TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH INTERIOR IN RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

Before the late sixteenth century, the churches of Florence were internally divided by monumental screens that separated the laity in the nave from the clergy in the choir precinct. Enabling both separation and mediation, these screens were impressive artistic structures that controlled social interactions, facilitated liturgical performances, and variably framed or obscured religious ritual and imagery. In the 1560s and 1570s, screens were routinely destroyed in a period of religious reforms, irreversibly transforming the function, meaning, and spatial dynamics of the church interior. In this volume, Joanne Allen explores the widespread presence of screens and their role in Florentine social and religious life prior to the Counter-Reformation. She presents unpublished documentation and new reconstructions of screens and the choir precincts that they delimited. Elucidating issues such as gender, patronage, and class, her study makes these vanished structures comprehensible and deepens our understanding of the impact of religious reform on church architecture.

Joanne Allen studied at the University of Warwick and the Courtauld Institute of Art, and completed postdoctoral research in Rome, Florence, and Venice. She teaches at American University, where she won a teaching award, and her research has been supported by the Renaissance Society of America and the Italian Art Society. She is a choral singer and artist.
TRANSFORMING THE CHURCH INTERIOR IN RENAISSANCE FLORENCE
SCREENS AND CHOIR SPACES FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO TRIDENTINE REFORM

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Frontmatter
More Information
To my parents, Lesley and Ray
CONTENTS

List of Figures  page xi
Acknowledgments xvii
Note to the Reader xix

Introduction  1
The European Architectural Context  6

CHAPTER 1
Accessing the Italian Church Interior  16
Choir Precincts and Screens  17
The Functions of Screens  31
Space and Accessibility  41
Images of the Divided Church Interior  46

CHAPTER 2
Transforming Churches in Fifteenth-Century Florence  62
Medieval Florence  63
Quattrocento Florence: Centralized Choirs  64
Quattrocento Florence: Retrochoirs  70
CHAPTER 3
Transforming Churches in Sixteenth-Century Florence
The Sixteenth-Century Italian Context c. 1500–1560 94
Florentine Renovations c. 1561–1564 100
Vasari’s Renovations of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce 123
Florentine Renovations in the 1570s and Later 135

CHAPTER 4
Community and Access in the Mendicant Church:
Santa Maria del Carmine 149
The Tramezzo 153
The Ascension Day Festa 161
Space and Accessibility in the Carmine Church Interior 165
The Removal of the Carmine Tramezzo 165

CHAPTER 5
Patronage and Place in Monastic Churches: Santa Trinita and San Pancrazio 174
The Benedictine Vallombrosans 175
Santa Trinita 175
San Pancrazio 193

CHAPTER 6
Gender and Ceremony in the Nuns’ Church: San Pier Maggiore 219
The Civic Role and Status of San Pier Maggiore 220
The Spatial Layout of the Church 224
The Removal of the Men’s Choir 235

CHAPTER 7
Behavior and Reform in the Civic Oratory: Orsanmichele 247
Orsanmichele 248
The Iron Tramezzo 249
Alterations to the Orsanmichele Interior in the Late Sixteenth Century 262

CHAPTER 8
Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici, Religious Reform, and the Florentine Church Interior 274
The Florentine Church Transformations: Chronology, Motivations, and Reaction 275
Enacting the Florentine Church Transformations: Vasari, Cosimo, and Altoviti 277
CONTENTS

The Council of Trent 287
Cardinal Carlo Borromeo’s Instructiones 291

Glossary 305
Archival Bibliography 309
Bibliography 311
Index 339
FIGURES

1 Fra Carnevale, *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (?)*. page 2
2 Ognissanti, Florence. 3
3 Map of Florence. 4
4 Musician’s gallery, Ägidienkirche, Lübeck, Germany. 6
5 Screen, St. Peter’s Church, Leiden, The Netherlands. 7
6 Screen, Saint-Étienne-du-Mont, Paris. 8
7 Il Gesù, Rome. 9
8 Chiesa Nuova, Rome. 10
9 San Francesco della Vigna, Venice. 11
10 San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. 12
11 Diagram indicating common spatial arrangements in Italian churches. 18
12 Choir stalls, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. 19
13 Lectern, Santa Maria in Organo, Verona. 20
14 Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. 22
15 Torcello Cathedral (Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta). 23
16 Screen, San Marco, Venice. 24
17 Modena Cathedral. 25
18 San Miniato al Monte, Florence. 26
19 Screen, Vezzolano Abbey. 27
20 Screen, Sant’Andrea in Flumine, Ponzano Romano. 27
xii  LIST OF FIGURES

