

NOTIZIE ISTORICHE

DELLE CHIESE FIORENTINE

Divise ne' suoi Quartieri

OPERA

DI GIUSEPPE RICHA

DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GESÙ

TOMO OTTAVO

DEL QUARTIERE DI S. GIOVANNI

Parte Quarta.

IN FIRENZE MDCCLIX.

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The figure of Lionardo Aretino, also known as Leonardo Bruni, whose contributions have influenced so many Florentine writers, was the first to speak of the importance of the Hospital of the Innocents. There is no better place to begin our discussion than with the important observations he made on 25 October 1421 in the meeting of the General Council – convened in the Palazzo de' Signori – to address the scourge of abandoned infants in the city: it was there that he promoted the construction of the shelter for those innocent children.

Knowing as he did the great reluctance to contribute public funds to the project, thanks to the military threat of King Louis of France that had caused Florence to join with Genoa to purchase the alliance of Livorno for 100,000 florins, Bruni mustered all of his rhetorical gifts and mounted the Bigoncia – a speaker's platform – to begin his oration. With grace and eloquence he cited the virtuous precedents set by the ancients, especially of the Romans, who were always admired by Florentines in those days.

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He praised the empathy of the Emperor Trajan and describe the bronze reliefs (one of which was discovered in 1747 in the Piacenza area) that demonstrated how highly regarded he had become for his desire to feed poor children and single women, with no thought to any strategic value they might bring him – as he might have with the conquests of Thrace and Mesopotamia, for example. His oration was so great that the Florentines who filled the audience hall roared their approval, praising Leonardo Bruni: never was any grave issue settled so decisively. And because of the strength of his oration, the famous Hospital of the Innocents was founded.

II. And because the issue had already been discussed at the official meetings in the Arte Por Santa Maria, known also as the Silk Guild, which had purchased land for such a project in 1419, the Signoria agreed to partner with the guild and provide additional funding to help in its maintenance in perpetuity. The government appointed administrators and ministers – the Fancilli lo Spedaligo – who were granted sovereignty to accept and disburse donations that came to the Foundling Hospital in order to supply it properly and with no interference from the Signoria. Thus, the official records of the government indicate that the noble vision of Leonardo Bruni, Chancellor of the Republic, was fulfilled in 1421.

III. Pursuant to this resolution, the Silk Guild initiated the construction of the hospital on the grounds it had purchased in 1419, which consisted of houses

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and a garden that had formerly been owned by Rinaldo degli Albizzi, the son of Messer Maso degli Albizzi (who had been made a count by declaration of the Emperor Roberto in 1402, as appears in an original document on sheepskin that is still in the Hospital's archives).

IV. The hospital's Archives contains the contract that notes the price of the aforementioned land sold by Rinaldo di Maso degli Albizzi at 1700 florins, a part of which came from the inheritance of Francesco di Leccio from S. Miniato, according to a document written by Ser Lodovico Bertini from the Tavarnelle on April 8th of 1419. The construction cost of the hospital was 30,000 gold florins, which explains why contemporary writers spoke so freely of its magnificence, calling it "Pulcherrimum Hedificium," or "Most Beautiful Building," which one would expect of anything made by the architect Ser Filippo Brunelleschi, of whom more will be said shortly.

V. The still unfinished hospital was opened in 1444, and it accepted its first infant sixteen days later, found in the crib known as the Porticella on the fifth of February. The little girl was called Agata, and many years later the Prior of the hospital, the esteemed and noted writer Don Vincenzo Borghini, built one altar in the girls' cloister in honor of Saint Agatha and another on the boys' side dedicated to the Holy Cross, because little Agata arrived at the hospital on a Friday – the day that the Feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated annually. The solemn circumstances surrounding the hospital's founding, reported on a sheep's skin document called the "Privilegia Artis Porte S. Maria" that is covered in brass tacks and can be found in the headquarters of the Silk Guild, notes:

