermo in 1260, lay penitents appear more frequently in documentation as procurators, syndics (or deputies), or other official representatives of the friars in transactions such as property acquisition, donations, or rental agreements. This not only reflects the increase in economic activities that accompanied the friars’ relocation into the city center, but it also indicates the growing importance of the role of the penitential members, who were essential for the procurement and subsequent management of the land and funds necessary for the initial stages of expansion and renovation of S. Fermo. A notable tertiary in Verona during this period was Friar Porceto, who fulfilled a variety of administrative roles between 1273 and the 1320s.

64 Ibid., 277. Gasparini does note that one could possibly justify their absence because the Veronese congregation was included in the province of S. Antonio; they were represented by “frater Grandonius de Padua.” D’Alatri suggested that the size of the penitential congregation was directly related to the number of friars, and indeed this may indicate a relatively small, exclusive group of friars at S. Fermo in Verona. Penitent congregations could range from a modest to large size. In Spoleto in 1301, approximately twenty penitents were recorded; in Bologna, there were fifty-seven names in 1252, and seventy-nine names in 1288. The community in Florence had approximately ninety-seven members 1230 and 1300; in Prato, there was an average number of sixty members in the thirteenth century, two-thirds of which were women. See D’Alatri, “Il terzo ordine” 124-125, and Rigon, “I laici nella chiesa Padovana,” 68.

65 This privilege was expanded by Innocent IV’s *Ordinem Vestrum* in 1245.
including syndic, executor, “operator of acquisitions,” and “locatore” of property. He alone was responsible for a significant portion of the financial transactions of the Franciscan community in the early fourteenth century, revealing the necessity of this community to the friars’ economy. Records suggest that personal and familial incentives may have also helped spur his industriousness on behalf of the S. Fermo: one of his sons served as a notary for the Franciscans, the other as a syndic and procurator, and his nephew was a member of the Order.

The first record to describe the Veronese community as a “Third Order” is a testament of 1310 that represents a certain Bonifacio as a member of the “terz’ordine dei frati di penitenza.” Thus, by this time, the group of lay penitents first recorded in 1249 had been “institutionalized” and formally associated with the Franciscan community at S. Fermo. Their official affiliation seems to have had little effect on the services they provided for the friars: they continued to represent the convent most frequently and effectively in economic affairs. Evidence also reveals that tertiaries—especially those in prestigious roles, such as syndics or procurators—travelled extensively within the region on Franciscan business. A will of 1297, for example, records Friar Porceto at S. Lorenzo in Vicenza serving as an executor. In light of their mobility, it may also be useful to consider tertiaries as important mediums for the circulation of architectural plans and sketches between communities.

Tertiaries also served similar roles for the Clarissan community at S. Maria delle

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66 See for example, De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 111. Friar Porceto is usually referred to as “Pistor,” a Veronese term for fornaio, or baker.
68 ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, perg. 204; De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 114.
69 Archivio Sartori II/2, 2282. Friar Avezuto di Padova and Friar Enrico, the leader of the tertiary congregation in Vicenza, were also present.
Vergini, and they may have used their influence and position to help channel the donations of testators to the friars through the women, who could legally receive goods and money. By the end of the fourteenth century, there was a decrease in donations to the friars, which, perhaps not coincidentally, corresponds to a marked rise in donations to the Clares at S. Maria delle Vergini. Since the friars had complete jurisdiction over the Clarissan community, they not only had access to all funds, properties, and goods donated to the convent, but they were also responsible for determining their distribution via the tertiaries in charge. This arrangement would have allowed Franciscans to avoid criticisms that accompanied large bequests while still reaping the benefits of these donations. In this way, the Clarissan community in Verona may have served as a kind of “intermediary” for testamentary bequests to the friars, who in turn, may have encouraged donations to the female community for their own benefit.

The Franciscans at Padua seem to have established a similar arrangement: the research of Bourdua has revealed that the Lupi family donated the land and money that served as endowments for a chapel in S. Antonio to the Clares of the Aracella instead of directly to the friars.

There was an inherent element of reciprocity in the relationship between the tertiaries and the Franciscans: the friars created opportunities for the lay members to live a more religious life in the secular sphere, and these men and women performed or facilitated certain secular duties on behalf of the friars. In this way, the congregation of

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70 On April 14, 1305, for example, Friar Viviano was the recorded syndic for S. Maria delle Vergini. ASVr, S. Maria delle Vergini, perg. 3; Maccagnan, Le Clarisse, 379. For figures regarding this increase, see Rossi, “I frati minori,” 127.
71 The community at S. Fermo may have been, at least to some degree, self-conscious about their breaches of poverty and therefore tried to develop alternative (and less conspicuous) means of accepting large donations. Indeed, surviving documentation hints to efforts by the Franciscans to preserve their title of “fratres paupertatis.” See for example, De Sandre Gasparini, “Il convento,” 118.
73 Ibid., 111-112; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2318. Although there are no documents of females performing
penitents or tertiaries provided a “legal” way for the Franciscan community to use and access money to accomplish their various initiatives, one of the most important being their building campaign.\textsuperscript{74}

### 7.4 The “Spiritual Transactions” of the Friars

#### 7.4.1 Preaching

The role of the friars in preaching, confession, and penance transformed the religious climate of Verona in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Erickson observed that the friars were “quite simply the most visible, most accessible dispensers of the Christian sacraments,” and this may have had as much to do with their eagerness to perform the sacraments outside as their omnipresence in the urban landscape.\textsuperscript{75} How did the friars use or manipulate the physical space of their convent to accomplish their missionary objectives?

In 1227, Gregory IX granted the Dominican Order the right to preach and hear confessions; four years later, the Franciscans received this same privilege from the bull *Nimis Iniqua*.\textsuperscript{76} It was critical that the papacy had extended these privileges collectively: preaching was the most effective catalyst for confession and repentance, and the ultimate

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\textsuperscript{74} See A. Vauchez, “Penitenti laici e terziari in Italiana nei secoli XII e XIV” and “Una campagna di pacificazione in Lombardia verso il 1233: L’azione politica degli Ordini Mendicanti nella riforma degli statuti comunale e gli accordi di pace,” from *Ordini mendicanti e società italiana: XII-XIV secolo*, 206-220 and 119-161, respectively. See also De Sandre Gasparini, “La Pace in Antonio e nella “devotio” dei mendicanti del 1233,” *Studia Patavina* 28 (1981): 503-509.

\textsuperscript{75} Erickson “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and Their Critics I,” 145.

\textsuperscript{76} In 1250, Innocent IV’s *Cum a Nobis* expanded the friars’ original privilege of preaching and hearing confession, and in 1254, the bull *Etsi animarum* allowed the friars to administer the sacraments of penitence without seeking or receiving jurisdiction from the local bishop.
goal of the mendicant preacher was to arouse these actions from his lay audiences.\textsuperscript{77} An anecdote from Thomas of Eccleston reveals the strong correlation between the pulpit and the confessional: he recalls the sermons of a certain Friar Aymon who “preached so movingly that so many delayed to communicate until they had confessed to him, and so he sat for three days in the church hearing confessions.”\textsuperscript{78} As Humbert of Romans observed, “as the seed is planted in preaching, the fruit is harvested in confession.”\textsuperscript{79}

Because some mendicant communities faced a tenacious secular clergy, they had difficulties maintaining these privileges: as a result, in 1237, Gregory IX demanded that bishops allow the friars to preach to the faithful and to hear confession.\textsuperscript{80} With Martin IV’s \textit{Ad fructus uberes} of 1281, the friars received absolute liberty for pastoral activities, including the right to hear confessions, as long as the individual also confessed once a year to his or her parish priest. In order to maintain peaceful relations with the secular clergy, some popes intermittently attempted to limit some of the activities of the friars. Bonifice IV’s \textit{Super Cathedram} (1300), for example, granted the mendicants the right to preach freely in their own churches and in public places, but stipulated that they could not do so in parish churches, nor could they hear confessions or perform burials without the permission of the secular clergy. The bull also required that the friars pay a fourth of the income from derived from burial fees to the local diocesan clergy.\textsuperscript{81}

In 1260s, the Alleluia movement, a lay, urban penitential initiative swept across

\textsuperscript{78} Thomas of Eccleston, \textit{The Friars}, 40.
\textsuperscript{79} Humbert of Romans, \textit{Humberti di Roma nis de Eruditione Praedicatorum}, xxi. See also Little, \textit{Religious Poverty}, 190.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Quoniam abundavit iniquitas} of 1237.
\textsuperscript{81} To see how this (and other law regarding burial) played out in fourteenth-century Venice, see Trexler, “Death and Testaments.”
the Italian peninsula. In the Veneto region, Dominican Friar Giovanni da Vicenza was the protagonist of this program, a central feature of which was the preaching of the friars. Salimbene recalls that during the Alleluia, the friars offered sermons “at evening, morning, and noon…and the crowds of people made stops in the churches and in the squares, lifting up their hands to God in praise and blessing forever and ever.”82 Voluntary flagellation en masse by the urban laity frequently followed these sermons, and Gasparini has suggested that in the Veneto region, the friars (especially the Dominicans) were the primarily catalysts of this initiative.83 Salimbene’s account reveals how contemporaries linked the practice of self-flagellation to penance and confession. He recalls that

The flagellants arose throughout the whole world, and all men, both small and great, noble and common, went in procession, naked, whipping themselves through the cities, led by the bishops and men in religious orders. And peace was made, and men restored their ill gotten gains. And so many went to confess their sins that the priests scarcely had time to eat.84

Gasparini has proposed that the friars’ central presence in the Alleluia movement—particularly through preaching, hearing confession, and granting penance—helped strengthen the relationship between the laity and the mendicant communities in Verona and other cities across the Veneto region. The Alleluia movement, which thrust the friars so prominently into the roles of preaching and confession may also have, along with their central relocation, manifest itself in the contemporary rise in donations.

