ST. AUGUSTINE AMONG THE MENDICANTS:
THE ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN HERMITS AND
EARLY RENAISSANCE ART IN ITALY

A Dissertation in
Art History
by
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2016
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In the early fourteenth century, the recently established Order of Augustinian Hermits began to promote the claim that St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) had founded their mendicant order in fifth-century Italy. By refashioning the historical account of their Order’s founding in textual and visual sources, the Hermits transformed St. Augustine from a North African bishop to a mendicant father, alongside St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. This dissertation examines how the Order promoted its evolving founding narrative and celebrated its spiritual ideals through monumental artistic narratives of Augustine’s life, produced in churches and monasteries in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. As the friars invented a new iconographic tradition for the saint, they highlighted a different aspect of Augustine’s identity – his singular role as the father and founder of the Hermits. My focus on Italian monumental cycles enables me to discern patterns of decoration in early Renaissance churches and to examine the importance of narrative art to the Order’s corporate aims.

My study provides a richer understanding of mendicant patronage by examining a saint whose vita differed from the biographies of traditional founder saints, and an order whose founding narratives contrasted sharply with the more contemporary origins of the better known Franciscans and Dominicans. Despite the prominence of the Hermits as distinguished artistic patrons, the scholarship on Augustinian art remains scarce in comparison to the voluminous studies devoted to Franciscan and Dominican patronage. As a result, the Hermits are often excluded from studies of Franciscan and Dominican art. As a fifth-century North African saint, Augustine differed in many fundamental ways
from his fellow mendicant founders. My study investigates how the “new” St. Augustine fit into the established paradigm of the mendicant founder, and how the Order’s representation of their founder compared to the conventional models of mendicant art patronage in general. In some cases, this comparative approach reveals the creativity of artists and patrons in transforming Augustine’s image to conform to the established model of mendicant founder, as European saint and mendicant exemplar. In other instances, this study illuminates how the Hermits challenged the traditional image of the mendicant founder and departed from the artistic traditions of the Franciscans and Dominicans.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a sincere thank you to various organizations associated with Pennsylvania State University for their extremely generous financial assistance. Several grants allowed me to travel extensively in northern and central Italy to consult libraries and visit numerous churches and museums. These include the Department of Art History Research Grant (2012), the Babcock Galleries Endowed Fund (2012), the Francis E. Hyslop Memorial Scholarship (2013), the Waddell Biggart Graduate Fellowship awarded by the Graduate School (2014), and the Schwartz Endowed Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Art History (2014). I was able to focus exclusively on my research during a semester residency at the Institute for the Arts and Humanities, as the recipient of the Junior Scholar Award in Early Modern Studies (2013) granted by the Committee for Early Modern Studies. Two Dissertation Fellowships (2015-2016) from the Department of Art History provided crucial support during the writing process. I also appreciate the help of those at the libraries, museums and churches that I visited. This generous assistance enabled me to complete this project.

I would also like to thank all my professors and fellow graduate students at Penn State for sharing their wisdom, feedback, and encouragement. I am grateful, in particular, for the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Robin Thomas, Dr. Elizabeth Smith, and Dr. Sherry Roush. They are exemplary teachers and scholars, who have kindly shared their knowledge of and passion for Italy. I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Brian Curran, who has been my graduate advisor since I first enrolled at Penn State as a
Masters student eight years ago. His constant encouragement and unwavering support kept me focused and motivated from the beginning of my graduate career. His extensive knowledge and valuable insight has guided my work as an art historian. Most of all, his dedication to his students amid tribulations has been nothing short of an inspiration.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank my family members, who have been relentless cheerleaders throughout my academic career. Their support has come in many forms – continual prayers, delicious meals, a comfortable home, emotional support, visits to Italy, academic advice, and financial assistance. My brother Zack and sister Sam have kept my spirits high while also keeping me grounded. I am grateful for Sam’s frequent visits to Penn State and our summers spent together at home, which provided much-needed periods of rest and relaxation. I was lucky enough to enjoy Zack’s company during a research trip to central Italy, where we shared our growing interest in the sights, cuisine, and history of the region. My Dad instilled in me the importance of education from an early age and always supported my desire to pursue a doctorate. My Mom has long shared a genuine interest in my work and accompanied me during a memorable trip to Italy, when I stumbled upon my dissertation topic, thanks to her willingness to always follow me into “just one more church.” Finally, I owe an enormous thank you to my husband, Steve, for being an encouraging and empathetic partner on this Ph.D. journey. I can always depend on him to listen and to provide perspective with wise words. Without the support of these individuals, my completion of this project would not have been possible.
**INTRODUCTION**

**The Augustinian Hermits and the Mendicant Orders**

Perhaps no other saint embodies the Christian ideal of faith and scholarship better than the fifth-century saint, Augustine of Hippo (354-430). His intellectual legacy, which survives in an immense corpus of writings, had a pervasive impact on the theological, philosophical, and political realms in later centuries.¹ As Bishop of Hippo, Augustine defended Church doctrine against heretical groups and authored the oldest Western monastic rule. Living in North Africa in the aftermath of the fall of the Roman Empire, Augustine penned his magisterial *City of God* (c.413-26), which described history as a battle between the earthly city of sin and the heavenly City of God. The saint also left behind a rare, introspective account of his dramatic conversion story in the personal memoir known as the *Confessions* (397-400).

In medieval art, Augustine appeared frequently in mosaics and frescoes as a Doctor (“teacher”) of the Church, a title shared with three other Church fathers known for their doctrinal teachings: Bishop St. Ambrose (c.340-397), Pope St. Gregory the Great (c.540-604), and the Cardinal St. Jerome (c.347-420).² Dressed in episcopal garb and

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² In 1298, Pope Boniface VIII decreed that the Church celebrate a feast day for the Four Doctors of the Church. Luigi Tosi, *History of Pope Boniface VIII and His Times*, trans. Eugene Joseph Donnelly (New York, Christian Press Association Publishing Company, 1911) 150. For an overview of early and late
holding a book or pen, Augustine stood as a symbol of Church authority and theological wisdom (fig.1). Numerous illuminated miniatures, including illustrated copies of his vita and liturgical manuscripts, depict famous episodes from Augustine’s life. He often appears reading or writing in his study, debating with heretics, or presenting his monastic rule to a group of religious followers.

In fourteenth-century Italy, secular and religious circles alike continued to revere St. Augustine as a distinguished patron saint of learning and monastic exemplar. His written works were frequently copied, published, and available in the libraries of universities, religious orders, and elite scholars. The proto-humanist scholar Petrarch (1304-1374) admired the saint for his devotion to classical learning and love of ascetic

medieval imagery of St. Augustine, see Alessandro Cosma, Gianni Pittiglio, and Valerio Da Gai, eds., Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1: dalle origini al XIV secolo (Rome: Città Nuova Editore, 2011), 29-44, 71-76, 155-78. For a medieval example of St. Augustine represented as a Doctor of the Church, see the eleventh-century apse mosaic in Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello (ibid., 61-63) and the 1250 fresco in the cupola of the Parma Baptistry (ibid., 57).


Ibid., 158-60. For example, see St. Augustine Giving the Rule to the Canons, 1154, Strasbourg, Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire, ms.376, fol.5r (ibid., 99-101); St. Augustine Refuting Faustus, 1050-65, Avranches Bibliothèque Municipale, ms.90, fol.1v (ibid., 63-64); St. Augustine Preaching to the Laity, 12th century, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, ms.193, fol.4v (ibid., 89-90).


solitude. Several religious groups, such as the Dominicans, Premonstratensians, and Canons, honored St. Augustine as bestower of their Rule.

One religious order, in particular, contributed immensely to the saint’s increasing popularity in fourteenth-century and fifteenth-century Italy – the Augustinian Hermits, a mendicant order that celebrated St. Augustine as its founder and the ultimate exemplar of Christian scholarship and preaching. The Order sparked a renewed interest in studying Augustine’s writings and representing his life in artistic imagery. This dissertation examines how the Hermits promoted their evolving founding narrative and celebrated their spiritual ideals through monumental artistic narratives of Augustine’s life. As the friars invented a new iconographic tradition for the saint, they highlighted a different aspect of Augustine’s identity – his singular role as the father and founder of the mendicant Order of Hermits.

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8 As Pittiglio has noted in his comprehensive catalogue of images of St. Augustine, more than half of the seven hundred images assembled in Iconografia agostiniana: dalle origini al IV secolo date from the fourteenth century (156). For a brief overview on the basic iconography of Augustine developed by the fourteenth-century Hermits, see Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 160-67.
Historical Background

The Origins of the Order of Augustinian Hermits

The Order of Augustinian Hermits was officially recognized as a religious order in 1256, when Pope Alexander IV united several disparate eremitical groups into a single order under the Rule of St. Augustine. The so-called Great Union of 1256 merged about 180 communities and over 2000 members into an order under the official title of Ordo Eremitarum Sancti Augustini. This unprecedented action, which resulted in a new mendicant order, joined together five already well-established religious groups that shared little in common. They followed various monastic rules, wore diverse monastic habits, and celebrated different patron saints and founders. They even held divergent views on property possession, meaning that they were not all truly “mendicant.”

Rooted in thirteenth-century papal reform, the Licet ecclesiae catholicae bull of 1256 explained that the Great Union aimed to strengthen the Hermits in fighting sin and to prevent confusion among rival groups within the Church. The papal effort to regulate religious orders had begun at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which forbade the establishment of new orders for fear that “too great a variety of religious orders leads to grave confusion in God’s church.” All existing orders were required to adopt one of the

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9 Frances Andrews, The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2006), 84.
three accepted rules (those of Sts. Augustine, Basil, and Benedict) and to receive papal confirmation. This program of reform, which was enforced throughout the thirteenth century in varying degrees, sought to centralize control over the large number of small orders active in Europe.

Before 1256, the five groups included in the Great Union had existed as independent and autonomous religious communities scattered across Italy and beyond. The Order of St. William (the Guglielmiti) claimed St. William of Malavalle (d.1157) as their founder, a Frenchman who spent his life as a hermit in Tuscany. Centered in Maleval near Siena, the Guglielmiti had expanded across Europe by the 1240s. They initially adopted the monastic rule attributed to St. William, but replaced it with the Rule of St. Benedict in 1238. The Hermits of Blessed John the Good (the Giamboniti) followed the ascetic example of St. John (c.1168-1249), who had lived as a solitary penitent in Bertinoro in the Italian Marches. With their motherhouse in Bertinoro, the


Giamboniti settled most heavily in northern Italy under the Rule of St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{15} The Hermits of Brettino (the Brettini), who originated in the early thirteenth century near Fano (Pesaro), populated the Marches, Umbria, Romagna, and the Veneto.\textsuperscript{16} They, too, followed the Rule of St. Augustine, but unlike the four other groups, the Brettini allowed no possession of property outside the hermitage. The Hermits of Montefavale acquired their name from the hermitage of Montefavale in Pesaro, Italy, where the community lived according to the Rule of St. William.\textsuperscript{17} The Order of St. Augustine of Tuscany (the Tuscan Hermits) was the largest group among those included in the Great Union.\textsuperscript{18} Originating as diverse eremitic groups in central Italy, the Tuscan Hermits had been united in 1243 by Pope Innocent IV, and assigned the Rule of St. Augustine.\textsuperscript{19} This “Little Union” became the precursor to the Great Union a decade later.

The Great Union not only forced these independent groups to merge into a uniform order under the Rule of St. Augustine, but also required the hermits to abandon their eremitic roots and conform to the mendicant model of active pastoral ministry.\textsuperscript{20} The papacy’s creation of another mendicant order attested to the success of the first two mendicant groups, the Franciscans and Dominicans. Led by St. Francis of Assisi (1181/82-1226) and St. Dominic (1170-1221), these friars had established a religious way

\textsuperscript{15} Andrews, The Other Friars, 78-81.  
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 81-82.  
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 82-83.  
\textsuperscript{19} Incumbit nobis (16 December 1243), in Van Luijk, Bullarium, 32.  
\textsuperscript{20} For the Augustinian Hermits, the transition from the \textit{vita contemplativa} to the \textit{vita activa} was a gradual process. Initially, the Order retained many of its isolated hermitages, and some members were permitted to alternate the eremitic with the pastoral life. \textit{Ils quae nostri} (13 June 1257), in Bullarium ordinis sancti Augustini: regesta. I. 1256-1362, ed. C. Alonso (Rome: Institutum Historicum Augustinianum, 1997), 11.
of life different from traditional monasticism. The Franciscan and Dominican Orders sought to imitate the apostolic mission described in the New Testament, where Christ and the Apostles sold all their possessions and devoted themselves to itinerant preaching. In contrast to the monk’s ideal life of solitary contemplation confined to a monastery, the mendicants moved into urban centers and embraced a pastoral mission of evangelism. Furthermore, while traditional monasteries owned communal property, the mendicants practiced a stricter version of poverty, forbidding the ownership of both personal and communal possessions and requiring friars to rely on begging for alms.

Unsurprisingly, the multiple changes imposed upon the eremitic groups included in the Great Union incited dissatisfaction among particular members. Immediately after the 1256 decree of Alexander IV, the Guglielmiti petitioned to withdraw from the Order, unhappy with the change in rule and the loss of independence. In 1266, the Italian Guglielmiti seceded, while the German and Northern European houses remained part of the new Order of Augustinian Hermits. Likewise, the Hermits of Montefavale left the Order and joined the Cistercians.

During the second half of the thirteenth century, the Augustinian Hermits made great efforts to unify and strengthen their newly formed Order. The prior general of the Order met with the provincial priors every three years at the general chapter meeting to

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21 The Acts of the Apostles 2:42-45 provides the basis for the apostolic life: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”


23 The Catholic Poor in Lombardy ultimately joined the Order of Augustinian Hermits despite opposition from many members. On these secessions from and additions to the Order, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 84-86.
discuss administrative matters.\textsuperscript{24} At the general chapter of 1290 in Regensburg, the Hermits approved an Order-wide policy of absolute poverty and ratified the official Constitutions, a series of regulations that supplemented the Rule of Augustine.\textsuperscript{25} They enforced a standard habit, which consisted of a black habit over a white tunic, with a scapular and cincture.\textsuperscript{26} The Hermits established several \emph{studia generalia} to equip their members as preachers, and made theological study the “foundation” of the Order, as stated in the Constitutions.\textsuperscript{27} In particular, the Order sparked a renewal in the study of Augustine’s intellectual legacy, for the Hermits believed that they had inherited the wealth of patristic literature composed by the saint.\textsuperscript{28} In 1345, the friars Augustine of Ancona (1243-1328) and Bartholomew of Urbino (c.1290-1350) published the \textit{Milleloquium veritatis S. Augustini}, a massive concordance of around fifteenth thousand passages from Augustine’s writings, organized under thematic subjects.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{24} General chapters were held every year until 1281, after which they were held every three years; in 1430 the Order decided to meet every four years. Andrews, \textit{The Other Friars}, 96-8.
\textsuperscript{25} Initially Alexander IV had allowed Augustinian houses to maintain, acquire, or eliminate communal property as they saw fit. \textit{Ils quae nostri} (13 June 1257), in Alonso, \textit{Bullarium I}, 11. For the Constitutions, see I. Arámburu Cendoya, ed., \textit{Las primitivas constituciones de los Agustinos (Ratisbonenses del año 1290)} (Valadoid: Archivo Agustiniano, 1966).
\textsuperscript{26} For debates over the uniformity of the habit and its similarity to the dress of other orders, see Cordelia Warr, \textit{Dressing for Heaven: Religious clothing in Italy, 1215-1545} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 117-30.
Aided by generous papal support, the Augustinian Hermits enjoyed a period of significant growth from the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century. In the late 1250s, they were divided into four main provinces – France, Germany, Spain and Italy. By the end of the thirteenth century, there were ten provinces in Italy alone, and others in France, Germany, Hungary, Provence, Spain and England. In 1329, the Order had twenty four provinces spread throughout Europe, as well as one province in the Holy Land. The presence of the Augustinian Hermits in Italy remained strong after the Great Union, particularly in the central and northern parts of the peninsula. The greatest concentration of houses remained in Tuscany, Umbria, the Marches, Romagna, Lombardy, and Veneto.

The Evolution of the Augustinian Founding Narrative

The newly formed Order of Augustinian Hermits did not possess a charismatic founder saint on the level of a St. Francis or St. Dominic. Nor did they enjoy a shared history emanating from a single location or lineage of distinguished saintly predecessors, as was the case with their fellow mendicants. Faced with a need to both unify and distinguish the Order, the Hermits vigorously began to promote the claim that St. Augustine of Hippo had founded their Order in the fourth century. To this end, they

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30 The ten Italian provinces were Ancona, Fermo, Lombardy, Naples, Pisa, Romagna, Rome, Siena, Spoleto and Treviso.
31 While the province of Fermo was eliminated, new provinces included Naples, Apulia, Sicily, Bavaria-Bohemia, Rhineland-Swabia, Saxony-Thuringia, Provence, Toulouse, Crete, Corfu, Cyprus, Rhodes, Aragon, and Catalonia. Andrews, The Other Friars, 99.
32 In 1300, there existed between 160 and 180 houses in central and northern Italy, and by 1400, around 60 more houses were established. Ibid., 100; B. van Luijk, “Diffusione degli Agostiniani in Italia,” in Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione I (Rome, 1974), cols. 327-40.
reframed the Great Union as the Order’s second founding, which marked the reunification of eremitic groups that had descended from Augustine’s original foundation despite no substantial evidence. As early as 1271, the prior general Clemente da Osimo referred to Augustine as “our holy father.”

By declaring Augustine as their founder, the Augustinian Hermits asserted their precedence over several other religious orders that also observed the Rule of St. Augustine, such as the Dominicans and the Augustinian Canons. As the fourteenth-century Hermit Nicholas of Alessandria (c.1245-1340) argued, these other orders that followed the Rule of Augustine were merely “brothers” of the saint, while the Hermits were his only “true sons.” This claim infuriated these other orders, particularly the Augustinian Canons, a group of religious clerics who believed that Augustine had founded their order after his ordination as Bishop of Hippo. The Hermits countered the Canons’ assertions by arguing that Augustine had bestowed the Rule to a community of hermits before he became bishop. With their new version of history, the Hermits celebrated a singular relationship to the esteemed theologian, which reinforced their claim to predate the Canons as well as the Franciscans and Dominicans.

33 Andrews, The Other Friars, 158.
34 Other orders that followed the Rule of Augustine include the Order of St. Victor, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, Knights Templar, Praemonstratensians, Gilbertines, and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. While the Rule of St. Benedict included specific regulations on daily life, the Rule of St. Augustine was merely a set of general precepts. Many orders found the flexibility of the Rule appealing and typically supplemented the Rule with a set of constitutions.
In addition to the desire to establish a corporate identity around a single founder, the Hermits were surely motived by the 1274 ruling of the Second Council of Lyons, which threatened to dissolve the Order. In response to attacks by the secular clergy on mendicant privileges, Pope Gregory X reinforced the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which forbade the creation of new orders and suppressed those orders that had been founded after 1215 without papal confirmation. Religious orders that had received papal confirmation after 1215 were forbidden to add new members or houses. This ruling exempted the Franciscans (confirmed in 1223) and Dominicans (confirmed in 1216) because of their “utility” to the Church. However, the Sack and Pied Friars were suppressed, and the Augustinians and Carmelites were permitted to exist only on a temporary and provisional basis. In 1298, Pope Boniface VIII overruled the Lyons decree and allowed the Augustinians and Carmelites to continue as approved orders. In 1303, Boniface VIII confirmed their status as the third and fourth mendicant orders with full rights to the privileges of preaching, confession, and burial.

A more immediate and direct motivation for the Hermits’ development of a founding narrative was a battle over the possession of St. Augustine’s relics. For

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38 Mansi, *Sagrorum conciliorum*, 97.


40 *Inter sollicitudines* (8 January 1303), in Alonso, *Bullarium, I*, 91-92. Stephan Kuttner has shown that the earlier draft of the Second Council of Lyons decree was significantly different than the final version, which addresses the existence of the Carmelites and Augustinians before 1215 as certain, rather than unclear. This change suggests that the two orders achieved some success in persuading the Council that they predated 1215. S. Kuttner, “Consiliar Law in the Making: The Lyonese Constitutions of Gregory X in a Manuscript in Washington,” *Miscellanea Pio Paschini*, II.15 (Rome, 1949): 39-81.
centuries, the saint’s body had resided in the Church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia, which belonged to the Augustinian Canons. In early 1327, the Augustinian prior general, William of Cremona, requested that the Hermits share custody of St. Augustine’s relics. With the *Veneranda Sanctorum Patrum* bull, Pope John XXII granted the Hermits joint possession of the saint’s relics and declared Augustine their “teacher, father, leader, head.”\(^{41}\) The Hermits established a house next to the Church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, and alternated possession of the church for liturgical rites with the Canons. With papal support behind the Hermits, their victory in Pavia initiated several rewritings of the Order’s history that attempted to provide historical support for its connection to St. Augustine.\(^{42}\) In the three decades following their acquisition of the relics, five members of the Order re-imagined Augustine’s biography by embellishing the early accounts of his life, including his autobiography, the *Confessions*.

In his memoir, Augustine describes his journey from a restless and sinful adolescence in North Africa to his conversion and baptism in Milan, followed by his return to Carthage.\(^{43}\) Born in a Roman province of North Africa, Augustine attended school in Thagaste and later studied rhetoric in Carthage, where his hedonistic lifestyle centered on sinful pleasure and worldly ambition. Although raised as a Christian by his

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mother Monica, Augustine chose to follow the heretical religion of Manicheanism. After beginning a career as a teacher in Thagaste and Carthage, he travelled to Rome in 383, at the age of thirty, to establish a school of rhetoric. A year later, he acquired a position in the imperial court at Milan, where he met Bishop Ambrose, whose influence led to Augustine’s conversion and baptism. The biographical portion of the *Confessions* ends with Monica’s death in Ostia in 387, on their return journey to Africa. Upon arriving in North Africa, Augustine began living in a monastery in Thagaste. He was ordained a priest in 391, and served as bishop of Hippo from 396 until his death in 430.

The *Confessions* provides little information about Augustine’s monastic life. Nowhere in the account does he mention founding a monastery. However, he does admit to skipping over information due to grief following his mother’s death, a statement that the Hermits employed to explain the omission. Augustine also omits any reference to his monastic Rule, which was considered part of his canonical writings by the late medieval period. The Hermits faced the task of proving that they were the original recipients of Augustine’s Rule, and therefore his most direct descendants.

Augustine’s friend and first biographer Possidius (d. c. 437), Bishop of Calama, provides additional information regarding the saint’s monastic foundations. According to Possidius, after being ordained as a priest in Hippo, Augustine established a monastery in his church compound, where he lived according to the way of life of the Apostles, “as

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44 “We looked for a place where we could be of most use in your service; all of us agreed on a move back to Africa. While we were at Ostia by the mouths of the Tiber, my mother died. I pass over many events because I write in great haste.” Augustine, *Confessions*, 9.8.17.
Augustine had formerly done after he returned to his native home from across the sea.”  
This ambiguous phrase left open the possibility that Augustine had founded a monastery before becoming a priest.

Two other medieval *vitae* were written by Philip of Harvengt (d. c.1183), a twelfth-century Premonstratensian, and the Dominican Jacobus of Voragine, who composed the popular collection of hagiographies known as the *Golden Legend* (1252-60). Jacobus does not emphasize the monastic aspect of Augustine’s life, although he mentions that Augustine founded a monastery of clerics in Hippo after being ordained a presbyter. In direct contrast, Philip of Harvengt, who belonged to an Order of Canons Regular that followed the Rule of St. Augustine, focused on Augustine’s roles as author of the monastic Rule and founder of the Canons. Philip repeats Possidius’ claim that Augustine established a monastery in Hippo as a priest, “as he had already done when he returned from across the sea to his homeland.” He adds that Augustine founded a second monastery of priests in the episcopal residence after becoming bishop. Philip specifies that Augustine wrote his monastic Rule for a community of clerics.

In contrast to earlier *vitae*, the accounts written by fourteenth-century Hermits focus on Augustine’s life before becoming a cleric. Taken together, these fourteenth-century sources illustrate the rapid and complex evolution of the Order’s founding narrative. One of the earliest of these texts is the *Vita Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi*, composed sometime between 1322 and 1331 by an anonymous prior of Santo

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Spirito in Florence. Written around the same time, in 1330, the anonymous *Initium sive Processus Ordinis Heremitarum Sancti Augustini* focuses specifically on the Order’s origins. The *Sermo de Beato Augustino* records a sermon on the subject of Augustine’s life preached by Nicholas of Alessandria in Paris in 1332, possibly at the Order’s *studium generale*. Finally, the most comprehensive text from the 1330s is a treatise written by the German friar Henry of Freimar in 1334, titled *Tractatus de origine et progressu ordinis fratrum heremitarum et vero ac proprio titulo eiusdem*.

By the time that Henry of Freimar composed his *Tractatus*, the fourteenth-century Hermits had added significant details to the story of Augustine’s time in Italy, reshaping the account of his conversion and inserting accounts of his monastic foundations. Henry argues that the Milanese hermit Simplicianus helped to inspire Augustine to conversion by recounting the example of the Desert Fathers, a detail that rooted the Order’s presumed founder in the eremitic tradition of the Hermits. In the *Confessions* Augustine describes the powerful impact of hearing the story of the Egyptian hermit St. Anthony Abbot. This anecdote provided the Hermits with a convenient link to the Desert Fathers of Egypt, whose withdrawal from society and exemplary asceticism was considered the

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48 Published in part by Rudolf Arbesmann, “The ‘Vita Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi’ in Cod. Laur. Plut. 90 Sup. 48,” *Traditio* 18 (1962): 319-55. The complete manuscript (Plut. 90 Sup. 48, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence) is available online: teca.bmlonline.it.
50 Rano, *Sermo*, 354-76.
52 In the *Confessions* Simplicianus was merely a holy man, not a hermit, and did not play such a significant role in spurring Augustine to conversion.
original phase of the monastic life. Henry adds that immediately after his baptism, Augustine received the eremitic habit from Bishop Ambrose and Simplicianus. He then lived outside Milan with Simplicianus and his fellow hermits for about one year.

Following his mother’s death in Ostia, Augustine founded a community of hermits in central Italy (though the precise location was subject to debate among these authors). He lived with the eremitic community for two years and granted them a rule and modum vivendi, based on the apostolic way of life. Upon his return to Africa, he established the same apostolic way of life that he had instituted in Italy. He later bestowed the Rule to a monastery of Canons, but only after first establishing a community of hermits. As evidence for this retelling of Augustine’s life, Henry cited “ancient legends,” as well as the Pseudo-Ambrosian Sermo de baptismo et conversione sancti Augustini, a spurious account of Ambrose’s vestition of Augustine in the eremitic habit.

The major thrust of these revised accounts of Augustine’s life was to connect his conversion, vestition, and earliest foundation to the ancient eremitic tradition. Henry claimed that Augustine had lived as a hermit before becoming a cleric, and bestowed the rule to the Hermits in Italy before establishing a monastery of Canons in North Africa. Furthermore, the new narrative established a line of historical continuity from Augustine’s original fourth-century foundation in Italy to the thirteenth-century eremitic groups of the Great Union, which was based largely in central Italy. To this end, the

55 According to the Confessions, Augustine returned to Africa in 387, the same year as his baptism, but the Hermits inserted a three-year visit to the central Italian countryside.
Hermits propagated the legend that St. Augustine had appeared to Pope Alexander IV in a vision, urging him to reunite his original eremitic community and join them to other similar eremitical groups.\textsuperscript{57}

It was not until Jordan of Quedlinburg (1300-80), a pupil of Henry in Erfurt, that an Augustinian author took a more critical approach to the existing source material.\textsuperscript{58} He composed his own \textit{Vita} sometime before 1343, when he presented it to the \textit{studium} in Paris as part of the \textit{Collectanea Augustiniana}, a compendium of sermons supposedly by Augustine.\textsuperscript{59} Jordan found it impossible that Augustine had stayed in Italy long enough to establish a monastic house, and argued that he had founded the first community of hermits after his return to Africa. Despite his efforts to use authentic sources, rather than the “ancient legends” cited by earlier writers, Jordan relied on the Pseudo-Augustinian \textit{Sermones ad fratres in eremo}, which was itself a fourteenth-century creation. This set of sermons seemed to provide proof of Augustine’s first monastic foundation in Hippo.\textsuperscript{60} Jordan also authored the \textit{Liber Vitasfratrum} (c.1357), a handbook to living as a true son of St. Augustine in observance of the Order’s Rule and Constitutions.\textsuperscript{61} Jordan’s literary corpus reveals the Order’s efforts to establish an institutional identity around Augustine, based on his commitment to the communal life, scholarship and preaching.

