

DYNAMIC DOORWAYS:  
OVERDOOR SCULPTURE IN RENAISSANCE GENOA

By

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DYANAMIC DOORWAYS:  
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## Abstract

*Soprapporte*—rectangular, overdoor lintels sculpted from marble or slate—were a prominent feature of both private residential and ecclesiastic portals in the Ligurian region in northwest Italy, and in particular its capital city Genoa, during the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Sculpted site- or city-specific religious narratives occupy the centers of most *soprapporte*, and are typically framed with the coats of arms or the initials of their patrons. As this study demonstrates, *soprapporte* were not merely ornamental, for they acted as devotional objects and protective devices while connecting the citizens who commissioned them to the city, neighborhoods, and religious complexes whose portals they decorated.

With a few exceptions, the literature on *soprapporte* is confined to scholarship produced by a limited circle of Ligurian scholars, and it is not part of the wider discourse of Italian Renaissance sculpture. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the relationship between these prominent and expensive objects and the history of ritual, patronage, and religious and domestic art in Genoa, this study represents the first comprehensive examination of these objects in English. In doing so, it also aims to reinstate Genoa into the dialogue of students and scholars of Renaissance politics, society, culture, religion, and art.

The dissertation is composed of an introduction that examines traditions in ecclesiastic and domestic façade decorations and considers the sculptors, placement, developments, prevalence, preservation, and materials involved in creating *soprapporte*. This essential background information is followed by four chapters, which serve as case studies for the various functions, imagery, and dissemination of overdoor sculptures

throughout Genoa and the rest of the Ligurian region. The over 350 examples of this sculptural type that I have encountered in my field research and consultation of secondary sources are included in an appendix. The result is a study that broadens the understanding of Ligurian, and especially Genoese, Renaissance art as well as provides a more coherent picture of the appearance and function of *soprapporte* and the ways in which they helped forge familial, communal, and devotional identities.

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## Introduction

The Ligurian region in northwest Italy, and in particular its capital city Genoa, are not well known to students and scholars of Renaissance art, but during the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries this area was home to at least 300—130 in Genoa alone— rectangular, sculpted overdoor lintels known as *soprapporte*, and probably many more. These prominent and particular reliefs, sculpted from marble or different types of slate, decorated the principal, exterior doorways of many private residences, various portals of religious complexes, and some interior entryways. *Soprapporte* helped define cityscapes throughout the region, for they marked the transitional space between a public street or piazza and a private, domestic, or sacred realm with site- and city-specific imagery. Sculpted religious narratives occupy the centers of most *soprapporte* and these scenes typically are framed with the coats of arms or the initials of their patrons or the owners of the palaces they decorated; elements that usually are secondary to the central image. The most popular narratives carved on these objects included the Annunciation, monogram of Christ, Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), Christ's nativity, and scenes depicting Genoa's patron saints John the Baptist and George. There was a marked tendency for compositional repetition within each subject type, from building to building and, in some cases, from city to city. *Soprapporte* were not merely ornamental, for they acted as devotional objects and protective devices for the individuals who occupied or patronized the spaces beyond the thresholds they decorated. Overdoor sculptures also served a vital function in advertising prominent Ligurian families and their presence within each city to fellow residents and foreign merchants, as well as to important dignitaries whose visits were greeted with grand, triumphal processions that in

some cases moved past the very palaces and churches the *soprapporte* ornamented. These overdoor sculptures visually connected the citizens who commissioned them to the city, neighborhoods, and religious complexes whose portals they decorated, thus establishing familial, communal, and devotional identities.

As individual works, *soprapporte* declared through heraldry and inscriptions the urban presence of specific families, while collectively they visually embodied the communal identity of the region and its vibrant visual culture. This dissertation contextualizes and interprets Genoese *soprapporte* in a variety of ways, namely via civic and religious imagery, family identity, and ecclesiastical functions and patronage. It also speaks to their popularity in places associated with Genoa, especially other cities in Liguria, as well as major Genoese trading posts throughout Europe and the Mediterranean.

### **Previous Scholarship on *Soprapporte***

With a few exceptions, the literature on *soprapporte* is confined to scholarship produced by a limited circle of Ligurian scholars who mainly focus on works in Genoa rather than considering overdoor relief sculptures as a regional phenomenon. While their research has proven invaluable to the field, it is linguistically and geographically isolated, as it is not part of the wider discussion of the history of Italian Renaissance sculpture. Most literature in English on Genoese and Ligurian art and architecture concerns the sixteenth century, the period that followed the zenith of *soprapporta* production in the late fifteenth century. Many scholars have largely ignored Genoa in favor of Florence, Rome, Venice, and other Italian artistic centers. While the focus on those cities is

justified given their enormous contributions to this period and the wealth of primary sources that document them, as an important maritime Republic ruled by an elected doge, Genoa should be acknowledged and integrated into these discussions.

In the nineteenth century, Federico Alizeri was the first scholar to engage in archival research on Genoese art made before the seventeenth century. He published his findings in six volumes titled: *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI (Notes on Artists in Liguria from Its Origins through the Sixteenth Century)*. He organized his research chronologically, further dividing it by medium with volumes I-III concerning painting and volumes IV-VI focusing on sculpture.<sup>1</sup> Included in these volumes are transcriptions of several fifteenth-century documents, now inaccessible, from Genoa's Archivio di Stato (State Archives) that refer to the Gagini (or Gaggini), the family of sculptors most closely associated with *soprapporte* production whose importance will be addressed more extensively below.<sup>2</sup> Alizeri's transcriptions rank among the few primary sources to reference *soprapporte*, as almost all of the many Ligurian sculpted portal decorations are undocumented. Perhaps due to the scarcity of archival records, in his 1875 book *Della vita privata dei genovesi (On the Private Lives of the Genoese)*, Luigi Tommaso Belgrano turned his attention to the different subject matters found on *soprapporte*, noting that the most frequently depicted narratives are the

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<sup>1</sup> Federico Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI*, 6 vols. (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino, 1870-1880).

<sup>2</sup> The Archivio di Stato has declared numerous fifteenth-century documents "non consultabile" (not consultable) due to their fragile state. According to Dr. Roberto Santamaria and others at the Archivio (discussions with the author, February-May 2009), during the archive's 1996 move from its old location next to the cathedral to its current location (Piazza S. Maria in Via Lata 7) the paper documents were found to be damaged by high humidity. The pages are now quite delicate and prone to crumbling with any type of handling. The Archivio has requested funds from the state to conserve and restore the documents digitally, but it is unlikely that the money will come through at any point in the near future.

Annunciation, Nativity, and St. George killing the dragon.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars touched on lintel sculptures through their work on the Gagini. At the beginning of the twentieth century Luigi Augusto Cervetto wrote the first monograph on the Gagini.<sup>4</sup> While it is a relatively straightforward biography with no critical analysis that mostly concerns post-Renaissance members of that family, it does provide a solid foundation for our knowledge of the Gagini and their sculptures.

In his 1906 book on Genoese art, *Genua*, German art historian Wilhelm Suida traced what he identified as the stylistic development of *soprapporte* and divided it into three distinct, chronological stages.<sup>5</sup> The first and earliest stage consisted of a single lintel sculpture, the second integrated a continuous cornice around the entrance into which the *soprapporta* was placed, and the third type substituted decorative, patterned architraves with relief sculpture that extended onto the pilasters, in place of a narrative *soprapporta*.<sup>6</sup> Suida's breakdown, however, is far too general and is problematic, given that over time many of the doorways in question have been altered during renovations, rendering it difficult or impossible to reconstruct them.<sup>7</sup>

Fellow German scholar Hanno-Walter Kruft rooted his scholarship in Suida's and followed his predecessor's taxonomic approach to dividing the history of *soprapporte* into separate categories. In both *Portali genovesi del rinascimento (Genoese Doorways of the Renaissance)* of 1971 and a related 1978 article "Alcuni portali genovesi del rinascimento fuori Genova" ("Some Genoese Doorways of the Renaissance Outside of

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<sup>3</sup> Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, *Della vita privata dei genovesi*, 2nd ed. (Genoa: Tipografia del R. Istituto Sordo-Muti, 1875), 34-35.

<sup>4</sup> Luigi Augusto Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone, loro opere in Genova ed altrove; Contributo alla storia dell'arte lombarda* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1903).

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Suida, *Genua* (Leipzig: Verlag von E. U. Seemann, 1906).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-58.

<sup>7</sup> Giuliana Algeri, "La scultura a Genova fra il 1450 e il 1470; Leonardo Riccomanno, Giovanni Gagini, Michele d'Aria," *Studi di storia delle arti* 1, no. 67 (1977): 65-66.

Genoa”), Krufft cited and dated works in a manner that supported Suida’s straightforward chronological development.<sup>8</sup> Because Krufft was primarily concerned with issues of dating and attribution, he focused his connoisseurial efforts and skills on making stylistic comparisons between *soprapporte* with the aim of identifying their authors and tracing a chronological development of their style.<sup>9</sup> However, according to Piero Boccardo, Director of Genoa’s Musei di Strada Nuova (Museums of the Strada Nuova), Krufft never saw any of the works he discussed in his publications *in situ*.<sup>10</sup> Given the possibility that he never visited Genoa, Krufft may have formed his ideas solely through the examination of photographs, most of which presumably were black and white.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, while Krufft’s publications are valuable for their compilation of known, as well as previously unpublished, works and stylistic analysis, his findings lack a contextual approach that can further illuminate why Ligurian patrons commissioned *soprapporte*, who their intended audience was, and under what physical and functional circumstances they were viewed.

The few other scholars who have studied *soprapporte* have approached them in a similar vein as Suida and Krufft, with an emphasis on connoisseurship. Before and after Krufft, work on *soprapporte* has been mostly limited to Ligurian scholars publishing in regional journals and presses and, thus, they have had a minimal impact on the wider study of Renaissance art.<sup>12</sup> One explanation some scholars cite for the relative lack of

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<sup>8</sup> Hanno-Walter Krufft, *Portali genovesi del rinascimento* (Florence: Editrice Edam, 1971); idem, “Alcuni portali genovesi del rinascimento fuori Genova,” *Antichità viva* 17, no. 6 (1978): 31-35.

<sup>9</sup> This summary is derived from Algeri, “La scultura a Genova,” 65.

<sup>10</sup> Piero Boccardo (Director, Musei di Strada Nuova di Genova), in discussion with the author, 18 March 2009.

<sup>11</sup> There is one St. George *soprapporta* in Berlin that Krufft may have seen in person, and he could have viewed others in European collections. However, since the majority of *soprapporte* are still *in situ*, if Boccardo is correct, he drew his conclusions with limited fieldwork.

<sup>12</sup> Orlando Grosso, *Portali e palazzi di Genova* (Milan: Bestetti & Tumminelli, 1910); F. W. Hasluck, “Genoese Lintel-Reliefs in Chios,” *Burlington Magazine* 18, no. 96 (1911): 325, 28-30; Elena Parma, “Genoa-Bruges: The Art Market and Cultural Exchange in the Fifteenth Century,” in *Italy and the Low*

interest in Genoese Renaissance studies is the absence of surviving primary documents.<sup>13</sup> Admittedly, this is a considerable obstacle, however, there is still a sizeable amount of visual evidence and some contemporary records from which to glean a more comprehensive understanding of these objects.

Building upon the work of these and other scholars, Orlando Grosso and Arturo Dellepiane each published studies that resulted in additions to the catalogue of known *soprapporte* in Genoa and parts of Liguria, but neither comes close to presenting an exhaustive list.<sup>14</sup> In her essay “La scultura a Genova tra il 1450 e il 1470: Leonardo Riccomanno, Giovanni Gagini, Michele D’Aria” (“Sculpture in Genoa from 1450 to 1470: Leonardo Riccomanno, Giovanni Gagini, Michele D’Aria”), Giuliana Algeri argues for a more sophisticated reading of Genoese *soprapporte* by concentrating on three major sculptors from the period. She demonstrates that most of the earlier studies suffer from the desire to create a clear stylistic chronology of overdoor sculptures and in the process take them out of their historical and artistic contexts.<sup>15</sup> Rather than forcing all *soprapporte* into a few predetermined categories, Algeri proposes a close reading of each work to allow for more nuanced interpretations, something she is able to do with only a few of these sculptures given the abbreviated format of her article. More recent Italian scholarship published by Luciana Müller Profumo, Paolo Marchi, and Piero Boccardo, has brought to light further relevant information such as more examples of the type and a

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*Countries - Artistic Relations: The Fifteenth Century*, ed. Victor Michael Schmidt (Florence: Centro Di, 1999), 79-97; Ennio Poleggi, *Genova: Una civiltà di palazzi* (Milan: Silvana, 2002); idem, *L’Invenzione dei rolli: Genova, città di palazzi* (Milan: Skira, 2004); Luciana Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti: L’ornamento nell’architettura genovese, 1450-1600* (Genoa: Banca Carige, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Christine Shaw, “Principles and Practice in the Civic Government of Fifteenth-Century Genoa,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2005): 46.

<sup>14</sup> Grosso, *Portali e palazzi*; Arturo Dellepiane, *I portali: Genova and Liguria artistica* (Genoa: Editrice Realizzazioni Grafiche Artigiana, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> Algeri, “La scultura a Genova,” 65.

greater emphasis on the subjects depicted and their significance to specific locations, but their analyses exclusively focus on Genoa at the expense of a broader discussion of the place *soprapporte* occupy within Liguria and the larger history of Italian Renaissance art.<sup>16</sup>

### **Methodology and Significance of the Dissertation**

This dissertation builds on previous scholarship, especially that of Algeri, to expand and enrich our knowledge of *soprapporte* by considering a broad selection of these works within their physical and functional contexts in order to decipher their diverse meanings. The present study widens the framework of interpretation by considering the political, devotional, and aesthetic motives for the creation of *soprapporte* through an examination of their precedents, imagery, patrons, placement, and the artists who created them. Additionally, it examines their regional and cross-cultural contexts and meanings by considering further examples of *soprapporte* throughout and beyond Liguria. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the relationship between these prominent and expensive objects and the history of ritual, patronage, and religious and domestic art in Genoa, this study represents the first comprehensive examination of these objects in English and aims to reinstate Genoa into the dialogue of students and scholars of Renaissance politics, society, culture, religion, and art.

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<sup>16</sup> See Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*; Piero Boccardo, “Per una mappa iconografica dei portali genovesi del Rinascimento,” *Atti del Convegno: La scultura decorativa del primo Rinascimento* (1983); Ezia Gavazza et al., “100 portali genovesi: Mappa iconografica dei portali genovesi del '400,” (Tormena-Genova: Associazione Amici dell'Arte e dei Musei Liguri, n.d.).

This project is based on visual, archival, and secondary research that was conducted in the United States and abroad, primarily in Genoa but also throughout the Ligurian region, Milan, Florence, Palermo, Bruges, Istanbul, and London, among others. The information gathered from primary and secondary sources—including Genoese chronicles, family histories, notarial records, church records, and ritual history—as well as fieldwork that involved locating and photographing extant works *in situ* and those in various public and private collections provides a socio-historical lens through which to interpret these works and what they tell us about the religious, political, and social motives of the period in which they were created. This includes an investigation of the possible precedents and contemporary sculptural decorations produced in Liguria as well as other parts of Italy. Furthermore, an appendix of works appears at the end of the dissertation that updates the earlier lists of *soprapporte* compiled by others. Although it is not exhaustive, the appendix adds significantly to the known canon of *soprapporte*, especially as no attempt has been made previously to compile a list of this specific type of overdoor sculpture outside of Genoa.

### **Genoese Gateways: Traditions in Ecclesiastic and Domestic Façade Decorations**

Genoa, derived from the Latin *janua* for gate or door, is an appropriate name for a coastal city that served as an entry point to northwest Italy and a gateway for trade between Western Europe and the Middle East. The Genoese further emphasized their liminal identity through artistic endeavors that include elaborate lintel relief sculptures framing palatial and sacred entryways. Viewers encountered these *soprapporte* as they crossed a threshold, either exterior or interior, or walked past doors situated along streets

and in the city's piazzas. Their visual impact is still apparent in the *soprapporte* that remain *in situ* such as a fifteenth-century marble relief featuring St. George, an early Christian soldier, in his sacred signature act of killing a dragon located over the main entrance of Palazzo Spinola at Piazza Pellicceria Superiore 3 (Fig. i-1). This narrative engages the viewer with its emphatic focus on St. George, who spears the dragon to save a princess slated to be sacrificed to the monster, an act that is symbolic of good triumphing over evil and Christianity victorious over paganism. The kneeling princess watches the action unfold from her perch on a ledge overlooking the rest of the scene, her palms raised to her chest and facing outward in a gesture of helplessness and distress. Angels holding lilies support Spinola family coats of arms on the ends of the rectangular relief so that they frame the central narrative and the inscribed initials, "P" and "S," on either side of St. George were probably added later to identify a subsequent owner of the palace.<sup>17</sup> This quintessential example of a *soprapporta* depicts the warrior saint in his role as defender of Christianity, the most popular subject for this type, and will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

The Palazzo Spinola lintel relief faces a small piazza and therefore could be viewed from a greater distance and variety of angles than *soprapporte* that adorned doorways along Genoa's narrow, dark streets. More often than not, a person encountered these sculptures as he or she moved through the labyrinth of medieval streets and alleys that characterizes Genoa's historic center even today. An example is a slate sculpture

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<sup>17</sup> Pietro Spinola appears to have added his initials to the sculpture when he acquired the palace in the late sixteenth century. The top square element that originally gave this work an inverted "T" form has been removed. This now-lost square probably contained a relief sculpture of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child like one that appears on the slate *Monogram of Christ soprapporta* with Adorno heraldic arms on Vico degli Adorno (Fig. i-2) or the monogram of Christ, as seen in the *St. George Killing the Dragon* overdoor at Via Canneto il Lungo 29r (Fig. i-3), for other inverted T-shaped lintels typically feature such adornment.

decorated with the monogram of Christ (“IHS,” a combination of Latin and Greek initials for his name) presented by angels and framed by Adorno family coats of arms in the Vico degli Adorno (Fig. i-2), a street that is barely wide enough to accommodate two people walking side by side comfortably.

While *soprapporte* are a type specific to the region of Liguria and to Genoese settlements throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, they take their place in a long, distinguished tradition of sculpted doorways that helped identify and sometimes prepared medieval and Renaissance viewers for the new spaces they were about to enter. Before delving deeper into the objects that are the focus of this dissertation, it is necessary to recognize some of their precedents and broader artistic and historical contexts. The following overview of medieval and Renaissance church and palace façade decoration demonstrates both the place Genoese *soprapporte* occupied within the history of liminal decoration in Europe, and particularly in Italy, but also how their form and subjects were unique symbols of Genoese and Ligurian identity.

Monumental portal sculptures appeared in the Middle Ages as early as the Ottonian Period (ca. 951-1024). In the following centuries Romanesque and Gothic church portal sculptures continued to expand and evolve, framing the primary entrances and preparing the viewer spiritually as he or she crossed the threshold to worship and commune with God. The well known and often cited *Last Judgment* of ca. 1120-1135 over the west portal of the church of Saint-Lazare, Autun, and the Christological scenes that decorate the Royal Portal, dated ca. 1145-1155, at Chartres Cathedral are just two examples of how the French marked such liminal spaces.

While these well-known French medieval portal sculptures are found on tympana, jambs, lintels, and archivolts, several Romanesque churches in Western Tuscany near the Via Francigena, the important route that conducted pilgrims and goods from Northern Europe to Rome, display more modest rectangular lintel narrative sculptures that closely resemble Genoese *soprapporte*. Examples of these lintels survive on three, twelfth-century Romanesque churches in the Tuscan city of Pistoia—the basilicas of Sant’Andrea, San Giovanni Fuoricivitas, and San Bartolomeo in Pantano. The sculpture over the entrance to each church evinces a strong local connection through its biblically-themed narrative. In the case of Sant’Andrea, the main portal, which an inscription dates to 1166, is framed at the top not with imagery related to the church’s dedication but rather with a relief that depicts the *Magi before Herod* and the *Adoration of the Magi* supported by capitals decorated with sculpted scenes of the *Visitation* and *Annunciation* (Fig. i-4). The Magi scenes would have resonated especially well with pilgrims, who likewise were travelers with a sacred purpose. The inclusion of such imagery corresponds to Pistoia’s status as a Ghibelline city that supported Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who in 1162 moved the relics of the Magi from Milan to Cologne to emphasize his own power and to privilege his German homeland. As Dorothy Glass argues, Pistoia, desiring to remain loyal to the emperor, likely used this image as a means to show its continued alliance with him.<sup>18</sup> At San Bartolomeo in Pantano, a sculptor from the same workshop that produced the Sant’Andrea reliefs carved a lintel narrative in 1167 that depicts the *Doubting Thomas* and the *Mission of the Apostles* (Fig. i-5). Although these are unusual subject choices, their precedents can be traced back to early Christian

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<sup>18</sup> Dorothy F. Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage, and Crusade in Western Tuscany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17.

sarcophagi.<sup>19</sup> The *Mission of the Apostles* in particular had contemporary resonance as support for the crusades as Christians fought to retake the Holy Land just as Christ called upon his followers, the Apostles, to spread his message and “go forth and rescue anew Jerusalem from the infidels.”<sup>20</sup> At San Giovanni Fuoricivitas, a lintel sculpture of ca. 1180 showing the *Last Supper* decorates the north entrance (Fig. i-6). Glass believes this narrative’s purpose was to indicate that the adjacent monastery housed a hospice and the charitable monks there provided meals to pilgrims.<sup>21</sup> If so, it advertised one function of the religious complex to which it provided an access, a feature that Genoese *soprapporte*, especially those in the sacristy and cloisters of Santa Maria di Castello discussed in Chapter Two, share.

Other lintel narrative sculptures on churches along pilgrimage routes in Tuscany were composed to appeal to travelers from far away as well as to local residents. This is especially evident in the overdoor decorations made for the churches of San Leonardo al Frigido on the outskirts of Massa, Sant’Angelo in Campo outside of Lucca, and San Cassiano a Settimo near Pisa.<sup>22</sup> In each of these examples, the lintel sculpture depicts Christ’s *Entry into Jerusalem*, a narrative that the average Christian viewer, literate or otherwise, would recognize. They are distinguished from one another, however, by the insertion of the image of the patron saint of each church.<sup>23</sup> On the lintel sculpture for San Leonardo al Frigido, now in the collection of the Cloisters Museum in New York, the church’s titular saint Leonard is the small figure at the end of the line of apostles on the

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<sup>19</sup> As Glass relays, examples of such sarcophagi are found in Sant’Ambrogio, Milan, the cathedral in Andona, and in the collection of the Musée Lapidaire at Arles. *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-36.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

far left (ca. 1175-1185) (Fig. i-7). St. Michael is similarly placed in the overdoor relief sculpture from Sant'Angelo in Campo (ca. 1175-1185) that is now kept at Palazzo Mazzarosa in Lucca (Fig. i-8). At San Cassiano a Settimo, St. Cassian of Imola, the saintly schoolmaster to whom that church is dedicated, appears at the far left, engaged in teaching two students (1180) (Fig. i-9). The prominent depiction of patron saints on lintel decoration in Renaissance Genoa, therefore, finds precedents in these Romanesque church decorations. It also is presaged in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Gothic portal sculptures on Genoa Cathedral's façade, especially the central tympanum featuring the martyrdom of St. Lawrence, to whom the cathedral is dedicated, on a grill directly below Christ in a mandorla surrounded by the symbols of the four apostles (Fig. i-10). *Soprapporte* likely developed out of medieval church decorations like the examples cited above, but they display a greater deal of variety in terms of their iconography and placement.

Imagery on lintels over palace entrances, while quite popular in Genoa and the territory comprising Liguria, is not as prevalent in other Italian cities and does not display the same Ligurian uniformity of shape and iconography. In fifteenth-century Florence, Venice, and Siena, palace façade decoration was characterized by a use of classicizing motifs and heraldry with the aim of achieving harmonious and balanced structural designs.<sup>24</sup> These palace decorations did not usually feature narrative sculptures, but often they did integrate the palace owner's heraldic insignia somewhere on the façade.

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<sup>24</sup> In all of these cities there was a desire to connect new structures visually to the great achievements of antiquity, but this was especially so in Venice which lacked Roman origins. For further discussion of Venice's complicated relationship to antiquity from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries see Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). For a description and discussion of Renaissance Florentine palace interiors see Brenda Preyer, "The Florentine *casa*," in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (London: V&A Publications, 2006), 34-49. Information on Venetian palace interiors can be found in

In Florence, family coats of arms were either prominent, separate facade elements, as seen on the corner of the Palazzo Medici that faces the Via Martelli and the cathedral square, or were more integrated into the architectural ornament, as on Leon Battista Alberti's Palazzo Rucellai, built between 1446 and 1451, where his personal *impres*e were placed in the friezes above the ground floor (a ring) and the *piano nobile* (billowing sail of fortune).<sup>25</sup> Family heraldic arms were either sculpted or painted and, despite being condemned by preachers such as the Franciscan Bernardino da Siena and the Dominican Girolamo Savonarola for glorifying individuals, they remained a popular means by which to identify oneself and one's property.<sup>26</sup> Whereas the Medici and Rucellai palaces demonstrate a focus on overall structural harmony found through architectural features that clearly define the three distinct floors, the Genoese emphasized the portal above all other architectural features on their palaces.

Florentines in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries recognized the potential "speaking" power of their palace facades and sought designs that relayed the appropriate messages. The Medici and Strozzi used rustication, a design feature which spoke in part to the patron's strength with its rough edges. While the masonry features of Florentine Renaissance palaces are visible today, many facades were plastered and painted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, those who felt using rustication made too

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Patricia Fortini Brown, "The Venetian *casa*," in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (London: V&A Publications, 2006), 50-65; idem, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice: Art, Architecture, and the Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 53-89.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Burroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Facade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14-15. Although the ring is usually associated with the Medici, it was actually used by families, including the Rucellai, throughout Italy. Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 117-18. Giovanni Rucellai also placed his sail of fortune *impres*e along the frieze on the church of Santa Maria Novella, completed by Leon Battista Alberti in 1456-1470.

<sup>26</sup> Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, & Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 74.

bold of a statement instead adorned their palaces with classicizing sgraffito images. As Eleonora Pecchioli notes, in the quattrocento, the façade became the focus of decorative treatment for the first time. Palazzo Gerini was adorned with sgraffitied pilasters in ca. 1450 possibly by Maso di Bartolomeo while Palazzo Nasi in Via San Niccolò was covered with sgraffitied cherubs and candelabra in the 1460s. The ca. 1460-1470 decoration of the Palazzo dell'Arte della Seta even integrated a sculpted frieze in which the guild's coat of arms appears among sgraffito garlands and cherubs. This new decorative motif was inspired by the frescoed grotesques recently rediscovered in ancient Roman rooms in Rome such as those in the emperor Nero's Domus Aurea ca. 64-68 CE.<sup>27</sup> Giorgio Vasari records that many Florentines in the sixteenth century turned to Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini (1477-1548) to ornament their palace façades with classicizing sgraffito. Some of these palaces, such as Feltrini's earliest work for the Palazzo de'Gondi in Borgo Ognissanti, have been destroyed, but his sgraffito façades remain on a palace built for Lanfredino Lanfredini along Lungarno Guicciardini and another for Andrea and Tommaso Sertini in Piazza Padella (Via de' Corsi).<sup>28</sup> For the Florentines, such façade adornments were intended to bring honor and respect to the family by beautifying the city. As Leon Battista Alberti explains in *Della famiglia (On the Family)*, a work he began writing in 1432, the ability to afford such nonessential expenses demonstrated one's complete freedom from financial concerns, a particularly desirable trait according to humanists.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Giovanni Rucellai felt that his entire palace, which

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<sup>27</sup> Eleonora Pecchioli, *The Painted Façades of Florence: From the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century* (Florence: Centro Di, 2005), 11-23, 42-43.

<sup>28</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols., vol. 5 (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1906), 206-07.

<sup>29</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *The Albertis of Florence: Leon Battista Alberti's Della Famiglia*, trans. Guido A. Guarino (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1971), 209-11.

was visible to all Florentines and visitors to the city, brought him far more honor than any of his financial achievements, which lacked the visual, tangible presence of his prominent home.<sup>30</sup> For Florentines, the family and the physical abode in which its members resided were so interconnected that “*casa*” meant both the house itself and the family lineage.<sup>31</sup> We shall see that the same was true for the Genoese.

Other images such as portrait busts and ephemeral objects were also added to Florentine domestic façades to identify the palace’s owner. The positioning of portrait busts over exterior portals followed an ancient Roman tradition described by Pliny the Elder. One example of this is Antonio Rossellino’s bust of Matteo Palmieri, which was placed over the entrance of Palmieri’s palace in Florence.<sup>32</sup> It was also quite common for Florentines to place busts over interior doorways as the Medici did with three busts by Mino da Fiesole recorded in an inventory taken after Lorenzo de’Medici’s death in 1492.<sup>33</sup> Written records testify that heraldic devices were also displayed on domestic façades in the form of stained glass windows, as seen in Franciescho di Simone Fantoni’s home in 1472, and were painted or sewn onto cloths that hung from windows in honor of feast days or other celebrations.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Giovanni Rucellai, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: Il Zibaldone quaresimale*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1960), 118.

<sup>31</sup> Musacchio, *Art, Marriage & Family*, 66.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 74. Contemporary paintings demonstrate the placement of these portrait busts over doorways. See Jacopo del Sellaio, *The Triumph of Mordechai*, cassone panel, ca. 1490, Uffizi, Florence and Sodoma, *A Priest Prepares Saint Benedict’s Easter Meal*, 1505-1508, fresco from the cloister of the Monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore. For images of these two works see Musacchio, *Art, Marriage & Family*, 80. For the full Jacopo del Sellaio panel see *Gli Uffizi: Catalogo generale* (Florence: Centro Di, 1979), 320.

<sup>33</sup> The portrait busts of Piero de’Medici, his wife Lucrezia Tornabuoni, and his brother Giovanni de’Medici, all of which date from ca. 1453, may have originally been placed on a piece of furniture, as their back sides are equally carved in detail. However, by 1492 they had been moved to the more traditional placement over doorways. Shelley Zuraw, “The Medici Portraits of Mino da Fiesole,” in *Piero de’Medici “il Gottoso” (1416-1469): Kunst im Dienste der Mediceer = Art in the Service of the Medici*, ed. Andreas Beyer and Bruce Boucher (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), 319-20.

<sup>34</sup> Musacchio, *Art, Marriage & Family*, 75.

A similar demonstration of familial wealth and power is seen on palace portal and façade decorations in fifteenth-century Venice, which, like Genoa, was a wealthy maritime Republic.<sup>35</sup> The Porta della Carta, the grand, formal entry into a new wing of the Doge's Palace that Doge Francesco Foscari (r. 1423-1457) commissioned in 1438, marks the transition from the Piazzetta San Marco to the palace's courtyard (Fig. i-11). Debra Pincus argues that the triumphal and festive adornment of the Porta della Carta represents a sharp change from fortified medieval palace doorways.<sup>36</sup> A large, pointed arch frames the doorway that is further decorated by various other Gothic architectural features. In the bordering niches are sculpted female virtues and in the roundel at the top of the large Gothic arch is a bust of St. Mark. A sculpture of the Lion of St. Mark with Doge Foscari kneeling before him rests directly above the palace opening.<sup>37</sup> Sculpted from red and white marble and Istrian stone by Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon, this work identifies Foscari's commission for the viewer and symbolizes a unified Venice with its inclusion of the city's patron saint.<sup>38</sup> Surrounded by the piazza, piazzetta, the church of San Marco, and the late-medieval Doge's palace façade in the sacred and secular heart of the city, this work would have been viewed by countless dignitaries, officials, citizens, and visitors to the city. Its prominent Venice-specific symbolism and its connection to Doge Foscari functioned like most Genoese *soprapporte*, which, as we have seen above,

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<sup>35</sup> Dennis Romano, "City-State and Empire," in *Venice and the Veneto*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16.

<sup>36</sup> Debra Pincus, *The Arco Foscari: The Building of a Triumphal Gateway in Fifteenth Century Venice* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), 56.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed description of the Porta della Carta and its Foscari symbols see *ibid.*, 76-103. See also Richard J. Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice: Patrons, Architects and Builders, c. 1430-1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 102-19. The current sculptures over the entrance are copies. The damaged, original head of Francesco Foscari is now in the Museum of the Doge's Palace.

<sup>38</sup> St. Mark became Venice's patron saint after Venetian merchants stole his relics from Alexandria and brought them back to their city in 828.

consist of coats of arms identifying the patron that flank a sculpture with civic iconography.

While the Doge's Palace was certainly the most prestigious residence in Venice, the façades of other palaces along that city's most important "street," the Grand Canal, were also used as fields on which to identify their occupants, and, in some cases, promote the Venetian Republic through civic symbols. For example, Palazzo Bernardo of c. 1442 and Palazzo Giustinian at San Moisè, whose façade was rebuilt in the 1470s, both prominently display coats of arms to either side of the third floor arcade. The Ca' d'Oro (Palazzo Contarini), of 1421-1437, which was designed and built by Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon, Matteo Raverti, and others, bears the personal impress of its patron Marino Contarini on the column capitals as well as in coats of arms between two third-floor windows. Contarini further embellished his palace façade with intricate carvings and floral motifs designed to pronounce his elite status.<sup>39</sup> Palazzo Foscari, begun in 1450 and, like the Porta della Carta, commissioned by Doge Francesco Foscari, features a façade that is characterized by balance and symmetry. Although it is not directly above the palace's water entrance leading into its *androne*, there is a large white marble relief sculpture over the arcaded balcony on the third floor. It is adorned with Venice's lion of St. Mark standing on a helmet at the center, which is flanked on either side by classicizing putti displaying shields decorated with Foscari symbols.<sup>40</sup> The heraldic

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<sup>39</sup> Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, Revised and enlarged ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 103-06. See also Goy, *Building Renaissance Venice*, 99-100.

<sup>40</sup> The heraldic arms were all damaged in 1797 but new flanking Foscari coats of arms were added in 1924. For additional information on Ca' Foscari, see Dennis Romano, *The Likeness of Venice: A Life of Doge Francesco Foscari, 1373-1457* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 246-48, 50-53. For a further discussion of the façade and place see Howard, *Architectural History*, 106-09.

imagery on the façades of all of these prominently placed palaces served to identify and advertise their patrons to anyone traveling along the Grand Canal.<sup>41</sup>

In fifteenth-century Siena wealthy patrons likewise often included coats of arms somewhere on the facades of buildings that belonged to them or with which they were associated, but rarely did they appear directly over the door or framing narrative images as we see in Genoa. Fabrizio Nevola has shown that the Sieneese often decorated their palaces with coats of arms painted on wood or paper, as they did along the ceremonial entry route to welcome Pope Pius II (r. 1458-1464) when he visited Siena in 1459 and again in 1460. These were replaced by permanent marble versions and placed on building facades throughout the city, such as those found on Santa Maria dei Servi, Palazzo Bichi-Tegliacci, and Palazzo Lolli that are still visible today.<sup>42</sup> The Piccolomini arms are especially prevalent in and around Piazza Piccolomini, where they help define that family's properties within the city. Pope Pius II, born Enea Silvio Piccolomini in nearby Corsignano, sought to raise the status of his family and possibly rival the civic power represented in the town's city hall, the Palazzo Pubblico, by renovating the buildings in his clan's Sieneese neighborhood. The family's heraldic arms—some included the papal tiara and crossed keys of Pius II and, later, Pius III—appear throughout the square, including on the Loggia Piccolomini, the Palazzo Todeschini-Piccolomini and the Palazzo Piccolomini-Clementini.<sup>43</sup> The Palazzo di S. Galgano, begun in 1474, on the other hand, displays unusual façade decorations with two

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<sup>41</sup> The 1478 portal of the Scuola dei Calegheri at San Tomà, the shoemakers' guild headquarters, consists of sculpted reliefs of shoes along the lintel with *St. Mark Healing the Cobbler Anianus* in the lunette above. Howard, *Architectural History*, 115.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>43</sup> Some of the buildings around Piazza Piccolomini were probably renovated to varying degrees over the years, but many of the extant coats of arms are original fifteenth-century sculptures. For a further discussion of Piazza Piccolomini see *ibid.*, 72-79.

rectangular reliefs depicting scenes from the life of St. Galgano. While the imagery still serves to identify the patron, Giovanni di Niccolò, the abbot of the nearby rural monastery of S. Galgano, it does so using narratives rather than heraldic symbols.<sup>44</sup>

While family coats of arms were employed on palaces throughout the city, the black-and-white civic coat of arms of Siena, representations of the city's principal patron saint, the Virgin Mary, and images of the she-wolf—referencing Siena's classical origins—were placed on and around the cathedral and city hall, the Palazzo Pubblico, in addition to various structures along the Strada Romana, the hill town's main thoroughfare and part of the aforementioned Via Francigena.<sup>45</sup> These repeated symbols in such prominent locations asserted to citizens and visitors alike a particular Siennese identity.

This abbreviated survey makes it clear that the *soprapporte* of Genoa and Liguria take their place in a rich tradition of sculpted Italian Renaissance façade and portal decorations. Similar to the ways in which sacred imagery above the doorways of medieval European churches and portraits and heraldry on fifteenth-century Italian palace façades communicated various messages, we shall see that *soprapporte* indicated economic and social class, identity, piety, as well as familial and political associations.

### **Soprapporte Sculptors**

Rather than commissioning works from local painters and sculptors, during the Renaissance, Genoa was a magnet for talent that came from other parts of Italy and Europe. Painters like Roger van der Weyden, for example, arrived in the city from Flanders to fulfill no-longer-extant commissions and Genoese patrons also frequently

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 133-34.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 140-45.

imported works by other Northern artists such as Jan van Eyck.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, while few *soprapporte* can be unquestionably associated with a particular sculptor, none is connected to a native Genoese artist.

The handful of lintel reliefs that are associated with specific artists in surviving notarial records serve as the basis for the attributions of the vast majority of undocumented *soprapporte*. Extant documents suggest that the Gagini family of sculptors, in particular Domenico and Giovanni, and their workshops were responsible for producing most *soprapporte* during the second half of the fifteenth century. As early as the 1440s, members of the Gagini family immigrated to the coastal Ligurian city from Bissone, a small town that at that time was a Lombard territory but that is now part of the Ticino region of southern Switzerland. While there is an undoubtedly strong connection between the Gagini and *soprapporte*, a dearth of quattrocento Gagini sculptures in Bissone renders it impossible to assess that family's early work or any influence it may have had on the type in Genoa.<sup>47</sup> However, a distinct rise in the popularity of *soprapporte* does appear to coincide with the arrival of the Gagini in the city. Their clear role disseminating these works warrants a closer examination of the family and their associates.

Domenico, who was born in Bissone in ca. 1425-30 and died in Palermo on 29 or 30 September 1492, was the first documented member of the family in Genoa. He is

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<sup>46</sup> Elena Parma, "Genoa - Gateway to the South," in *The Age of Van Eyck: The Mediterranean World and Early Netherlandish Painting, 1430-1530*, ed. Till-Holger Borchert (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 95-103; Parma, "Genoa-Bruges," 80-90. For further information on Ligurian painting in the fifteenth century see Giuliana Algeri and Anna De Florian, *La pittura in Liguria: Il quattrocento* (Genoa: Tormena, 1992).

<sup>47</sup> According to Ivano Proserpi, a Gagini scholar in the Lugano district of Switzerland, there are no extant sculptures by any member of the family in Bissone dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the period during which *soprapporte* proliferated in Liguria. Additionally, none of the archives in Bissone or nearby Lugano holds records for the family from this period. The earliest archival document in Bissone or Lugano to reference the Gagini dates from the seventeenth century. E-mail message to the author 22 April 2009.

perhaps best known for his work on a sculpted marble chapel made to house the esteemed relics of St. John the Baptist in Genoa Cathedral that was begun in 1448 (Fig. i-12).

Given the chapel's prestigious location, medium, and function, it seems that Domenico was already a highly regarded sculptor at the time of this commission. While little scholarship exists on any of the Gagini sculptors, Domenico's work has been studied the most extensively. Hanno-Walter Kruft's 1972 monograph *Domenico Gagini und seine Werkstatt (Domenico Gagini and his Workshop)* provides an overview of his artistic production in Florence, Genoa, Naples, and Palermo, among other Italian cities.<sup>48</sup>

Domenico resided in Genoa from ca. 1448 until sometime between late 1456 and early 1458, when he left for Naples. There he worked for the court of Alfonso V of Aragon until that ruler's death in June of 1458, after which he made his final move to Sicily, where he remained until he died eleven years later.

More than one scholar has noted similarities between Domenico's work and that of Filippo Brunelleschi, especially the former's use of perspective and ornamentation in the already mentioned St. John the Baptist Chapel, which he may have learned from Brunelleschi's now lost painted perspective panels of the Baptistery and Piazza della Signoria in Florence of ca. 1425.<sup>49</sup> Francesco Caglioti further argues that there are stylistic connections between Domenico's sculptures and the work of Donatello, Lorenzo

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<sup>48</sup> Hanno-Walter Kruft, *Domenico Gagini und seine Werkstatt* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1972).

<sup>49</sup> Scholars who have noted Brunelleschi's influence on Domenico's work include Ezia Gavazza, "Ricerche sull'attività dei Gagini architetti a Genova," in *Architetti e scultori del quattrocento*, ed. Edoardo Arslan, *Arte e artisti dei laghi lombardi* (Como: Nosedà, 1959), 174-75; Francesco Caglioti, "Sull'esordio brunelleschiano di Domenico Gagini," *Prospettiva*, no. 91-92 (1998): 70-76. For a discussion of these lost Brunelleschi panels see Antonio Manetti, *The Life of Brunelleschi*, ed. Howard Saalman, trans. Catherine Engass (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), 42-46; Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 52-55.

Ghiberti, and Filarete.<sup>50</sup> Filarete confirmed such associations in his *Trattato di architettura* (*Treatise on Architecture*, 1461-1464), in which he indicates that Domenico spent time in Brunelleschi's Florentine workshop between 1442 and possibly as late as 1448.<sup>51</sup> As such, the northern sculptor certainly would have had ample opportunity to interact with these prominent Florentine sculptors and architects and study their works.

While in Genoa, Domenico was assisted by at least one of his close relatives. His nephew Elia (active 1441-1489) came to the city to help Domenico with the St. John the Baptist Chapel in ca. late 1456-early 1457. Although little is known of Elia's early artistic endeavors, it is clear that before he worked in Genoa he assisted Lorenzo di Martino da Lugano on the Loggia Comunale in Udine, a city in northeastern Italy, in 1441 and again between 1450 and 1454.<sup>52</sup> A document of 8 March 1457 that was drawn up soon after Elia's arrival in Genoa lists him as the *capomaestro*, or foreman, for the St. John the Baptist Chapel, presumably in anticipation of (or as a result of) Domenico's move to Naples by January 1458.<sup>53</sup> Other documents indicate that Elia stayed in Genoa for some time, as in 1465 Domenico signed a six-year lease on a house for his nephew and a 1478 archival record notes a rent payment Elia made for an apartment in the city.<sup>54</sup> While no documents explicitly connect Elia to any *soprapporte*, based on its stylistic similarities to reliefs made for the John the Baptist Chapel, he is often identified as the probable sculptor of a marble *Nativity* lintel relief located at Via degli Orefici 47r (Fig. i-

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<sup>50</sup> Caglioti, "Sull'esordio brunelleschiano," 70-72.

<sup>51</sup> The treatise mentions a "Domenico dal Lago di Logano, discepolo di Pippo di ser Brunellesco." See Filarete (Antonio Averlino), *Trattato di architettura*, ed. Anna Maria Finoli and Liliana Grassi, 2 vols., vol. I (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1972), 172.

<sup>52</sup> Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 51.

<sup>53</sup> Archivio di Stato di Genova (hereafter ASG), Notai Antichi 854, Atti del Notario Lazzaro Raggio, 1455-1457, fol. 2; Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 36, 247.

<sup>54</sup> Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 51; Laura Filippini, "Elia Gaggini da Bissone," *L'Arte* XI (1908): 17-18.

13).<sup>55</sup> His associations with Domenico, along with his continued work in Genoa, suggest that he likely contributed to the creation of at least some overdoor sculptures, possibly including the aforementioned *Nativity*.

Giovanni Gagini, from another branch of the family, probably also came from Bissone and was active in Genoa from 1449 to 1514. He arrived in the city shortly after Domenico but seems to have established a separate workshop.<sup>56</sup> Giovanni's earliest known work is the white marble frame for a rose window in the façade of the church of San Michele in Pigna, a small Ligurian town north of Genoa on the French border. Inscribed with the date 1450, its sculpted architectural detail is comprised of twelve colonnettes surrounding an Agnus Dei holding a flag decorated with the cross of St. George.<sup>57</sup> As he became increasingly successful in Genoa, Giovanni began to receive a variety of sculptural commissions, including one for the now-destroyed Fieschi Chapel in the cathedral and a number of the *soprapporte* that will be addressed in other chapters.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Filippini, "Elia Gaggini," 28-29; Edoardo Mazzino, Teofilo Ossian De Negri and Leonard Von Matt, *The Historic Center of Genoa* (Genoa: Stringa Editore, 1978), 152. This work has also been credited to Giovanni Gagini. See Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 59.

<sup>56</sup> Giovanni's brother Pace assisted him in the later part of his career. Pace was active between 1493 and 1521 and thus appears not to have been involved during the primary *soprapporte* production period of the latter half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. For additional information on Pace see Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 67-113; Alberto Maria Ghisalberti, "Gaggini," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 51 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960), 227.

<sup>57</sup> This work is inscribed with the artists' names (Giorgio di Lancia and Giovanni Gagini) and the date (1450): "Mag(iste)r / Georg(ius) / D(e) Lancia" is inscribed on the left side of the rose window, at the center is the date "M CCCC L" and finally "Mag(iste)r / Ioh(anne)s D(e) / Bisono." The rose window is sculpted in a late Gothic style. Gavazza, "Ricerche sull'attiva dei Gagini," 175-76. See also Fulvio Cervini, "Vox tonitruui tui in rota. Il rosone quattrocentesco di San Michele a Pigna," *Intemelion*, no. 4 (1998): 61, 70. See also Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 55-56. Giorgio della Motta is also sometimes mentioned in earlier literature in association with this project, but Nino Lamboglia's close examination of the façade in 1962-1963 proved this to be a misreading of the inscription. See "Primi restauri alla Chiesa parrocchiale di Pigna," *Rivista Ingauna e Intemelion* XVIII (1963): 62-73. See also Cervini, "Vox tonitruui tui in rota," 63-70. Federico Alizeri is among those scholars who incorrectly attribute the Pigna work to Giorgio della Motta. See *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI*, 6 vols., vol. 4 (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino 1876), 121.

<sup>58</sup> The Fieschi Chapel was largely dismantled when its patronage was transferred to the De Marini family. Only the top of the chapel's entry arch remains from Giovanni's original design. Gavazza, "Ricerche sull'attiva dei Gagini," 177.

In addition to his sculptures, Giovanni appears to have been involved in architectural projects. A 1457 notarial document that records a commission for a St. George killing the dragon overdoor on the Palazzo Doria-Quartara (Fig. i-14) indicates that Giovanni additionally worked on a column carved from two stone blocks in the nearby Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo's interior courtyard.<sup>59</sup> An extant column matching this description led Ezia Gavazza to suggest that Giovanni was involved in the fifteenth-century redesign of the original thirteenth-century structure, a hypothesis supported by the similar stylistic details in its other columns as well as its staircase.<sup>60</sup> Giovanni's probable authorship of the St. George *soprapporta* on the palace's entry portal (Fig. i-15), further supports this assessment of his likely contributions to the palace renovation project.<sup>61</sup>

Although Giovanni and Domenico appear to have had separate workshops, there is evidence that they occasionally collaborated or assisted one another, especially in the acquisition of materials. A letter of 6 May 1448 from Doge Giano di Campofregoso to his cousin Spinetta di Camposfregoso (Genoa's Doge from 8 July 1461-11 July 1461) in La Spezia, thanks him for granting protection and shelter to "Giovanni and Domenico Bissone" in their travels to Carrara for marble.<sup>62</sup> A 1465 notarial document records Domenico's remaining monetary debt to Giovanni for the delivery of marble blocks that

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<sup>59</sup> For the original document see ASG, Notai Antichi 591, Atti del Notario Antonio Fazio seniore, 1456-1459, fol. 17. This document is transcribed in Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 150-51. For the relief, see Chapter Three.

<sup>60</sup> Gavazza, "Ricerche sull'attiva dei Gagini," 180.

<sup>61</sup> While Antonio Fazio the elder's 1457 notarial document cited above only indirectly connects Giovanni to the Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo, stylistic and construction similarities between it and Benedetto Doria's courtyard render Giovanni's involvement in the latter structure quite feasible. See *ibid.*, 181-82. For a further description of Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo (ca. 1455), see Poleggi, *Genova: Una civiltà di palazzi*, 18-20.

<sup>62</sup> This letter is published in Guglielmo Salvi, *La cattedrale di Genova (S. Lorenzo)*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Turin: S.A.L.E., 1931), 1002, n. 82.

were probably intended for the St. John the Baptist Chapel. According to this document, if Domenico failed to pay back the outstanding sum within a certain amount of time, his house in the Molo zone, which at that point his nephew Elia occupied, would be seized as collateral.<sup>63</sup> Even if Domenico and Giovanni never actually collaborated on a project together, they surely observed one another's work and perhaps shared techniques and styles.

While Domenico's Genoese sojourn represents only a brief period in his career (ca. 1448-1458), Giovanni was in the city from ca. 1451 until ca. 1507; at least fifty years longer than Domenico. As a result, Giovanni was more established here and produced a far greater number of works in the city. He received frequent commissions for *soprapporte*, in addition to sculptures for chapels, from the city's most esteemed families and institutions including the Grimaldi, Spinola, Fieschi, Doria and De' Fornari as well as the Banco di S. Giorgio, the city's financial institution founded in 1407, that attest to his great success in Genoa.<sup>64</sup>

Two additional sculptors, Leonardo Riccomanno (active 1431, died after 1472) and Michele D'Aria (active 1446-1502), have also been connected to Genoese overdoor sculptures.<sup>65</sup> While neither artist was related to the Gagini, both had professional ties to the family. Giovanni and Leonardo sculpted the sacristy overdoor in the church of Santa

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<sup>63</sup> ASG, Notai Antichi 871, Atti del Notario Emanuele Granello, 1450-1480, fol. 1. For a transcription of this document see Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 135-36. See also Clario Di Fabio, "Domenico Gagini da Bissone a Firenze e a Genova, con una postilla per suo nipote Elia," in *Genova e l'Europa continentale: Opere, artisti, committenti, collezionisti*, ed. Piero Boccardo and Clario Di Fabio (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2004), 50.

<sup>64</sup> Cervetto, *I Gagini da Bissone*, 57.

<sup>65</sup> Other families, particularly those from the Lake Lugano region of Switzerland, who may have been involved in *soprapporte* production include the d'Aria, d'Aprile, Della Porta, and, later, the Carlone. The Tuscan artists Donato Benti, Benedetto da Rovizzano, Gerolamo Viscardi, Domenico Fancelli, as well as the Spaniard Barolomé Ordoñez may have also worked on lintel sculptures during their time in Genoa. Piero Boccardo, *Ardesia: Tecnica e cultura. Del dipingere e scolpire in pietra* (Genoa: SIAG sas di A. Scalenghe & C., 1984), 34, 41.