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"To the acclaim of clerics, the Consuls of the Arte of Por Santa Maria, as Legitimate Masters and as Founders of the Hospital of the Innocenti, publicly announced by way of proclamation that within a month, on the 24th of January of 1444, the newly built Hospital would open: they invited the city fathers as well as the Florentine People to that Ceremony. On the aforementioned day the Consuls gathered that morning in the Church of Saint Maria del Fiore with the Bishop of Fiesole, Messer Benozzo de 'Federighi, who then governed as suffragan of the Church of Florence, and who, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, approved of this action with the consent of the Commissioner of the Pope, Paolo di Santa Fede. So assembled the People in the Cathedral, and they left in a grand procession to the hospital, led by the city Consuls, the Bishop and his prelates, and then other Clergy. The Bishop blessed the new house according to the customs of the Missal; then, blessing the vestments which he had to wear in order to solemnly celebrate the Mass of the Holy Virgin, the patron saint of the hospital, he presided over the Offertory

where the Priors, and Gonfaloniere of Justice, and all the Magistrates donated funds in the traditional way. At the same time, Messer Marco, the first Spedalengo elected by the Consuls, appeared dressed as an Oblate, or a Clerk, wearing all black clothing, with a similarly dressed child at his breast who was named Lapo Pacini. When the mass ended, the officials of the city, including the Consuls, accompanied the three Prelates to their Houses, and the Bishop returned to his palace, and he ordered this chronicle to be written by Ser Uberto di Martino from S. Donaro in Poggio, Chancellor of Silk Guild. And so was opened the hospital for all children, girls and boys alike.”

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VI. With these impressive origins we can understand how the hospital received such favor from benefactors, including the government of the republic, from the Grand Dukes and pontiffs, from bishops, and from important families in the city, all of whom competed with each other for the privilege of making the hospital both magnificent in appearance and richly ornamented. Benedetto Varchi, In Book IX of his history, was able to write; "Is there any other hospital praised like that of the Innocents, commonly called I Nocenti, comprised of a very large building with two great Gardens, that is able to nourish and to dress; containing a place to teach all children both boys and girls, who for whatever reason; with a window in each bedroom so they can hear services, the number of people there exceeds one thousand, even without the servants. Each year the hospital spends 11,000 scudi, 7500 of which it receives from its endowment, and the other 3500 of which comes from the public in the form of cash from alms." That is all we will hear from Varchi, but there is much more to say about the hospital's benefactors who governed the Republic, as we have seen in the decree of 1421 that initiated its foundation and in subsequent bequests that the Spedalengo accepted from the Innocenti's founders. In the deliberations of 1425, the Republic granted the Hospital perpetual exemption from forced loans and duties normally exacted by the Municipality of Florence. In 1470 the Signoria consented to distribute to the hospital a portion of the money received from criminal procedures, condemnations, and fines. In 1511 Piero Soderini, the head and Perpetual Prince of the Republic, assigned to it a healthy portion of the proceeds the city received from the ancient heritage of the Bentivogli Lords of Bologna (as we read in the donation registered as number 7 in the

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hospital's Archive; the summary of which is titled, *Illustrissimus Princeps Petrus Magnificens Equitis Domini Thomae de Soderinis Perpetuus Vexillifer Iustitiae Pop. Flor. donavit inter vivos Hospitali S. Marie Innocentium Bona Etc.*). The document notes: "bought from 'Gentlemen Bentivogli of Bologna for a price of 3 thousand florins, with obligations and conditions, that is, that the Spedalengo pro tempore, every year in perpetuity after his death on the day of Bentivogli's birth, which falls on March 17th, will

celebrate in the aforementioned Church in the hospital one solemn work with the intervention of the priests of Santa Maria del Fiore (who congregate in the Via di S. Gallo) and another observance on the day of Bentivogli's death, this one with 12 Masses. Additionally, there should be a Mass celebrated every day in the said Church, and to this effect they must retain the services of a chaplain and give him 70 lire a year, plus expenses ect. Recorded on this day by Ioannes Ser Marci Thomasii de Romena etc." Many donations and concessions were given to the hospital by the Supreme Pontiffs that may be confirmed in existing Papal Bulls found in the Hospital's Archives. For example, in 1463, the sixth year of his pontificate, Pius II acted with the blessing of the friars to bequeath to the Hospital of the Innocents all of the goods and belongings of the Augustinian Hospital of S. Maria di S. Gallo, founded by Guidalotto of Volto del Orco in 1218. Clement VII, in the ninth year of his pontificate (1531), pleaded with the Consuls of the Silk Guild in an effort to give them the Abbey of S. Salvatore a Colle, then held by Niccolò, the Archbishop of Capua. He repeated his offer with a Bull the very next year, but then added the threat of excommunication to anyone who tried to hide from the Innocenti any of the abbey's possessions; And we would be remiss to omit the famous Bull of this great pope, made in honor of the priests of S. Lorenzo to whom he ceded various goods and properties, but with the condition that the Innocenti would receive them should the priests somehow misuse them.