\textsuperscript{57} Henry of Freimar, \textit{Treatise}, 216-7.
\textsuperscript{58} Also called Jordan of Saxony, but not to be confused with the thirteenth-century Dominican writer of the same name.
The Order continued to promote its founding narrative in the fifteenth century, during the height of the Observant Reform movement. Beginning in the middle of the fourteenth century, numerous mendicant and monastic orders embraced new calls for religious reform. The Observant movement promoted stricter observance of monastic rules, as exemplified by the lives of their founder saints. Centered in Tuscany, the Augustinian Observance inspired many friars to endorse Augustine’s mythic visit to central Italy, including Andrea Biglia (c.1395-1435), Ambrosius da Cora (d.1485), and Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532).

**Artistic Tradition**

In addition to written treatises and *vitae*, the Augustinian Hermits employed artistic imagery to illustrate their connection to their founder saint. During the first two centuries following the Great Union, the narrative cycles commissioned by the Order centered on their founder, whose biography became the focus of narrative cycles and whose teachings became the inspiration for sophisticated allegorical programs. Until the

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canonization of Nicholas of Tolentino in 1446, Augustine was the only saint who belonged to the Order. As a consequence, the Hermits decorated their churches and monasteries with images of their founder, who appeared in monumental fresco cycles, painted altarpieces, sculpted monuments, and illuminated manuscripts.

The earliest evidence of the Order’s use of artistic imagery to promote its historical claims is the late-thirteenth-century fresco originally located in the convent of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano (fig. 2, c. 1278), which shows Augustine bestowing the Rule to a group of Hermits. Augustine sits enthroned as a group of friars kneel before him, and a group of Canons stand behind him. Another early representation of the same subject appears in the right apsidal chapel of the Church of Sant’Agostino in Rimini (before 1303), where Augustine bestows the rule to a group consisting of only friars. In other early trecento images, the Hermits created a new attribute for Augustine – the eremitic habit, which he wore in addition to or in place of his traditional episcopal garb. The oldest representation of Augustine dressed in the Order’s black habit and cincture appears

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65 This fresco and other paintings from the Augustinian convent now reside in the Pinacoteca Civica Bruno Molajoli in Fabriano. Hansen and Blume hypothesize that this iconography developed in a larger center of Augustinian activity, such as the friary of Santo Spirito in Florence, rather than a small town such as Fabriano. D. Blume and D. Hansen, “Agostino pater et praeceptor di un nuova ordine religios (Considerazioni sulla propaganda illustrata degli eremiti agostiniani),” in Arte e spiritualità (Rome: Àrgos, 1992), 77-78. For more on this fresco from Fabriano, see Wittiglio, Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 147-49; Fabio Marcelli, “Devozione e propaganda agostiniana,” in Il Maestro di Campodonico: rapporti artistico fra Umbria e Marche nel Trecento (Fabriano: Cassa di risparmio di Fabriano e Cupramontana, 1998), 164-68; Fabio Marcelli, “Il deserto nella città,” in Per corporalia ad incorporea (Tolentino: Biblioteca Egidiana, 2000), 135-42; Miklós Boskovits, “Insegnare per immagini: dipinti e sculture nelle sale capitolare,” Arte Cristiana 78 (1990): 129.


66 Ibid.
in a painted altarpiece by Simone Martini (fig.3, 1317-1320), made for the Church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano.\(^67\)

In their study of art commissioned by the Hermits, Dieter Blume and Dorothee Hansen have identified two major iconographic developments in the middle of the fourteenth century.\(^68\) First came the development of narrative cycles.\(^69\) The earliest European cycle of Augustine commissioned by the Hermits appears in the stained glass windows located in the choir of the Church of St. Augustine in Erfurt (c.1330-34).\(^70\) Eight cycles survive in Italy from the beginning of the fourteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century. The earliest of these are the frescoes in the right apsidal chapel in the church of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano (1311-60), painted by anonymous artists from the Marches, and the murals in the \textit{cappella maggiore} in the church of Sant’Agostino in Rimini (1315-18), executed by a distinguished Riminese workshop. Next come the earliest Italian cycles that represent the Order’s fully developed founding narrative: the frescoes in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua (1336-65) by the local artist Guariento di Arpo (1310-77), and the sculpted reliefs decorating the tomb monument of St. Augustine in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia (1350-62). Two later fresco cycles completed around the turn of the century survive in the \textit{cappella maggiore} in Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (1384-88), painted by the Sienese Bartolo di Fredi, and the \textit{cappella maggiore} in Sant’Agostino in Gubbio (1410-20), decorated by the local


\(^{68}\) Blume and Hansen, “Agostino pater et praeceptor,” 77-92.

\(^{69}\) For a diagram of episodes represented in European cycles of St. Augustine’s life from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see: Cosma et al., \textit{Iconografia agostiniana}, vol.1, 266; vol.2, 365-366.

Umbrian painter Ottaviano Nelli. Two Observant houses located near Siena, feature frescoes by Tuscan artists: the church of San Salvatore at Lecceto (1439-42), whose cloister walls are decorated with frescoes by the so-called Master of Sant’Ansano, and the church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano, where the Florentine Benozzo Gozzoli decorated the cappella maggiore (1465) with a spectacular narrative cycle of the saint’s life.

Around the middle of the fourteenth century, the Hermits also developed an allegorical iconography that presented Augustine as the maestro (“teacher”) of the order, emphasizing education as the foundation of the Order’s pastoral mission. Surviving allegorical programs include the frescoes by Giusto de Menabuoi (1370) in the Cortellieri chapel in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua, a slightly later fresco program by Serafino de’Serafini (fig.4, c.1378) on the entrance wall of the Church of Sant’Andrea in Ferrara, and a fresco by Bartolo di Fredi in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (1380-88). Organized in a diagrammatic composition, the fresco in Ferrara includes personifications of Theology and Philosophy, accompanied by theologians and philosophers, who display inscriptions from canonical texts. The lower register shows

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72 Remains are now housed in the Pinacoteca in Ferrara. The Ferrarese fresco was commissioned by the Marinetti brothers, who also employed Serafino Serafini to paint the Chapel of Saint Dorothy, located underneath the allegorical fresco of Augustine. Hansen, Das Bild des Ordenslehrers, 11-41; Pittiglio, Iconografia agustiniana, vol.1, 248-51.  
73 Hansen, Das Bild des Ordenslehrers, 78-88; Freuler, Bartolo di Fredi Cini, 233-39.  
74 Hansen has traced the Order’s development of the image of Augustine as maestro and the allegory of knowledge. She published her preliminary findings in a brief article written with Dieter Blume in 1992,
allegorical representations of the seven liberal arts, represented by famous writers, and
the seven virtues, represented by saints. The Cortellieri chapel (1370) in Padua places the
imagery specifically in the context of the Augustinian Order by including images of
contemporary Hermits, such as Giles of Rome (1243-1316), Albert da Padua (c.1296-
1323), and Nicholas of Tolentino (1246-1305).75 After reconstructing the damaged
frescoes in Ferrara and Padua from Bolognese manuscripts, Hansen has concluded that
this allegorical imagery probably originated in the Augustinian church of San Giacomo
Maggiore in Bologna, sometime before 1349.76

State of Research

This dissertation aims to address an imbalance in the scholarship devoted to the
artistic patronage of the mendicant orders in late medieval and early Renaissance Italy by
redirecting attention to an understudied, but significant, religious order. Despite their
unusual thirteenth-century origins, the Augustinian Hermits grew quickly in number and
emerged as an order of distinguished intellectuals and significant artistic patrons, eager to
promote their evolving iconography. From the mid-fourteenth century through the mid-
fifteenth century, the Augustinians followed only the Franciscans in the number of

[76] Hansen has reconstructed the damaged fresco program in Padua and Ferrara by using their iconographic
precedents, two Bolognese illuminated manuscripts: an illumination by Nicolo di Giacomo da Bologna, found in a legal
commentary by Bartolo da Sassoferrato, Lectura super digesto novo (1360-70, Madrid, Biblioteca Nazionale, Cod. 197, antea D. e) and
Bartolomeo di Bartolo’s La canzone delle virtu e delle scienze (1339-49, Chantilly, France, Musée Condé, Ms.1426), an illustrated
song made for Bruzio Visconti in Bologna (d.1356). The Church of San Giacomo in Bologna was completely rebuilt in the Baroque
period. As Hansen has pointed out, the city boasted the Order’s first studium generale, providing the
intellectual environment necessary for the mural’s sophisticated program.
houses in central and northern Italy. Yet, the scarcity of scholarship devoted to Augustinian art produced in this region is incomparable to the voluminous studies on Franciscan and Dominican patronage. The very title of Frances Andrews’ *The Other Friars* (2006) acknowledges the marginal status of the Augustinians and the Carmelites in historical scholarship on the mendicant orders.

Multiple reasons account for the relative lack of scholarly attention directed to Augustinian art. The Hermits’ unconventional thirteenth-century origins separated them from the two leading orders of the mendicant mission. Regarding the specific artworks examined in this study, monumental cycles of St. Augustine remain understudied in part because of their poor state of preservation and the relative anonymity of their artists and patrons. Many of the artists remain unidentified or underappreciated, and only in one instance can an Augustinian cycle be connected with certainty to the involvement of a specific friar. In addition, many of these cycles were relatively inaccessible to the non-Italian scholar until recent publications of high-quality photographic reproductions.

For most of the twentieth century, the definitive source on the iconography of St. Augustine was the pioneering study conducted by Pierre and Jeanne Courcelle in the

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79 The artists of the Arca di Sant’Agostino and cycle in Fabriano continue to be a subject of debate. The painters of the Rimini cycle and Lecceto cycle are known as the Master of the Choir of St. Augustine and the Sant’Ansano Master, respectively. Guariento di Arpo, the painter of the Paduan cycle, has been overshadowed in scholarship despite his prolific work for well-established patrons in northern Italy. The only known Augustinian patron is the prior Domenico Strambi, who commissioned Benozzo Gozzoli’s cycle in San Gimignano.
1960s. Their four-volume *Iconographie de Saint Augustin* provided a concise analysis of several European cycles of St. Augustine’s life, produced from the fourteenth to eighteenth century. The authors include artworks produced in various media (sculpture, painting, and illumination) and commissioned by different religious orders. Despite the omission of important cycles (such as the Lecceto frescoes) and several inaccurate observations, their study remains significant as the first attempt to study Augustinian iconography.

During the past two to three decades, the artistic production of the Augustinian Hermits has begun to receive increased attention by art historians. Most studies have adopted a case-study approach. The collection of eleven essays in *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy* (2007) provide insightful, well-researched studies of individual commissions. However, the volume lacks concluding observations regarding Order-wide trends in Augustinian artistic patronage. In the introduction, the editors Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop describe their objective as an attempt to discern the contributions of the mendicants to the artistic renewal in the Renaissance, but the book fails to address this general hypothesis. The essays included in *Augustine in Iconography: History and Legend* (1999) provide several fruitful studies on the literary sources for Augustine’s life, the archaeological evidence for Augustinian hermitages, and

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80 Pierre and Jeanne Courcelle, *Iconographie de Saint Augustin*, 4 vols. (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1965-80). The fourteenth-century cycles examined in the first volume include the stained glass in Erfurt (17-38), the frescoes at Notre-Dame du Bourg at Rabastens (39-46), Guariento di Arpo’s frescoes in Padua (47-51), the fresco cycle Fabriano (53-59), the sculpted Arca di Agostino in Pavia (61-72), the predella in the Pinakothek of Munich (73-79), Ottaviano Nelli’s frescoes in Gubbio (81-99), and the panels in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (101-105).

81 Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop, eds., *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

82 For the objectives of the editors, see Anne Dunlop, “Introduction,” *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy*, ed. Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 1-15.
artistic projects directed by the Hermits and Canons. Additional collections of micro-studies include the published proceedings of several conferences, organized by the Centro studi Agostino Trapè. Arte e spiritualità negli ordini mendicanti (1992), Arte e spiritualità nell’Ordine Agostiniano e il Convento di San Nicola a Tolentino (1994), and Per corporalia ad incorporealitá (2000) consist of brief essays on the spirituality, history, architecture, and art of the Augustinian Order, with a particular focus on the Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino in the Marches, an active center of Augustinian activity.

Notable case studies also include an article by Louise Bourdua (1998), who discussed the Paduan cycle as an illustration of contemporary textual treatises written by the Hermits in defense of their claims about their founder. Sharon Dale’s monograph on the sculpted tomb monument of St. Augustine in Pavia (2016) assembles into a single book her earlier research on this very important monument. Dale reconstructs the multiple phases of construction based on documentary evidence and offers the most complete iconographic analysis of the entire sculpture. She focuses on the involvement of the Visconti patrons in the creation of the Arca and the role of the friars in the calamitous political climate of northern Italy.

84 Arte e spiritualità negli ordini mendicanti: gli Agostiniani e il Cappellone di San Nicola a Tolentino (Rome: Argos, 1992); Arte e spiritualità nell’Ordine Agostiniano e il Convento di San Nicola a Tolentino (Rome: Argos, 1994); Per corporalia ad incorporealitá. Spiritualità, agiografia, iconografia e architettura nel medioeva agostinano (Tolentino, 2000). For a study that focuses solely on the Chapel of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, see Cappellone di San Nicola a Tolentino (Tolentino: Silvana, 1992).
Other recent publications discuss individual cycles as part of larger studies on specific artists, churches, or towns. Zuleika Murat (2016) has just published a monograph on the complete works of the Paduan painter Guariento di Arpo, including the three cycles of St. Augustine painted for the Dominicans and Hermits in Bolzano and Padua.87 Diane Cole Ahl (1996) has reassessed the complete works of Benozzo Gozzoli, including the Augustinian cycle in San Gimignano.88 The St. Augustine fresco cycle in the Church of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano was the subject of a recent exhibition on painting and sculpture in Fabriano (Da Giotto a Gentile, 2014), and an art historical study by Bonita Cleri and Giampiero Donnini (2006), who examined the fourteenth-century chapels in the Dominican and Augustinian churches in Fabriano.89 Angelo Turchini, Claudio Lugato, and Alessandro Marchi (1995) have examined the frescoes painted by the trecento Riminese workshop in the Church of Sant’Agostino in Rimini, and F. Cece and F. Sannipoli have briefly discussed Ottaviano Nelli’s frescoes as part of their study on the Church of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio.90

The small number of comparative studies of Augustinian art in the early Renaissance falls into one of two categories – either limited discussions of art

87 Zuleika Murat, Guariento. Pittore di corte, maestro del naturale (Silvana, 2016).
commissioned by the Hermits in Renaissance Italy, or broad, comprehensive surveys of Augustinian iconography. In the former category is the aforementioned article by Dieter Blume and Dorothee Hansen (1992), which provides preliminary thoughts on the development of Augustinian visual imagery. In his study on the “myth of Augustine,” created by the Hermits in the medieval and Renaissance period, the historian Eric Leland Saak (2012) includes a brief chapter on selected cycles of St. Augustine’s life. Saak’s observations focus on identifying the literary sources for specific images and ignore several relevant art historical studies. Saak’s more important contribution to the field of Augustinian scholarship include his research on the Order’s involvement in the papal politics of late medieval Europe and the development of their founding narrative in written sources. His exhaustive study of the textual tradition builds upon the seminal works by Rudolph Arbesmann and Balbino Rano, who have published critical editions of fundamental texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Saak has devoted special attention to the friar Jordan of Quedlinburg, whose underappreciated writings were essential to the Order’s articulation of its Augustinian identity.

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92 Saak, Creating Augustine, 139-92. Cycles examined by Saak include the Metrum pro depingenda vita Sancti Augustini (148-54), the stained glass in Erfurt (154-56), Guariento di Arpo’s cycle in Padua (156-7), the Arca di Sant’Agostino (157-61), Ottaviano Nelli’s cycle in Gubbio (162-66), A. di Lorenzo’s manuscript illuminations (166-68), the illuminated Historia Augustini (168-76), the enlightened Vita Sancti Augustini Imaginibus Adornata (176-79), and Benozzo Gozzoli’s cycle in San Gimignano (179-84).
In her book-length study, Meredith Gill (2005) has examined how Augustine’s written legacy inspired visual and verbal expression in Renaissance Italy. Her work reveals the pervasive influence of Augustine’s theological and philosophical writings on Italian humanists and artists from the fourteenth through the mid-sixteenth century. In the chapter devoted to the Augustinian Hermits, she discusses four Italian cycles of St. Augustine’s life, recognizing regional tendencies as well as a general desire to present the saint as a scholar and hermit. Later chapters connect Petrarch and Augustinian aesthetics, the Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino and Augustine’s theory of light, and Michelangelo’s Sistine Ceiling and the saint’s writings on time and creation. Gill’s unique approach places the Hermits within the wider context of Italian Renaissance culture, revealing points of exchange between the friars and contemporary humanist-scholars.

On the other end of the spectrum, the multi-volume Iconografia Agostiniana (2011-15) provides a comprehensive catalogue of every surviving image of St. Augustine made in Europe from the early Middle Ages up through the fifteenth century, across medium, place of origin, and patron. This enormous study is indispensable for its collection of a vast number of images into a single source. The editors provide a series of brief essays that discuss general trends in Augustinian iconography, as well as short catalogue entries that synthesize the current state of research and provide new insights.

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95 Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance.
96 The four Augustinian cycles are the Arca di Sant’Agostino in Pavia (40-44), Guariento di Arpo’s frescoes in Padua (44-60), Ottaviano Nelli’s cycles in Gubbio (60-76), and Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes in San Gimignano (76-93).
This resource is a useful starting point for an in-depth examination of particular types of images from focused geographic areas.

The comparative method has been underutilized not only in the study of Augustinian patronage, but also more generally, in the study of mendicant art (particularly among English publications). In her assessment of the state of research on religious orders and fresco decoration, Louise Bourdua (2009) describes the comparative method as a potentially fruitful, but undervalued approach to studying Italian mendicant art.\(^98\) Even among the prolific studies on Franciscan and Dominican art, the two orders are rarely examined comparatively. The recent exhibition catalogue, *Sanctity Pictured* (2014), is the first study devoted to the art of both the Franciscan and Dominican Orders in the period from 1200 to 1500.\(^99\) Many of the studies that do discuss mendicant art in more general terms have conspicuously ignored the Augustinians (as well as the Carmelites). For example, Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut’s *Penser en images* (2005), one of the few sources that discusses the imagery of founder saints collectively, hardly mentions St. Augustine and the Hermits.\(^100\) Even studies of mendicant architecture typically neglect or entirely overlook the buildings commissioned by Augustinian Hermits.\(^101\) Indeed, the term “mendicant” too often seems to refer exclusively to the Franciscans and Dominicans.

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\(^{100}\) Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut, *Penser en images les orders religieux (XIIe-XVe siècles)* (Paris: Editions Arguments, 2005). The author examines only one cycle of Augustine commissioned by the Hermits (Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes in San Gimignano).

\(^{101}\) For example, Caroline Bruzelius, “The architecture of the mendicant orders in the Middle Ages: an overview of recent literature,” *Perspective* 2 (2012): 365-386. Although the title of the article suggests that
Andrew Jotischky has provided a useful model for my study in *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (2002), where he discusses the historical narratives of the mendicant orders in written sources from the thirteenth to fifteenth century.\(^{102}\) By examining these orders collectively, Jotischky demonstrates the great degree to which the mendicant and monastic orders responded to each another in the evolution of their founding myths. He reveals that the widespread preoccupation with the tracing of historical roots was part of a deeper investigation into the very meaning and origins of the monastic profession. Although Jotischky does not delve deep into visual sources, his work reveals the usefulness of these lines of inquiry.

My study has also benefited from several useful encyclopedic publications that reflect a recent interest in the general reception of St. Augustine.\(^ {103}\) In addition to published sources, many online databases have proven very valuable resources for studying the Augustinian Order. The Associazione Storico-Culturale S. Agostino (www.cassiciaco.it) has assembled digital images of a vast number of representations of St. Augustine across time and place. The Centro Studi Agostiniano “Cherubino Ghirardacci” (www.ghirardacci.it) provides digital access to primary sources related to the history and artistic patronage of the Augustinian Order in Italy. Lastly, the

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Augustinian Historical Institute and Villanova University have collaborated to create a bibliographic database for all subjects related to St. Augustine (www.findingaugustine.org).

New Perspectives

Research Objectives

Several common threads, running throughout each chapter, distinguish this study from previous scholarship on Augustinian art. First, my focus on Italian monumental cycles enables me to discern patterns of decoration in early Renaissance churches and to examine the importance of narrative art to the Order’s propagandistic aims. The eight cycles under examination were produced in churches and monasteries in central and northern Italy, between the early fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century. I have endeavored to examine each image in the larger context of its placement within the narrative cycle, its relationship to the overall decoration of the church or chapel, and the monument’s location within the church interior. For this reason, I have made a schematic diagram for each narrative cycle, and have used many of my own photographs, which allow me to emphasize how individual scenes fit into the

104 The eight Italian cycles from this period are: the frescoes in the Church of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano (1311-60), the murals in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in Rimini (1315-18), Guarento di Arpo’s frescoes in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua (1336-65), the sculpted tomb monument of St. Augustine in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia (1350-62), Bartolo di Fredi’s frescoes in Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (1384-88), Ottaviano Nelli’s fresco cycle in Sant’Agostino in Gubbio (1410-20), the cloister cycle in San Salvatore at Lecceto (1439-42), and Benozzo Gozzoli’s church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano (1465).
broader spatial context. On-site visits to these churches have helped me to discern how this imagery was viewed by friars in their original context, and in turn, how the artworks functioned in relation to the daily life of the Augustinian viewer. In addition to close viewing, I rely heavily upon textual sources, including hagiographic *vita*, historical treatises, and recorded sermons, as well as the Augustinian Constitutions, registers of chapter meetings, church inventories, and profession records.

My broader goal is to enrich scholarly understanding of mendicant patronage by examining a saint whose *vita* differed from the biographies of traditional founder saints and an order whose founding narratives contrast sharply with the more contemporary origins of the better known Franciscans and Dominicans. While the Hermits are often excluded from studies of Franciscan and Dominican art, this dissertation takes a unique approach by examining imagery of St. Augustine directly within a broader mendicant context.

Several elements of Augustine’s life distinguished him from his fellow mendicant founders and posed challenges for the Hermits in their efforts to develop a historical connection to the saint. First, St. Augustine lived during the fourth and fifth centuries. Thus, the Hermits needed not only to create a line of historical continuity that spanned eight centuries, but also to reconcile their mendicant mission with ancient origins that predated the thirteenth-century mendicant movement. Second, the Hermits claimed that a North African saint had founded an Italian-based order, despite only living in Italy for a few short years. In contrast, Sts. Francis and Dominic were celebrated thirteenth-century

105 Other scholars have created schematic diagrams for the cycles examined in this dissertation; however, these diagrams are often published in languages other than English, and sometimes include inaccurate or inconsistent identifications of narrative episodes. Therefore, I have created my own diagrams, with a special attention to specifying each individual narrative episode.
European religious leaders. As a layman, St. Francis of Assisi composed a rule for a group of followers in Umbria, who were officially approved as an order in 1223 by Pope Honorius III. St. Dominic Guzman, an Augustinian Canon of Spanish origin, founded the Dominican Order in Toulouse in 1214, and later established houses in Rome and Bologna. In addition to the inconvenient chronological and geographic aspects of Augustine’s life, he was already revered by numerous religious orders as a patron saint or founder. As the Franciscan scholar Rosalind Brooke has pointed out, a religious order typically remembered its founder in three primary ways: by his *vitae*, rule, and relics. The relics of St. Augustine belonged to the Canons, his Rule was followed by a number of orders, and *vitae* of the saint had already been written by members of the Premonstratensian and Dominican Orders. While the Franciscans and Dominicans disseminated the legend of a new saint, the Hermits faced the challenge of adjusting an existing narrative to suit their own needs.

How did the “new” Augustine fit into the existing paradigm of the mendicant founder, as defined by St. Francis and St. Dominic? How did the Order’s representation of their founder compare to conventional models of mendicant patronage? These questions are central to my investigation of Augustinian artistic cycles. In some cases, this comparative approach reveals the creativity of artists and patrons in transforming Augustine’s image to conform to the established model of mendicant founder, as a European saint and mendicant exemplar. In other instances, this study illuminates how

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the Hermits challenged the traditional identity of the mendicant founder and departed from conventional modes of mendicant patronage.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter, “St. Augustine as Spiritual Father,” focuses on Guariento di Arpo’s fresco cycle in Padua. These frescoes are important for their narrative representation of the Order’s founding myth, as well as its inventive creation of a new iconographic episode, referred to as the vestition. By consulting both patristic texts and fourteenth-century sources written by the Hermits, I demonstrate the layers of meaning inherent in images of the vestition, which alluded to the Order’s historical roots as well as Augustine’s commitment to chastity. While Guariento’s cycle is typically examined in isolation from its surrounding decoration, I demonstrate the richness in meaning gained from viewing these frescoes in relation to other imagery in the chapel. A comparison to similar episodes in Franciscan and Dominican iconography reveals how the Hermits adapted a traditional episode to illustrate the Order’s eremitic origins and Augustine’s identity as its spiritual father.

In the second chapter, “St. Augustine as Italian Founder,” I examine how the Order represented the two Italian locations most closely associated with St. Augustine: the Order’s mythic founding site in Tuscany and the burial place of Augustine’s relics in Pavia. A close examination of the textual tradition, in conjunction with the visual imagery, reveals three different ways in which the friars wrote about and represented these places. My discussion investigates precisely why the friars revered these places as
holy – for their historical importance, their natural beauty, or the physical and spiritual presence of St. Augustine’s body. For the first time, I explain the unusual representation of the founding event on the Arca di Sant’Agostino in light of Jordan of Quedlinburg’s discussion of place in the Liber Vitasfratrum. In addition, I reveal how Benozzo Gozzoli’s image of Monte Pisano in San Gimignano relates to the convictions of the Tuscan Observants, who elevated Tuscany as the optimal place to practice the Augustinian life. I conclude this section by comparing the hagiographic and visual traditions of the Augustinian Order to those of the Carmelites, revealing overlapping approaches in the ways that these two new mendicant orders refashioned their places of origin within monastic history.

In the third chapter, “St. Augustine in the Cappella Maggiore,” I examine the artistic cycles of St. Augustine’s life in light of their location, intended audience, and visibility to viewers. Using both visual and documentary evidence (Constitutions, archival records, Augustine’s writings), I examine the ecclesia fratrum as a locus for the narrative imagery of St. Augustine. By reconstructing the original settings of the east ends of a series of Augustinian churches, I show that like Franciscan and Dominican architecture, the ecclesia fratrum (“church of the friars”) was designed as a separate area reserved for friars. Cycles of St. Augustine in the cappella maggiore fostered a sense of collective identity that suited the function of the ecclesia fratrum as the location of the friars’ daily worship and special monastic rites. St. Augustine’s theories about the dynamics of vision, along with writings by contemporary friars on the power of images, illuminate how the Hermits might have viewed these cycles. I argue that the location of images in the cappella maggiore suited multiple functions by reinforcing the Order’s
history, asserting the friars’ privileged access to the saint, celebrating the communal ideal, and inspiring them to act in imitation of St. Augustine. In addition, I examine the types of images that were visible to the laity from the nave. A comparison with the Dominican and Franciscan traditions reveals that each order had different tendencies regarding the location of founder imagery.