Maria di Castello in 1451-1452 (Fig. i-16), which is discussed in Chapter Two, and in 1475 Giovanni and Michele carved a no-longer-extant marble fountain and screen for the St. Vincent Chapel in the church of San Domenico. Even though there is no evidence that the latter two artists ever collaborated on a *soprapporta*, Michele later carved a *St. George Killing the Dragon* out of slate (ardesia) for an interior doorway in Genoa's Palazzo San Giorgio, home to the Banco di San Giorgio, that is flanked by the Banco's coat of arms (Fig. i-17).<sup>66</sup>

### **Placement, Developments, Prevalence, and Preservation**

Despite the uncertain attributions of most *soprapporte*, what we do know of the sculptors who probably made them, along with the works themselves, tells us a considerable amount about their production. The size of *soprapporte* varied depending on their placement and the dimensions of the buildings and settings for which they were made; smaller ones were usually made for interior doorways whereas larger examples typically decorated main, exterior doorways. In most cases, a lintel's size was determined by the preexisting doorway's measurements as most were carved after the fact and not made in conjunction with the construction of the building. The probable placement of the earliest known *soprapporta* suggests that they may have originated as interior sculptures that migrated later to exterior doorways. To be specific, Krufft claims that the 1452 interior overdoor relief by Giovanni Gagini and Leonardo Riccomanno for

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<sup>66</sup> The building in low relief in the right background is probably the Palazzo San Giorgio, the headquarters of the Banco di San Giorgio, as it appeared after the 1451 restoration of the palazzo. Isabella Ferrando Cabona, *Palazzo San Giorgio: Pietre, uomini, potere (1260-1613)*, 3rd ed. (Genoa: Silvana Editoriale, 2005), 74-76. Orlando Grosso claims the palace rendered in low relief in the background looks as it appeared in 1508 in *Il Palazzo San Giorgio*, 2nd ed. (Genoa: Sagep, 1984), 62-63. I would like to thank Dott. Francesco Frumento for his generosity in helping me find this *soprapporta* in Palazzo San Giorgio and for providing me with access to the private office in which this sculpture is located.

the sacristy of Santa Maria di Castello mentioned above, is also the earliest documented *soprapporta*.<sup>67</sup> Krufft has suggested that another early narrative *soprapporta*, the *St. John the Baptist in the Desert*, of ca. 1455 by Domenico Gagini in the Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas, may have been positioned over an interior doorway in the headquarters of the Confraternity of St. John the Baptist in the now-destroyed Molo neighborhood adjacent to Genoa's harbor (Fig. i-18).<sup>68</sup> An interior placement for this work does seem plausible, as it is in relatively good condition and shows no signs of weathering, which one would expect from an outside relief that was subjected to the elements for centuries. Examples of interior overdoor lintels in private palaces and churches confirm such a use, including a sixteenth-century *soprapporta* featuring a damaged coat of arms held by two classicizing angels and surrounded by stylized foliage that is over the main entrance on the counter façade of Palazzo Spinola Serra, Via Cannelto il Lungo 31 and the sacristy overdoor and those found throughout the cloisters at Santa Maria di Castello that are discussed in Chapter Two. Unfortunately, it is difficult to assess how prevalent such works were in Renaissance Genoa, because *in situ* interior overdoor lintels are substantially more difficult to access and catalogue, as many palaces in the city's historic center have been converted into private apartments and offices.

If *soprapporte* did originate as interior sculptures as Krufft posits, they very quickly were adapted for exterior portals. The already-noted *St. George Killing the Dragon* attributed to Giovanni Gagini on Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo dated ca. 1453-55,

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<sup>67</sup> See Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 9-10.

<sup>68</sup> Hanno-Walter Krufft, "John the Baptist in the Desert: A Relief and its Context," *Register of the Spencer Museum of Art* 6, no. 8-9 (1991-1992): 17. Piero Boccardo has found documentation that indicates this overdoor was located in the Molo neighborhood; the results of his research are forthcoming. In discussion with the author, 5 March 2009.

is one of the earliest documented exterior sculpted overdoors.<sup>69</sup> Interior and exterior *soprapporte* were placed over portals leading to spaces with a wide variety of purposes, both sacred and secular. Because the earliest *soprapporte*, both interior and exterior, all date to within a few years of each other around the middle of the fifteenth century, it may not be a case of which came first but rather what their various functions were.

Although this dissertation focuses on overdoors produced in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it is constructive to touch briefly on Genoa's portal decoration after this time period. In the sixteenth century the compositional format and subject matter of *soprapporte* evolved into the effusive, floral portal decoration still present along the Strada Nuova. Begun in 1550, this street, presently known as Via Garibaldi, is lined with impressive palaces built by the most wealthy and established families in the city including the Spinola di Luccoli, Grimaldi, and Pallavicino. These families, however, chose not to pronounce their presence with traditional narrative *soprapporte*, choosing classically-inspired imagery instead.<sup>70</sup> Some of these new overdoors consisted of friezes of triglyphs and metopes with ancient Roman armor carved in relief.<sup>71</sup> By the seventeenth century, the production of *soprapporte* in Genoa had waned, perhaps due to evolving aesthetic preferences.

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<sup>69</sup> Krufft claims the only *soprapporta* Domenico made is the one in the Spencer Museum of Art. See "John the Baptist in the Desert," 17. Giovanni and his workshop made most *soprapporte*, but the Museo Sant'Agostino in Genoa attributes a second *soprapporta* to Domenico – *San Giorgio che uccide il drago* (St. George Killing the Dragon), n. inv.: M.S.A. 527.

<sup>70</sup> The Strada Nuova has been known as the Via Garibaldi since 1882. In 2006 it was designated a World Heritage Site.

<sup>71</sup> For a further discussion of Genoese overdoors and their compositional changes after the fifteenth century see Manuela Di Pietro, "Tradizione classica a Genova; Tipologia dei portali con decorazione di armi, sec. XVI-XVIII," *Bollettino dei Musei Civici Genovesi* 9, no. 26-27 (1987): 11-38. See also Piero Boccardo, "Architettura, dipinta, e struttura architettonica nella decorazione esterna dei palazzi genovesi del secolo XVI," *Studi di storia delle arti* 3 (1980): 49-59.

*Soprapporte* were popular marks of prestige during the period in which they were produced. Based on the relatively large number of surviving fifteenth- and sixteenth-century examples, we can assume that during the Renaissance even more sculpted lintels that have since been lost adorned doors throughout Liguria. In Genoa, most *soprapporte* were lost either to military conquests of the city or renovations. One particularly damaging attack occurred on 30-31 May 1522, when an imperial army led by Emperor Charles V of Spain looted Genoa, taking numerous artworks from the city. Later, in 1684, Genoa suffered devastating destruction when King Louis XIV of France ordered his fleet to bombard the city. The French caused further damage to Genoa during their 1797 invasion of Italy, during which Napoleon's army chiseled away the heraldic markings on many *soprapporte* throughout the city.<sup>72</sup> In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries extensive new building projects led to the demolition of many of Genoa's medieval and Renaissance structures, such as the previously mentioned annihilation of the Molo zone near the harbor. During World War II, Allied offensives further damaged or completely obliterated various Genoese structures.<sup>73</sup> *Soprapporte* were sometimes recovered from the rubble in the 1940s, as was the case with an *Annunciation* overdoor originally located at Vico delle Mele 14r.<sup>74</sup> Tracking the whereabouts of all of these works is challenging, and the present locations of many of them, including the reclaimed *Annunciation*, are unknown.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Orlando Grosso, *Il San Giorgio dei Genovesi* (Genoa: Libreria Editrice Moderna, 1914), 170-71.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 295-96.

<sup>74</sup> Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 86-87.

<sup>75</sup> The Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Ambientali della Liguria does not have information as to the current location of the *Annunciation*. Luce Tondi (Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Ambientali della Liguria), in discussion with the author, 12 May 2009. A second example of a lost *soprapporta* is a monogram of Christ produced by the workshop of Giovanni Gagini that was last known to be in the Heim Gallery in London.

Efforts have been made in Genoa to preserve some of the works removed from destroyed buildings still in the city, as is the case with at least 20 largely intact *soprapporte* and many additional fragments in storage at the Museo di Sant'Agostino, Genoa's sculpture museum. Dealers and collectors have also sold or donated overdoor reliefs to museums throughout the United States and Europe, such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Unfortunately, in most cases, these *soprapporte* arrived at the museums in question with sparse provenance records and coats of arms that incurred damage or were destroyed by Napoleon's army, leaving little to tie the work to a specific location or patron.<sup>76</sup>

### **Marble and Slate: *Soprapporte* Materials**

In order to grasp fully the civic, familial, religious, and emblematic value of Ligurian and Genoese *soprapporte*, it is necessary to examine the material and costs involved in their production. *Soprapporte* typically were carved from white marble, a highly valued material, or various types of locally-quarried slate, a comparatively less expensive and durable medium. A patron's preferred medium, thus reflected his wealth and status.

White marble had to be imported to Genoa from Carrara, located 126 kilometers to the south in the Apuan Alps.<sup>77</sup> The Genoese mined ancient Roman ruins in and around their city for marble until the end of the twelfth century, exhausting that resource long before the advent of *soprapporte* production in the fifteenth century. Thus, if they desired to build and decorate with marble, they were left with no choice but to pay high

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<sup>76</sup> Grosso, *Il San Giorgio*, 170-71.

<sup>77</sup> They also sometimes quarried white marble in Capo Fari, Carignano, and Alberto. See Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 11.

import fees for newly-quarried, white Carrara stone.<sup>78</sup> Dangerous quarrying conditions, the time and labor involved in transport, as well as the rising demand for Carrara marble from cities undergoing extensive cathedral-building projects such as Florence (1296 to 1436) fueled comparatively more substantial costs for white marble from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.<sup>79</sup> It took approximately two months to extract a single block of marble.<sup>80</sup> Although the cost of acquiring marble for *soprapporte* in Genoa is unknown, it typically was based on the size and weight of each block, regardless of how far it had to travel to reach its destination, as it was for Michelangelo's diverse projects at San Lorenzo in Florence (1516 -1534).<sup>81</sup> Based on the substantial costs for the material—as well as its particular use in sacred buildings and suitability for carving intricate indoor and outdoor sculptures—white marble communicated prestige. For example, an inscription on Pisa Cathedral's façade: “boasts that it is unrivalled in its splendour because it is made of marble that is ‘white as snow’.”<sup>82</sup> Piero de' Medici ensured that everyone knew how much he paid for the marble tabernacle to frame and protect the miraculous painting of the Annunciation in Santissima Annunziata, Florence, by having Michelozzo inscribe on the monument: “Costò fior. 4 mila el marmo solo” (“the marble alone cost 4,000 florins”).<sup>83</sup> Although *soprapporte* constitute just one small part of a building's decorations, since it was considerably more work to import white marble, it

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<sup>78</sup> Not all Carrara marble is white. There are also variations with blue, gray, and/or green bands or veins of color.

<sup>79</sup> Nicholas Penny, *The Materials of Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 52.

<sup>80</sup> William Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo: The Genius as Entrepreneur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 43.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-60.

<sup>82</sup> Penny, *Materials of Sculpture*, 53.

<sup>83</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (New York: Phaidon, 1971), 48.

contributed to the prestige of palaces adorned by such overdoors.<sup>84</sup> Thus, one can surmise that the medium of a *soprapporta* connoted the status and financial situation of its patron or the institution in which it was located.<sup>85</sup>

The two types of slate that are most often cited as *soprapporta* media are ardesia, also known as pietra di Lavagna, and pietra nera di Promontorio.<sup>86</sup> However, these and other names are used quite indiscriminately and the secondary sources frequently do not agree in their identifications for a given type of slate *soprapporta*. Both ardesia and pietra nera di Promontorio are dark gray, almost black at times, and are usually difficult to distinguish from each other.<sup>87</sup> In fact, in contemporary notarial acts, these two common slates are described as being indistinguishable and were worked in exactly the same manner.<sup>88</sup> Slate appealed to the Genoese because it was comparatively easy to acquire and carve, as it is a softer stone than marble. By the medieval period, Ligurians regularly used slate for their sculptures and as their primary roofing material.<sup>89</sup> Its

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<sup>84</sup> Most buildings were constructed using local materials, and it was rare to transport large quantities of stone any considerable distance. See Wallace, *Michelangelo at San Lorenzo*, 12-13.

<sup>85</sup> Genoese merchants and some Genoa-based Flemish merchants recognized the potential for high profits in selling white marble and began aggressively marketing it throughout Europe as early as the sixteenth century. *Ibid.*, 56. The price difference between slate and marble substantially depended on the ease or difficulty in transporting it. Paolo Marchi, *Pietre di Liguria: Materiali e tecniche dell'architettura storica* (Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1993), 194.

<sup>86</sup> Pietra di Finale and pietra di Cava locale, both slates, were used occasionally in *soprapporte* production. See Marchi, *Pietre di Liguria*, 192. The first mention of Ligurian slate comes from Pliny the Elder in book XXXVI of his *Naturalis Historia* and the material was regionally employed as early as the eighth century BCE. Pliny the Elder refers to Ligurian slate as “mollitia” and states that the material is also found in Umbria and the Veneto. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historiae*, 6 vols., vol. 5 (Lipsiae: Teubner, 1875), 364-67.

<sup>87</sup> Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> See Agostino Giustiniani, *Annali della Repubblica di Genova*, 3rd ed., 2 vols., vol. 2 (Genoa: Presso il Libraio Canepa, 1854), 57. See also Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 13.

<sup>89</sup> Pre-Roman tombs made of slate and dated to the eighth and seventh centuries BCE have been found in the necropolis of Chiavari, south of Genoa. Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 13. See also Osbaldo Garbarino, “L’ardesia nella storia del popolo ligure” in *Ardesia, anima di Liguria*, ed. Annamaria y Palacios and Tiziano Mannoni (Genoa: Fondazione Mario e Giorgio Labò, 2005), 115. According to contemporary documents, slate from Lavagna was first used around 1000-1100. See Leonardo Savioli, *Ardesia: Materia e cultura* (Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1988), 146. Many medieval churches in Genoa, such as Santa Maria delle Vigne, feature slate, especially in their classical column capitals and bases. See Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 15.

popularity continued through the Renaissance, as the profusion of *soprapporte* carved from it attest. While most of the literature on the various types of slate indicates that they were all essentially the same, ardesia's soft consistency, coupled with its greater tendency to separate into sheets, sometimes rendered it more difficult for artists to capture great detail. Pietra nera di Promontorio's more clearly defined grain, on the other hand, made it easier to craft minute details.<sup>90</sup> Such distinctions, however, are virtually impossible to identify in a completed work, so for the purpose of this dissertation, the term "slate" will be used to designate all the different kinds of slate from which *soprapporte* were carved. When there is agreement in the scholarship regarding the type of stone used, the specific slate type for an overdoor sculpture will be noted in parenthesis.

The value of each *soprapporta* derives mostly from the nature of the stone from which it was carved but also from the original source of the material. Native to the Genoese region, various slates could be purchased at a fairly low cost.<sup>91</sup> Ligurians quarried ardesia from their territory around Chiavari and Lavagna, and pietra nera di Promontorio from the Ligurian province of the same name.<sup>92</sup> Vasari refers to two such black stones in the technical introduction to his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*.<sup>93</sup> Although he does not mention Genoa specifically, he states that the slate is also found in Tuscany, including the Carrara mountains, writing that:

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<sup>90</sup> Marchi, *Pietre di Liguria*, 192-93.

<sup>91</sup> Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 11. See also Belgrano, *Della vita privata*, 7, 13.

<sup>92</sup> In the medieval period the Ligurians opened many quarries in the valleys around Recco and on Mt. San Giacomo of Lavagna. See Garbarino, "L'ardesia nella storia," 115. For a discussion of the geological history and technical characteristics of ardesia see Tiziano Mannoni, "Natura e storie di una nobile pietra," in *Ardesia, anima di Liguria*, ed. Annamaria y Palacios and Tiziano Mannoni (Genoa: Fondazione Mario e Giorgio Labò, 2005), 119-51.

<sup>93</sup> The first he calls "paragone" (paragon or indexstone), so named because of where it was quarried in Egypt and part of Greece and because it was used to test gold. The type of paragone found in Genoa, however, is of a different variety with a different grain and color rendering it unsuitable for testing gold. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols., vol. 1 (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1906), 117.

“This stone is hard to carve, but is extraordinarily beautiful and takes a wonderful polish.”<sup>94</sup> Despite his admiration of the medium, Vasari is dismissive of its potential as a sculpting stone and its quality, discussing its usefulness when used for roof shingles, vessels for oil, and as a surface for painting.<sup>95</sup> Even so, the Genoese frequently employed slate for sculptures such as *soprapporte* because it could be polished to look like black marble.<sup>96</sup>

Families that commissioned slate lintels sometimes copied marble *soprapporte*, possibly with the aim of associating themselves with the most influential Genoese citizens who commissioned their prototypes. Given that *soprapporte* were carved from stone, the Genoese could not simply replicate these sculptures using molds as the Della Robbia did for their glazed terracotta works in Florence.<sup>97</sup>

Surviving traces of paint and gold leaf indicate that the marble and slate *soprapporte* were sometimes, and perhaps often, enhanced by the addition of pigment and/or gilding. Due largely to exposure to the elements, especially the sea air in the case of Genoa and other cities along the Ligurian coast, polychrome residue is extant on very few works that remain *in situ*. One example is the previously mentioned slate *St. George*

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<sup>94</sup> In his brief discussion of slate, Vasari specifically states that it was quarried in Lavagna, about 40 km south of Genoa. He additionally describes the tomb of Piero Soderini in Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence as “made of this same Prato touchstone, so well finished and lustrous that it looks like a piece of satin rather than cut and polished stone.” *Vasari on Technique: Being the Introduction to the Three Arts of Design, Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, Prefixed to the Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, ed. Gerard Baldwin Brown, trans. Louisa S. Maclehorse (London: J. M. Dent & Company, 1907), 42-43; *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, vol. 1, 117.

<sup>95</sup> Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, 54-55. See also idem, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, vol. 1, 124. For Vasari's discussion of slate used as a painting surface, see *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, vol. 1, 189-90. Vasari probably never traveled to Liguria where he would have seen the profusion of slate works, including *soprapporte*. Gerard Baldwin Brown notes an additional problem in that Vasari vaguely notes six black stones in his discussion of slate without going into the details of their varying compositions and sculptural potential. *Vasari on Technique*, 117-18.

<sup>96</sup> Penny, *Materials of Sculpture*, 310.

<sup>97</sup> For a brief discussion of Renaissance sculpture replication, see Kim W. Woods, “The Illusion of Life in Fifteenth-Century Sculpture,” in *Making Renaissance Art*, ed. Kim W. Woods (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 129-32.

*Killing the Dragon* over an interior doorway in Genoa's Palazzo San Giorgio (Fig. 17), which still has remnants of red pigment and gilding. One of the only exterior *soprapporte* still in its original location in Genoa that retains traces of paint is a slate monogram of Christ over the doorway of Vico delle Fiascaie 5r (Fig. i-19).<sup>98</sup> Some works now housed in museum collections have trace pigments as well. Technical analysis of a marble *St. George Killing the Dragon soprapporta* at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City has demonstrated that at least the coats of arms, banners, and parts of the figures that adorn this deeply-carved relief were once painted (Fig. i-20).<sup>99</sup> The addition of color would have rendered these relief sculptures far more legible, especially the ones carved from slate and those situated along Genoa's narrow, dark streets, at the same time highlighting their most important iconographical and heraldic elements.

### **Description and Organization of the Dissertation**

The information discussed above provides an essential background for the four chapters, epilogue, and a catalogue of works that follow. The chapters are comprised of case studies that consider the various functions, imagery and the dissemination of *soprapporte*. For example, Chapter One examines the civic and religious significance of overdoors that feature images of St. John the Baptist, one of Genoa's most important

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<sup>98</sup> Marchi, *Pietre di Liguria*, 194, n. 76. Painting on these slate surfaces required a "mestica", or type of basecoat before adding pigment. See *ibid.*, 195. Some *soprapporte* that are now in museum collections retain paint fragments including a nativity in Museo di Sant'Agostino in Genoa (n. inv. M.S.A. 500).

<sup>99</sup> According to Francesco Caglioti, the coats of arms were originally painted but were erased probably during the systematic destruction of heraldic arms during the Napoleonic era. Record of Francesco Caglioti's visit to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 10-11 February 2003. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Curatorial File, inv. 41-29/11. When conservator Mayda Goodberry cleaned the sculpture in 1986, she noted that gilding is still apparent in the lettering on the banners held by the angels and there are polychrome traces on parts of the figures. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Curatorial File, inv. 41-29/11.

patron saints. It particularly focuses on how these works relate to the history and visual culture of the saint's cult in the city, including a confraternity dedicated to him and the various reliquaries made to house Genoa's prized relic of the saint's ashes.

Chapter Two explores the origins and functions of *soprapporte* that decorate sacred spaces and buildings in Genoa via an in-depth examination of the Dominican Observant church of Santa Maria di Castello and the possible meanings its *soprapporte* held for ecclesiastics, secular patrons, and churchgoers. Chapter Three, conversely, focuses on *soprapporte* made for the secular sphere by addressing the appearance and placement of *soprapporte* that decorate Genoese palaces. Drawing from the example of the well-preserved neighborhood in which the prominent Doria family lived, it demonstrates how they symbolized familial and political power, structure, and identity throughout Genoa, as well as within the over sixty *alberghi*, or neighborhoods, that divided the city into distinct districts.

Chapter Four consists of the first sustained consideration of *soprapporte* in other parts of Liguria. Using the large coastal city of Savona and the small town of Triora in Liguria's mountainous inland as examples, it demonstrates that this type of decoration is not limited to Genoa, which has been almost the exclusive focus of previous studies of *soprapporte*. This chapter additionally explores the similarities and differences among *soprapporte* decoration that exist within the region, paying special attention to the popularity of reliefs representing the monogram of Christ on *soprapporte* and that image's connection to St. Bernardino da Siena's visits to Liguria in the first half of the fifteenth century. In the process, this chapter considers the functions and meanings those *soprapporte* may have held outside of Genoa.

The dissertation concludes with an epilogue that briefly addresses the international spread of Genoese *soprapporte* to the Greek island of Chios, a dependency of Genoa from 1436-1566, the Flemish mercantile city of Bruges, with which the Genoese had strong commercial ties, and Constantinople, where the Genoese had a trade colony called Galata or Pera. These final remarks are followed by the checklist of *soprapporte* mentioned at the beginning of the Introduction. The result is a study that increases the profile and our understanding of Ligurian, and especially Genoese, Renaissance art and provides a more coherent picture of the appearance and function of *soprapporte* and the ways in which they helped forge visual community identities.

**Chapter One**  
**St. John the Baptist *Soprapporte*:**  
**Overdoor Sculpture and the Visual Culture of a Patronal Cult**

As the Precursor to and baptizer of Christ, John the Baptist was a popular patron saint in major cities throughout Italy such as Florence, Turin, and Genoa. In the latter city devotion to the saint began with the acquisition of his ashes in the eleventh century, relics Genoa's civic and ecclesiastical leaders and citizens honored and promoted with expensive reliquaries and, from the fifteenth century, an elaborate chapel in the cathedral of San Lorenzo. During the second half of the quattrocento, the Genoese also began to commission *soprapporte* that featured the Baptist's image. These objects serve as particularly good examples of city- and relic-specific overdoor imagery that visually stresses Genoa's devotion to this important patron saint. From an art historical perspective, Genoa's possession of St. John's relics and the ornate sculpted reliquaries and chapel made to house them provide both an historical and iconographical context and complement for the proliferation of St. John the Baptist *soprapporte* in the city. Together, they formed a considerable body of imagery that celebrated the saint and invoked his continued intercession on behalf of Genoa, its church, and the individual citizens and institutions who chose to decorate their portals with his likeness.

Even with John the Baptist's popularity and Genoa's possession of his highly regarded relics, *soprapporte* on which his image was carved have received considerably less attention in the literature than those that depict George, the city's other principal patron saint. Indeed, despite the absence of his relics in Genoa, St. George lintel reliefs are far more prevalent than those depicting St. John both in number and placement. Only one St. John the Baptist sculpted overdoor is still *in situ* along a public street whereas

there are over twenty Genoese St. George *soprapporte* still in their original locations. Furthermore, a once prominent local confraternity dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the Confraternità di San Giovanni Battista, no longer exists. There are eleven extant *soprapporte* decorated with St. John's image and, although they are less visible and well known today than those that depict St. George, their numbers are comparable to others that illustrate the Annunciation or the monogram of Christ. As a group they constitute an important, and hitherto overlooked, part of Genoese liminal iconography. While the comparatively limited number of St. John *soprapporte* might suggest that he was a less popular patron saint than George, this chapter will show that his cult in Genoa was more important and his image more prevalent than has been acknowledged and that the overdoor sculptures on which he appears were part of a vibrant visual and devotional tradition.

Unlike other subjects frequently depicted on overdoors in Genoa—especially St. George, the Annunciation, and the monogram of Christ—St. John the Baptist is not found on *soprapporte* in any other Ligurian city examined during the course of this study.<sup>1</sup> The subject's presumed uniqueness to Genoa attests to the city's powerful and close connection to the saint and his relics. This chapter begins with a brief synopsis of St. John's life that informed his visual hagiography, followed by a history of the Baptist's cult in Genoa. The surviving *soprapporte* bearing his image will then be described and analyzed within the context of the rich traditions and visual culture that resulted from Genoa's desire to promote, honor, and celebrate its revered patron saint. In doing so, this chapter will demonstrate that a particular visual vocabulary was developed for Baptist

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<sup>1</sup> See the appendix for a full list of these cities.

*soprapposte* that differs from the imagery on other major works that celebrate the saint and depict scenes from his life.

### **The Saint's Life**

All four New Testament Gospels mention St. John the Baptist, with the most detailed biblical account of his life found in Luke. John was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth who, because of their advanced ages, had given up hope of ever having a child. Due to the improbability of the couple conceiving, Zacharias initially expressed disbelief when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to him at the temple and told him his wife would soon have a son. As a consequence of his doubt, he was struck dumb. Zacharias remained mute until he named his son following John's birth on 24 June, six months before that of his cousin, Christ (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80).

The Gospels are silent regarding John's childhood, but at some point he left home for the wilderness of Judea. Living in a state of silence and reflection, John made a coat from camels' hair and survived on locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6). While in the wilderness, God told him to go out, announce and prepare for the coming of Christ, preach God's word, and baptize all those who repented of their sins. John did as he was asked, baptizing multitudes in the Jordan River and developing a following of believers (Luke 3:1-18, Matthew 3:1-12, and Mark 1:1-8). Not only was John responsible for building this cohort of the faithful, but he was also the first to identify Jesus as the Lamb of God (*Agnus Dei*). As related in John 1:29, upon seeing the Lord for the first time St. John exclaimed: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," words that foreshadowed Christ's crucifixion, his sacrificial act to redeem

humanity. John's declaration was confirmed when, upon baptizing Christ in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and the voice of God declared Christ his son (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 3:21-22).

Some felt threatened by John's popularity, influence, and association with Christ. When the Baptist reproached King Herod the Great for taking Herodias, his brother's wife, for himself, Herodias plotted to kill him with the aid of her daughter, Salome (Luke 3:19-20). Salome danced for Herod at a banquet held in honor of his birthday, and he rewarded her performance by offering her whatever she wanted. As Herodias had already planned, Salome asked for John the Baptist's head, which Herod had to deliver in order to honor his oath. John's disciples then buried his body (Matthew 14:1-12 and Mark 6:14-29).<sup>2</sup>

Two important late-medieval apocryphal sources provide more expansive accounts of John the Baptist's life. The Genoese theologian and bishop Jacobus de Voragine included the first in his mid-thirteenth-century compilation of saints' lives, the *Legenda Aurea (Golden Legend)*. This text echoes much of the biblical account of John the Baptist's life and spiritual work, but it is silent regarding his time in the wilderness. However, as we shall see below, Voragine is an especially valuable source for information about the Baptist's followers after his death and what became of his body.<sup>3</sup>

The second significant source, especially for decoding the iconography of St. John the Baptist *sopraporte*, is an anonymous, fourteenth-century text titled *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista (The Life of St. John the Baptist)*. This text, modeled in part on the *Meditationes de Vita Christi (Meditations on the Life of Christ)* of ca. 1300, introduced

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<sup>2</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, Reprint ed. (Salem, N.H.: Ayer, 1989), 502-03.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 321-27, 502-10.

Italians to the apocryphal life of the Baptist derived from Eastern literary tradition.<sup>4</sup>

While the Gospels divulge very little about St. John's time in the wilderness, *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista* relates how he frequently explored the woods around his house as a toddler, staying in the wilderness for increasingly longer periods of time until he permanently moved there at the age of seven. *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista* goes on to explain how much the Baptist enjoyed this peaceful time that afforded him the opportunity to prepare for the coming of Christ.<sup>5</sup> As we shall see below, sculptors and patrons of *soprapporte* chose to portray John the Baptist almost exclusively in the wilderness, suggesting that they looked to the *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista* or another, similar text as an iconographical source.

### **The Genoese Cult of John the Baptist**

Before closely examining the individual St. John the Baptist *soprapporte*, it is important to trace the history of the saint's cult in Genoa. Doing so will provide a contextual lens through which one can arrive at an understanding of the impetus for decorating *soprapporte* with the Baptist's image. Furthermore, the historical background will position those overdoor relief sculptures within the larger body of Genoese works of art depicting John the Baptist.

Genoa's connection to St. John the Baptist originated during the First Crusade. In 1098 Genoese crusaders transported the ashes of St. John the Baptist from Myra, located

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<sup>4</sup> Stefanie Solum, "Lucrezia's Saint: The Child Baptist and Medici Redemption in Fifteenth-Century Florence" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2001), 17. *La Vita di San Giovanni Battista* was part of the *Vite de' santi padri (Lives of the Holy Fathers)* compiled between 1320 and 1342 by Fra Domenico Cavalca, a Dominican friar. Marilyn Lavin, "Giovannino Battista: A Study in Renaissance Religious Symbolism," *Art Bulletin* 37, no. 2 (1955): 88.

<sup>5</sup> Solum, "Lucrezia's Saint," 18-23; "Vita di San Giovanni Battista," in *Vite di alcuni santi scritte nel buon secolo della lingua Toscana*, ed. Domenico Maria Manni (Florence: Domenico Maria Manni, 1734-1735), 199-202.

in present day Turkey, to Genoa, where they were placed very close to the harbor in the church of Santo Sepolcro in the Prè district. The dedication of this church to Christ's sepulcher was subsequently changed in 1180 to San Giovanni di Prè, probably as a result of the important relics it housed.<sup>6</sup> According to Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, the Genoese went to Myra with the intent to steal the relics of St. Nicholas. However, as Italian merchants had stolen his relics in 1087 and taken them to Bari in southern Italy, the Ligurian crusaders instead took a container of ashes that they found under the high altar of the church of Holy Sion, where Nicholas had served as abbot, which they later learned were St. John's.<sup>7</sup> The saint's remains had been reduced to ashes because after the Baptist's followers buried him between the cities of Elisaeum and Abdia in the first century CE, visitors began reporting that miracles were being effected at his tomb. This not only led to an increased interest in the saint but also in Christianity. The pagan emperor Julian the Apostate (r. 361-363) sought to quell this illegal outpouring of devotion by ordering that the saint's remains be burned with the intention of destroying their miraculous intercessory powers. Unbeknownst to him, however, monks from Jerusalem gathered the ashes and took them to Bishop Philip in Jerusalem. Philip, in

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<sup>6</sup> The small church of Santo Sepolcro was founded on this site in 636; San Giovanni di Prè replaced it in 1180. Today there is a plaque found in Piazza della Commenda 36 that states that in 1098, the ashes of St. John the Baptist were received by the Genoese at that location. The plaque reads as follows: "D.O.M. Sacros Praecursoris cineres – exceptit. – A.P.C.N. MXCVIII." See P. Luigi Persoglio, *San Giovanni Battista e i Genovesi, ossia vita, reliquie e culto del santo in Genova ed altrove*, 2nd ed. (Genoa: Tipografia della Gioventù 1899), 141. The earliest St. John the Baptist translation account, now lost, was recorded by a certain Sallustio, followed by the still extant version by Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, c. 1292. See *ibid.*, *San Giovanni Battista*, 136. Another brief account of the translation of the relics to Genoa is found in Mario Curletto, *San Giovanni Battista dei Genovesi: Le ceneri del santo precursore di Cristo conservate nella cattedrale metropolitana di Genova* (Genoa: Tip. Porcile, 1950), 50-52.

<sup>7</sup> Orlando Grosso, "Il tesoro della cattedrale di Genova. I. Le arche di San Giovanni Battista e il piatto di Salome," *Dedalo* 5 (1924-1925): 415; Persoglio, *San Giovanni Battista*, 139. Chronicler Agostino Giustiniani also describes the 1098 acquisition of St. John's relics in *Annali della Repubblica di Genova*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2 vols., vol. 1 (Genoa: Presso il libraio Canepa, 1854), 132-34.

turn, sent them to Bishop Athanasius in Alexandria, and they eventually ended up in Myra, where they remained until they were taken to Genoa.<sup>8</sup>

The Genoese lost no time in invoking St. John's intercession, for his ashes were their most powerful relics.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the Baptist's ashes were held to be especially effective in calming rough seas because of what happened when the Genoese transported the relics to Genoa. Afraid of losing the ashes, the Genoese crusaders initially divided them among their ships. However, they soon encountered turbulent waters because: "the sea was so furious at the want of confidence reposed in it," and did not calm until the ashes were reunited.<sup>10</sup> The relics were similarly called upon in 1207, when numerous ships carrying over a thousand Genoese sailors off the coast of Nervi, a town about seven miles south from the center of Genoa, were threatened by a storm. The archbishop processed the ashes of St. John throughout Genoa accompanied by a contingent of clergy, laity, and the wives of the threatened men. The ships returned to Genoa safely once the storm passed and St. John was credited with their survival.<sup>11</sup> Again, when a storm threatened the city in December 1245 with powerful winds and high waves crashing into the harbor and flooding the streets, the citizens went to the cathedral at midnight, processed the saint's relics to the sea, and the waters miraculously subsided yet again thanks to the Precursor.<sup>12</sup> The Genoese often turned to the relics to calm the sea as they

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<sup>8</sup> Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 504-05.

<sup>9</sup> Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> James Theodore Bent, *Genoa: How the Republic Rose and Fell* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881), 26.

<sup>11</sup> Luigi Tommaso Belgrano and Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, eds., *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori dal MCLXXIV al MCCXXIV*, vol. 2 (Genoa: Tipografia del R. Istituto Sordo-Muti, 1901), 144.

<sup>12</sup> Agostino Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso precursore di N. S. S. Giovanni Battista protettore della città di Genova* (Genoa: Gio. Maria Farroni, 1648), 126-27.

did so once more in December 1391, and in 1396, 1406, and 1414.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the city still replicates this practice when it celebrates the feast of John the Baptist every 24 June by processing his relics along Via San Lorenzo from the cathedral to the harbor, where the archbishop presents the saint's ashes to the sea.

It is unclear how long St. John the Baptist's relics were kept at San Giovanni di Prè. Agostino Calcagnino's 1648 account of the translation records that they remained there for at least one night and D. Luigi Traverso's 1918 version of the same event is equally vague, stating that the ashes were there for several days (*qualche giorno*).<sup>14</sup> While the relics were kept at San Giovanni di Prè, they were guarded by the Order of St. John, which used the church as its base in the city.<sup>15</sup> The Order was a branch of the Knights Hospitaller, an organization that was established in Jerusalem in the eleventh century to care for and protect pilgrims. Its members came to be known by various names, including the Knights of Malta, and the group quickly evolved into a military order whose goal was to defend the Holy Land at the onset of the crusades, and that answered only to the pope.<sup>16</sup>

While the precise date of the relics' translation to the cathedral of San Lorenzo, where they remain today, is unknown, they were displayed on its high altar in 1118 when Pope Gelasius II (1118-1119) consecrated the cathedral and paid tribute to the relics

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 142-44, 48-49.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 96; D. Luigi Traverso, "Il culto di San Giovanni Battista in S. Lorenzo," in *La Cattedrale di Genova: MCXVIII - MCMXVIII*, ed. Lodovico Marchesè Gavotti (Genoa: Tipografia della Gioventù, 1918), 138.

<sup>15</sup> Anna Dagnino and Giorgio Rossini, *San Giovanni di Prè: Chiesa e commenda* (Genoa: Sagep, 1997), 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Timothy B. Smith, "Up in Arms: The Knights of Rhodes, the Cult of Relics, and the Chapel of St. John the Baptist in Siena Cathedral," in *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), 217; Timothy B. Smith, "Alberto Aringhieri and the Chapel of Saint John the Baptist: Patronage, Politics and the Cult of Relics in Renaissance Siena" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2002), 175-76.

there.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of when the ashes were moved, Calcagnino describes their translation to the cathedral as being celebrated with ephemeral decorations and pomp (*con apparato, e pompa*).<sup>18</sup> All of the citizens of Genoa accompanied the procession of the ashes to the cathedral's high altar, where they were kept until they were moved into a new chapel in the fifteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

In order to honor these prized relics and demonstrate their devotion to the Baptist, by the end of the fifteenth century, the Genoese had made three reliquaries to house them, each more expensive and impressive than the last. The relics were transported in each successive reliquary during the annual procession held on 24 June, the feast of the Baptist's nativity. Whether in motion or stationary on an altar in the cathedral, the reliquaries' rich decorations evince the prominent place they occupied in Genoese devotions, an importance that we shall see is also reflected in the number of *soprapporte* depicting the saint located throughout the city.

Although no documents confirm it, tradition holds that Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa presented Genoa with its first major reliquary for the Baptist's ashes when he visited the city in 1178 (Figs. 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3). Attributed to French and local Genoese metalsmiths, the reliquary consists of a wood casket lined with red damask and covered with quartz and silver that was embossed and decorated with niello scenes and decorative patterns. On display today in the Museo del Tesoro (Treasury Museum) of the cathedral, the small casket, or *cassetta*, (35 cm high, 60 cm long, and 32 cm wide)

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<sup>17</sup> Four bishops were also present when the pope consecrated the cathedral and honored the relics. "Le Sante Reliquie han subito un posto distinto sull'altar maggiore di S. Lorenzo, e poco appresso papa Gelasio II, presenti quattro Vescovi, tributa loro solenni onori." Traverso, "Il culto di San Giovanni Battista," 138.

<sup>18</sup> For a short time during the twelfth century the relics were also kept in the cathedral's baptistery (San Giovanni il Vecchio), but the exact dates are not recorded. Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

has narrative images on all four sides. On the long, front side six arches frame the events leading up to and including John's beheading; each one is occupied by one or two figures (Fig. 1-1). These niello scenes are not arranged chronologically and read as follows:

*Herodias Conferring with Salome* under the first arch; the *Feast of Herod* under the next three, with Herod in the first arch, Salome dancing in the second, and the presentation of John's head on a platter in the third. The *Beheading of the Baptist* occupies the final two arches in which the executioner is depicted in the first arch with John imprisoned and awaiting his fate in the second. Six arches similarly divide the images from the saint's life on the back, long side (Fig. 1-2). They depict the *Birth of John the Baptist* beneath the first arch, followed by an archbishop under the second, and St. John the Baptist in the third. The fourth image is in very poor condition but has been identified as the *Visitation*.<sup>20</sup> *John the Baptist in the Desert* comprises the fifth scene and the final arch frames an angel. The *Burial of St. John the Baptist* (Fig. 1-3) adorns one of the casket's short sides and the other features a detailed rendering of the *Baptism of Christ*. Such an extensive narrative set a precedent for the saint's later reliquaries and, as we shall see, stands in sharp contrast to the iconic images of the saint in the desert that are depicted on most of the St. John the Baptist *soprapporte*.

In 1299 the Genoese established the Confraternità di San Giovanni Battista, whose statutes were approved by Archbishop Porchetto Spinola.<sup>21</sup> Its members, who represented nearly all of the most noble families in the city, concentrated their efforts on expanding and strengthening popular, civic, and ecclesiastical devotion to the saint and his relics through campaigning for the granting of indulgences, the celebration of his feast

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<sup>20</sup> Patrizia Marica, *Museo del Tesoro di San Lorenzo* (Genoa: Sagep, 2000), 11.

<sup>21</sup> Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 127-28.

days, and by advertising the miraculous powers of his relics. In addition, they and many other citizens attended a mass and a sermon in honor of John the Baptist that was held on the first Thursday of every month in the cathedral.<sup>22</sup>

Probably as a result of the confraternity's efforts to promote the saint's cult, an unnamed French artist who was in Genoa to work on the cathedral façade's decoration sculpted a second, marble reliquary in the early fourteenth century (Fig. 1-4).<sup>23</sup> This reliquary is currently located on the altar of the St. John the Baptist Chapel in the cathedral. There is a clear dominant view, as the imagery carved in relief only appears on one of its two long sides, therefore suggesting that originally it may have been installed in a niche or within an altar. Its heavy stone medium, in contrast to the comparatively light and portable Barbarossa reliquary, suggests that it is unlikely that it was carried in procession, thereby rendering it unnecessary to adorn all four of its sides. Interestingly, because it is decorated on a single side, it resembles sculpted *soprapporte* more than the other Baptist reliquaries do. One scene flows into the next in a continuous narrative that depicts two main events from St. John's life. On the left is the *Baptism of Christ* and on the right is the *Feast of Herod*. On the left side of the feast scene the head of John the Baptist is delivered to Herodias, whereas Salome dances for Herod on the right side. Four lions adorn the bottom corners of the reliquary's pitched lid, and there is a relief bust of St. John the Baptist surrounded by foliage on the front.

Due in large part to the confraternity's efforts, popular devotions to St. John continued to grow, which led its members to try to establish a chapel for St. John's relics

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<sup>22</sup> Traverso, "Il culto di San Giovanni Battista," 139.

<sup>23</sup> Grosso, "Il tesoro della cattedrale," 415; Hanno-Walter Kruft, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista nel Duomo di Genova," *Antichità viva* 9 (1970): 33.

in the cathedral.<sup>24</sup> In 1323 the brothers Niccolò and Oberto Campanari donated a chapel in the choir near the cathedral's high altar for this purpose.<sup>25</sup> While it took approximately 150 years for the confraternity to succeed in realizing the relic chapel, in the interim Archbishop Bartolomeo di Reggio formally pronounced John the Baptist Genoa's patron saint in 1327.<sup>26</sup> From that point on, annual processions of the ashes took place through the city on 24 June, and those who visited the venerated relics eight days before and after his feast day were granted safe passage to Genoa, as decreed in the first book of the *Capitoli de Comune di Genova*, the city's statutes that date from the same year St. John was declared its patron saint.<sup>27</sup>

The Genoese, especially the St. John the Baptist confraternity members, turned to the relics in times of need. For example, as the Black Death swept through Italy in 1348-1349, they left offerings and prayed to the relics in the cathedral, asking the Baptist to intervene and save them. The saint was also credited with individual healing miracles such as one effected in 1396 when Nicolò della Porta, then Chancellor of the St. John the Baptist confraternity, miraculously recovered from a serious illness after appealing to him.<sup>28</sup>

In 1327, probably in celebration of the archbishop's declaration of John as the city's patron saint the same year, the governor of Genoa pledged to donate funds to the cathedral for the creation of yet another silver reliquary, but over one century passed before it was executed. Teramo Danieli, a goldsmith from the Ligurian town of Taggia,

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<sup>24</sup> Kruft, "John the Baptist in the Desert," 15.

<sup>25</sup> Kruft, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista," 33.

<sup>26</sup> Persoglio, *San Giovanni Battista*, 183; Traverso, "Il culto di San Giovanni Battista," 139.

<sup>27</sup> Persoglio, *San Giovanni Battista*, 184; Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 136.

<sup>28</sup> Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 144-45. Nicolò della Porta's 1410 writings on St. John the Baptist, including the translation of his relics, heavily borrowed from Jacobus de Voragine's ca. 1292 text without acknowledging his source. Persoglio, *San Giovanni Battista*, 136.

with the assistance of Simone Caldera, made the new reliquary between 1438 and 1445 (Figs. 1-5, 1-6, 1-7).<sup>29</sup> The execution of this impressive reliquary, which took the shape of a miniature Gothic cathedral, cost Doge Tomaso di Campofregoso and the Consiglio degli Anziani (Council of the Elders) 500 Genoese *lire*.<sup>30</sup> The reliquary consists of a wooden armature to which gilded silver reliefs and architectural elements were attached.<sup>31</sup> Iconographically connecting the reliquary to the building in which it was kept, images of the cathedral's four dedicatory saints—John the Baptist, Matthew, Lawrence, and George—are positioned at each corner. The canopies above each of these saints are surmounted by figures of bishops, one of whom is purported to be Jacobus de Voragine. The four sides of the reliquary depict scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist, which would have been visible to the crowds of people lining the processional route along which it was carried every 24 June. Unlike the previous two reliquaries, here the narrative is read sequentially from left to right. It begins on one of the long sides with a scene of the *Angel Announces the Birth of the Baptist to Zachariah*, and continues on the same side with the *Visitation*, *Birth of the Baptist*, and *Naming of the Baptist* (Fig. 1-5). The adjacent short side represents the *Young John the Baptist in the Desert* (Fig. 1-6). The other long side continues the narrative with the following scenes: *St. John Preaches to the Multitudes*, the *Baptism of Christ*, the *Beheading of the Baptist*, and, finally, the *Banquet of Herod*, in which John's decapitated head is presented to Herod on a platter (Fig. 1-7).

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<sup>29</sup> Grosso, "Il tesoro della cattedrale," 426. 18 May 1438 is inscribed on the base of the work. Caterina Marcenaro, *Il Museo del Tesoro della Cattedrale a Genova* (Milan: "Silvana" Editoriale d'Arte, 1969), n.p.

<sup>30</sup> The Gothic ornamented detail may have been inspired by Milan's cathedral, begun in 1386. Grosso, "Il tesoro della cattedrale," 430.

<sup>31</sup> The copper lion at the base of each corner is the only exception.

Shortly after the reliquary was completed in 1445, construction was finally begun on a chapel to house and honor the saint's relics (Fig. i-12). Its decorations sculpted by Domenico and Elia Gagini and others, this chapel is noteworthy because of its prominent location within the church, its wealth of narrative and decorative detail, and its size—it is at least two times larger than the other side chapels in the cathedral. It honors Genoa's patron saint and serves as an important marker of communal and ecclesiastical devotion to him. It also demonstrates how much the Genoese valued St. John and his relics.

As we have seen above, the initial plan to build the chapel in the fourteenth century was unsuccessful, but discussions to revive the project began in 1430. On 4 May 1448 Baldassarre Vivaldi and Gaspare Gattaneo, the priors of the Confraternity of St. John the Baptist, commissioned Domenico di Pietro Gagini *magister intaliator marmorum* (master marble sculptor) to construct the chapel in the form of a double canopy, or baldacchino, with four narrative reliefs depicting scenes from the life of the Precursor and nine figures sculpted in-the-round to be placed along the top of the canopy.<sup>32</sup> They chose the location along the left side aisle closest to the high altar that allowed them to construct a considerably larger, and consequently more impressive shrine than the one proposed in 1323. The funds for the new chapel in part were the result of a Bull Pope Eugenius IV issued in 1439 granting an indulgence to benefit its construction.<sup>33</sup> As the most prominent monument to John the Baptist in Genoa, the chapel forms a key element of the saint's iconography in the city and perhaps its

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<sup>32</sup> A medieval chapel situated to the left of the high altar was replaced in order to make way for the St. John the Baptist Chapel. Di Fabio, "Domenico Gagini," 49-50. A Senate decree from 19 February 1449 also refers to the 1448 revival of the project. Krufft, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista," 33.

<sup>33</sup> Krufft, "John the Baptist in the Desert," 15.

construction and decoration sparked the creation of the *soprapporte* that depict the saint in the years that followed.

By 1450 or 1451 construction was well under way on the chapel. Domenico and Elia's contributions to this project consisted of a large marble arch sculpted in relief that is supported on four, thin columns that frame the chapel's entrance.<sup>34</sup> The prominent spandrels of this arch appropriately advertise the identity of the saint whose relics the chapel houses, for each is decorated with two narrative panels depicting scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist. On the left, the *Birth of St. John the Baptist* appears below a panel that shows *St. John Preaching to the Multitudes* (Fig. 1-8), while on the right the *Baptism of Christ* appears above the *Dance of Salome* (Fig. 1-9). We shall see that while there are stylistic similarities between the chapel's sculpted reliefs and some of the Baptist *soprapporte*, they depict different scenes. In addition to the four, square relief panels, Domenico and Elia sculpted roundels in the spandrels that depict the *Annunciation* with the angel Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right. Gabriel and Mary kneel and face each other in three-quarter poses across the arch. The square narrative scenes, as well as the two roundels, are surrounded by decorative foliage and standing saints and prophets in niches with scalloped vaults further frame the two sets of square relief panels on their left and right sides. Above the cornice, engaged pilasters alternate with pointed arches. A freestanding figure of a saint or virtue crowns each arch and each

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<sup>34</sup> Kruft, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista," 33-34. On 2 January 1461 the confraternity commissioned Vincenzo Foppa to fresco the interior walls of the chapel with scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist that were destroyed in 1492. Hanno-Walter Kruft, "La decorazione interna della cappella di San Giovanni Battista nel Duomo di Genova," *Antichità viva* 10, no. 1 (1971): 20.

pilaster.<sup>35</sup> Below every pointed arch is a roundel and a lunette, which each contain narratives related to the identity of the figure above.<sup>36</sup>

Probably as a result of the creation of a new reliquary, relic chapel, and *soprapporte* with the saint's image, the Genoese cult of St. John the Baptist continued to grow throughout the fifteenth century. In 1463 Doge Paolo di Campofregoso decreed the perpetual, annual celebration of the feast of the Baptist's beheading on 29 August.<sup>37</sup> Prior to that year, the Genoese did not regularly mark this feast, nor did they celebrate it as enthusiastically as the Florentines, and especially the Medici family, did.<sup>38</sup> By the end of the fifteenth century there was an added incentive to celebrate this feast day in Genoa, for the city acquired a chalcedony dish upon which it was believed St. John's severed head was presented at the feast of Herod. It is an important secondary relic that is now kept in the cathedral treasury (Fig. 1-10). Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492), a member of Genoa's prestigious Cibo family and a former canon at San Lorenzo, left the relic to the cathedral upon his death in 1492.<sup>39</sup> The decorations on the plate are embellishments that predate the pope's donation and consist of a white enamel head of St. John the Baptist at the center, which was added in the 1420s or 1430s. John Cherry argues that the head was added to distinguish the particular importance of this relic at a time when many cities

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<sup>35</sup> There are eleven figures in total that depict the Madonna, Hope, Faith, Fortitude, Temperance, St. Sebastian, St. John the Baptist, St. George, St. Syrus, St. Lawrence, and Prudence.

<sup>36</sup> It is not known if the *tondi* with the scenes of saints' lives and lunettes with the coronation of the Virgin, the Evangelists, and the church fathers were part of the first project. See Kruft, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista," 36. The tondo scenes correspond to the sculpted saints above. Five lunettes contain the coronation of Mary, the four Evangelists, and four Church Fathers. See idem, "La cappella di San Giovanni Battista," 34.

<sup>37</sup> Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 151.

<sup>38</sup> See Allie Terry, "Donatello's Decapitations and the Rhetoric of Beheading in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 5 (2009): 609-38.

<sup>39</sup> Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso*, 152-54. French Cardinal Jean Balue, whose ancestors had brought the dish from the East, gave Pope Innocent VIII the relic. John Cherry, "The Dish of the Head of St. John the Baptist in Genoa," in *Tessuti,oreficerie, miniature in Liguria, XIII-XV secolo, atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Genova-Bordighera, 22-25 maggio 1997*, ed. A. R. Calderoni Masetti, Clario Di Fabio, and M. Marcenaro (Bordighera: Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, 1999), 135.

claimed to have relics of St. John.<sup>40</sup> Such a prized addition given by the pope to an already impressive cache of the Baptist's relics reinforced Genoa's relationship with its patron saint.

The Knights of Malta joined this fifteenth-century surge in cult activity when they renewed their interest in the Genoese relics after they defeated the Turks at Rhodes in 1480.<sup>41</sup> By the fifteenth century, the Knights had built a reputation as "protectors of sacred sites and properties."<sup>42</sup> Thus, in 1501, out of a desire to reestablish their connection to the ashes of St. John the Baptist in Genoa, they asked for and received permission from local officials to build an oratory adjacent to the relic chapel that provided visual access to the ashes via a window with an iron grille. The oratory allowed members of the Order to have a direct view of the chapel and permitted them to engage privately in rituals and prayers directed toward their patron saint.<sup>43</sup>

Despite all of the evidence presented above for a sustained, invested following of the saint's cult, of which the *soprapposte* were but one manifestation, some scholars contend that the Genoese did not appeal to the ashes of St. John the Baptist for intercession to the same degree that they did to the city's other patrons and protectors such as St. George and the Virgin Mary.<sup>44</sup> Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser argue that St. John the Baptist was primarily associated with the "heavy hand of central government" as the ruling elite were responsible for the annual procession and therefore

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<sup>40</sup> Cherry, "Dish of the Head," 137-38.

<sup>41</sup> Waxing and waning in a cult's popularity was not atypical and not necessarily due to the presence or absence of miracles but to a multitude of other factors. Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000-1215*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 127-31.

<sup>42</sup> Smith, "Up in Arms," 217.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>44</sup> When civil wars broke out in medieval Genoa, the consuls did, however, request men on both sides to "swear the peace before the relics of John the Baptist." See Diane Owen Hughes, "Urban Growth and Family Structure in Medieval Genoa," *Past and Present* 66 (1975): 13.

the general public may not have been as attracted to his cult to the same extent as they were to that of St. George.<sup>45</sup> However, as Diana Webb notes, it was not atypical for cities to have different saints represent the commune and the cathedral, and the cults of St. John and St. George could have comfortably coexisted. In Florence, for example, Zenobius and Reparata were patron saints of the Florentine Church throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance while the commune adopted St. John the Baptist as its principal patron saint at least by the late ninth century.<sup>46</sup>

Garnett and Rosser further assert that the physical state of the Baptist's remains may have resulted in a lesser degree of interest by Genoa's lower and middle classes. Because the Genoese relics of St. John consist of ashes, and, therefore, are essentially formless, they argue that the relics had far less visual impact than a finger or skull, both of which comprised a greater presence due to their recognizable forms. Additionally, as none of the containers made for St John's ashes are so-called speaking reliquaries, they did not provide an anthropomorphic form with which to associate his remains and the cult seemingly offered only "limited access to the divine."<sup>47</sup> Garnett and Rosser also point to a 1514 statement the Senate issued, which encouraged the Genoese to partake in the

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<sup>45</sup> Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, "The Virgin Mary and the People of Liguria: Image and Cult," in *The Church and Mary*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Suffolk, UK: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2004), 285. The annual procession began at the cathedral, where the relics were kept, and proceeded through the historic center toward the old port where the archbishop blessed the sea and the city with the ashes of St. John the Baptist. The Genoese still process the relics to the port for this blessing every 24 June.