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Pius V, to further increase the revenues to assist in the service of so many poor children, signed the Bull of 1569 to give the hospital a fifty-year waiver to free them from having to contribute to the coffers of the clerics of the Apostolic Chamber; The Bull of Clement VIII, signed in the first year of his reign, incorporated into it the Vallombrosan Abbey of S. Donnino fuori le Mura of Pisa, as well as the Pieve of Santa Maria in Limite, Diocesi of Pistoia. No less a gift was the one made in 1535 by Paul III, in which he donated to the Innocenti all the possessions of the Hospital of the Pollini in Via della Scala, a gift that we already reported in the chapter on the church of S. Martino in the third volume of this book; soon we will see the exchange between the officers of the Pollini and the Spedalingo of the Innocenti. Another merger was formed in 1554 by Pope Julius III, who with his Bull folded into the Innocenti the Hospital of S. Gimignano, done at the request of Duke Cosimo I.

VII. I come now to the topic of all the Bishops who donated property and goods to the Hospital. It is easy to applaud the many benefits made by the Archbishops of Florence, led by the first of them all, the great father St. Antoninus, and then Andrea Buondelmonti, who declared the children there his heirs; I will discuss some donations from foreign Prelates, including the Archbishop of Capua Cardinal Niccolò Schemberg Tedesco who, while serving as the Commander of the Abbey called S. Salvatore a Spugna, renounced his title and donated his legacy to the Innocenti, as told by Leopoldo del Migliore on page 314; and at subheading 6 of the sheepskin is found the tale of another donor, this one the Bishop of Cortona, Friar Mariano Servita, who in 1475

received permission from Cardinal Giuliano, overseer of the Roman church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, to donate to the fathers of SS. Annunziata a farm in the Parish of Santa Maria a Nuvole, as long as some of the proceeds from that farm were given in perpetuity to the hospital, as recorded in a document written by Ser Paolo di Ser Simone di Paolo di Guido del Giglio Cittadino

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Fiorentino on 27 January 1475. The famous Bishop of Fiesole, Baccio Martelli, having to dispose of the Chapel called S. Matteo in the Cathedral of Fiesole, on 5 January 1521 gave its patrimony in perpetuity to the Hospital of the Innocenti, a dowry that amounted to 40 ducats annually. And another Bishop of the same city, Piero Camaiani Aretino, on 5 October 1563 consented to the union of the two churches of Santa Maria di Ventena and of S. Marco in Poggio. We omit the most obvious of them all, that is the one made by the worthy sovereign head of the state who recognized the Republic's thoughtful protection of the hospital: According to a copy of the original document that is currently housed in the Silk Guild headquarters, Cosimo I, in 1568 (the 30th year of the Principality) donated to the hospital all the proceeds earned from Grosseto, called by del Migliore the most prosperous port of entry. As for the role of other private Benefactors, we will move on a cover them in another section in order to conserve space: but still we must mention the great authority granted by the Grand Dukes to the Workers of the hospital to press charges against Debtors without having to resort to any forum, as set forth by the Grand Duke Francesco I in Book 44 of the Decrees of the three Counselors on 12 January 1577. These workers likewise proceeded criminally against those delinquent in their payments to the detriment of the hospital and the children they were supposed to care for, as their desire to condemn debtors to corporal punishment was joined with the occasional call, in extreme cases, for the capital alterative due to similar punishments meted out in other court cases in Florence, as recorded in the book of the Privilegio on 14 March 1552.

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Recorded here is an agreement between Fra Michele di Vanni of Florence, Prior of the Hospital of S. Gallo, and the Head of the Innocents, on the occasion of the union of the two Hospitals.

"On the 4th of October 1453 it is agreed ...