The fourth chapter, “St. Augustine as Mendicant Model,” examines how the lives of the three principle mendicant founders (Sts. Francis, Dominic, and Augustine) exemplify “mendicancy,” as expressed in both written vitae and visual life cycles. More specifically, I question the roles of poverty and preaching in the formation of the individual and collective identities of the mendicant orders. The Hermits faced the challenge of reconciling their mendicant mission with the eremitic origins of their Order, and the antiquity of their founder, who predated the official mendicant movement.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I discuss how this dissertation helps us to reassess existing assumptions about mendicant art. Previous studies that concentrate on the Franciscan and Dominican traditions have obscured scholarly appreciation for the richness and variety of mendicant artistic production. The institution of the Augustinian Hermits and Carmelites as mendicant orders in the thirteenth century changed the conventional model of the mendicant founder in many ways. By considering mendicant art collectively, I consider the degree to which the art produced by the orders was distinctly “mendicant.”
CHAPTER 1

St. Augustine as Spiritual Father

As tourists find their way to the Arena Chapel in Padua to view the splendid trecento frescoes by Giotto di Bondone (c.1305), they often pass by the much less frequently visited Church of Sts. Philip and James, better known to locals as the Eremitani. The Gothic façade of the church overlooks the remains of the ancient Roman Arena, from which Giotto’s chapel receives its nickname (figs.5-6). The thirteenth-century church and the double-cloistered convent, which now houses the town’s civic art collection, was originally the home of the Augustinian Hermits, one of the four mendicant orders living within the walls of the Paduan commune. Committed to a life of poverty and urban preaching, the early-fourteenth-century friars complained about the increasing size and grandeur of the neighboring Arena chapel, built by the wealthy Paduan banker Enrico Scrovegni (d.1336). Enrico lived in the palace formerly

107 On Giotto’s frescoes and their patronage, see Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, The Usurer’s Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni, and the Arena Chapel in Padua (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008); Bruce Cole, Giotto: The Scrovegni Chapel, Padua (George Braziller, 1993); Claudio Bellinati, Giotto: Iconographic atlas of the Scrovegni chapel (1300-1305) (Treviso: Edizioni Grafiche Vianello, 2003); James Stubblebine, ed., Giotto: the Arena Chapel Frescoes (London, 1969); Andrew Ladis, Giotto’s O: Narrative, Figuration, and Pictorial Ingenuity in the Arena Chapel (University Park, PA: Pennsylvanina State University, 2008); Giuseppe Basile and Francesco Flores d’Arcais, eds., Giotto: gli affreschi della Cappella degli Scrovegni a Padova (Skira, 2002); Anna Maria Spiazzi, Giuseppe Basile, Serenella Borsella, eds., Giotto: la Cappella degli Scrovegni a Padova (Skira, 2002); Chiara Frugoni, L’affaire migliore di Enrico: Giotto e la cappella Scrovegni (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 2008).


109 “[S]ince the Prior of the aforesaid Monastery [Eremitani] has lodged a complaint in your presence, that the noble and powerful soldier, Lord Enrico Scrovegni the magnificent, citizen of Padua, had made and newly constructed a new bell tower in the Arena at the church which is located there, in order to place huge new bells in it to the grave scandal, damage, prejudice and injury of the friars and monks who dwell in that place, or in other words of the aforementioned Monastery and those of the Order located there, and of the
attached to his private chapel, where he commissioned the Tuscan painter Giotto to paint an elaborate decorative program. Although the Scrovegni palace was demolished in the nineteenth century, the interior of Giotto’s chapel remains in relatively good condition.\footnote{The palace was destroyed around 1820. Andrea Moschetti, \textit{The Scrovegni Chapel and the Frescoes Painted by Giotto Therein} (Florence: Alinari, 1907), 11. In the nineteenth century, the collapse of the chapel’s façade left the frescoes on the left and west walls unprotected. Since then, the frescoes have suffered from air pollution. On the condition of the frescoes following restorations made in the 1960s and 2001, see Giuseppe Basile, \textit{Giotto agli Scrovegni: la cappella restaurata} (Skira, 2002); Claudio Bellinati and Giorgio Deganello, \textit{Giotto: Padua, Scrovegni Chapel: the frescoes after the 2002 restoration} (Padua: Giorgio Deganello, 2006). Leonetto Tintori, “The State of Conservation of the Frescoes and the Principal Technical Restoration Problems,” in \textit{Studies in Conservation} 8.2 (May 1963): 37-41.}

Visitors can experience the overwhelming brilliance of the early Renaissance masterpiece after passing through a temperature-controlled room designed to maintain the frescoes’ state of preservation.

Unfortunately, the Church of the Eremitani has a more troubled, ever tragic history. In 1944, Allied bombing destroyed most of the eastern end of the church (fig.7). The cavernous wooden ceiling, built in the thirteenth century by Fra Giovanni degli Eremitani, has been repaired and the walls of the east end rebuilt.\footnote{Bettini and Puppi, \textit{La chiesa degli Eremitani di Padova}, 1-22.} However, much of the \textit{trecento} and \textit{quattrocento} fresco decoration remains in a sad state of disrepair. Traces of the church’s former splendor survive only in fresco fragments and blurry, black-and-white photographs. For example, in the Ovetari chapel, located in the southeast corner of

Convent and of the Church, and that, according to their sworn statements, there ought not to be a huge church in the Arena, but a small one with one altar in the manner of an oratory, and not with many altars, and further it ought to be without bells and without a bell tower according to the manner and form ascertained and contained in the document of concession made of the aforementioned Lord Enrico by the then Lord Bishop of Padua. The form and manner of the concession is as follows: That Lord Enrico will be allowed to construct in the Arena, or in that place which is called the Arena, without prejudice to the rights of others, a small church, almost in the manner of an oratory, for himself, his wife, his mother and his family, and that people ought not to be allowed to frequent this church. He should not have built a large church there and the many other things which have been made there more for pomp, vainglory and wealth than for praise, glory and honor of God. And again, these things have been done counter to the form and tenor of the concession of the Lord Bishop....” Stubblebine, \textit{Giotto}, 106-07.
the church, small pieces of fresco have been reattached to the walls to recreate part of the original murals by Andrea Mantegna (1448-57), based on photographs taken before the bombing.  

In its original state, the Augustinian church was a visual testament to Padua’s prominence in the history of fourteenth-century painting. In fact, the Augustinian friars stood at the forefront of the town’s period of artistic flourishing. Between 1310 and 1380, three distinguished artists – Guariento di Arpo (1310-1370), Giusto de’Menabuoi (c.1320-1391), and Altichiero da Verona (c.1330-c.1390) – decorated five chapels in the church. Shortly after, these very same painters produced some of the most noteworthy monuments in Padua, including the mesmerizing ceiling frescoes in the Baptistery (1374-78) and private chapels inside the Franciscan Basilica of St. Anthony (1376-79). The Paduan friars also attracted a host of distinguished scholars to their esteemed studium generale, which became one of the leading centers of Augustinian activity in Europe.  

112 Only two of Mantegna’s frescoes, which had been removed from the chapel in the nineteenth century, remain in relatively good condition, and have since been reattached to the chapel’s walls. On Mantegna’s frescoes in the Ovetari chapel, see K. V. Shaw, The Ovetari Chapel: Patronage, Attribution and Chronology, PhD. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1994.
113 Guariento painted the Chapel of St. Anthony (c.1362, the second chapel off the nave) and the cappella maggiore dedicated to Sts. Philip James (c.1360-65). Altichiero decorated the tomb of Diamante Dotto in the right apsidal chapel with a fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin (c. 1380). In 1370, Giusto de Menabuoi decorated the Chapel of St. Augustine (located off the nave), commissioned by Tebaldo dei Cortellieri, and in 1373, the Chapel of Sts. Cosmas and Damian (left apsidal chapel), commissioned by the Enrico Spisser, a German mercenary of Francesco II Vecchio da Carrara. For a history of the Church of the Eremitani and its artistic projects, see Bettini and Puppi, La chiesa degli Eremitani di Padova; Bertizzolo, Per l’inaugurazione della sagrestia degli Eremitani in Padova, 85-92; Anna Maria Spiazzi, La Chiesa degli Eremitani a Padova (Milano: Electa: 1991).
114 For studies on trecento painting in Padua and these artists, in particular, see: John Richards, Altichiero: An Artist and his Patrons in the Italian Trecento (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Anna Maria Spiazzi, ed., Giusto de’ Menabuoi nel Battistero di Padova (Trieste: Lint, 1989); Claudio Bellinati, ed., La cappella del beato Luca e Giusto de’ Menabuoi nella basilica di Sant’Antonio (Padova: Semenzato, Camillo, 1988); Sergio Bettini, Giusto de Menauboi e l’arte del Trecento (Padua: Le Tre Venezie, 1944); Murat, Guariento, 74-80, cat. 16, cat.19.
With close connections to the University of Padua, the friars assembled an admirable collection of manuscripts in their library.\textsuperscript{116}

Among the large number of artistic projects commissioned by the fourteenth-century friars is the fresco program in the \textit{cappella maggiore}, painted between 1360 and 1365 by the local artist Guariento di Arpo (figs. 8).\textsuperscript{117} The frescoes covering the vaults, the right wall, and most of the apse wall have been destroyed.\textsuperscript{118} However, pre-war photographs and written accounts indicate that the chapel walls originally featured an extensive decorative program.\textsuperscript{119} The side walls were decorated with a narrative cycle of St. Augustine in the lower registers, cycles of the Apostles Philip and James in the upper two registers, and allegories of the planets and ages of man in the socle (figs. 9-12). The apse wall depicted the \textit{Last Judgment} above scenes from the \textit{Passion and Resurrection of Christ}. This sophisticated program, which includes an unprecedented astrological dado, indicates the involvement of a learned friar in designing the frescoes.\textsuperscript{120} Zuleika Murat

\textsuperscript{116} For the impressive collection of books belonging to the library of the Paduan \textit{studium generale} (including those accumulated by the friars Bonaventura and Bonsembiante Badoer), see Luciano Gargan, “Libri de teleogi Agostiniani a Padova nel trecento,” \textit{Quaderni per la Storia dell’Università di Padova} 6 (1973): 1-23. For a 1639 inventory of the convent’s library, see Gutiérrez, “De antiquis Ordinis Eremitarum Sancti Augustini bibliothecis,” 240-51.

\textsuperscript{117} Guariento executed the cycle sometime between 1338, when the artist witnessed a contract in the chapter hall of the Eremitani, and the 1360s, when he moved to Venice. Most scholars agree with Francesca Flores d’Arcais, who dated the cycle to the period between 1360 and 1365 based on stylistic analysis. Francesca Flores d’Arcais, \textit{Guariento} (Venice: Alfieri, 1965), 62-65; ibid., “Profilio di Guariento,” in \textit{Guariento e la Padova carrarese}, ed. Davide Banzato, Francesca Flores d’Arcais, and Anna Maria Spiauzzi (Venezia: Marsilio, 2011), 17-38. For the most current reassessment of Guariento’s oeuvre, see Murat, \textit{Guariento}. For an overview of Guariento’s documentary record, see Gilda P. Mantovani, “Guariento nei documenti,” in \textit{Guariento e la Padova carrarese}, ed. Davide Banzato, Francesca Flores d’Arcais, and Anna Maria Spiauzzi (Venezia: Marsilio, 2011), 87-94.

\textsuperscript{118} For information on the conservation and restoration of Guariento’s frescoes, see Anna Maria Spiazzà, “Vicende conservative, tecnica di esecuzione e restau delle pitture murali di Guariento a Padova,” in \textit{Guariento e la Padova carrarese}, ed. Davide Banzato, Francesca Flores d’Arcais, and Anna Maria Spiauzzi (Venezia: Marsilio, 2011), 59-69.


\textsuperscript{120} For a discussion of the astrological dado, see Andrea Lerner, “Planetengötter in Gotteshaus. Zur Ikonographie von Guarientos Freskenzyklus der sieben Planeten und Lebensalter in der Eremitanikirche zu
and Giovanna Valenzanno have identified the family of the Augustinian friar Bonaventura da Peraga (1332-89) as the likely patrons of the chapel’s decoration. After joining the Paduan friary at a young age, Bonaventura attended the Sorbonne in Paris and established the faculty of theology at the University of Bologna. He later served as prior general of the Order in 1377, before becoming a cardinal in 1388. As a distinguished friar and learned theologian, Bonaventura would have been well-versed in the religious and secular texts required for designing Guariento’s decorative program.

The Frescoes by Guariento di Arpo in Padua (1360-65)


122 For the collection of books available to Bonaventura Badoer in the library of the Paduan studium generale, see Gargan, “Libri di teleologi Agostiniani a Padova nel trecento,” 1-23.

delivered by Nicholas of Alessandria to friars in Paris (1332), and the Tractatus (1334) by Henry of Freimar, who defended the Order’s claim to Augustine as founder in a historical treatise. Like these textual sources, the frescoes focus on the saint’s conversion, his vestition (the moment when he put on the eremitic habit for the first time), his bestowal of the Rule to the friars, and the papal confirmation of the Order.

My study redirects attention to an episode overlooked by Bourdua, as well as subsequent scholars, who have merely reiterated Bourdua’s interpretation – the baptism of Augustine’s illegitimate son, Adeodatus (fig.13). My examination of this overlooked episode reveals how the Hermits transformed Augustine from a sexual sinner to a model of chastity (a particularly important virtue for the Order), and from a carnal father of an illegitimate son to the spiritual father of his only true sons (a message central to the rhetoric that distinguished the Hermits from other orders). By examining this seemingly marginal episode in relation to the rest of the fresco decoration, I demonstrate that the baptism scene was carefully chosen as an integral part of a visually and thematically unified narrative program. Each pair of scenes centers around the theme of rebirth or renewal – a concept that corresponds to the Hermits’ vision of their Order’s history, as well as the spiritual development of Augustine and every Hermit friar.

Spiritual Rebirth

The first surviving fresco on the left wall (fig. 14) depicts two episodes related to Augustine’s conversion, which took place during his stay in Milan. On the left side of the panel, Augustine sits alone in a garden, accompanied by an angel who points to a passage in a book. According to the Confessions, this passage comes from the Book of Romans, which reads: “Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, and not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify desires” (Rom 13:13-14). Augustine is so moved by this verse that his doubts about Christianity vanish and, on the right, he proceeds into his house to tell his friend Alypius, who also converts upon reading Paul’s words.

This first fresco illustrates a major moment in Augustine’s spiritual journey – the turning point in which he renounces his old life of “immorality,” as prompted by the verse from Romans. Several visual details mark the two episodes as counterparts, highlighting the revelatory nature of the Scriptural passage and the inner transformation that results. In both scenes, an opened book, held by the angel and then by Augustine himself, is contrasted by a selection of closed books, such as the one being dropped by Augustine and those on the shelf behind Alypius. Guariento creates this visual contrast by altering the account provided in the Confessions. While Augustine describes the voice of a child telling him to “take up and read” (tolle lege), Guariento depicts the vision of an angel who actually points to the text. The immediate effect of the conversion is

126 Augustine, Confessions, 8.12.29.
witnessed in the adjacent episode, where Augustine shares the divine message with Alypius.

The verse from Romans, which exhorts its readers to “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ,” anticipates the literal clothing that occurs in the second pair of episodes (figs.15-16). This fresco represents the outward demonstration of Augustine’s inner transformation through two religious rites that celebrate Augustine’s spiritual rebirth – his baptism in Milan by Bishop Ambrose, alluded to in the right aisle of a church interior, and his vestition in the eremitic habit, depicted in the center of the fresco.

This central scene depicts Augustine’s vestition in the eremitic habit by Bishop Ambrose, the first representation of this episode in artistic iconography.128 This episode does not appear in the Confessions, but in a sermon falsely attributed to St. Ambrose, which the fourteenth-century Hermits used as evidence for Augustine’s early commitment to the eremitic life.129 In the scene, Ambrose, along with Simplicianus, a hermit and friend of Augustine, appear to be adjusting his belt, an important identifier in the habits of the fourteenth-century friars. By illustrating that Augustine had been vested in eremitic dress in Italy before his ordination as priest in North Africa, the Order demonstrated that Augustine had become a hermit before a cleric, thereby asserting its precedence over the Augustinian Canons.130

128 Courcelle, Iconographie de Saint Augustin. Les cycles du XIVe, 50.
129 The key passage records Augustine’s vestition immediately after his baptism: “We clothed the new Christian in new garments, even with a black cowl, and we ourselves did gird him with a leather cincture, which Simplicianus gave us with exceeding joy.” Pseudo-Ambrose, Sermo de baptismo et conversione sancti Augustini, 49. The passage is cited in Nicholas of Alessandria, Sermo, 366-67; Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 204-5.
The secondary scene on the right (fig.13) is often misidentified or overlooked by scholars.\(^{131}\) Twentieth-century art historians traditionally identified the young boy being baptized as Augustine, until Bourdua persuasively argued that the boy is actually Augustine’s son, Adeodatus.\(^{132}\) As she points out, the boy appears to be younger than Augustine and is not provided with a halo. These details follow the description in the \textit{Confessions}, which specifies that Augustine was baptized at age thirty, together with his son (who was about fifteen years old) and his friend Alypius (who appears in the previous fresco in a much different guise).\(^{133}\)

Guariento’s focus on the baptism of Adeodatus is unique in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cycles of Augustine’s life, which typically combine the saint’s vestition and baptism into a single event. It is also unprecedented among images commissioned by other orders, including a now-lost cycle painted by Guariento for the Dominicans in Bolzano.\(^{134}\) The Paduan fresco raises unanswered questions about why the Hermits chose

\(^{131}\) For the misidentification of Adeodatus as Augustine, see Courcelle, \textit{Iconographie de Saint Augustin. Les cycles du XIVe} , 51; Berenson, \textit{Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Central Italian and North Italian Schools } 1, 204.

\(^{132}\) Bourdua, \textit{“De origine et progressu,”} 188. Since the publication of her article, Bourdua’s identification has been adopted by most scholars (Cosma, \textit{Iconografia Agostiniana}, vol.1, 313; Gill, \textit{Augustine in the Italian Renaissance}, 56-7; Warr, “Hermits, Habits, and History,” 22; ibid., \textit{Dressing for Heaven}, 121), but not by all. Saak does not mention Bourdua’s revised identification and identifies the scene as the baptism of Augustine, accompanied by Adeodatus and Simplicianus (Saak, \textit{Creating Augustine}, 157).


to highlight the illegitimate son of their founder saint in this way. Since Bourdua’s reidentification of Gauriento’s subject, scholars have shied away from addressing this decision.135 A comparison between Augustine’s *Confessions* and fourteenth-century accounts provide insight into how the friars might have approached this potentially problematic aspect of the saint’s biography.

According to the *Confessions*, Augustine began a fifteen-year relationship with an unnamed woman in Carthage, who gave birth to his son a year later, when Augustine was seventeen years old.136 Although Augustine does not provide details about this woman, he vividly describes his weakness in the face of sexual temptation, which remained one of the major impediments to his conversion.137 Adeodatus and his mother accompanied Augustine to Italy, but Augustine was forced to dismiss his mistress when his mother Monica made (ultimately unsuccessful) plans for him to marry another woman.138 While Augustine’s mistress returned to Africa, his son remained with him in Italy. On the following Easter Vigil, Augustine was baptized in Milan along with Adeodatus, who died shortly after they both returned to North Africa.139

The mid-fourteenth-century Hermits (Nicholas of Alessandria, the anonymous author of the *Initium*, and Henry of Freimar) chose to downplay Augustine’s biological

135 The most extensive discussion to date is a brief note by Meredith Gill, who suggests that Guariento’s inclusion of Adeodatus might emphasize the importance of teaching by example and the restorative power of baptism. I develop her preliminary thoughts below by (1) exploring precisely how these ideas are illustrated within the visual dynamics of the painting and overall decorative program, (2) drawing connections to specific texts composed by the Hermits, (3) and discussing the role of Adeodatus in later cycles. Gill, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance*, 56-7.
136 Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.2.2.
137 In particular, Book 8 of the *Confessions*.
138 Ibid., 6.13.23; 6.15.25. While waiting for his betrothed to become old enough for marriage, he took another mistress to satisfy his lustful desires. Soon after, he converted to the Christian faith and broke off his engagement to embrace a life of celibacy.
relationship to his son, diminished his role in the saint’s life, and portrayed Adeodatus as a spiritual follower rather than his natural offspring. They certainly knew the Confessions very well, as evidenced by their frequent citations of the autobiography. However, they choose to ignore the troubling details regarding his struggle with lust, and omit all references to the mother of Adeodatus. Adeodatus is mentioned in only two contexts: his baptism alongside Augustine, and immediately afterwards, his accompaniment with him to a solitary place near Milan, where they lived together with other eremitic companions. This selective retelling of Augustine’s life suggests a desire to shift focus from his lustful relationship, which resulted in the birth of an illegitimate child, to his more edifying roles as a spiritual father and leader.

When the vestition and baptism scenes are viewed as a pair on the left wall, the role of Augustine as spiritual exemplar becomes clear, as both father and son partake in sacred rituals. Adeodatus imitates the example of Augustine, who presumably has just been baptized and simultaneously enters his own ritual rebirth through initiation into the religious life. The two figures are represented in similar figural arrangements, with Ambrose above and Monica below. Even the gesture of the older man, whose hand is visible on Adeodatus’ side, mimics the pose of Simplicianus, who adjusts Augustine’s belt. The Pseudo-Ambrosian sermon on Augustine’s baptism evokes this leader-follower

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140 The books belonging to the library of the Paduan studium generale included the Confessions, the pseudo-Augustinian Sermones, and numerous other books by St. Augustine. Gargan, “Libri di teologi agostiniani a Padova nel Trecento,” 1-23.
dynamic between father and son: “Rejoice at this great triumph in which Augustine, the leader, with his militant associates, Adeodatus and Alipius, has become our captive.”

The baptism marked Adeodatus’ transformation from the fleshly son of Adam into spiritual son of God, and celebrated his initiation into a new kind of family. The boy’s carnal relationship to Augustine could be washed away as he became spiritually reborn into the Church’s community of believers. Guariento, a painter known for creating dramatic narratives set in intricate architectural settings, divides the pictorial plane into three parts, each occupied by a different generation of one family – Augustine, his mother, and his son – whose spiritual, rather than blood, relationships are stressed.

Monica, who is not included in textual accounts of Augustine’s baptism, appears twice in the fresco. First, dressed as an Augustinian tertiary, she kneels in the left aisle, acting as maternal intercessor for her son. Her supplicant pose recalls her significant role in the Confessions as a model of piety and constant prayer. Second, she reappears in the right aisle as intercessor for Adeodatus, rather than participant in the scene. Looking beyond the pictorial space to the altar wall of the chapel, she is positioned outside the space in

142 Pseudo-Ambrose, Sermo de baptismo et conversione sancti Augustini, 49.
144 Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 57.
145 In one particular passage, Augustine describes Monica as his spiritual mother: “And now thou didst ‘stretch forth thy hand from above’ and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness [of Manicheism] because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the light of the faith and spirit which she received from thee, she saw that I was dead. And thou didst hear her, O Lord, thou didst hear her and despised not her tears when, pouring down, they watered the earth under her eyes in every place where she prayed. Thou didst truly hear her.” Augustine, Confessions, 3.11.19.
which the baptism takes place. Meanwhile, Adeodatus, the focus of the action in the right aisle, follows the example of his spiritual father, who provides a visual counterpart.

Augustine’s vestition also marked the beginning of his transition from biological father to spiritual father. It is noteworthy that Guariento’s fresco focuses specifically on the girding of the cincture, which is a departure from many other images of the subject.\textsuperscript{146}

While art historians have pointed out the eremitic connotations of the cincture, they often overlook its more fundamental religious significance. In his extensive commentary on the Rule and Constitutions (c.1357), titled the \textit{Liber Vitasfratrum}, the friar Jordan of Quedlinburg explains that the girding of the loins signifies the putting to death of the initiate’s carnal appetite, particularly the lustful desires associated with the lower part of the body.\textsuperscript{147} He traces the origins of the monastic custom from the Old Testament prophets to Christ’s Apostles and the Desert Fathers.\textsuperscript{148} Henry of Freimar mentions that Augustine’s black habit served as a “reminder of the darkness and deformity of his pagan ways,” while the cincture signified the “mortification of all beastly impulses… which were entirely extinguished in Augustine after his conversion.”\textsuperscript{149} He adds that Augustine

\textsuperscript{146} Examples include the sculpted Arca di Sant’Agostino in Pavia, Bartolo di Fredi’s frescoes in Montalcino, Ottaviano Nelli’s murals in Sant’Agostino in Gubbio, and Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes in San Gimignani. See discussion below.

\textsuperscript{147} Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 96: “The cincture… signifies the putting to death of all our animal drives, especially in those parts which contain the source of lust.” Ibid., \textit{Liber Vitasfratrum}, I.14: “Corrigia vero...secundum Johannem Cassianum, ubi supra, significant mortificationem omnium motuum bestialium illorum praecipue membrorum, in quibus luxuriae seminaria continentur.”

\textsuperscript{148} Jordan cites an Old Testament precedent from Leviticus, as well as a Gospel passage where Jesus instructs his disciples to “let your loins be girt” (Luke 12:35). Jordan provides several examples of biblical men who wore the cincture, including Old Testament figures Elijah and John the Baptist, as well as the Apostles Peter and Paul. Jordan connects the ancient tradition to Augustine by one of the saint’s sermons, in which he explains the habit and cincture to brothers in the wilderness. Ibid., 96-99.

\textsuperscript{149} Henry of Freimar, \textit{Treatise}, 206. Ibid., \textit{Tractatus}, 93: “…vel etiam hoc ideo factum est, ut nigredinis et suae paganiacae deformitatis numquam oblivisceretur, sed propterea in luctu et perpertua paenitentia remaneret. […] Si vero per zonam corrigia intelligatur, prout legitur, quod Elias et Johannes Baptistae zona pelliceam, quae fit de corio mortuorum animalium, significatur mortification omnium motuum bestialium, qui in beato Augustino post eius conversionem quasi funditus sunt extincti.”
girded his habit so that it did not touch the ground because he thought his body should be
disciplined more than other innocent hermits, since for thirty years he had spent his time
in worldly pursuits and pleasures. Guariento’s celebration of Augustine’s commitment to
the chaste life recalls the saint’s role as a model of chastity in the Liber Vitasfratrum.\textsuperscript{150}
Jordan admires how Augustine fled the company of women, refused to talk alone with
them, and even declined to live with his sister.\textsuperscript{151} Chastity was as important a virtue to the
Augustinian Order as poverty was to the Franciscans and obedience to the Dominicans.\textsuperscript{152}
While the profession formula used by the Dominican Order placed sole emphasis on the
vow of obedience, the formula of Augustinian profession added chastity to the vows of
obedience and poverty.\textsuperscript{153} When viewed in light of the habit’s powerful symbolism and in

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{150} The Rule itself includes a long set of instructions to aid the devotee’s effort to guard his own chastity and help his fellow brethren to keep themselves chaste. Likewise, Jordan also devoted a substantial section of the Liber Vitasfratrum to the subject of chastity. He includes numerous edifying examples and sixteen practical precautions and remedies for guarding one’s sexual purity. Augustine, “The Rule,” 291-92; Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 259-9.
\bibitem{151} Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 269, 279. The emphasis on Augustine’s conscious isolation from women contrasts with vitae of St. Francis of Assisi, who shared several well-known friendships with women, including St. Clare. Rosalind Brooke has pointed out that Franciscan hagiographers struggled to reconcile these anecdotes with monastic regulations that forbade women to enter the convent. Brooke, The Image of St. Francis, 271.
\bibitem{152} Saak has discussed how maintaining sexual purity was a major concern for the Order in the middle of the fourteenth century. Deviant sexual behavior was among the many issues addressed by the prior general Gregory of Rimini (c.1300-58) in his reform program of 1357. Gregorii Arimenensis, Ordinationes et Litterae, ed. Eric Leland Saak, in High Way to Heaven (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2002), 812-822; Saak, High Way, 291, 330-34.
\bibitem{153} Jordan of Quedlinburg believed that the formula for the profession rite, recorded in the Constitutions, was the original formula used by the “ancient fathers” (ibid. Life of the Brethren, 190-94). The formula of Augustinian profession as recorded in the Constitutions: “Ego Frater N. facio professionem, et promitto obedientiam Deo, et beatae Mariae, et tibi Fratri N., Generali Priori Fratrum Eremitarum Sancti Augustini et successoribus tuis, vivere sine proprio, et in castitate, secundum Regulam beati Augustini, usque ad mortem.” Constitutions. XVIII.117. The formula of Dominican profession lacks any reference to chastity, and instead mentions obedience twice: “I. N., make profession and promise obedience to God and to blessed Mary and to you, N., Master of the Order of Preachers and to your successors, according to the Rule of blessed Augustine and the constitutions of the friars of the Order of Preachers, that I will be obedient to you and to your successors until death,” Simon Tugwell, “Introduction,” Early Dominicans: Selected Writings, 23. On the importance of the Dominican vow of obedience, see Leon F. Strider, The Promise of Obedience: A Ritual History (Collegeville, Minnesota; the Liturgical Press, 2001), 62-67.
\end{thebibliography}
conjunction with the image of Adeodatus, Guariento’s *Vestition* carries a more precise meaning as a crucial moment within the personal life of Augustine.