An important aspect of mendicant preaching for this study concerns where the

82 Salimbene, Chronicle, 47-48.
83 De Sandre Gasparini, “Il movimento delle confraternite,” 370. As a form of penance, self-flagellation had its beginnings in the West in the eleventh-century eremitical movement inspired by Peter Damian. With regard to the Alleluia, Little cites how communal governments set weeks aside for processions of people engaged in the discipline. Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity, 54.
84 Salimbene, Chronicle, 478.
sermons took place rather than what specific themes the friars preached. The Franciscans and Dominicans revolutionized contemporary religious practices by preaching outdoors and in the vernacular, and in Verona, this practice shaped the configuration of their conventual spaces as well as their approach to construction. Christ was the first outdoor preacher of the Gospel, but for the Franciscans, Francis—who on at least one occasion preached in a piazza—also provided a model for preaching al fresco. Salimbene provides numerous illustrations of this practice in his own time: he recounts that in Parma, Friar Gerard of Modena delivered sermons from a “specially constructed platform in the square,” and that Friar Bertold spoke from “wood tower built like a bell tower which he used in the fields as his pulpit [that had] a wind-indicator [on top], so that the people could tell by the direction of the wind where to sit in order to hear best.”

It was essential that preaching occur in open and visible places where the friars could best attract the attention of the laity. Nonetheless, the practice was subject to criticism: even Humbert of Romans admonished that “it is not appropriate to teach in undignified places as some people do, preaching in markets and busy streets, and at

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85 With regard to Verona, very little is known about the specifics of mendicant preaching in terms of subject matter or specific sermons and preachers. It is reasonable to imagine, however, that the principal themes reflected the larger Franciscan and Dominican tendencies such as preaching in the vernacular and emphasizing subject of penance. Rusconi has argued that mendicant preaching specifically encouraged people to make penitence in order to receive salvation, noting that St. Anthony encouraged that preaching should not only be limited to Sundays and feast days, but also throughout Lent. Anthony’s preaching was likewise oriented to prepare one for confession for their sins—in one sermon, he stated that “Preaching is like a horn that calls war against vice.” Mendicant preaching was inextricably linked to a call for penitence, which was, in turn, linked to the receipt of the Eucharist. Rusconi does note, however, that the friars also addressed issues of public interest, such as social and economic problems, riches, prices, and relationships between the usurer and the merchant. Rusconi, L’ordine dei peccati: La confessione tra medioevo ed età moderne (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002), 109, 114-115. For further reading on mendicant preaching see Rusconi, “Predicatori e Predicazione (secoli XI-XIII),” in Intellettuali e potere, ed. C. Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 984-985; and D’Avray, The Preaching of the Friars.


87 Salimbene, Chronicle, 109, 566. Although Thomas of Eccleston and Jordan of Giano discuss preaching activities in their respective texts on Franciscan communities in England and Germany, significantly, neither chronicler mentions preaching outdoors. This may indicate that outdoor preaching was a practice that occurred primarily in the warmer climates of the Italian peninsula.
fairs.”\textsuperscript{88} Although some contemporaries deemed these kinds of public spaces “undignified” or inappropriate, the piazza in front of the mendicant church seems to have been an acceptable place to address large crowds and even offer the sacraments, as the papal privilege of portable altars indicates.\textsuperscript{89} Later medieval images of preaching friars often show them outside addressing the crowd from wooden pulpits in front of a church façade. Sano di Pietro’s painting of St. Bernardino preaching in front of S. Francesco in Siena (1427), the panel of a Dominican sermon by Agnolo degli Erri (c. 1470), or the detail of St. Vincent preaching from the altarpiece in Ss. Giovanni e Paolo by Veneto artist Giovanni Bellini (1464) are just some of the many images that represent this practice (figures 248-250).\textsuperscript{90} Preaching in the piazza seems to have been a common mendicant practice, preferred over preaching in the market place where, as Humbert said, “men are already busy…with worldly occupations, so it is liable to undermine their respect for the world of God to preach [in the market].”\textsuperscript{91}

The space of a mendicant piazza had many functions and, at least in Italy, it seems that the exterior space around the church and convent may have been as important as the lay spaces of the interior. As noted in the previous chapters, the recent research of Bruzelius has suggested rethinking the traditional spatial conception of the mendicant

\textsuperscript{88} Humbert of Romans, \textit{Early Dominicans}, 89.

\textsuperscript{89} This privilege was first granted in 1227 (\textit{A nobis humiliter postulastis}) by Gregory IX and renewed again in 1228 (\textit{Nos attendentes}) and 1230 (\textit{Quo Elongati}). BF I, 28, no. 3; I, 41, no. 23; Landini, \textit{The Causes of the Clericalization}, 60, n. 16, 61, n. 19. See also Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” and Rusconi, \textit{L’ordine dei peccati}.

\textsuperscript{90} See for example, \textit{Saint Bernardino Preaching in Front of S. Francesco in Siena}, by Sano di Pietro, 1427, tempera on panel, hall of the cathedral chapter, Siena; \textit{A Dominican Preaching}, attributed to Agnolo degli Erri, c. 1470, tempera on panel, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien; \textit{St. Vincent Ferrari Preaching}, from the Polytech of San Vicenzo Ferrari, by Giovanni Bellini, 1464, Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.

\textsuperscript{91} Indeed, many sources note that when Francis preached to the bishop of Terni, he did so outside, in the piazza. See for example, Pasztor, “La chiesa dei Frati Minori,” and the volume of \textit{Early Dominicans} (esp. the texts by Humbert of Romann).
church. Instead of only two liturgical spaces of the friars’ choir and the lay church, Bruzelius proposed that there was also an “outside church” utilized for preaching and the sacraments. She suggested that “with the mendicants ‘the church’ meant something different than what it had been before: a ‘church’ was perhaps more ‘permeable,’ perhaps ‘less separate,’ and probably consisted less of a strict separation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside.’” Architectural evidence confirms that in Verona, there was indeed a third “outdoor” church for both the Franciscans and the Dominicans, and that this space was critical to their respective missions.

An important early goal in the design of S. Anastasia seems to have been maximizing visibility of and public accessibility to their new complex. They approached this objective in two primary ways, the first of which involved planning and orienting their church and conventual buildings—including, significantly, the external space of the piazza—in relation to surrounding thoroughfares and other important sites. The friars aligned their church to the course of the Decumanus maximus (present-day Corso Porta Borsari-Corso S. Anastasia), the major east-west road of the city established in Antiquity that remains today (figures 27, 251). Running eastward from the city gate (Porta Borsari) in a straight line, this street passes the north end of Piazza Erbe before terminating directly into the piazza of S. Anastasia. The precision of this arrangement is such that the western portal entrance is centered almost perfectly on the axis of this thoroughfare. The friars thus utilized elements of the urban topography to create a prominent and direct approach into their convent.

The second way the Dominicans increased the public appeal of their site occurred

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92 Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
93 Ibid. See also the works of Hubert, cited in Chapter 4, note 91.
94 Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 212-213.
through the reconfiguration and demolition of existing elements. Around 1292, the friars razed at least one building near their construction site in order to widen the street leading to their convent. This act reveals that for the S. Anastasia community, the act of design was not restricted to the traditional elements of church and convent: the friars also planned, organized, and reconfigured the urban spaces surrounding their convent according to specific objectives, ones that not only included appealing to the lay public, but also facilitated public religious activities. The early date of this demolition also illustrates that shaping exterior sites was an early priority of construction, perhaps even preceding work on the church itself.

A parallel to the situation at S. Anastasia may lie in the more thoroughly documented piazza of S. Maria Novella in Florence (figure 252). When the Dominicans in Florence inherited the eleventh-century church, they petitioned the city for permission to enlarge the space of the piazza before beginning construction of their new church. The Florentine commune granted their request, but also guaranteed that the Dominican piazza at S. Maria Novella would forever remain open for the preaching of the friars, indicating that both the city and the friars recognized that control of this exterior space was critical to the Dominicans’ vocation. In Florence, construction of the piazza took priority over that of the actual church buildings, and a similar sequence seems to have characterized the building process in Verona. In both cases, a larger piazza would have allowed the Dominicans to preach freely to crowds while their churches were under construction.

Because S. Anastasia remained unfinished for such an extended period, the friars must

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95 See Chapter 6, note 65. The precise location of this house is unknown, but the document states it was located in the parish of Chiavica, which was adjacent to the southern conventual boundary, running from the river almost to Piazza Erbe (on the southern side of the Decumanus maximus). See figure 191.
96 See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 212.
have used the piazza and other exterior spaces around the convent extensively for preaching and offering the sacraments, as is proved by a relief panel on the façade of a friar addressing a crowd outdoors from a portable pulpit (figure 213).

Could public performances of the sacraments and sermons have held other advantages besides bringing passersby to confession and penance? Was there a certain economic value to staging religious activities outdoors? Bruzelius observed that a conspicuously unfinished church would have been an effective backdrop for a friar preaching in the piazza from his wooden pulpit; homilies on penance preached in front of this kind of monumental demonstration of poverty must have resonated deep within the pockets of the lay audience.97 Given this potential for donations, is it possible that the economic advantages of an incomplete church had become factors in the prolonged pause in Dominican construction? I presented strong evidence in the previous chapter that neither financial problems nor plague-related labor shortages contributed to the interruption in building works. Did the construction of the friars’ own liturgical choir and the use of (and perhaps “profit” from) the “outdoor church,” render the completion of the public, lay space of the nave less urgent? Rather than a cooperative solution to revive a stagnant construction program, the commune’s involvement with the Dominican works in the early fifteenth century may have been a response to a perceived nonchalance about the unfinished state of the friars’ project, perhaps related to the financial benefits of their “outdoor church.” The appointment of the Consiglio by the commune to supervise and advance the building campaign and the changes they imposed upon the façade design seem to indicate a “takeover” rather than a partnership, perhaps reflecting frustration with the dormant state of the works. Insufficient records prevent further speculation, but one

97 Ibid., 209.
thing is clear: the longevity of the building campaign meant that outdoor spaces were a fundamental aspect of the local Dominican mission during the fourteenth century.