That said Friar has no way to pay for the delivery of the Papal Bull that describes the union between these two hospitals, grants permission to the Prior and officers of the Innocenti to be able to implore the pope to approve the Bull and strip himself of the governance of the institution.

2. That the above-mentioned Fra Michele reserves, for the duration of his life, the title of Prior and Spedalingo of San Gallo, leaving the rest the governance of said hospital to the Consuls of the Guild and to the Prior of the Hospital of the Innocenti, with whom the said Fra Michele may collaborate on all matters that pertain to the services rendered in the hospital.

3. That the aforementioned Consuls and officers must preserve the Weapons, which have been in the said hospital in perpetuity in memory of the Founder and of the Benefactors, as a reminder to their consciences of the ruin of the suburbs in the siege of 1529.

4. That the Prior and Consuls are obliged to give the said Frate for the duration of his life, eight ducats each month, assigned for his security to the Florentine bank of his choosing.

5. Because he is allowed to live in a house with 28 *staiora* of land at the Porta alla Croce for the duration of his life, Fra Michele may stay there and profit from the proceeds of the land until his death; at which time it will transfer back to the Hospital of the Innocenti as a donation for which his sins will be remitted in Heaven.

6. That those who owed money to Fra Michele and the Spedale di S. Gallo will pay their debts instead to the officers of the Innocenti, without penalty to Fra Michele so he may not be charged with misappropriation of funds.

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7. That all the furniture, household goods, swaddling clothes, and the Beasts of burden from San Gallo remain, without exception, the property of the Innocenti, that the Consuls and Fra Michele may be indemnified against any complaints imposed or claims made on them by promising to pay appropriate compensations.

8. That the said Consuls should sanctify the church by retaining at least three priests to celebrate mass daily inside the said church.

9. That Mrs. Pera Maggiore, officer of the Women's Hospital, may live in said place if she chooses for the duration of her life; or, if she does not wish to stay, may be permitted by the officers to leave and take with her a pension and items for a comfortable life, the remainder of which shall be returned to the Innocenti upon her death.

IX. An anonymous Notary wrote a document in an official book, still preserved in the hospital of the Innocenti, which begins like this: "In the Name of God, and of the ever Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints in the Celestial Court, this book was kept in the time of Fra Giorgio Nuti, and is the oldest of all the writings from the Hospital of San Gallo," a text referred to by Stefano Rosselli in his *Sepoltuario*.

“Pacts and Agreements between the Pollini, the Founders, and the Masters of the Hospital of S. Maria della Scala with the Officers of the Hospital of the Innocenti.

On this day of 18 July 1536.

Dom. Lucas de Alamannis Rector Hospit. Innocentium ex a part, & Nob. Viri de Pollinis, videlicet Nicolaus Cionis Nicolai, Dominicus Zenobii Nicolai, Io: Baptista Hieronymi Cionis Nicolai, Zenobius Alexandri Zenobii, Raphael Francisci Zenobii, Hieronymus Francisci Zenobii, & Vincentius Alexander Zenobii omnes de Pollinis ex alters convenerunt. In primis quod per dictos Nobiles de Pollinis Patronos Hospit. S. Mariae della Scala in perpetuam

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memoriam, et recognitionem dicti Incis Patronatus, quod habebant in dicto Hosp, eligatur unus Cappellanus, ut infra amovibilis per Hospitalarium Hospit. Innocentium pro tempore existentem confirmandus, & approbandus per eundem Hospitalarium, & in eventu quo dictus Cappellanus in aliquo infrascriptorum deficeret, arbitrariness Hosptalarii praefati amovendus, & repellendus. Qui Cappellanus pro tempore existens teneatur per se, vel per alium Sacerdotem in dicta 'Ecclesia Hospit. Scale quotidie celebrare unam Missam, & annualm cum Presbyteris quolibet Anno in dicta Ecclesia sub die xvii. Octobris celebrare facere, ac etiam celebrare facere festum principale praefati Hospit. in die Annuntiat. V. M. & infra octavam Paschae Resurrect. D. Noftri dare dictis Pollinis Prandium, in quo expendere teneatur flor. 14 in Domin, Palm. ramos Olivarum, cum Palmis eisdem Dominis itemque in die Purific. V. M. ceram consuetam, & haec omnia teneatur facere Cappellanus;

“To whom a dowry of said Chapel was attached a farm in S. Marco Vecchio, a place known as Montughi, and another farm owned by the Pollini, and three houses on the Via della Scala, and not wishing to deprive the Chaplain of the privacy of the aforementioned chapel, all this should revert to the Hospital of the Innocents. The said hospital is obliged to give for every year in perpetuity a candle of 6 ounces of white wax, with a child painted on each of them, in memory of the two eldest Pollini children.”