While the cincture signified the repression of the sins resulting in carnal fatherhood, it simultaneously signified Augustine’s spiritual paternity of his mendicant sons. In his sermon on St. Augustine, delivered in 1332, Nicholas of Alessandria describes the Order’s habit as a tangible sign that distinguished the Hermits from other followers of the Rule as the only true sons of the saint: “But we are Augustine’s sons, born immediately from him, and therefore we clearly carry his sign, namely the habit which he used directly after his baptism.” Nicholas’ language evokes the father-son relationship between Augustine and his followers, and cites the habit as the most important visible evidence of their identity as spiritual progeny. Henry of Freimar also cited the habit as proof that the Hermits were the “true and proper sons” of St. Augustine. The presence of Adeodatus in Guariento’s fresco foreshadows Augustine’s mendicant followers and appeals to fourteenth-century rhetoric that spoke about the Hermits as “sons” of the saint. On the opposite wall, Augustine bestows the Rule to his eremitic sons, who wear the black habit received by Augustine in the previous episode (fig.17). A friar in the foreground noticeably adjusts his cincture, drawing attention to this

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155 Henry of Freimar, *Treatise*, 214: “The Order of Hermit Brethren of Saint Augustine and the brethren therein are true and proper sons of Saint Augustine and he himself is their true father. This is clear from the fact that he wore their habit while living the eremitical life and gave them a Rule of life.” Ibid., *Tractatus*, 99: “Quod enim ordo fratrum eremitarum sancti Augustini et fratres illius ordinis sint very et proprii filii beati Augustini et ipse sit eorum verus pater, ex hoc patet, quod eorum habitum in eremo portavit et eis regulam vivendi traditit, ut patet ex supradictis.”

156 Saak has made a similar suggestion in his discussion of textual sources. He argues that the Hermits completely “erased” Augustine’s “sexuality,” however, based on the prominence of Adeodatus in Guariento’s image, I would argue that the situation is more complex. Rather than “erasing” Adeodatus, the Paduan Hermits used him as evidence of the power of God’s grace and Augustine’s future spiritual paternity. *High Way*, 286-91.
distinctive part of the official habit and connecting the image to the action depicted in the previous fresco.

The ritual similarities between baptism and monastic profession, briefly noted by Meredith Gill, reinforce the visual correlation between the two episodes. But Gill’s observation prompts deeper consideration of how this coupling illustrates the ritual reenactment of Christ’s death and resurrection. Careful attention to visual details, along with consideration of textual sources familiar to fourteenth-century Hermits, reveals the importance of these two episodes in the cycle of St. Augustine and within the more extensive narrative program.

Augustine’s description of his baptism highlights his belief in the sacrament as a moment of spiritual rebirth. He writes: “We associated him [Adeodatus] with us so as to be of the same age as ourselves in your grace. We were baptized, and disquiet about our past life vanished from us.” The rite of baptism transformed Adeodatus from “natural son begotten of my sin” to spiritual kin. While baptism was viewed rather differently by fourteenth-century believers, since infant baptism had largely replaced adult baptism, the monastic profession was increasingly seen as marking a similar kind of transformation from death to rebirth. Baptism carried a long-standing association with monastic profession, which was considered a second baptism, because both rites commemorated the renunciation of sin and entry into a new spiritual community.

157 Gill mentions the connection between baptism and monastic profession in a brief reference, upon which I have elaborated by connecting the concept to particular texts written by the Hermits and specific visual details in Guariento’s frescoes (Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 57).
159 For detailed studies of monastic profession as a second baptism, see Jean Leclercq, “Tradition, Baptism and Profession: The Genesis and Evolution of the Consecrated Life,” in Aspects of Monasticism
The historic analogy between baptism and monastic profession has biblical foundations that reach back to St. John the Baptist. Long considered a precursor of the formal monastic life, John the Baptist was known for both his withdrawal into the desert and his baptism of Jesus. The Desert Fathers, third-century hermits who followed the eremitic lifestyle of John the Baptist, are credited as the first to make the connection between baptism and the monastic profession, in a collection of hagiographic writings called the *Vitae Patrum*. The fourth-century hermit Anthony Abbot (c.250-356) even argued for the power of monastic profession to forgive previous sins, as was the case with baptism.

Fourteenth-century Hermits would have been familiar with the longstanding association between the two rites. The fourth-century *Life of St. Anthony the Hermit* by St. Athanasius (c.295-373), one of the first texts to elaborate on this correlation, was credited with helping to lead Augustine to his conversion. The *Vitae Patrum* also grew increasingly popular in the fourteenth century, particularly among the Hermits, who considered the Desert Fathers to be their early predecessors. The 1639 inventory of the


161 “There was a certain one who was great among the seers; he declared, saying: I saw over the clothing of the monk, where he took the spiritual habit, the virtue which I saw standing over baptism.” *Vitae Patrum*, cited in Joseph H. Lynch, *Simoniacal Entry into Religious Life from 1000 to 1260* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976), 27.


163 In his *Liber Vitæfratrum* (c.1357), Jordan of Quedlinburg cites extensively from the *Vitae Patrum*. See Eric Leland Saak, “*Ex vita fratrum formatur vita fratrum*: The Appropriateness of the Desert Fathers in the
convent’s library in Padua records the *Vitae Patrum* among the friars’ collection of manuscripts.  

From the time of the Early Church up through the fourteenth century, the rite of monastic profession remained closely modeled on the sacrament of baptism, from the verbal pronouncement to the ritual actions and physical emblems. The most visually symbolic parts of both rites were the acts of stripping and dressing, both of which are highlighted in the Paduan fresco. Like the candidate for monastic profession, the neophyte Adeodatus strips his clothes to signify the shedding of his old life. Augustine, who wrote extensively on baptism, adopted the New Testament metaphor of clothing in his recorded sermons to the newly baptized, urging the candidates to strip off the old man and be clothed with the new. After undressing, the baptism candidate is dipped in or sprinkled with water three times, a symbolic enactment of Christ’s death and burial. The immersion in the water of the baptismal font, historically designed to

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165 For a study on the evolution of the rite of monastic profession, see Peifer, *Monastic Spirituality*, 174-191. For an examination of the specific similarities between the rites of baptism and monastic profession, see Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr*, 120-43.


168 In Romans 6:3, Paul writes: “Know you not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.”
resemble a sarcophagus, recalled Christ’s three days in the tomb. During the monastic rite, the monk acted out this spiritual death by lying prostrate on the floor.

While the nude, untonsured figure of Adeodatus represents the moment of his ritual death, Augustine personifies the resurrected man beginning a new life. It is only after the baptismal candidate emerges from the font, and the monk from the floor, that they are reborn, just as the resurrected Christ rose from the tomb. Both candidates are then dressed in new clothes that symbolize the entry into a new kind of life. The white garment of the newly baptized, which awaits Adeodatus in the hands of a nearby woman, represents the brightness of the neophyte’s cleansed soul, according to Augustine. The white baptismal garment contrasts with the hermit’s black habit. Henry of Freimar discusses the rich symbolism of the black color, which denotes that the friar is in a state of perpetual penance. He goes on to describe the cruciform shape of the cowl, which commemorates the Passion and signifies the friar’s crucifixion to the world. When an Augustinian novitiate put on the black cowl for the first time, the prior of the friary

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169 Jensen, Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity, 165. Ambrose himself writes that baptismal immersion was a symbolic burial. Interestingly, Augustine’s account of his baptism is the only place in the Confessions where he mentions the death of his son, adding another element of bodily death and spiritual rebirth (9.6.14). With Augustine’s lament of his son’s death comes the hope that he will find eternal life, which Augustine believed was only possible if one had been baptized.


reminded him of the significance of his new clothing by declaring, “God dresses you, a new man….”

The symbolic imitation of Christ’s death and resurrection through baptism and monastic profession is visually reinforced by the Passion and Resurrection cycle that once decorated the lower part of the apse wall (figs.18-19). A prewar photograph reveals that the central dado depicted the Imago Pietatis, where Christ’s limp body appears dead but rises as if alive. The Imago Pietatis visualizes the dual nature of Christ’s sacrifice as a death and rebirth. The fourth section of the dado represented the risen Christ, emerging from the tomb and carrying a banner that reads Victor Mortis. A surviving fragment from the cycle, which represents Christ Crowned with Thorns, indicates the original placement of the Passion narrative just above the height of an altar. This emphasis on Christ’s triumph over death was repeated in the now-destroyed Last Judgment above, where Christ leads the Blessed by the hand to Paradise, carrying the same cruciform banner (fig.20). As Janis Eliot has pointed out, this highly unusual...
depiction of Christ in the context of the *Last Judgment* suggests a deliberate visual emphasis on the theme of resurrection.\(^{177}\)

**Historical Renewal**

The model of the friar’s spiritual development, defined by a series of rebirths through baptism and monastic profession, can be read as a parallel to the historical development of the Augustinian Order, which viewed the Great Union not as the moment of its creation, but as a renewal of Augustine’s original foundation. The final pair of frescoes formerly on the right wall effectively underlines this concept of historical renewal. On the left, Augustine bestows his monastic Rule to a group of hermits, all identified by their black habits and leather belts. The hilly background suggests a Tuscan landscape, corresponding to early-fourteenth-century sources that locate the founding in central Italy.\(^{178}\) Augustine is mirrored in the adjacent fresco by Pope Alexander IV, who continues the saint’s legacy by reuniting what he had established centuries earlier (fig. 21). In a similar composition the pope is surrounded by thirteenth-century hermits dressed in various habits, as he joins together the five branches of the Order included in the Great Union of 1256.\(^{179}\)


\(^{178}\) Bourdua, “De origine et progressu,” 188-191. For fourteenth-century references to the founding place, see Arbesmann, “Vita,” 341 (fol.7r); Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 367; Rano, *Initium*, 338; Henry of Freimar, *Treatise*, 208. For a more in-depth study of the Order’s legendary founding site, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

\(^{179}\) Cordelia Warr has discussed Guariento’s representation of the habit in relation to contemporary disputes over the uniformity of the Augustinian habit and its similarity to the dress of other religious orders. Cordelia Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*, 117-30; ibid., “Hermits, Habits and History: The Dress of the
As noted, the fourteenth-century Order framed the Great Union as a re-union of multiple existing eremitic communities, whose origins could be traced back to Augustine’s original foundation. In fact, the Hermits credited Augustine with instructing Pope Alexander IV to re-unify his Order by appearing to him in a vision.\footnote{Henry of Freimar, \textit{Treatise}, 216-7. Alexander IV carried a significant connection not only to the Order’s origins, but specifically to the historical founding of its church in Padua. He gave the Hermits in Padua the right to say Mass on a portable altar on 4 April 1259. Bettini and Puppi, \textit{La chiesa degli Eremitani di Padova}, 14. For information on the \textit{duecento} community of Hermits in Padua, see Claudio Bellinati, “Monastero e chiesa degli Eremitani a Padova nel Duecento,” in \textit{Per L’inaugurazione della sagrestia degli Eremitani in Padova. 30 marzo 1971}, ed. Decimo Bertizzolo (Padua: Tip. Antoniana, 1971), 13-24; A. Rigon, “Richerche sull’eremitismo nel padovano durante il XIII secolo,” \textit{Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia} 4 (1980): 217-53, 228-34.} Indeed, it is important to note that fourteenth-century Hermits recast the Order’s history as a series of renewals. According to the anonymous author of the \textit{Initium}, after the Apostles of the Early Church established the model of apostolic life, a period of decline followed, until Augustine restored the apostolic rule by instituting his monastic rule.\footnote{Rano, \textit{Initium}, 338: “Beato pater Augustinus et doctor regulam apostolicam post Domini ascensionem ab apostolis traditam, sed diu negelctam, luculento sermone conscripsit.”} After his death, Augustine’s eremitic followers dispersed across Italy until their reunion in the thirteenth century. Writing two decades later, the Hermit Jordan of Quedlinburg elaborated on this historical pattern, which is characterized by periods of repeated decline and renewal.\footnote{Saak, “Creation of Augustinian Identity II,” 282.} Jordan believed that the communal life established by the Apostles was continued by the Desert Fathers, who withdrew from society once the apostolic ideal had been lost. Following in this tradition, Augustine was “the first to renew or restore the apostolic communion by means of a written rule.”\footnote{Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 308-9. Ibid., \textit{Liber Vitas fratrum}, III.3: “Et est signatur advertendum, quod primus renovator seu restaurator communions apostolicae per Regulam scriptam videtur fuisse beatus Augustinus…..” Jordan mentions the two other ancient rules that were papally approved: the sixth-century Rule of St. Benedict, and the Rule of St. Basil, who lived around the same time.}
foundation of the Order were largely forgotten, the Church carried out again everything that he had done, “as if for the first time, thus founding it and giving it authorization.”

The placement of Augustine’s cycle beneath the *Lives of Sts. Philip and James* reinforces this connection between the Apostles of the Early Church, Augustine’s foundation, and the fourteenth-century Order of Hermits.

Despite their prominent placement in the *cappella maggiore*, the *Lives of Sts. Philip and James* in the upper two registers have been largely ignored, particularly in relation to the cycle of St. Augustine below. In 1264, the Hermits changed the dedication of the church from Santa Maria della Carita to the Apostles Philip and James, who were frequently paired because they share the same feast day on 1 May. When the Hermits settled in Padua, a nearby Dominican church was already dedicated to St. Augustine, whose Rule was followed by the Dominican Order. As patron saints of the church, Philip and James were a logical choice for the subject matter of the choir decoration. However, as relatively minor Apostles, the two saints were rarely represented in narrative

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as Augustine. Jordan argues for the historical precedence of the Rule of Augustine over the Rule of Basil based on the fact that Augustine wrote his wrote at an early age and knew nothing of a rule written by Basil. He adds that even if the Rules of Pachomius and Basil preceded that of Augustine, Basil’s Rule is monastic, while Augustine’s Rule is based on the Acts of the Apostles. 

184 Jordan of Quedlinburg, *Life of the Brethren*, 109. Ibid., *Liber Vitasfratrum*, I.19: “…nec propter diuturritatem tam longaevi temporis de praemissis institutionem Ordinis concernentibus per beatum Augustinum circa suum Ordinem actitatis usquequaque Sedi apostolicae clarum esset, sed videretur in oblivionem ex lapsu tot generationum et temporum transivisse, licet verisimilia apparetent, igitur sancta mater Ecclesia praemissa Omnia per beatum Augustinum circa Odrinem gesta quasi de novo auctoritate apostolica per semetipsam immediate iterato egit, instituit et auctorizavit.”

185 The reason for this unusual dedication remains unclear.

cycles, making their representation on a monumental scale another experiment in new iconography.\textsuperscript{187}

The cycles of Sts. Philip and James follow a two-part narrative format similar to the structure of the St. Augustine cycle, and again reinforce the themes of death and resurrection. The top register on the left wall illustrates two episodes from the Miracle of the Idol (figs.22-23). According to the \textit{Golden Legend}, when the pagans tried to force Philip to worship the idol of Mars, he ordered forth a dragon that killed the son of the high priest and his two provosts.\textsuperscript{188} In the first fresco, the dragon strangles an older man and bites the neck of the priest’s son. In the next scene, the former priest of Mars raises a cross in place of the pagan idol. Several men who have been slayed by the dragon come back to life and kneel in prayer before the cross. Guariento’s repetition of the architectural setting draws an obvious juxtaposition between the two episodes: the worship of the idol and resulting killings by the dragon contrast with the erection of the cross and Philip’s resurrection of the dead. In the register below, the two frescoes (figs.24-26) are chronologically linked, as Philip convokes the bishops seven days before his death.\textsuperscript{189} This narrative pattern continues in the \textit{Life of St. James} on the right wall, known only through pre-war photographs and descriptions of the frescoes recorded

\textsuperscript{187} The mosaics in San Marco in Venice (12-13\textsuperscript{th} century) are a rare example of an earlier Italian cycle of the Apostles Philip and James. There are, however, a number of later cycles: the fresco cycle of Sts. Philip and James by Giusto de Menabuoi in the Chapel of Luca Belludi in the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua (1382), the fresco cycle of Sts. Philip and James by Spinello Aretino in San Domenico in Arezzo (1395-1400), and the frescoes of St. Philip by Filippo Lippi in the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence (1487-1502). George Kaftal, \textit{Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy} (Florence: Sansoni, 1978); ibid., \textit{Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting} (Florence: Sansoni, 1952); \textit{Iconography of the Saints in the Central and South Italian Schools of Painting} (Florence: Sansoni, 1965); \textit{Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy} (Florence: Sansoni, 1985). See also Richard P. Bedford, \textit{St. James the Less: a study in Christian iconography} (London: B. Quaritch, 1911); Louis Réau, \textit{Iconographie de l’art chrétien} (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1955), 1068-1071.

\textsuperscript{188} Jacobus da Voragine, \textit{Golden Legend}, 267.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
before their destruction. In the top register, James appears praying and preaching, exemplifying the active and contemplative components of the apostolic life. In the middle register, James is thrown from the Temple of Jerusalem (fig.28), which results in the siege of the city (fig.27), God’s punishment for his martyrdom.

The scenes from the *Lives of Sts. Philip and James* illustrate essential aspects of the apostolic mission in the Early Church. James preaches in Jerusalem, where he became the first bishop and the first Apostle to celebrate Mass. Philip leads pagans to Christianity and directs the leaders of the Church in the *Convocation of the Bishops*. The inclusion of a baptism episode in Philip’s *Convocation of the Bishops* might allude to Christ’s command to the Apostles to make disciples of all nations and baptize them (Mt 28:19-20). Since there is no well-known baptism episode associated with Philip the Apostle, its inclusion in the *Life of St. Philip* seems to be a deliberate choice made by the patron. Guariento locates the episode in the right aisle of a Gothic church interior, like

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190 Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, 204.
192 It is possible that the cycle of James also includes an image of baptism. In his description of the *cappella maggiore* before its destruction, Bernard Berenson describes the two frescoes in the top register as James “praying and baptizing” (*Italian Pictures* I, 204). It is too difficult to discern from pre-war photographs whether the image does in fact depict a baptism, and given the number of errors in Berenson’s identification of other episodes, I cannot be certain of his claim.
193 Bourdua has suggested that the scene alludes to the baptism of Simon the magician or of the Ethiopian eunuch (“De origine et progressu,” 180, n. 21). However, these two episodes occurred in the life of Philip the Deacon, not Philip the Apostle. It remains possible that the two Philips were intentionally conflated. Interestingly, in one of Augustine’s sermons, he mentions that it does not matter which Philip performed the famous baptism. *Sermon 266*, in *Sermons 230-272B on the Liturgical Seasons*, ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1993), 267. A similar conflation of minor and major saints occurs in the Chapel of Sts. Philip and James in the Basilica of St. Anthony in Padua, which borrows from Guariento’s program in the Eremitani. Two scenes from the life of St. James the Major are inserted into the cycle of St. James the Less. The inscriptions distinguish between the two saints, calling one “sancto” and the other “beato,” suggesting that the scenes were deliberately included to suit the chapel’s theme. Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 40-1; Camillo Semenzato, ed., *La cappella del beato Luca e Giusto de’ Menabuoi nella basilica di Sant’Antonio* (Padua: EMP, 1988). On the iconography of Philip the Apostle and Philip the Deacon, see Réau, *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, 1068-1071.
the *Baptism of Adeodatus* in the register below. This compositional repetition – with the left aisle reserved for female viewers, the right aisle for baptism, and the central nave for the main action – draws the viewer’s eye to these two secondary scenes. In contrast to Adeodatus, the catechumen in the register above wears a white tunic and holds a red robe. These garments correspond to the Early Christian tradition of using both red and white robes to signify the ritual imitation of Christ’s passion. This previously unnoticed visual detail underscores the dual purpose of baptism and alludes to the historical roots of the sacrament.

While the work of Philip and James in the Early Church laid the foundation for Augustine’s revival of the apostolic life, the martyrdoms of the two Apostles can also be viewed as precursors to the monastic tradition. Since the second century, martyrdom had been considered a baptism by blood because this sacrificial act forgave the martyr’s sins and physically imitated the sacrificial death of Christ. As persecution decreased in the fourth century, the ascetic life substituted physical martyrdom with a living, spiritual martyrdom through the voluntary acceptance of suffering. Jordan of Quedlinburg drew a direct connection between apostolic martyrdom and monastic profession in the *Liber*

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194 The focus on the sacrament of baptism should also be understood in light of Augustine’s well-known writings on the subject, which continued to shape canon law in the fourteenth century. Augustine supported the practice of infant baptism, arguing that all individuals, including infants, required baptism to cleanse them of original sin. He believed that this tradition had been handed down from Jesus and the Apostles. By the fifth century, infant baptism predominated, and infants usually waited for Easter or Pentecost to be baptized by the nearest bishop. However, with the high mortality rate in the Middle Ages, fear for the salvation of infants increased, and became an important issue in the fourteenth century. Several synods across Europe, including the Constitutions of Padua of 1339, demanded the baptism of infants eight days after birth by local clergy. See the “Constitutions of Padua,” *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio*..., XXV, ed. Giovan Domenico Mansi (Paris: H. Welter, 1901-1927), 1138; cited in Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, 111.

195 For the history of the connection between martyrdom and monastic profession, see Edward E. Malone, “Martyrdom and Monastic Profession as a Second Baptism,” *Vom christlichen Mysterium* [Casel Festschrift] (1951), 115-34.
Vitasfratrum. He explained that the cross-like shape of the cowl recalls the Passion, so that like the apostle the monk may say, “With Christ I am nailed to the cross.” Henry of Freimar specifically compares Augustine’s commitment to the apostolic life of poverty to “a martyrdom of desire.” The placement of the Martyrdom of Philip above the Vestition and Baptism on the left wall invites the viewer to make a visual connection between martyrdom, that is to say a baptism by blood, and the ascetic life, which was considered a living martyrdom. In addition to the strong symbolism of the white baptismal garment and the black habit, the striking red cloak worn by Philip on the cross evokes the religious significance of martyrdom as a baptism by blood.

My examination of the St. Augustine cycle in conjunction with other narrative images in the cappella maggiore reveals Guariento’s effective narrative structure, as well as the desire of his Augustinian patrons to insert their founding myth within a wider understanding of Christian history. Gill and Bourdua have recognized that the arrangement of frescoes and Guariento’s self-contained architectural backdrops allow for multiple ways of reading the imagery. However, they have not explained precisely how a holistic reading of the chapel decoration provides a richer and more complete understanding of the program’s meaning. My discussion has shown how Guariento employed a variety of visual details that can be appreciated only by a close viewing of the chapel’s narrative imagery, either one wall at a time or one cycle at a time. Taken

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198 Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 55; Bourdua, “De origine e progressu,” 181, 184.
together, these three narrative cycles present a view of history marked by moments of rebirth – the birth of the apostolic life by Philip and James, reborn through Augustine’s establishment of an eremitic community, and revived in the thirteenth century under Pope Alexander IV.

What is perhaps most innovative is the way that Guariento’s narrative connects the spiritual *progressu* of Augustine’s personal life with the historical *progressu* of the Order’s collective history. Just as Augustine and the Hermit friars had been reborn a second time through the profession rite, so was the apostolic life revived for a second time by the Great Union. The baptism/vestition episode is important both as a personal event within the life of Augustine and as a reminder of the Order’s eremitic and apostolic origins. Guariento’s focus on Adeodatus and the cincture highlights the episode as Augustine’s turning point from sinner to saint, and from fleshly father to chaste father. At the same time, the pairing of the baptism and vestition, and its placement in relation to other images of martyrdom, connects the fourteenth-century rite to its eremitic and apostolic precursors.

The Paduan cycle also reveals a new narrative consciousness in the way that Guariento represents the *progressu* of Augustine’s spiritual life and his position in a line of spiritual exemplars. Through its select choice of episodes and carefully devised compositions, Guariento’s cycle locates Augustine within a spiritual lineage and traces his development from catechumen and disciple to father and monastic exemplar. Dressed in lavish secular clothing in the first episode, Augustine converts upon reading the words of Paul, then leads Alypius to faith in the same manner. In the process, Augustine becomes a link in the chain of spiritual role models, influenced by the past and impacting
the future. In the second fresco, the participation of Ambrose and Simplicianus in Augustine’s baptism and vestition affirm their roles as spiritual fathers. Indeed, Augustine likened Ambrose to a father in the *Confessions*. What is more often forgotten is that Simplicianus was the baptizer of Ambrose. In the *Confessions*, Augustine refers to Simplicianus as “father to the then bishop Ambrose in the receiving of grace.” He adds that “Ambrose truly loved him as one loves a father.” Thus the inclusion of Simplicianus not only adds an eremitic emphasis, but establishes a long line of holy exemplars. Simultaneously, the inclusion of Adeodatus in the fresco portrays Augustine as an example for younger believers. In the *Bestowal of the Rule*, Augustine matures from follower to father, corresponding to Henry of Freimar’s argument that Augustine was a disciple in Milan, then a teacher in Tuscany. Such precise chronology was important to the early fourteenth-century writers, who claimed that Augustine could not have founded the Order in Milan, but waited until his sojourn through Tuscany. Augustine mirrors the pose of Christ Pantocrater, who appears opposite in the *Vestition*, painted in the apse of the church choir. In the final fresco, the father of the Roman Church, Pope Alexander IV, continues Augustine’s legacy in the modern era.

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199 Regarding his arrival in Milan, Augustine writes: “That man of God received me like a father...” Augustine, *Confessions*, 5.13.23.
200 Ibid., 8.2.3.
201 In the *Sermo de Beato Agostino*, Nicholas of Alessandria makes the same point about Augustine’s time in Milan after his baptism: “Nullam tamen ibidem regular composuit, cum semper ibis tans indueret formam discipuli sub Ambrosio et Simpliciano, non magistri.” Rano, *Sermo*, 367.
Before and After Padua

The impact of Guariento’s frescoes on later cycles of Augustine’s life is evident in their narrative format and the representation of the baptism and vestition. First, a look at two earlier Italian cycles illustrates the innovation of Guariento’s departure from these two precedents. Sometime between 1311 and 1360 a workshop of Marchigiana artists frescoed the three apsidal chapels of the Church of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano. The right chapel, dedicated to St. Augustine, is decorated on three walls with episodes from the saint’s life (fig.28). The scenes highlight Augustine’s role as bishop, miracle worker and peacemaker, rather than hermit and religious founder.

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202 The only earlier non-Italian cycle of St. Augustine’s life, which was commissioned by the Hermits, is the stained glass in Erfurt (1330-34). The cycle is the first to present new iconographic episodes (such as the Visit of Simplicianus) in a narrative format. The cycle does not show the vestition, but does include episodes that show Augustine as bishop and miracle-worker. Courcelle, Iconographie de Saint Augustin, Les cycles du XIVe, 17-38; Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, n.114.

203 A document from 1311 records the sale of land by the Hermits to pay artists to paint the church. Five new altars had been consecrated by 1360, providing the terminus ante quem. The chapels were probably designed as a single artistic project. The apsidal chapels have been attributed to various artists, including an Umbrian or Marchigian artist, Master of the Coronation of Urbino, Master of St. Emiliano and Allegretto Nuzi. For a summary of the debate over dating and attribution, see Cosma, Iconografia Agostiniana, vol.1, 273-76. For a history of the church, see Bonita Cleri, “La Chiesa di Sant’Agostino. le cappelle gotiche,” in Le cappelle gotiche in Sant’Agostino e in San Domenico di Fabriano, ed. Bonita Cleri and Giampiero Donnini (Fabriano: Fondazione Casa di Risparmio di Fabriano e Cupramontana, 2006), 7-72. For documents related to the church, see Stefano Felicetti, “Regesti documentary (1299-1499),” in Il maestro di Campodonico: rapport artistici fra Umbria e Marche nel Trecento (Fabriano: Cassa di risparmio di Fabriano e Cupramontana, 1998), 214-27, esp. 214, n.5.

vestition is represented. The cycle consists of a series of individual episodes that illustrate different facets of Augustine’s life and character, rather than a chronological biography.

The second cycle is found in the *cappella maggiore* of Sant’Agostino in Rimini, painted between 1315 and 1318 by an artist from the workshop of Giovanni da Rimini, now known as the Master of the Choir of St. Augustine. The *Life of St. John the Evangelist* runs along the upper registers on both side walls and the outer part of the lower left wall. The *Life of Augustine* occupies three of the four scenes along the lower registers of the side walls (figs. 29-31). Augustine’s *Bestowal of the Rule* (fig. 32) appears on the inner left wall, and *Augustine Preaching* and the *Ascension of Augustine* (fig. 33) along the lower register of the right wall. The frescoes in Rimini do not tell a coherent story of Augustine’s life, nor do they focus solely on the relationship between the Order and its founder. The artist does include Augustine’s bestowal of the rule, but the episode is given no narrative detail or temporal placement within the saint’s life.

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205 Turchini, Lugato and Marchi have convincingly dated the commission to sometime between 1315, when the location of the general chapter was announced, and 1318, when the chapter was held in Rimini (*Il Trecento riminese*, 23-28). For an overview of dating issues, see Da Gai, *Iconografia Agostiniana*, 185-86. For a discussion of the artistic project within the oeuvre of the Riminese school of painters, see Miklós Boskovits, “Per la storia della pittura tra Romagna e le Marche ai primi del ‘300,” *Arte Christiana* (1993): 95-114, 163-182.