Although the piazza seems to have been the most popular site for outdoor preaching, the mendicant orders utilized other exterior spaces as well. At the Franciscan church at Pola in Croatia, for example, the friars constructed a pulpit above the street on the south flank of the nave (figure 253). This rare surviving example of an external pulpit is one way that the friars would have addressed passersby or gathering crowds in the street below. At S. Fermo, the friars may have constructed their elevated north portal to serve as both an entrance and a “preaching platform”—a more monumental version of external pulpits, like the one that survives at Pola. In the same way that the Croatian pulpit facilitated preaching to the traffic on the street below, the north portal platform at S. Fermo would have provided an elevated podium from which the friars could address crowds in the adjacent busy thoroughfare between the port and market (figure 144).

If one could “erase” the later addition of the Madonna chapel, then the preaching potential of this podium becomes even more apparent. As the reconstruction of the fourteenth-century plan in figure 148 illustrates, the portal platform was once an isolated appendage, jutting out from the north flank into the public space of the street. This original arrangement would have not only facilitated gathering crowds around its structure, but would have been more visible from the port, bridge, and market. Like their Dominican neighbors, the Franciscans’ manipulation of exterior space seems to have also been an early construction priority, and the monumentality of both projects may even suggest that public preaching was a way for the mendicant orders to “counter” the liturgical processions of the bishop and his cathedral canons, which were likewise
outdoor, visible, and splendidly dramatic.  

The exterior spaces of both the Franciscan and Dominican convents thus appear to have held immense liturgical importance. Because the friars utilized the exterior of their churches in these ways, the interior liturgical space may have been less important for friars than it was for the other clergy. This is not to say, however, that church interiors sat empty and unused: preaching also occurred indoors, particularly during the cold months of winter. At S. Fermo, patron Barnaba da Morano commissioned the first recorded pulpit, which was installed in the center of the upper church in 1396 (figure 174). The late date of this pulpit and the apparent absence of a medieval pulpit at S. Anastasia suggest that during the fourteenth century inside preaching occurred elsewhere, probably from the tramezzo. The evidence for two-storey tramezzo structures in both churches would have facilitated their use for sermons to the gathering laity.

7.4.2 Burial

Until the thirteenth century, burial of the Veronese laity primarily occurred in public cemeteries outside the city walls. Church burial was reserved for the nobility, the very wealthy, or the highest members of the clergy, and usually occurred in monasteries outside of town. The mendicant orders presented the first significant alternative to this status quo, extending the privilege of burial outside the confines of the

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98 Da Lisca proposed that the opening of the portal entrance and the corresponding platform and stairway occurred in the first years of the fourteenth century, but that the sculptural and painted decoration of the archivolts and tympanum happened several decades later. Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 69-71.

99 It is possible that there may have been an earlier, temporary pulpit, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Morano pulpit replaced a previous structure.

100 As noted in the previous chapter, archeological excavations have revealed that the area to the southeast of the Porta Leone, including the zone around the cloister and apse of S. Fermo functioned as a necropolis beginning in Antiquity. See Chapter 5, note 7, as well as M. Delle Rose, “Cimitero,” in Enciclopedia dell’arte medievale, IV, ed, by E. Treccani (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana), 770-785.

101 Many of the city’s illustrious bishops were buried in S. Zeno, and tradition states that King Pippin (d. 810) was buried in the cloister. Other important burial occurred in the cathedral, including the interment of Pope Lucius III (d. 1185).
ruling class by interring the lay public in and around their own convents. In Verona, burial was one of the most lucrative “transactions” between the friars and their lay public: not only were burial fees and testamentary bequests indispensable sources of income for construction, but the physical act of burial played an important role in shaping and expanding church space.

Mendicant burial of laymen seems to have occurred in some Dominican convents as early as the mid 1220s, but the practice was not “legalized” until the mid-thirteenth century. On rare occasions, local bishops seem to have granted special exceptions to communities: in Padua, for example, Bishop Giodano allowed the Dominicans at S. Agostino to bury laymen around their site around 1226, the year they settled in the city. In 1227, Gregory IX granted the friars the permission to have cemeteries, but restricted burial within them to members of the fraternal communities. According to Salimbene, the friars attempted to honor this provision “out of love for the clerks, seeking to remain at peace with them,” initially refusing burial requests from the laity, including prominent patrons such as Elizabeth of Hungary. In 1250, Innocent IV granted the mendicants the privilege to bury members of the laity in their convents, even though other papal legislation and canon law discouraged burial within the interior space of the church.

102 M. Ronzani, “Gli ordini mendicanti e la ‘cura animarum’ cittadina fino all’inizio del Trecento: Due esempi,” in Nolens intestatus decedere:’ Il testamento come fonte della storia religiosa e sociale. Atti dell’incontro di studio, Perugia 3 maggio, 1985, ed. A. B. La Angeli (Perugia: Editrice umbra cooperativa, 1985), 121; Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town”
103 This privilege allows the friars “qui…elegerint sepulturam apud locum predictum.” See M. Ronzani, “Ordini mendicanti e la ‘cura animarum,’” 120-121
104 Ita vobis of July 26, 1227, BF I, 31, no. 8. See also Landini, The Causes of the Clericalization, 61, n. 18. In the face of the clerical opposition to this ruling, Gregory IX’s Nimis iniqua of 1231 further defended the rights of the mendicant orders to have their own cemeteries. Nimis iniqua of August 21, 1231, BF I, 74-75, no. 63 and 65.
105 Salimbene, Chronicle, 429.
106 Cum a Nobis petitur of February 25, 1250, BF I, 537, n. 316. Landini, The Causes of the
place having a parish cemetery or baptistery attached,” the friars avoided this stipulation by using their cloisters and churches to bury their dead. By the end of the thirteenth century, lay tombs in the churches and cloisters of the friars were commonplace.

The friars’ willingness to bury the laity and their accumulation of the related burial fees, legacies, and anniversary masses began diverting large amounts of money away from the secular clerics into mendicant communities, which in many instances provoked tension and conflict between the friars and the regular clergy. The friars sought to defend and maintain this practice: Salimbene, for example, speaks passionately about the “right” to choose one’s own place of burial, and the “right” of churches to receive bodies for burial. Aquinas also supported the burial of laymen within church interiors, noting that the presence of tombs would remind and encourage the faithful to pray for the souls of the deceased. The secular clergy nonetheless remained opposed and although evidence from cities such as Verona indicates that volatile confrontations were not typical, the scenarios of Piacenza, Pisa, Worms, and Exeter reveal that the case of Salerno was not unique, nor were incidents restricted to Italy.

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Clericalization, 69, n. 9, 71. For an account on these (and other privileges) granted to the mendicant orders by the papacy, see Landini, esp. ch. 4, “The Role of the Papacy: The Papal Bulls,” 56-76.

107 “Constitutions of Narbonne,” 87.

108 For example, Salimbene says “…it is not without reason that the Roman Pontiffs granted every man the right to choose his own burial place, according to the words of Ecclesiastes 7 [37]: ‘restrain not grace from the dead.’ …and this is what the Friars Minor and the Preachers do when they give burial to their spiritual sons and daughters who choose sepulture in their convents.” Salimbene, Chronicle, 409.


110 As Freed recounts, Bishop Henry of Worms (1217-1234) had welcomed the Franciscans into his diocese in 1222, but turned against the friars four years later, when the Dominicans tried to settle in Worms. Henry became even more incensed after the death of his nephew, who had not only joined the Dominican Order, but had been buried in their convent. The bishop forcibly exhumed the body and re-buried it in the cathedral; he then proceeded to expel the Dominicans from their convent and denied them their missionary privileges. The dispute was finally resolved in the early 1230s, when Henry permitted the Dominicans to re-settle within the city, so long as they promised to obey the bishop in all matters not contrary to their constitutions and papal privileges. In Exeter, the body of a noble who wished to be buried with the Dominicans was abducted by the cathedral canons, taken to the cathedral for the funeral, and then deposited, naked, back at the Dominican convent. The friars refused to touch the corpse, and only several
The papacy tried to reduce the tensions between the friars and the secular clergy through legislation such as *Super Cathedram*, which required the mendicants to pay one-fourth of all their burial-related income to the parish. The friars also sought to pass their own reforms in order to curb the zeal with which the friars were interring the dead. Bonaventure’s Second Encyclical Letter from 1266 warned the friars that “a contentious and greedy intrusion into the domain of burials and legacies, to the exclusion of those to whom the care of souls properly belongs, has made us exceedingly hated by many clergy.” He urges his Order to maintain peaceable relations with all the clergy as far as possible concerning both wills and burials, so that they may not have reason to enter into disputes with us, and that the whole world might clearly see that we are seeking only to gain souls, not earthy comforts.

Several of the Constitutions of Narbonne also addressed the economic-based controversies between the secular clergy and the mendicant orders. Amongst other things, the Constitutions prohibited friars from directly receiving money from testaments: “when [the friars] act as witnesses for wills, they are not to arrange any bequest for themselves or for their relatives.” Surviving testaments demonstrate that in Verona, the friars purposefully ignored this prohibition. In almost every case where a friar witnessed or served as the executor for a will he received compensation for his services, sometimes in the form of a cash gift or a sum to be shared between the friar and his

days later did the canons return to take the body back to the cathedral for burial. See Freed, *The Friars*, 38. For the situation in Pisa, see M. Ronzani, “Gli ordini mendicanti e le istituzioni ecclesiastiche preesistenti a Pisa nel Duecento,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome*, 89 (1977): 667-677. See also Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town”; and Erickson, “The Fourteenth Century Franciscans and Their Critics, I,” 129.