21 Screen, San Vittore, Bologna. 28
22 Santa Maria del Gradaro, Mantua. 29
23 Screen, San Domenico, Bolzano. 30
24 Fra Giovanni da Pistoia (?), Project for, or Plan of, San Francesco in Arezzo. 31
25 Titian, Assunta, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. 32
26 Crucifix, Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. 32
27 San Michele in Isola, Venice. 33
28 Screen, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Varallo. 34
29 Prophet reliefs, San Francesco della Vigna, Venice. 35
30 Marble panels, San Giovanni in Bragora, Venice. 36
31 Verification of the Stigmata, Upper Church, Basilica di San Francesco, Assisi. 38
32 Butteri, Recognition of the Relics of San Giovanni Gualberto, detail. 39
33 Ligozzi, Descrizione del Sacro Monte della Vernia. 40
34 Savonarola, Compendio di revelazione. 44
35 Sano di Pietro, St. Bernardino Preaching. 45
36 Bordon, Evangeliary for Santa Giustina. 46
37 Sassetta, The Damnation of the Soul. 48
38 Miracle of the Crib at Greccio, Upper Church, Basilica di San Francesco, Assisi. 49
39 Angelo and Bartolomeo degli Erri, St. Vincent Ferrer Baptizing. 50
40 Carpaccio, Apparition of the Crucified. 51
41 Choir stalls, San Miniato al Monte, Florence. 63
42 Bertoldo di Giovanni, The Pazzi Conspiracy Medal. 65
43 Model of Bandinelli’s Choir, Florence Cathedral. 66
44 Wall of choir precinct, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence. 67
45 Choir precinct, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence. 68
46 Santo Spirito, Florence. 69
47 Dosio (attr.), Interior of Santo Spirito, Florence. 70
48 High altar, Santo Spirito, Florence. 71
49 Plan of San Francesco al Prato, Perugia. 72
50 San Francesco, Brescia. 73
51 Anonymous, Ground Plan of a Church. 75
52 High chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. 76
53 San Lorenzo, Florence. 77
54 Verrocchio, Tomb of Cosimo de’ Medici (il Vecchio). 78
55 Santissima Annunziata, Florence. 80
56 Salvi (attr.), Ground Plan of Santissima Annunziata, Florence. 82
57 Tribuna, Santissima Annunziata, Florence. 83
58 San Salvatore al Monte, Florence. 84
59 Choir stalls, San Salvatore al Monte, Florence. 85
LIST OF FIGURES

60 Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi (formerly Cestello), Florence. 86
61 Giovanni di Domenico, Annunciation. 86
62 Retrochoir, Ferrara Cathedral. 94
63 Retrochoir, Reggio Emilia Cathedral. 96
64 Sanmicheli (attr.), Tornacoro, Verona Cathedral. 97
65 Sangallo the Younger, Montecassino: project for the church. 98
66 Santa Maria della Pieve, Arezzo. 99
67 Vasari, Pieve high altar, Badia delle Sante Flora e Lucilla, Arezzo. 100
68 San Niccolò Oltrarno, Florence. 101
69 Plan of San Niccolò Oltrarno, Florence. 102
70 Masolino, The Annunciation. 104
71 Choir stalls, San Niccolò Oltrarno, Florence. 105
72 Pulpit, San Niccolò Oltrarno, Florence. 106
73 San Marco, Florence. 107
74 Vasari the Younger, Plan of San Marco. 108
75 Plan of San Marco, Florence. 110
76 Doorframe, San Marco, Florence. 111
77 Digital reconstruction of the nave of San Marco, Florence. 112
78 San Marco, Florence. 113
79 Plan of Ognissanti, Florence. 114
80 Giotto and workshop, Crucifix. 115
81 Giotto and workshop, Virgin and Child Enthroned. 116
82 Giotto and workshop, Dormition of the Virgin. 117
83 Ghirlandaio, St. Jerome. 118
84 Botticelli, St. Augustine. 119
85 Pulpit, Ognissanti, Florence. 121
86 Organ, Ognissanti, Florence. 122
87 Retrochoir, Ognissanti, Florence. 123
88 Santa Maria Novella, Florence. 124
89 Plan of Santa Maria Novella. 125
90 Tomb of Tommaso Minerbetti, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. 125
91 Giotto, Crucifix, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. 127
92 Duccio, Rucellai Madonna. 128
93 Choir stalls, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. 130
94 Santa Croce, Florence. 131
95 Reconstruction of tramezzo, Santa Croce, Florence. 132
96 Nave pavement, Santa Croce, Florence. 133
97 Choir of San Domenico, Città di Castello. 134
98 Vasari and workshop, high altar ciborium, Santa Croce, Florence. 135
99 Santa Croce, Florence. 136
100 Digital reconstruction of San Giovanni, Florence. 137
101 Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. 150
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Plan of Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Interpretative Scale Model of Santa Maria del Carmine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Madonna del Popolo, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Predella of the St. Andrea Corsini Altarpiece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Ventura di Moro (attr.), Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Fra Filippo Lippi, Confirmation of the Carmelite Rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Exterior, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Staircase, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Staircase, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Plan of Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>Ardinghelli Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>Spini Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Tomb of Pietro Gaetani, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Cimabue, Virgin and Child Enthroned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>St. Mary Magdalene, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Southwest transept, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Northeast transept, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Ammannati and Tadda Justice, Piazza Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Ponte Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Organ, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Il Passignano, Translation of the Relics of San Giovanni Gualberto, Santa Trinita, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Staircases, stage, and balustrade, Santo Stefano al Ponte Vecchio, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Balustrade, detail, Santo Stefano al Ponte Vecchio, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Museo Marino Marini (former church of San Pancrazio), Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Interior, Museo Marino Marini (former church of San Pancrazio), Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Plan of San Pancrazio, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Alberti (attr.), Rucellai Sepulcher, Museo Marino Marini, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Choir stalls, detail, Vallombrosa Abbey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Choir stalls, Vallombrosa Abbey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>Choir stalls, detail, Vallombrosa Abbey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Roof Boss, Museo Marino Marini, Florence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Screen, Abbey of San Michele Arcangelo, Passignano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Pulpit, San Michele a Pianézzoli, Val d’Elsa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES xv