Item in supradicta die omnes de Pollinis suprannominati

elegerunt in Cappellanum Dominum Io. Baptistam
Dominici de Pollinis, & Hospitalarius Innocentium Dominus
Lucas de Alamannis dictum Ioannem electum, &
amovibilem ad nutum suum consirmavit. Ego Raphael
Miniati Matthiae Baldesi Civis rogavit.

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LESSON VIII

OF THE SPEDAL

DEGL'INNOCENT II

To understand the heightened international reputation enjoyed by the Hospital of the Innocenti, we need merely consider the words of the Florentine Signoria in their petition to the Spedalingo in 1456: “Et etiam quia manutentio dicti Hospitalis cedit ad gloriam Singularem huius Civitatis, praecipue apud exteras Christianas Nationes.” Within this document we find further authoritative instructions, constitutions, and the plan of the Building, which has been requested repeatedly by different princes who were eager to copy this model in their own States, as occurred in 1500 when a copy was sent to London at the request of the King of England, as del Migliore asserted on page 33: I do not believe that it would be problematic to discuss the exact description of the complex or the way in which it was governed.

Our observation of the building designed by Filippo Brunelleschi reveals his adaptation of the ancient style that the day’s best architects admired. The magnificent loggia, or porch, that fronts the sacred facility extends nicely into the Piazza that was later sold to the Consuls of the Silk Art by the Officers of Torre. The loggia sits on a regal staircase, made all the more impressive due to the employment of Corinthian columns, which feature rounded arches in

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proper proportional ratios to their height and that fit properly into the other architectural forms, like the windows with angular cornices that perch over each arch and give light to the apartments above. Small roundels contain reliefs of children wrapped in clothing on a blue background, all of which were worked from terra cotta by Andrea della Robbia: these admirably ornament the loggia and heighten its appeal. But even more impressive are the four sculpted heads of the Grand Dukes Cosimo I, Francesco I, Ferdinando I, and

Cosimo II, sculpted by Giovanni Batista Sermei, the noted pupil of Giambologna, that appear on the architraves of the doors within the loggia.

II. This façade permits me the opportunity to digress just a bit and relate an anecdote about Brunelleschi, reported by Vasari in the Artist's Life as follows:

"When Filippo traveled to Milan to bring to the Duke Filippo Maria (Giangaleazzo) a model of a Fortress, he asked his trusted friend Francesco della Luna to oversee the construction of the buildings that comprise the complex of the Innocenti. Francesco, however, altered the plan and built the Architrave lower than Brunelleschi wanted, thus changing the proportions improperly. Brunelleschi was irate when he returned, but Francesco explained that he had based his new design on the temple of St. John (the Baptistery of S. Giovanni), which was built in antiquity. Brunelleschi replied, pithily, "That's a beautiful building that has only one error in it; but it's that one error that you chose to replicate in this one!"

But returning to the aforementioned busts of the Grand Dukes, we see two short inscriptions. One of them, under the head of Cosimo I, reads:

PATER ET BENEFACTOR HOSPITALIS INNOCENTIVM.

The other, under the bust of Cosimo II, states:

NOMEN AVI COSMVS REFERENS ATQVE INCLYTA FACTA MDCXII.

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There are beautiful paintings by Bernardino Poccetti, among which include a painting of a dead child in the arms of Aesculapius, who tries to revive the infant by feeding it grass. The figures seem so naturalistic, so real, that the following lines were inscribed to praise the painter:

QVEM IVVENEM EXTINGVVM CERNIS, SL FORTE
RESVRGAT
PICTORI VITAM DEBEAT, AN MEDICO?