<sup>46</sup> Sally J. Cornelison, "Art and Devotion in Late Medieval and Renaissance Florence: The Relics and Reliquaries of Saints Zenobius and John the Baptist" (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1999), 134. For a further discussion of saints who represented the Genoese church and state see Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-States* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 135-97.

<sup>47</sup> Garnett and Rosser, "Virgin Mary and Liguria," 288.

celebrations and renew their enthusiasm for “the honour of so great a saint and that of the city” as evidence that the citizens had to be convinced of St. John’s relevance to them.<sup>48</sup>

Regardless of Garnett and Rosser’s claims, the evidence presented in this chapter, including the commission of *soprapporte* bearing his image, all imply that the Genoese instead had a great deal of interest and investment in his cult. This devotion continued unabated from the time his relics were acquired in the late twelfth century, and, as we have seen, reached its zenith in the fifteenth century. In spite of the small numbers of St. John the Baptist *soprapporte* in comparison with those that depict St. George, they still exist in significant numbers and their presence regularly reminded the Genoese of their ties to this saint and complemented the more extensive imagery found in the saint’s chapel at the cathedral and on the various reliquaries made for him that were displayed and processed on his feast day.

### **The *Soprapporte***

The advent of *soprapporte* featuring the image of John the Baptist immediately followed the construction of the chapel for the saint’s relics in the cathedral and the execution of the new silver reliquary by Teramo Danieli and Simone Caldera, suggesting that the relief lintels were part of a larger development and dissemination of the saint’s image in Genoa during the fifteenth century. The Baptist appears on at least eleven surviving Genoese *soprapporte* dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, over twice as many as Krufft cited in his work on the subject, with apparently no surviving

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 286.

examples from the sixteenth century.<sup>49</sup> We shall see below that the saint's presence on *soprapporte* can be accounted for by the exponential growth of John the Baptist's cult discussed above and the Genoese citizens' desire to celebrate their deep devotion to the saint in visual form and to invoke his intercession on their behalf.

Like the ones that depict St. George, which all show the saint killing the dragon, and the Annunciation, all of which depict the Archangel Gabriel kneeling before Mary, the St. John the Baptist lintel reliefs exhibit a great deal of iconographical uniformity, for most illustrate him in the wilderness. The only exceptions are a representation of St. John baptizing Christ and another in which he is paired with St. Francis, but he is always recognizable via his distinctive hair shirt attribute.

Scholars have linked most St. John *soprapporte* to the Confraternity of St. John the Baptist, whose headquarters in the Molo district adjacent to the harbor no longer exist.<sup>50</sup> As we have seen in the Introduction, Krufft suggested that the confraternity may have commissioned Domenico Gagini's *St. John the Baptist in the Desert Surrounded by Four Angels* dated to ca. 1455 (Fig. i-18).<sup>51</sup> Apparently sculpted at the same time that Domenico was working on the chapel to house the saint's relics, this lintel relief directly linked the patron(s) to the prestigious commission in the cathedral. The *soprapporta* echoes the delicate carving style of the chapel's reliefs but extends the John the Baptist

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<sup>49</sup> Krufft cites the following five St. John the Baptist overdoors in his research: the Spencer Museum of Art marble relief, an interior overdoor at Vico degli Indoratori 2, the still *in situ* example found at Vico delle Mele 6, and two from the Museo di Sant'Agostino (M.S.A. 335 and M.S.A. 382). Krufft, "John the Baptist in the Desert," 15.

<sup>50</sup> The earliest application of this idea is in reference to the Spencer Museum of Art's *St. John the Baptist in the Desert Surrounded by Four Angels*. Ulrich Middeldorf, *Sculptures from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: European Schools XIV-XIX Century* (London; New York: Phaidon Press, 1976), 61.

<sup>51</sup> For information on the dating of this object see *Grove Art Online*, s.v. "Gagini, Domenico" (by Hanno-Walter Krufft), <http://www.oxfordartonline.com> (accessed August 15, 2011). In another article Krufft is less specific, arguing for a dating between 1448 and 1456, the period in which documents state Domenico was working on the Chapel of St. John the Baptist in San Lorenzo. "John the Baptist in the Desert," 10.

iconography by depicting an iconic image of the saint. Its provenance is undocumented until the eminent American collector Samuel H. Kress acquired the work from the Contini-Bonacossi collection in Florence in 1941. His foundation gave it to the Spencer Museum of Art in 1960 along with several other objects, mostly paintings, that form the museum's Kress Study Collection.<sup>52</sup>

Measuring 40.6 x 113 cm, this white marble sculpture depicts St. John the Baptist at the center of the composition.<sup>53</sup> He is flanked by two angels on either side whose bodies curve toward the center, encircling the saint upon whom their attentions are focused. The seated John the Baptist reaches toward a lamb (Agnus Dei) who lies on top of a book, which one of the angels on the right appears to present to him. The strong directional forces of gestures, gazes, and the cross-shaped staff that John the Baptist holds at a diagonal across his chest, lead one's eye to the lamb and book to his left. A rocky groundline extends across the bottom of the lintel, where it spills over the bottom frame. The background landscape is minimally defined, so the illusion of space is

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<sup>52</sup> Krufft, "John the Baptist in the Desert," 7. Claudio Di Fabio states that this *soprapporta* is likely from the façade of a palace on Via del Molo, but he does not provide further explanation or evidence for this hypothesis. See "Domenico Gagini," 53. While the Spencer Museum of Art curatorial file states that the Kress Foundation bought the work from the Contini-Bonacossi collection, it does not indicate when or from where the Contini-Bonacossi obtained it. Middeldorf, *Sculptures from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, 61. For more information on the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the University of Kansas see the *Register of the Spencer Museum of Art* 6, no. 8-9 (1991-1992).

<sup>53</sup> The work clearly depicts St. John the Baptist—who is recognizable by his hair shirt and otherwise disheveled appearance—but early on the sculpture was identified as *Christ with Four Angels in a Landscape*. In correspondence in the Spencer Museum of Art curatorial file, Herbert Freedman suggested that the central figure may also be St. Clement, as the scene is more in keeping with his legend, but the hair shirt and Genoese connection suggest the most likely identification of this figure is St. John the Baptist. In February of 1960, immediately following the acquisition of the piece, the Spencer Museum of Art consulted Freedman—head curator of zoology at the Smithsonian Institute and expert in the symbolic significance of animals, and especially birds, in Renaissance art—regarding the iconography of the work. According to Freedman, the lamb and book symbolize Christ and possibly illustrate the Biblical moment when St. John says, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1:29), but this verse is usually iconographically tied to Baptism scenes. Additionally, Freedman seems to have only examined the sculpture through photographs and never saw the original. Its imagery is not unique, however, for John the Baptist is depicted in the wilderness with a variety of animals and birds in a fifteenth-century fresco in the Sacra di S. Michele near Turin. George Kaftal and Fabio Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints in the Paintings of North West Italy*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1985), 370, 72.

relatively shallow. The twisting trees that frame the figures on both sides, however, lend the sculpture a greater sense of three dimensionality. The trunks of several of these trees echo the inward curve of the angels' bodies towards St. John and emphasize the relief's central focus. A swan in the lower left corner and two doves on the right further complement the wilderness scene. Additionally, the frame of the lintel on the sides and top consists of a perspectival, coffered border, the lines of which converge at a vanishing point situated on the figure of St. John. Francesco Caglioti noted that the spatial rendering of the border is so successful that it evokes the impression of a window to the outside.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the linear perspective and the Baptist's elongated torso, which appears properly proportioned when seen from below, clearly shows that the *soprapporta* was meant to be viewed *di sotto in su*, that is, with the viewer situated some distance below it.

The elements, most notably the birds, that occupy and define the wilderness echo descriptions of John's rural refuge found in the aforementioned fourteenth-century *Vita di San Giovanni Battista*. In this redaction of the saint's life, which is written in the first-person as though its anonymous author is John the Baptist himself, the writer explains that when he went into the forest around his parents' home he "...saw the most beautiful place to live that I've ever seen, and I saw those fresh trees, and the singing birds, and on the ground there were these beautiful flowers."<sup>55</sup> The same features also shape the environment of Andrea Pisano's *Young St. John the Baptist in the Desert* panel from 1330-1336 on the south doors of the Florence Baptistery and the 1366-1377 *St. John Preaching to the Multitudes* panel from the silver altar also for the Florentine baptistery

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<sup>54</sup> Caglioti, "Sull'esordio brunelleschiano," 73, 76.

<sup>55</sup> As translated in Solum, "Lucrezia's Saint," 20. Original text in "Vita di San Giovanni Battista," 200.

that was made by Leonardo di Ser Giovanni, Betto di Geri, and others, both images that Domenico certainly knew from the time he spent working in the Tuscan city.<sup>56</sup>

The stylistic qualities of this work suggest Domenico's associations with other influential Renaissance sculptors he may have been in contact with during his stay in Florence. For example, the technique of elongating the torsos of figures that were meant to be viewed from below is also evident in Donatello's marble *St. John the Evangelist* (1410-1411) that was made for the façade of Florence Cathedral and the *St. Mark* at Orsanmichele. Furthermore, Claudio Di Fabio and Caglioti convincingly point to visual correlations between *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* and Lorenzo Ghiberti's early works, which Domenico also probably studied closely while in Florence. Such connections are especially evident when the seated John the Baptist is compared with any of Ghiberti's four, seated Church Fathers in quatrefoil frames (*St. Ambrose*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Gregory*, and *St. Augustine*), of 1403-1424 that are situated along the bottom row of the Florentine Baptistery's north doors. Although Ghiberti's figures are seen from above rather than from below as Domenico's *St. John* is viewed, an analogous understanding of foreshortening is apparent in the bodies of the reliefs by both sculptors. Additionally, Di Fabio makes a strong case for Domenico having derived the angels' curved postures in the *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* relief from Ghiberti's bronze *Baptism of Christ* relief of ca. 1427 on the front of Siena Cathedral's baptismal font and the angels

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<sup>56</sup> Lavin, "Giovannino Battista," 88; Joshua E. Glazer, "From *Dossale* to *Macchina*: The Silver Altar of Saint John the Baptist and Its Symbolic Function in Florence" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008), 81-85, 88-93.

surrounding the inscription on the back of Ghiberti's St. Zenobius shrine of 1432-1442 in Florence Cathedral.<sup>57</sup>

Although Kruft asserted that the Spencer Museum of Art has the only John the Baptist *soprapporta* that Domenico sculpted, the same attention to perspective and detail it evinces can also be seen in a second marble *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* overdoor relief currently in a private collection in Italy (Fig. 1-11).<sup>58</sup> Dated by Di Fabio to ca. 1440-1450 and attributed to Domenico, it may have been sculpted before the Spencer Museum of Art overdoor and the John the Baptist chapel in the cathedral.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps it is the earliest example of a growing interest in the Baptist's cult sparked in the 1430s by discussions regarding the execution of the reliquary chapel and the creation of the new silver reliquary for the saint's ashes.

This lintel, like the previous *soprapporta* by Domenico, also features St. John the Baptist cloaked in his hair-skin coat and holding a cross-shaped staff at the center of the composition. The rock outcropping upon which he stands and the trees that surround him are stylistically similar to those in the Spencer Museum of Art relief. Here, however, the solitary John the Baptist does not receive the Lamb of God from an angel, but rather he gazes and points down toward the ground to his left where this symbol of Christ and his sacrifice rests below a tree. The scene is a more traditional *soprapporta* composition

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<sup>57</sup> Di Fabio additionally believes the angels on the *St. John the Baptist in the Desert* resemble those on a St. George and the dragon *soprapporta* over the doorway at Via Luccoli 14. He states that this St. George was sculpted between 1451 and the summer of 1456 when Domenico left for Naples. Additionally the St. George composition is strikingly similar to another *soprapporta* on Palazzo Doria di Oneglia and to the St. George roundel on the façade of the St. John the Baptist Chapel in San Lorenzo. All of these examples show the influence of Donatello's *St. George and the Dragon* on Orsanmichele, both for its remarkable *rilievo schiacciato* technique and for its composition. Giovanni Gagini soon sculpted similar St. George images for a palace on Via San Bernardo and for Palazzo Doria in Piazza San Matteo. "Domenico Gagini," 53-54.

<sup>58</sup> Kruft, "John the Baptist in the Desert," 11.

<sup>59</sup> Clario Di Fabio, "Nascita e rinascita della statuaria celebrativa laica a Genova fra Tre e Quattrocento. Opizzino, Giacomo Spinola di Luccoli e la parte di Domenico Gagini," in *Medioevo: I committenti* (Milan: A.C. Quintavalle, 2011), 28, 32.

than the Spencer Museum of Art relief as it incorporates angels supporting coats of arms with initials, probably “P” and “M,” and decorative foliage at either side.

Three slate (*ardesia*) St. John *soprapporte* in the Museo di Sant’Agostino in Genoa made from ca. 1450-1480 share compositional details with the latter marble lintel relief in a private collection. In each of these works, coats of arms frame St. John, who stands at the center of the relief in a *contrapposto* stance. His body faces toward the right side of the composition as he holds a cross and/or the Lamb of God. All three situate St. John in a desert landscape that consists of rough, rocky ground and is populated with various animals. Each John the Baptist holds a fluttering banderole that, although worn, likely once included the Latin inscription “ECCE AGNUS DEI,” the words John exclaimed when he first saw Christ that is a familiar part of the saint’s iconography. Indeed, Benozzo Gozzoli also referenced John’s identification of Christ as the Lamb of God on overdoor imagery when he frescoed *The Mystic Lamb* (1459-1460) above the entrance to the chapel in the Medici Palace, Florence, with John’s proclamation in Latin (“ECCE ANGUS [sic] DEI ECCE”).<sup>60</sup>

The subject and, especially, the compositional and stylistic repetition evident in these slate *soprapporte* and Domenico’s work in a private collection suggest that all four overdoor sculptures were made by the same workshop, and that this evidently popular design was produced and then purchased by various patrons who had their respective initials and/or coats of arms added. Perhaps their patrons were members of the St. John the Baptist confraternity, as at least one of the slate works was taken from a house on Via del Molo, which was in the same neighborhood as the confraternity’s headquarters before the area was demolished in the second half of the nineteenth century (Fig. 1-12). Despite

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<sup>60</sup> Diane Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 85.

its poor condition and destroyed coats of arms, Museo di Sant'Agostino staff have identified the patron of the Via del Molo lintel from ca. 1450-1460 as someone from the Centurione family, seemingly because of the inscribed initials "G" and "C" on either side of St. John.<sup>61</sup> While this may be the case, it is also conceivable that a later occupant of the house added the initials, a not uncommon occurrence when a property changed ownership.<sup>62</sup> The identities of the patrons of the other two slate works are unclear, as the coats of arms once carved on them have been effaced and there is no information regarding their respective original locations in the curatorial files. The museum files do record, however, that one dated to ca. 1460 was taken from an eighteenth-century home in the Albaro zone—near the harbor just east of the Molo district—in 1927 when the commune of Genoa razed that part of the city (Fig. 1-13). Given the date of the palazzo's construction, this was not the sculpture's fifteenth-century post, especially as it was immured in the façade, as opposed to being placed over its entrance. The curatorial records note that the third slate work from ca. 1470-1480 was probably taken from a house owned by a Pinelli family member, but no explanation or evidence for such an assertion is given (Fig. 1-14).<sup>63</sup> Such scant documentation for these John the Baptist reliefs speaks to the difficulties in identifying the patrons of most *soprapporte*, especially those that are no longer *in situ* and whose original location is unknown.

Ascertaining the earliest position of and patrons for two slate St. John the Baptist *soprapporte* in the collection of the Castel Sant'Angelo in Genoa is even more

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<sup>61</sup> Museo Sant'Agostino, Curatorial File, n. inv. M.S.A. 335.

<sup>62</sup> Adding initials to indicate a change in ownership was a common practice. Another example of this is the *St. George Killing the Dragon* and *St. John the Baptist soprapporte* on the Palazzo Brancalone Grillo. The Grillo coats of arms were originally present on both works, and when Luca Spinola bought the palace in 1496 he added his initials. This St. John the Baptist overdoor is discussed later in this chapter while the St. George killing the dragon work is addressed in Chapter Three.

<sup>63</sup> Museo Sant'Agostino, Curatorial File, n. inv. M.S.A. 382; Museo Sant'Agostino, Curatorial File, n. inv. M.S.A. 337.

challenging. One is a fragment with a haloed St. John standing in his hair-skin garment. He holds a cross-shaped staff to his chest with his right forearm while he looks down at a scroll in his hands (Fig. 1-15). While there is too little remaining of this work to reconstruct its full composition, St. John's stance and cross staff indicate that it may have echoed the iconography of the three slate St. John works at the Museo di Sant'Agostino and the marble lintel relief by Domenico in a private collection discussed above.

In the second St. John the Baptist overdoor at Castel Sant'Angelo, the saint stands on the left side of the composition, observing a kneeling St. Francis who, with raised hands, receives the stigmata from a seraph (Fig. 1-16). On the far right, in front of a simple church facade, a noticeably smaller figure with his hands pressed together in prayer crouches before this miraculous vision. This diminutive figure has a tonsure and wears the same hooded robe tied by rope at the waist as St. Francis. He may represent Brother Leo who, although he did not see the miraculous event, was present on Mt. La Verna when St. Francis received the stigmata. It is not uncommon to find Leo in images of the stigmata as is evident in Pietro Lorenzetti's version of the subject from ca. 1320 in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi; Sassetta's panel for the enormous, double-sided Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece of 1437-1444, today in the National Gallery, London; and Spinello Aretino's fresco of ca. 1390 in San Francesco, Arezzo, among others.<sup>64</sup> As these examples demonstrate, Brother Leo is typically placed in the

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<sup>64</sup> For further analysis of the *Stigmatization* on the Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpieces see Donal Cooper, "The Franciscan Genesis of Sassetta's Altarpiece," in *Sassetta: The Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece*, ed. Machtelt Israëls (Florence; Leiden: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies; Primavera Press, 2009), 286-96; Rachel Billinge, "The Stigmatization of Saint Francis," in *Sassetta: The Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece*, ed. Machtelt Israëls (Florence; Leiden: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies; Primavera Press, 2009), 505-09. The St. Francis cycle in the Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi is the earliest known inclusion of Brother Leo into an image of the stigmatization. Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of St. Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 403.

composition's bottom right; St. Francis and Leo are usually visually separated by a crevice in the rocky landscape and Leo rests on a lower groundline, reading a book, unaware of the dramatic event unfolding. While the small figure on the *soprapporta* is similarly placed in front of a chapel in the composition's lower right, his gaze and body are directed toward the stigmata as though he is an eyewitness occupying the same space. His interaction with Francis is not typical of Tuscan or Umbrian images of the stigmata, but, as evident in the fifteenth-century St. Francis fresco cycle by Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo and assistants in Santa Maria Annunziata in Bienno (Lombardy), artists in northwest Italy sometimes depicted Leo directly observing Francis receiving the wounds of Christ.<sup>65</sup>

The inclusion of St. John the Baptist in a scene of the stigmatization of St. Francis brought together the Precursor and one of the most venerated late-medieval saints. While no coats of arms or initials indicate the identity of its patron, perhaps this image was placed over a Franciscan cloister doorway and functioned as a marker of space and as a visual exemplar for the friars in a manner similar to the overdoors in the cloisters of the Dominican convent of Santa Maria di Castello that are the focus of Chapter Two. The now destroyed church and convent of San Francesco di Castelletto in Genoa would have been a likely location for such a *soprapporta*.<sup>66</sup> As a relatively small overdoor, it was more than likely intended for an interior portal. Alternatively, it may have reflected the dedication or affiliation of the building it once decorated like the slate (ardesia) *soprapporta* that likewise depicts *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata* (1488) over the entrance to the Franciscan convent of Santissima Annunziata di Portoria, Genoa (Fig. 1-

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<sup>65</sup> Kaftal and Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, vol. 4, 295-96.

<sup>66</sup> This Franciscan religious complex was constructed in the thirteenth century and destroyed in the early nineteenth century.

17). Having such an image of the Order's founder in a Franciscan institution would have advertised both its identity as a Genoese convent and its mendicant religious affiliation to the friars who lived there and/or those who came to the church to pray and seek Francis' and John the Baptist's saintly intercession.<sup>67</sup>

In addition to the examples cited above, there are at least three extant fifteenth-century slate John the Baptist *soprapporte* in inaccessible locations. Elia Gavazza, Piero Boccoardo, Guido Rosato, and Anna Daneri Pisano included them in their undated pamphlet "100 portali genovesi: Mappa iconografica dei portali genovesi del '400" ("100 Genoese Portals: Iconographic Map of Genoese Portals from the 1400s"), but no images of these works have been published and very little is known about any of the sculptures.<sup>68</sup> Two of these overdoors are inside private buildings in the historic city center. One is identified as a *Baptism of Christ* located at Vico degli Indoratori 2 and the other is generically described as a John the Baptist at Vico dietro il Coro di San Cosimo 12. Their placement within their respective buildings is unclear, so it is not apparent if they remain in their original locations and, therefore, were made as interior overdoors, or if they perhaps were once over exterior doorways and were later moved inside to preserve them.<sup>69</sup> The third elusive St. John the Baptist lintel's placement is also unclear, but it is located somewhere on the property of the Villa Spinola on Via Filippo Corridoni 5.<sup>70</sup> While the information, documentary and otherwise, regarding these works, and most of

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<sup>67</sup> William R. Cook, "Giotto and the Figure of St. Francis," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 142.

<sup>68</sup> Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 43-51.

<sup>69</sup> One such interior overdoor that was meant for exterior placement is a St. George killing the dragon that today hangs on a wall inside the palace at Via Garibaldi 4. Its original door placement is unknown.

<sup>70</sup> Built in the seventeenth century, the Villa Spinola is used today by Capurro Ricevimenti, a catering business for private parties.

the John the Baptist *soprapporte*, is minimal, their existence is further proof of the prevalence of the saint's image on relief lintels in Genoa.

The most unique rendition of St. John the Baptist on a *soprapporta* appears on the only remaining *in situ* overdoor sculpture to depict the saint.<sup>71</sup> Located at Vico delle Mele 6r, this *soprapporta* features St. John in the left half of the image as he presents a coat of arms to God, who emerges from the heavens in the upper left corner (Fig. 1-18). Although ruined, the heraldry was probably that of the Grillo or Spinola, as each family owned the palace at one time.<sup>72</sup> Rather than adhering to the traditional *soprapporta* composition in which a main narrative or image at the center is flanked by coats of arms, in this work all of the important figures are on the left half while the right side is filled with several trees, a rock outcropping, a leopard, and a crane. In this particular case, the emphasis on the left half is explained by its location and demonstrates that at times *soprapporte* carvers took the intended locations of their reliefs into account when devising their compositions—as we have seen with the *di sotto in su* perspective of the example at the Spencer Museum of Art. Positioned at the end of the palace near its left corner and perpendicular to a zigzagging street, only the left side of the work is clearly visible as one approaches it from the east on Vico del Santo Sepolcro. This is an odd place for a door, but obviously it is one that, like the *soprapporta*, was designed to line up axially with the thoroughfare. Due to the door's position, the primary figures on the overdoor are the most consistently visible to passersby, to whom the entire composition is

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<sup>71</sup> A heavily worn slate *soprapporta* at Via Pré 8 appears to bear the inscription “ECCE AGNUS DEI” but an image of John the Baptist is not visible anywhere on the panel.

<sup>72</sup> As the original owners of the palace, the Grillo's coat of arms probably decorated the *soprapporta*. When Luca Spinola bought the building in 1496, he may have replaced it with his heraldry and/or his initials. An “S” is visible just the upper right of the central tree and probably stood for a Spinola family member.

revealed as they continue to walk along the rest of the palace's facade.<sup>73</sup> This unique composition in which the Baptist presents a coat of arms to God provides an excellent example of a patron who sought the intercession and protection of a patron saint who worked on behalf of both the entire city and individual citizens and their families.

### **Byzantine Stylistic Influence on *Soprapporte***

In all of the John the Baptist *soprapporte* for which images are available, the haggard-looking saint is rendered in a more iconic format than in the other medieval and Renaissance works that depict him in Genoa. The images on the overdoor relief sculptures contrast with the narratives that decorate the three reliquaries and relic chapel at Genoa Cathedral, all of which recount multiple episodes from the life of St. John the Baptist. The distinctive compositional format of the St. John *soprapporte* is even apparent when comparing individual scenes from the reliquaries and relic chapel with the overdoor sculptures. For example, noticeable formal differences delineate the *Young John the Baptist in the Desert* on one of the short sides of the fifteenth-century silver reliquary (Fig. 1-6) from the *soprapporte* that also depict the Baptist in the wilderness. Following biblical descriptions, the Baptist is visualized on the reliquary as a discernibly younger man than the overdoor works as he lacks a beard and his face is wrinkle-free. Moreover, John the Baptist is not the dominant figure in the reliquary's composition; an angel who clasps the Baptist's hand and leads him into the desert is twice the size of the saint, emphasizing his tender age. Furthermore, the *Young John the Baptist in the Desert* is just one component of the reliquary's decorations. All of the chapel and reliquary images

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<sup>73</sup> For this work see also Mauro Ricchetti, *Dentro il centro storico di Genova cento edicole dimenticate: Sei itinerari di ricerca* (Genoa: Erga Edizioni, 1990), 248-49.

lack the iconic format of the *soprapporte* and instead relate a more expansive life of the saint.

The iconic formats and repeated iconography of the aged John the Baptist in the wilderness *soprapporte* arguably have more in common with Byzantine precedents.<sup>74</sup> Byzantine influence was certainly apparent in Genoa long before patrons began to commission *soprapporte*.<sup>75</sup> Byzantine artists were also known to have traveled to Genoa for commissions. For example, in ca. 1310 a Byzantine artist painted a lunette fresco over the southern entrance (the portale di S. Gottardo), perhaps a precedent for the sculpted *soprapporte*, on the counter-façade of San Lorenzo that depicts the Virgin Mary and Child flanked by Sts. John the Baptist, George, and Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan and one of the four Fathers of the Church (Fig. 1-19).<sup>76</sup>

The St. John the Baptist overdoors are characterized by clarity and focus on the Baptist, a common attribute of Byzantine representations of the saint.<sup>77</sup> While not direct copies, the *soprapporte* in some ways resemble the frontal-facing figures in the Byzantine Deësis icon type in which the chief intercessors, the Virgin Mary and John the

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<sup>74</sup> Johannes Irsmscher et al., "John the Baptist," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1068-69. Another Genoese *soprapporta* with Byzantine subject matter depicts Christ Pantocrator; it is over a doorway in the cloister of Santa Maria di Castello and is discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>75</sup> An example is a *pallio*, an embroidered silk textile, with pictorial imagery and Latin text related to the passion of St. Lawrence, that today is part of the collection of the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa. The Byzantines presented the *pallio* to the Genoese as a diplomatic gift to recognize the 1261 trade agreement between Genoa and Michael VIII Paleologus, the Greek ruler of Nicaea and future Byzantine emperor. This object clearly demonstrates exchange between the Byzantines and Genoese, so we can assume that the Genoese were aware of the Byzantine icon type through this established trade connection. For more on the *pallio* see Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 258-59; Paula Johnstone, "The Byzantine 'Pallio' in the Palazzo Bianco at Genoa," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 87 (1976): 99-108; Cecily J. Hilsdale, "Diplomacy by Design: Rhetorical Strategies of the Byzantine Gift" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2003), Chapter Four.

<sup>76</sup> Sts. George and John the Baptist are almost always depicted together, but the identity of the third saint sometimes varies. See Grosso, *Il San Giorgio*, 121-22. For a discussion of this and other cathedral frescoes see Robert S. Nelson, "A Byzantine Painter in Trecento Genoa: The Last Judgment at S. Lorenzo," *Art Bulletin* 67, no. 4 (1985): 548-66.

<sup>77</sup> Kathleen Corrigan, "The Witness of John the Baptist on an Early Byzantine Icon in Kiev," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): 3.

Baptist, flank or appear below the enthroned Christ.<sup>78</sup> This Byzantine image's influence was not confined to Genoa, as similar iconic formats appeared throughout Italy such as in Pietro Cavallini's *Last Judgment* (1290s) at Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome and Nardo di Cione's *Last Judgment* (1350s) in the Strozzi Chapel at Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Therefore, the Genoese John the Baptist *soprapporte* could be considered a variation of the Deësis in which the Baptist acts alone as the chief intermediary between the faithful and Christ.

Another possible connection to Byzantine art concerns the older appearance of St. John the Baptist in *soprapporte*. Indeed, like Christ, John probably died around age 33, preceding the savior in life and death by about six months (Luke 1:36 and Matthew 14:10-12). While depicting the Baptist with the aged features that typically are associated with prophets was not unusual in Western art, it was common in Byzantine portrayals of the saint. For example, an older John the Baptist holding a disc with the Agnus Dei appears on the mid-sixth-century archiepiscopal throne of Maximian of Ravenna, made by a Byzantine artist.<sup>79</sup> John the Baptist's advanced age is also noticeable in the later thirteenth-century, Byzantine-style fresco cycle depicting his life on the ceiling of Parma's Baptistery.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, John the Baptist is depicted as older in images of the Byzantine Anastasis, or Harrowing into Hell, such as in the funerary chapel of Christ in Chora (Kariye Camii), Istanbul (1316-1321). These portrayals of the

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<sup>78</sup> Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Deesis," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 599-600. Prior to the seventh century, Byzantine images of St. John the Baptist included the Agnus Dei, similar to the *soprapporte* with the saint. This changed as a result of Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council of 692 that determined it was no longer appropriate to depict Christ as the Lamb of God. He had to be visualized in human form alone. Corrigan, "Witness of John the Baptist," 3-4.

<sup>79</sup> Corrigan, "Witness of John the Baptist," 6.

<sup>80</sup> Pietro Toesca, *Il Battistero di Parma. Architetture e sculture di Benedetto Antelami e seguaci. Affreschi dei secoli XIII e XIV* (Milan: Silvana), 32-53.

saint are more in keeping with the particularly noteworthy aged appearance of the Spencer Museum of Art overdoor with John the Baptist, which Krufft found “disturbing,” because according to scripture the saint was beheaded as a younger man. Herbert Freedman seemed equally perplexed by this relief sculpture stating, “The whole composition is quite unusual; I do not recall anything quite like it in either sculpture or painting.”<sup>81</sup>

Thus, it appears that the iconography on St. John the Baptist *soprapporte* has Byzantine origins, something that one might expect from an object made for a city that had strong economic ties throughout the Mediterranean and with Byzantium in particular. The iconic nature of the *soprapporte* in question comprises an additional type of Baptist imagery that supplements the rich and varied iconography and narratives of his chapel and reliquaries at Genoa Cathedral. Whereas the images on the reliquaries and chapel reliefs present him as part of a dramatic and complex narrative, the *soprapporte* stress his role as an intercessor, which was magnified by showing the saint in the desert during which time he meditated and reflected on God’s plan. Placed over doorways along Genoa’s streets and possibly on the interiors of its buildings, these relief sculptures encouraged passersby and other viewers to turn to the Baptist for assistance and served as an ever-present reminder of his role as the city’s patron saint.

## **Conclusion**

Even though the ashes of St. John the Baptist were never visible and their reliquaries only occasionally processed through Genoa, the *soprapporte* that depicted the

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<sup>81</sup> Krufft, “John the Baptist in the Desert,” 15; Freedman letter, February 18, 1960, SMA Curatorial File, inv. 1960.0057.

saint acted as permanent, daily reminders of the saint's protection of the city. In addition, they broaden our understanding of the history of the saint's cult in the city and the iconographic and decorative traditions that grew out of it. Genoa's St. John the Baptist *soprapporte* attest to the popularity of this sculptural type and reflect just one aspect of its varied iconography and functions within the city and region of Liguria that are explored in the following chapters. Together with St. John's chapel and relics at the cathedral, the sculpted lintels on the streets constituted a significant iconographical tradition devoted to the Baptist in Genoa that has long merited exploration.

## Chapter Two

### Sacred Portals: *Soprapporte* in the Dominican Church of Santa Maria di Castello

*Soprapporte* made for private palaces are still readily visible on the streets of Genoa, whereas those that decorate sacred portals are comparatively hidden. Found almost exclusively in church sacristies and cloisters, both spaces with less public traffic than urban thoroughfares, relief lintels in religious buildings were intended for the more limited and focused audience of clerics and the private citizens who commissioned these sculptures and frequented the spaces they decorated. While little scholarly attention has been paid to *soprapporte* in general, there is an even greater lacuna in literature on the ones made for religious contexts. This chapter addresses how ecclesiastic portal sculptures functioned in ways that were specific to their locations and audiences while at the same time conformed to Genoese iconographic traditions in keeping with the more conspicuously placed ones over secular and domestic doorways.

Six Genoese religious complexes incorporate at least one *soprapporta* into their respective decorative programs. The portals they adorn are in buildings with a variety of affiliations—Collegiate, Carmelite, Benedictine, Franciscan, and Dominican. A marble *soprapporta* depicting St. George killing the dragon, the most popular subject for ones found on secular doorways, is in the cloister of the church of Santa Maria delle Vigne. The main entrance of the convent of Santissima Annunziata di Portoria is marked by a slate (ardesia) lintel sculpture illustrating the Annunciation and monogram of Christ with a lunette relief directly above that shows St. Francis receiving the stigmata.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The work is attributed to Gaspare della Scala da Carona. He sculpted it in 1488 as noted by an inscription carved directly onto the relief. The sculpture's date corresponds to the start of the convent's expansion. Kruft believes that there are similarities between the landscape of the stigmata lunette and the *St. John the Baptist in the Desert soprapporta* at the Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS (Fig. i-18). There may be

Additionally, *soprapporte* are embedded into the exterior walls of two other Genoese churches; at the cathedral there is a marble St. George overdoor relief on the wall facing Via San Lorenzo, and a fifteenth-century slate *soprapporta* depicting the Annunciation used to be on the corner of the church of Nostra Signora del Carmine at the end of Via Monte Cristo.<sup>2</sup> Six overdoor sculptures with inscriptions and Doria coats of arms are over portals in the cloister at the Benedictine complex of San Matteo, which will be addressed more fully in Chapter Three.

The final example of a Genoese religious complex with extant *soprapporte*, the Dominican Observant church and convent of Santa Maria di Castello, is the focus of the present chapter. Its sacristy and three cloisters are still adorned with nine sculpted lintels, an unusually large number of overdoors for a religious setting in Genoa. As is evident from the examples cited above, most other Genoese churches and their cloisters typically had only one or two overdoors.<sup>3</sup> The sculpted reliefs at Santa Maria di Castello also

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more *soprapporte* inside the convent, to which it is difficult to gain access. Gavazza et al., “100 portali genovesi,” n. 32; Federico Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI*, 6 vols., vol. 5 (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino 1877), 24; D. Castagna and M. U. Masini, *Genova. Guida Storico Artistica* (Genoa: M. U. Masini Editore, 1929), 48; Kruft, *Portali genovesi*, 9; Cassiano da Langasco, *Chiesa della SS. Annunziata di Portoria (S. Caterina)* (Genoa: Sagep, 1975), 2.

<sup>2</sup> The St. George *soprapporta* is placed on the cathedral wall alongside other mismatched sculptures. It may have come from one of the houses demolished between 1835 and 1840 to enlarge the piazza in front of the cathedral. *Liguria*, 6th ed. (Milan: Touring Club Italiano, 1982), 120. Gavazza and Boccardo note the material and general date of the Annunciation *soprapporta*. Gavazza et al., “100 portali genovesi,” n. 31; Boccardo, “Per una mappa,” 53. In 1973 the Annunciation sculpture was moved inside to a small room off of the sacristy in an effort to preserve it from weathering. This *soprapporta* may have initially been placed over the doorway of a house on via Monte Cristo. I would like to thank Don Davide Bernini, who began serving the church before 1973 and who showed me where the sculpture was located on the church’s exterior wall. I am also indebted to Adriana Barbolini who confirmed this after consulting parishioners whose association with the church also dates to before 1973. Bernini and Barbolini also assisted me in identifying the text on the *soprapporta*. Mary holds an open book inscribed with the following words: “Ecce ancilla domini fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum” (“Here the servant of the Lord said be it done unto me according to thy word,” Luke 1:34). On the banner is “Ave [Maria] Gratia Plena Dom[inus],” the beginning of the Hail Mary.

<sup>3</sup> There are also comparatively limited numbers of *soprapporte* within church complexes outside of Genoa that typically feature traditional subjects. For example, the church of the Capuchin friars in the town of Santa Margherita features an Annunciation *soprapporta* over the main doorway. Along the Ligurian coast

depict an exceptionally wide range of subjects—the Annunciation, St. Dominic, St. George killing the dragon, St. Jerome, Christ Pantocrator, the Crucifixion, and an inscription—many of which relate to and prepare the viewer for the function of the rooms whose portals they decorate. Understanding the role of *soprapporte* within Santa Maria di Castello is especially important for the study of this sculptural type, as it provides a framework for an analysis of their role within a religious context with an audience largely composed of Dominican friars. Furthermore, it is here that we find the earliest documented overdoor sculpture, a work dated to 1452 in the sacristy that provides insight into the early use and appearance of this type.

We shall see that overdoor adornment in a variety of media is typical for Dominican complexes, and it is no accident that the numerous *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello postdate the convent's transfer to the Dominican Observant Order in 1442. This chapter considers how the Dominicans at Santa Maria di Castello combined the Ligurian *soprapporta* type with traditional and contemporary Dominican convent decorations to meet the ritual and devotional needs of its mendicant inhabitants and to mark the contributions of its most important patrons. To that end it begins with a brief outline of the previous scholarship on the subject as well as with a history of the church and the establishment of the Dominicans there by Pope Eugenius IV. The Santa Maria di Castello *soprapporte* are then described and analyzed according to their placement within the decorative program of the sacristy and cloisters and their relationships to one another. Finally, these works are considered in comparison to earlier religious complex portal adornments, especially those at better-studied Dominican sites such as San Marco in

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between Santa Margherita and Portofino is a slate St. George killing the dragon *soprapporta* over the entrance to the abbey of San Girolamo al Monte di Portofino.

Florence, in an effort to understand how the *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello may have functioned on a variety of levels for viewers by simultaneously visually connecting the friars to the Genoese community and proclaiming their reformed Observant identity by using Genoese and Dominican visual vocabularies.

### **Previous Scholarship**

As with most early modern Genoese topics, there are no English language studies of Santa Maria di Castello and its decorations. In fact, only a handful of Genoese scholars have investigated the history of the church and its cloisters. The present chapter draws from their work and the documents they published. It also utilizes unpublished sources and employs visual and contextual analysis in an effort to explain how the convent's lintel sculptures relate to the larger body of extant *soprapporte* and the significance of their placement. In particular, this study owes a great deal to the work of Padre Raimondo Amedeo Vigna, who published several books along with numerous essays in the *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, a regional history journal.<sup>4</sup> As a Dominican friar at Santa Maria di Castello, Vigna benefited from unlimited access to its archive. His extensive descriptions of the church's decorative program reflect his admiration for its beauty.<sup>5</sup> They are also useful for our understanding of the layout of the complex in the latter part of the nineteenth century but, understandably, they are silent as

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<sup>4</sup> P. Raimondo Amedeo Vigna, *Illustrazione storica, artistica ed epigrafica dell'antichissima chiesa di Santa Maria di Castello in Genova* (Genoa: Luigi Nazario Lanata Libraio, 1864); idem, *L'antico collegiata di Santa Maria di Castello in Genova* (Genoa: Dario Giuseppe Rossi, 1859); idem, *I Domenicani illustrati del convento di Santa Maria de Castello in Genova* (Genoa: Adamo Lanata, 1886); idem, "Monumenti storici del convento di S. Maria di Castello in Genova dell'ordine dei predicatori 'ordinati ed illustrati'," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 20, no. 1 (1888): 1-335; idem, "Storia cronologica del convento di S. Maria di Castello," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 21, no. 1 (1889): 1-368.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Vigna praises Girolamo Panissari, Prior of Santa Maria di Castello from 1446 to 1452, for inspiring all the beautiful decorations throughout the complex. See Vigna, "Storia cronologica," 83.

to its appearance when the *soprapporte* were made. Unfortunately, a majority of the archival sources Vigna cites are not relevant to the fifteenth-century overdoor reliefs addressed throughout this chapter.

Ennio Poleggi, a retired University of Genoa architecture and urban history professor who has written extensively on Genoa's architectural history, published a book on Santa Maria di Castello and its cloisters in 1973; it remains the only book-length examination of the complex other than Vigna's earlier volume.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Padre Costantino Gilardi, a friar at Santa Maria di Castello, has investigated the connections between the Dominicans of Genoa and Florence in the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> These ties, and how they can be applied to an interpretation of the *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello, are explored further in this chapter. A few other recent books that briefly address Santa Maria di Castello and its history were published as part of the 2004 celebration of Genoa's designation as the European Capital of Culture, but their authors focused on championing modern restoration efforts rather than analyzing and interpreting the decorative program.<sup>8</sup>

### **History of Santa Maria di Castello**

The present basilica of Santa Maria di Castello (Figs. 2-1 and 2-2) is not the first church to occupy this prominent, elevated site in the Castello neighborhood of Genoa on

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<sup>6</sup> Ennio Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello e il romanico a Genova* (Genoa: Sagep, 1973).

<sup>7</sup> Costantino Gilardi, "Le programme décoratif d'un couvent de l'Observance dominicaine de lombardie: Santa Maria di Castello à Gênes, 1442-1526," in *Les dominicains et l'image. De la Provence à Gênes XIIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Nice: Serre Editeur, 2006). He also published on the church's restoration in 2004. See idem, "Restaurare a Castello," in *Cinque chiese e un oratorio: Restauri di edifici religiosi dal XII al XVII secolo per Genova Capitale Europea della Cultura 2004*, ed. Gianni Bozzo (Genoa: San Giorgio Editrice, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Gianni Bozzo, ed. *Cinque chiese e un oratorio: Restauri di edifici religiosi dal XII al XVII secolo per Genova Capitale Europea della Cultura 2004* (Genoa: San Giorgio Editrice, 2004).

which it is situated. Named for an ancient Roman fortress that once stood there, the Castello borders the port and is the oldest area of the city.<sup>9</sup> Steeped in history, it was here in 658 that the Lombard king Ariperto chose to found a church.<sup>10</sup> A document dated 7 April 1049 notes a donation of land to the church. Artists and architects from around Lakes Como and Lugano in Northern Italy designed and began construction on a new Romanesque structure beginning in 1100.<sup>11</sup> Dedicated to Santa Maria di Castello, it was built directly over Ariperto's demolished, seventh-century church, perhaps as a symbol of triumph over Arian heresy.<sup>12</sup> Consecrated on 3 May 1237 by Gerardo, the patriarch of Jerusalem, this church was among the most holy in Genoa, even serving as co-cathedral with San Lorenzo during the turbulent tenth and eleventh centuries, when the bishop was temporarily transferred to the fortified Castello neighborhood.<sup>13</sup> Until World War II the Genoese continued to recognize the strong ties between the two churches with an annual procession of the cathedral canons from San Lorenzo to Santa Maria di Castello for the blessing of the baptismal font on Whitsunday Eve, the day before the feast of Pentecost.<sup>14</sup>

Additional construction and decoration continued at Santa Maria di Castello through the seventeenth century. The church's aisles were finished with stone rib vaults in the thirteenth century and the nave vaulting was completed shortly before 1468.

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<sup>9</sup> Lazzaro De Simoni, *Le chiese di Genova: Storia, arte, folklore*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Genoa: Ceretti, 1948), 61.

<sup>10</sup> Ennio Poleggi and Isabella Croce, *Ritratto di Genova nel '400: Veduta d'invenzione* (Genoa: Sagep, 2008), 200.

<sup>11</sup> Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> "Vicariati e parrocchie: S. Maria di Castello," Arcidiocesi di Genova, <http://www.diocesi.genova.it/documenti.php?idd=203&parrocchia=138>. According to some sources, including the previously cited website, the current church was begun in the eleventh century, however, the Touring Club Italiano guide to Liguria dates it to the first quarter of the twelfth century. The same source also notes that a sculptural fragment from the 658 church is conserved in the chapel in the present church's baptistery. *Liguria*, 102. A brief history of building at this location is also found in Giacomo Grasso, *Guida a Santa Maria di Castello*, trans. Chiara Savigni (Genoa: Corigraf and Sagep, 1989), 5.

<sup>13</sup> "Vicariati e parrocchie: S. Maria di Castello."

<sup>14</sup> Poleggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 201; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 70.

Workers built the sacristy in 1452.<sup>15</sup> Three cloisters were added between 1445 and 1513 and lateral chapels were incorporated into the church's aisles in 1448. The apse was extended in 1448-49 and again in 1589, when builders constructed the cupola. While chapel decorations continued to be added in the sixteenth century, by the eighteenth century the complex was beginning to show serious signs of neglect due to a lack of funds.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, Santa Maria di Castello's church and cloisters have undergone extensive changes since its *soprapporte* were sculpted in the fifteenth century. In particular, the second cloister in which most of the extant *soprapporte* are found, has been significantly altered to accommodate new functions. Such renovations are not unusual. As William Hood has noted, within monastic complexes, cloisters were the most frequently altered spaces and contemporary descriptions of their decorations rarely survive.<sup>17</sup> In the case of Santa Maria di Castello, this problem is compounded by the transformation of the first and third cloisters into private apartments after 1870.<sup>18</sup> Those areas continue to be used as residences and are inaccessible for study, so it is uncertain if any fifteenth-century decorations remain within them. Thus, a complete understanding of the fabric and how the church and cloisters of Santa Maria di Castello appeared and functioned as a collective unit in the Renaissance is challenging.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Daniele Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello: Chiesa e convento* (Genoa: Sagep, 1997), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Poleggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 200.

<sup>17</sup> William Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 125.

<sup>18</sup> Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 162.

<sup>19</sup> Restoration efforts have been pursued on various parts of the church and cloisters over the last couple of centuries, including Maurizio Dufour's work from 1859 to 1860. The church's façade underwent renovations in 1925 and 1948 that removed plastered and painted black and white stripes, inexpensive imitations of those found on the marble façades of the important religious and residential buildings throughout Genoa that are addressed in Chapter Three. Cesare Fera and Luciano Bianchi initiated and carried out a further restoration of the convent in 1961 and 1965, work that was continued in 1979 and that was finally completed in 1989. Minor restorations also took place in 1847, 1874, 1882, and 1895-1900. The most recent restoration of the church took place in 2003-2004 in preparation for Genoa's year as the European Capital of Culture. Poleggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 200-01; Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 4; Gilardi, "Restaurare a Castello," 40.

## Pope Eugenius IV and Dominican Reform in Italy

From the eleventh century a college of canons served Santa Maria di Castello, residing in a building located where the first cloister now stands.<sup>20</sup> While the church initially flourished under the canons, by the fifteenth century their numbers had greatly decreased, leading to a general wane in their prominence within the city. This decline prompted Pope Eugenius IV to issue a foundation bull on 22 June 1435 and a second bull on 14 June 1441, which transferred Santa Maria di Castello to the Dominican Observants of the Lombard Congregation.<sup>21</sup>

Although the transfer was the result of a papal order, not everyone supported the change. Genoa's archbishop and doge, who opposed the pope's reforms, attempted to halt the convent's reassignment.<sup>22</sup> This conflict is documented in a lengthy correspondence in which the doge, Tommaso Campofregoso, and archbishop, Giacomo Imperiale, vehemently disagreed with Eugenius' reforms for political reasons and tried to stop the transfer. When Giacomo Imperiale's letters to Eugenius did not elicit the desired result, the archbishop went so far as to expel the Dominicans from Santa Maria di Castello on 13 November 1442, confiscating all of the liturgical objects in the sacristy and cutting the bell tower ropes, effectively silencing their calls to worship.<sup>23</sup> The archbishop and clergy's objections to papal intervention, however, were quickly

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<sup>20</sup> When the Dominicans razed the building used by the canons they reused some building materials in the first cloister. Several column capitals there are believed to derive from the Collegiata's eleventh-century building. See Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Although the 1435 bull did not lead to the Dominicans' immediate occupation of Santa Maria di Castello, it established Eugenius IV's intentions. Valeria Polonio, "Crisi e riforma nella chiesa genovese ai tempi dell'arcivescovo Giacomo Imperiale (1439-1452)," in *Miscellanea di studi storici* (Genoa: Fratelli Bozzi, 1969), 278. For the 1435 bull see N. Perasso, "Le chiese di Genova e del genovesato: Santa Maria di Castello," [n.d.], MS 839, Archivio di Stato di Genova, fol. 246r.

<sup>22</sup> Gilardi, "Restaurare a Castello," 32; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 113 and 16.

<sup>23</sup> Gilardi, "Le programme décoratif," 85; Vigna, *L'antico collegiata*, 151-78.

suppressed and on 23 November 1442 the Dominicans officially and permanently moved into Santa Maria di Castello.<sup>24</sup>

The Dominicans, like many other religious orders, experienced a surge of reform that began in the late fourteenth century and spread throughout the fifteenth century. Initiated in 1390 by Raymond of Capua, Master General of the Dominican Order, with an official decree for reform that Pope Boniface IX ratified with a bull issued the same year, the Observant movement quickly gained momentum through the enthusiastic support of advocates such as Fra Giovanni Dominici, a Dominican from Florence. Advocates of these reforms believed that their order had moved away from a strict adherence to its three main tenets of charity, humility, and voluntary poverty set forth when Pope Honorius III approved the rule of the Dominican Order on 22 December 1216.<sup>25</sup> The Observants, as they came to be called, endorsed a pure and simple adherence to the ideals their founder St. Dominic espoused, and they sought to separate themselves from the alleged corruption of the Dominican Conventuals, who only loosely followed these tenets. Each province was to have at least one Observant house, whether it came as the result of a transfer from a current Conventual community or another order, or the creation of an entirely new foundation. For example, when the Conventuals at the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence failed to pass similar reforms, Giovanni Dominici established a new Observant community at Fiesole in 1406.<sup>26</sup> The excitement and religious fervor surrounding the reforms of the Observants made possible the

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<sup>24</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 2. On 17 October 1442 Cristoforo Spinola, Stefano Cattaneo, Nicola Giustiniani, Benedetto Assereto, Paolo Guarco, Luca Pizzo, and other nobles from the city and parish seized possession of the Canonica di Castello. For further information on the complications that arose from the transfer of Santa Maria di Castello to a Dominican house see P. Guglielme, "I Domenicani a Castello (1442-1942)," *Il Nuovo Cittadino*, 24 October 1942, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> For a brief discussion of the Observant Dominican reform movement see Paolo Morachiello, *Fra Angelico: The San Marco Frescoes* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 9-12.

establishment of such new Dominican communities throughout Italy, including Santa Maria di Castello in Genoa.

Pope Eugenius IV's backing of fifteenth-century Observant movements considerably benefited the Dominicans of Santa Maria di Castello. If not for him, it is unlikely the reformed Lombard Congregation would have ever been granted such a prominent location in Genoa. Their initial establishment there in 1441-1442 echoed another transfer that Eugenius affected in Florence when he turned the Silvestrine convent of San Marco over to the Dominican Observants in 1436.<sup>27</sup>

The pope was a great supporter of the Dominicans. As Joseph Gill explains, Eugenius believed that the Dominicans embodied, and had the potential to extend, the same spirit that earlier had moved him to donate all of his worldly possessions to the less fortunate and join the Augustinian convent dedicated to St. George in Venice.<sup>28</sup> The Dominican Observants, along with the Benedictine and Observant Franciscan orders, also championed the general reform of the morals and actions of the Church that Eugenius so desired. Realizing that comprehensive church reform was virtually impossible, Eugenius chose to focus his energies on those reform groups for whom there was a much higher likelihood of achieving results, albeit on a smaller scale. In order to demonstrate his support for the Observant movements, Eugenius authorized the establishment of monasteries and convents for such groups, designated individuals to serve as "Observant Visitors" and granted them the power to instigate reform at preexisting monasteries, and issued papal bulls whenever it was necessary for the Observants' success and growth.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Gill, *Eugenius IV: Pope of Christian Union* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1961), 186-87.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

Indeed, Eugenius' support for reform spread throughout Italy with the reassignment of religious properties recorded in all corners of the peninsula from Rome to Naples, from Sicily to Venice, and countless smaller towns as well. Eugenius even sent Dominicans and Franciscans to "effect what changes they deemed useful and necessary" in Jerusalem, Caffa (modern-day Feodosiya), and Constantinople.<sup>30</sup>

Giovanni di Montenero, a Genoese Dominican, had close ties to both the city of Florence and Eugenius IV, and he played a vital role in ensuring that an Observant community was established in Genoa at Santa Maria di Castello. Throughout the 1430s Giovanni, a doctor of theology and canonical law, served as a papal representative at the Councils of Basel (1431), Ferrara (1438), and Florence (1439) in talks that sought to reconcile the Eastern Orthodox and Western Latin Churches.<sup>31</sup> One goal of these discussions was achieving greater unity among the four mendicant orders—Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians—which was achieved with an agreement signed on 2 April 1435. Together the mendicants supported papal power over the ecumenical council that the original Council of Basel had sought to undo.<sup>32</sup> During the 1439 Council of Florence, Giovanni became a principal representative of the Western Church who favored union with that of the East.