139 Crucifix, San Lorenzo a Fossato. 204
140 Screen, Vallombrosa Abbey. 205
141 Choir stalls, Abbey of San Michele Arcangelo, Passignano. 206
142 Lectern, Vallombrosa Abbey. 208
143 Piazza di San Pier Maggiore, Florence. 220
144 Plan of San Pier Maggiore, Florence. 221
145 Cenni di Francesco, Antiphonary and Gradual. 222
146 Buonsignori, Nova pulcherrimae civitatis Florentiae, detail. 224
147 Jacopo di Cione, The Coronation of the Virgin. 225
148 Drawing Elevation of San Pier Maggiore. 226
149 Still of the digital reconstruction of San Pier Maggiore, Florence. 227
150 Santa Felicita, Florence. 228
151 Sant’Ambrogio, Florence. 229
152 San Felice in Piazza, Florence. 230
153 Relief, Piazza San Pier Maggiore, Florence. 231
154 Lippi di Benivieni, Crucifix. 232
155 Gaddi (attr.), Madonna del Parto, San Francesco di Paola, Bellosguardo, Florence. 233
156 Chapel screen, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. 235
157 Tabernacle of the Crucifx, San Miniato al Monte, Florence. 236
158 Ciborium for the Sacrament, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. 237
159 Exterior, Orsanmichele, Florence. 248
160 Orsanmichele, Florence. 249
161 Plan of Orsanmichele, Florence. 250
162 Orcagna, Tabernacle, Orsanmichele, Florence. 251
163 Francesco di Antonio del Chierico, Organ shutter. 253
164 Poccetti, St. Antoninus Kneeling before the Crucifix in Orsanmichele, Florence, San Marco, Florence. 254
165 Chapel screen, Santa Trinita, Florence, Bartolini Salimbeni Chapel. 256
166 Chapel screen, Prato Cathedral, Chapel of Sacro Cingolo. 257
167 Bronze railing, Orsanmichele, Florence. 258
168 Francesco da Sangallo, Virgin and Child with Saint Anne, Orsanmichele, Florence. 259
169 Orcagna (attr.), Crucifix, San Carlo Borromeo, Florence. 260
170 Via dell’Arte della Lana. 261
171 Drawing of Balustrade for Orsanmichele, Florence, 1587. 264
172 Drawing of Balustrade for Orsanmichele, Florence, 1588. 265
173 Balustrade, Salviati Chapel of St. Antoninus, San Marco, Florence. 266
174 Plate of Giorgio Vasari. 278
175 Poggini, Cosimo I de’ Medici. 279
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>Caccini, <em>Bust of Antonio Altoviti</em>, Santi Apostoli, Florence. 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177</td>
<td>Tibaldi, Eucharistic tabernacle, Milan Cathedral. 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>Clerici, <em>San Carlo Borromeo</em>. 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179</td>
<td>Santa Prassede, Rome. 294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>Milan Cathedral. 295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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NOTE TO THE READER

IN ARCHIVAL TRANSCRIPTIONS, abbreviations have been expanded, and where relevant, words have been separated and punctuation and diacritics added. Incomprehensible or uncertain words are followed by (?). If text was added above, it is indicated thus: ^text^.

The Florentine year began on 25 March. In the text, dates have been modernized, but in archival transcriptions and notes, dates remain according to the Florentine calendar and are indicated by (stil. Flor).

For definitions of terms, please consult the Glossary at the end of the book.

ARCHIVE ABBREVIATIONS

ASF Archivio di Stato di Firenze
BML Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana
BNCF Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze
CRS Corporazioni Religiose Soppresse dal Governo Francese (a section within ASF)