In addition to this painting, Poccetti painted in the vault an unusually vivid representation of Mars that is marvelous to see. In one of the offices of the hospital appears Poccetti's miraculous portrait of Giorgio Ferravecchio, his dearest friend, without whose companionship he never could have painted. Finally, at the head of the Loggia appears a hole, or small window, into which unwanted infants are placed. The opening is wide enough to accommodate newborns, a feature that has inspired many to write verses. One

of these writers, Giovanni Sernigi, wrote the following: "One night, at the darkest hour, into that window was placed a small child who would grow into an important figure. He was beaten constantly by those who did not recognize his future importance, but he withstood the punishment. Impetuously, as he wandered about, he let slip from his lips the words, "beware, this boy will grow to be a powerful man who will rule cities!" And when this Creature reached the age of eighteen, the spirit moved the Spedalingo to recommend him to a Florentine Gentleman from the house of Ramaglianti, who wound up taking the boy with him to the Middle East.

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There the brave boy was noticed by the Sultan, who ultimate made him the Lord of Damascus, City of Syria." So ends this tale. But on that window, by a scene of the Nativity, appear the words:

PATRES NOSTRI DERELIQUERVNT NOS,
DOMINVS AVTEM ASSVMPSIT NOS.

III. One enters the church through one of the Doors under the Loggia, located next to the Hospital situated near the mouth of the street, that has in front of it an image of God the Father with other figures, made by Graffione, a painter celebrated in those times. Entering the Church, we see first on the pier with the font a sculpture in marble of a small child, believed to be the work of Giambologna, who is also thought to have made the marble head of Christ crowned with thorns. A Bust of a Woman, attributed to Sermei (Giambologna's student), is also placed above the shelves of the two side doors. At the high altar appears a beautiful painting of the Adoration of the Magi, which includes both excellent figures and a view of a great river in the distance. A small vignette of the Massacre of the Innocents appears in the background, and on another hill stands a farmer cutting down a tree. This admirable painting and its figures were painted by Domenico Ghirlandaio. The entire Church – and its altar – were consecrated with great solemnity on the 2nd of April 1451 by the Holy Archbishop Antonino before all the city's leaders, as appears in a document written by Ser Uberto di Martino from S. Donato in Poggio. Pope Eugene IV granted Indulgences, and the Spedalingo Don Teodoro Baldini placed below the Altar the relics of St. Mario. Each arch contains two side altars. In the first on the right side, decorated with elaborate columns and owned by the Lenzi family, we see a representation of the Deposed Christ, made by Ulivieri, a disciple of Poppi. In the second chapel, commissioned by Pieri Spedalingo,

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appears Matteo Rosselli's altarpiece of Saints Martin and Gallo, the two patron saints of this hospital. At its head is the painting of the Annunciation of the Virgin by Filippo

Latini, followed by the Pugliesi Chapel with a beautiful altarpiece by Piero di Cosimo, in which is represented the Virgin Mary flanked by saints and surrounded by terracotta heads of Cherubs made by Luca della Robbia. At the foot of the Presbytery is buried Don Vincenzo Borghini, one of the most venerated and important Spedalighi of this place. The Epitaph on his tomb states:

VINCENTII BORGHINI OSSA
OBIIIT YEAR MDLXXX. DIE XV. AVG.
VIXIT AN. LXIII. MENS. IX. DIES XX.

However, because we know that Don Vincenzo was born in 1515, this stone should state VIXIT AN. LXV instead of VIXIT AN. LXIII. Plaques in the floor mark the tombs of other Spedalighi, as in the case of Lapo Pacini, first Proprietor and protector of the Hospital, whose sepulcher is inscribed with Lombard letters.

IV. From the Church to the door on the right, one passes through the first Courtyard, the interior of which is adorned with Corinthian columns made of *pietra serena* and, in the lunettes, with portraits of the hospital's most distinguished benefactors. Some of these include,

Francesco Buonagrazia.
Agnolo del Caccia.
Raffaello Ridolfi.
Andrea da Castiglionchio.
Giovanni dei Nobili.
Batista Bizzini.
Iacopo Viuoli.
Matteo Gondi

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Andrea Buondelmonti, Archbishop of Florence.
Piero Soderini
Cav. Girolamo de'Pazzi.
Alessandro Strozzi.
Bindaccio Peruzzi.
Card. Niccolò Schembergh.
Cione Pollini.
Francesco di Leccio from S. Miniato.