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111 As noted in Chapter 4, Bonaventure’s First Encyclical Letter from 1257 complained that “brothers are all too eagerly invading the area of burials and legacies, causing no small annoyance to the clergy, especially parish priests.” Bonaventure, “First Encyclical Letter,” 60.
113 Ibid., 228.
114 “The Constitutions of Narbonne,” 83-84.
convent. I have already noted examples of confessors and executors being singled out by testators, but sometimes patrons wished to express their affection for individual friars outside of these roles. In 1313, the testament of Bonazuta specified that Friar Nicolò, guardian of S. Fermo, was to receive 100 soldi upon her death, and in November of 1337, a certain Bartolomeo requested burial at S. Fermo and specified that Friar Bellebono was to receive 5 lire from his estate.\textsuperscript{115} The community at S. Fermo is not unique in this aspect: other Franciscan and Dominican convents accepted money from testaments for the burial of laymen; the associated fees probably generated the largest amount of income for the friars.\textsuperscript{116} Statutes passed in the Franciscan Provincial Chapter of 1290 forbade the friars’ involvement with activities connected to last testaments, and this may have stemmed directly from the regional problems created by the revenue generated from burial.\textsuperscript{117}

The combination of Napoleonic legislation, which ended the practice of burial in churches, and centuries of interventions have removed most of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century tombs from the Veronese convents.\textsuperscript{118} The losses are especially evident at S. Fermo where, despite the large number of surviving requests for burial in

\textsuperscript{115} April 36, 1313, ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, rotoli, b. III, perg. 159; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2111; January 12, 1330, ASVr S. Fermo Maggiore, rotoli, b. III, perg. 225; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2111-2112.
\textsuperscript{116} For numerous examples of this in the Veneto, see the documents published in Archivio Sartori, II/2. For the Dominican community, this began as early as the 1250s during their occupation of S. Maria Mater Domini, when testator Giordani Capitali left the prior 200 lire as a pious gift (February 4, 1254, ASVr S. Silvestro, app., perg. 87).
\textsuperscript{117} For these statutes, see Rossi, “I frati minori,” 125.
\textsuperscript{118} A narrative of the transfer of the early fifteenth-century tomb of layman Barnaba da Morano illustrates of how these kinds of programs affected medieval tombs: carved and installed by 1411, da Morano’s tomb originally occupied a large part of the interior wall of S. Fermo’s façade (the friars had to block off two windows of the gallery that divides the upper and lower part of the façade to accommodate the sarcophagus). In 1814, a restoration project re-opened these blocked windows and in the process, moved Morano’s tomb to the Brenzoni chapel. (His will requested burial in this tomb, which was already commissioned and in situ at the time of his death, in the habit of a Franciscan. See Archivio Sartori II/2, 2136.) See also Da Lisca, Studi e ricerche originali, 77; Franco, “Tombe di uomini eccellenti,” 246.
the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, few tombs from this period remain.\textsuperscript{119} A rare exception is the Franciscan church of the Aracoeli in Rome, which boasts a surprisingly large number of medieval floor tombs throughout the nave and transepts (figure 254). It may be more accurate, then, to imagine the fourteenth-century interiors of the Franciscan and Dominican convents in Verona resembled something more along the lines of the Aracoeli, with gravestones literally paving the floor, than the more orderly arrangements of the present day.

Because the friars used church and cloister space for burial, the physical interment of the body may have been directly responsible for the configuration of convent space.\textsuperscript{120} In Verona, both communities were already entombing the lay public in and around their early sites; the desire or need for extra burial plots may have already been a pressing concern by the mid-thirteenth century and was perhaps an additional consideration behind their transfer to larger sites.\textsuperscript{121} Evidence suggests that the practice of lay burial may have shaped both the physical space of their buildings as well as the friars’ approach to construction.

By the beginning of the fourteenth century, there was a steady and constant request by testators—particularly members of the upper and middle classes, such as the families of the Servidei, Zaccaria, Ciserchi, Della Torre, Della Scala and De Campsonbus—to be

\textsuperscript{119} In some cases, documents record the transfer (or complete removal) of large-scale sarcophagi from their original locations, but slab tombs have suffered the greatest loss. During the resurfacing of the pavement at S. Fermo between 1826 and 1834, and again in 1875, workers removed and/or covered up many floor tombs. See Franco, “Tombe di uomini eccellenti,” 246.

\textsuperscript{120} See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”

\textsuperscript{121} The 1235 testament of Montenaria requested burial with the Dominicans at S. Maria Mater Domini, for example, while the will of Roberto Scoto di Conegliano from 1253 requested burial in S. Francesco. For the testament of Roberto Scoto di Conegliano, see Archivio Sartori II/2, 2106; for that of Montenaria, see ASVr, Santo Spirito, perg. 172/a; Rossi, “Orientamenti religiosi,” 114.
buried with the Franciscan community at S. Fermo. In her study of burial in Verona from the first half of the fourteenth century in Verona, Rossi noted that out of a sample of fifty-four wills requesting burial from this period, twenty-four specified burials at S. Fermo (twelve men and twelve women). In comparison, the other mendicant churches—S. Anastasia, the Carmelite church of S. Tomaso, the Servite church of S. Maria della Scala, and the Augustinian church of S. Eufemia—had between two and three burial requests each. My survey of documents yields a similar analysis: at least twenty-seven testators requested burial at S. Fermo between 1300 and 1350, and the distribution of these appeals indicate that burial with the Franciscan community peaked between circa 1305 and circa 1335. In light of the fact that some of the most significant renovations to the church were either underway or recently completed during this period, there seems to be an important correlation between the processes of renovation and the appeal of the site as a place for entombment. In contrast, the second half of the fourteenth century witnessed a decline in the number of testators electing burial at S. Fermo: only fourteen testators requested interment in or around the Franciscan site between 1351 and 1400.

Could the reduction of burial requests in this

122 Although a large portion of the Della Scala family is buried at S. Maria Antica, Giovanni della Scala elected burial at S. Fermo. Although this rupture with tradition must represent a strong affection for the Franciscans, no further information survives about Giovanni or his patronage of the Franciscans (including his tomb, which was moved to S. Maria Antica in the 1830s). See Franco, “Tombe di uomini eccellenti,”; and Rossi, “I frati minori.”


124 My own survey of wills studied full and partial-text wills from the years 1307 (three testaments), 1312, 1313 (two testaments), 1319 (four), 1320 (two), 1330 (four), 1337 (two), 1338, 1339, 1340, 1342, 1344, 1347, 1348 (two), and 1349. Two additional wills requesting burial with the Franciscans survive from the fourteenth century, but their specific dates are unknown so they are not included in this survey. The distribution of these figures suggest that burial at S. Fermo was at its peak between circa 1305 and circa 1335.

125 This survey represents my own findings. Rossi records eleven burials at S. Fermo from this period. Her survey also shows that eleven burials occurred at S. Eufemia, seven at S. Tommaso, and three at S. Maria della Scala. Approximately forty-one testators requested burial elsewhere, largely with their parish church. Rossi, “I frati minori,” esp. 127-128.
period be related to the perception that construction of the church was more or less complete, and that burial space had already been filled? This need—either perceived or real—may have been a motivation behind the construction of the two additional cloisters beginning in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, as discussed below.

Although numerous requests for burial at S. Fermo survive from this period, in most cases the testator does not specify where in the church of convent he or she wants to be interred. This coupled with the physical losses of tombs makes it impossible to fully reconstruct burial in and around the Franciscan church during this period, to determine the “hierarchy of burial” at play in the space of the convent, or to establish which areas were reserved for the friars and which were used by the laity. Nonetheless, some observations are possible: in the fourteenth-century, burial occurred in both the upper and the lower churches, in the cloister, and in the “cimiterio,” which seems to have been synonymous with the space in front of the church, including the façade and piazza. I will return to this below.

Based on the late fourteenth and early fifteenth-century tombs of Friar Gusmerio and Provincial Minister Zeno da Verona, Franco proposed that the lower church was at least partially reserved for illustrious members of the local community, and hypothesized that these tombs were probably originally installed near the altar in this space (figure 255). Although compelling, there are two potential problems with this interpretation. One is that the slab tombs of friars Gusmerio and Zeno are not in their original locations: they hang vertically on the wall of the north transept in the lower church. Without supporting documentation, there is no way to determine if these were originally installed

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126 Most requests use a variety of generic phrases, such as “in loco fratrum minorum de Verona,” “apud ecclesiam fratrum minorum de Verona,” or “ad ecclesia Sancti Firmi Maioris de Verona.”
in the lower church (rather than, for example, the upper church or cloister).\textsuperscript{128} Secondly, considering that the zone around the altar of the lower church—where the relics of Saints Fermo and Rustico were enshrined—was probably “prime real estate,” it seems that friars have been more likely to “market” this space towards or reserve it for illustrious patrons willing to pay the price for interment near the relics. Indeed, the addition of the public entrance into the lower church may have also been intended to increase access to this space for the purposes of lay burial. Cannon has shown that among Dominican convents, ordinary friars, officers, and even many of the provincial priors had simple graves suited to the original, humble character of the Order.\textsuperscript{129} At S. Sabina in Rome, the Dominican friars were interred beneath a single, unmarked stone in the nave of the church, and Sartori has proposed a similar arrangement for friars in the Franciscan church in Udine.\textsuperscript{130} While the tombs of friars Gusmerio and Zeno indicate that at least in some cases, relief tombs were commissioned for important, higher-ranking members of the community, this does not necessarily mean that they would have occupied some of the most desirable plots in the church.