Sometime after February 1440, Giovanni returned to Genoa, where he began to seek donations and support for the foundation and the additional construction and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>31</sup> For more information on Giovanni di Montenero's role at the Councils of Basel and Florence see Gilles Gérard Meersseman, *Giovanni di Montenero O.P., difensore dei mendicanti: Studi e documenti sui concili di Basilea e di Firenze* (Rome: Ad S. Sabinae, 1938). For additional details about Eugenius IV and his reforms see D. Hay, "Eugenio IV," in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 43, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993), 496-502.

<sup>32</sup> Gilardi, "Le programme décoratif," 84.

decoration of Santa Maria di Castello for the Observant Dominicans.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the establishment of an Observant convent in Genoa symbolized Giovanni's continued dedication to his Order's position in support of attempts to unify the Western and Eastern Churches the Councils began in the previous decade.

### **Patronage at Santa Maria di Castello**

The Dominican community that, thanks to Eugenius IV and Giovanni di Montenero, settled at Santa Maria di Castello required more space than did the canons who previously occupied it. Thus, the friars found it necessary to renovate the preexisting church as well as to construct a large, adjacent cloistered complex to accommodate their needs for daily life and rituals. This led the Dominicans to buy more land and buildings in the surrounding area on which they could expand.<sup>34</sup> Simply by acquiring more space in the neighborhood, they almost immediately made their presence known.

Although the Embriaco and Castello families dominated the surrounding neighborhood, also known as the *castrum Januae*, the Giustiniani and Grimaldi paid for most of the restoration work, new additions, and decorations at Santa Maria di Castello. The Giustiniani provided financial support for the church, including Paride Giustiniani, who bankrolled the expansion and decoration of its choir and apse in 1448-1449.<sup>35</sup> The brothers Manuele and Leonello Grimaldi financed the renovation of its sacristy and cloisters. Their family arms, and sometimes their initials, are included on many of the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>34</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 141.

*soprapposte* found in these areas of the complex to indicate their patronage.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the display of Grimaldi heraldic symbols attested to the family's generosity and concern for salvation.

Manuele and Leonello's contributions to Santa Maria di Castello's renovations can be divided into three phases. The first dates from 1445 to 1452 and marks the period when they funded a bridge that connected the church to its seaside property and began construction on the first cloister, refectory, dormitories, kitchen, and infirmary. During the same period they also renovated the sacristy and built the second cloister, a chapter room, library, loggia, pharmacy, and parlatory (reception room for visitors). In the second phase of 1453-1462, the brothers completed construction on the first cloister and finished decorating the first and second cloisters. The final building phase dated to 1492-1513 and resulted in the erection of the third cloister and more friars' cells.<sup>37</sup>

The Grimaldi, one of Genoa's oldest noble families and stockholders in the Banco di San Giorgio, were active participants in the city's government. Mary Weitzel Gibbons notes that by the time Luca Grimaldi commissioned Giambologna to build and decorate his funerary chapel in San Francesco di Castelletto, Genoa in 1579 his family members had served in a variety of roles including senator, ambassador, procurator, and even doge.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the Grimaldi were a well-known, well-connected, politically active, and powerful Genoese family. Their wealth, along with their social and political status, provided them with the financial resources and influence to enable, or that necessitated,

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<sup>36</sup> They are also sometimes referred to in the literature as Emanuele and Lionello Grimaldi-Oliva; the Oliva family, of which they were a part, joined the Grimaldi *albergo*.

<sup>37</sup> Poggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 151; Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Mary Weitzel Gibbons, *Giambologna: Narrator of the Catholic Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 9.

their participation in such high profile commissions.<sup>39</sup> Their commitment to Santa Maria di Castello's renovation and decoration associated the family with the Dominican Observants and their papal-supported reforms and provided an unparalleled opportunity to help secure their salvation, as their family shields on these commissions would have prompted the friars to remember them frequently in their prayers.

In addition to wielding political power through the government positions they held, the Grimaldi also actively sought to acquire property not only in their neighborhood, but also in many other Genoese districts.<sup>40</sup> By the mid-thirteenth century the Grimaldi owned property in the area known as San Luca, as well as land in the western corner of the Porta dei Vacca, in the Molo district, and at Canneto, the central commercial district. As a result, the Grimaldi owned property in three of Genoa's eight *compagne* divisions (Borgo, Macagnana, and Palazzolo).<sup>41</sup> By being well represented in those areas they were able to influence both the political, social, and economic dealings within their own *albergo* and in strategic districts outside of the urban zone in which they lived.

### **The Sacristy *Sopraporte***

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<sup>39</sup> The Grimaldi's success allowed them to be active patrons and promote a life of virtue. For a discussion of the general fifteenth-century change in attitude towards wealth see Hans Baron, "Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth as Factors in the Rise of Humanistic Thought," *Speculum* 13 (1938): 18-37. Cosimo de' Medici's Florentine commissions between 1436 and 1450 in particular set the tone for these new views on monetary generosity. The Grimaldi's patronage of Santa Maria di Castello is an example of a similar phenomenon in a different locale. See A. D. Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 162-70.

<sup>40</sup> These divisions and their organizations were closely tied to how the Genoese identified themselves and defined their community roles and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>41</sup> The three *compagne* represented each one of the city's original divisions into *castrum*, *civitas*, and *burgus*. Diane Owen Hughes, "Kinsmen and Neighbors in Medieval Genoa," in *The Medieval City*, ed. Harry A. Miskimin, David Herlihy, and Adam L. Udovitch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 99.

At least two *soprapporte* once marked doors leading into and out of the sacristy at Santa Maria di Castello. One, probably paid for by Paride Giustiniani, originally adorned the portal between the choir and the sacristy. The other is still *in situ* over the door that leads from the sacristy into the church's right transept and, as we shall see below, is a documented Grimaldi commission. Due to their stylistic similarities, the artists Giovanni Gagini and Leonardo Riccomanno probably were involved to some degree in the creation of both works, and if so, their sculptures enhanced the viewers' experience of this sacred space.

The friars would have viewed the first of these works, a lintel relief depicting *St. George Killing the Dragon* (Fig. 2-3), as they exited the choir and moved into the sacristy after mass. By far the most common overdoor theme to be found on private palaces, this subject, which will be analyzed in terms of its symbolism, meaning, and function in Chapter Three, appears only once in Santa Maria di Castello. While this *soprapporta* and its doorposts were removed from the choir during later renovations, they were saved. Today, the sculpture is in the second cloister over the interior entrance of the original library, a space that additionally houses many other fifteenth-century sculptures from the sacristy that are now part of the church's museum.<sup>42</sup>

St. George, who appears front and center on horseback, dominates this relief. While the saint is rather thin and has indistinct facial features, he is clearly recognizable by his attribute, a shield marked with a cross, and because he is engaged in his signature saintly act. Dressed in full armor and a cape that is swept up into thick folds of fabric created by deep drilling, the saint is presented dramatically, as he has just sprung into

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<sup>42</sup> Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 76; Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 13; Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 53.

action to save the princess. This dynamic moment is also captured in the S-curve of the horse's tail and its lively mane. The horse rears up on its hind legs; the dragon's tail is wrapped around the horse's back right leg, partially trapping it, as St. George spears the dragon through the neck, pinning him to the ground. The dragon, with a clenched crocodile-like snout, beady eyes, serpentine body, and scaly wings seems to have all but succumbed to St. George's powerful action.

Meanwhile, the princess delicately perches on a hexagonal platform. From her vantage point she is removed from the action and raised as if she is a trophy to be presented to the winner of this epic battle between good and evil. Her body is positioned in a three-quarter view as she observes the drama occurring before the flowing Gothic S-curve of her body. With her hands brought together palm-to-palm in prayer and a crown designating her royal status, she appears to be emotionally unmoved by the events that unfold before her.

The overall scene is surrounded by a simple, sculpted border that is interrupted only by a rope pattern, which frames the top and sides and continues to flow down the edges of both doorposts, thus visually connecting the relief to the rest of the door's frame. A large tree on either side encloses the narrative. While the genus of the stylized tree on the right is difficult to discern, the tree on the left is an oak. The oak tree is referenced again in the acorns and oak leaves adorning the posts. Additionally, a small plant sprouts on either side of both trees. The deep roots apparent at the base of each of the large trees suggest their strength and continued stability, things the Observant Dominican friars would have undoubtedly wanted to achieve in their new home.

The delicacy of the marble carving and employment of *rilievo schiacciato*—especially in the foliage at the base of either tree and the horse’s harness and caparison—suggests that the artist was familiar with techniques the Florentine artist Donatello pioneered. Although no documentation directly connects the St. George *soprapporta* to a specific sculptor, it could be argued that Domenico Gagini, Giovanni Gagini, or Leonardo Riccomanno may have been involved in its creation.<sup>43</sup> As we have seen in the Introduction, Domenico and Leonardo trained in Tuscany and documents show that Leonardo and Giovanni worked on other sculptural projects at Santa Maria di Castello. Indeed, Alizeri noted that the elegant foliage surrounding both this work (Fig. 2-4) and the inscription *soprapporta* over a door in the sacristy (Fig. 2-5) suggests that the same artist(s) sculpted both works or, at the very least, the respective artist(s) for each *soprapporta* shared techniques and stylistic ideas.<sup>44</sup> Alternatively, the repetition found on both lintels’ doorposts, may have more to do with the patrons’ desire for visual cohesion between the entrance from the choir and the sacristy’s decorative program.

No record of who commissioned this work has been found, but Paride Giustiniani is its most probable patron. Since he was responsible for redecorating the choir and high altar in 1448-1449, as noted above, it stands to reason that he paid for the *soprapporta* as well.<sup>45</sup> If Paride did commission the overdoor as part of the choir’s decorative program, the relief sculpture, and not the documented Grimaldi inscription from 1452 discussed below, is the earliest *soprapporta* at Santa Maria di Castello.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Some sources attribute the work to the circle of Giovanni Gagini. See Gavazza et al., “100 portali genovesi,” n. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 143.

<sup>45</sup> Gilardi, “Le programme décoratif,” 89-90.

<sup>46</sup> This work is usually dated to ca. 1448-1449. See Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 22; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 141.

The sacristy itself (Fig. 2-6), dedicated to Sts. Fabian and Sebastian in 1452 and to the Apostle Thomas in 1453, served as a chapel for the Grimaldi and, as such, may have been used for family burials.<sup>47</sup> In its dual function, it is typical of late medieval and early Renaissance sacristy patronage.<sup>48</sup> The clergy primarily used sacristies as they prepared for mass, but laypeople also used them for a variety of purposes. Notarial acts, wills, and marriage contracts were often signed in sacristies, important meetings were sometimes held there, and government officials frequently stored copies of important public documents and valuables in them for safekeeping.<sup>49</sup> The relatively close proximity of a sacristy to the high altar meant that those buried in it or associated with the space would benefit from the prayers said there and were remembered by a high volume of secular and ecclesiastical visitors. After the high altar, the sacristy often ranked as the most prestigious area of the church to patronize, leading some very prominent families to do so. Two well-studied Florentine examples are the sacristy at Santa Trinita and the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo, which served as burial chapels for the powerful and influential Strozzi and Medici families respectively.<sup>50</sup>

Onofrio Strozzi began work on the sacristy at Santa Trinita shortly before his death in 1418; his son Palla continued the family patronage of the space, dedicating it to their patron saints, Honophrius and Nicholas, in 1421. As was standard in sacristies from

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<sup>47</sup> A large marble Grimaldi tomb slab with a life-size skeleton now hangs on a wall on the second floor corridor of the second cloister. It may have originally been a floor tomb in the sacristy. Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 16; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 139.

<sup>48</sup> Margaret Haines, "The Sacristy of S. Maria Novella in Florence: The History of Its Functions and Furnishings," *Memorie Domenicane* 11 (1980): 580.

<sup>49</sup> Idem, *La Sacrestia delle Messe del Duomo di Firenze*, trans. Laura Corti (Florence: Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, 1983), 30; Richard C. Trexler, "Honor Among Thieves. The Trust Function of the Urban Clergy in the Florentine Republic," in *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore*, ed. Sergio Bertelli and Gloria Ramakus (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1978), 324-25.

<sup>50</sup> Haines, *La Sacrestia delle Messe*, 25.

the time period, it was adorned throughout with the donors' coats of arms.<sup>51</sup> Despite the fact that most of the Strozzi-commissioned works for the Santa Trinita sacristy have been lost or dispersed, a family coat of arms remains over a doorway in the smaller of the sacristy's two chapels (Fig. 2-7), as well as on a marble floor slab just inside the door that connects the sacristy with the church's right transept (Fig. 2-8).<sup>52</sup> The family's patronage is additionally acknowledged with Onofrio and Palla's sculpted coats of arms on the sacristy's external entrance that faces the Via del Parione. The impressive, richly decorated *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 2-9) of 1423 by Gentile da Fabriano, which Palla commissioned for the sacristy's main altar, also survives today in the Uffizi Gallery with the Strozzi heraldic arms on the frame's lower corners. Onofrio was buried in an arcosolium tomb in the wall between the major and minor sacristy chapels and Palla, too, would have been buried in the sacristy if he had not been expelled from Florence in 1434, never to return.<sup>53</sup>

Commissioned by Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo was completed in 1428, but after Giovanni died in 1429, his sons Cosimo and Lorenzo took over as patrons, choosing a decorative program that showcased the family's patron saints in stucco tondi and arched overdoor reliefs, 1428-1443, and bronze doors, 1440-

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>52</sup> Howard Saalman proposed that the slab marked an earlier burial location for the elder Strozzi as its inscription, meaning "the lesser," was his device and was ideally located for optimal contact with visitors and their prayers. Onofrio was likely temporarily buried in the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Trinita while the sacristy was being finished. His body was then moved to the sacristy entrance until his tomb was complete. Howard Saalman, "Strozzi Tombs in the Sacristy of Santa Trinita," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 38 (1987): 153-56.

<sup>53</sup> For Onofrio's sarcophagus see also Darrell D. Davisson, "The Iconology of S. Trinita Sacristy, 1418-1435: A Study of the Private and Religious Art in the Early Quattrocento," *Art Bulletin* 57, no. 3 (1975): 317.

1443, by Donatello.<sup>54</sup> The family is also commemorated in inscriptions on the sides of the marble tomb that Cosimo and Lorenzo commissioned from Buggiano for their father and mother in ca. 1433 (Fig. 2-10).<sup>55</sup> As Saalman states, the Old Sacristy was one element of “a coordinated part of the Medici’s long-term political strategy.”<sup>56</sup> Giovanni’s sarcophagus eventually was placed at the center of the sacristy with an altar-like marble table over it that is decorated with Medici coats of arms. A marble, serpentine, bronze, and porphyry tomb (Fig. 2-11) that Andrea del Verrocchio sculpted in 1469-1472 for the brothers Piero and Giovanni de’ Medici occupies the arch between the sacristy and the adjacent Medici transept chapel dedicated to Sts. Cosmas and Damian.

Like the Medici and Strozzi, the Grimaldi recognized the earthly and heavenly benefits of aligning themselves through their patronage with functional sacred spaces. They also formally ensured that their family received regular spiritual benefits in the sacristy at Santa Maria di Castello. In an act that the notary Antonio Torriglia recorded on 22 November 1452, the Vicar General of the Dominican Observants, Prior Girolamo Panissari and the convent’s friars promised Manuele and Leonello Grimaldi that they would remember them and their descendants each day during the celebration of mass in the sacristy.<sup>57</sup> Vigna published a document dated 10 February 1453 that confirms the import of this notarial act, for it states that the brothers were responsible for the sacristy’s dedication and that because of their generosity in commissioning honorable sculptures

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<sup>54</sup> For more on the iconography of the Old Sacristy and its relationship to Medici political motives see John T. Paoletti, “Donatello’s Bronze Doors for the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo,” *Artibus et Historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 36-69.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 46; Crispin Robinson, “The Early Medici and Architecture,” in *The Early Medici and their Artists*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis (London: Birkbeck College, 1995), 55. For more on this sarcophagus see Sally Cornelison, “The Tomb of Giovanni di Bicci de’ Medici and the Old Sacristy at San Lorenzo,” in *The Sculpted Object, 1400-1700*, ed. Stuart Currie and Peta Motture (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), 25-42.

<sup>56</sup> Howard Saalman, *Filippo Brunelleschi: The Buildings* (London: Zwemmer, 1993), 123.

<sup>57</sup> For a transcription of this notarial record, today housed in the State Archives of Genoa (Archivio di Stato di Genova), see Poggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 234, n. 28.

appropriate for that space a priest would say mass there each day for the brothers and their father.<sup>58</sup> The establishment of such a privileged, daily recognition probably came about because the Grimaldi provided a substantial endowment for the sacristy, just as the Medici did for the Old Sacristy and, later, for Michelangelo's Medici Chapel at San Lorenzo, 1526-1533.<sup>59</sup>

Although the Grimaldi did not commission bronze doors, stucco reliefs, freestanding tombs, or impressive altarpieces as their Florentine counterparts did, they did provide the Genoese sacristy with expensive books and marble furnishings that included an altar, sacrament tabernacle, holy water basin, and a prominently-placed *soprapporta* (Fig. 2-12).<sup>60</sup> This sacristy *soprapporta*, like the previously discussed St. George lintel, is unusual in that it does not include a coat of arms; however, like most *soprapporte*, it does advertise its patrons' identity. The lintel consists of a Latin inscription on a rectangular banner held by an angel on either side. The angels and inscription are contained within a framework of putti and foliage. The buoyant angels' bodies are parallel to the groundline. Each angel has one arm draped over the banner's top while the other holds one end of the dedicatory inscription. Fragments of blue paint in the background and traces of red pigment on the inscription indicate that much of the *soprapporta*'s white marble surface was once brightly colored.

The door's frame is composed of three distinct borders. The innermost one surrounding the opening acts as a thin stringcourse between the upper frame and the

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<sup>58</sup> Vigna published the first of these documents in his *Illustrazione storica*, 178.

<sup>59</sup> For further information on the Medici endowment see L. D. Ettlinger, "The Liturgical Function of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 22, no. 3 (1978): 294-98.

<sup>60</sup> The sacristy does not retain its original fifteenth-century appearance. In 1622 the space was renovated extensively and in 1735 wooden cupboards, which still remain there, were added. Most of the Grimaldi-commissioned decorations were removed, and many of those works are now housed in the library. Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 234, n. 29.

*soprapporta*. This border is made up of a pattern of intertwining foliage that Luciana Müller Profumo describes as being sculpted in the Lombard style but that actually is drawn from classical motifs.<sup>61</sup> A comparatively much wider border surrounds the entire doorway and *soprapporta*. Here the curling foliage pattern of the inner frame is repeated, but in the frieze above the main relief panel, circles of leaves and vines are filled with cherubs in a variety of playful poses. Finally, a narrow frame composed of sculpted oak and acorn leaves outlines the entire doorway, a feature that we have seen is echoed in the nearby St. George overdoor. A cherub placed just inside each of the corners of the doorframe looks out as if to invite the viewer to pass under the threshold and into the church.

The sacristy *soprapporta*, which viewers saw as they exited the sacristy and entered the church's right transept, is the most obvious record of the extensive Grimaldi contributions at Santa Maria di Castello.<sup>62</sup> For those who could read it, this white marble overdoor sculpture served as a billboard that advertised the Grimaldi brothers' generosity with the following Latin inscription:

The same (noun not specified) has a sacred spot and books,  
 [and] this altar and a sounding/echoing hall and barred cloisters,  
 [and] hallways, magnificent as much up as down.  
 These things Manuele and Leonello, Grimaldi offspring, are producing.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 85-86. For the use of classicizing decoration on Renaissance works see Sally Cornelison, "Lorenzo Ghiberti and the Renaissance Reliquary: The Shrine of the Three Martyrs from Santa Maria degli Angeli, Florence," in *De Re Metallica: The Uses of Metal in the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert Bork, et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 163-79.

<sup>62</sup> One also passes through a very small vestibule between the sacristy and church that served as a transitional space. The atrium vault is painted with symbols of the Evangelists that were executed between 1450 and 1452 by unknown Ligurian painters.

<sup>63</sup> The original Latin inscription reads as follows: E[a]dem sacru[m]que et libros continet edem / hanc aram sta[m]numque sona[n]s et cosita claustra / atria magnieica {sic, for magnifica} sursu[m] simul atqu[ue] deorsu[m] / h[a]ec Manuel Leoneloq[ue] edu[n]t Grimalda propago. Several errors are evident in the Latin text, which are problematic for its translation. These include issues in line one where "eadem...eadem" should likely read "aedes...eadem" and line three in which "magnieica" is an obvious error for "magnifica." I would like to thank Anthony Corbeill for his assistance with this translation.

The first line may refer to the sacristy where this sculpture is found. Regardless, the overdoor's purpose is to acknowledge and praise the Grimaldi brothers' donations that comprised this space along with the adjacent cloister and, it would seem, books and an altar.<sup>64</sup> The tense of the verb "producing" implies that their work at Santa Maria di Castello is an ongoing process. In so marking the room, the brothers ensured that the Dominicans friars and other visitors to the sacristy would be constantly reminded of their contributions and include them in their prayers.

While the St. George overdoor marking the liminal space between the choir and the sacristy was probably commissioned first, the Grimaldi sacristy lintel stands out as the earliest documented Genoese *soprapporta* commission. According to the records of the notary Antonio Fazio, a contract for its execution was drawn up between the Grimaldi brothers and Giovanni Gagini in January 1451. In August of the same year, however, Giovanni traveled to Pietrasanta, Leonardo Riccomanno's hometown, to acquire marble for this project.<sup>65</sup> While no document explicitly describes Giovanni's activities in Pietrasanta beyond purchasing stone, he presumably met Leonardo while there and invited him to come to Genoa to work with him on this and other projects.<sup>66</sup> As a consequence, Giovanni had Leonardo's name added to a revised contract dated 3 January 1452.<sup>67</sup> Kruft posits that the Grimaldi sacristy commission was well underway before the

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<sup>64</sup> The marble altar that the Grimaldi commissioned for the sacristy survives only in pieces today and has been moved to the original library in the second cloister. The sacristy books referred to in the inscription were lost in 1684 when the French bombed Genoa, an incident that took place during the War of the Reunions (1683-1684) between France and Spain. Grasso, *Guida a Santa Maria di Castello*, 17, 20.

<sup>65</sup> The notary Nicolò di Gioffredo recorded that Giovanni Gagini was in Pietrasanta in August 1451. Poggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 235, n. 35. Another document shows that Giovanni accrued a debt of 20 lire for marble while there. ASG, Notai Antichi 587, Atti del Notario Antonio Fazio seniore, 1447-1452, fol. 13.

<sup>66</sup> Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 145.

<sup>67</sup> ASG, Notai Antichi 587, fol. 13. For a full transcription of this Latin document see Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 145-47. An abbreviated version of it appears in Cervetto, *I Gaggini da*

1452 contract was signed, and that because of the contract's language, Leonardo was most certainly a later addition to the project for which he had far less responsibility than Giovanni.<sup>68</sup> Alternatively, the new contract, with its specification that both artists were to work on the sculpture, may imply that Leonardo was brought on because Giovanni was too busy with other projects; Giovanni, as the senior artist to whom the commission was awarded, may have turned over most of the responsibility to execute his design to Leonardo in order to complete the sculpture in a timely fashion.

Leonardo, however, may have done more than just assist with sculpting the *soprapporta*. Indeed, Federico Alizeri attributed it solely to Leonardo, noting the rhythmic patterns of foliage that suggest the sculptor's awareness of Tuscan styles and methods.<sup>69</sup> A recent study of the overdoor by Federica Pellati, Valentina Rachiele, Paolo De Gasperis, and Sara Badano, supports Alizeri's claim that the entire work was made by Leonardo alone.<sup>70</sup>

Vigna published the text of three parchments from the church's archive that record a papal concession of indulgences to those who visited the sacristy and Grimaldi family chapel. Two of these documents date from around the time of the sacristy's completion. The first was drawn up on 10 February 1453 and the second is dated 20

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*Bissone*, 250, Document X. Krufft also addresses these sources in *Portali genovesi*, 9. The archivists at the Archivio di Stato di Genova have declared the original document "non consultabile" (not consultable).

<sup>68</sup> Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 9. This is not the only contribution Leonardo Riccomanno made to the decorative program of Santa Maria di Castello. A marble bas relief depicting the *Crucifixion* made for the nave of the church has also been attributed to him. It has been dated to 1452, the same year as the sacristy *soprapporta*. Leonardo was also likely involved in the creation of the other *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello. Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 8. Domenico Gagini, from another branch of the Gagini family, sculpted at least one work for Santa Maria di Castello—a tabernacle for the sacristy now found in the upper loggia of the second cloister and dated to before 1457. See idem, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 19.

<sup>69</sup> Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 143.

<sup>70</sup> Federica Pellati et al., "Santa Maria di Castello," <http://www.santamariadicastello.it/>; P. Paolo Guerrieri, O.P., *Santa Maria di Castello in Genova* (n.d.), 20.

December of the same year.<sup>71</sup> They show that Pope Nicholas V granted an indulgence of from five to forty years to anyone who came to the chapel on the 20 January feast of Fabian and Sebastian, the saints to whom the sacristy was dedicated. Cardinal Fermanus granted an additional indulgence of 100 days to all those who visited the chapel on the feasts of the Nativity, Easter, and Sts. Dominic, Thomas, Fabian, and Sebastian, as well as the Assumption of the Virgin.<sup>72</sup> The Grimaldi had the terms of the indulgences and the names of the saints to whom the chapel was dedicated inscribed on a marble relief in the shape of an oval wreath; six angels present the wreath, which hung on a wall in the sacristy (Fig. 2-13).<sup>73</sup> These indulgences ensured a regular, if sporadic, audience for the family's piety and patronage.

### **The Cloister *Soprapporte***

Although there are a few more common *soprapporte* subjects—namely the St. George relief already discussed and two Annunciations in the second cloister—at Santa Maria di Castello, most of the sculpted lintel reliefs throughout its cloisters depict imagery that is unusual when compared to that found adorning other church doorways and palace entrances throughout Genoa. In addition to the Grimaldi inscription and St. George *soprapporte* originally over the sacristy's doorways, there are also two Annunciations, two that depict St. Dominic, one of St. Jerome, another of Christ Pantocrator, and a Crucifixion. The extraordinary narrative variety of the Santa Maria di Castello *soprapporte* must be a consequence of their placement marking interior, rather

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<sup>71</sup> Vigna transcribed the first of these documents in his book. The third document is dated much later and notes an indulgence issued by Pope Innocent XI on 20 August 1688. Vigna, *Illustrazione storica*, 178.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> This work may have been sculpted by Domenico Gagini and is dated to 1453. Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 142-45.

than exterior, thresholds and of the dedication and religious affiliation of the church and convent in which they are located. Thus, they naturally had a different effect on their audience than the more public *soprapporte* along the streets of Genoa to be discussed in Chapter Three. In fact, most of Santa Maria di Castello's interior doorways are lower than the exterior entrances for private palaces, and consequently they impacted the viewer in a more direct manner as a result of the closer perspective.

Four of the seven *soprapporte* remaining in the second cloister today share stylistic characteristics that are especially notable in the decorative, twisted foliage created by deep undercutting and drillwork that fills the space surrounding the narratives and heraldic arms. The stylistic similarities between these four works—two depicting St. Dominic, one of St. Jerome and another that features Christ Pantocrator— suggest that they were commissioned at approximately the same time from the same workshop. They are also all notable in that they feature unusual *soprapporta* subjects, none of which appear on overdoors outside of Santa Maria di Castello. Although there are no extant documents related to their commission and all of them have suffered surface abrasion, what remains of their heraldic markers and initials indicates that all four lintel reliefs were Grimaldi commissions. While the Grimaldi cloister *soprapporte* are in poor condition due to their partial exposure to the elements under what were originally open loggias, enough remains to identify most of the iconographical elements within each lintel, thus allowing for an analysis of their particular and collective functions within the cloisters' decoration.

One of these works is located at the far end of the gallery of the Loggia of the

Annunciation.<sup>74</sup> Below a mid-fifteenth-century fresco of *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence* by an unknown artist (Fig. 2-14), a slate *soprapporta* that shows *St. Dominic Surrounded by His Followers* (Fig. 2-15) marks the threshold leading from the second cloister into the first cloister that may have originally adorned the entrance to the chapterhouse on the ground floor below.<sup>75</sup> Based on its style, Sanguineti dates the relief to after 1453, suggesting that the cloister lintel reliefs were sculpted just after the Grimaldi sacristy inscription was executed in 1452.<sup>76</sup> Heraldry composed of the torsos of majestic horses with armor and coats of arms flank the main scene along with stylized foliage and scrolls of text wrapped around poles extending horizontally along the upper border.

St. Dominic stands fully frontal at the center of the relief. Four kneeling Dominican friars, recognizable by their hooded habits and tonsured heads, surround the founder of their order, two on each side. The friars gaze up at St. Dominic with their hands pressed together in prayer. Dominic shelters the friars under his cloak in a compositional arrangement based on Madonna della Misericordia (Madonna of Mercy) images. This visual trope was frequently employed throughout Italy to illustrate Marian protection and intercession as in the central panel of Piero della Francesca's *Misericordia Altarpiece* (1445-1462) in the Pinacoteca Comunale, Sansepolcro. Two further examples in Venice include Mary shielding a married couple and patron on a lunette over Calle del

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<sup>74</sup> The loggia is so named because of the 1451 fresco of the *Annunciation* by Giusto di Ravensburg on one wall. The prevalence of the Annunciation imagery at Santa Maria di Castello both in the two *soprapporte* and in this fresco, demonstrates the Dominicans' devotion to Mary. Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 55.

<sup>75</sup> "Chiesa di Santa Maria di Castello," I palazzi dei Rolli di Genova - Una reggia repubblicana, [http://www.irolli.it/chiesa\\_genova/8/chiesa-di-santa-maria-di-castello.html](http://www.irolli.it/chiesa_genova/8/chiesa-di-santa-maria-di-castello.html). Daniele Sanguineti refers to the fresco above the San Domenico *soprapporta* as *San Domenico che invita al silenzio e all'osservanza della disciplina* and dates it to 1451. Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 18. The possible original location for this overdoor is noted in Grasso, *Guida a Santa Maria di Castello*, 14, 39.

<sup>76</sup> There is some disagreement as to the type of stone from which this relief is carved. Sanguineti states that the material is ardesia but Kruft and Gavazza both identify it as pietra nera di Promontorio. Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 18; Kruft, *Portali genovesi*, 9; Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 86.

Paradiso and another of the Madonna with kneeling *confratelli* from the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Carità that is embedded into the wall of the scuola's headquarters on the Calle dei Volti.<sup>77</sup> Just as Mary shelters her followers in this popular image type, St. Dominic protects his followers at Santa Maria di Castello. Thus, the Dominican friars who occupied the cells beyond this doorway were reminded of St. Dominic's intercessory powers each time they passed under this *soprapporta*. In this intimate community, St. Dominic cared for the friars in a manner akin to the way in which St. George and St. John the Baptist protected the Genoese who adorned their palaces with their likenesses.

Although rare, this is not the only instance of a Dominican image that borrows Madonna of Mercy vocabulary. A page from a mid-fifteenth-century manuscript entitled *Regole e ordinazioni del Terz'Ordine domenicò (Rules and Ordinations of the Third Order of the Dominicans)* (Fig. 2-16) portrays St. Dominic in this manner as well. In it, St. Dominic stands at the center holding a miniature church in his left hand and in his right he holds the discipline, or whip, used in penitential self-flagellation. Angels to his left and right hold open his mantle, which shelters kneeling and praying Dominican friars.<sup>78</sup> Another example is an image of *Saint Dominic with Saints and Worshipping Nuns* (Fig. 2-17) on the verso of a ca. 1490, double-sided processional painting from the Marches region that today is in the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Painted by Lorenzo d'Alessandro da San Severino, its recto shows *Christ on the Cross Adored by Saints Thomas Aquinas and Catherine of Siena*.<sup>79</sup> These two examples indicate that St.

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<sup>77</sup> Brown, *Private Lives*, 13-15, 200-01.

<sup>78</sup> This manuscript page is part of the collection of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze (hereafter BNCF), Pal. 152, fol. 1r. Claudio Leonardi and Antonella Degl'Innocenti, *I santi patroni: Modelli di santità, culti e patronati in Occidente* (Milan: CT, 1999), 232-33.

<sup>79</sup> Brooklyn Museum of Art, s.v. "Collections: European Art: Christ on the Cross Adored by Saints Thomas Aquinas and Catherine of Siena (Recto); Saint Dominic with Saints and Worshipping Nuns (Verso)," [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4730/Christ\\_on\\_the\\_Cross\\_Adored\\_by\\_Saints\\_T](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4730/Christ_on_the_Cross_Adored_by_Saints_T)

Dominic in the guise of the Madonna of Mercy was a visual trope the Dominicans appropriated to symbolize their founder's care for those who followed him. The example in the *Regole* suggests that this image type was one with which the friars were familiar, just as they were with the images that illustrate the treatise *De Modo Orandi* and depict St. Dominic engaged in various modes of prayer and were copied on the walls of the novices' cells at San Marco in Florence.<sup>80</sup>

St. Dominic's central position in the *soprapporta* is noteworthy, as are his hieratic size and attributes. Dressed in the traditional Dominican garb, a circular halo crowns his bearded face and tonsured head. In his left hand he displays the book that Sts. Peter and Paul presented to him in a vision as a tool to use when preaching God's word throughout the world.<sup>81</sup> He holds a lily in his right hand to symbolize his sacred vow of chastity. The coats of arms, unfortunately, have been damaged beyond recognition. However, the letters "L" and "G" appear on either side of the saint, and almost certainly indicate that Leonello Grimaldi was the *soprapporta*'s patron.<sup>82</sup>

There are three other probable Grimaldi *soprapporte* commissions from the early 1450s in the gallery above the Loggia of the Annunciation at Santa Maria di Castello. Most scholars identify a slate (ardesia) overdoor sculpture along the north-south arm of this gallery as an image of St. Dominic (Fig. 2-18).<sup>83</sup> In this relief, St. Dominic stands on a trapezoidal platform. A stylized tree grows from rocky outcroppings on each side of the haloed saint. His garments follow the S-curve of his body as he points and gazes

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omas\_Aquinas\_and\_Catherine\_of\_Siena\_Recto\_Saint\_Dominic\_with\_Saints\_and\_Worshipping\_Nuns\_Verso/set/29d7b7695b1b183fd3c53f02573d3e63?referring-q=dominic (accessed November 21, 2011).

<sup>80</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the *De Modo Orandi* and the dormitory images at San Marco see William Hood, "Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying: Gestures in Fra Angelico's Cell Frescoes at San Marco," *Art Bulletin* 68, no. 2 (1986): 195-206.

<sup>81</sup> Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 416.

<sup>82</sup> Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 9 and 12, fig. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 20; Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 87.

toward an open book in his left hand, a common gesture in depictions of St. Dominic. Two Fra Angelico paintings, for example, similarly represent the Order's founder holding a book and pointing to the text inscribed on its pages. They include the left panel of the *Perugia Altarpiece*, 1447-1448, in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, and on the far left side of the *Sacra Conversazione* fresco in the east dormitory at San Marco, Florence of ca. 1443. Like the St. Dominic *sopraporta* in the loggia below, the initials "L" and "G" for Leonello Grimaldi are incorporated into its composition, and his family's coats of arms, red diamonds on a white field, flank the central image indicating that the work is a Grimaldi commission.<sup>84</sup> The distinct diamond pattern of the Grimaldi arms, partially damaged, is visible on the right shield.<sup>85</sup> A foliage design that is similar to the previous images surrounds St. Dominic, although the armor that frames the family arms is topped by an angel instead of a horse on both sides.

*Christ Pantocrator* (Fig. 2-19), a slate sculpture above a door that leads from the same upper-floor loggia of the second cloister into the first cloister, echoes the position of the *St. Dominic* overdoor in the Loggia of the Annunciation on the floor below.<sup>86</sup> This Gagini-esque bas relief dated to the second half of the fifteenth century features Christ at the center surrounded by an aureole.<sup>87</sup> Depicted with a full beard and long hair, Christ bestows a blessing with his raised right hand and holds an open book in his left.<sup>88</sup> The book, along with Christ's halo, overlaps the encircling frame. The spiritual light, which

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<sup>84</sup> Ezia Gavazza, Piero Boccardo, Guido Rosato, and Anna Daneri Pisano also note that the coats of arms are those of the Grimaldi family. Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 87.

<sup>85</sup> For an image of the Grimaldi family heraldry see Agostino Franzoni, *Nobiltà di Genova* (Genoa: Pietro Giovanni Calenzano e Gio. Maria Farroni, 1636), fol. 18r.

<sup>86</sup> Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 85.

<sup>87</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 22.

<sup>88</sup> Usually he is displayed with a closed Gospel. If he holds an open book he is considered a variation called "Christ the Teacher."

emanates from his body, takes the form of alternating swirls and rays.<sup>89</sup> The four Evangelists further frame Christ outside the border of light. In the upper right is an angel symbolizing Matthew, a lion in the lower right represents Mark, an ox, the symbol of Luke, is found in the lower left, and in the upper left is the eagle of St. John. Stately horses with coats of arms at the base, exactly like those on the St. Dominic lintel relief in the Loggia of the Annunciation on the floor directly below, flank Christ Pantocrator and the four Evangelists. While the coats of arms are in poor condition, Gavazza recognizes them as Grimaldi heraldic devices, an almost certain identification given the sculpture's similarities to other *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello, and especially with the Loggia of the Annunciation's St. Dominic *soprapporta*, on which Leonello Grimaldi's initials also appear.<sup>90</sup>

Text is incorporated into the *Christ Pantocrator* sculpture in two places. To the left and right on either side of Christ there is a scroll whose inscription is too worn to read. Stylized foliage, most of which has weathered as well, fills the space around Christ and the four Evangelists. The inscription on Christ's open book, however, is legible, stating: EGO SUM VIA VITA ET VERITAS ("I am the way, the life, and the truth"), from John 14:6.<sup>91</sup> The inclusion of this passage is atypical of Byzantine images of Christ Pantocrator in which the open book he holds almost always cites John 8:12: "I am the light of the world." While the Christ Pantocrator on this *soprapporta* does present a

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<sup>89</sup> In traditional Byzantine representations of Christ this aura is usually created with gold mosaic tesserae or gold leaf.

<sup>90</sup> Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 85.

<sup>91</sup> The text of John 14:6 actually reads as follows: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The "life" and "truth" are probably reversed on the *soprapporta* in order to fit the passage within the allotted space and format.

passage from John, it is unclear why the presumed Dominican iconographical advisors for this project chose an uncharacteristic verse to accompany a standard image type.

The final slate *soprapporta* from the Grimaldi commission is located diagonally across from the *Christ Pantocrator* on the same east-west corridor of the second cloister's third level. Like the aforementioned relief, it is not a narrative and is iconic in its depiction of the bearded *St. Jerome* sitting on a bench (Fig. 2-20). The saint's lower body is turned toward a lion, his companion and attribute, to his right while his torso and head face forward. He holds a quill in his right hand and clasps a book to his chest with his left one. Clothed in a hooded cassock closed by a clasp at his neck, he also wears a cardinal's hat and a halo surrounds his head. Winged gargoyles flanking *St. Jerome* present eroded coats of arms to the viewer. Despite its poor condition, Gavazza associates the sculpture with the Grimaldi family, for the letters "S" and "G" are inscribed on either side of *St. Jerome*, although the identity of the specific Grimaldi family member whose name began with the initial "S" is uncertain.<sup>92</sup> The surrounding stylized foliage is similar to that found on the nearby *Christ Pantocrator* overdoor, the *St. Dominic* on the north-south corridor of the same floor, and the *St. Dominic* in the Loggia of the Annunciation (Fig. 2-18). Such stylistic repetition certainly suggests that the same workshop made these *soprapporte* probably shortly after the sacristy inscription overdoor, in ca. 1452-1455.

Based on stylistic and size discrepancies between them and the works previously discussed, the remaining three *soprapporte* in the cloister, a *Crucifixion* and two *Annunciations*, were likely not part of the original Grimaldi decorative program. Despite

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<sup>92</sup> Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 88. For Grimaldi family genealogy see Gio. Andrea Ascheri, *Notizie storiche intorno alla riunione delle famiglie in alberghi in Genova* (Genoa: Tipografia Faziola, 1846), 9, 15, 39, 41-42, 47, 73-76; Franzoni, *Nobiltà di Genova*, fol. 18r.

their differences, they do share with the Grimaldi commissions an emphasis on Dominican-specific subjects determined by the friars and placed over portals.

A slate bas relief of the *Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St. Dominic* (Fig. 2-21) is mounted on the wall opposite the St. Dominic *soprapporta* in the Loggia of the Annunciation. Attributed to the Master of the Annunciation of the Mount (Maestro dell'Annunciazione del Monte) it has been dated on stylistic grounds to the late 1460s; about one decade later than the Grimaldi commissions.<sup>93</sup> Approximately half the size of the other *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello, a mid-fifteenth-century fresco of *St. Peter Martyr* (Fig. 2-22) painted by an unknown artist ornaments the wall above it. Although it is rarely mentioned in the literature, given its placement over the doorway leading from the Loggia of the Annunciation into an atrium connected to the sacristy, refectory, and third cloister, this small sculpture should also be considered a *soprapporta*.

A slate *soprapporta* depicting the *Annunciation* (Fig. 2-23) adorns a doorway in a room just off the north-south corridor of the Loggia of the Annunciation. The Dominicans originally used this room as their refectory, later converted it into a parlatory, and at the end of the sixteenth century they transformed it into the prior's cell. During a restoration carried out in 1965, the space was turned back into a refectory.<sup>94</sup> The *Annunciation* lintel relief, which Sanguineti dates from the late fifteenth century, presents the angel Gabriel kneeling before Mary as he relays the message of her impending miraculous impregnation by the Holy Spirit.<sup>95</sup> Gabriel is depicted kneeling in profile, with his right knee on the ground and his left hand resting on his raised, bent left

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<sup>93</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 18.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 206-07.

<sup>95</sup> Sanguineti, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 19; Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 33; Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 53.

knee; he gives a two-fingered blessing gesture towards Mary with his right hand. His long, curly locks of hair fall around his face and his garment flutters behind him and envelops his torso in deep folds that indicate he has just flown in to relay God's message to Mary. A large halo encircles his head; the stylized rows of feathers of his fully visible right wing echo the curve of his halo, each subsequent row gradually increasing in size. The tip of his left wing is just apparent two-thirds of the way down behind the right one.

Mary, who is significantly smaller in scale than Gabriel, balances out the composition on the right. Dressed in a long garment cinched at the waist and partially covered by a cloaked hood clasped at the neck, she has fallen to her knees with both hands raised. This gesture simultaneously suggests her submission to God's will and thanks for His blessing.<sup>96</sup> Her head is also surrounded by a halo, across which a beam of light falls, marking the dove of the Holy Spirit's path from heaven to Mary. Mary's upper body is rendered in three-quarters pose while the left side of her lower body is awkwardly sculpted in profile. The sculptor had some sense of how to evoke forms with realistic mass and volume, but he obviously had not mastered perspective. The chair behind Mary and the manuscript lying atop the reading stand in front of her also are unsuccessful attempts by the sculptor to evoke three-dimensional space. Mary's seat is presented from a strictly frontal vantage point with decorative finials and a scallop shell atop a pointed roof. At the base of the chair, a simple decorative quatrefoil enclosed by a circle is just visible behind the heavy folds of Mary's cloak. The reading stand is especially cumbersome, as the sculptor seems to have attempted to simultaneously turn it to the right in Mary's direction and position the text so that it opens outward toward the

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<sup>96</sup> This gesture of submission is the most typical response for Mary in fifteenth-century Annunciation images. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 55.

viewer. This awkwardness suggests that the audience was to view this work from a lower vantage point than its current position high on the cloister wall.

A large vase containing three lilies bisects the *Annunciation*'s composition and creates an emphatic separation between Gabriel and Mary. However, the banner Gabriel holds in his left hand visually unites them. It weaves around the three lilies and ends just short of Mary's face. The text inscribed on the banner is the beginning of the Hail Mary prayer, "AVE GRATIA PLENA DOMINUS," that the faithful invoked when requesting Mary to intercede on their behalf.

Although a frame contains the narrative, various sculpted objects jut out beyond its confines to suggest a deeper spatial recession through overlapping elements. For example, the folded ends of each figure's garments drape over the bottom frame and Gabriel's wings and halo, as well as the back half of the dove of the Holy Spirit, overlap the upper frame. Even the coats of arms that flank the image extend beyond the left and right frame on both sides.

The shields feature diagonal bands on the lower three-quarters while the upper horizontal band has an asterisk at the center. These duplicate coats of arms have not been identified, but they might belong to the Fereta family, who were allied with the Grimaldi. Fereta heraldry features diagonal stripes similar to the ones that appear on the relief and asterisks, along with a crowned lion.<sup>97</sup> An element of the coat of arms is repeated in the narrative image on the lectern, where an asterisk fills each of the two base panels.

Unfortunately, the original location of this sculpture is unknown. The room in which it now resides was the site of the first museum at Santa Maria di Castello, which opened in 1959. Gian Vittorio Castelnovi notes that the installation of works in this room

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<sup>97</sup> For an image of the Fereta heraldry see Franzoni, *Nobiltà di Genova*, fol. 18r.

does not correspond to the original positions they occupied in the church and cloisters, including the *Annunciation soprapporta*.<sup>98</sup>

A second *soprapporta* depicting the *Annunciation* (Fig. 2-24) that is not mentioned in the literature is made of white marble and mounted on a metal grid located against a wall on the second cloister's upper loggia. Obviously not in its original location, it appears to be a stylistically more mature rendering of the subject than the one just discussed, and, thus, probably dates later than its counterpart.<sup>99</sup> Compositionally, it echoes the previous slate relief with the standard arrangement in *Annunciation* imagery of Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right. However, in this work Gabriel stands in a *contrapposto* pose with his body twisted into a three-quarter turn toward the viewer whereas his head is sculpted in profile. His wings are about half the size of those of the Gabriel in the previously discussed *Annunciation* image, but the feathers that comprise them are more realistic in terms of their texture and slight variations between them. While lacking the effect of motion that characterizes the slate work, here there is a gentle flow to Gabriel's drapery.

Hieratic scale is exchanged in the two *Annunciations*. In the slate version Gabriel is notably larger than Mary. In the marble one, however, the archangel, who stands in a fully upright position, is the same height as the kneeling Madonna. She is still dressed in a long garment and hooded cloak, but instead of raising her arms in an active response, here she clasps her hands in prayer, with her head bowed and eyes closed in acceptance of the announcement.

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<sup>98</sup> Gian Vittorio Castelnovi, *Il Museo di S. Maria di Castello* (Genoa: Edizione del "Bollettino Ligustico" 1960), 5.

<sup>99</sup> However, the stylistic difference could be due in part to the difference in materials: white marble for one and the more malleable slate for the other.

The artist who created the marble *Annunciation* was far more successful in evoking three-dimensional space than the one who carved the slate version. The turned, three-quarter chair, rather than the frontal one of the slate *Annunciation*, suggests a structure that Mary conceivably could sit upon. Furthermore, the indented, rounded curves of the seat cushion denote that it is a functional object. The flower foliage adorning the base of the throne is also found on the angular side of the three-dimensional reading stand.

The reading stand, while rendered with a greater illusion of depth than the one on the slate *Annunciation*, is still clumsily shaped. This awkwardness may partially be intentional, however, as the manuscript is tilted toward the picture plane perhaps in a conscious effort to display the spiritual text clearly to the viewer. Only the tops of the figures' halos invade the upper realms of the frame that acts as a window onto this scene.

The variegated stone floor on which Gabriel stands drops down just in front of the reading stand. It is at the same point that the sculpture has been cut in half. Since the image lacks the enormous vase that often occupies the center of *Annunciation* scenes, it is probable that this element was cut out from the original. Gabriel holds a lily in his right hand and the banner with the first part of the "Ave Maria" inscribed on it in his left. The sophisticated subtlety with which the symbolism is integrated into this image further supports a later dating, probably early sixteenth century, of this *Annunciation soprapporta*.

### **Dominican Context**

Although they are examples of a sculptural type typical in Liguria, the Santa Maria di Castello *soprapporte* also take their place among the far better-studied Tuscan examples of Dominican convent decorations—in particular those at Santa Maria Novella in Florence, San Domenico in Fiesole, San Domenico in Cortona, San Marco in Florence, and San Domenico in Pisa. We shall see that portals in Dominican Conventual and Observant convents throughout Tuscany and probably elsewhere were often embellished with sculpted and painted overdoor ornamentation. Thus, the overdoor sculptures at Santa Maria di Castello combine the two traditions, Ligurian and Dominican, to make for a unique decorative complex. The following analysis will show that these liminal markers operated as visual cues to prepare the viewer for the function of the rooms that lay beyond them, thus guiding the viewer's visual and devotional experience of the various spaces within the convent.

The prevalence of portal decoration in Italian Dominican contexts from the thirteenth century on is an outgrowth of the popular carved reliefs found in earlier medieval cloisters. The sculpted lintel reliefs that adorned such spaces, especially in France, usually depicted either the founder of the order with whom the convent or monastery was affiliated, a biblical narrative, or visualized rituals or ceremonies that occurred within the cloistered space.<sup>100</sup> For example, a sculpted *Christ Washing the Feet of the Apostles* relief at St. Trophime in Arles of ca. 1120 and another at Moissac, also dating from the early twelfth century, are located near their respective cloister wells to designate that this was the site on which the traditional *mandatum*, the ritual reenactment

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<sup>100</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 124.

of feet washing, took place.<sup>101</sup> It was also common to find statue-columns in medieval cloisters that depicted St. Nicholas, who fasted as an infant when he refused to drink from his mother's breast. Examples of that saint's image were placed near refectory entrances at Notre-Dame in Châlons-sur-Marne, St.-Maur-des-Fossés, France, and in Italy at Sant'Ellero just outside Galeata in Emilia-Romagna, where the monks understood that its function was to encourage them to fast.<sup>102</sup>

Such twelfth-century decorations may have inspired the numerous painted and sculpted overdoors in Italian Dominican complexes. Significantly, Dominican portal adornments demonstrate how that religious order carefully controlled the visual experience for those who moved through their complexes by marking doorways as functional transitional spaces.<sup>103</sup> After the 1274 Council of Lyons, the Dominicans began to devote more of their resources to commissioning works of art, especially images depicting their most important saints: Dominic, Peter Martyr and, after his canonization in 1323, Thomas Aquinas.<sup>104</sup> In keeping with St. Dominic and his followers' vow of poverty, artistic commissions were limited early in the Order's history. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, donors spent increasing amounts of money on works of art for Dominican complexes that were both aesthetically pleasing and prompted the viewer to pray for the patron's salvation.<sup>105</sup> In fact, most Dominicans believed that their cloisters

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<sup>101</sup> Léon Pressouyre, "St. Bernard to St. Francis: Monastic Ideals and Iconographic Programs in the Cloister," *Gesta* 12, no. 1/2 (1973): 75.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*: 76-77.

<sup>103</sup> Joanna Cannon, "Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy: The Provincia Romana, c. 1220-1320" (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1980), 321.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. See also Donald Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor: The Life and Cult of Peter of Verona (Martyred, 1252)* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008), 91.

<sup>105</sup> Cannon, "Dominican Patronage," 152-53.

should be decorated as powerful images could completely alter the way in which they experienced the spaces.<sup>106</sup>

The Dominicans, like the members of other religious orders, marked each day by the Divine Office, praying eight times at vigils, lauds, prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and compline. Between prayers they took their meals, carried out day-to-day tasks such as cooking, gardening, and cleaning, discussed convent issues, studied, and slept.<sup>107</sup> Education was of the utmost importance to members of the order as evidenced by the allowance of a friar to dismiss any other duties if he saw reason to spend more time pursuing his studies.<sup>108</sup> Regardless of the time of day or activity, the friars reflected on the life of St. Dominic and sought to emulate his virtuous ways, aided by the many images of their founder throughout the religious complex.<sup>109</sup>

At Santa Maria Novella in Florence, two painted and two sculpted overdoors testify to this interest in demarcating liminal spaces with images in Dominican cloisters. Although the exact date of each work is uncertain, they were made after the church was transferred from the canons of Florence Cathedral to the Dominican Order in 1221. Following the transfer, the convent was rebuilt and enlarged; the Chioostro Grande (Great

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<sup>106</sup> Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 169.

