

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 She presents unpublished documentation and new reconstructions of screens and the choir precincts that they delimited.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.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83359-2 — Transforming the Church Interior in Renaissance Florence
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TRANSFORMING
THE CHURCH
INTERIOR IN
RENAISSANCE
FLORENCE

SCREENS AND CHOIR SPACES
FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO
TRIDENTINE REFORM

JOANNE ALLEN

American University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108833592

DOI: 10.1017/9781108985659

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First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-83359-2 Hardback

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To my parents, Lesley and Ray

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS PROJECT HAD ITS GENESIS in a short-term fellowship at the Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut (NIKI) in Florence in Spring 2012. The NIKI was my summer base for archival research in Florence for the following five summer vacations, and I thank the staff there, especially Michael W. Kwakkelstein, Gert Jan van der Sman, and Ilaria Masi, for their support and encouragement. Further financial support, for research travel, image rights, and publication costs, was provided by the Mellon faculty fund at American University (AU), an Italian Art Society Research and Publication Grant, and the Renaissance Society of America-Samuel H. Kress Publication Subvention for Art Historians. I am particularly grateful to the AU College of Arts and Sciences for awarding me a Book Incubator Grant, which gave me the opportunity of soliciting several peer reviews before publication.

I am grateful to the staff at the various libraries and archives who have assisted me with this research, in particular those at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, the Medici Archive Project, the Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, American University Library, the Library of Congress, and the National Gallery of Art Library.

Many friends and colleagues have shared their specialist knowledge with me, brought important material to my attention, assisted with translations, and offered practical assistance for which I am most grateful. With apologies for any omissions, these include Jon Allen, Jordan Amirkhani, Maurizio Arfaioli, Alessio

xviii ∩ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Assonitis, Grazia Badino, Sheila Barker, Melissa Becher, Juliet Bellow, Giacomo Benedetti, Sarah Bercusson, Mattia Biffis, Erin Black, Rebecca Bossi, Louise Bourdua, Doug Brine, Ann Brooks, Kim Butler, Mehreen Chida-Razvi, Roberto Cobianchi, Thomas Dalla Costa, Carla D’Arista, Paul Davies, Maria DePrano, Douglas Dow, Nicholas Eckstein, Theresa Flanigan, Mary Garrard, Lucas Giles, Linda Goodwin, Gianmario Guidarelli, Erik Gustafson, Joseph Hammond, Grace Harpster, Sarah Hines, Alison Holdsworth, Megan Holmes, Andy Holtin, Deborah Howard, Tiffany Hunt, Sandro La Barbera, Stuart Lingo, Alison Luchs, Tycho Maas, Irene Mariani, Matko Marušić, Fabio Massaccesi, Rod McElveen, Sara Miglietti, Paola Modesti, Chemi Montes, Haude Morvan, Zuleika Murat, John Nadas, Alana O’Brien, April Oettinger, Ashley Offill, Laura

Overpelt, Andrea Pearson, Ying-chen Peng, Beth Petitjean, Emily Price, Gaia Ravalli, Esther Rodriguez Camara, Alexander Röstel, Sam Sadow, Jaylynn Saure, Patricia Simons, Jennifer Sliwka, Elizabeth von Buhr, Justine Walden, Sandra Weddle, Matthew Woodworth, and Michela Young.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Caroline Bruzelius, Joanna Cannon, Donal Cooper, Sally Cornelison, Alexandra Dodson, Antonia Fondaras, Julian Gardner, Christa Gardner von Teuffel, Erin Giffin, Michael Gromotka, Marcia Hall, and Sharon Strocchia, each of whom has read this study in its entirety or one of its chapters. I offer my affectionate thanks for their careful reading, critical comments, advice, and encouragement. Without their generosity my mistakes would have been many. Those that remain are, of course, all mine.

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)

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