Significantly, burial was not restricted to church interiors. At S. Maria Novella in Florence and S. Domenico in Prato, the friars constructed niches for tombs in the fabric of the lower and outer convent walls; evidence suggests that north exterior wall of the cloister at S. Fermo adjacent to the piazza may have resembled these examples in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (figures 256, 257). Although this wall has been heavily restored, the remains of what appear to be a tomb niche are visible near the intersection

\textsuperscript{128} Because the floors of the lower church have long since been repaved (and were also severely damaged during floods), is unknown precisely who would have been buried here.
\textsuperscript{129} Cannon, “Dominican patronage,” 138.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid.; Archivio Sartori II/2, 1710. This unmarked tomb was in the middle of the choir.
of cloister and façade (figures 258, 259). Scholars have traditionally identified this recess as the former entrance to the cloister, suggesting it was sealed-up when Friar Giovanni Tecacino di Terrazzo constructed a new, larger doorway several meters to the right in the 1590s. My analysis of this fabric proposes 1) that this “door” may in fact be a tomb niche; and 2) that the previous entrance into the convent from this wall was located to the right of this alcove, corresponding with the adjacent window (figure 258). Several observations support this conclusion: the size and shape of this opening and its elevation within the wall fabric are all consistent with extant examples of wall niches, such as those cited above. As illustrated by the arrow in figure 259, on the right side of and adjacent to the pointed arch at the top of this opening is the beginning or springing of what appears to be another arch; these traces indicate an adjacent aperture, which could possibly suggest an arcade. The bricks of this arch fragment are identical to those of the coursed masonry around this recess (as opposed to the later masonry used to fill it in), which reveals these niches were constructed coevally with the fabric of the wall.

Examination of the corresponding arcade in the interior of the cloister provides evidence that the position of the former door between the piazza and cloister was located elsewhere (figure 260). The arcade arch over the bay of the covered walkway that corresponds with this opening (indicated by arrow “A”) is significantly narrower than the arcade arch to the left (arrow “B”). This arch to the left (arch “B”) is the widest arch of

131 Restoration programs reconfigured the exterior wall of the cloister facing the piazza and added a new entrance to the convent is still partially visible to the extreme left of the façade); in the same period, workers repaved the piazza, raising the level of the pavement approximately fifty centimeters above the road. For more information, see S. Ferrari, “Il convento dal 1806 ad oggi: Vicende e trasformazioni osservate attraverso le immagini d’archivio,” in *Intorno a S. Fermo Maggiore*, 71-82.

132 Simeoni says this of the now-closed opening in the cloister wall near the façade (facing the piazza): “sono i resti dell’antico ingresso del convento, a cui Fra Giovanni Tecacino de Terrazzo sostituì un grande portone a bozze nel 1592.” Simeoni, *Verona: Guida storico-artistica*, 235, 254. This entrance is now the ingress for the office of the Soprintendenza.

133 The bottom of the opening is 89 centimeters above the current level of the pavement.
the cloister arcade and features a window below its apex. It thus seems reasonable to conclude that 1) the present window opening corresponds to what used to be the entrance into the convent from the piazza; and 2) that the wider span of the corresponding arch above was intended as a framing device for this doorway below.

This reading of the physical fabric supports the possibility that the exterior wall of the cloister adjacent to the façade and piazza was once configured as an arcade for tombs, an interpretation further supported by the documentation of the Servite-Franciscan conflict discussed in the previous chapters. The second measurement of 1327 calculated the distance between “locum sive cimiterium Fratrum Minorum et locum Servorum Sancte Marie de Verona.” Trevisan’s reconstruction of this measurement suggests the Franciscan “cimiterium” corresponded with the space of the piazza, in front of the church (figure 65). This analysis is confirmed by the testament of Giovanni da Tolentino from 1425, which requests burial “in cimiteri ecclesie Sancti Firmi Verone fratum minorum in monument ubi ponita sunt corpora matris sue et certorum suorum filiorum;” the only surviving component of the Da Tolentino family sepulcher is the canopy to the right of the portal (figure 100).

It is clear that the façade at S. Fermo had a distinctive burial purpose, as the Da Tolentino canopy and the effigy tomb of Aventino Fracastoro (on the opposite side of the portal) attest. This practice is consistent with other sites in the Veneto that began incorporating tombs into façade designs by the middle of the thirteenth century: analysis of ex novo projects such as S. Lorenzo at Vicenza and Ss. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice

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134 See Chapters 4 and 5.
136 Ibid.
137 ASVr, Antico Ufficio del registro, Testamenti, b. 17, 1425, n. 5; Archivio Sartori II/2, 2120.
reveal that the friars planned for burial space within the facade structure from the onset of
cstruction. Bruzelius has suggested that the insertion of tombs into the exteriors of
facades would have been extraordinarily effective backdrops for friars preaching in their
piazza, and the practice of outdoor preaching may have indeed encouraged communities
to incorporate tombs on the front of their churches. Significantly, Trevisan’s
reconstruction of the 1327 calculations indicate that the entire piazza of S. Fermo served
as a cemetery in the fourteenth century, perhaps being paved with tombs like the interior
of the Aracoeli. This is also supported by surviving requests for burial “in cimiterio”
beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, which are too numerous to have
been accommodated on surfaces of the façade and the adjacent wall. Although there is
evidence to indicate friars at S. Antonio in Padua utilized their piazza for burial as well,
the entombment of the laity in the pavement in front of the church was a highly unusual
practice.

In the Veneto, the development of the chiostrò di morti provided additional space
for the burial of lay patrons, as seen in the plans of the Dominican convents of S.

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138 Analysis of S. Francesco in Bassano also suggests that the facades once featured burial niches which were covered by subsequent restorations. Curiously, the prominent placement of lay tombs on façades seems to be restricted to mendicant churches in Italy; to my knowledge, there are no Franciscan or Dominican sites in Germany or France, for instance, that incorporate lay burial on the church façade.

139 Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town,” 216.

140 Burial requests “in cimiterio” are found, for instance, in testaments with the following dates: December 26, 1359 (ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, b. 5, perg. 371; Temporin, doc. 20); 1379 October 17, 1379 (ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, b. 5, perg. 425; M. Temporin “Testamenti”, doc. 50; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2115); June 28, 1384 (ASVr, S. Tommaso, b. 1, perg. 66; M. Temporin, doc. 62); October 3, 1408 (ASVr, Off. Reg., Testamenti, anno 1408, n. 55; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2118); February 19, 1421 (ASVr, Off. Reg., Testamenti, anno 1421, n. 30; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2119); March 22, 1429 (ASVr, Off. Reg., Testamenti, anno 1429, n. 32; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2120); December 26, 1439(Off. Reg., Testamenti, anno 1439, n. 233; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2120).

141 I wish to thank Giovanna Valenzano for sharing this information from her research with me.
Paolo in Venice, and in the Franciscan example of S. Fermo in Verona. Despite the fact that the cloisters at S. Fermo retain only a portion of their original fabric, a small number of fourteenth-century tombs survive in the antique cloister. Most of these are found in the pavement of the walkway between the upper and lower churches and on the corresponding walls, such as the tombs of Antonio Pelacani (c. 1327), the doctor Omobono (c. 1330), and Maria de’Mantesi (c. 1334) (figures 106-108). Painted fragments of coats of arms on nearby west cloister wall also attest to burial in this area (figure 109). The high density of tombs along this walkway indicates that the cloister was a popular site for burial; the laity may have especially coveted a location along the highly trafficked path between the upper and lower churches for the increase in Franciscan prayers that was sure to accompany this visible position. The appearance of burial requests from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards specifying interment in the cloister further signifies the appeal of this space, which may have motivated the construction of two additional cloisters in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, as noted above. Bruzelius has proposed that the large scale of mendicant building programs was generated, in part, by the need for burial space, as seems to be proved by these additions, particularly in relation to the modest size of the community.

Whereas S. Fermo was a popular spot for burial in the fourteenth century, interment with the Dominicans at S. Anastasia was less appealing to the laity in this

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142 With regard to Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, Ghedini argues that the first “campo santo” of the Dominican site was already present in the early 1300s; later in century a second and larger cemetery was added. Merotto Ghedini, “Santi Giovanni e Paolo; 115.
143 Examples include the testament of Bartolomeo del q. Corseto Marogna from 1342 (ASVr, S. Fermo Maggiore, Rotoli, b. III, perg. 294; reg. 2, p. 140; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2112-2113); Zilia q. Alegrino from March 25, 1408 (ASVr, Off. Reg., Testamenti, Anno 1408, n. 1; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2118); and that of Margherita from February 14, 1413 (ASVr, Off. Reg., Testamenti, anno 1413, n. 18; Archivio Sartori, II/2, 2118-2119).
Here too, later restorations of the former Dominican church and convent have erased most evidence of the medieval burial that occurred here. Some conclusions are nonetheless discernible: early burial with the Dominicans was largely restricted to the adjacent cloister and the exterior of the convent, especially in the cortile, where the fourteenth-century sarcophagi of Giuncello de’ Principe, Leonardo da Quinto, and Bartolomeo Suxaimi, are installed on the east wall of S. Giorgio, near the tomb of Castelbarco (figure 218). A single medieval slab tomb is all that remains of burial in the cloister, although other records demonstrate the friars used this space to inter members of the lay public (figure 261). Biancolini, for example, notes that a member of the Merzari family was buried here in the fourteenth century, and traces of frescoed coats of arms on the interior walls also suggest a cemetery function (figure 262). Friar Pellegrini describes this space as the “Chiostro de Morti,” and speaks of tombs in the cloister wall, although he does not note the date of these tombs or burial niches. As Napione has observed, the use of the exterior and conventual space of the convent for early burial would have allowed the friars to inter their patrons during the initial work on the church.

It is also likely that the façade of S. Anastasia once incorporated tombs like S. Fermo and other regional sites. A broken masonry joint in the brickwork of the façade to

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144 My research has found very few surviving burial requests from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; surviving examples include those of Azzone and Guglielmo Castelbarco (1265 and 1319, respectively), Azzone da Sesso (1371) and a testator named Anna (1386). See Chapter 6, notes 132 and 134. See also “I frati minori,” 124.
145 Floor tombs, for example, would have been removed during the repaving of the interior in 1462. Biancolini, Notizie storiche VII, 171.
146 See Chapter 5, note 207.
147 Pellegrini, “La religione,” ch. 9. There is no way of knowing what proportion of these tombs would have been from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Friar Pellegrini also notes tombs from 1312, 1313, 1351, and 1362, although he does not specify where in the church or cloister they are located.
the left of the portal creates a faint pointed-arch “patch” in the wall, marked by the arrow in figure 263. Does this outline designate an area of repair or could it signify the form of an earlier sarcophagus (perhaps removed during the commune’s re-design of the structure in the fifteenth century)? The shape and size of this irregularity in the wall fabric coincides with the dimensions of contemporary tombs, and the location of Bavarino de Crescenzi’s sepulcher (1346) on the front of S. Giorgio may indicate that the Dominican church also included tombs on its façade (figure 216). Lack of documentation unfortunately prevents further speculation.