<sup>107</sup> For a discussion of a Dominican friar's daily life, see the following article based on fourteenth-century account books at San Domenico in Bologna: Rosalba Giannini, "Vita quotidiana e osservanza della regola in un registro trecentesco di S. Domenico in Bologna," in *Miscellanea Gilles Gérard Meersseman* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1970), 313-41. The day-to-day activities at San Domenico in Bologna are also the subject of Pietro Lippini, *La vita quotidiana di un convento medievale: Gli ambienti, le regole, l'orario e le mansioni dei frati domenicani del tredicesimo secolo* (Bologna: Edizioni Studio domenicano, 1990).

<sup>108</sup> Marian Michèle Mulchahey, "*First the Bow is Bent in Study...*": *Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 17-18, 38.

<sup>109</sup> William A. Hinnebusch, *Dominican Spirituality: Principles and Practice* (Washington, D.C.: Thomist Press, 1965), 39.

Cloister) was added ca. 1303-1340 while the Chiostro Verde (Green Cloister) was rebuilt beginning in 1350, work that was completed within ten years.<sup>110</sup>

In the Green Cloister a *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 2-25) by an anonymous fourteenth-century painter marks a no-longer-extant doorway to the left of the Spanish Chapel. Although the portal has been filled in and is covered by an altar today, it once provided access to the staircase that led to the dormitory.<sup>111</sup> *Saints Dominic and Thomas Aquinas with the Crucifix* (Fig. 2-26), also by an anonymous fourteenth-century painter, covers the wall over the passageway leading from the Green Cloister to the convent's refectory and beyond to the Great Cloister.<sup>112</sup> In both cases the overdoor paintings guided the friars through the complex, denoting transitions from one space to the next, and prompting them to reflect upon and seek to emulate the holy figures depicted.

Both of the sculpted overdoors at Santa Maria Novella at one time marked the entrances to chapterhouses. The earliest of these is dated to 1308 and depicts the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 2-27) over the door leading from the Great Cloister courtyard into the Capitolo del Nocento, the original chapterhouse.<sup>113</sup> Its subject signifies the

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<sup>110</sup> For further information on the renovations and additions to the convent after the transfer to the Dominican Order see James Wood Brown, *The Dominican Church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence: A Historical, Architectural, and Artistic Study* (Edinburgh: Otto Schulze & Co., 1902), 73-93.

<sup>111</sup> The lunette image may be by Cimabue or one of his followers. The Dominicans filled the doorway after a gambler, angered by his losses, took out his aggressions by throwing his dagger at the image. Blood seeped from the wall as a result and the gambler was soon after hanged in the piazza. In response to this horrible but miraculous series of events, the Dominicans filled in the portal sometime after 1360 and built an altar in front of it. See *ibid.*, 75-76, 81; Stefano Orlandi, *Necrologio di S. Maria Novella*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1955), XXIII, n. 19.

<sup>112</sup> Amber Allison McAlister, "Narrative and Allegory in the Genesis Cycle in the Chiostro Verde, Santa Maria Novella, Florence" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2003), 24. Giorgio Vasari identified the painter as Stefano Fiorentino. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, vol. 1, 449. See also Brown, *Dominican Church*, 81-82.

<sup>113</sup> I would like to thank Lauren Severini and Gabriele Gemignani for helping me access the Chiostro Grande. Since 1920 it has housed the Scuola Marescialli e Brigadieri dei Carabinieri and is not typically open to visitors.

dedication of that space to the Epiphany.<sup>114</sup> Similar to the compositions of Genoese *soprapporte*, the narrative scene of the three kings and their visit to Bethlehem is flanked by the coats of arms of its patron, Baldassare Ubriachi, a Florentine merchant. Indeed, the man kneeling before the middle king probably is a portrait of Ubriachi.<sup>115</sup>

Another sculpted relief dated to the time of the chapel's construction between 1345 and 1350 graces the lintel above the second, later chapterhouse entrance at Santa Maria Novella in the Green Cloister (Fig. 2-28).<sup>116</sup> A now-lost lunette fresco of *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence*, which was replaced in the sixteenth century with a window surrounded by alternating black and white voussoirs, once occupied the space above the sculpture.<sup>117</sup> Buonamico di Lapo Guidalotti commissioned the building, which also served as his burial chapel, designating in his 1355 will that 325 florins were to be spent on its decoration.<sup>118</sup> As a consequence, his coat of arms was placed prominently throughout the chapterhouse and its chapel in order to commemorate his generosity and encourage the Dominicans to remember him perpetually in their prayers. His coat of arms is at the center of the relief over the chapterhouse's single entrance and to the right there is an image of Sts. Peter and Paul standing in St. Peter's Basilica as they hand St.

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<sup>114</sup> Orlandi, *Necrologio di S. Maria Novella*, vol. 1, 545-46.

<sup>115</sup> Richard C. Trexler cites the lintel sculpture as proof that Baldassare built the chapel because of his onomastic connection to the middle king, who was likewise named Balthasar. "The Magi Enter Florence. The Ubriachi of Florence and Venice," in *Church and Community 1200-1600: Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1987), 86-87.

<sup>116</sup> This lintel sculpture is rarely discussed in the literature, perhaps because James Wood Brown deemed its artistic merits: "singularly weak, and will not bear comparison with the earlier lintel of the Capitolo del Nocentino." *Dominican Church*, 144.

<sup>117</sup> The fresco was probably painted in the late fourteenth century. *Ibid.*, 84. The archival information referring to the existence of this lunette painting can be found in BNCF, Conventi Soppressi 777, E. 5. See *idem*, *Dominican Church*, 84, n. 2. For more descriptive information on this entrance see also McAlister, "Narrative and Allegory," 24.

<sup>118</sup> McAlister, "Narrative and Allegory," 27.

Dominic a sword and a book, symbols of the Dominicans' mission to fight heresy.<sup>119</sup> An image of St. Peter Martyr's martyrdom, as witnessed by his traveling companion Domenico, is positioned to the left of the coat of arms.

According to Scott Montgomery, both of the Santa Maria Novella chapterhouse lintels' narrative images were intended to prepare the Dominican friars for entry into those spaces, but the one over the chapterhouse in the Green Cloister most successfully conveyed this objective.<sup>120</sup> That overdoor demonstrated that the Order operated under papal approval; it also encouraged meditation and contemplation of the Order's goals, which must have been topics of discussion in the meeting room they were about to enter. In fact, as Montgomery further suggests, the image of God's hand blessing St. Peter Martyr at his death triggered in the Dominican friars' minds the saint's final words: "Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit" (Psalm 31:5).<sup>121</sup> Thus, when passing under the lintel, the friars were reminded of the Dominican saint's sacrifice and how it echoed Christ's own death.<sup>122</sup> St. Peter Martyr, who famously preached in the piazza in front of Santa Maria Novella, served as an exemplar in imitating Christ and serving God. By placing images of him over a door through which they frequently passed, the Dominicans also promoted the cult of one of their most important sainted members.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Scott Montgomery, "Il Cavaliere di Cristo: Peter Martyr as Dominican role model in the fresco cycle of the Spanish Chapel in Florence," *Aurora. The Journal of the History of Art* 1 (2000): 2, 4. Amber McAlister, however, identifies the right scene as St. Dominic's *Assumption into Heaven by St. Peter and Christ*. See "Narrative and Allegory," 24.

<sup>120</sup> Montgomery, "Il Cavaliere di Cristo," 4.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.; Stefano Orlandi, Thomas Agni de Lentino, and Rodericus de Attencia, *Pietro martire da Verona. Leggenda di Fra Tommaso Agni da lentini nel volgare trecentesco con lettera di Fra Roderico de Atencia: Introduzioni storiche biografiche e note* (Florence: Il Rosario, 1952), 29.

<sup>122</sup> Montgomery, "Il Cavaliere di Cristo," 4.

<sup>123</sup> The St. Peter Martyr iconography continues in the frescoes on the chapterhouse's counter-façade. They depict additional scenes of his life and miracles and, as such, would have induced the exiting friars to use the esteemed saint's life as a guide for their own just as the overdoor relief did. Together the interior and exterior images served as frequent encouragement for the Dominicans to strive for a similar commitment to their beliefs and reinforced the Order's ideals.

The Dominicans' use of liminal spaces to convey important themes and messages continued into the fifteenth century at San Domenico in Fiesole and San Domenico in Cortona. Fra Angelico, a member of the Dominican Observant Order, painted overdoor decorations for both Conventual churches. At Fiesole in 1435 he frescoed a *Madonna and Child* lunette over the church's main entrance (Fig. 2-29). Above the central church portal at Cortona, he frescoed a *Madonna of Humility with Saints Dominic, Peter Martyr, and the Four Evangelists* in 1438 (Fig. 2-30). Both paintings reminded laypeople and Dominicans alike of the Order's dedication to the Virgin Mary.<sup>124</sup> In the latter case, the Dominican-specific devotional message is made clearer through the addition of images of Sts. Dominic and Peter Martyr who flank Mary.

Building on and complementing these earlier portal decorations, the liminal imagery at San Marco in Florence has stood as the most expansive and sophisticated use of Dominican portal decoration. According to Hood, the San Marco overdoor frescoes, paid for by Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici and dated to ca. 1441-1442, clearly and deliberately indicated the function of the space beyond each respective threshold.<sup>125</sup> For example, a lunette fresco depicting the *Man of Sorrows* (Fig. 2-31) over the entrance to the refectory was designed to elicit contemplative thoughts of the Eucharist and the Last Supper as the friars prepared to partake of their daily meals.<sup>126</sup> Another lunette of *Saint Peter Martyr Enjoining Silence* (Fig. 2-32) over the door leading from the first cloister to the church functioned as a call for silence as the friars entered that sacred space. The

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<sup>124</sup> Diane Cole Ahl, *Fra Angelico* (London and New York: Phaidon, 2008), 96-98, 109-11.

<sup>125</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 148. The Medici-funded renovations at San Marco lasted from 1438 to 1445. Cosimo was largely responsible for this, but his brother Lorenzo probably also had significant input until his death in 1440. For more on the dual patronage of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici see John T. Paoletti, "Fraternal Piety and Family Power: The Artistic Patronage of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici," in *Cosimo "il Vecchio" de' Medici, 1389-1464: Essays in Commemoration of the the 600th Anniversary of Cosimo de' Medici's Birth*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 195-219.

<sup>126</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 158; Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 186.

chapterhouse's facade was augmented by an image of *Saint Dominic* holding the scourge, which has since been removed. Because the chapterhouse was a pre-existing structure and remained intact during Michelozzo's renovation of the convent, it was the only one of the five cloister overdoor paintings that was not placed directly above the doorway but rather was situated just to the left of it. Even so, like the other similarly-placed frescoes, it conjured thoughts that, in keeping with didactic Dominican texts, self-inflicted bodily punishment with a whip was a salient feature of the Observant's core beliefs and penitential practices.<sup>127</sup>

*Christ as Pilgrim Received by Two Dominicans* (Fig. 2-33) is located above the door leading into the pilgrims' hospice. This fresco demonstrated to the friars and guests who frequented it how they should engage in acts of charity by caring for pilgrims' needs, regardless of their status, as two apostles had unknowingly done for Christ.<sup>128</sup> The function of the lunette fresco of *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Fig. 2-34) over the doorway between the guest quarters and the entrance to the cloister from the piazza is not as clear as the previous four. Both Creighton Gilbert and Hood, however, believe it probably once marked the entrance to the convent's original library.<sup>129</sup> Thus, the San Marco overdoor frescoes were intended to "provoke specific responses or memories in the friars who passed beneath them."<sup>130</sup> In Hood's view the lunette paintings are representative of

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<sup>127</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 159. This fresco is in very poor condition. Hood also expresses this argument that the imagery at San Marco served as teaching tools for the friars in idem, "Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying," 195-206.

<sup>128</sup> Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 187. This biblical story is from Luke 24:28-29.

<sup>129</sup> Creighton Gilbert, "A Sign about Signing in a Fresco by Fra Angelico," in *Tribute to Lotte Brand Philip: Art Historian and Detective*, ed. William W. Clark (New York: Abaris Books, 1985), 69; Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 158-59; Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 187. The contemplative function of rooms in a Dominican convent is briefly addressed in Mulchahey, "First the Bow is Bent in Study...", 119-20.

<sup>130</sup> Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 158.

how all of the frescoes throughout the complex were meant to operate: the subject of each one was intended to prompt the friars to recall a particular Dominican custom or ideal.<sup>131</sup>

Regardless of the physical distance between them, Santa Maria di Castello in Liguria and the Dominican convents in Tuscany discussed above make for especially interesting and meaningful comparisons, ones that have never before been considered in the literature. This is especially true of San Marco, for like Santa Maria di Castello it was not originally a Dominican convent, becoming an Observant institution during Eugenius IV's papacy. The new decorations made for both convents acted as didactic, mnemonic, and devotional devices for the friars and were the result of the patronage of important families in their respective cities—the Grimaldi at Santa Maria di Castello and the Medici at San Marco.<sup>132</sup>

The similar Dominican overdoor ornaments in Genoa and Florence may have been the result of direct observation of San Marco's decorations by Girolamo Panissari, the Genoese Dominican discussed above. From 1442 until at least 1444, Panissari was a professor at the *studium* at San Marco. During Panissari's time with the Dominican Observants in Florence in the early 1440s, Fra Angelico and his workshop completed that convent's fresco decorations, including the ones that we have seen he painted over doorways. Panissari, who also was known as Girolamo di Montenero, was the brother or nephew of Giovanni di Montenero, a friar who played a significant role in establishing the Dominican community at Santa Maria di Castello. Perhaps because of these connections, by early October 1446 he had returned to Genoa to serve as Santa Maria di

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>132</sup> As Hood notes in regard to painted cloister decoration in Florence between ca. 1420 and 1450, "Both the subject matter and even more formal properties of the decoration were intended to publicize the legitimacy of the order's roots in primitive Christian monasticism and the rigors of its Rule." Ibid., 126.

Castello's prior.<sup>133</sup> His tenure there as prior coincided with the renovation of the church and the early stages of its cloisters' expansion and redecoration. Thus, Panissari's knowledge of San Marco's decorative program likely impacted the type, location, and iconography of his convent's decorations.

The employment of overdoor imagery at San Marco and Santa Maria di Castello, as well as the repetition of some subjects, reflects a larger Dominican preference for certain types of decorations. It may also suggest that the Genoese Dominicans desired to establish a certain degree of visual conformity between their convent and the one in Florence. The *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence* (Fig. 2-14) above the door leading from Santa Maria di Castello's Loggia of the Annunciation in the second cloister into the first cloister must derive from the earlier fresco Fra Angelico painted at San Marco that depicts *Saint Peter Martyr Enjoining Silence* (2-32).<sup>134</sup> Just as the latter fresco reminded friars at San Marco that they should halt all conversation before crossing into their place of worship, so too did the *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence* prompt the Dominicans at Santa Maria di Castello to refrain from speaking in the dormitories; their silence encouraged reflection and meditation on things like the life and suffering of Christ. As stated in their first Constitutions, silence unified the Dominicans and focused their collective energies on following the ways and teachings of St. Dominic.<sup>135</sup>

The nuns at the convent of San Domenico in Pisa evidently were similarly inspired to copy San Marco's decorations. Previously a Dominican Conventual nunnery, San Domenico became an Observant house in the 1480s and was governed by San

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<sup>133</sup> Gilardi, "Le programme décoratif," 86.

<sup>134</sup> This image is to the immediate left of the much larger Fra Angelico fresco of *Saint Dominic with the Crucifix*, 1441-1442.

<sup>135</sup> Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 186.

Marco's friars. Among the images commissioned after its conversion is a fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli and his workshop of *Saint Dominic Enjoining Silence* (2-35) that is dated to ca. 1490. This fresco originally adorned the area directly above a doorway in the refectory. Ann Roberts notes the parallels between this painting and that of *Saint Peter Martyr Enjoining Silence* at San Marco, as both were intended to remind the viewers of the importance of silence within the mendicant community, a notion that is applicable to *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence* at Santa Maria di Castello as well.<sup>136</sup> Through the selection of the subject and the choice of Gozzoli, who assisted Fra Angelico at San Marco, to paint it, it appears that the nuns expressly emulated San Marco.<sup>137</sup>

It should also be noted that while the Dominicans frequently displayed visual calls for silence, this iconography was not limited to their Order. A *St. Benedict Enjoining Silence* (Fig. 2-36) fresco dated to ca. 1435 and attributed to Fra Angelico originally greeted the Benedictine monks who lived at the Florentine Badia as they entered their refectory from the Orange Cloister.<sup>138</sup> In both the Benedictine and Dominican examples, the function was the same, as all were meant to act as visual indicators to the viewer that s/he was about to cross into a new space where silence was required.

In the case of Santa Maria di Castello, *soprapporte* augmented the overdoor frescoes including the *St. Dominic Enjoining Silence*, and a direct visual link can be drawn between some of the sculpted lintel reliefs and the decorations at San Marco. For example, the *Crucifixion soprapporta* at Santa Maria di Castello (Fig. 2-21) and Fra

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<sup>136</sup> Ann Roberts, *Dominican Women and Renaissance Art: The Convent of San Domenico of Pisa* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 198-202.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>138</sup> Anne Leader, "Architectural Collaboration in the Early Renaissance: Reforming the Florentine Badia," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, no. 2 (2005): 217-19; *idem*, "Reassessing the murals in the Chiostro degli Aranci," *Burlington Magazine* 149, no. 1252 (2007): 460-70.

Angelico's dormitory frescoes at San Marco, specifically those in the cells along the novices' corridor that depict St. Dominic kneeling at the base of Christ's cross as he engages in various modes of prayer and meditation (for example, Fig. 2-37). This imagery is of particular interest given the presentation of St. Dominic as a contemporary witness to this event, a common iconic image for the Dominicans. As Hood explains, the inclusion of St. Dominic in biblical scenes functioned as "...a starting point for a mnemonic process whereby the friar's meditation helped him to study sacred texts in preparation for preaching."<sup>139</sup> Positioned over the threshold leading from the Loggia of the Annunciation in the second cloister into the ante-loggia, the Dominicans would have passed under this image on their way to the sacristy and eventually into the church itself. Consequently, this *soprapporta* served as a reminder to the Dominicans of their role and responsibilities as disseminators of God's word just as St. Dominic preached during his lifetime.

The two *Annunciation soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello (Figs. 2-23 and 2-24) and Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* (Fig. 2-38) of 1441 at the top of the stairs in the lay brothers' corridor at San Marco offer another parallel. While the original locations of both *Annunciation soprapporte* are unknown, their shared narrative subject marks the moment of the Incarnation of Christ. Perhaps one of them originally decorated a dormitory entrance as Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* does for the Observants in Florence. Although Fra Angelico's San Marco fresco is not situated over a doorway, but rather decorates the wall directly opposite the staircase portal, it does mark the transition from the convent's lower level into the dormitory in a manner similar to a portal decoration. There, the Virgin's likeness inspired and reminded the friars each time they entered the

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<sup>139</sup> Hood, "Saint Dominic's Manners of Praying," 195-96.

dormitory of how she unselfishly gave her body to God to fulfill his will.<sup>140</sup> If the imagery were not clear enough, an inscription in Latin at the bottom of the fresco instructs the viewer that: “When you come before the image of the Ever-Virgin take care that you do not neglect to say an ‘Ave’.”<sup>141</sup> Such visual and textual cues ensured that the Dominicans remembered to ask for Mary’s intercession and keep her always at the forefront of their thoughts. The marble Annunciation overdoor in particular relayed this message by rendering a kneeling, praying Mary with clasped hands, bowed head, and closed eyes. As Michael Baxandall has shown, this pose suggests submission to God’s will through quiet meditation, which is in keeping with the Dominicans’ typical use of imagery as devices to instill the proper, focused prayerful mindset in the viewer.<sup>142</sup>

Three of the *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello, one of St. Jerome (Fig. 2-20) and two with the image of St. Dominic (Figs. 2-15 and 2-18), specifically directed and encouraged the acquisition of knowledge. Known for his penitence and his study, translation, and revision of the Bible, the Dominicans particularly admired St. Jerome. Therefore, it is not surprising that they chose his image for the *soprapporta* marking the entrance to the original library at Santa Maria di Castello. Built around the middle of the fifteenth century by the Grimaldi brothers, it was the convent’s center for learning. Just beyond the St. Jerome *soprapporta* in the library’s atrium are frescoes that show the *Meeting between Saints Dominic and Francis* and the *Man of Sorrows Surrounded by Symbols of the Passion* that have been attributed to a Lombard painter active around

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<sup>140</sup> Morachiello, *Fra Angelico*, 270.

<sup>141</sup> The Latin inscription reads as follows: “VIRGINIS INTACTE CVM VENERIS ANTE FIGVRAM PRETEREVNDO CAVE NE SILEATVR AVE.” English translation from Hood, *Fra Angelico*, 262.

<sup>142</sup> The meditative pose is also more in keeping with the composition of the previously mentioned *Annunciation* fresco that Giusto di Ravensburg painted in the Loggia of the Annunciation in 1451. For a general discussion of how Annunciation images functioned for fifteenth-century viewers, see Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 40-45.

1460. While the frescoes and the St. Jerome sculpture all promote Dominican values, the lintel relief in particular guided the friars' behavior and thought in this part of the cloister. Seeing the image of St. Jerome just before they entered the atrium leading to the library would remind the Dominicans of Jerome's saintly dedication to his theological and intellectual pursuits and inspire their own quest for knowledge. This message was of the utmost importance given that the Dominicans believed that only with constant study could they successfully engage in the Order's contemplative practices through which they connected to God.<sup>143</sup>

Both St. Dominic *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello follow iconographical convention in showing the Order's founder displaying an open text. Thus, like the St. Jerome image above, they asserted the Dominican emphasis on learning and would have reminded the friars of the importance of intellectual pursuits to their Order. While the intended location is uncertain for both of these *soprapporte*, their educational focus, made clear by the open book, suggests that perhaps one may have been over a portal in the library or its atrium situated along the east-west gallery of the third floor. We have seen above that at San Marco a fresco of *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Fig. 2-34) holding an open book once marked the entrance to the original library, so it certainly is conceivable that the Genoese Dominicans echoed this scheme. Alternatively, one of these overdoors may have been paired with a mid-fifteenth-century fresco of *St. Dominic Encouraging Study*, over the doorway leading from the ground floor staircase in the first cloister to the original library on the third floor of the second cloister; presumably this fresco's subject

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<sup>143</sup> Hinnebusch, *Dominican Spirituality*, 16, 39-53; Mulchahey, "*First the Bow is Bent in Study...*", 130-218.

guided the friars to their studies in the library.<sup>144</sup> There is no evidence to confirm that the sculpture was placed here, but the subjects complement each other and *soprapporte* were sometimes paired with frescoes over doorways at Santa Maria di Castello, as we have seen in the Loggia of the Annunciation.

## Conclusion

The sculpted *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello were far more than mere ornaments for the respective spaces they decorated. Analyzing the lintel sculptures within the context and history of Dominican convent decorations and the history of Genoese art reveals their role as meditative signposts within the complex's decorative program. All of the sacristy and cloister relief lintels at Santa Maria di Castello conform to the Dominicans' employment of mnemonic devices to reinforce their ideals, teachings, and devotional practices. Additionally, the inclusion of Grimaldi heraldry and initials on many of these works ensured that the friars' thoughts and prayers constantly were directed towards the members of the Genoese noble family who commissioned them and their descendants.

As the lintel relief sculptures demonstrate, the Dominicans at Santa Maria di Castello appear to have adopted a traditional Genoese form of adornment for their convent, combining it with longstanding Dominican decorative traditions and the earlier images at San Marco in Florence in particular. Because the Santa Maria di Castello reliefs were created during the early stages of the development and dissemination of *soprapporte* in Genoa, they are an especially important case study for our comprehension

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<sup>144</sup> Ennio Poleggi notes the placement of this fresco in his 1973 book. No photograph has been published of the image, and it is located in an area of the first cloister that has been converted into private apartments. Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 176.

of the stylistic development and evolving ideas related to the function of this sculpted  
overdoor type.

### Chapter Three

#### Genoese Public Spaces and *Soprapporte*: The Doria Family and Piazza San Matteo

While Chapter Two addressed *soprapporte* made for a distinct religious and lay audience within Santa Maria di Castello, this chapter focuses on the function and iconography of these types of sculptures in more easily accessible, urban public spaces. Specifically, it considers how *soprapporte* over palace entrances were integrated into the Doria family's *albergo*, a Genoese type of neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> Similar to the *soprapporte* at Santa Maria di Castello, most Doria overdoor sculptures depict religious scenes and are framed by their patrons' coats of arms or subsequent owners' initials. As this chapter makes clear, however, despite their compositional parallels and some iconographical similarities to the *soprapporte* at the Dominican Observant convent, the Doria *soprapporte*'s more public and largely secular locations require that their meanings be interpreted according to a different set of criteria. We shall also see that the varying coats of arms that framed the Doria overdoor relief sculptures and others situated throughout the city represented particular families or clan groups while at the same time emphasizing a united civic identity represented via the image of one of Genoa's principal patrons and protectors, St. George. Nowhere is this more evident than on the buildings that surround the core of the Doria *albergo*, the Piazza San Matteo.

Diane Owen Hughes, Jacques Heers, and George Gorse have closely examined Genoa's medieval and Renaissance urban structure and its related social organization. Other scholars also have addressed to different degrees the specific area of Genoa in

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<sup>1</sup> While largely found over the main entrance doors to palaces, a few were placed on interior palace doorways such as a marble monogram of Christ inside Vico degli Indoratori 2 and a slate monogram of Christ inside Via Lomellini 17. Kruff states that there are far fewer interior *soprapporte*, and they are of a lesser artistic quality than exterior works. *Portali genovesi*, 6.

which the Doria family resided. Their analyses, however, rarely mention the *soprapporte* with which the family decorated their buildings. Chapter Three expands upon the important historical groundwork on Genoa's *alberghi* system in order to explain and interpret the placement and symbolism of overdoor sculptures throughout the Doria neighborhood. It begins with an introduction to the Doria family and a description of their *albergo*. It then addresses the origin and development of the Doria neighborhood within the urban framework of Genoa's *alberghi* system. As this chapter demonstrates, Genoa's division into distinct neighborhoods, or districts, is similar to that of many other Italian cities, but Liguria is the only region in which one finds *soprapporte* employed as markers of such familial and social divisions. Like other Italian cities such as Florence, Siena, and Venice, the functions of Genoa's urban fabric were fluid, changing throughout the day as different people used its various spaces and thoroughfares for multivalent purposes. In an effort to arrive at a broader understanding of how the Genoese used *soprapporte* in public settings, the Doria overdoors still *in situ* will serve as a case study that suggests the nature of more widespread decorative trends in the city. This is followed by an analysis of additional probable Doria overdoors that no longer are in their original locations. At one time, there may have been as many as fifteen *soprapporte*—and possibly even more—within the Doria *albergo*. This chapter provides a more comprehensive understanding of the Doria sculpted lintel reliefs, but, perhaps more importantly, it elucidates the Genoese propensity for marking not only their family ties and property, but also their identity and devotions as Genoese citizens.

### **The Doria *Albergo*: Symbolic Power and Dominance in a Genoese Neighborhood**

Little is known of the Doria before 1110, the date of the earliest document confirming their presence in Genoa. Despite their obscure, medieval origins, the Doria quickly became involved in important political, economic, and maritime enterprises that made their fortune and established them among the city's elite.<sup>2</sup> Their *albergo* is an ideal focal point for exploring the nature of privileged Genoese families' patronage of public *soprapporte* for two reasons. First, it is the best-preserved Renaissance neighborhood in Genoa.<sup>3</sup> Second, the Doria were among the most powerful Genoese families in the second half of the fifteenth century when *soprapporte* became a popular decorative type. While their elevated status makes their patronage exceptional, rather than standard, evidence of the profuse commissioning of lintel reliefs by such an influential family suggests that this Genoese sculptural type was considered more prestigious than other types of architectural ornamentation.<sup>4</sup> It is unlikely *soprapporte* would have been diffused to such an extent throughout the city without the Doria and other prominent Genoese families employing it on their palace façades.

The Doria *albergo*, located just northeast of Genoa's cathedral, surrounds the Benedictine church of San Matteo, which was founded in 1125 (Figs. 3-1 and 3-2). Built on a hill, the church functioned visually and symbolically as the clan's devotional and urban core. According to an eighteenth-century manuscript that describes and illustrates Genoese churches, Bishop Sigifredo gave Martino Doria permission to build the small,

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<sup>2</sup> This early document refers to Martino and Gerardo Doria as well as their immediate family members. See Clemente Fusero, *I Doria* (Milan: dall'Oglio, 1973), 11, 27. See also Paolo Lingua, *I Doria a Genova: Una dinastia mancata* (Genoa: Fratelli Frilli Editori, 2007), 53.

<sup>3</sup> Other areas in the historic center that reflect the medieval *alberghi* organization to varying degrees include the Piazza Giustiniani, Piazza Cattaneo, Piazza Rovere and Piazza Grillo Cattaneo.

<sup>4</sup> The Doria family's patronage is similar to that of the Medici in Florence in that their commissions must not be thought of as typical for the time. For this consideration regarding the Medici see John T. Paoletti, "Familiar Objects: Sculptural Types in the Collections of the Early Medici," in *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Sarah Blake McHam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 80.

Romanesque church and Pope Honorius II authorized its construction in the *borghetto*, or municipality, of Campetto delli Orefici.<sup>5</sup> Martino's establishment of the church publically proclaimed the area as a permanent Doria stronghold.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in a papal bull dated 29 January 1413, the schismatic pope John XXIII conceded the perpetual right to patronage of San Matteo to the Doria family beginning with Francesco Doria, thus confirming and guaranteeing the continuation of the family's long association with the church.<sup>7</sup> The present church dates to 1278 when the Doria built a larger basilica on the same site as the Romanesque structure, presumably to accommodate their growing numbers and corresponding increasing spatial and devotional needs (Fig. 3-3).<sup>8</sup> Marco Veneto, a Doria prisoner of war whose name indicates he was from the Veneto region of northeast Italy, designed the adjacent cloister in 1308, as his inscribed name on a column capital decorated with four Doria eagles just inside the cloister's entrance from the piazza attests.<sup>9</sup>

The Doria family made a deliberate and calculated move to build San Matteo on the top of a hill.<sup>10</sup> Despite the church's modest dimensions, its elevated position over the *albergo's* roads and buildings gives it greater visibility and emphasizes its centrality to

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<sup>5</sup> N. Perasso, "Le chiese di Genova e del genovesato: San Matteo," [n.d., MS 836, Archivio di Stato, Genoa, fol. 160r. See also Stefano and Sara Gadducci D'Oria, *San Matteo: La chiesa, la piazza, i palazzi* (Genoa: Società Editrice Sampierdarenese, 2005). The establishment of San Matteo is also briefly addressed in Lingua, *I Doria a Genova*, 55-57.

<sup>6</sup> Fusero, *I Doria*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> Marco Doria, "San Matteo," in *Medioevo restaurato. Genova 1860-1940*, ed. Colette Dufour Bozzo (Genoa: Francesco Pirella, 1990), 311.

<sup>8</sup> Perasso, "San Matteo," 167.

<sup>9</sup> The inscription reads as follows: "MCCCVIII APRILIS MAGISTER MARCVS VENETVS FECIT HOC OPUS." Riccardo Navone, *Viaggi nei Caruggi: Edicole votive, pietre e portali* (Genoa: Fratelli Frilli Editori, 2007), 195. Over time, adjoining tall palaces were built that enclosed the originally open cloister and the terrace has undergone various renovations.

<sup>10</sup> The piazza's original steep incline can be seen today in the street adjacent to the church, Salita San Matteo (Fig. 3-4).

the neighborhood.<sup>11</sup> The surrounding Doria palaces echo the decorative scheme of the church's black-and-white striped local slate and Carrara marble façade, reinforcing their close physical and visual relationship.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, the façade's appearance parallels that of the city's cathedral of San Lorenzo (Fig. 3-5), which likewise is decorated with black slate and white marble stripes and therefore further legitimizes the Doria church's prestige by association. Under the law, only the most powerful Genoese families—the Doria, Spinola, Grimaldi, and Fieschi—were permitted to use this type of conspicuous, banded façade that otherwise was exclusively reserved for the city's religious buildings.<sup>13</sup> The resulting visual parallels between their neighborhoods and the religious center served to raise each family's status within the city's social hierarchy.<sup>14</sup>

San Matteo's prestige is further enhanced by the piazza, which opens before it. While the small square measures only about twenty-five by twenty-three meters, it provides a striking contrast to the labyrinth of narrow, medieval streets that surrounds it.<sup>15</sup> Almost immediately after the church was built, Doria family members, beginning with Martino in 1125 and followed by Branca, Domenicaccio, Giorgio, Lamba, Lazzaro, and others, built palaces on the Piazza San Matteo's periphery as well as along adjacent

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<sup>11</sup> Doria, "San Matteo," 307.

<sup>12</sup> Paolo Montano, "La piazza, la chiesa e il chiostro di San Matteo," *Quaderno 4* (1970): 168; Federico Donaver, *Le vie di Genova: Notizie storiche e curiose ad uso del popolo e delle scuole* (Genoa: Libreria Editrice Moderna, 1912), 246.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned Doria buildings and the cathedral, it is still visible today on a number of structures throughout the city, including the palaces of Rabella Grimaldi at Via Luccoli 16, Giacomo Spinola at Piazza delle Fontane Marose 6, Nicola Grimaldi at Vico San Luca 2, and Ferrari Ravaschieri (Fieschi) at Via San Lorenzo 17, as well as on the churches of Santa Maria in Via Lata, San Donato and Sant'Agostino (today the Museo di Sant'Agostino). Since the city did not include the Grillo family on this list of privileged families, the black-and-white marble facing on the Palace of Brancaleone Grillo must have been added when Luca Spinola bought the building. For this privilege, see Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 15-17.

<sup>14</sup> Orlando Grosso, *Dimore genovesi; i palazzi, le ville, i castelli* (Milan: L. Alfieri, 1956), 62, 71. See also George Gorse, "A Family Enclave in Medieval Genoa," *Journal of Architectural Education* 41, no. 3 (1988): 22-24.

<sup>15</sup> Montano, "La piazza," 168-69.

streets, effectively creating a geographic stronghold for the family within the city.<sup>16</sup>

Branca Doria's palace, which stands to the right of the church, and the Lamba Doria and Doria-Quartara palaces, which face the church on the opposite side of the piazza, were constructed in the late thirteenth century.<sup>17</sup> In the fourteenth century Domenicaccio Doria built his palace at the northern corner of the piazza; it has a secondary façade that faces Via David Chiossone, which runs perpendicular to Salita San Matteo. Lazzaro Doria constructed his palace in the fifteenth century on the southwestern corner of the piazza, and it was renovated in the sixteenth century before the Genoese donated it to the renowned military leader Andrea Doria after he drove out the French and restored the Republic in 1528.<sup>18</sup>

Multiple Doria palaces, including Domenicaccio's, Branca's, and Lamba's, all originally had open loggias on the ground level, but only Lamba's loggia has been restored.<sup>19</sup> The others were enclosed in the fifteenth century and are discussed in relation to *soprapporte* later in this chapter. The recovered Palazzo Lamba Doria portico gives a partial sense of the structural unity that once characterized the entire albergo (Fig. 3-6). Its open arcade integrates the palace with the piazza, providing streamlined access to the social and commercial activities that once animated the loggia.<sup>20</sup>

Other types of decorations besides the *soprapporte* that are the focus of this chapter visually unified the albergo and contributed to a propagandistic Doria message of their family's unified presence. Particularly noteworthy is the Palazzo Lamba Doria's

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<sup>16</sup> Gorse discusses the piazza's measurements and its unifying slope in "Family Enclave," 23.

<sup>17</sup> Lamba Doria (c. 1250-1323) was a Genoese admiral best known for his 1298 defeat of the Venetians at Curzola. His sarcophagus is embedded into the façade of the church of San Matteo. For further details about Lamba Doria's life see Lingua, *I Doria a Genova*, 84-85.

<sup>18</sup> Montano, "La piazza," 171. Domenicaccio Doria (c. 1450-1505) played a role in a few Genoese battles, including a failed 1484 campaign to defend Pietrasanta. See Lingua, *I Doria a Genova*, 92-93.

<sup>19</sup> Montano, "La piazza," 171.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 167. See pages 141 and 142 of this chapter for a discussion of the function of loggias.

façade on which an inscription commemorates the palace namesake's key naval victory over the Venetians in 1298. The adjacent Palazzo Andrea Doria (formerly Palazzo Lazzaro Doria) similarly incorporates triumphal inscriptions and Doria coats of arms (Fig. 3-7).

The church of San Matteo continues this proclamation of Doria prestige on its façade and especially over the main entrance with inscriptions trumpeting further Doria military triumphs (Fig. 3-8). In addition, embedded portions of ancient Roman sarcophagi and sculpted torsos suggest Doria ties to the values and ideals of the ancients and the city's classical past.

A thirteenth-century tympanum mosaic depicting St. Matthew, the Doria's patron saint and the titular saint of the church, distinguishes San Matteo's entrance (Fig. 3-9). A marble medallion sculpted with a Doria eagle in relief and another with the cross of St. George adorn voussoirs on the right and left respectively. We shall see that the San Matteo overdoor's composition anticipated the fifteenth-century *soprapporte* that face the same piazza.<sup>21</sup> Although the lintel is not made of one stone block, its inclusion of coats of arms framing the visual focal point is akin to *soprapporte*. Attention to such doorway decoration as early as the thirteenth century suggests that in the fifteenth century the family desired to establish visual continuity with its past commissions. None of the Doria palace *soprapporte*, however, features St. Matthew as the church door does. Rather, the two palace lintel sculptures that face directly onto Piazza San Matteo represent St. George, one of the city's principal patron saints. In most *soprapporte*, neither the coats of arms nor family saints are the focal point of the imagery; instead, they emphasize Genoa-specific images. While the present chapter reveals some exceptions to

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<sup>21</sup> This mosaic was preserved from the original church of San Matteo. Montano, "La piazza," 182.

this rule, the most conspicuous Doria albergo *soprapporte* depict St. George and, consequently, demonstrate the family's allegiance to the city and devotion to one of its most important saintly protectors.

The Doria *albergo* was not only visually dominant in its organization and decoration, but it also occupied prime real estate, for it was located near the city's cathedral and adjacent to its ducal palace, as well as relatively close to the harbor, the city's economic lifeline.<sup>22</sup> Due to its proximity to such key locations, it is quite likely that the Doria *albergo* received a larger number of visitors than others. Processions were probably frequently routed past the Doria palaces, bringing with them greater exposure and prestige. According to Gorse, the Doria *albergo*'s strategic location also gave the family access to two city gates, one from the east and one from the south.<sup>23</sup> Its prime position within the urban center meant that the Doria controlled one of the most important zones marked by the major thoroughfares of Via Soziglia and Via Luccoli.<sup>24</sup> These connecting streets led from the harbor to a city gate, Porta di Serravalle, and passed by Santa Maria delle Vigne, one of Genoa's oldest churches, that was founded in 981 on the site where a child playing in a vineyard experienced a miraculous vision of the Madonna.<sup>25</sup>

The Piazza San Matteo's nearly square shape indicates a desire for, or an attempt at, creating geometric order—an approach to urban design that was unusual in a city known for its confusing maze of narrow, curving streets and few open spaces, and,

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<sup>22</sup> Palazzo Ducale was first used as the doge's residence in 1339 for Simon Boccanegra, Genoa's first doge.

<sup>23</sup> Gorse, "Family Enclave," 22.

<sup>24</sup> Doria, "San Matteo," 307.

<sup>25</sup> The present structure dates to 981, but there may have been a building here in 560. *Liguria*, 131.

therefore, was that much more striking.<sup>26</sup> The square's development may have been part of a larger trend towards spatial regularity evident in other Italian cities. According to Marvin Trachtenberg, the desire for rational urban planning that traditionally has been associated with Renaissance design actually began in the late medieval period, as can be seen in Florence's Piazza del Duomo.<sup>27</sup> Building on Trachtenberg's hypothesis, Areli Marina has demonstrated that logical, grid layouts occurred even earlier in Northern Italy, for this organizational principal is evident in Parma's square Piazza del Duomo of 1196-1296.<sup>28</sup> The Doria *albergo*'s organization around a mostly symmetrical, central piazza likewise suggests a certain degree of unified planning.

It is important to note that the Doria albergo's remarkably good state of preservation is due in part to a series of changes undertaken in the early twentieth century. In 1909, the architect Gaetano Poggi added access stairs and railings to the piazza that disrupted the previously completely open, sloping piazza. The following year, the Municipality sought to extend Via David Chiossone, which required decreasing the Piazza San Matteo's size. This request led to a more comprehensive restoration project for the Doria neighborhood that began in 1910-1911 but was halted during World War I.<sup>29</sup> Orlando Grosso, Director of the Ufficio Belle Arti (Office of Fine Arts) of the Genoese commune, eventually took up the cause again in 1930 and finished the remaining work, concluding with San Matteo's cloister.<sup>30</sup> Despite the changes made during the last century, the basic organization of the piazza and its surrounding buildings

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<sup>26</sup> Doria, "San Matteo," 307.

<sup>27</sup> For a further discussion of the piazza's organization and regularity, especially with regard to the viewer's perspective, see Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye*, 165-84, 241-43, 45-73.

<sup>28</sup> Areli Marina, "Order and Ideal Geometry in the Piazza del Duomo, Parma," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 65, no. 4 (2006): 520-49.

<sup>29</sup> Doria, "San Matteo," 312.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 313. The 1930s restoration work is recorded in an inscription on the well's steps in the center of the cloister.

remains close to the original layout. As such, it conveys the clear sense of the architectural and decorative cohesion that defined the original space, a space in which the *soprapporte* made for the Doria palaces were important components.

### **Genoa's *Alberghi*: Social Organization and Urban Landscape**

Throughout the Renaissance, the Genoese emphasized the power of their respective *alberghi* over the highly unstable communal government.<sup>31</sup> These social groups "...profoundly altered the nature of interfamily ties and had far-reaching implications for the social organization of the city."<sup>32</sup> One of the most noticeable ways in which familial geographical boundaries were visualized was through the coats of arms displayed on *soprapporte*.

Genoese neighborhood enclaves such as the Doria's first developed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when noble families began to migrate to the city from their country estates, but they were rooted in earlier geographical divisions within the urban core. The original divisions in Genoa date from the Carolingian period and consisted of three areas: the *castrum*, the original Carolingian-era fortress; the *civitas*, the fortified city adjacent to the fortress; and the *burgus*, the settlements that lay outside of the *civitas*' protective wall.<sup>33</sup> The Carolingian divisions evolved into *compagne*, voluntary territorial associations, of which there were seven in 1130.<sup>34</sup> A church stood as

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<sup>31</sup> Shaw, "Principles and Practice," 49.

<sup>32</sup> Quentin Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 170.

<sup>33</sup> Owen Hughes, "Kinsmen and Neighbors," 95; Fusero, *I Doria*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Four of these *compagne* were inside the city walls and three were located outside. The seven *compagne* were Palazzolo (later known as Castro) and Piazzaluna, which were in the *castrum*; Macagnana and San Lorenzo in *civitas*; and Porta, Soziglia, and Borgo in *burgus*. In 1134 the Borgo *compagna* split, thus creating a fourth *compagna* called Portanuova located just outside the city walls. Owen Hughes, "Kinsmen and Neighbors," 95.

the focal point of each *compagna*, as we have seen is the case with San Matteo in the Doria *albergo*. Not only did the *compagne* churches function as religious hubs for the secular and domestic buildings that surrounded them, but they were also gathering places for assemblies and discussions. Each *compagna* had its own banner or flag, access to the sea, and a charter by which its members swore to abide. Membership in a *compagna* was highly desirable as it was a requirement for Genoese citizenship.<sup>35</sup>

The smaller *alberghi* evolved out of the *compagne*, each one led by a powerful family that “created strongholds reminiscent of their fortified, towered houses in the countryside.”<sup>36</sup> Until the fourteenth century, only blood relatives would be bonded together in an *albergo*; however, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a shared lineage no longer served as a prerequisite for residence.<sup>37</sup> Less powerful families, especially those of the poor and middle classes, would ally themselves with one of the stronger families and take their name.<sup>38</sup> The sixty-four *alberghi* in existence by the fourteenth century essentially constituted separate towns within Genoa; each had a church, elected its own council representatives, and usually conducted business solely with its own members.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the government exerted very little control over, or had impact on, the *alberghi* activities. Moreover, although the relationship between *alberghi* leaders and the Genoese government has not been fully explored, there seems to be little

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<sup>35</sup> Fusero, *I Doria*, 16.

<sup>36</sup> Gorse, “Family Enclave,” 21. For a brief discussion of the Genoese *compagne* and their subsequent impact see Jacques Heers, *Parties and Political Life in the Medieval West*, trans. David Nicholas (Amsterdam; New York: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1977), 18.

<sup>37</sup> Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements*, 176; Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 154.

<sup>38</sup> Owen Hughes, “Urban Growth,” 28.

<sup>39</sup> Gorse, “Family Enclave,” 20. For further discussion of self-sufficient Genoese *alberghi* see Fusero, *I Doria*, 28. Family solidarity was placed above all other interests. See Jacques Heers, *Family Clans in the Middle Ages: A Study of Political and Social Structures in Urban Areas* (Amsterdam; New York: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1977), 107.

correlation between the evident importance of a given *albergo* and the number of official government offices its members held.<sup>40</sup>

The various Genoese family neighborhoods were connected by *vicoli*, also known as *caruggi*, narrow streets that cut throughout the city and defined clan areas. In some sense, the *vicoli* not only delineated each family's territory but they also limited its ability to expand or change shape as the diverse, and sometimes long, maze of these medieval streets effectively prevented any substantial alterations.<sup>41</sup> Architectural historians Ennio Poleggi and Luciano Grossi Bianchi note that the narrow streets that function as points of connection and transition within Genoa's urban space were modeled after those of a traditional *souq* (central market place) in an Islamic city, suggesting that the Genoese knew of and borrowed it from their trade connections with the Islamic world.<sup>42</sup> As a case in point, the *vicoli* and the boundaries they created were echoed in Alexandria, Egypt, a popular wintering locale for many Genoese beginning in the fourteenth century.<sup>43</sup> In Genoa they reified interdependence within nuclear families and, according to Luciano Müller Profumo, the grand piazzas that served as controlled meeting places in other Italian cities were both practically impossible and useless in medieval Genoa, where small neighborhoods defined the cityscape.<sup>44</sup> However, despite the absence of such

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<sup>40</sup> Shaw, "Principles and Practice," 56-57. See also Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements*, 176-82.

<sup>41</sup> Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 11-12.

<sup>42</sup> Ennio Poleggi and Luciano Grossi Bianchi, *Una città portuale del Medioevo: Genova nei secoli X-XVI* (Genoa: Sagep, 1979), 59-60.

<sup>43</sup> Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 15.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Piazza S. Lorenzo and Piazza Ferraria (today known as Piazza Matteotti), large public squares in front of the cathedral and doge's palace respectively, were not built until the 1530s and 1540s when the urban center underwent renovations to open up the space. Thus, during the period of this study, these areas echoed the labyrinth of narrow medieval streets found throughout most of Genoa's old center. See George Gorse, "A Classical Stage for the Old Nobility: The Strada Nuova and Sixteenth-Century Genoa," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 2 (1997): 303.

grand squares as the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, smaller piazzas in Genoa, like that of San Matteo in the Doria neighborhood, served a similar, if more diminutive, function.

Familial, civic, and geographical connections are also evident at this time in other Italian cities such as Florence, Siena, and Venice, but they are not denoted by *soprapporte* as they are in Genoa. For example, as F. W. Kent has shown, Florentine family ties, established through residency in a particular area of the city within one of the four main quarters, defined the primary neighborhoods.<sup>45</sup> Florentine palaces, especially when they were marked by coats of arms, symbolized clan unity when located near one another and helped preserve a patron's memory long after he died.<sup>46</sup> Even enemies understood the palace's symbolic value as they often sought to destroy their oppositions' homes as a sign of their own dominance.<sup>47</sup>

New construction in Florence was almost always undertaken within a patron's family neighborhood, or *consorteria*, regardless of space constraints.<sup>48</sup> In the mid-fifteenth century, for example, Giovanni Rucellai constructed his palace within the Rucellai's neighborhood facing the Via Vigna Nuova. This location allowed for only a small, triangular-shaped piazza (Piazza dei Rucellai) in front of the palace.<sup>49</sup> He chose this relatively confined location regardless of the fact that legislation had recently been passed to encourage new builders to occupy the considerable amount of open space

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<sup>45</sup> F. W. Kent, "Palaces, Politics, and Society in Fifteenth-Century Florence," *I Tatti Studies* 2 (1987): 41-70; Nicolai Rubinstein, "Introduction," in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: A Florentine Patrician and His Palace*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1981), 3-5.

<sup>46</sup> Kent, "Palaces, Politics, and Society," 45-46.

<sup>47</sup> Heers, *Family Clans*, 104.

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of Florentine *consorterie* see Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, & Family*, 62-71.

<sup>49</sup> Kent, "Palaces, Politics, and Society," 48; F. W. Kent, "The Making of a Renaissance Patron of the Arts," in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: A Florentine Patrician and His Palace*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1981), 53-54.

within the city walls that was still available.<sup>50</sup> Rucellai also had to put forth considerable effort to acquire eight adjacent houses to expand his palace.<sup>51</sup> Such complications were worth it, however, as Rucellai saw this building project as a fulfillment of his goal to distinguish his worth and reputation for perpetuity.<sup>52</sup> Obviously, residing within his family neighborhood was a primary goal for Rucellai as palaces like his were “centres of wider family and neighbourhood cooperation and sociability, magnets to attract clients of diverse social rank to the patronage networks run by their owners.”<sup>53</sup> Patrician palaces saw a constant stream of people pass through their portals to conduct business, so a building’s location seemingly was just as important as the structure itself in defining the owner’s social status.

Scholars have found additional evidence for strong neighborhood connections in Florence through studies of the workings of particular districts. Nicholas Eckstein’s investigation of the city’s Green Dragon district in the Oltrarno suggests that while it largely functioned as an independent entity within the city, it consisted of closely interconnected neighborhood groups with common goals; for example, the district’s artists appear to have all worked collaboratively at one point or another.<sup>54</sup> Dale and F. W. Kent’s examination of the Red Lion district in Florence’s northwest quadrant further confirms the tight kinship and strong connections among neighbors with regard to

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<sup>50</sup> Kent, “Palaces, Politics, and Society,” 49.

<sup>51</sup> Brenda Preyer, “The Rucellai Palace,” in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: A Florentine Patrician and His Palace*, ed. Alessandro Perosa (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1981), 156-61.

<sup>52</sup> Kent, “The Making of a Renaissance Patron,” 53.

<sup>53</sup> Kent, “Palaces, Politics, and Society,” 58.

<sup>54</sup> Nicholas A. Eckstein, *The District of the Green Dragon: Neighbourhood Life and Social Change in Renaissance Florence* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1995), 43. For further discussion of the Green Dragon’s neighborhoods see Chapter Two in Eckstein, *The District of the Green Dragon*.

everything from financial matters to political issues.<sup>55</sup> Although disagreements inevitably arose among the Red Lion's inhabitants, they could always return to their common focus point, the church of San Pancrazio.<sup>56</sup>

The primacy of neighborhood groups also is evident in Siena and Venice. The former was divided into three parts, called *terzi* that were further subdivided into *contrade*, or districts. Each of the Sienese *contrade* was—and still is—represented on a rotational basis in the popular bi-annual Palio horse race held in the Piazza del Campo, reinforcing a loyalty and pride for one's neighborhood that dates back to the fourteenth century.<sup>57</sup> Venice, on the other hand, was divided into six sections known as *sestieri* that were similarly subdivided into smaller parishes with a church and small piazza serving as the focal point in a manner akin to the Genoese *albergo*. The Venetian divisions, however, were created by the natural geographic boundaries of each small island that functioned as an independent neighborhood.<sup>58</sup> Thus, neighborhood divisions and associations were a common characteristic of most Italian cities of the time, but the Genoese distinguished themselves in the manner of marking their urban organization with *soprapporte*.

Until the mid-fifteenth century, secular construction in Genoa continued in a medieval style; open loggias typically defined the ground floor level of palaces,

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<sup>55</sup> See D. V. Kent and F. W. Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1982). For additional discussion of Florentine neighborhoods see F. W. Kent, "Ties of Neighbourhood and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence," in *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 79-98.