Later Italian cycles of St. Augustine’s life grew increasingly extensive and biographical. These cycles generally follow the new official *vita* of St. Augustine, written by the friar Jordan of Quedlinburg (1343), which begins with his early years before his conversion.\(^{207}\) Jordan’s description of the saint’s early life focuses on his involvement with the heretical sect of Manicheanism, rather than his sexual exploits, as the principle cause of his *errores*.\(^{208}\) Like earlier sources, Jordan’s *Vita di Sancti Augustini* highlights the saint’s baptism and vestition as a central moment in the narrative of his life. He describes the restorative power of the baptismal waters to cleanse carnal sins through spiritual renewal: “Finally, in the fonts together with Augustine, Alypius and the boy Adeodatus, born from him carnally, were spiritually renewed.”\(^{209}\) Adeodatus reappears later in Jordan’s narrative as one of Augustine’s companions on the return journey to Africa, along with Monica and his eremitic brethren.\(^{210}\)

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\(^{208}\) The *Life of Saint Augustine* (c.1450), written by the prominent English friar John Capgrave (1393-1464), provides a striking contrast. Written specifically for an unnamed noblewoman, this *vita* is based largely on Jordan’s *Vita di Sancti Augustini*, but with notable additions to the earlier text. Capgrave mentions Augustine’s faithful mistress and his early desire for a wife. Capgrave apparently believed that these additions would appeal to a female readership. John Capgrave, *Life of Saint Augustine*, ed. Cyril Lawrence Smetana, O.S.A. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2001), Chapter 18; Cyril Lawrence Smetana, O.S.A., “Introduction,” in *Life of Saint Augustine* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2001), 11. For Capgrave’s reliance on Jordan’s *vita*, see Arbesmann, “Jordan of Saxon’y’s *Vita S. Augustini,*” 341-353.

\(^{209}\) Jordan of Quedlinburg, *Vita di Sancti Augustini*, 790: “Denique in eisdem fontibus simul cum ipso Augustino, Alipius et puer Adeodatus de ipso carnaliter natus, spiritualiter renati sunt.” His juxtaposition of *carnaliter*, used to describe Adeodatus, with *spiritualiter*, referring to the baptismal rite, subtly alludes to the baptismal absolution of Augustine’s sins of the flesh. The phrase also appears in the earlier *vita* by Philip of Harvengt (*Vita beati Augustini*, 1215).

\(^{210}\) Jordan also includes a more detailed description of Adeodatus and emphasizes his remarkable intelligence and love of virtue, which astounded even Augustine. Drawing from Augustine’s brief comments about his son in the *Confessions* (9.6.14), Jordan’s description of Adeodatus perhaps tries to speak to the natural intelligence of the boy’s father, and the ways that he might have imitated the behavior of Augustine. The Augustinian friar Ambrosius da Cori (1481) includes the same basic information in his fifteenth-century *vita*. Ambrosius Massarius de Cora, *Defensorium Ordinis Sancti Augustini*. 
Likewise, artistic cycles emphasize the centrality of the baptism and vestition by typically locating the episode at the midpoint of the cycle. Two elements from Guariento’s fresco are commonly repeated: the representation of Adeodatus (as observer, rather than participant) and the coupling of the two rites (either paired side by side or conflated into a single scene).\footnote{\textsuperscript{211}Warr has discussed the prominence of the vestition episode in Augustinian cycles and their subtle variations. She focuses on the Hermits’ deliberate efforts to combine the baptism and vestition in order to claim precedence over the Canons. Warr, “Hermits, Habits, and History,” 17-28; ibid., \textit{Dressing for Heaven}, 117-30.} The sculpted relief of the \textit{Baptism and Vestition} appears on the west side of the Arca di Sant’Agostino (1361-1409, figs.34-47), an elaborately carved tomb monument.\footnote{\textsuperscript{212}Sharon Dale’s research on the patronage of the Arca has proven that the Arca was produced in three phases: 1361-2 (base, gisant, and attendant figures), 1378-81 (rectangular reliefs, canopy), and after 1409 (gabled reliefs). She has demonstrated that the Hermits relied on funds supplied by the Visconti family, and the complicated political and religious climate during this time led to delays in the construction of the Arca. Dale, \textit{Arca di Sant’Agostino}. See also ibid., “A House Divided,” 55-77; ibid., “Grant me Chastity and Continence, but not yet,” 207-230. Dale’s conclusions corrected previous assumptions that the Arca predated Guariento’s cycle (Gill, \textit{Augustine in the Italian Renaissance}, 55).} Located in the Church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia, where the saint’s relics are buried, the tomb represents Augustine’s life and translation in nine rectangular reliefs. The sculptor, whose identity remains uncertain, combines the two rites into a single moment (fig.41).\footnote{\textsuperscript{213}The Arca has been attributed to various sculptors, including Giovanni di Balduccio, a group of his followers, and Bonino de Campione. See Dale, \textit{Arca di Sant’Agostino}, 11.} In the center, the small figure of Adeodatus kneels at the font along with Augustine, who puts on the habit, identifiable by its pointed hood, with the assistance of Ambrose and Alypius.\footnote{\textsuperscript{214}Louise Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder St. Augustine of Hippo,” in \textit{Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy}, ed. Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 41-42.} Monica kneels in prayer on the right and Simplicianus stands on the left.\footnote{\textsuperscript{215}Courcelle, \textit{Iconographie de Saint Augustin. Les cycles du XIVe}, 66.} The episode reappears in the fresco cycle by Bartolo di Fredi in the Church of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (1384-88, figs.48-53). The damaged fresco in the lunette on
the right wall includes an unidentifiable episode on the left, probably a baptism scene, and the vestition on the right (figs. 51-52).  

The young figure on the far left of the vestition scene, hovering over Augustine, could possibly be Adeodatus.

Ottaviano Nelli’s fresco cycle in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio (1410-20, figs. 54-78), which consists of twenty-five scenes, depicts the two events side by side within the same pictorial frame (fig. 68). The fresco cycle by Benozzo Gozzoli in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano (1465, figs. 79-96) includes seventeen scenes, arranged in three ascending registers. The saint’s baptism and vestition (fig. 90) appears in the middle register of the apse wall. The tonsured and haloed Augustine kneels over the font while Bishop Ambrose pours water over his head. Surrounding him are Monica, haloed Alypius, bearded Simplicianus, and another hermit, who holds both white and black garments. To the left of Ambrose is a younger observer, who might be identified as Adeodatus. The episode reappears among the fourteen frescoes covering the Tuscan cloister at Lecceto (1439-42, figs. 97-99). Located in the center of the upper register, the severely damaged fresco of the vestition at Lecceto is too illegible to discern the figures, but it is likely that the artist followed the iconographic elements of previous images.

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216 The cycle is too damaged to identify many of the other episodes and the cycle’s overall narrative structure. For a deeper discussion of the chapel’s iconography, see Gaudenz Freuler, Bartolo di Fredi Cini: ein Beitrag zur sienesischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts (Disentis: Desertina Verlag, 1994), 222-39; Cosma, Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 331-48.


219 On the attribution of the cycle to the Master of Sant’Ansano, see Miklós Boskovits, “Il gotico senese rivisitano: Proposte e commenti sua una nostra,” Arte cristiana 71.698 (1983): 269; Cesare Brandi, Quattrocentisti senesi (Milan: Hoepli, 1949), 133; Marla Merlini, “Pittura tardogotica a Siena: Pietro di
Dressing (and Undressing) the Mendicant Founders

The image of Augustine’s baptism and vestition can be likened to St. Francis’ renunciation of worldly goods, an episode in his vita that marks his departure from his natural family in pursuit of the religious life. St. Bonaventure (1221-74), the official biographer of St. Francis, describes the moment when Francis renounced his inheritance to follow an ascetic life: “He stripped himself immediately of all his clothing and have it back to his father…. and turning to his father said, ‘From now on I can say with all truth, ‘Our Father who art in heaven,’ because Pietro di Bernardone has repudiated me.’” The episode is depicted in many painted cycles of the saint, often as the opening scene. In the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi (c.1300, fig.100), the first extensive cycle of Francis’ life, the Renunciation of Worldly Goods appears along the right nave wall.

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220 For a discussion of vestition imagery in the iconography of religious orders, see Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 81-125. She discusses the Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, and Camaldolese traditions, but not images of St. Augustine. For a discussion of religious habits in the daily life of the mendicants and their role in artistic iconography, see Warr, Dressing for Heaven, 55-130.

221 Bonaventure, Legenda Maior, II.4, trans. Ewer Cousins, in Bonaventure – The Soul’s Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

222 St. Francis’ renunciation of worldly goods is the first episode represented in the lower church cycle of San Francesco in Assisi (1253-66), the Bardi chapel (1325-28), the Sassetti chapel (1483-85), and the quatrefoils by Taddeo Gaddi (1325-40). The episode also appears in the upper church cycle in Assisi (c.1300), the fresco cycle in San Francesco in Gubbio (c.1280), and Benozzo Gozzoli’s cycle in San Francesco in Montefalco (fig.148, 1425).

Francis stands opposite his father, a local cloth merchant, as the Bishop of Assisi covers his naked figure with a garment. The compositional division of the fresco into two parts, with Francis’ father on one side and the saint and bishop on the other, signals Francis’ rejection of material goods, in favor of religious poverty. Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut has discussed this episode as a “contre-exemple” of the traditional vestition scene.224 By removing his clothes, rather than putting on the habit, Francis illustrated his commitment to poverty, his defining characteristic.

Similarly, the representation of Monica and Adeodatus in images of Augustine’s vestition evokes the carnal relationships shared between the three family members. Although Adeodatus is not the main focus of later baptism episodes, as in Guariento’s fresco, his inclusion in many of these images reminds the viewer of Augustine’s departure from his natural family and commitment to living as a chaste man in the future. Several sermons delivered by fourteenth-century Hermits identify Augustine’s conversion as the moment when he lost all desire for a wife and carnal child.225

Monica and Adeodatus play dual roles, as Augustine’s carnal mother and son, but also his spiritual intercessor and follower. While the father of St. Francis represents the material world that his son seeks to abandon, Augustine does not leave behind his mother

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224 Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 114-25.
225 The comment stems from a passage in the Confessions, where Augustine remarks that after his conversion he was happy to lose the things that he once held dear (9.1.1). The remark appears in the vita by Possidius, and later in sermons delivered by the friar Hermán de Schildesche (d.1357) and an anonymous Augustinian preacher. Rano, “San Agustin y su Orden,” 43, 47-8, 82.
and son after his vestition. Instead, they accompany him on his spiritual pilgrimage through Italy. The Lecceto cycle depicts the saint approaching the Tuscan coast, aboard a boat with Monica and Adeodatus (fig.99).\textsuperscript{226} Gozzoli’s cycle in San Gimignano includes Adeodatus in the \textit{Funeral of St. Monica} in Ostia (fig.92).\textsuperscript{227}

The comparative episode in the Dominican tradition is commonly known as the Vision of Blessed Reginald. The legend developed in thirteenth-century \textit{vitae} of St. Dominic.\textsuperscript{228} According to the written sources, Blessed Reginald fell ill, shortly before joining the Dominican Order in 1220. While St. Dominic was praying intently for him, the Virgin appeared to Reginald. She anointed and cured him, then presented him with the black and white habit of the Dominican Order.\textsuperscript{229} Dominican writers specify that the habit bestowed by the Virgin was different from the one previously worn by the friars.\textsuperscript{230} Therefore, the vision asserted the Virgin’s divine sanction of the Dominican habit, an important symbol of the Order’s identity.\textsuperscript{231} The Arca di San Domenico (figs.101-102), the sculpted tomb of St. Dominic in San Domenico in Bologna, illustrates the legend in three episodes, located on the long side of the monument.\textsuperscript{232} On the left, Reginald meets Dominic in Rome; in the center, Reginald collapses, while Dominic appears in the upper

\textsuperscript{228} The episode appears in every early \textit{vita} of St. Dominic: Jordan of Saxony’s \textit{Libellus de principiis} (1231-34), Peter of Ferrand’s \textit{Legenda Sancti Domini} (after 1234), Constantine of Orvieto’s \textit{Legenda Sancti Domini} (1245), Humbert of Romans’ \textit{Legenda Sancti Domini} (before 1254), Jacobus da Vorgine’s \textit{Golden Legend} (c.1260), and Gerard of Frachet’s \textit{Lives of the Brethren} (after 1256). On the development of the legend in thirteenth-century \textit{vitae}, see Warr, \textit{Dressing for Heaven}, 72-73.
\textsuperscript{229} This is the most commonly repeated version of the legend. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{231} For a discussion of the importance of the habit as a defining symbol of the Order, see Ibid., 83-86; Joseph Siegwart, “Origine et symbolism de l’habit blanc des Dominicains,” in \textit{Vie Dominicaine XXI} (Fribourg, 1962).
\textsuperscript{232} On the three different tombs of the saint, see Anita Federer Moskowitz, \textit{Nicola Pisano’s Arca di San Domenico and its Legacy} (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 6-8.
left corner, hands clasped in prayer; and on the right, the Virgin anoints Reginald with one hand and holds up the Dominican habit in the other hand.

These images of dressing and undressing within the lives of Sts. Francis, Augustine, and Dominic are representative of more general trends in the iconographic and hagiographic traditions of the three mendicant orders in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. St. Francis’ renunciation illustrates two essential elements of the saint’s identity: his love for poverty and his likeness to Christ. Visualizing his poverty in the most dramatic way, Francis makes himself naked like Christ on the cross. The vision of Blessed Reginald highlights the Dominican Order’s special devotion to the Virgin and Dominic’s important role as a model of prayer. As is typical in Dominican hagiography, Dominic is not the main protagonist of this visionary episode, but the intermediary. On the Arca, he appears as intercessor in the second episode, and is omitted entirely in the third relief. In painted images of the vision, such as the altarpiece

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235 On the connection between the naked Francis in the Renunciation of Worldly Goods and the naked Christ on the Cross, see Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 121-25.


of Blessed Andrea Gallerani (c.1270-80, Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena), the praying figure of Dominic often appears in a separate pictorial frame, isolated from Reginald and the Virgin.\(^{238}\) Despite St. Dominic’s importance as founder, Dominican hagiography often relegated him to a secondary character in the early history of the Order.\(^{239}\) In Jordan of Saxony’s *Libellus de principiis ordinis Praedicatorum* (1231-34), an account of the Order’s origins, St. Dominic is merely one of many important friars, who contributed to its early history.\(^{240}\) He is neither the focus of the *Libellus*, nor the first character mentioned.\(^{241}\) While St. Francis was fundamental to the Franciscan Order’s identity and formation, as author of the rule and the ultimate exemplar of poverty, St. Dominic played a more minor role in the Dominican tradition, leaving behind only a single letter as part of his written legacy.\(^{242}\)

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\(^{240}\) Jordan opens the *Libellus* with a reference to Dominic’s companion, Bishop Diego: “There was a man in the parts of Spain of venerable life whose name was – Diego.” Brooke, “St. Dominic and his First Biographer,” 23-40.

The relief of the *Vision of Blessed Reginald* also illustrates the tendency of Dominican art to represent episodes that emphasize Dominic’s contribution to the Order, rather than the personal elements of his biography.243 In contrast to the *Vision of Blessed Reginald*, Francis’ renunciation was central to his personal narrative of spiritual transformation, often placed at the beginning of his life cycles. In their explanation of these different patterns of artistic patronage, scholars have pointed out the “dullness” of Dominic’s *vita* in comparison to the evocative life of St. Francis, full of theatrical episodes that made for striking images.244 The Franciscans praised Francis as the singular *alter Christus*, but St. Dominic was a more conventional saint, admired as an example of humility, prayer, and preaching.245

I would argue that images of St. Augustine’s vestition combined elements of the Dominican and Franciscan traditions by presenting the episode as a momentous event in his personal *vita* and the Order’s corporate history. Located at the center of his life cycles and combined with his baptism, the episode is the crucial moment in Augustine’s personal transformation from sinner to saint. Simultaneously, the representation of the habit defined Augustine as hermit and father of the Order. Many religious orders

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243 On the Arca’s emphasis on Dominic’s contribution to Order, see Cannon, “Dominic *alter Christus*?,” 26-48. On the difference between images of St. Dominic on the Arca and representations of St. Francis, see also Krüger Klaus, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien* (Gerb. Mann, 1992), 141-47. On the early cult and iconography of St. Dominic, more generally, see Fabio Bisogni, “Gli inizi dell’iconografia domenicana,” in *Domenico di Caleruega e la nascita dell’ordine dei frati predicatori* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioeuva, 2005), 613-38; Luigi Canetti, *L’invenzione della memoria. Il culto e l’immagine di Domenico nella storia dei prima frati predicatori* (Fondazione CISAM, 1996).


followed the Augustinian rule, but only the Hermits enjoyed the privilege of wearing his habit.
CHAPTER 2
St. Augustine as Italian Founder

The fifteenth-century friar Andrea Biglia likened the uncertainty of the Order’s founding site to the uncertainty regarding Homer’s birthplace, since, in both cases, the “ambiguity is proof of its antiquity, rather than its obscurity.” The unusual circumstances surrounding the Hermits’ thirteenth-century origins left them without a foundation site in the tradition of other mendicant orders. As they developed their own founding narrative, the Hermits disputed over the precise location of Augustine’s original foundation, a subject that became hotly contested outside the Order as well. The location of St. Augustine’s relics also posed several challenges. As noted previously, the saint’s body was buried in a church that the Hermits were forced to share with their rivals, the Canons, who also claimed Augustine as founder. As a result, the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro remained a contested space for the Hermits and Canons, whose disagreements continued to escalate well into the sixteenth century. The two groups could not even agree where the bones of St. Augustine actually lay beneath the church. In addition to

246 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 194: “Denique ipse hanc ambagam non obscuritatis nostre, sed vetustatis indicium esse puto; novarum enim rerum nota ac designata origo est, antiqua autem se quiri volunt, nec tamen adhuc tam fixa est multarum rerum intentio, ut non titubent autores.”
247 In nearby Milan, a controversy arose in 1474 over whether the Fabbrica del Duomo should dress the statue of St. Augustine (intended for the roof of the Cathedral of Milan) in the habit of the Hermits or the Canons. On 13 May 1484, Sixtus IV (1471-84) attempted to end the long-lasting dispute between the Canons and Hermits by ordering both sides to remain silent. Elm, “Augustinus Canonicus-Augustinus Eremita,” 84; Quia apostolas praecit, in L. da Empoli, Bullarium ordinis eremitarum sancti Augustini (Rome: 1628), 322.
248 Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 42.
these complicated circumstances, the founder of the Augustinian Hermits was not a native Italian, but spent most of his life in North Africa. By the fourteenth century, Augustine’s native province was no longer an extension of Christian Europe, but a foreign entity under Muslim rule.

Despite these problematic circumstances, both the origin site and the burial place of Augustine were a major focus of the Order’s evolving foundation myth in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Both sites connected the personal life of St. Augustine to the Order’s recent historical renewal. Although Augustine was born and died in North Africa, northern Italy had been the setting of his spiritual birth, as well as his final resting place in Pavia. The latter gained enormous significance for the Hermits in 1327, when they acquired custody of his relics—a powerful confirmation of the Order’s singular relationship to Augustine. At the same time, the reunion of the Hermits with their founder in Pavia helped to verify that the thirteenth-century Great Union was indeed a reunion of Augustine’s original eremitic community. Meanwhile, Tuscany was the supposed site of the Order’s founding and the geographic center of the Order’s thirteenth- and fourteenth-century population, and eventually became the heart of the Observant Reform in the fifteenth century.

This chapter contains the first study focused exclusively on how the Order formed an institutional identity around these two locations, as illustrated in both visual and textual sources. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cycles representing the life of

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Augustine show an increased attention to the geography of the saint’s life – in the choice of episodes, which focus on the saint’s time in Italy, and in the representation of physical settings, which show specific Italian locales. The textual and visual examples reveal complex, divergent, and continually evolving ideas about how the places inhabited by St. Augustine connected him to the Order’s history, and more importantly, how they dictated where the friars should practice the religious life.

I will begin by introducing the early fourteenth-century textual tradition, which, as Eric Leland Saak and Rudolf Arbesmann have pointed out, cast Tuscany as the geographic center of Augustine’s spiritual life, the Order’s founding myth, and the history of monasticism. For these early writers, the place where Augustine bestowed his Rule determined the Hermits’ identity as his true sons, the original recipients of the Rule, and the inheritors of an ancient eremitic tradition. Through a close examination of an overlooked textual source, written by an anonymous member of the Order, I will demonstrate how one author’s narrative fit into a geographic framework that privileged Italy and Augustine within the broader narrative of Christian history. This and other early texts from the 1330s provide new insight into Guariento’s cycle in Padua, which highlights the Order’s historical and institutional origins. As we shall see, this cycle celebrates Augustine as the renewer of the cenobitic life and Italy as the center of monastic history.

I also identify an alternate tradition in connection to another major fourteenth-century commission, the Arca di Sant’Agostino in the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia. The Arca fashions Pavia as a different kind of origin site. Based on my new

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reading of Jordan’s *Liber Vitae fratrum* in relation to the reliefs on the Arca, I argue that both Jordan and the Arca shift focus from the actual foundation site to the place where the physical and spiritual union between the friars and St. Augustine was restored. Like Guariento’s cycle in Padua, the Arca reliefs privilege St. Augustine’s time in Italy, but specifically northern Italy, the *locus* of his spiritual birth and resting place.

The Observant friars of the fifteenth century reinvigorated the interest in Augustine’s Tuscan travels, casting him as a desert hermit in the Tuscan wilderness. In the later part of this chapter, I demonstrate that like their fourteenth-century counterparts, prominent Tuscan friars (like Andrea Biglia and Giles of Viterbo) employed geographic analogies to describe the Order, but elevated the Tuscan Hermits as superior to other members of the Order. Benozzo Gozzoli’s fresco of the Order’s founding in San Gimignano embodies many of the ideas promoted by these Tuscan Reformers, depicting Augustine as itinerant inhabitant of the region and emphasizing the natural beauty of Tuscany that made the region suitable for the life of the friar-humanist.252 I also argue that Gozzoli’s depiction of Monte Pisano as the Order’s foundation site operates not only as a literal reference to a Tuscan locale, but also as a powerful metaphor for Augustinian spirituality. Finally, I discuss how the Augustinian tradition compares with the hagiographic and iconographic developments of other orders, particularly, the Carmelites, who also created a founding story around a saint who originated from a distant land.

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In Italia primo: Locating the Birthplace of the Order

Textual Sources

As recounted in the *Confessions*, Augustine grew up in a Roman province of North Africa, where he spent most of his life, aside from a brief voyage to Italy (fig. 103). As a youth Augustine attended school in Thagaste and then in Carthage, where he joined the heretical sect of the Manicheans. Driven by academic ambitions, he began his career as a teacher first in Thagaste and later in Carthage. Searching for more disciplined students, he travelled to Rome at the age of thirty to establish a school of rhetoric. He soon acquired a position at the imperial court in Milan, where he met Bishop Ambrose, whose influence led to Augustine’s conversion. Only five years after his arrival in Italy, Augustine returned to Africa, where he served as Bishop of Hippo from 396 until his death in 430. Augustine’s first biographer, Possidius, focuses his *vita* on Augustine’s legacy as bishop in the fight against heretical sects in Africa. As is clear from these and other early accounts of Augustine’s life, North Africa was the setting for his monumental theological output and the place that he considered to be his homeland.253

In their revised versions of Augustine’s life, the Hermits writing in the 1320s and 1330s emphasize Augustine’s visit to Italy, the setting for the most transformative moments in his Christian life and the most important events in the Order’s history. These texts include the *Vita Aurelii Augustini* (c. 1322-31) by an anonymous prior of Santo Spirito in Florence, an anonymous treatise on the Order’s origins titled the *Initium sive*

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253 In several instances Augustine refers to Africa or Thagaste as his patria (“homeland”). *Confessions*, 4.7.12; 4.4.9.
Processus Ordinis Heremitarum Sancti Augustini (c.1330), the Sermo de Beato Augustino, delivered by Nicholas of Alessandria in Paris in 1332, and Henry of Freimar’s Tractatus de origine et progressu ordinis (1334). By embellishing previous sources, these authors inserted a detour into Augustine’s travels. They believed that Augustine had spent a year in Milan, where he was baptized and educated in the faith by Bishop Ambrose and the hermit Simplicianus. He began wearing the eremitic habit immediately after baptism, and lived in a secluded place outside the city with Simplicianus and his companions. Following his time in Milan, Augustine and his comrades set out in search for a place more “suitable” to serve God. They traveled through central Italy and began living among eremitic communities, to whom Augustine bestowed his Rule, before returning to Africa.

All four of these authors agree that Augustine instituted the Rule in Italia primo, deinde in Africa (“first in Italy, then in Africa”), but there is no consensus regarding the precise location of the first Italian settlement. The anonymous author of the Vita Aurelii Augustini is vague and brief in his reference to the Order’s founding place, but locates Augustine’s first community somewhere in Tuscany. He writes that Augustine and his African companions came upon hermits in partibus Tusciae in desertis marinis (“deserted parts along the Tuscan coast”), where he lived with them for some time and

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254 Rano, Initium, 339: “Verum quidquid sit, tamen per sua verba habemus VIII Confessionum quod ipse cum suis per spatium trium annorum exemplis Anthonii et sanctorum partum Deo simul serviebant ieiuniis et orationibus et locum querebant aptum ad serviendum Deo.” Arbesmann, “Vita,” 341 (fol.7r): “Quaerebamus quiniam locus nos utilis haberet servientes tibi: pariter remeabamus in Africam.” Nicholas of Alessandria, Sermo, 367: “Instigante autem pia matre que affectabat codem sepulcro cum viro suo inn propria civitate recondi, ut ipse dicit 9 Confess., ad Africam cum Nebridio et Evodio, puero a Deo dato et pia matre remeabat querens coddicid locum sibi aptum ad serviendum Deo.” Henry of Freimar, Tractatus, 95: “…Augustinus sibi consentiens assumptis secum Nebridio et Evodio usque ad patres Tuscie devenit et ibi matre sua defuncta apud Ostia Tibernia sum suis sociis locum aptum ad serviendum deo quaesivit….”

255 Rano, Initium, 338.
gave them the *modum vivendi* that he would later institute in Africa.\(^{256}\) The author of the *Initium* admits that no one can know for certain where Augustine established his first community, thanks to the length of time that has passed and the lack of sources, but he offers several possibilities.\(^{257}\) He reports that Augustine came upon some of *nostris italicis... monasteriis et heremis* (“our Italian monasteries and hermitages”), which asked him to establish a rule for them to follow.\(^{258}\) Many of these hermits were living in a hermitage *in marinis Tuscie partibus ac romanis*, just as previous hermits had lived in *Pisanis montibus*.\(^{259}\) The author then offers three possible sites for Augustine’s first settlement: Milan, where he received the eremitic habit; along the coast near Rome at a place called Centumcellae (*in partibus romanis et marinis in loco de Centumcellis*); or some other *in alio loco de nostris aliquis* (“place of old”).\(^{260}\) Finally, he suggests that Augustine might have given his Rule not just in one place, but in many locales in Italy.\(^{261}\)

Both Nicholas of Alessandria and Henry of Freimar securely locate the *primus locus* of the Order in Centumcellae, where they report that Augustine wrote the Rule and lived for two years before returning to Africa to establish more houses. Henry of Freimar refers to the original foundation as *locum nostrum qui dicitur Centumcellis* (“our house

\(^{256}\) Arbesmann, “Vita,” 341 (fol.7r): “In partibus Tusciea in desertis marinis in venerunt de heremitis sequentibus Pauli et Antonii vestigia, quorum aliqui exequius matris Augustini interfuerunt, quae apud Ostiam Tiberinam defuncta est. Cum quibus Augustinus aliquo tempore habitans modum vivendi, quem latius postea in Africa clerics et eremitis constituit, eis dedit.”

\(^{257}\) Rano, *Initium*, 338: “Locus autem determinatus in quo ipse beatus pater Augustinus hoc fecerat, tam ex longitudine temporis quam ex pigritia scriptorum determinate non habetur.”

\(^{258}\) Ibid: “Et ut a nonnullis de nostris italicis inventis in monasteriis et heremis [rogaretur], tam sibi quam eis vivere secundum dictam regulam istituit.”

\(^{259}\) Ibid: “Et in marinis Tuscie partibue ac romanis tunc et aneata quam plurimi in heremo habitabant, ut Antonius vir heremita habitans in Pisanis montibus....”