For the Dominicans, burial within the church does not seem to have begun until the end of the century, and interment in the interior was restricted to the parts of the church that were complete at this time, specifically the choir and apsidal chapels. Burial in this area was reserved for the wealthy and elite citizens, such as the military captain Cortesia Serego (d. 1386) in the choir, and Tomaso Pellegrini, Federico Cavalli, and Giovanni Salerni, entombed in their respective chapels between 1380 and 1396 (figure 200). Although both material and documentary evidence reveals that S. Anastasia was a less popular site for burial of the laity than S. Fermo during most of the fourteenth century, this pattern began to change in the final years of the 1300s. By the early the fifteenth century, S. Anastasia emerged as one of the richest sites of lay patronage in the city, especially among the ruling class, as the commissioning of private chapels, altars, and family tombs from this century demonstrate, although few of these survive today.

By redefining the spaces of the living and the dead, the friars amassed incredible amounts of wealth that directly funded their building programs. In many ways, the

149 For more on the general effects of mendicant burial of the laity, see for example Le Goff, “L’immaginario urbano.”
Franciscans at S. Fermo seem to have outright advertised the practice of lay burial in and around the space their convent. The clustering of tombs in the visible, exterior spaces of the convent, such as the piazza, the façade, the adjacent wall of the cloister, and even the north portal platform, as the broken remains of the early fifteenth-century sarcophagus of Giuliano Fracastoro attest, may have been a means of attracting potential patrons (or rather, their bodies) (figure 144). It also seems that both communities planned their new, central convents in ways that would not only accommodate, but also facilitate, burial of the lay public.

7.5 The Friars and the City

Investigating the specific interactions between the mendicants and the city has illuminated some of the dynamics and pressures that affected the physical configuration of convent space, and the friars’ stylistic choices, and the sources of funding for the monumental projects in Verona. As I have shown, the laity, vis-à-vis donations and bequests, eagerly supported the building programs in Verona; the friars, in turn, designed or manipulated their respective sites to attract and accommodate the lay public and their pious practices, such as sermon attendance and burial. The contributions of the laity, although substantial, were not the only components of the friars’ economy: revenue from Inquisition activities and other economic dealings, including the rental of conventual landholdings, also helped subsidize the building programs in Verona; for the Franciscans, the efforts of the tertiary community were essential to their economy, and therefore their renovations.

Mendicant attitudes towards architecture and economics varied not only according to order, but also between regions and towns. Even communities located near
one another approached their construction projects and the related, vexed issues of accumulation of property, cash, and goods, slightly differently. While S. Fermo tertiary Porceto Pistore acquired and leased numerous plots of land, gardens, and vineyards to help the friars fund their renovations, the Franciscan communities in nearby Vicenza and Padua were ordered by the provincial minister Giovannino da Cremona to sell a large number of inherited properties that carried rents. Thus, even within the regional framework of the Franciscan Order, communities were, at least to a degree, semi-independent enterprises. This quality of individualism manifested itself most visibly in architecture.

150 See Bourdua “Aspects of Franciscan Patronage,” 5.
Conclusion

Is [space] then a floating “medium,” a simple abstraction, or a “pure” form? No—precisely because it has a content.\(^1\)

Although the literature on mendicant architecture has tended to study these sites as an end in themselves, mendicant churches were part of a social process, profoundly connected to their local institutions and cultures. This dissertation has therefore sought to better understand the “content” of the Franciscan and Dominican convents in Verona by examining these sites within the framework of their respective communities, specific pastoral activities, and the urban setting of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century city.

The architecture of the mendicant orders held an enormous capacity to convey specific principles and ideas. Although the Veronese sites include idioms popularized by “Franciscan” or “Dominican” projects across the Italian peninsula, other elements are unquestionably “Veronese,” revealing the considerable influence of local architectural traditions. Other forms, still, are radically “Gothic,” signifying that the concepts of “newness” and “distinction” were also important qualities to these communities. Significantly, each site balanced these styles in unique and innovative ways. At S. Fermo, the friars merged seemingly incompatible elements from Gothic and Romanesque vocabularies in order to insert themselves into the local religious history while at the same time distinguishing their church from those of other institutions. Although S. Anastasia also incorporates visual cues from these architectural styles, it uses them within a more recognizably “Dominican” aesthetic system, avoiding both the candid experimentation with “newness” and the strong attachment to traditional forms expressed at S. Fermo. Both communities understood that certain elements and styles could elicit

\(^1\) Lefebvre, *Production*, 82.
particular meanings and references, and therefore deliberately selected architectural forms and iconographies for the messages they wished to convey. The intentionality with which the friars approached their design seems a critical factor for understanding the processes of construction, as well as how these communities may have viewed their roles and position in the city.

Each community utilized its site as a monumental forum for expressing its social and economic powers and its religious obligations to the city. The friars’ pastoral mission and the “spiritual transactions,” or exchanges between themselves and their patrons, provided critical sources for funding and important directives for convent design. For both S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, the fraternal spaces of the cloister and conventual buildings took priority over the erection of the churches. This initial construction focus was tied to both the friars’ ministry and their conceptualization of “church,” which extended beyond the traditional walls of the nave and choir to include the space of the piazza, the cloister, and even adjacent public roads. At S. Fermo and S. Anastasia, the friars designed and manipulated their churches and the exterior spaces around their convents in order to utilize the surrounding urban fabric for pastoral activities, such as preaching and burial. These churches provide important models for rethinking and reframing the conventual understanding of the production, use, and function of mendicant architecture, even for projects that remained unfinished, as in the case of S. Anastasia.

As Bruzelius has suggested, the concept of “church” seems to have been more flexible and permeable for the friars than other clergy, and the friars’ use of architectural and urban space is a rich area for further research.²

I began this final section with a quotation from Lefebvre and I shall close with

² See Bruzelius, “The Dead Come to Town.”
him as well. Lefebvre encouraged his reader to

Think of architecture as ‘archi-textures,’ to treat each monument or building, viewed in its surroundings and context, in the populated area and associated networks in which it is set down, as part of a particular production of space.³

Indeed, neither the “content” nor the “production” of mendicant buildings can be deciphered or revealed through formal analysis of plan and architectural components alone. No longer can the study of the mendicant church be divorced from its conventual complex, its fraternal community, earlier settlements, the urban environment, or the social and religious institutions and pressures that gave rise to its fabric. I have demonstrated how local circumstances and factors wielded great influence in the shaping of architectural space; in Verona, regional and local variables combined with the individual activities and economic situations of each convent to create important distinctions in their respective building designs. Like scholarship on other types of medieval buildings, research on mendicant churches must move beyond formalist studies and seek to understand these buildings and their construction as social enterprises, an approach that requires a site-by-site examination of the unique social, economic, historical, and artistic cultures that produced them.

³ Lefebvre, *Production*, 118.
Appendix 1: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Decorative Program of the Upper Church of S. Fermo

Despite the construction of monumental altars and chapels in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which covered or removed portions of the nave walls, parts of the Franciscan decorative program are still visible. Scholars including Sandberg-Vavalà, Cuppini, D’Arcais, and more recently, Bourdau and De Marchi, have studied the thirteenth and fourteenth-century fresco decoration of the upper church in detail, and an overview of their findings are summarized in this appendix.¹ The absence of documentation about these paintings makes it difficult to establish firm dates for the frescos; thus, stylistic observations and analysis provide the foundation for chronology and dating.

1.1 The Choir

One of the earliest components of the Franciscan painted program, dated before 1290, survives on the north and south wall of the choir.² Boldly colored geometric flowers decorate the lunettes below the vaults, and fragments of a stylized frieze of swirling foliage on a blue-green background with thick red borders appears below, as seen in figures 115 and 117. In the quadripartite vault above, frescoed symbols of the Evangelists holding their respective Gospels were painted several decades later, between circa 1314 and 1325, by an artist known as the Maestro del Redentore (figure 246).³

The intrados of the pointed transverse arch that crosses the choir, transitioning between the quadripartite vaults of the choir and the five-part vaulting in the apse, features painted busts of saints set in geometric frames. This decoration, as well as that

¹ See Chapter 5, notes 68 and 69.
² See De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 199.
³ Ibid., 203-205.
of the polygonal apse, is also attributed to the Maestro del Redentore in the same period. In the apsidal vaults, a frescoed Christ in Judgment sits enthroned between full-length figures of the Virgin and John the Baptist; Fermo and Rustico are depicted on either side. In the lunettes above the lancets are the painted half-length figures of saints Anthony, Francis, Benedict, and two unidentified martyrs.

1.2 Cappella S. Antonio, Cappella della Passione, and the “Castelbarco Chapel”

Below the triumphal arch and to the right is the Cappella della Passione. The massive renovation of this chapel in the seventeenth century completely erased the earlier decoration, and no known documents testify to details of a previous program.

On the opposite side of the triumphal arch is the corresponding Cappella S. Antonio. Although dramatically renovated in the early seventeenth century, portions of the fourteenth-century program have been exposed behind later additions of painted panels, which swivel on hinge-like devices to permit viewing of the frescos behind them. A Resurrection scene depicting a victorious Christ emerging from an empty tomb and flanked by angels decorates the north wall; a large, “Giotto-esque” Crucifixion scene occupies the surface of the eastern wall. Both images are attributed to the S. Zeno Master and dated to circa 1330 (figures 264, 265).