<sup>56</sup> Kent and Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood*, 128-40.

<sup>57</sup> For a history of the Sienese *Palio* see William Heywood, *Palio and Ponte: An Account of the Sports of Central Italy from the Age of Dante to the XXth Century* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1904; reprint, 1969), 197-230. For additional information on Siena's *Palio* from the medieval period through modern times see Gerald Parsons, *Perspectives on Civil Religion* (Aldershot, Hants; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 135-262.

<sup>58</sup> Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1997), 18.

providing a space for social and business activities. In Genoa, many *alberghi* had a designated public loggia for the express purpose of having a place where neighborhood inhabitants could meet.<sup>59</sup> People moved with considerable ease in and out of those covered, open spaces. This meant that passersby could observe everything that happened within the loggias. As Evelyn Welch notes, this arrangement proved particularly advantageous in discouraging dishonest business exchanges.<sup>60</sup> While legislation called for clear demarcations between the public shop and the domestic realm, officials could not entirely prevent the intermingling of the two, especially in northern Italy where shopkeepers often displayed their goods in front of palaces.<sup>61</sup> However, around 1450 the Genoese began to enclose the lower levels of their palaces, incorporating the loggia into their private living space, thus expanding the size of their homes while simultaneously redefining the city's commercial and private spaces.<sup>62</sup> The newly-created single entrances leading directly into homes produced sharp delineations between public and private, with the threshold serving as the liminal division between the two. Once inside the doorway, the old loggia served as a vestibule leading to a courtyard with stairs that provided access to the higher levels. Along the streets with recently closed loggias, *soprapporte* were the primary decorations on the palace façades.

Müller Profumo posits that the advent of *soprapporte* in Genoa corresponds to the

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<sup>59</sup> Luigi Tommaso Belgrano briefly addresses the Genoese loggia as a meeting space in *Della vita privata*, 44-46. See also Diane Owen Hughes, "Domestic Ideals and Social Behavior: Evidence from Medieval Genoa," in *Medieval Families: Perspectives on Marriage, Household, and Children*, ed. Carol Neel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in Association with the Medieval Academy of America, 2004), 128.

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion of Renaissance sales and shop visibility see Evelyn S. Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 96-104.

<sup>61</sup> For an extended analysis of the demarcations between the public commercial businesses and private interior spaces see *ibid.*, 123-63.

<sup>62</sup> Boccardo, *Ardesia*, 27.

closure of medieval loggias and the urban transformation it triggered.<sup>63</sup> Similar renovations were happening in other Italian cities like Florence at about the same time, but *soprapporte*-type decorations on palaces were only installed in Genoa and the region in which it was located. Evidently, only the Genoese felt compelled to affirm their individual presence using this mode of adornment. Moreover, in employing a specific decorative type, they pronounced a common Genoese iconography and symbolism, even among diverse family groups.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps due to their competition in the international trade market, especially with the Venetians, they sought a way to stand out and identify their united power through imagery.

### **The Doria *Soprapporte***

The Doria family advertised its presence with coats of arms, inscriptions, and black-and-white striped slate and marble façades throughout their *albergo*. *Soprapporte*, however, were the primary mode for displaying the coats of arms and were introduced to Genoese palaces to advertise the identity of their inhabitants.<sup>65</sup> Four narrative *soprapporte* dating from the second half of the fifteenth century remain *in situ* over the doorways of Doria palaces, including two depicting St. George and two of more unusual subjects: a triumphal entry and a *Raising of Lazarus*. There are also six sculpted relief lintels with inscriptions adorning doorways in San Matteo's cloister, and four overdoor fragments displayed on the lowest level of Branca Doria's palace, now a self-service restaurant situated just off of the main piazza and adjacent to the cloister. Another

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<sup>63</sup> Some *soprapporte* placed over openings without doorposts may have already existed. See Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 50.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 49.

*soprapporta* depicting the Nativity with well-preserved Doria coats of arms—now an antependium for the altar in the chapel of the Piccolo Cottolengo di Don Orione, an organization established in Genoa in 1933 to assist at-risk children—likely also originally decorated a lintel in the Doria *albergo*. All of these works once incorporated the Doria emblem, a gold and silver eagle with a red beak wearing a red crown that is set against a black background.<sup>66</sup> What follows is an examination of the Doria *soprapporte*, their role as family symbols, and the ways in which they operated as part of a larger Genoese iconography that must have been common to *alberghi* throughout the city.

Although *soprapporte* do function as unique symbols of clan affiliation, Genoa was by no means the only Italian city with domestic architectural decorations that identified Renaissance families.<sup>67</sup> In fact, according to Jacques Heers, Italian noble homes were often marked by large stones emblazoned with heraldic arms placed above doorways and patrons throughout Italy demonstrated an interest in demarcating their homes' transitional spaces with overdoor sculptures.<sup>68</sup> Classically-inspired bust sculptures, like the *Piero de' Medici* by Mino da Fiesole of 1453 that depict contemporary adults as well as children became popular interior portal decorations in quattrocento Florence that emphasized the symbolic significance of the threshold and family lineage.<sup>69</sup> At Ca' Soranzo at Ponte dell'Angelo in Venice, the Soranzo family coats of arms are surmounted by a sculpted

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<sup>66</sup> The Doria coat of arms is described in Angelo M.G. Scorza, *Le famiglie nobili genovesi* (Genoa: Fratelli Frilli, 1924; reprint, 2003), 82.

<sup>67</sup> Large family clans were typical of most Italian cities and throughout Europe. Richard Goldthwaite, "The Florentine Palace as Domestic Architecture," *American Historical Review* 77 (1972): 12.

<sup>68</sup> Heers, *Family Clans*, 102. For further discussion of the ways of displaying an Italian Renaissance family's name and arms on their palace façade see Nino Tamassia, *La famiglia italiana nei secoli decimoquinto e decimosesto* (Milan: R. Sandron, 1911), 104-49.

<sup>69</sup> The idea for interior placement came from Pliny's description of ancient Roman busts above interior doorways in his *Natural History*. Jane Schuyler, *Florentine Busts: Sculpted Portraiture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), 24, 27. For further discussion of Florentine busts placed over domestic portals see Shelley Zuraw, "The Medici Portraits of Mino da Fiesole," in *Piero de' Medici "il Gottoso" (1416-1469): Kunst im Dienste der Mediceer = Art in the Service of the Medici*, ed. Andreas Beyer and Bruce Boucher (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993).

angel on the façade (Fig. 3-10).<sup>70</sup> Additionally, following the 1491 marriage of Pellegrina Foscari and Alvise Mocenigo, an arch was placed over Calle del Paradiso in Venice to unite the houses on both sides, marking them as a joint property (Fig. 3-11). The *Madonna of Mercy* sculpted on both sides of the arch is further augmented on one side by the families' respective coats of arms.<sup>71</sup> The placement of such sculpted heraldry suggests that in many Italian cities, the doorway was viewed as a prominent transition marker for the viewer and a prime location from which to make important pronouncements of family power.

Palace façade embellishments, in addition to expressing the family's identity and associations, could also act as talismans. Such a protective function is associated with three marble relief roundels that were once embedded on the Tiepolo palace façade in Venice and many others like them, that were exceptionally popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in that northeastern Italian city (Fig. 3-12).<sup>72</sup> Two of the Tiepolo works depict eagles triumphing over hares, and on a third a prowling lion was carved. All three were intended to communicate the family's values, in this case the victory of virtue over vice, and also act as protective devices, for they used classical and Christian imagery to ward off any threats to the family that lived in the residence.<sup>73</sup> Just as the Tiepolo palace façade acted as the primary venue for that Venetian family to display its prominence, Genoese palace façades similarly declared the owner's identity and served apotropaic functions. This is especially true of the prevalent St. George killing the

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<sup>70</sup> Brown, *Private Lives*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 15.

<sup>72</sup> The reliefs were removed from the palace before it was destroyed following the 1310 Quirini-Tiepolo conspiracy. The sculptures are now attached to the west wall of the Oratory of San Vito. For a further description of the Tiepolo palace see *ibid.*, 24, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Geraldine A. Johnson, "Family Values: Sculpture and the Family in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 221.

dragon image on overdoors, which was also thought to ward off evil through that civic saint's intercession.

### **St. George *Soprapporte***

In Genoa's Doria neighborhood, two St. George *soprapporte* that face the Piazza San Matteo are the most readily visible of the *albergo*'s overdoors. One adorns Palazzo Doria-Quartara, a structure Giorgio Doria built in the fifteenth century by combining several smaller homes and a tower into a considerably larger residence in a manner similar to how Giovanni Rucellai created his Florentine palace during the same century (Fig. i-14).<sup>74</sup> The other St. George overdoor decorates the main entrance to Palazzo Danovaro-Gnecco (previously Doria) (Fig. 3-13). The latter *soprapporta* is a faithful copy of a stolen fifteenth-century original Gagini work.<sup>75</sup> It is framed by Doria coats of arms that have the letters "A" and "D" incised into them.<sup>76</sup>

The Genoese first adopted St. George as their protector during the early centuries of Christianity, when they were introduced to this warrior saint's cult through their trading connections with the Byzantine Empire. They further demonstrated their devotion to St. George when they dedicated a church to him in the eighth century.

Interestingly, despite such devotion, Genoa has never possessed any St. George relics,

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<sup>74</sup> The Doria family continued to occupy the palace until Isabella Gnecco bought it in 1798. The Quartara family purchased the property in the second half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> I have not found further information regarding this theft. This sculpture is typically not discussed in the literature and the theft is mentioned only briefly in guidebooks. In any event, it was stolen before 1929, the date of the earliest written theft reference, which states that the lintel sculpture was stolen in "recent times." See Castagna and Masini, *Genova*, 262. See also *Liguria*, 138. In a list of Genoese *soprapporte*, Piero Boccardo notes that the original work is not in its intended location, Salita San Matteo 19, but does not refer to its theft. See Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 53.

<sup>76</sup> Navone, *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 195.

although nearby Portofino acquired some from Lydda (modern day Lod, Israel) in the eleventh century.<sup>77</sup>

The specific hagiographic scene in which St. George kills the dragon to save the princess was adapted and dispersed throughout the West in large part via the *Legenda Aurea*, Jacobus de Voragine's popular thirteenth-century compilation of saints' lives.<sup>78</sup> According to his Life, St. George was born in Cappadocia. As a member of the Roman army, he traveled to the town of Silena, located in the modern-day province of Libya. A monstrous dragon threatened the town and its citizens attempted to satiate the creature by bringing it two sheep to eat each day. However, when the sheep population dwindled to dangerously low levels, they began feeding the dragon one sheep and one human being each day. The sacrificial person was selected by lottery from all of the Silenese male youths and maidens. As St. George traveled toward the city, he met a weeping princess, by then the only young person left, on her way to be sacrificed. The king's pleas to the townspeople to spare his daughter had gone unanswered, so the princess prepared to face her death. Protected by the sign of the cross, however, St. George captured the dragon with the help of the princess, who used her girdle to secure control over the creature. George and the princess led the dragon back to Silena and upon their arrival he explained to the townspeople "Ye have naught to fear, for the Lord has appointed me to deliver you from the crimes of this monster! Believe in Christ, be baptized, and I shall slay the

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<sup>77</sup> In 1154 Portofino built a church for St. George's relics and dedicated it to this saint. See Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 67. For a history of St. George's head relic, taken from the Greek island of Aegina by the Venetians in 1462 and rediscovered in 1971 in a reliquary cupboard in the hall of the conclave in S. Giorgio Maggiore, see Kenneth M. Setton, "St. George's Head," *Speculum* 48, no. 1 (1973): 1-12.

<sup>78</sup> Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 232-38. The St. George story may have roots in Greek and Egyptian legend with Perseus and Horus respectively. The origin of George's identity as a dragon slayer is unclear. Johannes Aufhauser claims it did not appear in Europe until the twelfth century while Kenneth Setton points to evidence of the story in Cappadocia by 1006. See Johannes B. Aufhauser, *Das Drachenwunder des heiligen Georg in der Griechischen und Lateinischen Überlieferung* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1911), 169-70, 237-46. See also Setton, "St. George's Head," 2.

beast that persecuted you!” Once everyone had been baptized, St. George slew the dragon with his sword. The king rewarded him with a great deal of money, which St. George distributed among the poor. Before he departed, however, he taught the king the following four things: “...how to care for the church of God, [how] to honour the priests, [how] to assist with devotion at the divine office, and [how] to have the poor always in mind.”<sup>79</sup>

Little is known of St. George beyond this narrative and the three attempts to martyr him (first by cutting him up, then by burying him, and, finally, by burning him); he ultimately succumbed to death by decapitation on 23 April 303.<sup>80</sup> His popularity can be traced to fourth-century Byzantium, where he was one of the fourteen Holy Helpers, saints especially noted for their protection against disease. Some also view St. George as a substitute for the pagan cult of Mithras and others see his story as a distortion of that of George of Cappadocia, a fourth-century Arian bishop of Alexandria who persecuted Christians.<sup>81</sup>

The devotion the Genoese demonstrated toward St. George only increased with the onset of the Crusades in the eleventh century, given the strong associations of good—St. George—triumphing over evil—the dragon—in the saint’s story. A thirteenth-century fresco along the left side aisle of Genoa’s cathedral and a rectangular marble relief embedded into the same church’s exterior wall, both depicting St. George, along with the

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<sup>79</sup> Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 232-35.

<sup>80</sup> Information varies widely regarding St. George’s place of birth, death, and battle location. See Grosso, *Il San Giorgio*, 28. The earliest surviving text on his martyrdom is an incomplete document found at the Cathedral of Q’asr Ibrim in Nubia. See Samantha J. E. Riches, “St. George as a Male Virgin Martyr,” in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha J.E. Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002), 69.

<sup>81</sup> Frederick George Holweck, *A Biographical Dictionary of Saints* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1923), 423. St. George is often associated with St. Theodore, who killed a crocodile, and St. Margaret, who defeated an impure monster. See Grosso, *Il San Giorgio*, 29.

city's other major saints, Siro and John the Baptist, attest to the high esteem in which the Genoese populace held their warrior patron saint.<sup>82</sup> The Genoese even featured an image of St. George on horseback on the city's first flag dated to around 1198. Indeed, overdoor sculptures with this narrative functioned as permanent versions of the ephemeral tradition of hanging the Genoese flag above the palace entrances of well-deserving *condottieri*, or military leaders.<sup>83</sup> This traditional way of celebrating these mercenaries' contributions to military victories probably led to the early popularity of the image on *soprapporte* throughout Genoa.

One of the few extant documents related to Genoese *soprapporte* concerns the commission for the St. George relief on the Palazzo Doria-Quartara (Fig. i-14). This record, written by the notary Antonio Fazio the elder and dated February 1457, states that Giorgio Doria commissioned Giovanni Gagini to sculpt a St. George lintel for his palace. The contract further stipulates that it was to be made of marble, that the patron would cover all expenses, and that the sculptor would devote himself exclusively to this project in order to finish it within the contractually allotted three months.<sup>84</sup> No collaborators are mentioned and Giuliana Algeri believes Giovanni received assistance in the project only in the procurement of materials.<sup>85</sup> The sculpture was inspired by an earlier marble St. George *soprapporta*, for the document states that Giovanni should make an overdoor for

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<sup>82</sup> The sculpture's date is uncertain but it probably was made sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. It was considered to be Genoa's primary visual example of the St. George narrative. See Navone, *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 147.

<sup>83</sup> Poggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 164. For a discussion of Genoa's early painted flags see Federico Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI*, 6 vols., vol. 1 (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino, 1870), 267-73.

<sup>84</sup> There is no record of whether Giovanni Gagini was able to complete this project in the contracted three months. ASG, Notai Antichi 591, fol. 17. For a transcription of the original document see Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 150-51.

<sup>85</sup> Algeri, "La scultura a Genova," 68.

the Doria palace that was similar to, but surpassed in quality, the one adorning  
Brancaleone Grillo's palace located a short distance away in the Grillo *albergo*.<sup>86</sup>

Dated ca. 1453-55 and also attributed to Giovanni Gagini, the Grillo *St. George* is the earliest known sculpted exterior overdoor (Fig. i-15).<sup>87</sup> Giovanni Grillo and his son, Brancaleone, who served as ambassador to the pope and Spanish king, built this palace between 1453 and 1455 by buying smaller houses and renovating the buildings to merge them into one larger structure. Two *soprapporte* decorate the black-and-white striped façade at Vico delle Mele 6; one, already discussed in Chapter One, depicts St. John the Baptist and is located over a corner door (Fig. 1-18), while St. George killing the dragon ornaments the lintel above the main door at the same address. Although no documents related to their commissions are known, stylistic similarities to the Doria-Quartara palace doorway led both Krufft and Poleggi to attribute the St. George work on the Grillo palace to Giovanni Gagini. Especially notable are similarities in their door posts and architraves directly below the central narrative.<sup>88</sup> Since Giovanni is known to have been in Genoa by 1452 to work at Santa Maria di Castello, it is conceivable that he sculpted this *soprapporta* immediately following the palace's construction in the early 1450s. Furthermore, as Giorgio Doria specifically requested a work emulating the one decorating Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo, it is quite probable that he hired the same sculptor to execute it.

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<sup>86</sup> ASG, Notai Antichi 591, fol. 17; Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 150; Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 10-11; Poleggi, *Santa Maria di Castello*, 141-42; idem, *Genova: Una civiltà di palazzi*, 18. The Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo St. George also inspired two *soprapporte* in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection in London. See John Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: H. M. Stationery Off., 1964), 389-90. See also Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 10.

<sup>87</sup> Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 10-11.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; Poleggi, *Genova: Una civiltà di palazzi*, 18.

The St. George *soprapporta* on Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo incorporates only the most dramatic elements of the saint's narrative. Besides St. George on horseback and the dragon, the princess is the only other figure in the central scene, which is framed by griffin-like creatures above coats of arms. Stylized foliage fills the lower corners, and twisted molding surrounds the entire scene.<sup>89</sup> While the coats of arms likely originally identified the Grillo family, Luca Spinola, who bought the palace in 1496, clearly appropriated the symbolic function of the *soprapporta* by sculpting his own emblem into the relief.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, he had the initials "L" and "S" carved into the marble to either side of St. George and on the St. John relief.

The composition of the St. George *soprapporta* at Palazzo Doria-Quartara, demonstrates that Giovanni Gagini followed Giorgio Doria's desire to outdo Grillo and his overdoor. The scene of St. George killing the dragon to save the kneeling princess does suggest the Palazzo Doria-Quartara *soprapporta*'s dependence upon the earlier model; however, Gagini expanded the narrative to include the king and queen, their court, and a shepherd playing a flute to his flock of sheep below. Trees and rocky ledges replace the stylized foliage, creating a more naturalistic setting. Additionally, Gagini replaced the griffins bearing coats of arms with soldiers, perhaps Genoese ones, dressed in armor and wielding spears.

St. George killing the dragon is the most common *soprapporta* subject on Genoese palace façades, as he still appears on twenty-one *in situ* external overdoors on the streets of Genoa and upwards of twenty-four additional works are known to have

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<sup>89</sup> The stylized foliage and drill work appear quite similar to the *St. George Killing the Dragon soprapporta* by the workshop of Giovanni Gagini at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City (Fig. i-20).

<sup>90</sup> The Spinola arms depict rows of silver- and red-checked bands over gold. See Scorza, *Le famiglie*, 203-07.

existed at one time, many of which are in museums today. All of the St. George lintels demonstrate basic compositional similarities, with variations occurring only in the details beyond St. George, the horse, and the dragon. Many of the more elaborate St. George overdoors copy the composition of the Palazzo Doria-Quartara lintel, as seen, for example, in two slate St. George *soprapporte* in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Figs. 3-14 and 3-15).

The St. George killing the dragon over the entrance to Palazzo Danovaro-Gnecco, Piazza San Matteo 19, presents a more simplified and stylized version of the legend (Fig. 3-13). This relief sculpture, like the Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo lintel, includes only St. George on horseback, the dragon, and the princess. Crowned Doria eagles are not carved onto the coats of arms, as would have been typical, but instead the artist integrated these important avian symbols as bearers of the heraldic markers on either side. The rest of the doorframe is adorned with decorative foliage and twisted molding similar to that on the Palazzo Doria-Quartara relief and a putto is also tucked inside each corner of the doorway. As one of the city's patron saints, the Genoese looked to St. George to shield them from potential harm. That at least two St. George *soprapporte* distinguished the Doria *albergo*'s piazza demonstrates the subject's great significance as a symbol of Genoa and its citizens' devotion to its patron saint. More importantly, the fact that they appear all over the city shows that the Doria did their part to promote this aspect of civic iconography.

The elite Genoese's adoption of St. George imagery for their palaces is akin to Florence and Venice's dissemination of their own respective civic and religious symbols. In the early fifteenth century the Old Testament hero David came to symbolize Florence,

as the city was smaller than most European powerhouses and its citizens saw themselves as underdogs just as David was in his battle with Goliath. His image, like Donatello's marble *David* that was installed in the Palazzo Vecchio in 1416, was employed to represent Florentine strength in the face of adversity.<sup>91</sup> Private citizens, most famously the Medici, recognized the power of appropriating such imagery. Donatello's bronze *David* was in the Medici palace's courtyard by 1469 at the latest, and probably much earlier.<sup>92</sup> Its placement effectively affirmed the Medici's political status and position, however misleading, as typical citizens of the Florentine Republic.

Similarly, the Lion of St. Mark came to symbolize the Venetians after two merchants stole the evangelist's relics from Alexandria in 828 and brought them to Venice. Not only did the Venetians build and decorate San Marco to house those important relics, but they also employed lion imagery throughout their city and its territories as a symbol of their Republic. Placed on everything from coins to banners to ducal seals to paintings and sculptures adorning various buildings, the lion also took on the role of Venetian protector.<sup>93</sup> Vittore Carpaccio's *Lion of St. Mark*, painted in 1516 for the Magistracy of the Treasury offices in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi near the Rialto Bridge, depicts St. Mark shielding the city from harm but also makes clear in the lion's stance that the Venetians held great power over land and sea.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, a sculpted lion on top of a column at the edge of Piazzetta San Marco welcomes visitors to the city just as

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<sup>91</sup> An inscription on the statue reads: "To those who fight strongly for the fatherland, God lends aid even against the most terrible foes." For the original Latin inscription and this translation see Christine M. Sperling, "Donatello's Bronze 'David' and the Demands of Medici Politics," *Burlington Magazine* 134, no. 1069 (1992): 222.

<sup>92</sup> For the sculpture's placement within the Medici Palace courtyard and its earlier location in the previous Medici house see Francis Ames-Lewis, "Donatello's Bronze *David* and the Palazzo Medici Courtyard," *Renaissance Studies* 3, no. 3 (1989): 239-46; Francesco Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici: Storia del David e della Giuditta*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2000), 101-222.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, *Art and Life*, 80-81.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 81; Romano, "City-State and Empire," 9.

the relief of a lion commissioned by the Senato Terra placed over Porta dell' Arsenal (dated 1456-1460 and attributed to Gambello) greeted shipyard workers on a daily basis.<sup>95</sup> Francesco Foscari, Doge of Venice from 1423 to 1457, adopted this civic symbol for his private palace, begun in 1450, installing a relief sculpture of the lion of St. Mark standing on a helmet on its façade. Additionally, as already discussed in the Introduction, Foscari had himself depicted kneeling before the lion of St. Mark on the Porta della Carta on the Doge's palace. Thus, Genoese citizens' employment of St. George images was analogous to the ways in which the Florentines used David and the Venetians utilized St. Mark.

While it appears that St. George *soprapporte* connected individual families with city-wide devotions to a Genoese patron saint, this sculptural type nevertheless also visually connected the various *alberghi* to the Casa di San Giorgio (also known as the Banco di San Giorgio), a privately-funded organization founded in 1407 that served an important role in administering the city's public debt and managing its tax income.<sup>96</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Casa di San Giorgio adopted St. George as its symbol, and for a time the organization may have controlled the privilege of having a St. George *soprapporta* on one's private palace.<sup>97</sup> Inside the room of the Manica Lunga in the Palazzo San Giorgio, which housed the bank's offices, a lintel Michele D'Aria sculpted in 1508 depicts St.

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<sup>95</sup> Deborah Howard, "The State," in *Venice and the Veneto*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68-69.

<sup>96</sup> Most scholars have subscribed to the idea of what Christine Shaw refers to as the "myth" of the Casa di San Giorgio that suggests this institution served as the center of Genoese power. According to Shaw, Machiavelli is responsible for perpetuating this myth as he declared in his *Istorie fiorentine* that if all Genoese citizens chose to pledge their allegiance to the Casa di San Giorgio rather than the Comune it would be the measure for all other Republics. Scholars often point to the alleged political power of the institution and its control over vast quantities of Genoese territory as evidence of the Casa's dominance; in truth members of the Casa held no official political power and the large territories they are said to have controlled were in fact temporary holds on small sections of rotating properties. See Shaw, "Principles and Practice," 57-64.

<sup>97</sup> Poleggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 164.

George killing the dragon to save the princess in a composition similar to those Giovanni Gagini and his workshop produced (Fig. i-17). However, in this work, the heraldic arms of St. George—a red cross on a white field—appear on the shields and flags the flanking Genoese soldiers hold.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, the Palazzo San Giorgio, originally built by a certain Friar Oliviero for the Captain of the People Guglielmo in 1260, is rendered in low relief in the right background to connect this *soprapporta* to its location.<sup>99</sup> While the traditional triumphant moment of dragon slaying is the focal point, here the crowds of onlookers—who sometimes occupy a ledge in Giovanni Gagini’s versions of the story—fill the palace’s first and second floor windows.

St. George killing the dragon, the primary image associated with this prominent maritime city is both a symbol of victory and an apotropaic sign employed on overdoor relief sculptures throughout its streets. As already noted, this depiction of the saint first appeared over doorways on the Genoese flag, which designated citizens who had been victorious in battle defending and championing their esteemed city. While this indicator of individual military prowess was certainly important, in a more general sense—and perhaps more significantly—the image of George depicts a Christian protector and intercessor who guards against evil, enemies and any other threats. The existence of at least two St. George *soprapporte* facing the main piazza in the Doria *albergo* both acknowledged the family’s contributions to Genoa’s military conquests and ensured that the warrior saint watched over them.

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<sup>98</sup> The flag is painted red and white and extant gold-colored pigment can be seen throughout this sculpture.

<sup>99</sup> In 1570 the Banco di San Giorgio radically altered the building with a large Renaissance addition, complete with a new façade to accommodate its growing needs. The building served as the Banco di San Giorgio until the end of the eighteenth century, when it became the Consorzio Autonomo del Porto di Genova. See Lorenzo Capellini and Ennio Poleggi, *Guide di architettura Genova* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 1992), 32; Grosso, *Il Palazzo*, 62-63.

## Doria Reliefs and Rituals

A rather unusual overdoor remains *in situ* at Via David Chiossone 1, just down the street from the Palazzo Doria-Quartara St. George *soprapporta* in Piazza San Matteo. Based on stylistic analysis, scholars have attributed the marble *Triumph of the Doria*, one of only two extant triumphal entry *soprapporte*, to various Gagini family members including Pace, Elia, and Giovanni (Fig. 3-16).<sup>100</sup> Arturo Dellepiane, for one, believes that Pace Gagini, with the help of Nardo Riccomanno, sculpted this excellently preserved, high-quality relief.<sup>101</sup>

The *Triumph of the Doria* depicts two centaurs pulling a cart flanked by two figures dressed in armor who hold a large Doria coat of arms in the center of the relief. Putti are interspersed throughout the scene, including one who rides a centaur and another at the back of a cart who blows a horn to announce its arrival. Two other putti below their trumpet-playing counterpart strain to push the heavy cart forward.

While the subject is unusual, it suggests the Doria's high status in that the only other known triumphal *soprapporta* adorned the doorway of a palace owned by the Spinola, another leading Genoese family (Fig. 3-17). The *Triumph of the Spinola*, like its Doria counterpart, features a triumphal procession of the family coat of arms atop a cart festooned with a garland. Two centaurs pull the cart while putti play horns and stringed instruments. A contingent of soldiers on foot and horseback follow behind the cart. The

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<sup>100</sup> D. Castagna also attributes the *Triumph of the Doria* on Via della Posta Vecchia to Pace Gagini. Castagna and Masini, *Genova*, 89. A plaque placed next to the doorway after a 1994 restoration, associates the work with the artistic circle of Giovanni Gagini. This plaque also dates the work to around 1470-1480. The *Triumph of the Doria* restoration was paid for by the Amministrazione Provinciale di Genova and carried out by Ditta U. Buonasorte – F. Dettori. Riccardo Navone attributes the work to Elia Gagini. Navone, *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 200.

<sup>101</sup> Dellepiane, *I portali*, 15.

architrave below the *Triumph* displays a monogram of Christ at the center and Roman profile heads at each corner.

Both triumphs probably were derived from images on ancient Roman sarcophagi to be found in the city, the most prominent of which are still embedded in the cathedral's exterior walls.<sup>102</sup> Piero Boccardo posits that the Doria lintel was sculpted first due to the older, Gothic script used in the monogram of Christ and because the Spinola work appears to be of inferior quality, and therefore must be a derivative of the Doria.<sup>103</sup> His first argument for this chronology seems reasonable, but the second is questionable both because each work appears to be of high quality and the second work could have improved upon the first. As we saw above, when Giorgio Doria commissioned Giovanni Gagini to sculpt a St. George overdoor for his palace he specified that it should be similar to, but surpass in quality, the one adorning Brancalone Grillo's house.<sup>104</sup>

The relative size of the sculpted forms in each lintel appears to be the only major compositional difference between the Doria and Spinola triumphs. Although both are well-sculpted marble reliefs, the small amount of negative space around the carved elements creates a claustrophobic quality in the Doria work, as its figures are all larger relative to the cart. The overall compositions, however, are remarkably similar. Both *soprapporte* feature their patrons' respective coats of arms displayed on carts pulled by a pair of centaurs and surrounded by putti. The wider expanse between the front and back legs of the Doria centaurs suggests a more pronounced movement forward; two soldiers on horseback, absent from the Doria work, bring up the rear on the left of the Spinola

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<sup>102</sup> Colette Dufour Bozzo, *Sarcofagi romani a Genova* (Genoa: Tip. Pagano, 1967), 29-31.

<sup>103</sup> Piero Boccardo, "Per l'iconografia del 'Trionfo' nella Genova del Rinascimento; I portali Doria e Spinola," *Studi di storia delle arti* 4 (1981-1982): 41.

<sup>104</sup> ASG, Notai Antichi 591, fol. 17; Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 4, 150.

*Triumph* and propel that procession onward. Both portal sculptures are augmented by a pattern of putti and foliage around the door frame with classical Roman imperial profiles in each of the upper corners and a monogram of Christ within a roundel at the top center. While the Spinola doorway lacks the putto figures tucked inside each corner of its opening, it is otherwise quite similar to the Doria work. The Spinola family occupied an *albergo* that had the church of San Luca (founded in 1188) at its center that was located nearby, to the northwest of the Doria neighborhood. Despite the Doria and Spinola's frequent competition for power in the city, their replication of this image may have been intended to illustrate their common identities as Ghibelline supporters or may simply represent their shared use of classical imagery.<sup>105</sup>

The Doria triumphal *soprapporta* visualizes in classicizing terms what probably periodically occurred just before it on the street. Due to the Doria's stature as a leading Genoese family, this sculpted triumphal imagery likely emulated the numerous processions and other pageants that were held in and/or moved through the *albergo*. In this respect, it mirrored in function the triumphal arch of King Alfonso of Aragon (1453-1458 and 1465-1471) that comprises the main entrance to the Castel Nuovo in Naples and depicts on the main frieze Alfonso's triumphal entry into the city as its ruler.<sup>106</sup> Although the exact routes are unknown for most Renaissance-era processions in Genoa, given the Doria family's high status and their *albergo*'s proximity to the cathedral, their neighborhood likely would have been integrated into at least some of these celebrations and events.

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<sup>105</sup> For further information on the competition between the Doria and Spinola see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 194-97.

<sup>106</sup> Alison Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence: Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts* (New York: Abrams, 1995), 62-63; Margaret Ann Zaho, *Imago Triumphalis: The Function and Significance of Triumphal Imagery for Italian Renaissance Rulers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 49-61.

It is noteworthy that the compositional movement of this triumphal overdoor from left to right propels the viewer toward the Piazza San Matteo and the Doria's family church at the heart of their *albergo*. The lintel relief sculpture is located on the outer edge of the Doria *albergo* and may even have been the starting point for processions through it. This relief depicts a triumphal procession that by virtue of the directional movement of its composition, induces passersby to walk toward Piazza San Matteo to the southwest. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Doria coat of arms—which itself was a triumphant symbol—on this and the other *soprapporte* in their *albergo* tied together the various branches of the clan.<sup>107</sup>

Contemporary documents regarding Genoese triumphal processions rarely contain many specific details, especially regarding their routes. The existing documents demonstrate that processions frequently occurred in Renaissance Genoa just as they did in cities throughout Italy and the rest of Europe.<sup>108</sup> Among the limited sources on processions in Genoa for the fifteenth century, one of the most informative was written by a Dominican friar, Agostino Giustiniani (1470-1536). Printed posthumously in 1537, his *Annali della Repubblica di Genova* (Annals of the Republic of Genoa) is the “first thorough, humanist history of Genoa in Italian,” and draws upon earlier historical accounts and various extant documents.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, Giustiniani does not acknowledge one of his main sources, the almost contemporary writings of Bartolomeo Senarega (1440s-1514).<sup>110</sup> Senarega, who served as Genoa's chancellor, wrote a history

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<sup>107</sup> Heers, *Family Clans*, 101-02.

<sup>108</sup> Boccardo, “Per l'iconografia del ‘Trionfo’ nella Genova,” 47.

<sup>109</sup> Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 292.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

of the city from 1488 to 1514. Giustiniani's *Annali*, written in the Italian vernacular, however, brought Genoa's history to a wider audience than Senarega's work in Latin.

Unfortunately, Giustiniani's account does not refer to any *soprapporte*, but its chronological narrative does mention esteemed visitors to Genoa and the festivities held in honor of their respective arrivals during which lintel reliefs certainly would have been viewed by participants and onlookers alike. Ritual entries into Italian and European cities usually began with various officials and a military contingent meeting visitors outside a city gate. As Diana Norman explains, the honored guests were then presented with the keys to the city before they entered the city shielded by a canopy, which also served to single them out as the most important part of the procession. Processions typically moved past major civic and religious buildings and ended with mass at the cathedral. Visitors were also treated to the spectacle of games, dances, and fireworks performed in their honor, and they usually departed the city with lavish gifts.<sup>111</sup> Although specific details about many entries into Genoa are unknown, those that were recorded follow this general pattern, perhaps echoing in some ways the triumphal processions depicted on the Doria and Spinola *soprapporte*.

The Genoese often engaged in festivities of local importance, especially for military victories. In 1481 they fêted Cardinal Paolo Fregoso upon his return from fighting the Ottoman Turks who had attempted to take Otranto, an important Genoese trading outpost in southern Italy. These events sometimes lasted for several days, as did

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<sup>111</sup> Diana Norman, "'Sotto uno baldachino trionfale': The Ritual Significance of the Painted Canopy in Simone Martini's *Maestà*," in *Beyond the Palio: Urbanism and Ritual in Renaissance Siena*, ed. Philippa Jackson and Fabrizio Nevola (Malden, Mass.; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 11-18.

a three-day procession through the city in 1492 to celebrate the taking of Granada, which certainly would have passed by numerous *soprapporte*.<sup>112</sup>

A majority of the recorded processions and celebrations were organized to exalt the Milanese. For example, in 1497 the Genoese held a funeral procession honoring Beatrice d'Este, the sister of Isabella d'Este and the wife of Ludovico Sforza (Ludovico il Moro), the Duke of Milan, who died in childbirth.<sup>113</sup> The Genoese certainly hosted such events aimed at glorifying various Milanese rulers and visitors because of the two cities' close political ties. Even though Genoa largely "governed itself internally according to its own laws" throughout the fifteenth century, it was technically ruled by Milan from 1464 to 1499 with a brief break in 1478.<sup>114</sup>

Many wedding banquets likely took place in Genoese piazzas, just as they did in other Italian cities, although sumptuary laws to some degree controlled the lavishness of those events.<sup>115</sup> In 1489 a festival was held in honor of Isabelle of Aragon's marriage to Gian Galeazzo Sforza.<sup>116</sup> The following year, two leading Genoese families held a celebration in the Piazza di Sarzano in honor of Giovanni Adorno and Eleonora Sanseverino's wedding. Although there are no extant descriptions of these festivities, they probably bore similarities to the often-cited, extravagantly celebrated Florentine marriage of Nannina de' Medici to Bernardo Rucellai in the Rucellai loggia and adjacent

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<sup>112</sup> Boccardo, "Per l'iconografia del 'Trionfo' nella Genova," 47-48.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 286.

<sup>115</sup> The recent exhibition *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, included Tuscan wedding chests that commemorated some of the festivities held in honor of the newlyweds in Florence. See Cristelle Baskins, "Triumph: An Introduction," 1-14; Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "The Triumph of Everyday Life," 31-46; Cristelle Baskins, "The Triumph of Marriage: Frederick III and Leonora of Portugal, 1452," 47-65 in *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance* (Boston; Sarasota; Pittsburgh: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art; Gutenberg Periscope Publishing Limited, 2008).

<sup>116</sup> Giustiniani, *Annali*, vol. 2, 557-58. See also Bartolomeo Senarega, *De rebus genuensibus commentaria ab anno MCDLXXXVIII usque ad annum MDXIV*, ed. Emilio Pandiani (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1932), 14-15.

piazza in front of the Palazzo Rucellai in 1466.<sup>117</sup> Attendees to such events in Genoa would have viewed *soprapporte* in the piazzas where they were held over a sustained period of time.

In 1468 a particularly luxurious revelry took place in Genoa for then Duke of Milan Galeazzo Maria Sforza and his new wife, Bona of Savoy. Less than one week after their proxy marriage on 10 May 1468, Bona set off by sea to join her husband in Italy. She disembarked in Genoa and then traveled by land to Milan. Galeazzo directed a contingent of hundreds of people, led by Ludovico Sforza, to meet Bona in Genoa and accompany her back to Milan.<sup>118</sup> Upon her arrival on 28 June, the Genoese welcomed Bona with great festivities, presenting her with keys to both the ducal fortress and the city, among other diplomatic gifts.<sup>119</sup> Giustiniani's writings provide no details of the actual procession and celebrations, but he does note that Galeazzo sent many ambassadors to welcome his new wife who certainly would have passed by or under any number of *soprapporte* during their time in Genoa.<sup>120</sup>

Bona, along with Galeazzo sojourned in Genoa a few years later in 1471 while enroute home to Milan after a trip to Florence. Giustiniani reports that the Genoese received them with great joy bestowing upon them new honors and housing them in the best palaces. The celebrations were equal to those organized in recognition of major feast days and the Genoese presented the couple with gifts that included four gold bowls.

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<sup>117</sup> Giovanni Rucellai, *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: Il Zibaldone quaresimale*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1960), 28-34. For an analysis of this wedding see F. W. Kent et al., *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: A Florentine Patrician and His Palace*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1981), 66-76.

<sup>118</sup> Gregory Lubkin, *A Renaissance Court: Milan under Galeazzo Maria Sforza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 49-50.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>120</sup> Although Giustiniani mistakenly lists this event occurring in 1466, he regarded it as important enough to include in his synopsis. *Annali*, vol. 2, 453.

However, according to Giustiniani, the couple did not express the proper gratitude and left quickly and quietly after the third day.<sup>121</sup>

Other visitors to the city were welcomed with similar pageantry whether or not they desired such attention. In 1491, Beatrice d'Este, wife of Ludovico Sforza, attempted a secret visit to Genoa by arriving in disguise. However, she was soon discovered, and the citizens responded with the usual grand celebrations befitting someone of her stature.<sup>122</sup> Beatrice's father, Ercole I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, visited Genoa the following year and was appropriately welcomed with grand celebrations, which involved processing along Genoa's streets and surely passing by many *soprapporte*.<sup>123</sup> Emperor Maximilian I even stopped in Genoa in 1496. Giustiniani also mentions a procession of a true cross relic carried by young noblemen through Genoa's streets the same year as Maximilian's visit, but, unfortunately, no sources indicate the route taken by either party.<sup>124</sup>

While no known document states that any of these visitors stayed in the Doria palaces, the texts cited above indicate that such important guests were often housed in local palaces owned by prominent families. Given the Doria's high status, their palaces surely were frequently used for that purpose. Foreign visitors would have had ample opportunities to view *soprapporte* both in official triumphal processions that moved through the city, as well as during less formal visits to the individual palaces they decorated. Furthermore, such visitors would have been exposed to enough of the city to recognize the symbolic significance of this sculptural type as both civic, clan, and thaumaturgic symbols. *Soprapporte* marked the various family neighborhoods via the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 466-67.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 564. See also Senarega, *De rebus Genuensibus commentaria*, 21.

<sup>123</sup> Senarega, *De rebus Genuensibus commentaria*, 23.

<sup>124</sup> Giustiniani, *Annali*, vol. 2, 586-87. See also Senarega, *De rebus Genuensibus commentaria*, 59.

coats of arms carved on them while also repeating subjects, especially the image of their patron saint, George that were common to the entire town. Thus, the Doria clan fittingly asserted their prestige to this international audience and to themselves and their fellow citizens with a plethora of self-promotional, city-specific visual imagery as seen with the profusion of *soprapporte* throughout their *albergo*. The same must have been true of other, less well preserved, Genoese *alberghi*.

### **Additional Doria *Soprapporte***

While some Doria overdoors, especially those depicting St. George, clearly promoted the family's Genoese identity, other reliefs featured more personal subjects. One such *soprapporta* adorns a portal on Lazzaro Doria's palace on the northwest corner of Piazza San Matteo. Built around 1468 by its namesake, Lazzaro's palace is notable for its black slate and white Carrara marble striped façade dated to 1486, and for its two *soprapporte*, one over the main entrance and another just beyond it over the doorway leading from the vestibule into the interior rooms. Although it was built after Lazzaro returned from fighting in a 1466 expedition against Barcelona, as previously mentioned, the Republic gave the palace to Andrea Doria in 1528. The structure remains in relatively good condition today thanks to Orlando Grosso's restoration of it between 1929 and 1930. Unfortunately, the extent of this restoration makes it difficult to determine the chronology of the building's execution.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Lazzaro Doria had to destroy three houses that had been built by the Brancaleone family before 1414 in order to erect his grand palace. Poggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 167-68.

The outermost marble doorway is adorned with candelabra in relief, an unusual motif for the early 1500s, carved by an anonymous sculptor (Fig. 3-18).<sup>126</sup> In the palace's vestibule, a second overdoor sculpture made of slate features an elaborate, multi-figured narrative of the *Raising of Lazarus* that depicts Lazzaro's onomastic saint (Fig. 3-19). Scholars disagree as to this work's date and sculptor, and there are no extant documents that record its commission. Luciano Müller Profumo suggests a 1480 dating based mostly on stylistic considerations, while Piero Boccardo posits that the *Raising of Lazarus* was sculpted over a decade earlier, around 1468 when the palace was begun.<sup>127</sup> The work's surrounding door frame, similar to that of the outermost portal, is adorned with classicizing candelabra and plant motifs.<sup>128</sup> Two Doria eagles present the family's coat of arms, which also features another Doria eagle, in the slim architrave. The *Raising of Lazarus* is represented in the frieze immediately above this, with Lazarus emerging from his tomb at the relief's compositional center. Christ stands to the left of Lazarus in a *contrapposto* pose. Gesturing toward Lazarus, Christ commands him to rise from the dead in reward for his faith. Lazarus appears against a gap in the loggia that runs the length of most of the frieze's middle ground, lunging out of his tomb toward Christ (John 11:1-44). Witnesses on the right side of the panel cover their noses in response to the smell of rotting flesh emanating from Lazarus.

<sup>126</sup> *Soprapporte* adorned with candelabra became much more popular in the sixteenth century. Arturo Dellepiane dates the work to the early 1500s and attributes it to Niccolò da Corte. Dellepiane, *I portali*, 16. However, the evidence for this claim is uncertain and Ennio Poleggi has recently asserted that it could also be attributed to Michele d'Aria, Giovanni da Campione, or Gian Giacomo della Porta. Poleggi and Croce, *Ritratto di Genova*, 168.

<sup>127</sup> Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 121. Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 46. In a book published six years later, Piero Boccardo suggests instead that the work was sculpted in the 1490s based on its late Gothic style and evident Lombard influence. *Andrea Doria e le arti: Committenza e mecenatismo a Genova* (Rome: Arti Grafiche Fratelli Palombi, 1989), 17. In a recent publication, Riccardo Navone supports dating the work to around 1480. See *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 192-93.

<sup>128</sup> The candelabra motif may have been influenced by the similar design Francesco del Cossa carved on Palazzo Schifanoia's marble façade doorframe in Ferrara sometime after 1466 but before 1477-78. See Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 46, n. 23. See also Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 122.

Müller Profumo believes that the *Miracle of the Miser's Heart* of 1447-1450, one of four bronze reliefs Donatello sculpted for the high altar of the church of St. Anthony in Padua, served as a model for this work (Fig. 3-20).<sup>129</sup> No evidence has been found, however, of a Gagini sculptor visiting the Veneto to see that work. Moreover, while the Genoese relief demonstrates an awareness of linear perspective in its use of architecture to frame the narrative, Donatello's is by far the more sophisticated of the two.

Boccardo further posits that the considerably weathered Lazarus relief originally graced the outermost entrance in a far more noticeable position where the candelabra *soprapporta* is now installed.<sup>130</sup> If his hypothesis is true, Costantino Doria may have had the work moved to its current location when Matteo Bissone and Giovanni de Lancio renovated the palace in 1486. Alternatively, it could have been moved during the 1528 building alterations made for Andrea Doria.<sup>131</sup> In either case, if the sculpture was moved to this less visible location, it likely was done to allow Andrea to assert his ownership of the palace while still acknowledging his connections to Lazzaro's accomplishments and importance as one of his forebears.

Fewer lintel sculptures appear over some of the doors in the cloister of San Matteo, than those that decorate the convent of Santa Maria di Castello. There are six in all, but one has been mostly destroyed. Unlike a majority of *soprapporte*, the ones at San Matteo feature inscriptions at their centers instead of narratives; thus, they recall the Grimaldi brothers' 1452 commemorative inscription lintel in the sacristy of Santa Maria di Castello. However, their original placements and functions are uncertain. Although the slate inscriptions are difficult to read due to the sculptures' poor conditions,

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<sup>129</sup> Müller Profumo, *Le pietre parlanti*, 125.

<sup>130</sup> Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 46; idem, *Andrea Doria*, 18.

<sup>131</sup> Boccardo, "Per una mappa," 46, n. 25.

Domenico Piaggio transcribed four of them in the eighteenth century.<sup>132</sup> Each overdoor is inscribed with a year—1403, 1405, 1406, 1410, or 1431—and in all but one case, in which the prior of the church is the subject, they are epitaphs for Doria family members.<sup>133</sup> Thus, perhaps these works originally had functions similar to those of the four cenotaphs commemorating church and military leaders painted in the side aisles of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence.<sup>134</sup> They may have been located inside San Matteo and later removed as part of one or two renovation projects carried out in the mid-sixteenth century by Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli (1543-1547) and Giovanni Battista Castello (1557-1559), during which the interior of the church was extensively redecorated.<sup>135</sup> It is possible that the Doria chose to relocate these slabs over the cloister doorways, in part, because their rectangular shapes and compositions with the family’s coats of arms flanking the central inscriptions echo the format of traditional *sopraporte*.

In addition to the St. George and triumph overdoors discussed above that remain situated on or near the Piazza San Matteo, there are five overdoors no longer *in situ* that the Doria probably commissioned and integrated into their *albergo*’s decorative program.

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<sup>132</sup> Domenico Piaggio, “Epitaphia, sepulcra et inscriptiones cum stemmatibus, marmorea et lapidea existentia in Ecclesiis Genuensibus” (Genoa: Sezione di Conservazione, Biblioteca Civica Berio, 18th century), fols. 126r-30v.

<sup>133</sup> The prior of the church is mentioned in the following inscription: MCCCCXXXI Venerabilis P. Dominus Andreas de Leonibus Prior huius ecclesiae fieri fecit huc opus (1431, the venerable P. Dominus Andreas of Leon, the prior of this church, caused this work to arise) (Fig. 3-21). The other four inscriptions all similarly record a Doria death(s). For example, the following: MCCCCIII die V Maii Sepulcrum Pominorum Andriani et Oliverii de Auria fratrum diri Antorrii et heredum (5 May 1403, the tomb of the brothers Andriano, and Oliviero Doria, likewise heirs of Antorrius) (Fig. 3-22); MCCCCII Sepulcrum nobilis et egregii militis domini Alaonis del Auria domini Alaonis utriusque Doctoris eximi et filiorum m[e]jorum (1402, the tomb of the noble and eminent soldier Lord Alaonis Doria, outstanding doctor of civil and canon law, and of both his sons) (Fig. 3-23). For earlier transcriptions see *ibid.* I would like to thank Zach Fischer for assisting me with this translation.

<sup>134</sup> The cenotaphs in Florence Cathedral commemorated Cardinal Corsini, Fra Luigi de’ Marsili, John Hawkwood, and Niccolò da Tolentino respectively. See Eve Borsook, “The Power of Illusion: Fictive Tombs in Santa Maria del Fiore,” in *Santa Maria del Fiore: The Cathedral and Its Sculpture*, ed. Margaret Haines (Florence: Edizioni Cadmo, 2001), 59-78.

<sup>135</sup> *Liguria*, 137.

Although we have seen that it is one of the best-preserved Genoese *alberghi*, renovations and restorations have resulted in various changes to the Doria's fifteenth-century façade decorations. It is likely that even more *soprapporte* lined the Doria-inhabited streets at one time, advertising the family's power and prestige and identifying their palaces within the fabric of the city.

One such work is an astonishingly well-preserved slate Nativity *soprapporta* that today is in the Cappella del Piccolo Cottolengo, Don Orione in Genoa with an unknown provenance (Fig. 3-24).<sup>136</sup> Each of the perfectly-preserved coats of arms at either end displays a crowned eagle, a clear indicator that a Doria family member commissioned this unusually crowded *soprapporta* composition. Surrounded by light rays at the center, the Christ Child is its obvious focal point. Joseph and Mary kneel in prayer with bowed heads on either side of him. The artist employed hieratic scale in that he made Mary larger than the other figures in order to highlight her important role as a principal intercessor and Christ's Virgin mother. The Christ Child and Mary lock eyes as their bodies turn toward each other; behind them an ox and donkey stretch their necks outside a stable window to view the holy family better. The Annunciation to two shepherds tending to their flock is portrayed in the surrounding hills. One plays his pipe, while the other surveys the upper center scene of two angels flanking a radiant dove.<sup>137</sup> The relief's iconography is similar to that found in the five other examples of the same subject in Genoa, but its intricate detail and careful renderings of form are surpassed only by a

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<sup>136</sup> According to the organization's current director, Don Germano Corona, there are no documents regarding the establishment of the chapel or acquisition of this *soprapporta*. Interview with Don Germano Corona, 17 April 2009.

<sup>137</sup> Stylistically, the trees look very similar to those on the St. George *soprapporta* at Santa Maria di Castello and may suggest an attribution to Giovanni Gagini (Fig. 2-3). Like the Spencer Museum of Art's *St. John the Baptist in the Desert Surrounded by Four Angels soprapporta*, the bottom edge of rocky landscape flows over the frame (Fig. i-17).

marble *Nativity* that remains *in situ* over the door at Via Orefici 47, not far from the Doria *albergo* (Fig. i-13).

Four *soprapporte* fragments that today hang on the walls of the Kilt 2 self-service restaurant on the basement level of what originally was Branca Doria's palace may also have once decorated doorways within the Doria *albergo*, perhaps even in or on that very building.<sup>138</sup> One of the sculptures, the central section of a marble Lamb of God holding the Genoese flag, hangs on the entryway wall (Fig. 3-25). Three more *soprapporte* fragments are displayed on an adjacent wall. Two of them, one marble and one slate, are clearly Doria commissions. While only the lower section of a coat of arms is extant on the marble one (Fig. 3-26), almost the entire left side of the slate example depicts a crowned Doria eagle displaying the family's coat of arms (Fig. 3-27).