\(^{260}\) Ibid., 337-38: “Quoniam aliqui dicunt hoc fuisse Mediolani in monasterio superius nominato. Quod confirman, quia beatus Ambrosius in *sermone* quem fecit de baptismo Augustini dicit quod ipsum induit cuculla. Aliqui hoc fecisse in partibus romanis et marinis in loco de Centumcellis vel in alio loco de nostris antiquis, que tunc temporis errant.”

\(^{261}\) Ibid., 338: “…non solum in uno loco, sed in pluribus.”
which is called Centumcellae”), located in the wilderness of Tuscany. Nicholas of Alessandria adds that Augustine came upon many leading the eremitic life on Mons Pisanus and other places suitable for that lifestyle, before finally landing in loco sancte Trinitas de Centumcellis, where he wrote the Rule. Both authors seem to draw from a common source, now lost, which Henry of Freimar calls antiquis legendis (“ancient legends”).

In sum, these four accounts of the Order’s founding center on the legendary foundation sites of Centumcellae and Monte Pisano. While the precise locations intended by these authors cannot be determined with full certainty, both sites referred to somewhere in Tuscany (a broad region in central Italy that occupied a larger geographic area than the modern region of that name). Monte Pisano was likely one of the hills to the north of Pisa towards Lucca, as suggested by its name. Archaeological remains and documentary records indicate that two thirteenth-century hermitages occupied these Pisan hills, although there is no evidence that these houses predated the late medieval period.

As for Centumcellae, Henry of Freimar and Nicholas of Alessandria connect the site to a hermitage dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which likely refers to the thirteenth-century Augustinian hermitage of the Holy Trinity, located near Civitavecchia in the Roman province. Documents indicate that this hermitage “de Centumcellis” belonged to the

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262 Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 208. Ibid., Tractatus, 96: “Et cum in eremo tusciae mutlos eremitas invenisset sanctae vitae, demum applicuit ad locum nostrum, qui dicitur Centumcellis, qui fuit, ut dicitur primus locus conventualis nostril ordinis, et cum illis fratribus per biennium morabatur.”
263 Nicholas of Alessandria, Sermo, 367.
264 Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 209. Ibid., Tractatus, 96: “Quod ex antiquis legendis non abbreviates colligitur.”
Tuscan Hermits, who formed the largest of the groups included in the Great Union of 1256.266

The legends connecting Augustine to Monte Pisano did not begin with the fourteenth-century Hermits, however, though they certainly promoted them with new vigor. The association of this locale with Augustine’s Italian journey can be dated back to at least the twelfth century, which suggests that it was part of a longstanding oral tradition. Hugh of Saint Victor (1096-1141), a Canon Regular at the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris, mentions the legend in his commentary on the Rule of St. Augustine. He begins his Expositio in regulam S. Augustini with a brief reference to Augustine’s bestowal of the Rule to his brothers on Monte Pisano.267 Petrarca reiterates the legend in his philosophical treatise on the solitary life, De Vita Solitaria (1346-56), showing that even those outside the Order were familiar with this tradition.268 Petrarca writes that “it is believed” that Augustine lived as a hermit in pisani montis and wrote a book for the monks there.269 Although his reference to Augustine’s sojourn in Monte Pisano was

266 For all surviving documents related to Centumcellae, see Ennio Brunori, “L’Eremo della Trinita ‘de Centumcellis’,” in Augustine in Iconography: History and Legend, ed. Joseph C. Schnaubelt, O.S.A., and Frederick Van Fleteren (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 223-68. The site is referred to in fourteenth-century accounts as both Tuscan and Roman, but was clearly associated with the region considered to be Tuscany. Nicholas of Alessandria refers to those who received the Rule at Centumcellae as “those from Tuscany.” Sermo, 367.
intended more to demonstrate the saint’s love of solitude, rather than to prove the Order’s founding legend, later Hermits cited Petrarch as strong support for their origins myth.\footnote{Voci draws attention to the language used by Petrarch and argues that he does not openly support the origins myth, using phrases such as \textit{creditur} and \textit{prescriptus est} and omitting any mention of a rule or founding. Anna Maria Voci, \textit{Petrarca e la vita religiosa}, 86. On Paolo Lulmeo da Bergamo’s citation of Petrarch in defense of the Hermits in 1479, see Voci, \textit{Petrarca e la vita religiosa}, 149-50.}

As Rudolph Arbesmann has pointed out, the Hermits deliberately located its origins in Tuscany in order to establish an unbroken line of historical continuity from Augustine’s original foundation to the thirteenth-century Tuscan Hermits.\footnote{Arbesmann, “Vita,” 319-55.} For these early Hermits, the new geography of Augustine’s life was central to proving their historical legitimacy and their relationship to their founder. By declaring Italy as their birthplace, the Hermits claimed that Augustine was living as a hermit when he had bestowed the Rule to his earliest followers, which took place before his ordination as bishop in Africa. Nicholas of Alessandria and the author of the \textit{Initium} denied the Canons any right to Augustine and endorsed the false legend that the Canons had been founded by Bishop Ruf in Gaul.\footnote{Nicholas of Alessandria, \textit{Sermo}, 369-70; Rano, \textit{Initium}, 341; Arbesmann, “Vita,” 352.} However, Henry of Freimar argued that Augustine had given the Rule twice – first to the Hermits in Italy, and secondly to the Canons in Africa after having been ordained bishop.\footnote{Henry of Freimar, \textit{Treatise}, 216.} The subtle chronological and geographic elements in Henry’s narrative maintained that the Hermits had continued observing Augustine’s Rule in the Tuscan countryside until the thirteenth-century Great Union, when the original Tuscan Hermits were combined with similar eremitical orders.

Tuscany came to be viewed as not only the setting for the Order’s early beginnings and more recent history, but as the point of intersection between the Hermits

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and the Desert Fathers. Henry of Freimar and his fellow brethren traced the earliest followers of Augustine back to the very first hermits, creating an ancient connection to the fathers of monasticism. In this view, the Tuscan hermits, to whom Augustine bestowed the Rule, were the descendants of Anthony of Egypt and Paul of Thebes, the Desert Fathers who had dwelled in the Egyptian desert in the third and fourth centuries. In the *Confessions*, Augustine credited the eremitic example of Anthony Abbot as helping to inspire his conversion. The fourteenth-century Hermits built upon this connection by arguing that Augustine’s followers were direct descendants from Anthony.274 According to Nicholas of Alessandria, when the followers of Anthony of Egypt and Paul of Thebes were dispersed throughout the world by Christian persecution and divine providence, some settled in Italy, first landing in Rome.275 Somewhere between Rome and Viterbo, they joined the descendants of two Italian hermits, Mamilianus of Tuscany and Anthony of Pisa, who had lived on Monte Pisano.276 Together they eventually built one hundred cells and a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity at a place called Centumcellae.277 Nicholas adds that Simplicianus had been inspired by the example of these hermits, creating a direct lineage to Augustine himself.

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274 For a discussion of the increasingly important role of Anthony and Simplicianus in the Hermits’ narratives, see the literature by Saak.
275 Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 363-64.
276 Ibid., 364; Rano, *Initium*, 338; Arbesmann, “Vita,” 341. Arbesmann points out that in the *Vita S. Mamiliani et sociorum eius* (fol.13r-15v), which immediately follows the *Vita Aurelii Augustini* in the Laurentian manuscript, the author implies that Mamilianus was originally from Tuscany (“Vita,” 344-5). Arbesmann rightly points out that the Hermits conflated several storylines – Anthony Abbot, who helped to convert Augustine, the medieval saint Anthony from Pisa, and the Tuscan Hermits who followed the Rule of St. Augustine.
277 Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 365: “Dicti autem heremite in prefata heremo inter Roman et Viterbium in tantum numero et merito satis cito creverunt, quod ibidem C cellas construxerunt iuxta locum qui Centum cellis dicitur et habitatores illius regionis in dicta heremo ecclesiam in honorem Sancte Trinitas ipsis fratribus edificarunt et ibi in processu temporis fuit primus locus Ordinis heremitaum sancti Augustini.”
The author of the *Initium* writes that these hermitages were still occupied at the time of Augustine’s visit and survived through to the present day, when “our brothers” still inhabited them.\(^{278}\)

These fourteenth-century friars fashioned Augustine’s Italian journey as a central part of a larger historical narrative that celebrated Italy as a thriving center of the eremitic tradition and the destination of a divinely sanctioned pattern of migration. Even the Hermits from Augustine’s African foundations returned to Italy centuries after his death. According to Nicholas of Alessandria, African brothers who had travelled to Sardinia with the relics of Augustine dispersed into the Roman and Tuscan provinces and some joined the community in Centumcellae.\(^{279}\) Nicholas of Alessandria draws a cohesive lineage from the descendants of Augustine’s Italian foundation and the African brethren, writing that “from all was made one sheep and one pastor.”\(^{280}\) Nicholas’s language is particularly striking for its similarity to the text of the papal bull that united the Order in 1256.\(^{281}\) The author of the *Initium* reiterates Nicholas’ language, writing that the descendants of Augustine’s African foundations and “our Italians” (*nostri italicis*) formed “one sheepfold” (*uno ovile*).\(^{282}\) By referencing the metaphor used by Pope Alexander IV to describe the disparate groups united in the Great Union, these fourteenth-century authors draw a connection between their “second founding” and their

\(^{278}\) Rano, *Initium*, 338.

\(^{279}\) Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 371. The author of the *Vita Aurelii Augustini* adds that Mamilius and his companions from Tuscany were taken to Africa as captives upon the Vandal invasion, but by divine miracle, made their way back to the Tuscan coast. Arbesmann, “Vita,” 345 (fol.13v-15v).

\(^{280}\) Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 370-71: “Et ex omnibus ex tunc factum est unum ovile et unus est pastor.”


\(^{282}\) Rano, *Initium*, 342: “Depopulata simuliter Sardeina, in insulis marinis et in marictima, facto uno ovile cum nostris italicis a superius nominates descendentiibus, habitaverunt.”
early history. In the process, Centumcellae achieved an elevated status as the universal center of eremitic activity, attracting hermits throughout the world – followers of Anthony of Egypt and Paul of Thebes, descendants of Italian hermits Anthony and Mamilianus, Augustine and his companions, and later generations from Augustine’s North African foundations.

Guarento’s Frescoes in Padua

Echoing the emphasis of the early-fourteenth-century textual sources, the frescoes by Guariento d’Arpo in Padua (1360s) are limited to episodes that took place in Italy – Augustine’s conversion and baptism in Milan, the bestowal of the Rule in Tuscany, and papal confirmation of the Order in Rome. Augustine’s conversion takes place in an enclosed garden, as reported in the Confessions, while the baptism and vestition is set in a Gothic church interior. On the right wall, Augustine bestows the Rule in an open-walled church that permits a view of a craggy landscape, dotted with churches (fig.17). As Louise Bourdua has suggested, the setting seems to depict Centumcellae, which literally means “one hundred cells.” The fresco is the earliest representation of this subject that includes a landscape, rather than an empty background or generic architectonic setting.

While it is possible that Guarento intended to represent a specific hermitage, namely the foundation site at Centumcellae, his setting also epitomizes the cenobitic

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284 The earlier cycle in Fabriano (1310-60) does not include the Bestowal of the Rule. The damaged fresco in the Rimini (1315-18) cycle depicts a cloth of honor as the background to the event. The fresco from the convent of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano (c.12780) depicts a generic architectonic background. For these images, see Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 147-49; 184-7.
monastic life – the ideal eremitic community that formed the foundation for the medieval mendicant tradition. Two forms of the ascetical life originated with the Egyptian Desert Fathers: anchoritism and cenobitism. The anchoritic hermit (such as Anthony Abbot) lived in an isolated cell, while the cenobitic hermit (such as St. Pachomius) lived in a community of hermits, combining the ascetical desert dwelling with the communal emphasis of the apostolic life. The Hermits credited St. Augustine’s Rule with establishing a form of monasticism that restored the communal life, exemplified by the Apostles, and the asceticism of the desert hermits. Guarento’s setting depicts both of these aspects of the ideal religious community. On the one hand, the very name of the presumed setting, Centumcellae, evokes the eremitic settlements of the Desert Fathers, which were commonly referenced in ancient sources by the number of monks who dwelled there. On the other hand, the open church accommodates the gathering of the hermits. It is noteworthy that the Hermits are not depicted as passive recipients of the Rule, but engage in various activities – singing, praying, reading, and conversing with one another. In fact, one friar in the right background seems to be oblivious to the presence of Augustine as he turns toward the altar in prayer. This combination of individual cells and a communal area were two essential aspects of the cenobitic life, upheld by Augustine in his Rule.

Although Jordan of Quedlinburg’s writings probably did not arrive in Padua until after Guarento’s completion of the frescoes, a passage from his Liber Vitasfratrum provides further insight into how fourteenth-century reconciled the eremitic origins of the

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285 On the historical origins of cenobitic monasticism among the Desert Hermits, see Lawrence, Medieval Monasticism, 1-18.
Order with the mendicant lifestyle.\textsuperscript{287} Jordan recalls Pope Alexander IV’s command to the Hermits to move from their hermitages in the wilderness into the cities like the other mendicant orders. He describes Alexander’s decree as a return to (rather than a departure from) Augustine’s idea of the perfect religious life, which combines the tradition of solitude of the wilderness with the community in the monastery. In the same way, the mendicant friar combines the contemplative life of solitude and study in his cell with the communal life in shared parts of the monastery. Jordan characterizes the Order as “a sort of cornerstone,” which combines both the \textit{vita activa} and \textit{vita contemplativa}. He goes on to write that the Order’s combination of the solitary life of the anchoritic hermits and the apostolic community of the cenobites is:

in conformity with the way of life of the brothers of old, who lived in the wilderness of Centocelle near Rome. It is said that there is still a monastery there, one of the oldest in Italy, where the twofold style of life was to be found up until the time of Pope Gregory IV. There many lived together in a common house or monastery, while others had their separate cells about. These used to come together at the monastery on certain days to celebrate and to receive the sacraments; then they would return to their cells, bringing with them bread and salt.\textsuperscript{288}

Jordan’s description of the ancient community at Centocelle matches Guariento’s image, suggesting that the pictorial setting functioned as more than simply a reference to a particular Tuscan locale. The image illustrates the two sides of cenobitic monasticism,

\textsuperscript{287} Arbesmann and Hümpfner, “Introduction,” lviii; Bourdua, “\textit{De origine e progressu},” 178.
\textsuperscript{288} Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 101. Ibid., \textit{Liber Vitasfratrum}, I.16: “Praefatus autem status Ordinis, pro quanto videlicet ad modum lapidis angularis utrumque complectitur, conformis est quodammodo illi modo vivendi, quo olim vivebant fratres, qui habitabant in eremo de Centumcellis in Romanis partibus, ubi adhuc manere dicitur monasterium ex antiquioribus, quae sunt in Italia, ubi, ut fertur, erat duplex vivendi modus et fuit usque ad tempora Gregorii papae IV. Nam plures ibi habitabant simul in communi loco, scilicet in monasterio, alii vero habitabant per cellas suas distinctas circumquaque et conveniebant certis diebus ad commune locum ad celebrandum et ad sumendum sacramenta et sic redeundes ad cellas portabant secum sal et panem.”
which Augustine had restored by his written Rule, and which was considered a precursor
to the mendicant lifestyle imposed upon the Hermits in the thirteenth century.

This reading of Guariento’s image is more meaningful when viewed in relation to
the adjacent fresco (fig.21), which shows Alexander IV uniting several eremitical groups
into a single, mendicant order. By mirroring the compositional format of the Bestowal of
the Rule, Pope Alexander IV Uniting the Order establishes a visual connection between
Augustine, the father of the Order, and Pope Alexander IV, who facilitated the Order’s
thirteenth-century revival. Alexander IV does not appear in profile, as in most images of
papal confirmation. Instead, he sits forward and centered, like Augustine does in the
scene of the bestowal of the rule. The deliberate pairing casts Alexander IV as the
Order’s second founder. After all, the papacy gave the Hermits a new purpose by shifting
their way of life from one of solitude and retreat to pastoral preaching. The contrast in
architectural structures shows the evolution of the Hermits from an eremitical community
living in the wilderness to institutionalized order.

Guarento’s final fresco illustrates the gathering in Santa Maria del Popolo in
Rome of Italian delegates from each group included in the Great Union. Following this
meeting, which served as the first general chapter of the Order, Italy remained the
administrative center for the Augustinian Hermits. From the 1250s onward, Augustinian
houses in central and northern Italy outnumbered those in the southern peninsula and

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289 Contemporary examples of the papal confirmation of the rule can be found in the art commissioned by
the three other mendicant orders. Franciscan examples include the fresco in the Upper Basilica of San
Francesco in Assisi (c.1300), Giotto’s fresco in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence (1325-28), and
Giotto’s Louvre altarpiece for San Francesco in Pisa (c.1295-1300). Dominican examples include the relief
on the Arca di San Domenico in Bologna (c.1264). A Carmelite example is Pietro Lorenzetti’s predella of
the high altarpiece for the Carmelite church in Siena (1328-9).
elsewhere in Europe. However, the Hermits had no motherhouse of the sort that the Franciscan had in Assisi. Representatives from every province came together at the general chapter, whose location alternated between Italy and other provinces (such as Toulouse and Provence), beginning in 1324. During the fifteenth century, most chapters were held in Italy. Furthermore, there were only two non-Italian prior generals during the late medieval period. Italian houses, in particular, benefited from the Order’s close relationship to the papacy, receiving numerous papal privileges. It is worth noting that Pope Alexander IV granted the Augustinian church in Padua the right to say Mass. Guarenteo’s fresco may allude to both the local significance of this pope’s action, as well as the Order’s strong connection to the Roman Church. During the fourteenth century, the Hermits stood out among the mendicants as the fiercest defenders of the papacy during political instabilities.

**Pater Plurimum: St. Augustine, Italy, and a Universal History of Monasticism**

The four Augustinian friars writing in the 1330s traced the origins of *omnis Ordo et religio modernorum religiosorum* (“every order and modern religious group”) back to Anthony of Egypt and Paul of Thebes. Stemming from these fathers of the anchoritic

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290 For the number of provinces in Italy, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 99.
291 Ibid., 96.
292 Ibid., 95, n.112.
294 For a discussion of the Order’s involvement in the papal politics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Saak, *High Way*, 15-159.
tradition were three monastic legislators, each of whom wrote a Rule in a different part of the world – Basil (329-379) in Caesarea, Pachomius (292-348) in Thebes, and Augustine (354-430) in Italy and Africa. While Basil and Pachomius instituted a *regulam vivendi* in the East (in Asia Minor and Egypt, respectively), Augustine authored the earliest rule in the West, modeled after the *vita apostolica*. Traditionally, Augustine’s most direct impact was associated with North Africa, but the Hermits inserted Italy onto the map of his influence. Indeed, the author of the *Initium* made a point of specifying *in Italia primo, deinde in Africa*, while Nicholas of Alessandria mentions only Italy.

In an under-examined excerpt from the *Initium*, the author elaborates on the far-reaching influence of Augustine’s monastic example. In his comparisons between Old Testament precursors and later religious figures, the author likens Augustine to Noah, because Noah saved the human race just as Augustine saved the world from heretics. Noah’s three sons, who populated the world after the flood, are compared to the three branches of Augustine’s followers. Japheth is likened to the Hermits, Shem to the Canons Regular, and Cam to other followers of Augustine’s Rule. In his explanation of this

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297 Rano, *Initium*, 345: “Per Noe, qui archam Domini, ut salveretur genus humanum, intravit, beatus Augustinus intelligitur, qui, intrans Dei Ecclesiam, humanum genus ab heretics liberavit.”
analogy, the author refers to the etymological meaning of each son’s name. He explains that Japheth’s name means “width” (latitudo), and he is likened to the Hermits, because they multiplied and seized the world by their holy example and clarity of knowledge. This analogy casts Augustine as the head of multiple descendants, who spread far and wide, just as the human race descended from Noah.

This comparison to Noah attests to the way that the Hermits embraced Augustine’s prolific legacy as “father of many,” both within and outside the Order. In addition to the first settlement in Italy, the Augustinian writers credited Augustine with founding as many as four monasteries in Africa with the habit and way of life established in Italy, referring to him as pater plurimum. The Hermits also proudly recognized that Augustine’s legacy extended to every religious order that followed the Rule of Augustine, as well as to the foundational mendicant orders. The Dominicans not only followed the Rule of St. Augustine, like the Augustinian Canons, but St. Dominic had

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298 Rano, *Initium*, 345-46: “Cui sunt tres filii: Sen, qui nominatur interpretator; Cam, calidus; Iaphet, latitudo. Per quos triplex genus Augustinum sequentium deisgnatur. Nam per Sen intelliguntur canonici regulares, qui sub eius regulam militant. Per Cam, qui ex amoris calore vitam et regulam Augustini sequuntur. Sed per Iaphet, fratres isti heremite, qui ex quo ad terras venerunt exemplo sancte vite et scientie claritate multiplicati mundum comprehendunt.” The name Shem means “explainer,” and thus the Canons are those who serve under the Rule of Augustine; Cam means “hot,” and thus he is likened to those who follow Augustine’s Rule and life out of heated love.

299 Rano, *Initium*, 340: “Et postquam episcopus fuit yponensis, quam apostolicam monasteria in solitudine construxit, in quibus sicut pater plurimum morabatur, ipsos suos filios anacoritas instruendo, corrigendo et ordinando, ut Deo dignae et secundum regulam apostolicam servirent.” In the *Initium*, *Sermo*, and *Tractatus*, the authors recall that upon arriving in Africa, Augustine was given a garden villa by Valerius, where he established a monastery with the same apostolic rule instituted in Italy. Nicholas and Henry add that once he was ordained, Augustine founded another monastery next to the church in Hippo. Henry adds a fourth establishment, which he locates outside Hippo. In addition to these specifically mentioned settlements, all three authors add that Augustine founded numerous hermitages and solitary places with the habit and way of life as in Italy. In the prologue of the *Liber Vitasfratrum*, Jordan also finds the large number of Augustinian friars to be a notable part of Augustine’s legacy: “Of all the orders the Augustinian Hermits have always been most fertile in its members.” Life of the Brethren, 59.

300 Nicolas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 370. The Hermit Beato Santiago de Viterbo (c.1255-1308) remarks on Augustine’s large family in a sermon: “Unde multam familiam habet, omnes scilicet religions que secundum quius Regulam vivunt.” In a sermon by Henry of Freimar, he applies Deuteronomy 33:24 (“Of Asher he said: Blessed above sons is Asher”) to the multiplication of Augustine’s sons (those who follow his Rule), who are both numerous and diverse. Rano, “San Agustin y su Orden,” 8, 22-3.
joined the Canons Regular before establishing the Dominican Order. While the Hermits had followed the Rule *ex institutione*, since Augustine’s foundation in Italy, the Canons and Dominicans followed the Rule *ex devotione* and were founded outside Italy. The Hermits made an even bolder claim regarding St. Francis of Assisi. They believed that Francis had stayed at the Augustinian hermitage of St. James of Aquaviva near Pisa before founding the Franciscan Order. In the family tree of these three mendicant orders, then, the Hermits saw themselves as the root, from which sprang all that followed.

A particularly interesting, but overlooked detail regarding about the *Initium*’s comparison between the Augustinian Order and Noah’s son, Japheth, is the author’s use of geographic associations, which would have been commonly understood in the fourteenth century. A longstanding tradition held that each son of Noah had populated a different part of the world. During the Middle Ages, Noah’s sons were most often linked to the three known continents – Japheth with Europe, Shem with Asia, and Ham with Africa. Based on a particular interpretation of Genesis, the association of each son with

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303 The legend about St. Francis grew more elaborate in each account. In the *Initium*, Francis merely visited the Tuscan Hermits; in the *Sermo* he lived with the hermits; in the *Tractatus* Henry suggests that Francis was a member of the hermitage. For a discussion of the textual tradition, see Saak, *High Way*, 214-16.

304 Benjamin Braude has shown that these associations between the sons and continents were not consistent. I would argue that the fluidity of these kinds of associations allowed medieval writers to compare Noah’s sons to the Magi (none of whom came from Europe), and also to Augustine’s followers. Benjamin Braude,
a different continent and ethnic population was commonplace in medieval literature and cartography. Medieval T-O maps (mappamundi), so named for their tripartite organization, sometimes inscribed the name or depicted the image of each son in his respective sector (fig.104). This medieval vision of the world as consisting of three separate continents fit neatly with the number of Noah’s sons, and acquired religious significance in the writings of monastic scholars, who found a Trinitarian significance in this geographical organization of the world. With Jerusalem at the geographic center of the world, Christ himself was the connecting figure, with the cross shape standing for the crucified Christ. On the thirteenth-century Hereford Map (c.1278-90; fig.105), commissioned by British Canons, an image of Augustine as bishop appears beside the city of Hippo in the African continent, located in the lower right quadrant of the mappamundi. In contrast to the map made for the Canons, the author of the Initium associates the Hermits with Japheth, the father of the Europeans. While the full intentions behind this gesture cannot be grasped for certain, the implications would probably not have been lost on the fourteenth-century reader.

These orderly models of the geographic spread of monasticism across three parts of the world recall some familiar religious narratives, such as the spread of Christianity


307 Cosma notes that the artist of the map has incorrectly labeled the continent of Africa as EUROPA, with the image of Augustine placed between the letters “O” and “P.” Cosma, *Iconografia Agostiniana*, vol.1, 148-9.
by the four Evangelists and twelve Apostles. The crossing vaults in the upper basilica of San Francesco in Assisi (fig.106) depict each Evangelist beside an image representing the country that he Christianized. Mark appears next to *YTALIA*, which is indicated by a cityscape of Rome. Painted by Cimabue in the late thirteenth century, these frescoed images asserted both the universality of Christianity and centrality of the papacy in Rome, which is cast as the new Jerusalem. Similarly, the twelve Apostles, whose very title means “sent,” were commissioned to spread the Gospel to the four corners of the earth.

The same kind of geographically-based narrative is embedded in medieval and Renaissance legends surrounding the three Magi, who were believed to have come from three different parts of the world. Augustine himself wrote that the Magi traveled not only from the east, but from the north, south, and west. The eighth-century Pseudo-Bede associated the Magi with the three known continents and called them descendants of Noah’s sons, who had fathered the three races of the Earth. In the fifth century, Jerome reiterated the connection between Noah’s sons and the three Magi. The journey

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308 Mark is paired with Italy (YTALIA), Matthew with Judea (IUDEA), John with Asia (ASIA), and Luke with Greece (ACCHAIA).


of the Magi from faraway lands to celebrate the birth of Christ in Bethlehem illustrates
the universal nature of God and the geographic centrality of Christ. St. Bruno, an
eleventh-century Carthusian monk, connected the three origins of the Magi to the
eventual spread of the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity. In Andrea Mantegna’s
*Adoration of the Magi* (c.1495-1505; fig.107), skin color and attribute indicate a different
place of origin for each Magus – Caspar holds a Chinese porcelain cup, Melchior holds a
Turkish censer, and Balthasar the Moor carries a covered cup made of agate.

The *Initium*’s universalizing narrative of monastic history, led by three monastic
legislators and followed in the West by the three branches of Augustine’s followers,
mirrors the biblical narratives of the Magi, the Evangelists, the Apostles, and Noah’s
sons. Together, these narratives present a global Christian history that links the growth of
medieval monasticism to the spread of Christianity in the Early Church. When spiritual
piety began to fade, Sts. Augustine, Basil, and Pachomius renewed strict religious life
throughout the world. The Rule of St. Augustine, in particular, renewed the *vita
apostolica* after a period of decline, ultimately leading to the birth of the mendicant
orders in Europe. Like the apostolic spread of the Gospel, Augustine’s Rule became
instituted beyond Italy in Africa and the rest of Europe. However, while the journeys of
the Magi, Apostles and Evangelists are focused towards or away from the Holy Land, the

314 “The sons of Noah were three, who were saved in the ark at the time of the flood, from whom all
humankind has everywhere disseminated. In three parts is all the world divided into Asia, Africa, and
Europe. Therefore these men who came to Jesus were three, signifying the holy Church’s collecting in one
faith those from all parts of the world. Insomuch that the places of the three men are all places, that all live
in the three parts of the world, and that all of it must worship one God in three persons. Thus from this one
The "trecento" legend of Augustine is centered on Italy, the new center of Christendom. Christ’s birth in Bethlehem attracted the Magi from different nations, and his death and resurrection sent out the Evangelists and Apostles to spread the Gospel beyond Jerusalem throughout the world. Interestingly, the author of the Initium compares Noah’s sons to Augustine’s followers, rather than the three monastic legislators, which seems like the more obvious comparison. The author’s decision made Augustine the heart of his narrative, like Christ in the biblical account.