Two additional registers survive on the south wall of the chapel. The upper zone depicts the martyrdom of Franciscan friars in Morocco (figure 266). In the lower register, St. Anthony preaches to the pope and his officials from a wooden pulpit. Both

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5 This scene—particularly in the treatment of the mourning angels—recalls the Crucifixion painted by Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua.
7 De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 214.
of these scenes are attributed to another artist known as the Maestro delle Storie di Sant’Antonio and are dated between 1340 and 1350, slightly later than the decoration on the adjacent walls.  

The intrados of the arched doorway into the “Castelbarco Chapel” includes traces of the patron’s coat of arms, which depicts a white lion on a red shield, hence giving the chapel its nickname (figure 151). Painting here is fragmentary, but some scenes are legible: the eastern apsidola features a votive fresco of the Virgin and Christ Child with saints Fermo and Rusico below (figure 267). On the south wall, traces of an Annunciation and Crucifixion scene survive. These paintings are attributed to the Maestro del Redentore, the same artist active in the choir and apse, and dated to circa 1320.

1.3 The Triumphant Arch

The central position and large scale of the triumphal arch make it the focus of the Franciscan decorative program (figure 91). On the right side of the arch in the top register is the kneeling profile of lay benefactor Guglielmo Castelbarco. The donor, dressed in rich crimson robes, faces inward towards the apse and offers a model of S. Fermo heavenward (figure 127). His coat of arms is displayed prominently behind him. Opposite Castelbarco is the corresponding portrait of Friar Gusmerio, recorded as guardian of the convent in 1318 and 1319 (figure 128). Also in kneeling profile, Friar Gusmerio offers clasped hands upwards in prayer; his simple brown tunic and tonsured head dramatically contrast with the richly trimmed garment and elegant cap of

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8 Brenzoni, “Scoperte, restauri e riletture,” 230-237. This artist was active in Verona in the second half of the fourteenth century.
9 The present state of these frescos is severely faded and they have yet to be restored; traces of this design are barely legible. Earlier photographs identify this decoration more clearly as the Castelbarco shield.
10 De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 214.
Castelbarco. Inscriptions that are mostly effaced accompany the figures. Above Castelbarco is the epigraph, “Susipe, Sancte Deus, munuscula, que pater meus de mei fisco Gulielmi, dat tibi Cristo.”\(^{11}\) The inscription behind Friar Gusmerio declares, “Vitras, picturam, navem, corum, et alia plura offert tibi Criste Dani et pauperibus iste,” and includes the date 1314 (“mille trecente quattord’a”).\(^{12}\) Both figures are attributed to the hand of the Maestro del Redentore, and the date is traditionally associated with the completion of this part of the triumphal arch decoration.\(^{13}\) Above the portraits of friar and patron is a depiction of God the Father, painted in the sixteenth century, which may have replaced an earlier image of God or Christ. The lower scenes depicting the Coronation of the Virgin and Adoration of the Magi are from the second half of the fourteenth century and likely the work of artist Paolo Veneziano, who is documented in Verona between 1336 and 1362.\(^{14}\)

**1.4 North and South Transepts**

The matching intrados of the wide semi-circular arches that separate the transepts from the nave are decorated with busts of saints in geometric frames, nearly identical to those depicted on the transverse arch that spans the width of the choir. The *apsidola* area of the north transept features paintings from the initial Franciscan decorative program.

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\(^{12}\) Ibid, 92. “Windows, painting, nave, choir, and other things, I, Daniel the pauper of Christ offer to you Christ.”

\(^{13}\) Although 1314 is the most common transcription of the date in this text, its interpretation has generated some debate: some scholars have suggested 1304, 1324, 1334, 1340, and so on as possible readings. Any date after 1320 for the triumphal arch imagery has been largely challenged because it post-dates Castelbarco’s death in this year. However, it is possible that his portrait could have been based on his effigy tomb at S. Anastasia and therefore painted after his death. Most associate this inscription with the decorative program, but some believe that it commemorates a significant event in the convent’s history. Biancolini and Mellini both reported that the date celebrates the church’s consecration by Bishop Tebaldo in the same year. Biancolini, *Notizie storiche* IV, 591; G. L. Mellini, *Scultori veronesi del trecento* (Milan: Electa, 1971), 21.

\(^{14}\) For a discussion of attribution and dating of these scenes, see De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 205-206.
that, like the frieze and lunette of the choir, were painted before 1290. Only two very fragmentary images survive in this area, and both depict narratives from the Life of Francis: a seraph on a cross against a background of stars may have represented the Stigmatization, and traces of birds hint at a Preaching to the Birds scene (figure 9). These subjects seem to coincide with the larger theme of the transept decoration, painted around 1330 by the Maestro del Redentore to celebrate the life and miracles of St. Francis. The construction of the entrance into the Della Torra Mausolem in the early sixteenth century destroyed some of the frescos on the northern wall, and this loss combined with the poor condition of the rest of the cycle make many images difficult to decipher. Nonetheless, some scenes are clearly legible, such as Francis’s conversion and his renunciation of goods, seen in figure 268.

The frescos of the south transept have suffered severe losses from the installation of the Alighieri altar in the 1550s and the configuration of the doorway to the cloister and lower church in the west wall during the same period. Only the upper portion of the decoration from south wall is legible: directly underneath the vault, flanked by two saints in roundels, a kneeling St. Louis receives his Franciscan tunic from the pope (figure 269). Below and to the left, barely visible due to the obstruction of the Alighieri altar, Louis sits on a stately throne. The corresponding scene to the right features the narrative of Drusiana’s Resurrection by St. John the Evangelist. On the west wall to the left and above the entrance to the lower church are fragments of a fresco cycle that include a

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15 Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 36; Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 199. Bourdua suggests that these images may even pre-date the beginning of renovations to the church.
17 For a discussion of iconography, style, attribution, and dating for this cycle, see De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 212-214; and Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 55-61.
18 These frescos are currently undergoing extensive cleaning and restoration, which should be complete at the end of 2010. Hopefully, this work will reveal more about this important cycle.
partial cityscape and a nimbed female figure (perhaps Clare) (figure 270). The appearance of St. Louis of Toulouse has led scholars to propose that the decoration of this area honored the king-saint, canonized in 1317. These frescos are dated between 1325 and 1330 and also attributed to the Maestro del Redentore.

1.5 The Nave

To the north, the entrance to the Cappella Madonna, constructed in the early seventeenth century, and the portal that links the upper church with the public road below occupy a significant portion of the nave wall. In the tympanum above the portal is a fresco of the Crucifixion, dated to 1363 and attributed to the painter Turone di Maxio, who was active in Verona during the second half of the fourteenth century (figure 142). Below this scene are partial fourteenth-century votive paintings that include a knight kneeling before a seated Madonna, another Madonna enthroned with saints, and additional full-length figures of saints. To the west of the portal is an altar dedicated to St. Nicholas, erected in 1534, and the Brenzoni tomb from 1426. Above and to either side of the Brenzoni tomb, fragments of an earlier architectural cityscape and figures of saints are visible, indicating that the later installation of the Brenzoni sarcophagus covered an earlier fresco cycle (figure 175).

Another Crucifixion scene, also attributed to Turone di Maxio, unfolds in the tympanum above the porta maggiore on the west wall (figure 89). As later cycles have covered most of the fourteenth-century decoration to the right of the entrance, only traces of earlier figures survive. To the left of the entrance, votive paintings of saints are

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19 See, for instance, Bourdua, The Franciscans and Art Patronage, 41-43, 55-61. This cycle in the south transept is attributed to the hand of the S. Zeno master.
19 See, for example, De Marchi’s discussion of this cycle in “La prima decorazione,” 211-212.
20 San Fermo: Le tre chiese, 12.
positioned in Gothic niches.

In the western corner of the south wall of the nave is a dramatic cycle, dated around 1330, that depicts the martyrdom of four Franciscan friars in Thana (Bombay) in 1321 (figure 176). Only three scenes survive: the first image (top left) represents a dream sequence in which the friars extract their revenge. As the man responsible for their deaths—an inscription identifies him as “Chadi Episcopus Saracenorum”—lies sleeping, the four martyred friars appear with swords to avenge their execution. To the right of this scene, the Emperor of Thana interrogates and condemns the Saracen bishop Chadi. Chadi’s sentence is fulfilled in the gruesome lower register, where the decimated corpses of the bishop and his family hang from nooses. Votive paintings of full-length saints, probably from the middle of the fourteenth century, appear below the martyrdom sequence.

To the east of this cycle is the Morano pulpit, commissioned in 1396 by lay patron Barnaba da Morano and sculpted by local artist Antonio da Mestre (figure 174). Executed in the local red marble, the crowning feature of the pulpit is the ornate Gothic canopy with trefoil arches, gables, and crockets. Frescoed portraits of biblical writers, including Daniel, David, and Solomon, sit in architectural studia on both sides of the marble pulpit.

To the left of this program is a fragmentary Tree of Life (Lignum Vitae) scene, largely damaged by the construction of the Brenzoni chapel, which also required

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21 Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage* 45-52; De Marchi, “La prima decorazione,” 214. The martyred friars were Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, Demetrius of Tafelicio, and Peter of Siena.
22 F. Pietropoli, “Verona, Chiesa di S. Fermo Maggiore,” in *Pisanello, i luoghi del gotico internazionale nel Veneto*, ed. P. Marini (Milan: Electa, 1996), 48-49. This is also next to the adjacent sixteenth-century altar dedicated to S. Nichesola.
demolition of the choir screen, beginning in 1495 (figure 135). Above, the kneeling figure of the Angel Gabriel indicates an Annunciation scene. The entrance to the sacristy and altars dedicated to saints Rafael and Francis, all from the sixteenth century, occupy the remaining fabric of the south wall.