V. We come now to the apartment of the Spedaligo, where rare paintings are kept, and the Archive, which is full of ancient parchments; there is also an office for the Camarlingo and one for the Chancellery. From this courtyard one enters another, which has in front of it a very large vegetable garden where plants and grasses grow, and which has water flowing through channels by means of two wheels of an instrument described

by Vitruvius in Book X, and it is believed that the first such machine to be used in Florence was in this garden. In the Enimmi, the Malatesti refers to it like this:

"Then gushing into the lake in several torrents,
where the veins of those the waters rush,
We hear that the errors of mothers are Innocents."

From the central core one comes to the Women's hospital, where, according to Vasari, there appears a three-foot tall picture by Pontormo of The History of the Eleven Thousand Martyrs. Here the figures are about to be crucified by Diocletian in a forest, where Iacopo (Pontormo) added a battle scene filled with horses, beautifully painted nudes, and putti that fly in the air to pounce upon the executioners. The Emperor, too, is surrounded by nude figures rejoicing in their martyrdom: Raffaello Borghini also describes this painting with the following words; "It is a work truly worthy of infinite praise." The Canon Biscioni, in his erudite notes on the text by the aforementioned Borghini, says that he (the Emperor) weeps tears, but this does not seem accurate. There too you have a painting of a Coronation

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by Maria di Francesco Poppi, with four small pictures of angels and saints. We cannot forget the panel by Giotto, in which is represented the Eternal Father, the Virgin Mary, and Saints. This painting has been retouched by Mr. Agostino Veracini, famous for his ability to vivify ancient panels in dire need of repair, as we read in an inscription on this panel:

EXIMIVM IOTTI OPVS CVM TEMPORIS INIVRIA PENE WITH
SVMPTVM IN TENEBRIS IACERET AVGVSTINVS VERACINIVS
HVIVSCE SAECVLI INTER EXCVLTOS PICTORES MERIT
PRIMVS MAXIME AD REFICIENDAS VETVSTATE HAVSTAS
SVMMORVM VIRORVM DEPICTAS IMAGINES ARTE POLLENS
AD VERAM GENVINAMQVE FORMAM SOLERTI INGENIO AC
STVDIO REDEGIT. ANNO MDCCLVIII.

VI. And coming to the governing body of this pious hostel, we read in the registers that there are only women allowed here, sometimes as many as 900, all under the direction of a Prioress of mature age who is carefully selected for this duty to teach these women. Their status – as nuns, married women, or whatever they truly are, is determined by the officers: the way they distinguish themselves is simple and pure, as maidens under the age of 25 wear white, adults between the ages of 25 and 45 wear blue, and the older ones wear black. Those who live there can perfect themselves by doing women's work, especially embroidery, and in very fine sewing that promotes the city. Children study with two teachers who specialize in grammar and the other arts, and they seem to be quite

happy as they prepare themselves to be men of merit and of wisdom, being at the hospital ready to glorify Mother Florence with their rare talents.

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The number of prostitutes there is always large, and they have with them many children, while young girls from the countryside deliver provisions monthly to the Houses, from which come specific requests, I guess. However, these prostitutes are always considered to be children of the Ospedale. There are many Ministers who take care of the shops, man the entrance, and guard the Church and the Creatures inside it, but the superintendent of everyone is the Spedalingo selected by the Emperor after serious consideration by the city council for his suitability for administering charity and providing everything for everyone in a way that satisfies the government and enhances the hospital's prospects. The current Spedalingo the is highly respected Count Giovanni Michele Pierucci.

VII. I would be remiss to forget the ancient Seal of the Spedale, near the tomb of the Lord Carlo Tommaso Strozzi, which features in it the image of Mary with the Christ Child at her bosom, with two coats of arms underneath: on the right side we see arms of the silk guild, marked by a red door on a white field, and on the left is a bandaged child lying on a cup, that the most learned Lord Manni believes to be the coat of arms of the Hospital of S. Gallo, the institution that accepted foundlings in the days before the foundation of the Innocenti. The Silk Guild shield was added after the two hospitals joined together, while the arms of the Innocenti were originally designed much like the reliefs of the children that adorn the frieze of the Loggia (standing in their clothes, but without a cup). The Oblates wore this design on their garments with a seal that said,

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VIII. And finally we come to the final list of all the Spedalinghi who have governed the hospital, provided by Mr. Conte.