The last of the four fragments was probably part of a *soprapporta* that marked the main entrance to Branca Doria's palace.<sup>139</sup> It depicts a kneeling patron, most likely Branca, with his hat hanging from his hands that are clasped together in prayer (Fig. 3-28). A letter, probably an "I," is carved in the space above him. Two angels also kneel in front of the patron, facing whatever once was at the center of the slate relief's composition. Krufft and Riccardo Navone have both dated this work to 1460, and while Krufft does not go so far as to state that Domenico Gagini sculpted this work, he does draw stylistic parallels between it and the St. George tondo on the Chapel of St. John the Baptist that Domenico made in the city's cathedral.<sup>140</sup> It is difficult to determine the

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<sup>138</sup> Branca Doria, c. 1235-1325, appears in Dante's ninth circle of hell for sins of betrayal (canto XXXIII, 130-154), for in 1275 or 1290 he killed his father-in-law, Michel Zanche. Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno of Dante: Bilingual Edition*, trans. Robert Pinsky (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994), 292-93, 353 n. 132. Additional information on Branca may be found in Lingua, *I Doria a Genova*, 86-90.

<sup>139</sup> *Liguria*, 137.

<sup>140</sup> Krufft, *Portali genovesi*, 8. See also Navone, *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 194.

relief's subject because the central image is not extant, but Navone proposes that this is part of an Annunciation scene.<sup>141</sup> While that is possible, visual parallels between it and the only other extant *soprapporta* that includes a kneeling patron suggest it could have been a monogram of Christ. The other overdoor with a donor portrait is in the Museo di Castello Sforzesco in Milan. It also has a kneeling male figure in the lower corner and two angels in the same position and at its center is Christ's monogram (Fig. 3-29). Given the propensity for compositional repetition on *soprapporte*, this comparison suggests that the Branca Doria fragment was part of a similar scene. However, in it, the kneeling figures all look down—perhaps at the Christ Child in a Nativity—rather than up or out as they do in the Castello Sforzesco image.

At least two of the fragments, and possibly all four, once marked Doria *albergo* doorways. Despite their unknown provenances, their existence further proves the proliferation of this Renaissance Genoese sculptural type and their importance for prominent families in particular. The number of *soprapporte* within the Doria neighborhood suggests that they had a significant impact on the city's visual landscape. It also supports the argument for similar decorative configurations and themes for other Genoese *alberghi* associated with the city's leading families.

## Conclusion

Genoese secular *soprapporte* acted on one level as *albergo* billboards, identifying the residents of a particular neighborhood and promoting their importance and piety, and on another as protective talismans. While this chapter focused on just one Genoese neighborhood, it demonstrates how these objects, found throughout the city, probably

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<sup>141</sup> Navone, *Viaggio nei Caruggi*, 194.

would have functioned for other family clans as well. Unlike the Santa Maria di Castello lintel reliefs, the Doria *soprapporte* had a much wider audience, and, as such, impacted a larger group of people on a regular basis. With as many as fifteen or more overdoor sculptures once dispersed throughout the *albergo*, the Doria *soprapporte* were constant reminders not only of the family's might, visualized in its coats of arms and unique subjects, but also of their strong ties to their Genoese origins both through the employment of this regional type but especially in the highly visible St. George reliefs at the center of their *albergo*.

## Chapter Four Beyond Genoa: Ligurian *Soprapporte* in Savona and Triora

The present chapter examines *soprapporte* found in parts of Liguria other than Genoa. There are extant overdoor sculptures in at least thirty—and probably many more—towns in the region.<sup>1</sup> Thus, although Genoa is the largest city with *soprapporte* and its examples of the sculpted overdoors are by far the most often discussed in the literature, this type extended well beyond the Ligurian capital’s walls. These distinct sculptures also were not confined to large communities, as notable lintel reliefs adorn both sacred and secular doorways in far less populated towns such as Cénova, Chiavari, Pieve di Teco, Levanto, and Portofino.<sup>2</sup> Using two representative communities as case studies: the large coastal city of Savona and the small mountain town of Triora, this chapter considers *soprapporte* as a Ligurian, rather than solely Genoese, phenomenon. The significant number of extant overdoors in Savona and Triora, many of which remain *in situ*, are ideal focal points for this chapter because some differ markedly from those in Genoa whereas others demonstrate some intriguing parallels with regard to their subject matter. An exploration of the functional, iconographical, and stylistic similarities and differences of *soprapporte* all over Liguria, demonstrates that while the overdoor type is

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<sup>1</sup> See the Appendix for a list of towns with *soprapporte* and their subjects.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of sacred portal decorations are found at the church of San Pantaleo in the commune of Ranzo where a slate *Agnus Dei* and two slate Christ monograms adorn the primary entrances and at La Cervazza, the abbey of San Girolamo al Monte di Portofino (between S. Margherita and Portofino) where there is a St. George *soprapporta* over a cloister entrance. The Lapidici di Cénova, a guild of stonecutters, executed relief sculptures at San Pantaleo in 1493. A museum, known as both the Museo della Pietra and the Museo dei Maestri della Pietra di Cénova, has recently opened in Cénova, a small, inland mountain town. Its focuses are the area’s rich stonecutting history, including the native sculptors, their life in Cénova, their working process and workshop organization, the typology of their sculptures and a map noting the location of the remaining *soprapporte* in town. See “La scuola dei lapidici di Cenova,” Comunità Montana dell’Olivo e Alta Valle Arroscia, [http://comunitamontanaarroscia.imperia.it/Page/t01/view\\_html?idp=125](http://comunitamontanaarroscia.imperia.it/Page/t01/view_html?idp=125). Mauro Ricchetti, a Genoese architect and former university professor, asserts that there is a clear artistic link between Genoa and Cénova. Mauro Ricchetti, in discussion with the author, April 2009. This town has comparatively plain *soprapporte*; most are inscribed with monograms of Christ and some include rosettes.

common in Liguria and typical Genoese subjects are found throughout the region, local variations in terms of heraldry and iconography distinguish the ones made for each community.

As we have seen, little scholarship has been published on Genoese overdoors, but the dearth of research is even more pronounced with regard to *soprapporte* outside the Ligurian capital. A further lack of scholarship on Ligurian art during the Renaissance and the region's art in general complicates the study of this sculptural type. According to the Genoese historian Teofilo Ossian De Negri's brief discussion of *soprapporte*, lintel reliefs derive from the fourteenth-century practice of placing sculpted rosettes, crosses, and other simple markers over the keystones of doorways in inland Liguria. These symbols appear to have functioned as apotropaic signs, and Ligurians believed in their protective powers to prohibit evil from entering the home. Later, these central overdoor ornaments were enlarged, sometimes flanked by the patron's coat-of-arms, and sculpted onto fifteenth- and sixteenth-century rectangular *soprapporte*.<sup>3</sup> Hanno-Walter Kruft, who we have seen is a leading scholar on lintel relief sculptures and their history, wrote a brief follow-up article to his short book on Renaissance Genoese portals in which he addresses their existence beyond the confines of Genoa's walls.<sup>4</sup> As is the case in his book, however, in this short essay he focuses almost entirely on issues of style and attribution at the expense of those concerning context and function. In lieu of analyzing their significance in Liguria and placing them within the broader body of art historical scholarship, he lists some of these works and notes the difficulties in identifying original locations for the overdoors that were moved during nineteenth- and twentieth-century

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<sup>3</sup> Teofilo Ossian De Negri, *Il ponente ligure: Incrocio di civiltà* (Genoa: Stringa Editore, 1974), 171-72.

<sup>4</sup> Kruft, "Alcuni portali genovesi," 31-35.

renovation projects and are now displayed in museums.<sup>5</sup> This chapter, as well as the Appendix that lists *soprapporte* identified during the course of this study, substantially expands upon Kruff's article and contextualizes pan-Ligurian relief sculptures through comparisons to Genoese examples and a consideration of their original locations and connections to their respective patrons and communities.<sup>6</sup>

Like published sources on Genoese *soprapporte*, research on Ligurian overdoors has been almost exclusively the province of scholars from the region. Savona, due to its relatively large size and importance as a port city, has commanded comparatively more attention from historians such as Carlo Varaldo and Marco Ricchebono, although their work rarely discusses *soprapporte*, in part due to the nature of their discipline.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Triora, resident historian Padre Francesco Ferraironi, who primarily wrote during the first half of the twentieth century, is responsible for most of the published material on the town's history, art, and culture, including some exploration of Triora's *soprapporte*.<sup>8</sup> This chapter draws from these limited resources, as well as from a visual and contextual analysis of the extant objects in each city to recognize and further explain this unique sculptural type's Ligurian proliferation.

Savona and Triora are the focus of the present chapter, but the additional consideration of *soprapporte* in other cities is integrated in order to represent the style and iconography of lintel sculptures outside of Genoa more accurately. It begins with a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.: 31.

<sup>6</sup> The inaccessible nature of most building interiors, a challenge in every location discussed throughout this dissertation, means that the extent of the popularity of interior *soprapporte* is uncertain.

<sup>7</sup> For example, see Carlo Varaldo, *Savona nel secondo quattrocento: Aspetti di vita economica e sociale* (Savona: Cassa di Risparmio, 1980); Marco Ricchebono and Carlo Varaldo, *Savona* (Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1982).

<sup>8</sup> See Francesco Ferraironi, *Guida e album di Triora (Liguria Occidentale)* (Florence: Scuola Tip. Calasanziana, 1914); idem, *Arte e cultura nella montagna ligure (la zona di Triora presso Sanremo)* (Rome: Tip. Sallustiana, 1960).

discussion of Savona and its *soprapporte* in relation to Genoa and proceeds with a similar examination of Triora and its overdoor relief sculptures. Notable in both locations is the preponderance of lintels featuring the monogram of Christ and the lack of the St. George imagery that was so common in Genoa. Thus, Chapter Four concludes with an examination of the region's relationship to San Bernardino of Siena, the disseminator of the symbol of Christ at the time, and an exploration of the intention and impact of reproducing this image on the overdoors in these communities. While the limits of this study preclude a survey of all sculpted lintel reliefs outside of Genoa, the strategic sampling of specific coastal and inland sites and works clearly asserts the prominence of *soprapporte* as a regional, and not exclusively Genoese, decorative type with distinct iconographical vocabularies for every community in which they are found.

## **Savona**

During much of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when *soprapporte* were being produced, Savona was engaged in a struggle for independence from Genoa. A northern Ligurian port city about 48 kilometers west of Genoa, Savona was the only regional center that could compete with the larger maritime republic in international trade.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the Genoese sought to suppress and control their neighboring economic rival. While the Savonese succeeded in gaining their autonomy on several brief occasions in the preceding centuries, they always were forced to return to Genoese rule.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gaetano Ferro, "Liguria: A Mediterranean Region in a Phase of Transition," in *Liguria and Genoa at the Time of Columbus*, ed. Gaetano Ferro (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 14. See also Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 126.

<sup>10</sup> Savona managed to gain sovereignty in 1238-1251, 1318-1332, and 1335-50. See Maria Pia Rota and Gaetano Ferro, "The Western Riviera," in *Liguria and Genoa at the Time of Columbus*, ed. Gaetano Ferro (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 152; Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 124.

Despite its lack of political and economic independence, during the second half of the fifteenth century, Savona experienced one of the most vibrant economic and cultural climates in its history.<sup>11</sup> Such a prosperous time came about despite the negative effects of the 1453 fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks, which resulted in the blockage of Savona's trade routes in the Red and Black seas; as a consequence, Savona moved its commercial investments west and focused on Spain and Portugal instead.<sup>12</sup> The citizens of Savona also enjoyed a brief respite from serious conflict with Genoa during this period that allowed them to concentrate on their own domestic affairs.<sup>13</sup> It was during this time that at least forty-four *soprapporte* were made within the city. Of these, eight are no longer in their original locations and fifteen have been lost or destroyed.

Savona's urban spaces and social hierarchy were loosely modeled after Genoa's *alberghi* that were discussed at length in the previous chapter. In fact, historian Jacques Heers' study of medieval family clans led him to hypothesize that the *albergo* "...seems to have been the real and quite fundamental structure of a very large number of families of the Ligurian Riviera," not just those in Genoa.<sup>14</sup> According to Heers, *alberghi* developed in the Ligurian countryside and were later expanded and adapted in urban coastal centers like Genoa and Savona.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Marco Ricchebono and Carlo Varaldo's brief investigation of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century statutes in Savona's

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<sup>11</sup> Varaldo, *Savona nel secondo quattrocento*, 12-13; Ferro, "Liguria: A Mediterranean Region," 21; Carlo Varaldo, *La topografia urbana di Savona nel tardo medioevo* (Bordighera: Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri, Museo Bicknell, 1975), 23. Savona's economic success during this period is referred to as a 'golden age' in Trevor Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35. During the Renaissance, Savona was the second largest Ligurian city after Genoa, but today it is the third largest after Genoa and La Spezia with 62,553 residents according to the 2011 census. "Comune di Savona," <http://www.comune.savona.it>.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Rubin Stuart, *Isabella of Castile: The First Renaissance Queen* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 231-32.

<sup>13</sup> Rota and Ferro, "The Western Riviera," 153.

<sup>14</sup> Heers, *Family Clans*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

state archives that refer to geographic districting based on family affiliation, confirms Heers' assertion.<sup>16</sup> However, the specific ways in which the various family groups in Savona interacted politically, socially, and economically, both internally and externally, is less clear.<sup>17</sup> Despite the lack of evidence, given Heers, Ricchebono, and Varaldo's research on Liguria and its history, it seems that Savona generally followed the *albergo* system and, therefore, probably utilized *soprapporte* for similar purposes of family clan and civic identity as the Doria and other residents did in Genoa.

Unfortunately, identifying these families and their interactions through the study of *soprapporte* has been complicated by damage to and the destruction of many of these works. Most of the surviving lintel sculptures lack heraldry, which, like those in Genoa, Napoleon's troops effaced in 1797. In addition, Savona experienced heavy bombing during World War II, resulting in a great deal of destruction throughout the city. It was hit especially hard in 1944, with the worst bombings occurring in the historic city center due to its close proximity to the port and Savona's main industries.<sup>18</sup> These attacks devastated many of Savona's celebrated medieval and Renaissance buildings and included inevitable *soprapporte* losses.<sup>19</sup>

A majority of Savona's surviving *soprapporte* are clustered along Via Forni, Via Pia, Via degli Orefici, Via Quarda Superiore, and Via Vacciuoli in the extant areas of the historic center, where wealthy Savonese families had long resided. These streets possibly served as processional routes, for they are all linked to each other and situated near the

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<sup>16</sup> Ricchebono and Varaldo, *Savona*, 77.

<sup>17</sup> Varaldo, *La topografia urbana*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Ricchebono and Varaldo, *Savona*, 68, 100.

<sup>19</sup> Savona probably also experienced *soprapporte* loss and damage during earthquakes that occurred in 1537 and 1540. Gaetano Ferro, "The Natural Environment," in *Liguria and Genoa at the Time of Columbus*, ed. Gaetano Ferro (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992), 50.

site of the old cathedral.<sup>20</sup> Adjacent to the port and easily accessible, this neighborhood would have welcomed many foreign visitors. Thus, the *soprapporte* along these streets advertised the residences of distinguished Savonese families such as the Chigi, Cuneo, Pico, Della Rovere, and Gavotti, to a variety of merchants, travelers, and other members of the local population, but they also may have established visual connections to Genoa. In cases where Savona's *soprapporte* displayed what we have seen in previous chapters was Genoa-specific imagery, they likely functioned as signs acknowledging Genoese supremacy, links to prominent Genoese families, or shared Genoese devotions.

About twenty percent of Savona's *soprapporte* are carved from marble, while the rest were created from various slates. Local slate was significantly more popular than imported Carrara marble as it was easier to acquire, cheaper, and a more malleable material to sculpt. Carrara marble, as discussed in the Introduction, was more arduous to quarry and had to be transported a greater distance, so it naturally cost more. Thus, a marble *soprapporta* adorning a doorway in Savona certainly reflected its patron's greater economic resources.

While many of the same *soprapporte* subjects appear in Savona and Genoa, including two Annunciation overdoors and one depicting the Agnus Dei, there are some notable differences. For example, whereas narratives of St. George killing the dragon dominated the iconography of Genoese *soprapporte*, in Savona there were three, only one of which survives. Instead, the most popular extant lintels in the latter city depict more iconic decorative motifs such as coats of arms and the monogram of Christ. Commonly referred to as a "*trigramma*" in the Italian literature, Christ's monogram consisted of the

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<sup>20</sup> Priamar fortress, built in 1542 when the Genoese conquered Savona, marks the original location of the cathedral and old city. The present cathedral was built nearby in 1589.

letters “IHS.” Deriving from IHΣOYΣ, the Greek word for “Jesus,” “IHΣ” (iota-eta-sigma) is the Greek abbreviation. Christians translated this into the Latin “IHS” and placed it in various locations, including the catacombs in Rome.

There are eight monogram of Christ *soprapporte* still *in situ* in Savona, but there were likely many more during the Renaissance. All five of the extant overdoors along Via Pia feature this subject. Eight other lintel reliefs—now lost or destroyed—once adorned palace doorways along this street as well. While there are no known records of the imagery on these eight works, given the propensity for subject matter repetition on *soprapporte*, it is probable that at least some of them also featured Christ’s monogram. There is a typical surviving example of the *trigramma* over the entrance to Palazzo Gazzo at Via Pia 22 (Fig. 4-1). The palace’s overdoor relief sculpture features the monogram twice, both at the architrave’s midpoint and above at the center of the lintel, where it is encircled by a wreath held by angels, a common motif in ancient and medieval art. The flanking coats of arms on the slate (*ardesia*) *soprapporta* have been effaced beyond recognition. This work, along with an almost identical one made from the same material just down the street at Via Pia 10 (Fig. 4-2), also features ancient Roman style profile heads on the door jambs, a trope common in Genoa, which suggests an artistic exchange between the two cities as well as a Renaissance preference for classically-inspired images.<sup>21</sup> Nearby at Via Pia 9 (Fig. 4-3) and Via Pia 11 (Fig. 4-4) there are slate doorways with the same monogram of Christ at the architrave’s center. In each of these examples, angels present a now-destroyed coat of arms in the lintel above. The prevalence of Christ’s monogram on *soprapporte* in Savona is almost certainly related to San Bernardino’s Ligurian visits in 1417, 1418, 1429, and 1439, that will be discussed

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<sup>21</sup> The coats of arms at Via Pia 10 are also in poor condition. The right one may belong to the Chigi family.

later in this chapter. By placing these images over a palace threshold, a patron associated his family, whose coats of arms flank the monogram, with Christ and San Bernardino's sermons, invoking the protection of both exalted holy figures.

Although unusual, at least one Savonese *soprapporta* with a coat of arms at the center, like those mentioned above at Via Pia 9 and 11, retains its heraldic markings (Fig. 4-5). The ca. 1450-1500 lintel, today part of the collection of New York University's Villa La Pietra on the outskirts of Florence, measures 80 x 223 cm. No longer *in situ*, this marble relief features two angels presenting the Della Rovere coat of arms: an oak tree surmounted by St. Peter's crossed keys and the papal tiara. Smaller split Della Rovere and Basso family coats of arms framed by helmets and topped by Della Rovere oak trees, appear to the left and right of the central image. Beneath each tree a unicorn holds a banner with the Latin inscription "sub umbra tua" (under your shade).

Its original location and patron are unknown, but given the papal and Della Rovere family symbolism, it must have been made for a palace owned or associated with one of two Savonese popes elected from the family: Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere, r. 1471-1484) or Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, r. 1503-1513).<sup>22</sup> During their respective papacies, Savona experienced a building and decorating boom, and both popes remained connected to their Ligurian roots.<sup>23</sup> Sixtus IV cemented his legacy in Savona by building the Sistine Chapel (1480-1483) adjacent to its cathedral as a mausoleum for his parents. Julius II focused on "embellishing the family stronghold in Savona" by, among other things, commissioning Giuliano da Sangallo to design and build the Palazzo della Rovere

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<sup>22</sup> The file on this sculpture at the Soprintendenza ai beni ambientali ed architettonici della Liguria states that this work was made for the cathedral in Savona but gives no evidence to support this assertion. Carlo Varaldo, *Corpus inscriptionum medii aevi Liguria I: Savona, Vado, Quiliano* (Genoa: S.p.A., 1978), 152.

<sup>23</sup> Agostino Giustiniani writes of the favoritism bestowed upon Savona during these popes' reigns. Rota and Ferro, "The Western Riviera," 154.

(also known as Palazzo Santa Chiara) on Via Pia.<sup>24</sup> Patronage by such prominent figures as well as the city's economic prosperity generated an environment ripe for *soprapporte* production. As the Villa La Pietra relief features both the Della Rovere and Basso coats of arms, perhaps it was commissioned for, or by, Giovanni Basso and his wife Luchina della Rovere, the sister of Pope Sixtus IV, or their son Cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere (d. 1507).<sup>25</sup> Given their papal connections, they undoubtedly would have sought to visually align themselves with Sixtus IV's persona and power. The central position of the papal coat of arms along with the Latin inscription mentioned above, advertises these associations and thereby increases their prestige.

Neither of the two extant Annunciation *soprapporte* in Savona remain *in situ*, although their original locations are known. Today these slate (ardesia) sculptures hang over doors at the top of the entry staircase to the Pinacoteca di Savona in Palazzo Gavotti.<sup>26</sup> One relief is incomplete on both ends, where presumably there were coats of arms and portions of Gabriel's wings and Mary's chair (Fig. 4-6). These lacunae have been filled in with another material and smoothed over to make it appear as a complete, albeit smaller than is typical, *soprapporta*. Otherwise, the relief resembles Genoese versions of the same subject, which include a vase with lilies at the center between the kneeling Gabriel and Mary as the dove of the Holy Spirit enters her. Dated to the end of

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<sup>24</sup> Ian F. Verstegen, "Introduction," in *Patronage and Dynasty: The Rise of the Della Rovere in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Ian F. Verstegen (Kirksville, Mo.: Truman State University Press, 2007), xvi.

<sup>25</sup> Andrea Sansovino sculpted the tomb monument for Cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere in Santa Maria del Popolo, but only the Della Rovere coat of arms adorn it. See John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 3 of *An Introduction to Italian Sculpture* (London: Phaidon, 1996), 157, 59.

<sup>26</sup> It is unclear if any of the five *soprapporte* in the Pinacoteca were a part of its collection before the museum relocated to the newly-restored Palazzo Gavotti in 2003. It is possible that at least one of the Annunciation *soprapporte* was not placed here until 2007 or later. On 29 June 2007, the Società Savonese di Storia Patria addressed the deteriorating condition of a *pietra nera soprapporta* depicting the Annunciation located somewhere in the historic center by moving it inside. See Società Savonese di Storia Patria, "Attività 2007 in sintesi," <http://www.storiapatriasavona.it/attiv07.htm>. Thus, it seems likely that at least one of the Annunciation *soprapporte* was moved to the Pinacoteca after 29 June 2007.

the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sculpture's damaged state is probably due to the destruction of the palace it once adorned on Via Vacciuoli.

The other *Annunciation* relief was also salvaged from a destroyed building, but it is in far better condition, for it is missing only its coats of arms (Fig. 4-7). Taken from Palazzo Cuneo or Palazzo Pico, buildings that were presumably once located on a street in the historic center (Via Forni, Via Pia, Via degli Orefici, Via Quarda Superiore, or Via Vacciuoli), this fifteenth-century sculpture does not present a typical depiction of the Annunciation.<sup>27</sup> As one would expect based on other Ligurian Annunciation *soprapporte*, Mary and Gabriel are portrayed at the center, but, unusually, two saints frame the main scene on this example. On the far left a figure—probably St. Dominic—gazes out of the composition while holding a crucifix, an open book, and a lily.<sup>28</sup> San Bernardino of Siena is similarly placed on the far right, identifiable by the monogram of Christ above his right hand, which is raised in a preaching gesture, and by the three bishops' mitres at his feet that symbolize the three bishoprics (Siena, Ferrara, and Urbino) he declined to lead.<sup>29</sup> Given the relative profusion of *soprapporte* decorated with Christ's monogram in Savona, the inclusion of San Bernardino in this relief is of particular interest. Bernardino's preaching had a powerful effect on the Savonese, as it did wherever he traveled, and they found ways to further integrate his image, or the

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<sup>27</sup> While the Pinacoteca Civica's wall label says the work is from Palazzo Cuneo, another source cites Palazzo Pico on Via Quarda Superiore as its original location. Palazzo Pico was destroyed in the 1880s to make way for the construction of Via Paleocapa. It was placed in its current location in 1938. Agostino Bruno, "Quadro delle principali opere d'arte e d'antichità esistenti nelle fabbriche da demolirsi per il compimento della via Paleocapa," *Atti e Memorie della Società Storica Savonese* 2 (1890): XIV-XV.

<sup>28</sup> The lily is closely associated with Dominic and is also used to identify the saint on the Grimaldi *soprapporta* in the Loggia of the Annunciation at Santa Maria di Castello. Kaftal and Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, vol. 4, 236. It is also possible this figure is St. Francis, as he is often holds a book and crucifix, paired with San Bernardino of Siena. Kaftal and Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, vol. 4, 284-85. Other sources support the identification as St. Francis, but they identify the right saint as St. Anthony of Padua without any evidence. Varaldo, *Corpus inscriptionum medii aevi Liguriaie*, 60-61; Poggio Poggi, *Catalogo Pinacoteca Civica di Savona* (Savona: Officina d'arte, 1938), 19.

<sup>29</sup> Kaftal and Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, vol. 4, 157.

monogram associated with him, into established *soprapporte* patterns. Pairing the Franciscan Bernardino with another famed preacher and the founder of the Dominican Order, also known as the Order of Friars Preachers, emphasized the importance of God's message, appropriate for an object that presumably would have been viewed by a large number of people as they walked past it on the street. Furthermore, the introduction of additional saints to the standard Annunciation *soprapporta* format might represent the patron or his family members, just as we saw in Chapter Three with the *Raising of Lazarus* on Palazzo Lazzaro Doria (now Andrea Doria) in Genoa, which depicts Lazzaro's onomastic saint (Fig. 3-19).

While St. George was the most popular *soprapporta* subject in Genoa, outside of the capital city his image was comparatively less common. The Ligurian communities that still have St. George overdoor sculptures—such as Santa Margherita, Finale Ligure, and Cervazza—usually only have one; the exception to this is Levanto, where there are three.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, in Savona there is only one extant St. George portal sculpture, but photographic evidence shows that at least two others once existed along Via Vacciuoli that presumably were lost during World War II bombings.<sup>31</sup> Although photos of the Via Vacciuoli St. George *soprapporte* do not capture either work in great detail or focus (Figs. 4-8 and 4-9), it appears that they were virtually identical to the marble St. George lintel over the portal of Piazza Vescovado 13 (Fig. 4-10).<sup>32</sup> The extant St. George may also originally have adorned a Via Vacciuoli portal, as its current location over a modern

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<sup>30</sup> The Genoese workshop of Giovanni Gagini or Leonardo Riccomanno made the St. George works in Levanto. Piero Boccardo, "Un capitolo della scultura a Levanto nel Quattrocento: Le soprapporte," in *Le arte a Levanto nel XV e XVI secolo*, ed. Pietro Donato (Milan: Electa, 1993), 41.

<sup>31</sup> The length of the street referred to as Via Vacciuoli extends for only a short distance; it then turns into Via Verzellino and Via Forni in either direction.

<sup>32</sup> For photos of these two destroyed works, see Dellepiane, *I portali*, 63-64. Dellepiane does not state the cause of their destruction nor the source for his photographs.

door frame near this street suggests it has been moved. All three works depict St. George on horseback killing the dragon with the princess kneeling on a ledge, her arms crossed in submission with the entire scene flanked by destroyed coats of arms.<sup>33</sup> The carefully rendered composition in each version includes a stylized, rocky landscape that extends into the lower frame. The saint wields a sword and a shield that is decorated with the cross of St. George—as he also does in the *soprapporta* inside of Palazzo San Giorgio, Genoa, examined in Chapter Three—while eagles perched on helmets present the effaced coats of arms on each end.

Not only were the three Savonese St. George overdoors similar to each other, but they also had visual parallels to several Genoese *soprapporte*. In particular, the Savona St. George overdoor reliefs compositionally echo one at Genoa's Museo di Sant'Agostino (Fig. 4-11), and others *in situ* over doorways at Piazza San Cosimo 2r (Fig. 4-12), Via Ponte Calvi 3 (Fig. 4-13), and Vico Casana 52r (Fig. 4-14).<sup>34</sup> While none of these examples appears to have been executed by the same hand, there are enough formal affinities among their figures and compositions to conjecture a shared awareness of a St. George *soprapporta* archetype, or they may even have been produced by the same workshop.

Compared to the at least thirty-nine St. George *soprapporte* still in Genoa, the three known works depicting the same subject in Savona may seem insignificant. However, bearing in mind the destruction Savona endured over the years, at one time there may have been many more lintel reliefs adorned with this image heralding the

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Two, n. 96.

<sup>34</sup> The similarly composed *St. George Killing the Dragon* at the Museo Sant'Agostino (n. inv.: M.S.A. 527) is attributed to Domenico Gagini, dated to the middle of the fifteenth century, and made of slate (*pietra nera di Promontorio*).

Genoese presence there. Given the considerable numbers of St. George overdoors produced in Genoa and their role as symbols of the city and invocation of its patron saint's protection, it is likely that the placement of such works in Savona was meant to represent Genoa's dominance over Savona, Savonese families with close ties to the Genoese government, or Genoese citizens who lived in Savona or had residences there.<sup>35</sup>

As in Genoa, in Savona *soprapporte* sometimes were placed over private, interior doorways. There are two slate overdoors in the atrium of Palazzo Lamba Doria along Via Quarda Superiore and two interior *soprapporte* in Palazzo dell'Anziania in Piazza del Brandale.<sup>36</sup> The two in Palazzo Lamba Doria are over doorways that are set perpendicular to one another; one displays a monogram of Christ (Fig. 4-16), while the other features a coat of arms flanked by the letters "B" and "C" (Fig. 4-17).<sup>37</sup> Like Lamba Doria's palace in Genoa discussed in Chapter Three, this building was gifted to the Italian admiral after 1298, when he led the Genoese to victory in the battle of Curzola against the Venetians. The initials on the overdoors are probably those of a subsequent owner, but there is no evidence that connects it to a specific individual. As in Genoa, many palaces, including Lamba Doria's and the Palazzo dell'Anziania, have been converted into private apartments and are not accessible. Because no photographs or descriptions have been published of the latter palace, it is not possible to analyze its overdoors.

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<sup>35</sup> The one extant *Agnus Dei* in Savona, today displayed in the entrance hall of Palazzo Pozzobonello, also may have tied the city to Genoa, as this was a popular subject in the Ligurian capital (Fig. 4-15).

<sup>36</sup> Flavia Folco and Geza Kertesz, *Antichi portali del centro storico di Savona* (Savona: Tipolitografia "Priamà" di Marco Sabatelli editore, 1981); Pasquale Rotondi, *Il Palazzo Lamba Doria a Savona* (Genoa: Sigla Effe, 1958), 25.

<sup>37</sup> Varaldo, *Corpus inscriptionum medii aevi Liguriaie*, 71.

The profusion of portal decorations in Savona, as in Genoa, may be attributed in part to the closing off of previously open ground floor palace loggias.<sup>38</sup> We have seen in Chapter Three that loggias provided a venue for business and social activities and alerted passersby to the presence and location of various families within the city. Enclosing them altered this environment, replacing it with a network of confining, narrow *vicoli*, or *caruggi*, just as it did in Genoa. While Varaldo states that marble and slate *soprapporte* were added to Savonese palace facades after their loggias were enclosed to improve their appearances, these embellishments certainly carried far greater significance.<sup>39</sup> The choice of subject matter, placement, as well as the addition of family heraldry, call for a more nuanced reading that demonstrates the local and regional diversity of overdoor sculptures.

It appears that *soprapporte* provided a way for the Savonese to assert their individual identity, through the addition of heraldry, similar to what we have seen in Genoa. The presence of popular Genoese subjects, especially St. George, on a few *soprapporte* represents the exchange, influence and close contact between Genoa and Savona. Documents show that not only were the two cities financially committed to one another through trade, but some Genoese also resided in Savona in order to manage their commercial interests there.<sup>40</sup> The constant interactions between the Savonese and the Genoese, in addition to merchants from around Europe and the East, generated an

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<sup>38</sup> Varaldo, *Savona nel secondo quattrocento*, 19. See also Ricchebono and Varaldo, *Savona*, 39. For a brief discussion of how the loggia enclosures and subsequent interior renovations were similar to those in Genoa, see Varaldo, *La topografia urbana*, 24.

<sup>39</sup> Varaldo, *Savona nel secondo quattrocento*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Rota and Ferro, "The Western Riviera," 158.

atmosphere rich with exchange, including that of an artistic nature, and allowed for the dispersal of *soprapporte* throughout the region and beyond.<sup>41</sup>

## **Triora**

The western Ligurian town of Triora, located 165 kilometers from Genoa, sits high atop Mt. Trono, 30 kilometers from the sea and only a few kilometers from the Italy-France border.<sup>42</sup> It was by no means a populous town or an economic powerhouse, but it appealed to the Genoese during the medieval and Renaissance periods due to its strategic mountaintop position.<sup>43</sup> From this elevated vantage point, one can see the surrounding Argentine Valley for miles in all directions, a desirable advantage over approaching enemies. Although it is best known today for its late sixteenth-century persecution of witches, Triora also boasts at least eighteen extant Renaissance overdoor sculptures that leading local families such as the Velli and Gastaldi commissioned.<sup>44</sup>

Because of Triora's geographic position, the town frequently lost its independence to more powerful communities, especially Genoa. In 1260 the Genoese seized the town, which was then in the territory of Ventimiglia, and placed the Genoese citizen Guglielmo Boccanegra in charge of it.<sup>45</sup> Under his leadership the ruling city built five defensive fortresses around Triora that provided strategic advantages.<sup>46</sup> Not

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<sup>41</sup> See the Epilogue for a brief discussion of *soprapporte* found outside of Liguria. While scholarship on these works is negligible, beyond the region, overdoor relief sculptures are found exclusively in areas with Genoese trade connections.

<sup>42</sup> I would like to thank Mauro Ricchetti for first taking me to Triora and introducing me to its *soprapporte*.

<sup>43</sup> Triora's population today numbers around 398. "Comune di Triora," <http://www.comune.triora.im.it>.

<sup>44</sup> Other leading families were the Capponi, Stelli, Borelli, Faraldi, and Alberti. See Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Mauro Ricchetti, *Ulivi e pietre di Liguria: Antichi insediamenti abitativi dell'entroterra*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Busalla: Bonati & Scalenghe, 1988), 121.

<sup>46</sup> Sandro Oddo, "Profili storico-culturale di Triora," in *Triora e il suo territorio*, ed. Enzo Bernardini (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1994), 11.

surprisingly, the Triorans did not fully embrace this control, and they sought to reclaim their autonomy multiple times. In one such attempt in 1405, they attacked and severely damaged the Genoese-built fortresses, thereby symbolically breaking free from their occupiers, or at least contesting their authority.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the obvious differences between Triora and Genoa—size and location—the two communities do share a defining feature: the old urban centers of each city are characterized by the dark, narrow, winding streets that typify most medieval towns. These claustrophobia-inducing medieval *vicoli*, which, as we have seen above, are also present in Savona, probably resulted from a lack of available space on which to build. In all three cities, land was at a premium; Triora's size was confined by that of the mountain on which it stood, and Genoa and Savona were nestled between the sea and the mountains. The *vicoli* in each city are only occasionally punctuated by piazzas, most of which are relatively modest in size, resulting in a twisting labyrinth of streets.

Although small in size and population, Triora has a strong artistic tradition that flourished, perhaps not coincidentally, around the time it came under Genoese control in the thirteenth century, and that like Genoa was influenced by Tuscan and Lombard traditions.<sup>48</sup> In the fourteenth century a branch of the Florentine Capponi family took refuge in Triora, creating a direct connection between those two geographically diverse and distant cities.<sup>49</sup> Another example of the Tuscan-Trioran link is a *Baptism of Christ*, painted in 1397 by the Sienese artist Taddeo di Bartolo for the baptistery of Triora's

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<sup>47</sup> Giustiniani, *Annali*, vol. 2, 236.

<sup>48</sup> Oddo, "Profilo storico-culturale," 12.

<sup>49</sup> It is unclear why the Capponi chose to settle in Triora. Lorenzo Lanteri, "Il turismo a Triora ieri e oggi," in *Triora e il suo territorio*, ed. Enzo Bernardini (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1994), 10.

Collegiata, a Romanesque-style church built in 1390 that was dedicated to Saint Catherine of Genoa.<sup>50</sup> Although there are no known documents associated with Taddeo's altarpiece in Triora, he probably met the patron who commissioned it during one of two periods during which he worked in Genoa; from 1393 to 1394 and from 1397 to 1398.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, Milan-trained artists steeped in Lombard artistic traditions came to Triora in 1460 to work on the convent of San Domenico founded by the Dominican friar Cristoforo da Milano.<sup>52</sup> The Tuscan and Lombard styles were certainly represented in this mountaintop village, but, as we shall see below, the primary concern for the *soprapporte* sculptors in Triora appears to have been following or complementing the general compositional patterns for this sculptural type seen in other Ligurian towns.

Overdoor sculptures continued to be produced in Triora after the Renaissance, but the majority of *soprapporte* there were made before 1550. While the lintel sculptures occasionally are mentioned in the Trioran literature, Francesco Ferraironi's 1960 book entitled *Arte e cultura nella montagna ligure (la zona di Triora presso Sanremo)* (Art and Culture in the Ligurian Mountain[s] [the Zone of Triora near Sanremo]) stands as the only attempt to record these works.<sup>53</sup> Of the eighteen surviving overdoor sculptures, five that are extant and at least one known to have been obliterated by World War II bombings are sculpted with the image of Christ's monogram. There are also two decorated with various types of stylized foliage, four with a central coat of arms, two with subjects too damaged to identify, three that depict the Agnus Dei, and at least two Annunciation *soprapporte* adorned palace entrances at one time.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Gail E. Solberg, "Taddeo di Bartolo: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., New York University, 1991), 110-112.

<sup>52</sup> Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 182-84, 208-22.

Triora's extant overdoors are sculpted in various types of local slate from the nearby Cava quarry that are often identified in the literature as *pietra nera lavorata*, *ardesia*, or *pietra viva*, rather than the more expensive and prestigious Carrara marble from which many Genoese and some Savonese lintel reliefs were carved.<sup>54</sup> The lack of marble *soprapporte* indicates comparatively greater concentrations of wealth in Genoa and Savona where that medium was far more common, but it probably speaks even more to the extreme physical difficulty and excessive expense in transporting such a heavy material from the coast of Tuscany to the top of a Ligurian mountain. As is the case in Genoa, traces of pigment on some of the sculptures indicate that they were originally painted. In fact, the oldest *soprapporte* in Triora were usually made of gray slate (*pietra viva*), which was then painted with bright colors.<sup>55</sup> Sculpted by local artisans, most of the Trioran reliefs were made for local consumers, but, according to Sandro Oddo, some were exported to other Ligurian towns.<sup>56</sup>

As we have seen in Genoa and Savona, weathering, as well as deliberate and wartime destruction, has had a devastating effect on the survival rate of Triora's art. Napoleon's troops damaged most of the coats of arms on Triora's *soprapporte* when they passed through the town in May of 1797. The handful of overdoors that escaped this

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<sup>54</sup> Ricchetti, *Ulivi e pietre*, vol. 2, 120; Oddo, "Profilo storico-culturale," 12. In local dialect the *soprapporte* are referred to as "portún." See Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 208.

<sup>55</sup> Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 210. Painting sculptures was a common practice in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. It was not until the sixteenth century that Italian sculptors and their patrons began to favor monochrome works due to the belief that they better reflected an antique style. Marco Collareta, "From Color to Black and White, and Back Again: The Middle Ages and Early Modern Times," in *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 67-73.

<sup>56</sup> Oddo, "Profilo storico-culturale," 12.

vandalism were removed and temporarily hidden.<sup>57</sup> Triora suffered further losses of its artistic patrimony during World War II, especially on 5 July 1944, when the Germans bombed the town.<sup>58</sup> Parts of Triora, including the entire Rizettu neighborhood, were completely destroyed.<sup>59</sup> While Ferraironi notes only a couple of *soprapporte* losses as a result of the war, given the overall damage to the city, it is quite likely that even more were obliterated than he reports.

Of the varying subjects found on Triora's *soprapporte*, the only ones with narratives are the two *Annunciation* sculptures, which, as we have seen, was a popular subject for overdoor sculptures in Genoa, Savona, and throughout Liguria. The two examples in Triora were sculpted for palace doorways at Via Camurata 24 (Fig. 4-18) and Via Cava (Fig. 4-19), although the latter is no longer *in situ*.<sup>60</sup> The first example is sculpted from slate (*tenera ardesia*) and probably dates to the second half of the fifteenth century based on stylistic grounds.<sup>61</sup> The *Annunciation* lintel relief along Via Cava is smaller, carved from the same medium, and probably also dates to ca. 1450-1500. Both works follow the standard composition with the kneeling Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right; however, in the Via Camurata *Annunciation*, the lectern is the central focal point, while a vase filled with lilies occupies the middle of the Via Cava example's composition.

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<sup>57</sup> Surviving *soprapporte* include those for the following local noble families: Stella, Giauni and Borelli. The best examples of Trioran overdoor lintel reliefs have been protected by the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti since about 1920. Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 18, 210.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>60</sup> The Via Cava *Annunciation* remained in its original location until at least 1960. See *Ibid.*, 184, 91. Its present location is unknown.

<sup>61</sup> Due to its high quality, this sculpture has been placed under the protection of the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti. *Ibid.*, 182-84.

Given the established connections between Triora and Genoa, it is reasonable to conclude that the *soprapporte* sculptors in each city were at least aware of overdoors made in both locations if not mutually involved in their creation. As a result, the congruent compositions and narratives may have been deliberately replicated to serve similar purposes. In fact, Ferraironi believes there are particularly strong compositional and stylistic connections between the Via Cava work and one once found in Piazzetta Santo Sepolcro in Genoa.<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately, the current location of the presumed Genoese precedent is unknown, so a close comparison of the two works today is not possible.<sup>63</sup> Regardless of this loss, the Trioran *Annunciations* compositionally complement most of Genoa's extant *soprapporte* of the same subject, including slate works in the sacristy of the church of Nostra Signora del Carmine (Fig. 4-20) and at Via del Campo 35r (Fig. 4-21). These two Genoese *Annunciations* also share with their Trioran counterparts a lack of family coats of arms. While one cannot exclude the fact that heraldry may have appeared in close proximity to the reliefs on their respective palace façades, the absence of heraldry on them may suggest a greater emphasis on spiritual or apotropaic function over familial identity in these cases. Like most Italians, Triorans were devoted to the Virgin Mary and enthusiastically celebrated the feast of the Annunciation every 25 March.<sup>64</sup> Although these festivities were held only once a year, the *soprapporte* adorned

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 184. Hanno-Walter Kruft cites the Genoese work, noting that there is a provincial copy modeled after this type over a doorway along Via Colombo in the Ligurian city of Finalmarina. See *Portali genovesi*, 8; 21, n. 9; 29, fig. 5. For an image of the Finalmarina *Annunciation* see Dellepiane, *I portali*, 63.

<sup>63</sup> I have been unable to find photographs of this overdoor sculpture. There is an *Annunciation soprapporta* along Archivolto de Franchi, a short distance away. It appears to have been moved there from another location, as it is mounted on the wall rather than immured in it and its rough edges indicate that it was cut out of its original overdoor position. It is conceivable that this is the comparative work to which Ferraironi refers, but its condition is too deteriorated to confirm if this is the case.

<sup>64</sup> For a brief discussion of Ligurian devotion to the Madonna see Luigi Augusto Cervetto, *I Gaggini da Bissone*, 59-61. Genoese-specific devotion to the Virgin Mary is discussed in idem, *Genova e l'Immacolata*

with Annunciations acted as visual daily reminders of Mary's presence in and protection of the town, as well as her special status as the mother of Christ and one of the most important holy intercessors.

Among the Trioran *soprapporte* with a single heraldic coat of arms at the compositional center, are two relatively similar slate examples dated to the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>65</sup> One decorates a secondary entrance portal to Palazzo Capponi (later Massa, then Mentone) along Via Cima (Fig. 4-22), while the other adorns the sacristy portal in the Collegiate church (Fig. 4-23). Both have a desecrated coat of arms at their centers, but given that the Capponi originally owned the palace it adorned, the former almost certainly once bore the arms of that prominent Florentine family.<sup>66</sup> The sacristy lintel sculpture suggests that in Triora it may have been common to place *soprapporte* in important liturgical spaces as was the case in Genoa's Santa Maria di Castello.

Overdoor reliefs marking sacred entrances can also be found on a couple of churches on the outskirts of Triora. Despite the poor condition of the fourteenth-century church of Santa Caterina, the lintel marking its main entrance remains intact. This slate (*pietra recante*) *soprapporta* features an unidentified coat of arms surrounded by a worn inscription written in Gothic script (Fig. 4-24).<sup>67</sup> A little further out into the countryside stands the twelfth-century church of S. Bernardino, whose dedication was changed to that of the Franciscan saint shortly after his 1450 canonization, which the Capponi family maintained. Despite a lack of photos recording its appearance, textual sources state that a

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*nell'arte e nella storia* (Genoa: Adamo G. Lanata, 1904), 1-149. Portals adorned with the *Annunciation* were also common in Tuscan, Venetian, and Lombard art. See Belgrano, *Della vita privata*, 96.

<sup>65</sup> The Via Cima work is made of slate (*pietra di lavagna*). The sacristy portal in the Collegiata is inscribed with the date 1555. Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 214, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Napoleon's troops desecrated most of the coats of arms in 1797. *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>67</sup> Oddo, "Profilo storico-culturale," 12; Ferraironi, *Guida e album*, 49, 51; *idem*, *Arte e cultura*, 102-10.

*soprapporta* graced the church's main entrance and that Giovanni Canavesio (active 1450-1500) of the nearby town of Pinerolo painted a fresco cycle in its interior.<sup>68</sup>

Five extant monogram of Christ *soprapporte* in the town's center testify to its popularity there, which may be due to the influence of San Bernardino on the Triorans as discussed below. One of these is over a doorway on Vicolo Zunzelli (Fig. 4-25).<sup>69</sup> It marked the entrance to the home of Marco Capponi, a local notary and member of the Trioran branch of the Florentine family. Dated to ca. 1430, Marco proclaimed his residency and ownership of the palace by placing his initials "M" and "C" on either side of the monogram.<sup>70</sup> Weathering has eroded these details to the point that today they are barely recognizable, but Ferraironi's ca. 1960 photographic record of the sculpture shows the still discernable initials and clearly distinguishable Gothic script used for Christ's monogram (Fig. 4-26).<sup>71</sup>

A second monogram of Christ from roughly the same time period no longer exists (Fig. 4-27). This relief sculpture once adorned a palace entrance in Piazza della Collegiata, a relatively large open space in front of the Collegiate church. German bombs caused considerable damage to the piazza and church in July 1944, and several palaces abutting the square—including the one with the lintel relief of Christ's monogram—were destroyed as a result of these attacks. An earlier photograph Ferraironi published shows

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<sup>68</sup> Oddo, "Profilo storico-culturale," 12.

<sup>69</sup> The door's lower frame was removed after the house was first abandoned in 1625 and it is now utilized in a barn doorway on Salita del Castello. Based on the *soprapporta*'s length, the current lower doorframe is roughly two-thirds the size of the original framework. Ferraironi identifies this street as Via di S. Agostino. Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 216.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 261, fig. 150.

that the heraldic arms to the left of the *trigramma* was removed, probably in 1797, but an Agnus Dei on the right side remained intact until its destruction in 1944.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the heavy bombings the town endured, especially around Piazza della Collegiata, another monogram of Christ *soprapporta*, located in the square at number 16, survived (Fig. 4-28). It is a fifteenth-century slate relief lintel that features Christ's monogram on the architrave and the sun and a moon in the left and right corners, respectively. Two kneeling angels holding a coat of arms with a half open book placed to the right decorate the large lintel above the architrave and roundels with classicizing portraits adorn the middle of each door post. As was the fate of most Trioran coats of arms, Napoleon's troops also defaced this one in 1797. However, enough detail remained in 1960 for Ferraironi to identify on it a horse head, the Gastaldi family's symbol.<sup>73</sup> Large worn areas to either side of each angel, traditionally reserved for coats of arms in *soprapporte*, suggest that additional heraldic markings were included in the original design, but they, too, may have been destroyed in the late eighteenth century.

The first owners of the palace at Via Roma 6 chose a simpler composition for their slate monogram of Christ framed by now-damaged coats of arms and the letters "P" and "C" (Fig. 4-29).<sup>74</sup> This relief sculpture and the Capponi *soprapporta* discussed above are the only extant Trioran overdoors to incorporate the patron's initials, a practice that we have seen was common in Genoa. Presumably, such inscriptions were not as prevalent in Triora, but these two examples confirm that the use of initials was not unique to Genoa. Although Napoleon's soldiers scraped away the lower edges of each coat of

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 213; 53, fig. 142.

<sup>73</sup> The Gastaldi family had four houses nearby, thus supporting Ferraironi's hypothesis. Ibid., 214.

<sup>74</sup> The letters are not legible today, but they were apparent when they were photographed sometime before 1960. This street was previously known as Via Velli, so named for the family that occupied the house at number 6 after 1622. Ibid., 212 and 52, fig. 141.

arms, it appears that there is an eagle on the left one and a rooster on the right one. No specific sculptor is connected to this, or any other *soprapporta* in Triora, but Ferraironi suggests that the high carving quality evident in the latter monogram of Christ lintel is closely related to a fifteenth-century *soprapporta* featuring the same subject at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan (Fig. 3-33).<sup>75</sup> His comparison is rather perplexing, however, as the Castello Sforzesco work in marble involves a far more complex rendition of the monogram of Christ in which images of the patrons and angels surround the central initials.

The final monogram of Christ *soprapporta* that Ferraironi noted is located over the doorway at Via Largo Generale Francesco Tamagni 5 (Fig. 4-30). The lintel is composed of a monogram flanked by two floral motifs that may have been either decorative or at one time also contained family insignia. Above the door's cornice two lions support a now destroyed coat of arms between them. The Capponi family owned this house until the Tamagni family purchased it in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Due to the poor condition of the coat of arms it is not clear which family commissioned the *soprapporta*, although it is more probable that the Capponi ordered it during the heyday of Ligurian lintel relief sculptures. The lions may have also served as a symbolic reference to the Capponi's Florentine origins, where images of lions were abundantly employed as civic symbols in such highly visible locations as the west façade of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's town hall.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>77</sup> Renovations to the Palazzo Vecchio's façade after 1343 included the addition of lions on the west portal pediment and the Marzocco placed on the northern end of the *ringhiera* in 1349. See Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532: Government, Architecture, and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17. Donatello's version of the *Marzocco*, the heraldic lion, that replaced the previous one on the *ringhiera* dates to 1418-1420. The Florentines kept live

One curious omission from Ferraironi's documentation of Triora's *soprapporte* is a final monogram of Christ relief at Via Camurata 22 (Fig. 4-31). Carved from slate, it depicts Christ's monogram surrounded by two desecrated coats of arms and stylized foliage. Its dimensions are wider than those of the door it decorates, even when taking into consideration the fact that the right third of the sculpture is missing. It may be the case that this work was moved there from another location, made smaller for some reason, or covered over for a period of time and therefore Ferraironi overlooked it.

While many of Triora's *soprapporte* echo subjects seen in Genoese portal reliefs, there are no extant St. George or St. John the Baptist overdoor sculptures in the city. Given that Genoa controlled Triora during the primary period of lintel relief production, it is curious that the Genoese did not impress their favored *soprapporta* iconography upon their subject citizens. References to the city that ruled Triora, such as Genoa's heraldic arms on the Biblioteca Ferraironi's façade, are sporadic. Symbolic images were often employed to proclaim dominance over Triora, so one could expect to find many St. George overdoors prominently positioned throughout the city. Florentines used to place images of the Marzocco lion in the main piazzas of the towns under their rule and the image of Siena's patron saint the Virgin Mary, was dispersed throughout Sienese territory, so it seems natural that the Genoese would impose St. George imagery in Triora.<sup>78</sup>

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lions in the Zecca Vecchia and Piazza San Giovanni, and Pope Boniface VIII gave the city a lion in 1302. See Giovanni Villani, *Selections From the First Nine Books of the Croniche Fiorentine of Giovanni Villani*, ed. Philip Henry Wicksteed, trans. Rose E. Selfe (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1897), 166-67, 346.

<sup>78</sup> Since Mary was Siena's patron saint from 1260, her image was visible throughout Sienese territory in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance. See Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 107-207.