I believe that my observations about the Initium help to provide additional insight into Guariento’s fresco program in Padua, which was based on the texts from the 1330s, as Louise Bourdua has already shown. The Paduan cycle celebrates Augustine’s Italian foundation as the renewal of the apostolic mission and the product of the ancient monastic tradition. The cycle of Augustine in the lowest register of the side walls stands beneath images of the Apostles Philip and James at work in Asia and Jerusalem. The Last Judgment on the apse wall brings together the twelve Apostles and the monastic fathers, who possibly represent Basil of Asia, Pachomius of Thebes, and Mamilianus from Tuscany (fig. 108). All three of these saints were bishops, but here they appear as hermits, wearing the black habit and cincture. Their dress establishes a historical connection to the nearby scene showing Augustine receiving the habit, as well as the contemporary Hermit Beato Agostino Novello (1240-1309), who stands behind them. The Paduan chapel unites the leaders of the eremitic and apostolic life, and showcases the

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316 Historical patterns of movement certainly favored an Italo-centric view. As Jonathan Conant has shown, the cults of numerous African saints spread from Carthage to western and southern Italy in the early Middle Ages, brought by Christians escaping fleeing persecution and war. Jonathan P. Conant, “Europe and the African Cult of Saints, circa 350-900: An Essay in Mediterranean Communications,” Speculum 85.1 (Jan 2010): 1-46.

role of Augustine and Pope Alexander IV in the restoration of the apostolic tradition in Italy.

A close reading of the *Initium* also aids the viewer’s understanding of Bartolo di Fredi’s frescoes in Montalcino. Like Guariento’s image in Padua, the *Bestowal of the Rule* (fig. 53) in the choir of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (1384-88) sets the scene in a hilly, presumably Tuscan, setting. The rugged desert landscape resembles the Egyptian Thebaid, with hermits at work in the background. However, in contrast to the Paduan fresco, Augustine appears here in his role as *pater plurimum*. Kneeling below Augustine are not just Hermits, but also Augustinian nuns on the left (which might be explained by the female patronage of the chapel); Canons on the right; and Sts. William of Malavalle (d.1157) and John the Good (1168-1249), who flank the figure of St. Augustine. The latter were the twelfth-century founders of two groups included in the Great Union. These kneeling recipients illustrate the far-reaching impact of Augustine’s monastic example, which influenced a number of religious groups, male and female, mendicant and monastic. At the same time, the image privileges Italy as the original *locus* of the bestowal of the Rule. In this sense, it recalls Nicholas of Alessandria’s sermon, where he argues for the precedence of the Hermits over the Canons. But we should note that

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320 Marcelli, “Il deserto nella città,” 135-36; Da Gai, *Iconografia agostiniana*, vol.1, 333-34. St. William of Malavalle was born in France, but spent most of his life as a hermit in Malavalle in Tuscany, and became the patron saint of a group of followers, known as the Williamites. The Williamites were included in the Great Union, but petitioned to withdraw shortly afterwards. John the Good, born in Mantua, established a community of hermits in Butriolo in northern Italy, known as the Gianboniti.
Nicholas concludes his argument with a less combative tone, saying: “The issue, however, is not to be greatly disputed, especially because if Augustine founded that Order and ours, it all goes to the praise of that glorious father, how very many sons in Christ he bore.”

The inclusion of William of Malavale and John the Good in this scene is particularly interesting, since the Guglielmiti had originally followed the Rule of St. William (and later St. Benedict) before being included in the Great Union. Shortly after the Great Union, the Italian Williamites seceded from the Order of Augustinian Hermits. As Fabio Marcelli has pointed out, the two figures wear the Order’s black habit. It is likely their eremitic dwelling in Italy that awards them inclusion in this image – John the Good lived as a solitary penitent in Bertinoro in the Marches, and William lived as a hermit in Tuscany, with his followers focused in Maleval near Siena. These two Italian saints attest to the continuous presence of the eremitic life in Italy from the time of Augustine to more recent days. Given the Tuscan location of the Augustinian church in Montalcino, it is not surprising that Bartolo di Fredi highlights Tuscany as the most appropriate setting for the eremitic life.

322 Andrews, The Other Friars, 76-77.
323 Ibid., 85-86.
325 Andrews, The Other Friars, 76, 78-79.
A Return to Origins: The Arca di Sant’Agostino in Pavia

The translation of Augustine’s relics centuries after his death shifted the focus of the saint’s journey. While Africa was the place of his natural birth and death, Italy had become the locus of his spiritual birth and the final resting place of his holy relics. More specifically, it was the Order’s newly acquired custody of Augustine’s relics that made the translation to Pavia so important in the larger narrative of the saint’s life. The reunion of Augustine’s body with his true sons in Pavia confirmed the Order’s relationship to their founder and served as a powerful illustration of the re-union of the Hermits in 1256.

The story of Augustine’s two-part translation is reported for the first time by St. Bede (672-735) in the Chronica de sex huius saeculi aetatibus and was recounted later by Jacobus da Voragine in the Golden Legend (1252-60). Sometime during the fifth or sixth centuries, religious persecution by Arian Vandals forced several Christian exiles to flee to Sardinia with the body of St. Augustine. Saracen attacks on Sardinia in the early eighth century led to a second translation, led by Liutprand, King of the Lombards, to the Lombard capital of Ticinium, present-day Pavia. According to the Golden Legend, Augustine’s body could not be moved until Liutprand promised to build a church for him, resulting in the construction of the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, where Augustine’s remains are still venerated today. King Liutprand entrusted the relics and church to a group of Benedictines, and the church passed into the hands of the Augustinian Canons in

the thirteenth century. In 1327, upon the request of the prior general William of Cremona, Pope John XXII granted the Hermits the right to share the relics and the church, a symbolic gesture of the Order’s status as the true sons of the founder saint.\footnote{Veneranda Sanctorum Patrum (20 January 1327), in Maiocchi and Sacchi, \textit{Codex Diplomaticus}, 13-19.}

The enormous effect of the \textit{Veneranda Sanctorum Patrum} bull should not be underestimated. In the face of fiery objections from other orders regarding the Hermits’ claims to historical primacy, the papacy officially endorsed their singular relationship to the esteemed theologian, declaring Augustine to be their “teacher, father, leader, head.”\footnote{Ibid: “Sic ergo apparat quod beatus Augustinus dux, magister, caput et pater fuit heremitarum.”} The papal decree also allowed the Hermits to establish a convent adjacent to the church, and thereby to stake their claim to Pavia as an important center for their own Order.

Sharon Dale has shed light on the political reasons behind Pope John XXII’s remarkable decree, which sought to assert papal power in Lombardy in the face of the Visconti lords by elevating the status of the Hermits.\footnote{Dale, “A House Divided,” 55-77. See also Saak, \textit{High Way}, 163-75.}

In the early 1350s, the Pavese Hermits began plans to build a tomb monument to honor the Order’s founder in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro.\footnote{All dates related to the Arca commission are based on Dale’s recent research published in \textit{Arca di Sant’Agostino}.} This was just one of the ways that the Order sought to enhance the prestige of their monastery in Pavia. At the general chapter meeting of 1341 in Toulouse, all of the Order’s friars were encouraged to visit Pavia.\footnote{“Antiquiores quae extant definitions capitulorum generalium ordinis,” \textit{Analecta Augustiniana} 4 (1911-12), 205; Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder St. Augustine of Hippo,” 35.} In 1343, it became home to a \textit{studium generale}, and in 1348, it was the site of the general chapter and became the first General House of the Order.\footnote{Benedict Hackett, “San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, Pavia,” in \textit{Augustine in Iconography: History and Legend}, ed. Joseph C. Schnaubelt, O.S.A, and Frederick Van Fleteren (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 209.} Several general
chapters (1343, 1365) requested that each province offer a donation to the Pavese convent. In 1338, the Order established a feast day on June 5 to celebrate the founding of an Augustinian house at Pavia next to Augustine’s tomb. With additional feast days dedicated to the first and second translations, the Order commemorated the series of steps involved in Augustine’s final return to the Hermits. With no other canonized saints belonging to the Order, and no motherhouse to call its own, the Order sought to make Pavia a site of Order-wide devotion. Two Augustinian beati, Agostino Novello of Siena (1240-1309) and Nicolas of Tolentino (1246-1305), attracted local cults in Tuscany and the Marches, but the house in Pavia could appeal to friars and lay worshippers across Europe.336

The Arca di Sant’Agostino carried special importance, since it served as a stand-in for the actual tomb of Augustine. The relics of Augustine were buried deep in a crypt, located underneath the eastern end of the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro. There seems to have been no official or proper “tomb” of the saint anywhere in the church. As a result, the precise location of the relics became a topic of debate between the Hermits and Canons of Pavia. Arguments between the two sides escalated to such a degree that, in

335 The feast day was suppressed in 1343. In addition, the Order celebrated the main feast day of St. Augustine on 28 August and the feast day of his conversion on 5 May. Hackett, “San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro,” 207; E. Esteban, “De festis et ritibus sacris Ordinis Eremitarum Sancti Augustini saeculo XIV,” Analecta Augustiniani 16 (1937): 3-40; ibid., “De Caeremoniali ordinis eremitarum sancti Augustini,” Analecta Augustiniana 15: 181-227, 192-9.
1400, Pope Boniface VIII divided the church in half, and required the Orders to alternate possession of the crypt. Until the rediscovery of the relics in 1695, the Canons and Hermits claimed that the body was located underground on their respective sides. Today the relics are located in an altar beneath the Arca, which now stands in the chancel of the church, however, they remained in the Hermits’ sacristy until the seventeenth century. Given the limited access to the actual relics of Augustine, the Arca provided a fitting memorial to their founder and locus of Augustinian devotion.

Modelled after the sculpted tomb monuments of St. Dominic in Bologna (c.1264) and St. Peter Martyr in Milan (1339), the Arca di Sant’Agostino (fig.35) features more narrative reliefs than both of these earlier ensembles. Nine rectangular reliefs run along the upper register, representing scenes of Augustine’s life and translation, and ten gabled reliefs illustrate his pre-death and posthumous miracles. A series of standing figures, including Apostles, Evangelists, deacons, and hermits, form the base of the monument. Atop the base lies a sculpted effigy of St. Augustine, dressed in episcopal garb and

339 Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 41-42. In 1695, workmen accidentally discovered a silver box containing bones in the crypt. The remains in the casket were declared the bones of Augustine, whose name was written on the box, and the relics were moved to the altar underneath the Arca. In 1737, the Arca was moved from the sacristy to the high altar, and moved again several times, before returning to the chancel of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in 1900, where it remains today.
surrounded by deacons. Begun in 1361, the Arca was produced in three separate phases of construction, with the narrative reliefs being executed between 1378 and 1381.  

Like the contemporary cycle by Guariento in Padua, the Arca di Sant’Agostino in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro privileges episodes that took place in Italy, but the emphasis lies on Augustine’s time in northern Italy, in particular. The narrative begins on the north side, where the Arca’s largest relief panel shows *St. Augustine Teaching Rhetoric* (fig.38), flanked by cityscapes of Milan and Rome (the latter identifiable by the inscription *SPQR*). The three reliefs on the west side illustrate four crucial episodes that occurred in Milan: *Preaching of Ambrose*, *St. Augustine’s Visit to Simplicianus* and the *Tolle Lege*, and the *Baptism and Vestition* (fig.36). Chronologically, the next three episodes appear on the east side: *St. Monica’s Funeral in Ostia*, the *Bestowal of the Rule*, and *St. Augustine with the Heretics*. The cycle skips over Augustine’s death and finishes on the south side (fig.37) with two panels showing the translation of the saint’s body across the sea to Sardinia, and then into the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro.

The reliefs do not follow a circular route around the Arca, but begin and end on the north and south sides, respectively. The earliest episode, *Augustine Teaching Rhetoric*, occupies the entire north side and the two translation episodes appear on the south side. This arrangement, in which Augustine’s life is bookended by episodes with the most identifiable Italian settings, reinforces Italy as the beginning and endpoint of his journey. The physical movement of the viewer around the Arca in order to view the

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342 Sharon Dale has shown that the Hermits relied on funds supplied by the Visconti family, and describes how the complicated political and religious climate during this time led to delays in the construction of the Arca. The three phases of construction are as follows: 1361-2 (base, gisant, and attendant figures), 1378-81 (rectangular reliefs, canopy), and after 1409 (gabled reliefs). Dale, *Arca di Sant’Agostino*, 63-68, 113, 93.
reliefs evokes the circuitous travels of Augustine and his relics, and might have conjured up the journey just traveled by the pilgrims viewing the monument.

Contrary to what many earlier scholars have assumed, the biographical reliefs on the Arca do not follow the earlier texts of the 1330s, but rely principally on the body of literature written by the German friar Jordan of Quedlinburg (1300-80).343 The Pavese prior Bonifazio Bottigella (d.1404), who probably designed the iconographic program, chose Jordan’s new official biography of Augustine over the earlier texts that had been written in the wake of the 1327 bull.344 A former pupil of Henry of Freimar in Erfurt, Jordan attended the studium generale in Bologna (1317-1319) and the University of Paris (1319-22).345 He then taught as a lector at the Augustinian studium in Erfurt, where he was elected provincial prior for several years. Jordan was a distinguished member of the Order and a prolific author, who wrote several biblical commentaries as well as the widely popular Meditationes de Passione Christi. Jordan’s corpus of works on St. Augustine include: the Vita di Sancti Augustini (completed by 1343), a complete account of Augustine’s life, included in the Collectanea Augustiniana, a compendium of sermons attributed to Augustine; the Metrum pro depingenda vita sancti Augustini (1341), a set of mnemonic verses that were intended to serve as a programmatic guide for illustrating

343 Many earlier scholars have assumed that the reliefs followed Henry of Freimar’s treatise: Gill, Augustine in the Renaissance, 44; Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder,” 40-4; Da Gai, Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 320-9 (Cosma acknowledged the mistake in Iconografia agostiniana, vol.2, 43). Dale has corrected this previous assumption, showing that the first phase of the Arca (base, gisant, and attendant figures) is based primarily on Augustine’s own writings, the Pseudo-Augustian Sermones ad fratres in eremo commendantes and Jordan’s Liber Vitasfratrum; the second phase (rectangular reliefs) on Jordan’s Vita Sancti Augustini and Metrum; and the third phase on the Golden Legend. Dale, Arca, 93-4. As I argue below, Jordan’s Vitasfratrum also informs our understanding of the biographical reliefs.

344 Scholars have debated the identity of the Arca’s patron for decades. For discussion of the Arca’s likely patrons, see Dale, Arca, 65-67.

345 For information on the life of Jordan of Quedlinburg, see Arbesmann and Hümphner, “Introduction,” x-xxiii.
Augustine’s life; and the Liber Vitasfratrum (c.1357), an extensive commentary on the Rule, illustrated by numerous examples of noteworthy members of the Order and ancient monastic fathers. It is unclear whether Jordan knew about the plans for the Arca when he composed the first Vita and Metrum, but it is possible that he did possess this knowledge when he wrote the Liber Vitasfratrum.  

Having attended the general chapters of 1338 and 1343, Jordan might have even been present at the 1348 meeting in Pavia, where the execution of the Arca was likely discussed.

Jordan of Quedlinburg took pains to base his vita of St. Augustine on credible sources, rather than the “ancient legends,” cited by Henry of Freimar. He relied on a set of sermons believed to be the words of Augustine himself, the Sermones ad fratres in eremo, but modern scholars have exposed this source as a fourteenth-century creation.

The Sermones confirmed Hippo as the site of the Order’s first foundation. Jordan embraced the notion that Augustine had traveled to Italy to visit the Tuscan Hermits and those at Centumcellis. However, he considered it to be impossible that Augustine had stayed in Italy long enough to establish a monastic house there. Instead, he argued that

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346 Arbesmann and Humpfner believe that Jordan probably began developing his plans for the Vitasfratrum during his time in Bologna (1317-19), where he would have learned of the Dominican Vitasfratrum by Gerard of Frachet, upon which Jordan’s text is based. The Augustinian Order probably had knowledge of Jordan’s writing plans by the general chapter meeting of 1338 in Siena, which Jordan himself attended as definitor of the Saxon-Thuringian province. Jordan does not explicitly mention the Arca in his Vita, Metrum, or Liber Vitasfratrum, but the vision of Augustine at the tomb in the Liber Vitasfratrum has been read as a veiled reference to the Order’s plans for the Arca. See below for a discussion of the vision of Augustine at the tomb. Ibid., “Introduction,” xvii-xviii; Gerard de Frachet, O.P., The Lives of the Brethren: The early years of the Order of Preachers, trans. Placis Conway, O.P. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

347 Dale, Arca, 92-3.

348 On the dubious authenticity of the Sermones, see Saak, Creating Augustine, 81-137.

when Augustine left for Africa, he took twelve men from Simplicianus’ hermitage outside Milan to establish the first settlement of Hermits in Africa, based on the habit and mode of living they had learned from Simplicianus.\textsuperscript{350} Then, after he became bishop, Augustine bestowed a second Rule to the Canons. Jordan believed that the friars from Augustine’s African foundations eventually fled to Italy during Vandal invasions, and remained scattered throughout the peninsula until Alexander IV reunited them.\textsuperscript{351} Jordan’s narrative of Augustine’s life maintained the importance of Italy as the place where Augustine acquired the habit and mode of living that he would later establish in Africa. However, Jordan did not insist on an Italian site for the original foundation like Henry of Freimar had done.

The reliefs on the Arca retain the eremitic emphasis of Guariento’s cycle. The conversion relief includes Augustine’s \textit{Visit to Simplicianus} (fig.40), the hermit who led Augustine to follow the Christian faith and take up the eremitic lifestyle, according to the Hermits. The baptism and vestition episodes are combined into a single scene, in order to show that Augustine began living as a hermit immediately after his baptism.

The central panel on the opposite side shows one of the most important episodes, Augustine bestowing the Rule to a group of hooded friars (fig.43). This relief focuses on the figures of Augustine and his followers, and leaves the background completely empty. Scholars have disagreed on the precise location implied by the placement of the relief. Meredith Gill identifies Italy as the intended location (following the narrative by Henry of Freimar), while Saak has argued for Africa (according to Jordan of Quedlinburg’s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Vita}, 791: “Cuius piis precibus pius ille pater Simplicianus annuens dedit ei duodecim fratres viros religiosos, cum quibus adiunctis sibi carissimis amicis suis qui diu secum fuerant, Nebridio, Evodio, Alipio et Pontiano, cum matre et filio Adeodato, ad Africam profiscendi iter arripuit.”
\item Ibid., \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 91-2.
\end{enumerate}
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vita).\textsuperscript{352} If the Arca does indeed follow the vita by Jordan, then the position of the relief probably implies that the event took place in Africa. However, I would argue that this line of inquiry, which aims to identify the intended locale, misses the point. What is most striking, in my opinion, is the absence of setting, which stands in sharp contrast to the detailed backgrounds represented in the other reliefs. An Italian setting is not represented, but neither is an African setting. No previous scholar has sufficiently explained why this relief lacks any sense of a geographic setting. Considering the Arca’s reliance on several of Guariento’s compositions in Padua, it is noteworthy that the relatively static relief of the Bestowal of the Rule conspicuously lacks the narrative quality of Guariento’s image of the same subject. I propose that this avoidance of an identifiable physical setting for the Bestowal of the Rule reflects the new line of thought expressed by Jordan of Quedlinburg, who upheld that the spiritual and physical union of Augustine and his followers was more important than the physical place where this unification took place.

Several passages from the Liber Vitasfratrum reveal that Jordan’s definition of the Augustinian life did not depend on where one observed the modum vivendi, bestowed by the saint. In a section addressing the quarrels between the Canons and Hermits, Jordan argues that the true sons of Augustine were defined not by when (or by extension, where) they had received the Rule, but by how well they observed it after having received it.\textsuperscript{353}

\textsuperscript{352} Gill, Augustine in the Renaissance, 44; Saak, Creating Augustine, 158. Dale points out that the Lombard locations in the reliefs would have suited the Visconti patronage, and suggests that the refusal to locate the Bestowal of the Rule in a Tuscan locale was part of the Visconti’s desire to proclaim Lombard supremacy. While the agendas of the friars and Visconti may have coincided in this particular instance, it seems unlikely to me that the Visconti played a significant role in designing the biographical reliefs of Augustine, which reflect primarily Order-wide themes. Dale also interprets the relief as the Pavese friars’ efforts to deny the Tuscan friars a privileged place within the Order, an incomplete explanation that I have sought to remedy in this chapter. Dale, Arca, 124; 129-30.

\textsuperscript{353} Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 190.
Jordan considered the Hermits to be superior to the Canons because they observed the Augustinian life in a more perfect way, not because they had received the Rule first.

For Jordan, the essential element of Augustine’s Rule, and by extension the Augustinian life, was the *vita communis*, the state of dwelling together in physical and spiritual union with one’s brethren. He opens the first chapter of the *Liber Vitasfratrum* by describing the four components of the communal life: dwelling together in the same place, unity of spirit, holding temporal possessions in common, and proportional distribution of goods.\textsuperscript{354} In the first section, Jordan discusses the reunion of Augustine’s relics with the Hermits in Pavia. In the second section, Jordan explains that the purpose of physical unity is to attain spiritual oneness, as explained in the Rule and the Book of Acts.\textsuperscript{355} Augustine wrote in his Rule that the purpose of living together was to have “one heart and one soul,” just as the Acts of the Apostles instructed.\textsuperscript{356} Several poignant excerpts support Jordan’s argument that it is not the place itself that makes the friar holy, but rather the act of dwelling together that facilitates the ultimate goal of spiritual unity. Jordan cites Hugh of Saint Victor’s commentary on the Rule of Augustine: “God looks more for unity of spirit than of place.”\textsuperscript{357} Jordan then proceeds to quote a sermon delivered by Augustine to his brothers in the wilderness: “The place does not make us holy, but a good life will sanctify both the place and ourselves.”\textsuperscript{358} Jordan concludes that

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\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 63.  
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid., 117-19.  
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid., 117.  
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid. Jordan of Quedlinburg, *Liber Vitasfratrum*, II.1: “Et ipse Pater noster Augustinus in sermone De filio prodigo ad fratres suos in eremo sic ait: ‘[…] Locus enim non facit sancts, sed bona operatio locum sanctificabit et nos.’”
\end{flushright}
“the only thing that truly unites us in the eyes of God is a dwelling together of our spirits, not a mere lodging in the one place.”

Jordan considered the reunion of Augustine’s relics with the Hermits in Pavia as a restoration of the spiritual and physical union shared at the original foundation. In the *Liber Vitae fratrum* Jordan frames the 1327 ruling of Pope John XXII as Augustine’s return to his origins:

> It would certainly have been in no way possible if he [God] had not so arranged it to be done, he… who has implanted in things a natural tendency whereby they readily return to their origins. …. When alive, our glorious father Augustine, no matter what his state, always had a particular leaning toward those sons of his, and they always had a filial affection toward so great a father as he. This fact offered an unhoped-for hope, so to speak, that it would be possible at some time for the father and his sons to return to their original physical unity, and that at length the Lord would grant them to dwell together as one under their father’s leadership in the communion of heavenly citizens (my emphasis).

By the term “origins,” Jordan does not refer to the particular place where the Order was established. Instead, he focuses on the state of dwelling together with Augustine both *physically* – in the same place, just as the earliest Hermits had lived with him in the first monastery and had cared for his relics following his death – and *spiritually* – through the friars’ observance of the Rule under the leadership of their father. Regarding their physical unity, Jordan believed that the Hermits had possessed the relics of Augustine in Africa before religious persecution forced them to flee to Italy. For this reason, he viewed the 1327 bull as a restoration of their original right. In turn, their restored physical unity in Pavia symbolized their spiritual unity and the Hermits’ identity as his true sons. It is telling that Jordan couches the relics controversy within a broader discussion about how to observe the communal ideal of Augustine’s Rule. Jordan considered the unity of

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359 Ibid., *Life of the Brethren*, 106.
Augustine and the Hermits to be not just a matter of justice, but as essential to the friars’ ability to fully observe the Rule.

Jordan expresses the physical unity of Augustine and the friars by reiterating the “head and members” analogy that had been used by earlier fourteenth-century authors to describe their relationship to Augustine. After the friars were reunited with Augustine in Pavia in 1327, the Hermits developed a rhetoric that referred to the Great Union of 1256 as a spiritual and physical re-embodiment of Augustine.\(^{360}\) As early as the 1330s, the friars developed the legend that Augustine had appeared to Alexander IV with a large head, separated from his smaller members, urging the pope to unite the scattered members of his Order. The vision of Augustine’s head with small, separated members alluded to both the Great Union (the union of smaller eremitical groups into a single larger group) and the Hermits’ custody of Augustine’s relics (the reunion of the Order’s head with its members).\(^{361}\) The papal bull issued by Pope John XXII had used the same language to describe the Hermits, “united as members to their head, sons to their father.”\(^{362}\) Jordan repeats the metaphor in the Liber Vitasfratrum. He also records that after the Church brought together members of the Order that had been separated, it “went on to reunite these members even physically to their most holy head.”\(^{363}\)

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\(^{360}\) Saak has discussed the development of this metaphorical language (Creating Augustine, 57-61).

\(^{361}\) The specific word (exilis) used by fourteenth-century Hermits to describe the “members” carries a double significance, meaning both “small” and “separated”: “magnum quidem capite sed membris exilem” (Henry of Freimar, Tractatus, 216-7); “magnus capite et parvus membris” (Rano, Initium, 345); “grandis capite, sed membris exilis” (Nicholas of Alessandria, Sermo, 372).

\(^{362}\) Veneranda Sanctorum Patrum (20 January 1327), in Maiocchi and Sacchi, Codex Diplomaticus, 13-19.

\(^{363}\) Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 104. Ibid., Liber Vitasfratrum, I.18: “Quoniam autem non satis esset unita fore membra inter se, nisi etiam essent suo capiti cuncta, hoc attendens novissimis temporibus Sedes apostolica membra sacra huius Religionis inter se primitus disiuncta, ut visum est, univit et postea nihilominus ipsa membra suo sacratissimo capiti etiam corporaliter reunivit.”
Jordan’s *Liber Vitasfratrum* helps to explain the Arca’s relief of the *Bestowal of the Rule*, which omits the setting and focuses solely on the figures of Augustine and the Hermits. The relief evokes the “head and members” analogy employed by the fourteenth-century Hermits to explain their relationship to Augustine. Layered in rows, the friars fill the entire space of the relief and become the “members” belonging to Augustine, who stands as the center and head of the body. Several Hermits reach out their hands to touch the saint, literally forming a physical union. The uniformity of their physical bodies exemplifies their oneness of spirit, defined by Jordan as “uniformity of life.”

Following the logic of Jordan’s rhetoric, the translation episodes on the Arca (figs.45-46) can be viewed as a pendant to the *Bestowal of the Rule*. Represented with striking detail, each translation episode marks a step toward restoring the physical unity between the father and his sons. The artist includes hooded Hermits as companions on this sojourn. They accompany Augustine’s body aboard the ship to Genoa, and carry his body through the gates of Pavia and into the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro. Their continuous physical contact with the body of Augustine recalls the equally physical union illustrated in the *Bestowal of the Rule*, and anticipates the future re-embodiment of the Order. The number of sculpted images representing Augustine’s body – three times in the translation episodes in addition to the life-size effigy – reinforces the theme of re-

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365 Courcelle, *Iconographie de Saint Augustin. Les cycles du XIVe*, 68. Jordan refers to those translating the body as *episcopi*, *sacerdotes*, and *religiosae*, while the author of the *Initium* calls the exiles *sui filii et fratres* (Rano, 341). One of the appendices of the *Vita Aurelii*, possibly by an author other than the original writer of the *vita*, records that members of the Order of Hermits carried Augustine’s body to Italy. The author uses this fact to distinguish the Order from the Canons and Dominicans. Arbesmann, “*Vita Aurelii*,” 351-52 (fol.1v-12r).
embodiment. In the absence of the actual relics, these corporeal images would be a powerful reminder of the union between Augustine, whose body lay underneath the church, and the friars, living in the Pavese convent.

The gabled reliefs in the uppermost register, which illustrate several miracles retold in the *Golden Legend*, seem to be aimed primarily at an audience of pilgrims. The large number of miracle scenes is unusual when compared to other fourteenth- and fifteenth-century cycles of Augustine’s life, but suited the function of the monument and its mixed audience of friars and pilgrims. A gable on the south side (fig.47) shows Augustine directing a group of maimed pilgrims away from the “tombs of the apostles” in Rome and toward his own tomb in Pavia. The adjacent pinnacle shows a group of healed pilgrims standing outside the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro. These episodes highlight San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro as a prestigious pilgrimage destination that rivals Rome, the Italian city with the most numerous and venerable sacred relics.