Two separate foliate friezes—in places badly damaged—appear throughout the nave. Surviving fragments suggest that the upper frieze, distinguished by thick, rampant red foliage that swirls around figural busts, began just to the west of the transept and ran along the perimeter walls immediately below the roof (figures 89, 135, 142). The second frieze appears below the upper one, and although well preserved on the west wall to the left of the entrance, only traces survive on the north wall. This frieze also features a vine design on a red background interspersed with figures, but the foliage is less abundant and the treatment of the figures less sophisticated than that above, suggesting an earlier date or perhaps a less skilled artist.  

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23 Brenzoni, “Scoperte, restauri e riletture,” 239-241. Funds for the chapel were donated in the last testament of Bernardo Brenzoni, written on September 16, 1495. The chapel is dedicated to St. Bernard and also known as the S. Bernardo chapel.

24 For more on these friezes, see De Marchi, “Due fregi misconosciuti.”
Appendix 2: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth-Century Decorative Program at S. Anastasia

The surviving thirteenth and fourteenth-century decoration at S. Anastasia occurs in the east end and around the transept. Unlike S. Fermo, which featured a comprehensive, thematic and ideological fresco program, the contemporary decoration of the Dominican church consisted mostly of votive paintings that reflected (probably in consultation with the Dominican community) the patron saints of individual donors. As these medieval paintings are both insufficiently documented and studied, stylistic observations and analysis provide the basis for dating. This appendix presents a brief overview of the thirteenth and fourteenth-century decoration of the upper church.

2.1 The Vaults

The earliest surviving paintings in the church appear in the webbing of the rib vaults over the transept, crossing, and first bay of the nave (figures 198, 199, 201). These frescos feature simple, sparse foliate decoration, probably painted around the first decade of the fourteenth century. A horizontal frieze composed of swirling vines and a plain, five-petal floral motif within a red border is shares many of the stylized, geometric qualities of the vault decoration, suggesting a contemporary date. The frieze begins in upper zone of the cappella maggiore and continues along the transept walls into the nave (figure 200).\(^1\) In the second bay of the nave, however, there is a dramatic shift in style. The frieze continues, uninterrupted, but the foliage becomes more profuse, the blossoms more abundant, and there is a greater sense of naturalism, which indicates its later execution (figure 271).

\(^1\) On the east wall above the apse and chapels this frieze appears three separate times; on the walls of the transept, the frieze repeats four different times.
2.2 The Cappella Maggiore and Apsidal Chapels

The walls of the cappella maggiore are largely unadorned. Besides the vault and the frieze fresco described above, the north and south walls of the choir are the only surfaces that feature fourteenth-century decorative elements. Centered on the south wall is a Last Judgment scene, attributed to the Maestro del Giudizio Universale, who was active in the city around 1340 (figure 202). Christ sits within the frame of a mandorla, surrounded by the kneeling figures of the Virgin, John the Baptist, and the elders seated in gothic thrones. In the register below, angels and the faithful flank an empty cross, and the damned are depicted to the left. On the opposite (north) wall is the late fourteenth-century tomb of Cortesia Serego, a captain in the Veronese army who died in battle in 1386.

Most of the wall surface of the adjacent Pellegrini Chapel is covered with terracotta reliefs representing narrative scenes from the Life of Christ dated to circa 1435. The tomb of Tomaso Pellegrini (d. 1392) is affixed to the northern wall and is, attributed to Antonio da Mistro, the same sculptor of the Morano pulpit in S. Fermo. A fresco beneath the baldachin features the Virgin and Child enthroned flanked by John the Baptist and St. Thomas, attributed to the painter Martino da Verona around 1395. On the southern wall is the Bevilacqua and Pellegrini tomb, which also includes a fresco of the Virgin with saints George, Catherine, Dominic, and Zeno, also by Martino da Verona (figure 272).

In the Cavalli chapel, a fresco of the Madonna enthroned with saints is part of the

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3 Ibid. See Appendix 1.
4 Ibid., 38.
5 Ibid.
late fourteenth-century program; other frescos were painted in the fifteenth century (figure 180). The only fourteenth-century decoration in the Cappella Sant’Anna is the fragmented fresco painting of the vaults. However, flanking the chapel entrance are votive frescos of saints, one of whom has been identified as St. Eligius, a patron saint to artisans, and attributed to the Second Master of San Zeno in the mid-fourteenth century (figure 222).

On the left wall of the Salerni Chapel near the entrance is the tomb of Giovanni Salerni (d. 1380). In the lunette below the canopy is a fresco depicting the Madonna and Child, various saints, and a patron (probably Salerni himself), attributed to Jacopo da Verona, a painter active in the city between 1388 and 1442 (figure 273). On the opposite wall is a votive image of the Madonna with the Christ Child, St. John, and a patron, probably painted by Giovanni da Badile (1379-1451) (figure 274). Two additional votives appear on the right wall: the Virgin and Child enthroned with saints, attributed to the Second Master of S. Zeno between 1325-1350, and Christ enthroned, dated to the mid-fourteenth century.

2.3 Votive Paintings in the Nave

The first column on the north side of the church from the east features a mid to late fourteenth-century votive image of an enthroned, nursing Madonna flanked by two saints (figure 275). A tonsured friar holding a sword, who probably represents Peter Martyr, appears on the right. To the left of the Virgin is another tonsured saint—aged

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8 Its decorative program of scenes from the Life of Christ date to the second half of the fifteenth century.
7 Ibid., 44.
8 Ibid., 46.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
with grey hair and a long beard—whose identification unclear.\textsuperscript{11}

The adjacent column to the west features another votive painting, and here too the central focus is a seated Virgin and Child. To her right is a nimbed, bearded bishop saint dressed in full regalia, who may represent Zeno, traditionally represented with a grey beard; the fragmentary figure of a patron kneels below. To the left of Zeno is a martyr saint who holds his severed head, crowned with a bishop’s miter, in his hands (figure 247). On the right side of the Virgin and Child is a tonsured bishop-saint and traces of another kneeling patron (figure 276).\textsuperscript{12} To the right of the bishop is St. Anastasia, identified by the palm branch of martyrdom in her right hand.

On the north wall opposite these columns and just west of the transept, is another pair of late fourteenth-century votive frescos (figure 241). The top image features a large robed Dominican friar who could be Dominic or Peter Martyr: extensive losses above his shoulders prevent secure identification. The friar holds a model of a church in this left hand and an open gospel or prayer book in his right. A patron kneels at his feet, offering the Dominican a scroll filled with illegible text. This image is, for obvious reasons, a compelling comparison to the trumeau sculpture of the façade and the triumphal arch decoration at S. Fermo, and I will return to it in a following section. Yet unlike the façade model of S. Fermo held by Castelbarco, the model in this image does seem to correspond to the design of S. Anastasia.

Below this image is a standing nimbed female figure with flowing red locks

\textsuperscript{11} Simeoni identifies this fresco as “Madonna and Saints” and attributes it to the painted “Bartolomeo Badile,” who he links to the frescos in S. Georgio. As there the artist responsible for the frescos is thought to be “Giovanni Badile,” it seems a mistake on the part of Simeoni. Nonetheless, there are stylistic similarities that could link this votiveresco, along with the Madonna fresco in the Salerni chapel (attributed to Giovanni Badile) to the artist who worked in S. Giorgio. Simeoni, \textit{Verona: Guida storico-artistica}, 64.

\textsuperscript{12} These figures may represent a local Dominican bishop such as Pietro della Scala or Giovanni di Nazo, although neither of these men were ever canonized.
blessing a tonsured friar at her feet. The identification of this saint is not entirely clear, but there is evidence to suggest she represents Anastasia. For one, she shares the same flowing red locks as the figure of St. Anastasia in the nearby votive column.

Furthermore, traces of what appears to be a crucible are discernible in her right hand. This may refer to the Greek orthodox tradition, which venerated Anastasia as healer and often depicted her with the attribute of a medicine pot. The use of this iconography could be viewed in relation to contemporary outbreaks of plague epidemics in Verona.

Additional later fourteenth-century votive scenes appear in the north transept (figure 199). These feature various depictions of the Virgin surrounded by saints, who are for the most part unidentifiable, but probably represent the patron saints of the individuals who commissioned these works.

2.4 The Frescos of the Oratory of S. Giorgio

Simeoni reports that frescos covered most of the interior of S. Giorgio by 1354, and that the surviving painted coats of arms along the perimeter walls indicate that the primary patrons of the decoration were the Knights of Brandenburg, a noble group of German soldiers affiliated with the court of Cangrande II (figure 215). Surviving frescos indicate that, as at S. Anastasia, the early program featured individual votive images rather than a cohesive thematic or ideological program. With the exception of fragmented Crucifixion and Adoration scenes in the east, the extant paintings represent the patron saints of individual donors; in addition to the Virgin, other frequently represented saints include George, Peter Martyr, and Anastasia.

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13 Simeoni, Verona: Guida storico-artistica, 68. The knightly rank of these patrons must also be a factor behind the original dedication of the building to St. George, the patron saint of soldiers.
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**Biography**

Meagan Green Labunski was born in Austin, Texas on August 30, 1980. In 2003, she graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with honors in Art History and entered the Graduate Art History program at Duke University in the same year. In addition to awards and support from Duke University, she has received research grants from the Fulbright Commission in Italy, the Graham Foundation, and the Gladys Kreible Delmas Foundation. Labunski first participated in and then led a Vertical Integration Study Program in the Veneto region of Italy; she has also been a fellow at the Mellon Summer Institute in Italian Paleography at the Getty Research Institute and at the Summer Institute in the Humanities at the Venice International University.
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Figure 4. S. Antonio (Franciscan), Padua.
Figure 5. S. Fermo, Verona (Intorno a S. Fermo, 80).
Figure 6. S. Anastasia, Verona (Photograph by David Monniaux, Wikimedia).
Figure 7. Diffusion of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders, c. 1300 (Schenkluhm, *Architettura*).
Figure 8. “Francis Preaching to the Birds.” S. Francesco, Assisi, upper church. Attributed to Giotto, c. 1300 (flickr.com).
Figure 9. Traces of “Francis Preaching to the Birds.” S. Fermo, Verona, apsidola of north transept (Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*, 37).
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