Although there may have been St. George *soprapporte* in Triora at one time, their absence today raises another question as to the extent of artistic exchange that existed between the mountain town and Genoa. It is clear from the images discussed above that the Triorans were familiar with some overdoor subjects also found in Genoa such as the Annunciation and monogram of Christ. What is less clear is how they knew about them. It is a matter of debate as to whether sculptors in Triora acquired *soprapporte* designs from the Genoese, vice versa, or if there was a mutual exchange of ideas between the two. Some scholars have argued that local Ligurian village artisans originally created these subject types, which were brought to Genoa when they immigrated to the city. According to Ferraironi's campanilistic opinion, when Trioran families moved to coastal locales like Sanremo and Genoa, they brought their artistic heritage with them. This legacy and tradition included *soprapporte*, taken with them in a completed form or they transported the materials and/or knowledge of sculpting techniques to allow them to recreate these works of art in their new homes.<sup>79</sup> Ferraironi further suggests that some Triora sculptures ended up adorning private homes in Genoa and Rome.<sup>80</sup> One possible example of this in Genoa is a slate Agnus Dei overdoor in Piazza Stella 5 made for the Stella family that immigrated from Triora in the fourteenth century (Fig. 4-32).<sup>81</sup> If such an evolution did take place, it is contrary to the more typical occurrence in which an idea is born in the more vibrant and influential big city and later picked up by the smaller surrounding towns, perhaps in an effort to associate themselves with a more powerful

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<sup>79</sup> Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 10. See also Mauro Ricchetti, *Ulivi e pietre di Liguria: Antichi insediamenti abitativi dell'entroterra*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Genoa: Stringa, 1985); Ricchetti, *Ulivi e pietre*, vol. 2.

<sup>80</sup> Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 36.

<sup>81</sup> Donaver, *Le vie di Genova*, 415. For information on dating and medium see Gavazza et al., "100 portali genovesi," n. 4. The coats of arms have been destroyed but the *soprapporte*'s position on a Stella palace strongly suggests that their family insignia originally decorated these now empty visual fields.

ally. As a local historian, Ferraironi was probably eager to champion Triora as the disseminator of *soprapporte* to Genoa, but there is no sound evidence to support this claim. Furthermore, the dissemination of this sculptural type probably developed as a reciprocal and regional, rather than an isolated and localized phenomenon.

### **San Bernardino in Liguria**

By far the most common non-Genoa-specific subject represented on *soprapporte* in both Savona and Triora is the monogram of Christ. Thus, a close exploration of the subject's particular connection to these two communities and the larger region of Liguria is warranted. San Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), the great Observant Franciscan preacher Pope Nicholas V canonized in 1450 and to whom the popularity of the monogram is credited, had an impact on the Ligurian people that is readily visible on lintel reliefs throughout the region.

While Bernardino popularized this symbol, he was not the first to use it. As recorded in the Gospels, Christ's apostles were the earliest to venerate the name of God.<sup>82</sup> Bernardino, however, augmented his monogram of Christ tablet with the inscription "In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur coelestium, terrestrium et infernorum" (That at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Emily Michelson, "Bernardino of Siena Visualizes the Name of God," in *Speculum Sermonis: Interdisciplinary Reflections on the Medieval Sermon*, ed. Cary J. Nederman Georgiana Donavin, and Richard Utz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 162; Vincenzo Pacelli, "Il Monogramma bernardiniano: Origine, diffusione e sviluppo," in *S. Bernardino da Siena predicatore e pellegrino*, ed. Francesco d'Episcopo (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 1985), 254.

<sup>83</sup> Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino* (Verona: Stamperia Valdonega, 1963), 118. See also Cynthia L. Polecchiti, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena & His Audience* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 7. The inscription is taken from Philippians 2:10.

Christ's monogram was so closely associated with Bernardino that it became his attribute.<sup>84</sup>

San Bernardino's effect on Ligurians was a result of the direct contact the future saint had with them during his travels as a preacher. He first visited Liguria in 1417, when he stopped to minister to the Genoese on his way to Lombardy.<sup>85</sup> The friar returned to northwest Italy the following year, this time traveling throughout Liguria to spread the word of God in many of the region's towns and villages—including Savona and Triora.<sup>86</sup> Apparently he especially enjoyed his time in Triora given that he later called the town "mia piccola patria" (my little homeland).<sup>87</sup> Although specific details of his activities and exact itinerary are uncertain, documents do indicate that Bernardino passed through Liguria again in 1429 and 1439 as he journeyed between the Tuscan and Lombard regions.<sup>88</sup> Well known and admired for his ability to deliver God's word with conviction in a relatable manner, regardless of his listeners' social standing or level of education, his sermons drew large crowds wherever he preached.<sup>89</sup>

The Franciscan saint adopted the emblem of Christ as a preaching tool around the year 1410, when he had it carved on houses and gates throughout Camaiore.<sup>90</sup> The

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<sup>84</sup> Michelson, "Bernardino of Siena," 178; Kaftal and Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, 158-66. For examples of images of San Bernardino identified by his "IHS" attribute made shortly after his death in 1444 see Machtelt Israëls, "Absence and Resemblance: Early Images of Bernardino da Siena and the Issue of Portraiture (With a New Proposal for Sassetta)," *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 11 (2007): 77-114. Franciscan churches also used his emblem on their pulpits. See Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *The Renaissance Pulpit: Art and Preaching in Tuscany, 1400-1550* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 34.

<sup>85</sup> In Genoa he delivered a series of Advent sermons. Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 28.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 1; P. Luigi M. Levati, "Relazioni di S. Bernardino da Siena con Genova e la Liguria," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 53 (1926): 226.

<sup>87</sup> Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 198.

<sup>88</sup> Levati, "Relazioni di S. Bernardino," 227.

<sup>89</sup> Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 25. See also Poggio Bracciolini, "Dialogue on Avarice," in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 243-44.

<sup>90</sup> John R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 463-64.

citizens of this small Tuscan town began placing copies of the monogram above their doors, just as Ligurians would do on their *soprapporte* shortly after Bernardino departed their region.<sup>91</sup> Beginning with a homily he delivered in Ferrara in 1417, the friar incorporated the *trigramma* into his sermons in a more tangible manner when he designed a painted, portable tablet upon which Christ's monogram surrounded by twelve gold sun rays appeared against a blue background, symbolizing faith.<sup>92</sup> Held by Bernardino as he spoke, the monogram acted as a symbolic shield of Christ, protecting the faithful from harm.<sup>93</sup>

As we know from contemporary images and texts, Bernardino lifted the tablet up at strategic points before, during, and after his sermons.<sup>94</sup> Several surviving images illustrate Bernardino displaying Christ's monogram to his audience as he preached. Sano di Pietro's *Sermon of San Bernardino in the Campo*, 1448, in Siena's Museo dell'Opera del Duomo and Neroccio de' Landi's painting of the same name of ca. 1474 that today is in Siena's Museo Capitolare (Palazzo Pubblico), show San Bernardino captivating his audience through the use of the IHS tablet.<sup>95</sup> The monogram continued to influence and inspire his followers long after Bernardino departed a city, as people attempted to capture its potency by placing the emblem on building façades—including above doorways—and various objects.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Peter Regalatus Biasiotto, "History of the Development of Devotion to the Holy Name" (Thesis, St. Bonaventure College and Seminary; St. Anthony's Pontifical "Athenaeum" at Rome, 1943), 91-92.

<sup>92</sup> Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 118; Michelson, "Bernardino of Siena," 159.

<sup>93</sup> Pacelli, "Il *Monogramma* bernardiniano," 256.

<sup>94</sup> An eyewitness description, written by Benedetto di Maestro Bartolomeom, relays this use of the IHS monogram. Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 11-12.

<sup>95</sup> Israëls, "Absence and Resemblance," 99.

<sup>96</sup> Michelson, "Bernardino of Siena," 157, 76. Evidence for the cult of Bernardino's popularity in Liguria is also discussed in Levati, "Relazioni di S. Bernardino," 233-35.

Emily Michelson discusses Bernardino's four major goals in using the monogram. First and foremost it should remind and encourage one's personal faith. Second, it should inspire each person somehow to demonstrate this faith. Third, it can be used as a tool for contemplation and fourth as a "healthy substitute for satanic amulets, charms, vanities, and sinful activities." The friar's followers were to use the monogram exactly as the preacher explained so as to avoid any associations with icons and unorthodox image worship.<sup>97</sup> Bernardino employed this emblem with the hopes that it would replace the self-promotional tradition of marking everything with factional emblems, especially family coat of arms, which he preached against using as property markers.<sup>98</sup> Ironically, instead of replacing this tradition and creating unity and peace, however, the Ligurians combined Christ's monogram with personal heraldic symbols in *soprapporte*.

As discussed above, the monogram of Christ decorates overdoors throughout Savona and Triora. While the limited literature on Ligurian art does not address the symbolic implication of this image on *soprapporte*, it is probable that it was adopted following San Bernardino's visits as a reminder or commemoration of his sermons.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the *trigramma* on lintel reliefs was by no means confined to Savona and Triora. Monogram of Christ *soprapporte* likewise dominated many other Ligurian towns with lintel relief sculptures. In cities such as Portofino, Taggia, Chiavari, and Impera-

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<sup>97</sup> Michelson, "Bernardino of Siena," 163-78.

<sup>98</sup> For example, Christ's monogram replaced the Visconti coat of arms on the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena as a sign of religion and peaceful liberty. P. Tommaso M. Gallino, "Il Monogramma del Nome di Gesù," *Bollettino di Studi Bernardiniani* 2, no. 1 (1936): 4. See also Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, 118; Polecristi, *Preaching Peace*, 8; Debby, *The Renaissance Pulpit*, 49. San Bernardino's objection to the display of family coats of arms is found in Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, ed. Carlo Delcorno, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Milan: Rusconi, 1989), 342.

<sup>99</sup> For example, while Ferraironi remarks that Bernardino's sign is carved over a number of Triora's portals and the architrave of the rustic churches of S. Zane and S. Bernardino, both located in the countryside surrounding Triora, he does not analyze the significance of the imagery or its placement. Ferraironi, *Arte e cultura*, 200.

Porto Maurizio, this image appears to have been the most common subject, presumably also reflecting the resonance of San Bernardino's sermons throughout the region and the protective powers believed to be associated with this emblem.

By contrast, *soprapporte* featuring Christ's monogram were not as popular in fifteenth-century Genoa as they were throughout the rest of the region. While the motif is visible over some doorways along Genoa's narrow streets today, many of them date not to the Renaissance, but rather to the eighteenth century, when the Genoese saint Leonardo da Porto Maurizio revived the use of the emblem in his sermons. Reclaiming its semiotic power St. Leonardo had the symbol printed and placed in both public and private locations. In 1737 the Genoese placed Christ's monogram over a city gate, and some palace *soprapporte* with the emblem—although it is unclear which ones—may date to this later period.<sup>100</sup> San Bernardino of Siena's preaching certainly impacted the Genoese, but they chose to place the monogram of Christ on coins struck in 1458 and 1463 rather than on their portals.<sup>101</sup>

## Conclusion

While an exploration of *soprapporte* in Savona and Triora does not represent decorative practices for all Ligurian towns, it does provide a basis for our understanding of lintel sculptures as a regional type. As we have seen, overdoors were not solely found in Genoa, but in some cases the Genoese did use sculpted lintels to represent its regional dominance. The seaside city of Savona, which is closer to Genoa and was under its rule during the period in which *soprapporte* were being produced, has more in common with

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<sup>100</sup> Pacelli, "Il *Monogramma* bernardiniano," 259-60.

<sup>101</sup> Biasiotto, "History of the Development," 98; Levati, "Relazioni di S. Bernardino," 231-32, 35.

Genoese lintel reliefs than does the more distant mountainous, land-locked Triora, but both cities displayed locally-distinctive overdoors. Indeed, as this chapter has demonstrated, *soprapporta* production was not an exclusively Genoese phenomenon. The popularity of imagery such as the monogram of Christ in areas outside of Liguria's capital city suggests that the Genoese did not dictate the subject matter selection of lintel works throughout the region. Indeed, *soprapporte* truly were a regional sculptural type with imagery that was specific to their locations.

## Epilogue

Ligurian *soprapporte* were produced in the greatest numbers between ca. 1450 and 1500. As discussed in the Introduction, the demand for these distinct sculptures continued to some degree into the sixteenth century, when their format and subject matter changed considerably. The extant, *in situ*, latter sixteenth-century portals of the palaces along the Strada Nuova in Genoa most clearly demonstrate this transformation. Planned in 1550-1551, the Strada Nuova, now known as Via Garibaldi, was constructed between 1558 and 1591. This street—which George Gorse calls a “linear piazza”—along which the wealthiest citizens built prominent palaces, was made substantially wider than Genoa’s other thoroughfares expressly to act as a stage for the grand theatrical processions of the nobility.<sup>1</sup> This new street’s emphasis on processional space suggests that the most affluent Genoese citizens desired to improve upon their already flourishing street celebrations and events and to increase their visibility in this new urban setting.

For a select few, the Strada Nuova replaced the traditional *alberghi* and their small piazzas and diminished the visual and symbolic importance of *soprapporte*. Gone were the religious narratives framed by coats of arms confined to the lintels; in their place were dramatic, floral motifs intermixed with classical-inspired details surrounding the entire doorway. By the seventeenth century, portal decorations had lost any resemblance to the fifteenth-century *soprapporte* examined throughout the preceding pages.

The four chapters of this dissertation examine some of the major themes and functions of *soprapporte*. While these are by no means exhaustive of the complex and diverse issues affecting our understanding of this sculptural type, some general

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<sup>1</sup> Gorse, “Classical Stage,” 304, 13-14.

conclusions may be drawn. First, most of these objects designate the patron via coats of arms or initials, and, as such, were intended to identify and/or advertise family affiliations. Second, although they appear with the greatest frequency in Genoa, lintel relief sculptures were not confined to Liguria's capital city; as is evident in Chapter Four and the Appendix, which lists all *soprapporte* found during the course of this study. These overdoor decorations were employed throughout the northwestern Italian region and, as we shall see below, in many foreign cities with which the Genoese had trade connections. Third, these sculptures conveyed various meanings that were dependent upon placement and audience. For example, the subject matters chosen for *soprapporte* generally were more diverse in ecclesiastical settings such as Santa Maria di Castello than they were on the exterior palace entrances that were readily visible along public streets. Fourth, certain iconic and narrative themes such as St. John the Baptist in the desert, St. George killing the dragon, and the Annunciation appear frequently in Genoa, indicating their appeal as representations of the city's chief intercessors, but other uncommon *soprapporte* narratives like the raising of Lazarus and St. Dominic addressing his followers show that patrons also sometimes chose subjects that had a more personal resonance.

Although the sculpted *soprapporta* type did not appear in other major Renaissance cities like Florence, Rome, and Venice, it did surface in Genoese trading outposts. Extant lintel relief sculptures on the Greek island of Chios,<sup>2</sup> in the important

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<sup>2</sup> The Genoese occupied Chios from 1346-1566. During this period, a number of Genoese noble families took up residence on the island and marked their new palaces with *soprapporte*. Unfortunately, most of these fifteenth-century overdoors were destroyed in 1566 during the violent Turkish conquest, but six lintel sculptures, two fragments, and a cast of a lost overdoor are still extant. Their subjects generally echo those found on *soprapporte* in Genoa. Three of the full lintels depict St. George, two feature the Annunciation, and the remaining example is of *Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*. The fragments are both pieces of

trading center of Istanbul,<sup>3</sup> and in the Flemish city of Bruges,<sup>4</sup> demonstrate the spread of Ligurian art and devotions through visual images—especially those of St. George—that were either created there or imported from Genoa. While additional investigation beyond this study is imperative to understand the full implication of *soprapporte* that appear outside of Liguria, it seems that, at least on a basic level, these works were signs of Genoese identity. The fact that lintel reliefs were used to identify the Genoese abroad proves that this sculptural type was seen as a clear, visual identifier of the Republic and its citizens. Additionally, it demonstrates the city’s success at branding itself to the extent that foreign viewers would associate these images with the Genoese.

Liguria, and Genoa in particular, largely has been neglected in Renaissance studies, but, as this dissertation demonstrates, their rich history and artistic patrimonies deserve further investigation. The case studies presented here reveal that *soprapporte* were intimately connected to the religious, social, economic, political, and cultural identities of those who commissioned and viewed them. Studying these objects contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of ritual activity, patronage, and the

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monograms of Christ and the cast is from a Nativity *soprapporta*. For images and a general discussion of these works see Hasluck, “Genoese Lintel-Reliefs,” 325, 28-30; Kruft, “Alcuni portali genovesi,” 31.

<sup>3</sup> The Genoese had a colony in the city called Galata, or Pera, from 1273 until the fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Ottoman Empire in 1453. While little remains there from the Genoese, I have found evidence that they also employed overdoors in this colony. A lintel fragment with three coats of arms (the center one appears to be a red cross on a white field, symbolic of St. George and, therefore, also of the Genoese) still adorns the portal in the old city wall leading into Galata (today known as Karaköy). Another *soprapporta* fragment, in poor condition, with lions or griffins on its coats of arms and rosettes is on the wall of a covered walkway leading into the courtyard of the Arap Mosque (Arap Camii). Formerly a church dedicated to Sts. Paul and Dominic, the building was converted into a mosque in 1475-1478. The portal sculpture may have been over a doorway in the church or on a nearby Genoese palace.

<sup>4</sup> The Genoese began trading with Bruges as early as 1277. As they did in Constantinople, the Genoese established a colony in Bruges that included a number of noble families such as the Doria, Spinola, and Adorno. A lunette relief of St. George killing the dragon hung over the main entrance of the Loggia of the Genoese, built for the consulate between 1399 and 1410. The narrative is surrounded by five coats of arms. Only one of the heraldic markers has been identified. The upper left coat of arms is that of Johannes Crabbe, Abbot of the Abbey of Dunes in Koksijde (1457-1488). For more information on the Genoese in Bruges see Parma, “Genoa-Bruges,” 79-97.

significance of liminal spaces, not only in and around fifteenth-century Genoa but for the Italian Renaissance in general.

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## **Appendix**

### ***Soprapporte in the Ligurian Region and Beyond***

This is by no means an exhaustive list of *soprapporte*. Instead, it is a compilation of the ones that I have encountered thus far in my field research and consultation of secondary resources. While I have traveled extensively, especially in the Ligurian region, I have not had an opportunity to visit all potential *soprapporte* sites. The works are divided into four main sections. The first three—Liguria, other areas of Italy, and outside Italy—list works *in situ*, while the final section is devoted to overdoor sculptures that are currently in museums, galleries, and private collections. The locations under each heading are organized alphabetically; the Genoa section, because there are far more lintel reliefs there, is subdivided by primary subject matter. Works that have been lost or destroyed are listed under their known original locations. The identifications of coats of arms are included for those works in which they are extant and legible.

### **Liguria**

#### **Aiola**

1. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble, ca. 50 x 90 cm. Church of San Maurizio. (Inscription: TE AMBROGII GEORGII ZIOANNISMARCI / OLIM IOANIS AIOLE MDXX.)

#### **Albenga**

2. *Archangel Michael*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (ardesia). Sacristy, Albenga Cathedral.
3. *Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via delle Medaglie d'Oro 77.
4. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1450-1500. Casa Fieschi-Ricci.
5. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Palazzo Vecchio del Comune (Civico Museo Ingauno).
6. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Piazza IV Novembre. Cazzulini coats of arms.
7. Unknown subject, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Vico Carenda.
8. Unknown subject (*Agnus Dei* or *Monogram of Christ* ?), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate.

Via delle Medaglie d'Oro 40.

### **Arcola**

9. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1450-1550, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Tancredi, Via Bernabò.

### **Borgio Verezzi**

10. Unknown subject, ca. 1450-1500.

### **La Cervazza**

11. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Over entrance to the Abbey of San Girolamo al Monte di Portofino (between Santa Margherita and Portofino). Da Passano (?) coats of arms.

### **Chiavari**

12. *Landscape, Inscription and Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Martiri della Liberazione 67.

13. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Giuseppe Raggio 9.

14. *Pagan Wine-Making Ritual, Madonna and Child Enthroned and Sts. John the Baptist, Anthony Abbot, Francis and Bernardino da Siena*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Via Rivarola 41, 43, and 45.

### **Finalborgo**

15. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Palazzo Bavassano.

16. Unknown subject, early sixteenth century. Palazzo del Tribune.

### **Finalmarina**

17. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500. Via Colombo.

18. Unknown subject, early sixteenth century. Palazzo Battaglieri, Via Barrili

### **Finale Ligure**

19. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (?). Via CA. Colombo, 4.

20. *Coat of Arms* (?), early sixteenth century, slate. Via Torcello.

21. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Anton Giulio Barrili 11.

22. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Villa Sanguineti.

### **Genoa**

#### **Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)**

23. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Corner of Via San Bernardo and Vico dietro il Coro di San Cosimo. Genoa and Cattaneo coats of arms.

24. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Piazza Cinque Lampadi 2.

25. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia). Via Pré 2.

26. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Piazza Stella 5.

27. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Vico del Sale.

28. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Vico di S. Antonio 9.

29. *Agnus Dei* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (?). Vico Doria 1r (interior); original location unknown.

#### **Annunciation**

30. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra di Promontorio). Via del Campo 35r.

31. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra di Promontorio). Vico del Campo 2.

32. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *Annunciation with Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico Croce Bianca 1.
33. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Archivolto de Franchi.
34. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra di Promontorio). Via Garibaldi 3 (interior). Spinola coats of arms.
35. *Annunciation*, ca. 1475-1500, slate (ardesia), 68 x 165 x ca. 5 cm. Current location unknown; originally located at Vico delle Mele 14r (damaged during World War II). Traces of Gambarotta and Monsia coats of arms.
36. *Annunciation*, fifteenth or early sixteenth century, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), Piazza S. Nicolosio 9/Salita San Nicolosio 17.
37. *Annunciation with Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico di Santa Fede 8.
38. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Piazza Veneroso 4 (interior).
39. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Sacristy of the church of Nostra Signora del Carmine, Via Brignole de Ferrari; originally located over a doorway near the start of Via Monte Cristo in 1973.
40. Gasparo della Scala da Carona (?), *Annunciation with Monogram of Christ and St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, 1488, slate (ardesia). Convent of Santissima Annunziata di Portoria, Viale IV Novembre 5.
41. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia). Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior); original location unknown.
42. *Annunciation*. Piazzetta S. Sepolcro; original location unknown.
43. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Vico delle Cavigliere 21
44. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500. Via Gramsci 1 (interior).

### **Candelabra**

45. *Candelabra*, ca. 1450-1525 (?), marble. Via Fossatello 2.
46. *Candelabra*, ca. 1450-1525 (?), marble. Piazza Grillo Cattaneo 2.
47. *Candelabra*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), marble. Via San Bernardo 16r.

48. Anonymous Tuscan sculptor and Nicolò da Corte (?), *Candelabra*, ca. 1450-1515, marble. Palazzo Andrea Doria (previously Lazzaro Doria), Piazza San Matteo 17.
49. *Candelabra*, ca. 1450-1525 (?), marble. Piazza Sauli 23r.

### **Imperial Profiles**

50. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico Mele 13.
51. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico del Campo 5.
52. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via Canneto il Lungo 27.
53. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via Canneto il Lungo 29r
54. *Imperial Profiles*, early sixteenth century, slate. Vico Carmagnola 7.
55. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Piazza Cattaneo 25r.
56. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Piazza Cavour 7.
57. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via Chiabrera 19r.
58. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico delle Fasciuole 14.
59. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico Superiore del Ferro 1.
60. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico Superiore del Ferro 13r.
61. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via delle Grazie 48r.
62. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico degli Indoratori 4.
63. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Piazza della Lepre 9.
64. *Imperial Profiles*, early sixteenth century, slate. Piazza Pinelli 3.
65. *Imperial Profiles*, early sixteenth century, slate. Piazza della Posta Vecchia 2 (exterior and interior).
66. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via della Posta Vecchia 12.
67. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Via di Pré 8.

68. *Imperial Profiles*, early sixteenth century, slate. Piazza San Donato 21.
69. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico San Filippo.
70. *Imperial Profiles*, early sixteenth century, slate. Palazzo Pagano Doria, Vico San Matteo 12.
71. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico San Pancrazio 4.
72. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate (ardesia). Via San Siro 2.
73. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico di Santa Fede 8.
74. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Piazza Sauli 3 (interior).
75. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Piazza Stella 5.
76. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1475-1525 (?), slate. Vico degli Stoppieri 13.
77. *Imperial Profiles*, ca. 1500-1550, marble. Palazzo Spinola Serra, Via Cannelto il Lungo 31 (interior, counter-façade).

### **Monogram of Christ (*Trigramma*)**

78. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico degli Adorno. Adorno coats of arms.
79. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via del Campo 1A. Navone coats of arms.
80. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico Cicala 1.
81. Domenico Gagini (?), *Monogram of Christ* or *Nativity* (?) (fragment), ca. 1460, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 46.5 x 71 cm. Vico Doria 1r (interior); original location unknown.
82. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico delle Fiascaie 5r.
83. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Vico degli Indoratori 2 (interior).
84. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (possibly seventeenth century), marble. Piazza Invrea 3Ar.
85. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via Lomellini

17 (interior).

86. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, marble (?). Via della Maddalena 9r; lost/destroyed.
87. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico San Cristoforo 12.
88. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico Scurreria 1.
89. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Vico della Torre di San Luca 6r. Spinola coats of arms.
90. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico Untoria 9.
91. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (possibly seventeenth century), marble. Vico delle Compere 2.
92. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Piazza Campetto 5.
93. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Salita allo Arcivescovato 3.

### **Nativity and Adoration of the Magi**

94. *Adoration of the Magi*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Girolamo Grimaldi, Salita San Francesco 4 (interior); originally located at Via Canneto il Lungo 31.
95. *Adoration of the Magi*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico Carmagnola 7 (interior).
96. Elia Gagini (?), *Adoration of the Magi*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Via degli Orefici 47r
97. *Nativity*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Cappella del Piccolo Cottolengo, Don Orione, Via Paverano 55; original location unknown. Doria coats of arms.

### **St. George**

98. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, late fifteenth century, marble (?). Piazza dell'Amico; lost/destroyed.
99. Pace Gagini (?), *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1455-1466, marble. Via Canneto il Lungo 29r.

100. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Via Canneto il Lungo 67Ar.
101. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra di Promontorio). Vico Casana 52r.
102. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Piazza Cattaneo 80r. Cattaneo coats of arms.
103. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Piazza de Franchi; lost/destroyed.
104. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via Garibaldi 4 (interior); original location unknown. Banco di San Giorgio coats of arms.
105. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Piazza dei Giustiniani 6 (interior). Giustiniani coats of arms.
106. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (probably after 1470), marble. Vico degli Indoratori 2.
107. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, Vico degli Indoratori; lost/destroyed.
108. Workshop of Domenico Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Via Luccoli 14. Carpenino (?) coats of arms.
109. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico della Madonna 11r.
110. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1457, marble. Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo, Vico delle Mele 6. Serra family coats of arms.
111. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble or slate (?). Vico delle Mele 11; lost/destroyed. Franchi coats of arms.
112. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Vico Oliva 13r. Grimaldi-Olivi coats of arms.
113. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Palazzo Spinola, Piazza Pellicceria superiore 3. Spinola coats of arms.
114. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via Ponte Calvi 3. Gentile coats of arms.
115. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Via della Posta Vecchia 12.

116. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via Pré 68. Fregoso (?) coats of arms.
117. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble or slate (?). Piazza San Cosimo 2r.
118. Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, 1457, marble. Palazzo Doria-Quartara, Piazza San Matteo 14.
119. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (ca. 1470-1480), marble. Palazzo Danovaro (previously Doria), Salita San Matteo 19. (\*copy: original was stolen)
120. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Via San Siro 6
121. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Vico Teatro delle Vigne 1; lost/destroyed.
122. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Corner of Vico Torre delle Vigne and Vico del Fornaro. Franchi coats of arms.
123. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior); original location unknown.
124. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Palazzo San Giorgio (interior). Banco di San Giorgio coats of arms.
125. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (?). Passegiata Anita Garibaldi (Genoa-Nervi); original location unknown.
126. *St. George Killing the Dragon with Sts. John and Siro* (?), ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. South wall of San Lorenzo; original location unknown.
127. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Cloister of the church of Santa Maria delle Vigne.
128. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Villa Imperiale di Terralba, Via San Fruttuoso 70.
129. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Oratory of San Gaetano (Genoa-Cornigliano).

### **St. John the Baptist**

130. *Baptism of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vico degli Indoratori 2 (interior).

131. *John the Baptist*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia), Vico dietro il Coro di San Cosimo 12 (interior).
132. *John the Baptist*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia ). Villa Spinola, Via Filippo Corridoni 5 (interior).
133. *John the Baptist*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Palazzo Brancaleone Grillo, Vico delle Mele 6r. Serra (?) coats of arms.
134. *John the Baptist* (?), ca. 1450-1500, slate. Via Pré.

### **Triumphs**

135. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini (Elia or Pace Gagini?), *Triumph of the Doria*, ca. 1470-1480, marble. Via David Chiossone 1. Doria coat of arms.
136. *Triumph of the Spinola*, ca. 1450-1500 (before 1470?), marble. Via della Posta Vecchia 16.

### **Unknown Subjects**

137. *Unknown Subject with Doria Coat of Arms* (left corner fragment), ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Vico Doria 1r (interior); original location unknown.
138. *Unknown Subject with Doria Coat of Arms* (left side fragment), 1450-1475, slate. Vico Doria 1r (interior); original location unknown.

### **Various Subjects**

139. Workshop of Giovanni Antonio Amadeo (?), *Resurrection of Lazarus*, ca. 1468-1480, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Palazzo Andrea Doria (previously Lazzaro Doria), Piazza San Matteo 17.
140. *Christ Pantocrator*, ca. 1453, slate (ardesia). Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior, third floor). Grimaldi coats of arms.
141. *St. Dominic*, ca. 1453, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior, second floor). Grimaldi coats of arms.
142. *St. Dominic*, ca. 1453, slate (pietra nera di Promonotorio). Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior, third floor). Grimaldi coats of arms.

143. *St. Jerome*, ca. 1453, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Convent of Santa Maria di Castello (interior, third floor). Grimaldi coats of arms.
144. *Madonna and Child, Sts. Catherine, and Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico dietro il Coro della Madonna 12.
145. *The Tiburtine Sybil Points Out the Madonna to Augustus*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia). Vico Cavigliere 21.
146. Leonardo Riccomanno and Giovanni Gagini, *Grimaldi Brothers' Dedicatory Inscription*, 1452, marble. Sacristy of Santa Maria di Castello (interior).
147. *St. Siro*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (?). Via San Pietro della Porta 13r; original location unknown.
148. *St. Anthony Abbot*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (?). Vico Inferiore del Roso.
149. *The Monogram of Mary ("M")*, ca. 1500-1550, marble (?). Piazza Cinque Lampadi.
150. *Madonna and Child*, ca. 1500-1550, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Vico Ragazzi 7.
151. *Coat of Arms*, early sixteenth century, marble. Palazzo Spinola Serra, Via Canneto il Lungo 31 (interior).

### **Impera-Porto Maurizio**

152. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1500-1550 (?), slate. Via Domenico Acquarone 34.
153. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Archivolto della Tina.
154. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Salita de Ferrari Gregorio.
155. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Parrasio 12/16.
156. *Monogram of Christ, a Bishop and St. Catherine*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Santa Caterina 15.

### **Lerici**

157. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, 1487. Castello di Lerici.

## **Levanto**

158. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450, slate (ardesia), 40 x 135 cm. Castello San Giorgio.
159. *Annunciation, St. Anna, the Madonna and Child and a Donor*, ca. 1450, marble, 80 x 285 cm. Church of Santissima Annunziata.
160. Michele d' Aria, *Bishop Bartolomeo Pammoleo*, ca. 1466-1502, marble, 225 x 97 x 15 cm. Church of Sant' Andrea.
161. *Crucifix and the Madonna, Sts. John and James, and disciplinanti*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 53 x 150 cm. Oratory of San Giacomo.
162. *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Sts. John the Baptist and Francis (?)*, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, marble (?), 40 x 196 cm. Via al Mescio 1.
163. *Glory of San Bernardo da Siena*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 69 x 164.2 cm. Convent of Santissima Annunziata (interior).
164. *Monogram of Christ (?)*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia), 45 x 130 cm. Courtyard of the Oratory of San Giacomo.
165. Workshop of Domenico Gagini, *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 78 x 195 cm. Salita San Giacomo 4.
166. *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, slate (ardesia), 56 x 218 cm. Convent of Santissima Annunziata; current location unknown.
167. Workshop of Giorgio Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 70 x 210 cm. Church of Nostra Signora della Costa. Da Passano coats of arms.
168. Workshop of Giorgio Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Salita San Giacomo 6. Da Passano coats of arms.
169. Workshop of Leonardo Riccomanno, *St George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 69 x 199 cm. Villa Tagliacarne Massola, Via D. Viviani 75 (interior).
170. *Sts. John the Evangelist, Roch, Sebastian and disciplinanti*, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, slate (ardesia), 30 x 168 cm. Church of San Nicolò.

## **Moneglia**

171. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, 1455, marble. Church of S. Giorgio.

### **Pieve di Teco**

172. School of Cénova, *Annunciation*, ca. 1402-1500, slate (ardesia). Ospitale S. Lazzaro.

173. *Monogram of Christ*, 13 August 1427 (inscribed), slate. Corso Mario Ponzoni 20.

174. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Corso Mario Ponzoni 40.

175. Unknown subject (six figures), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Corso Mario Ponzoni (to the right of #20).

### **Ponzano Superiore**

176. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, 1541, marble. Banco di San Giorgio.

### **Portofino**

177. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Castello di S. Giorgio.

178. *Imperial Profile Flanked by Two Dolphins* (?), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Castello di S. Giorgio.

179. *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Patrons and Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1555, slate. Santa Maria Assunta Oratory.

180. *Madonna and Child with Sts. George and Martin*, second half of the thirteenth century, marble. Castello di S. Giorgio.

181. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Castello di S. Giorgio.

182. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Castello di S. Giorgio.

183. *Monogram of Christ*, 1512, slate. Castello di S. Giorgio. Da Passano (?) coats of arms.

184. *Nativity* (copy of Via degli Orefici 47r), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (painted white). Castello di S. Giorgio.

185. *Nativity*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Castello di S. Giorgio.

186. Unknown subject, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Duca degli Abruzzi 18-16.

### **Portovenere**

187. *Genoese Griffin*, ca. 1450-1500.

### **San Remo**

188. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (?). Via F. Corradi 92.

### **Santa Margherita**

189. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Church of the Frati Cappuccini.

190. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Villa S. Giacomo.

191. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1550 (?), slate. Via Pescino 1.

### **Sarzana**

192. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, early sixteenth century, marble. Porta della Dogana.

### **Savona**

193. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1525 (?), slate. Palazzo Pavese-Pozzobonello, Via Quarda Superiore 7 (interior); original location unknown.

194. *Coat of Arms*, early sixteenth century (?), slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), Palazzo Lamba Doria (interior), Via Quarda Superiore 16 and 18 (interior).

195. *Coat of Arms*, early sixteenth century. Palazzo Ghirardi, Via Vacciuoli.

196. *Coat of Arms*, early sixteenth century. Via Orefici.

197. *Coat of Arms*, early sixteenth century, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Vacciuoli-Cerisola, Via Vacciuoli 1.
198. *Coat of Arms and Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Via Pia 11.
199. *Coat of Arms and Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Casa Ramolla (?), Via Pia 9.
200. *Decorative Portal*, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Bardolla, Via Quarda Superiore 29r.
201. *Decorative Portal*, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Del Carretto, Via Orefici 2.
202. *Decorative Portal*, early sixteenth century, marble. Palazzo Pavese-Pozzobonello, Via Quarda Superiore 7.
203. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Palazzo Giusti-Rosso (Basso della Rovere), Via Pia 15.
204. *Decorative Portal*, early sixteenth century, marble. Palazzo Pavese-Pozzobonello, Via Quarda Superiore 7.
205. *Double Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Via Pia 10. Chigi (?) coats of arms.
206. *Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Grasso, Via Pia 22.
207. *Monogram of Christ*, early sixteenth century, slate (pietra Lavagna). Palazzo Pavese-Spinola, Via Pia 26.
208. *Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Torre Aliberto-Sacco-Jachino, Via Quarda Superiore 11r.
209. *Monogram of Christ*, early sixteenth century (?), slate. Palazzo Lamba Doria, Via Quarda Superiore 16 and 18 (interior).
210. *Monogram of Christ*, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Richermi-Ghirardi, Via Quarda Superiore 26.
211. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Piazza del Vescovado 13.
212. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Via Vacciuoli 12; destroyed.
213. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500. Via Vacciuoli 8; destroyed.
214. *Sts Peter and Paul, and an Eagle* (?), ca. 1450-1525 (?), slate. Palazzo Pavese-Pozzobonello, Via Quarda Superiore 7 (interior); original location unknown.

215. *Suckling Madonna and Child Enthroned with Sts. Catherine and Barbara and Two Soldiers*, ca. 1450-1525 (?), marble. Palazzo Pavese-Pozzobonello, Via Quarda Superiore 7 (interior); original location unknown.
216. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Sormano, Via Pia 1; lost/destroyed.
217. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Naselli-Feo, Via Pia 2; lost/destroyed.
218. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Cassinis-Del Carretto, Via Pia 5; lost/destroyed.
219. Unknown subject, slate (arenaria). Palazzo Della Chiesa, Via Pia 6; lost/destroyed.
220. Unknown subject, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Della Chiesa, Via Pia 8; lost/destroyed.
221. Unknown subject, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Luca Pavese, Via Pia 12; lost/destroyed.
222. Unknown subject, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Da Pisa, Via Pia 13; lost/destroyed.
223. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Multedo-Chiabrer, Via Spinola 4; lost/destroyed.
224. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Multedo-Sacco, Via Sacco 1; lost/destroyed.
225. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo di Civile Abitazione, Via Pia 29; lost/destroyed.
226. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo di Civile Abitazione, Piazza della Rovere; lost/destroyed.
227. Unknown subject, slate (ardesia). Palazzo dell'Anziana, Piazza del Brandale (interior).
228. Unknown subject (2), slate (ardesia). Palazzo dell'Anziana, Piazza del Brandale (interior).
229. Unknown subject, slate (ardesia). Palazzo Richermi-Ghirardi, Via Quarda Superiore 22; lost/destroyed.
230. Unknown subject, marble. Palazzo Monte di Pietà, Via A. Aonzo 9; lost/destroyed.

### **Sestri Levante**

231. *Decorative Portal* (above are two griffins facing a freestanding pilaster with Roman Imperial portrait at base of column), ca. 1500-1600, slate. Via XXV Aprile 1945 165.

232. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1500-1600, slate. Via XXV Aprile 1945 173r.

233. Unknown subject, ca. 1450-1500. Vico del Bottone (interior).

### **Taggia**

234. *Agnus Dei* (?), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Soleri già Pantano; original location unknown.

235. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Soleri già Pantano 18.

236. *Crowned Female Figure and Kneeling Patron Below Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Soleri già Pantano 18 (adjacent to above).

237. *Madonna della Misericordia*, ca. 1450-1500, marble or slate (?). Location unknown; lost/destroyed (?).

238. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Soleri già Pantano 15.

239. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Ruffini 2.

240. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (?). Via Ruffini.

241. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Via Cassana 4.

242. *St. Jerome*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Pasquale Alfonsi 2r.

243. *Unidentified Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble or slate (?). Via S. Dalmazzo,

244. *Unidentified Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Soleri già Pantano; original location unknown.

### **Trebbiano**

245. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Vestibule of Palazzo Tancredi.

### **Triora**

246. *Agnus Dei* (?), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Roma 16.

247. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Ca' dei Cherùghi, Via Giuni 14.
248. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Ca' dei Velli (today Asplanato), Via Sant'Agostino 8.
249. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Camurata 24.
250. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Cava.
251. *Castaldi Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Casa dei Gastaldi (now Lanteri-Ausiello), Via del Pantáno (Via Cava).
252. *Coat of Arms* (?), ca. 1450-1500, slate. Casa dei Valoria, Via Velli (today Via Roma).
253. *Coat of Arms* (?), ca. 1500-1600 (?), slate. Via Giuni 6.
254. *Coat of Arms* (flanked by lions), 1500-1550 (?), slate. Via Roma 12
255. *Coat of Arms and Monogram of Christ* (?), 1555, slate. Sacristy of the Collegiata.
256. *Coat of Arms (Monogram of Christ in the architrave)*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Piazza Reggio (Collegiata) 16.
257. *Decorative Foliage*, 1500-1550 (?). Via Castello 4.
258. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra di Lavagna). Palazzo Capponi (later Massa, then Mentone).
259. *Decorative Portal*, ca. 1500-1550 (?), slate. Via Cima 4.
260. *Male Figure, Two Eagle's Heads, and Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500, slate. Vicolo Zunzelli.
261. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Camurata 22.
262. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Via Roma già Velli, 6.
263. *Monogram of Christ with Agnus Dei*. Piazza della Collegiate; destroyed.
264. *Monogram of Christ*, 1604, slate. Via Camurata 24.
265. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500. Via Sant'Agostino (near #8); destroyed in July 1944.

266. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1430, slate (?). Ca' del Marco Capponi, Vicolo Zunzelli. (lintel posts were transferred to a building along Via S. Agostino in 1625.)
267. *Monogram of Christ* (above the lintel, possibly a later addition, are two lions supporting a rounded object between them that may have contained a coat of arms), ca. 1450-1550, slate (Lavagna). Palazzo Tamagni (latter Palazzo Capponi), Via Largo Gen. Francesco Tamagni, 5.
268. Unknown subject. Via del Castello; lost/destroyed.
269. Unknown subject (probably *Coat of Arms* or *Monogram of Christ*), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate. Gandolfi house, Via Camurata 10 (abutting Piazza della Collegiate).

### **Ventimiglia**

270. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1514-1550, marble (?). Palazzo Pubblico, Banco di San Giorgio, Via G. Garibaldi 7.

## **Other Regions of Italy**

### **Bastia, Corsica**

271. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1550 (?). Entrance to Castello di Bastia.

### **Bonifacio, Corsica**

272. *Monogram of Christ*. Maison Charles-Quint.

### **Naples, Italy**

273. *Coat of Arms*. Stairway entrance of Palazzo Orsini (interior).
274. Domenico Gagini and a Lombard assistant, *Triumphal Arch of Alfonso I d'Aragona, refiguring the time of Dioscuri (Doppelseitige Portalrahmung mit Sopraporten: Einzug König Alfonsos in Neapel, Schlachtszene)*, ca. 1457, marble, 470 x 167, double-sided doorway in the Sala dei Baroni, Castelnuovo.

### **Palermo, Sicily**

275. Workshop of Domenico Gagini, *Christ Pantocrator*, possibly commissioned by the Signori Bonnet in 1495. Entrance to S. Maria di Gesù.

### **Trapani, Sicily**

276. Workshop of Domenico Gagini (?), *Annunciation*. Church of Santa Maria di Gesù.

## **Outside Italy**

### **Bruges, Belgium**

277. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1475, marble. Main entrance to Genoese Loggia. One coat of arms is that of Johannes Crabbe, Abbot of the Abbey of Dunes in Koksijde (1457-1488).

### **Chios, Greece**

278. Unknown Lombard-Genoese sculptor, *Annunciation*, ca. 1475-1500, marble. Cemetery next to the church of S. Giovanni. Giustiniani coats of arms.

279. Unknown Lombard-Genoese sculptor, *Annunciation*, late fifteenth century, slate (ardesia). Church of St. Phanourios near the monastery of Nea Moni. Castiglione coat of arms.

280. Workshop of Domenico Gagini (?), *Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Church of Chalkiós (originally on the Castello of Chios).

281. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Over main entrance of church at Neochori.

282. *Nativity* (destroyed), cast of the upper right fragment extant at the gymnasium at Mytilene shows shepherd, dog, rocky landscape and part of a coat of arms. Giustiniani (?) coats of arms.

### **Istanbul, Turkey**

283. *Three Coats of Arms* (fragment), ca. 1400-1500, marble (?). Old city wall portal

leading into Galata, Istanbul's former Genoese district (today known as Karaköy). Center coat of arms might be Genoese heraldic arms.

284. Unknown subject (fragment), ca. 1400-1500, marble (?), on a wall adjacent to Arap Mosque/Arap Camii (formerly a Roman catholic church dedicated to Sts. Paul and Dominic; converted into a mosque, 1475-1478). Lion or griffin coats of arms and rosettes.

### **Nice, France**

285. *Monogram of Christ*, 1482, slate or marble (?).

## **Museums, Galleries, and Private Collections**

### **England**

#### **Heim Gallery, London:**

286. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Ex-collection Heim Gallery, London; current location unknown.

#### **Victoria and Albert Museum, London:**

287. Style of Giovanni Gagini, *Annunciation*, 1450-1500, slate, 45.7 x 114 x 6 cm (inv. 7254-1861).
288. *Candelabra*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Taken from Via Ponte Calvi, Genoa.
289. Giovanni Gagini (?), *Nativity Surmounted by St. Stephen*, 1472, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 517.1 x 234.2 cm (inv. 221:5-1879). Taken from the entrance to the Doria family chapel, church of San Bartolomeo della Certosa, in Rivarola, outside Genoa.
290. Giovanni Gagini (?), *Resurrection Surmounted by St. George*, 1480, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 509.5 x 229 cm (inv. 222:5-1879). Taken from the entrance to the Spinola family chapel, church of San Bartolomeo della Certosa in Rivarola, outside Genoa.
291. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate

(pietra nera di Promontorio), (inv. 7255-1861).

292. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), (inv. 7256-1859).

## **France**

### **Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris:**

293. Style of Giovanni Gagini, *Annunciation*, ca. 1450, marble, 49 x 65 cm (inv. 1778).

## **Germany**

### **Bode Museum, Staatlich Museen, Berlin:**

294. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble (inv. A E 12).

## **Greece**

### **Byzantine Museum, Chios:**

295. Unknown Lombard-Genoese sculptor, *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble.

296. After Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Giustiniani and Castelli coats of arms.

297. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini (?), *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), gray marble.

298. *St. John the Baptist (?) and Monogram of Christ* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (pietra di Thimiana).

## **Italy**

**Galleria Civica di Palazzo Rocca, Chiavari, Italy:**

299. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate (ardesia) (inv. n. 4.). Taken from Casa dei Garibaldi, Via Rivarola.

**Museo Bardini, Florence, Italy:**

300. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 95 x 165 cm (n. 180, inv. 128). Inscription: PAX HUIC DOMUI ET OMNIBUS HABITANTIBUS IN EA.

**Villa La Pietra, Florence, Italy:**

301. Domenico Gagini, *Angels Holding the Della Rovere Papal Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 80 x 223 cm.

**Castello D'Albertis, Genoa:**

302. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), slate, Castello D'Albertis, Genoa, Italy.

303. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio). Taken from a doorway in the San Matteo zone of Genoa. In two pieces with missing middle section.

304. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, marble. Partial Doria family coats of arms.

305. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble.

306. *St. George Killing the Dragon* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio).

307. *St John the Baptist* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate.

308. *St. John the Baptist and St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, ca. 1450-1500, slate.

309. Unknown subject (fragment, lower right corner with coat of arms), ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble.

**Museo di Sant'Agostino, Genoa:**

310. *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 72 x 180 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 264).

311. Genoese Master, *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1400-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 48 x 119 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 266).
312. Genoese Master, *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 48 x 119 cm. Spinola coats of arms.
313. Ligurian School, *Agnus Dei*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 58 x 188.5 x 12 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 2903).
314. Pace Gaggini (?), *Annunciation*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 185 x 322 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 537).
315. *Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1550 (?), marble, 110 x 70 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 265).
316. Gagini workshop (?), *Coat of Arm (?)* (fragment), ca. 1475-1500, slate (ardesia), 50.5 x 43.5 x 5.5 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 546).
317. Ligurian or Lombardy Artist, *Coat of Arms*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 58 x 161 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 267).
318. *Decorative Portal* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 27 x 37 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 510).
319. *Decorative Portal with Monogram of Christ*, 1560, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 36 x 328 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 334).
320. *Madonna and Child*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 58 x 140 cm, (n. inv. M.S.A. 342). Spinola and Adorno coats of arms.
321. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500 (ca. 1470), slate (ardesia), 34 x 168 x 2.5 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 235). Taken from the Ponticello zone. Grimaldi or Vivaldi (?) coats of arms.
322. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 105 x 168 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 529). Taken from the demolished Ponticello zone.
323. *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia).
324. *Monogram of Christ*, sixteenth century, slate (ardesia), 38 x 176 x 2.5 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 2911).
325. *Monogram of Christ* (fragment), 1475-1500, slate (ardesia), 42.5 x 60 x 5 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 515).
326. Ligurian School (Gagini?), *Monogram of Christ*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia), 55 x

115 x 4.5 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 3100)

327. *Nativity*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia) (n. inv. M.S.A. 2146).
328. *Nativity*, 1480s, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 51 x 118 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 500). Taken from Palazzo Ricci a Montesano.
329. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), (n. inv. M.S.A. 527). Sculpture taken from Piazza San Lorenzo. Fieschi coats of arms.
330. Gagini workshop, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1460-1470, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 75 x 200 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 528).
331. Gagini workshop, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1465-1470, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), (n. inv. M.S.A. 2955). Conestagio or Giustiniani coats of arms.
332. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1460, slate (ardesia), 77 x 203 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 198). Fieschi coats of arms (?). Taken from Palazzo Fieschi in Piazza San Lorenzo (palace destroyed in 1840).
333. *St. George Killing the Dragon* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, marble, 76 x 93 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 52).
334. *St. Jerome*, late fifteenth century, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 46 x 125 cm, (n. inv. M.S.A. 385).
335. Anonymous local master, *St. John the Baptist*, early 1450-1460, slate (ardesia), 56 x 170 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 335). Taken from a demolished home in Via del Molo. Centurione (?) coats of arms.
336. *St. John the Baptist*, ca. 1470-1480, slate (ardesia), 48 x 110 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 337). Taken from a Pinelli family house.
337. Anonymous local master, *St. John the Baptist*, ca. 1450-1465, slate (ardesia), 42 x 139 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 382).
338. *St. John the Baptist*, ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 60 x 145 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 572). Possibly taken from the zone of San Lorenzo.
339. *Two Angels with Coats of Arms* (crowned roosters), ca. 1450-1500, slate (n. inv. M.S.A. 980). Taken from Taggia, acquired by la Reghetto in 1926.
340. *Unidentified Saint* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 66 x 22 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 513).
341. *Unidentified Saint* (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 50

x 20 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 514).

342. Unknown subject (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), 29 x 40 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 511).

343. Unknown subject (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia), 31 x 58 cm (n. inv. M.S.A. 523).

344. Unknown subject (fragment), ca. 1450-1500, slate (ardesia) (n. inv. M.S.A. 524).

### **Castello Sforzesco, Milan:**

345. *Annunciation*, ca. 1450, slate (Lavagna), 52 x 76 cm (inv. 1135).

346. *Monogram of Christ* (with donors), ca. 1470-1480, marble, 75 x 205 cm (inv. 1178 (516)).

347. *San Giorgio Killing the Dragon* (three fragments), slate (pietra nera di Promontorio), largest fragment 36 x 35 x 5 cm (1167/A,B, and C ECSA, photo ID). Bottigella coats of arms.

348. School of Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1500-1550, marble, 64 x 154 cm (inv. 1010). Taken from the Villa Tittoni di Denio.

### **Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan:**

349. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500 (?), marble. Room 1A in the Cappella di Caterina e S. Ambrogio; unknown original location.

### **Musei Civici del Castello Visconteo, Pavia:**

350. Lombard master, *Annunciation*, ca. 1460-1470, slate (ardesia), 40 x 123 cm (inv. C 45/XIV). Taken from the monastery of S. Salvatore.

### **Pinacoteca Civica, Savona:**

351. *Annunciation*, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, slate (ardesia), 45 x 140 cm. Taken from a destroyed building on Via Vacciolli.

352. *Annunciation with Sts. Bernardino and Dominic* (?), late fifteenth century, slate (ardesia), 51 x 200 cm. Taken from Palazzo Cuneo (destroyed).

353. *Coat of Arms* (fragment), late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, slate.
354. *Decorative Portal*, late fifteenth century, slate. Taken from a destroyed house on Via de Veri.
355. *Decorative Portal*, late fifteenth-early sixteenth century, slate.

### **United States**

#### **Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California:**

356. Domenico Gagini, *Allegorical Portrait of Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon, Castille, and Naples (Der thronende Ferdinand der Katholische)*, 1473-1479, marble, 78.7 x 160 cm (William Randolphe Hearst Collection 50.33.4).

#### **Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas:**

357. Domenico Gagini, *John the Baptist in the Desert*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 41.9 x 114 x 11.4 cm (inv. 1960.0057). Taken from Via del Molo (neighborhood destroyed) in Genoa.

#### **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts:**

358. *St. George Killing the Dragon*, ca. 1450-1500, marble, 66 x 208.2 cm (inv. S0n4).

#### **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri:**

359. Workshop of Giovanni Gagini, *St. George Killing the Dragon*, late fifteenth century, marble, 71.12 x 198.12 x 27.94 cm (inv. 41-29/11).

#### **Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington:**

360. *Annunciation*, early sixteenth century, slate, 48.26 x 136.53 x 4.45 cm (inv. 55.217)