1420. Antonio di Ser Leonardo Cecchi.

1435. Tommaso di Maso da Perugia.

1440. Piero d'Andrea di Piero, who renounced it.

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1444. Giovanni di Leonardo Grilli, Canon of San Lorenzo, renounced.

1444. Marco from the Borgo to San Lorenzo. Presided at the time of the Factory's completion, and was the first to accept children to the institution.

1444. Lapo di Piero di Pacino Pacini, citizen and merchant of Florence, buried here with an inscription to mark his tomb.
1446. Andrea di Giuliano Fiorentino.
1447. Adamo di Giovanni.
1450. Marco di Giuliana di Mugello.
1451. Niccolò di Piero, Spedalingho at the time of the church's solemn consecration by Saint Antoninus.
1456. Lorenzo di Frosino from the Volpaia.
1458. Pace di Sandro from Empoli.
1461. Girolamo di Niccolò from S. Gimignano.
1478. Francesco di Giovanni who was parish priest of S. Clemente in Pelago.
1479. Francesco di Andrea, previous Prior of the Hospital of S. Gallo.
1481. Francesco di Martino della Torre.
1483. Francesco di Giovanni Tesori, buried here with an Inscription and his Effigy carved in marble.
1497. Girolamo di Stefano di Cino.
1506. Francesco di Cesare Petrucci.
1528. Damiatio di Biagio Manti from Imola, formerly priest of the Borgo San Lorenzo.
1528. Piero di Lionardo Giachini from Empoli, Canon of Volterra, Vicar General of Florence, Bishop of Hippo, and Suffragan of Pistoia.
1530. Simone di Caterino Guidoni Aretino, previously the Prior of S. Felicita of Florence.
1531. Luca di Tommaso Alamanni.
1552. Vincenzo Borghini Monaco Cassinese of the Badia Fiorentina, buried with Inscription on his tomb.
1580. Fra Niccolò Mazzi of Cortona, Franciscan Confessor of the most celebrated Grand duchess of Tuscany.

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1587. Vincenzio Casanuova, Abbot of S. Donnino alla Rocca in Romagna.

1591. Giovanni Batista di Niccolao Totti, formerly a Pisan Canon, then Spedalingo of S. Maria Nuova di Firenze.

1594. Ruberto di Ruberto Antinori, Doctor, Theologian, and Florentine Canon.

1616. Giovanni di Cesare Mattioli from Staggia, monk of Monte Oliveto, first Spedalingo of S. Matteo, then Spedalingo of S. Maria Nuova.

1618. Marco di Cassiano Settimanni from the Rocca S. Casciano, previously Spedalingo of S. Maria Nuova.

1622. Fra Adriano Mannozi Servita, Prior of the Hospital of Bonifazio, Confessor of the Cardinal Carlo de 'Medici, Doctor Theologian, and Provincial head of his Order.

1628. Niccolò di Luigi Pieri Scodellari, Doctor Theologian, Canon, and Florentine Archpriest, buried with an inscription.

1642. Filippo del Senator Paolo Ricasoli, then Spedalingo of S. M. Nuova, buried with an Inscription.

1645. Alexander of Senator Vincenzio Pitti, Consul of the Florentine Academy.

1647. Fabio di Salvi Scarlatti.

1648. Paolo Donato di Giovanni Squarcialupi, priest of S. Agnesa in Chianti, buried there.

1677. Don Teodoro Baldini from Castiglion Fiorentino, Valombrosan abbot and General of the Order.

1685. Filippo di Giovanni Francesco Grazzini, Canon of Florence.

1695. Lodovico dei Sir Piero da Verrazzano I. C. Subdeacon of Florence, buried with an Inscription in the Salesian Monastery called the Conventino.

1719. Alessandro di Lodovico Gianfigliuzzi I. C. Canon of Florentine and Vicar General of Fiesole.

. Francesco Rucellai, Florentine Canon.

. the Count Giovanni Michele Pierucci.