With this elaborate tomb monument, the Hermits hoped to make Pavia a shrine worthy of Augustine’s relics. The church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro was made holy by

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366 It is noteworthy that the cycle also includes the *Funeral of St. Monica*, rather than the more common image of the death of St. Monica, placing added emphasis on the contact between the friars and sacred bodies. The subject is represented here for the first time (Da Gai, *Iconografia agostiniana*, vol.1, 324). For studies on the increasingly popular cult of St. Monica, particularly in connection to the rediscovery of her relics in 1430 in Ostia and their translation to the convent of Sant’Agostino in Rome, see I. Holgate, “The Cult of St. Monica in Quattrocento Italy: Her Place in Augustinian Iconography, Devotion, and Legend,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 71 (2003): 187-212; Meredith Gill, “‘Remember me at the altar of the Lord’: Saint Monica’s Gift to Rome,” *Augustine in Iconography, History and Legend*, ed. J.C. Schnaubelt and F. Van Fleteren (Villanova, PA: Augustinian Historical Institute, Villanova University), 549-576.


368 Anita Federer Moskowitz has pointed out Pavia’s rivalry with Rome. Pavia considered itself a second Rome, and San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro was supposedly founded by Constantine, who also founded the Roman basilica of San Pietro. Moskowitz has argued that the Arca even resembles the Arch of Constantine in its architectonic structure. Moskowitz, “A Tale of Two Cities,” 1-6; ibid., *Nicola Pisano’s Arca di San Domenico and its Legacy*, 34-5.
the presence of Augustine’s relics, which finally found a suitable setting when the Hermits regained custody of the body. According to Jordan’s narrative, the body of Augustine had remained in a state of exile and neglect ever since the Hermits had lost possession of the relics in North Africa. When the Vandals invaded Hippo, they violated many “sacred places,” including the place where Augustine had rested for sixty-two years. With this wave of persecution, the Hermits fled to Italy and lost custody of their founder’s body. By the fourteenth century, North Africa was no longer Christian (or Roman), but a foreign land to those living on the Italian peninsula. For Jordan and his readers, such a place must have seemed ill suited to house the relics of a saint.

According to Jordan’s version of the story, the relics found safety in Pavia, but subsequently suffered from neglect in the hands of the Canons. Jordan recounts a vision experienced by a prominent Augustinian friar shortly after the prior general William of Cremona requested custody of Augustine’s relics. In a church belonging to another order, the friar stood before the tomb of a bishop that had fallen into neglect. The sculpted image of the bishop on the tomb arose before the friar and his brethren, and delivered an exhortation to them “like a father would to his sons.” As Augustine

369 Ibid., 104-6.
370 At the end of Augustine’s life in the fifth century, the Vandals invaded North Africa, and by the eighth century Muslim rule had taken over the formerly Roman and Christian provinces. Conant, “Europe and the African Cult of Saints,” 1-46. In On the Solitary Life Petrarch remarks that while Augustine learned Latin while growing up in Africa, it was rare now for those in Africa to know their mother language Latin and practice the Christian faith (243).
372 Ibid. Jordan of Quedlinburg, Liber Vitasfratrum, I.18: “Porro ita diu affectat reunion, antequam facta esset, cuidam fratri nominato in Ordine per visum revelata fuit hoc modo. Videbatur enim ei, quod ipse cumm multis fratibus et melioribus personis Ordinis esset in quaedam ecclesia non nostri Ordinis, in qua erat quoddam seculum elevatum unius magni sancti episcopi, sicut ex figura imagines desuper sculptae ostendebatur. Quod quidem seculum minus decenter a personis illius ecclesiae tenebatur. Nam pulpit et candelabra antiqua cum pulveribus irreverenter superiactata apparebant. Itaque fratibus in ecclesia stantibus et seculum aspicientibus, ecce imago episcopi visa est se elevare et illas scorias super se iactatas
returned to his tomb, the friars began to weep, and Augustine said to them: “Do not weep, my sons. Behold I shall be with you always, until the end of the world.”

Jordan’s curious account highlights the spiritual presence of Augustine among his sons, facilitated by their proximity to their founder’s tomb. If Jordan did know about the plans for the Arca when he wrote this passage, he would surely have considered it a worthy project for honoring the tomb of St. Augustine.

The Arca di Sant’Agostino shows a shift in focus from the physical place where Augustine and the friars first united to the place where the physical and spiritual union between the body and its members was restored. As is evident from this discussion, the cycles in Padua and Pavia present two different narrative traditions. Ottaviano Nelli’s cycle in the cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio (1410-20) also follows Jordan’s vita, as well as the narrative presented on the Arca. In Gubbio, the Bestowal of the Rule (fig.72) depicts St. Augustine enthroned before a group of friars. The image follows Augustine’s return to Carthage (fig.70) and ordination as priest (fig.71). While the background is mostly illegible, there appears to have been no detailed or otherwise signified setting. Like the Arca relief, the absence of setting in Nelli’s Bestowal stands in sharp contrast to the diverse backgrounds in the other frescoes, including those that

indignanter reicere. Et sic surgens episcopus de tumulo pontificaliter indutus ivit stare ante altare et invitans ad se fratres cantare coepit: Venite, venite, venite, filii, audite me: timorem Domini docebo vos. Et cantavit haec verba in nota gradualis, sicut episcopi in inthronizationibus cantare solent. Quo expleto sedit ipse, et fratres omnes ante se per ordinem sedere iussit. Et tunc dulcem exhortationem velut pater suis filiis fecit. Ex quo iste frater intellelexit in spiritu illum fore beatum Augustinum.”


375 Cosma claims to see Canons in the lower part of the fresco, but it is impossible to know for certain given the fresco’s poor state of conservation. Ibid., 390.
happened in Africa (figs. 61, 70). This cycle also includes a two-part translation. The first
episode (fig. 77), which remains mostly illegible aside from the tips of the sails at the top
of the fresco, is positioned directly below the Bestowal of the Rule and thereby
establishes a direct connection to the Order’s foundation. The second scene (fig. 78)
shows a group of friars carrying the body of Augustine, visualizing the reunion of the
father with his sons. On the other hand, the cycles in Montalcino and San Gimignano
reveal a stronger interest in representing the Order’s Tuscan origins, harkening back to
the early-fourteenth-century Hermits and Guariento’s cycle in Padua. As I will discuss
below, in the Augustinian church in San Gimignano Benozzo Gozzoli (1465) omits the
translation episodes and depicts Monte Pisano as the setting for Augustine’s Bestowal of
the Rule with unprecedented specificity and originality.

**Fifteenth-Century Tuscany and the Observant Reform**

As the Observant Reform emerged in the second half of the fourteenth century,
Tuscany became the dynamic center of the Augustinian Observance in Italy. In 1385,
the hermitage of San Salvatore di Foltignano, better known as Lecceto, was established
as the first of several Tuscan Observant houses. The Observant friars strove for a stricter
adherence to Augustine’s Rule, with particular emphasis on prayer, meditation, and
community. The Observant friaries housed only friars living under the Reform
Movement, and formed their own congregation within the Augustinian Order.

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During the fifteenth century, the Augustinian houses in Tuscany continued to embrace their supposed connection to the original group of Tuscan Hermits visited by Augustine and later united in the Great Union. The Tuscan landscape was dotted with several twelfth-century hermitages that had been abandoned after the Great Union, but still survived as visible reminders of the Order’s eremitic origins. The Observant friar’s emphasis on obedience to Augustine’s Rule continued to draw them back to the appealing legend that Augustine had written his Rule specifically for eremitic communities in Tuscany, which provided an ideal setting for the life of prayer and community celebrated in the Rule. While early fourteenth-century sources revealed a desire to locate a single foundation, fifteenth-century Augustinian authors highlight the saint’s visit to multiple Tuscan hermitages. The Tuscan friars cast Augustine as an itinerant hermit, whose wanderings through the Tuscan wilderness recalled the vitae of the Desert Fathers. Two fifteenth-century cycles of St. Augustine, located in Observant houses in Lecceto and San Gimignano, present the vita of the saint with a distinctly Tuscan flavor.

Founded in 1288, the hermitage at Lecceto was named the motherhouse of the Augustinian Observant Movement by Pope Eugenius IV in 1443. Secluded in a dense forest outside Siena, Lecceto appealed to the Observant friar as the ideal location for


prayer and contemplation, isolated from the distractions of worldly life. While Lecceto was associated with the eremitical life, it also became a haven for Augustinian humanists devoted to intellectual pursuits. Many Augustinian friars engaging in humanist circles in Florence and Siena saw a kinship between the eremitical and intellectual life. For this reason, prominent members of the Order, like Andrea Biglia (c.1395-1435), who belonged to Sant’Agostino in Siena, and Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532), prior general of the Order, retreated from their own houses to spend secluded time at Lecceto. Born in Milan, Andrea Biglia attended and taught at universities in Bologna, Florence, Siena and Padua, the leading humanist centers of the fourteenth-century. When he wished to escape the distractions of the conventional friary, he withdrew to Lecceto to work on his translations of Aristotle.

Both Andrea Biglia and Giles of Viterbo added Lecceto to the map of sites visited by Augustine during his Tuscan sojourn. The list of renowned religious figures who had supposedly visited the hermitage also included Sts. Ambrose, Monica, and Catherine of Siena. Biglia believed that St. Francis of Assisi had also visited Lecceto before establishing the Franciscan Order. These legends cast Lecceto as the gravitational center of eremitic life. Fifteenth-century frescoes (1439-1442) decorating the south and east sides of the Chiostri de Beati highlight the importance of Lecceto as a popular

380 For more on Biglia’s life, see Arbesmann, “Andrea Biglia,” 154-85. For more on Giles’ life, see Martin, “Giles of Viterbo and the Monastery of Lecceto,” 215-47.
381 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 186, 203; Giles of Viterbo, De Ilicetana Familia, 249.
382 Ambrogio Landucci, Sacra Ilicetana Sylva (Siena, 1653), 13-15.
eremitic refuge over the centuries. Curiously, this cycle is often overlooked in comparative discussions of cycles of Augustine from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.384

The cycle of Augustine’s life (fig.97), painted along the south wall of the cloister, stands adjacent to the frescoes on the east wall, which depict episodes from the lives of Anthony Abbot and other saints believed to have lived at Lecceto.385 The frescoes devoted to Augustine are, unfortunately, too damaged to discern the setting of most of the scenes. However, the mere coupling of the two cycles on the east and south walls illustrates a universal history that centers on Tuscany as the new Thebaid and the locus of eremitical exempla across time, a theme developed as early as the writing of the Initium (c.1330).386 The upper register of the south wall shows Augustine’s voyage to Italy (and perhaps specifically his arrival in Pisa, in the sixth fresco, fig.99), while the upper register on the east wall illustrates Anthony’s voyage to a desert hermitage, above a fresco of the Egyptian Thebaid.387

384 Ahl does not consider the Lecceto frescoes a narrative cycle (“Benozzo Gozzoli’s Frescoes,” n.3), nor do the Courcelles consider them in their monograph on cycles of Augustine.
The Augustinian house of Sant'Agostino in San Gimignano was led by Fra Domenico Strambi, a leader in the Reform Movement and the advisor for the fresco program executed by Benozzo Gozzoli on the walls of the *cappella maggiore* of the church. Gozzoli presents Augustine as the exemplary Christian scholar, which Diane Cole Ahl has connected to Strambi’s Observant ideals. Educated at the Sorbonne in Paris, Strambi established a reputation as a learned scholar. After unsuccessfully attempting to establish the San Gimignano friars under the Reform movement, Strambi left the convent, but later returned to become its prior. In 1457, he resumed his efforts to establish the house as an Observant congregation, and in 1481, the convent of San Gimignano finally became an Observant house under the jurisdiction of Lecceto. A document from 1464 indicates that Fra Domenico Strambi acquired the rights of the *cappella maggiore* from the Dietiguardi family. The inscription on Gozzoli’s *Departure from Rome* (fig. 86) praises Strambi as the patron of the cycle, which sends a powerful message to the brethren at San Gimignano to follow Augustine’s example of faith and learning. More than the Observant branches of other orders, Augustinian friars, such as Strambi, believed that learning could help restore the kind of inner spirituality and discipline exemplified by Augustine.

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388 For more on Strambi’s life, see Ahl, “Benozzo Gozzoli: The Life of Saint Augustine,” 359-82.
391 On the emphasis of the Augustinian Observance on learning, see Walsh, “Papal Policy and Local Reform. b) Congregatio Illicetana: The Augustinian Observant Movement in Tuscany and the Humanist Ideal,”105-45; K. Elm, “Mendikanten und Humanisten im Florenz des Tre- und Quattrocento. Zum
Gozzoli’s image of the Order’s founding (fig. 91), located in the middle register on the right wall, is remarkably innovative for a variety of reasons, including the representation of Monte Pisano for the first time in Augustinian iconography, and the pairing of the Bestowal of the Rule with two apocryphal and rarely depicted episodes (Augustine’s Visit to the Tuscan Hermits and the Parable of the Trinity). Surprisingly, given the rich landscape that characterizes his frescoes here, few scholars have fully explained Gozzoli’s complex representation of place. In this section, I will examine how Gozzoli’s innovative landscape and unusual combination of episodes illustrate Augustine’s itinerant travels through the Tuscan countryside, the ideal setting for spiritual contemplation and communal dwelling.

The rugged mountain landscape and the Latin inscription below the fresco identify the setting of the Visit to the Tuscan Hermits and the Bestowal of the Rule as Monte Pisano. Overlooking a medieval town, an enclosed monastery stands atop the peak of the mountain, complete with a tower and surrounding wall. A rustic figure walking down the winding path with his horse suggests a remote locale, removed from city life. Halfway up the mountain, the haloed figure of Augustine sits amidst a group of hermits in the Visit to the Tuscan Hermits. These brothers wear various habits, all of which lack the cincture and cowl that had become an integral part of the official habit bestowed by Augustine to the Hermits. In contrast, the brothers depicted in the Bestowal...
of the Rule wear uniform dress, complete with the cincture and the cowl. Taken together, the setting of Monte Pisano, the official habit, and Augustine’s bestowal of the Rule help to identify the episode as the founding event.394

This choice of Monte Pisano as the birthplace of the Order corresponds to several contemporary texts.395 Both Ambrosius de Cora (1481), who served as prior general of the Order, and Andrea Biglia (1431) located the founding event at Monte Pisano.396 It is possible that the friars in San Gimignano were familiar with Biglia’s treatise, which he had composed a few decades earlier while living at nearby Lecceto. Although Biglia’s death in 1435 came well before the execution of Gozzoli’s frescoes, he had been a prominent figure in the Sienese area, having lived at the convent of Sant’Agostino in Siena and taught at the city’s university. Like Strambi, Biglia supported the Reform Movement and valued scholarship as an integral part of the life of the Augustinian friar.

At the very least, Biglia’s text provides a glimpse of the oral and written traditions that

394 Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 137-45.
395 Scholars have offered various incorrect observations regarding Gozzoli’s fresco of the Bestowal of the Rule and its textual sources. Several authors have misidentified Henry of Freimar as the source of the image, although Henry cites Centumcellae (not Monte Pisano) as the place where Augustine bestowed the Rule (Gill, Augustine in the Italian Renaissance, 92; Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 137-45).
Donadieu-Rigaut identifies the church in the foreground as the first foundation at Centumcellae, an interpretation which conflicts with the inscription’s explicit reference to Monte Pisano. Saak claims that Petrarch is the only explicit textual precedent for Gozzoli’s location of the episode at Monte Pisano, and ignores Andrea Biglia’s reference, which is more likely to be the source, considering its contemporaneity with Gozzoli’s cycle (Creating Augustine, 185). Ahl and Pittiglio correctly link Gozzoli’s image to Biglia’s text (Ahl, “Benozzo Gozzoli,” 368; Iconografia agostiniana, vol.2, 495).
396 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 202. Ambrosius adds that Augustine later visited Centumcellis, where he instituted the apostolic way of life to the hermits living there. Ambrosius Massarius de Cora, Defensorium Ordinis, transcribed in part by Saak (Creating Augustine, 186) and more fully here: http://www.cassiciaco.it/navigazione/scriptorium/testi%20medioevo/massarius.html. In a different text, Ambrosius de Cori refers only to Centumcellis in connection with the bestowal of the Rule. In the late fifteenth century, Ambrosius interpolated a twelfth-century sermon falsely attributed to Augustine, but more likely delivered by the Canon Regular Pietro Comestore (c.1110-1179). Ambrosius added details concerning the order’s foundation, writing that Augustine gave the Rule to the hermit brothers and lived with them for two years at “a place called Centumcellis.” The difference between this reference and the vita suggests to me that by this time it was common to connect Augustine and the Rule to many different Italian locations. For a discussion of Ambrosius’ authorship of these interpolations, see Saak, Creating Augustine, 71; Rano, “San Agustin y los orígenes,” 683, n.139.
flourished in the Sienese region. The endorsement of Monte Pisano by the prior general Ambrosius de Cora in his 1481 treatise written in defense of the Order also testifies to the continued popularity of this notion well into the later decades of the fifteenth century.397

In contrast to the vague references to Monte Pisano in some earlier texts, Biglia identifies the first settlement on Monte Pisano specifically as the hermitage of San Giorgio della Spelonca, an Augustinian house that dated back to at least the twelfth century.398 The hermitage of San Giorgio della Spelonca was so-called for the many caves (spelonche) in the mountain-side on which it stood. It is possible that the dark shadows painted around Augustine in the Visit to the Tuscan Hermits was intended to suggest a setting in one of these caves. Physical remains indicate that the hermitage was located on top of this mountain, just as Gozzoli has depicted in the fresco.

It may seem curious, at first, that Gozzoli chose to place Augustine not at the top of the mountain near the hermitage, but closer to the picture place, seated before a church. It has been pointed out that the anachronistic Gothic church recalls the church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano, and the positioning of the episode close to the picture plane adds a sense of visual immediacy.399 Strambi, who appears as the figure to the right of Augustine, supports the Rule on Augustine’s lap, representing his commitment to

397 For historical background on the life of Ambrogio de Cora, see Cécile Caby, “Ambrogio Massari, percorso biografico e prassi culturali,” in La carriera di un uomo di curia nella Roma del Quattrocento, ed. Carla Prova, Raimondo Michetti, and Domenico Palombi (Viella, 2008), 23-68.
enforcing strict observance in San Gimignano. Through this creative manipulation of the painted landscape, Gozzoli depicts the bestowal of the Rule from the perspective of the friars viewing the fresco in the Church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano. The event of the Order’s founding provides a historical backdrop comparable to the contemporary setting of the church and its convent. Indeed, when viewing the Tuscan hills surrounding the church of Sant’Agostino, the friars could imagine the founding of the Order that took place on a nearby hilltop. Strambi’s presence among the original Tuscan hermits, who first received the Rule, suggests a historical continuity from the Order’s first generation to the Tuscan Observant friars.

The third episode depicts the parable of the Trinity, an apocryphal story that does not appear in the Confessions. According to the legend, Augustine was walking along the beach meditating on the Trinity when he came upon a boy, who was trying to gather the water from the sea with a spoon. Augustine told the boy that this was an impossible task, and the boy replied that it was likewise impossible to understand the Holy Trinity.

Henri-Irénée Marrou has shown that this legend originated as a medieval exemplum regarding the futility of understanding religious truths (such as the mystery of the Trinity). Several late medieval sources recount the story of a man who comes to

400 Ahl, “Benozzo Gozzoli’s Frescoes,” 368.
401 Gozzoli even includes a novitate, dressed in white and standing apart from the other friars, appealing to friars of varying status. Hackett and Radan rightly identify the figure as a novitate, and point out that friars were allowed to take off their black garment inside. Pittiglio agrees and cites other images of Augustinian novitiates. Hackett and Radan, “Significato degli affreschi nel chiostro e nel portico di Lecceto,” 104; Iconografia Agostiniana, vol.2, 496. Other suggestions for this enigmatic figure seem unlikely. For example, Saak identified the figure as a Cistercian monk, alluding to the papal requirement that Cistercians be present at any initial chapter (Saak, Creating Augustine, 180-1). Donadieu-Rigaut and the Courcelles argue that the monk dressed in white is a Premontre, a branch of the Canons Regular that also claimed Augustine (Donadieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 141).
such a realization while contemplating high religious truths near the sea. These moralizing stories take various forms. A thirteenth-century German Cistercian tells of a Parisian scholar walking along the Seine when a child appeared. A thirteenth-century Spaniard merely recalls an anonymous man on the banks of a river. The changing details seem to reflect the geographic origins of the author. A thirteenth-century English author assigns the episode to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury; a fourteenth-century Italian Franciscan cites Raynaldo d’Arezzo, one of Francis’ followers; and a fifteenth-century French text names Alain de Lille, a French theologian. Writing in 1263, the Barbaçon Dominican Thomas de Cantimpré was perhaps the first to associate the episode with Augustine, who was supposedly composing his well-known treatise on the Trinity (De Trinite) when he experienced a vision on the seashore.403

Whatever its origin, it seems likely that Augustine’s renowned writings on the Trinity, together with an apocryphal letter to Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313-386), encouraged a connection between the legendary exemplum and the saint’s biography.404 In circulation by the twelfth century, the aforementioned letter describes Augustine’s vision of St. Jerome, who appears at the hour of his death and makes the same analogy between the sea and human knowledge. At this moment, Augustine realizes the futility of understanding the Trinity and other divine mysteries. From this, the legend of the child and seashore was appended to the Augustinian narrative. It grew particularly popular

403 Ibid., 404.
404 Pseudo-Augustine, Epist ad Cyrilum Ierosolymitanum Episcopum, Ep. 18, PL 33, 1122-23.
During the fourteenth century, when it was cited by Opicinus de Canistris from Pavia (1337) and the Venetian Pietro de’ Natali (1369-72). Over time, the seaside location of Augustine’s vision eventually came to be associated with the legendary foundation site of Centumcellae. The Dominican Thomas de Cantimpré and the *Golden Legend* both locate this episode in Africa. However, in 1608, Ambrogio Staibano, a Neapolitan Augustinian Hermit, situates the scene at Centumcellae, “on the sea shore,” where Augustine was composing books on the Trinity on his way back to Africa. As early as the fourteenth century, Nicholas of Alessandria had suggested that Augustine meditated on the Trinity while he stayed at Centumcellae. Augustine himself reports that he had begun the book as a young man and completed it much later, making it at least plausible that he had started writing during his Italian sojourn.

Based on these textual associations, it seems that Gozzoli’s *Parable of the Trinity* is not simply an allegorical episode, but provides an explicit reference to the twelfth-century hermitage at Centumcellae. Therefore, I propose that the *Parable of the Trinity*, represented here for the first time, is linked to the *Bestowal of the Rule* and the *Visit to

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406 The episode is not included in William Granger Ryan’s modern English translation of the *Golden Legend*, which is based on the Latin edition by Th. Graesse in 1845. Presumably Graesse did not consider the episode to be part of Jacobus’ original text, but an addition made by another author. The episode is included in other editions of the *Golden Legend*, such as the English translation published by William Caxton in 1483. Jacobus de Voragine and William Caxton, *The Golden Legend*, vol. 5, ed. F.S. Ellis (Temple Classics, 1900).
the Hermits by its Tuscan setting.\textsuperscript{410} The winding path and Augustine’s multiple appearances add an itinerant quality to the saint’s journey, which is characteristic of fifteenth-century legends that connected him to several sites in Tuscany. Andrea Biglia claimed that Augustine visited three known Italian hermitages – Centumcellis, Lecceto, and Monte Pisano.\textsuperscript{411} Giles of Viterbo also referred to these legends in his De Illicetana Familia, written sometime before 1506 and addressed to the friars at Lecceto. He reports that Augustine had traveled \textit{in universo Thusco}, cultivating monks at Monte Pisano, Centumcellae, and Lecceto.\textsuperscript{412}

By pairing the \textit{Parable of the Trinity} with the two other episodes, Gozzoli presents the Tuscan landscape as an ideal setting for communal living and spiritual contemplation, the two essential focal points of the Observance.\textsuperscript{413} The position of the monastery at the top of a mountain peak alludes to the elevated status of the Tuscan convent as the optimal locale for combining the Christian and scholarly ideals of the Augustinian friar. Furthermore, the \textit{Parable of the Trinity} demonstrates the importance of combining scholarly pursuits with faith, which supersedes human reason.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{410} The only Italian representation of the Parable of the Trinity that potentially predates the Gozzoli cycle is the central part of an altarpiece predella painted by Filippo Lippi (1452-65), now housed at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. The background shows a hilly landscape with a stream, which could be identified as a generic Tuscan locale. However, Augustine wears full Episcopal regalia, suggesting that he has already been ordained bishop. Likewise, in all earlier examples from outside Italy, Augustine appears in Episcopal garb. For a discussion of this episode in European iconography, see Pittigli, \textit{Iconografia agostiniana}, vol.2, 11-16.

\textsuperscript{411} Biglia, \textit{De Ordinis nostri forma}, 186-207. For references to Centumcellis: 202, 208; Lecceto: 186, 203; Monte Pisano: 207.

\textsuperscript{412} “Extant in Monte Pisano, extant ad Centumcellas vestigia plane insignia, extant in universo Thusco sola loca quae ille et incoluit et monachis incolenda dedit. Vestra tunc domus coeptit, tunc monticulus Illicum comis opacus umbras obtulit primis illis patribus, ubi divines commentionibus incumbere quietissime possent.” Giles of Viterbo, \textit{De Illicetana Familia}, 249.

\textsuperscript{413} The Parable of the Trinity is associated with an eremitic setting in the panel by Jacopo del Sellaio (1470-93, Stocolma, Nationalmuseum), which combines three episodes in a single frame: Augustine with the Christ child, the penitent Jerome in the desert, and the temptation of Anthony Abbot.

Mountain as Metaphor

The mountainous setting of Monte Pisano provided a suitable location for the bestowal of the Rule, but not simply for its association with eremitism and the hilly terrain of Tuscany. Monte Pisano was also an appealing choice for the Order’s foundation because of the historical and metaphorical significance of its mountainous setting in the broader field of Christian history and Augustinian thought.

Indeed, in the biblical tradition the mountain appears as an ideal place for spiritual communication with God, thanks to its isolation from worldly distractions and its symbolic and physical proximity to the heavens. Hugh of Saint Victor, for example, points out that biblical examples of divine communication occurred in places removed from human activity, such as in the wilderness, in deserts, or on mountains.415 Numerous Old Testament examples of mystical experiences took place on mountains, including Abraham’s ascent to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice Isaac, Lot’s orders to flee Sodom to the nearby mountain, and Moses’ acceptance of the Ten Commandments atop Mt. Sinai.416 Significant mystical moments in the life of Christ also take place on mountains – the crucifixion on Golgatha, his Transfiguration on Mt. Thabor, his Ascension on Mt. Olivet, and his temptation atop a high mountain. In many instances, the mountain is also a place where sacred law or divine direction was bestowed, such as Moses and the Ten

Commandments, Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, and the mountain in Galilee where Christ entrusted the Christian mission to his Apostles. The remoteness of the mountain also made it a desirable location for the earliest apostolic community, who first dwelled together on Mt. Sion, as Jordan of Quedlinburg notes.\footnote{Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 66.}

The historical narratives of religious orders also locate important events in mountainous landscapes. The Carmelite Order revered Mt. Carmel as their sacred birthplace, where Elijah and his successors had lived and worshiped together.\footnote{On the development of the Carmelite founding narrative in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Jotischky, \textit{Carmelites and Antiquity}, 106-50.} Monte Cassino, where St. Benedict wrote his Rule and built his great monastery, was considered to be the founding place of the Benedictine Order. St. Francis of Assisi composed his Rule on the remote hilltop of Fonte Colombo, and received the stigmata on Mount La Verna.\footnote{References to Francis’ retreat to a mountain to write the Rule appear in the \textit{Scripta Leonis} and later in Bonaventure’s \textit{Legenda Maior}. Brooke, \textit{Image of St. Francis}, 260-1.}

St. Bonaventure drew a close connection between these two events by describing the stigmata as a manifest sign of God’s approval of the Franciscan Rule.\footnote{“The means by which the Holy Spirit has wonderfully confirmed the profession or poverty ought not to be passed over in silence. For…at the same time in which blessed Francis sought the confirmation of his Order from the pope, the stigmata of Our Lord were impressed on him. This confirmation was not from a man but from God. a man can be deceived, and so not only did man set his seal of lead on the confirmation of this religious Rule in which is the profession of the highest poverty, but the Lord himself wished to apply his own seal of lead to the confirmation of poverty by impressing the stigmata of His passion on blessed Francis.” Bonaventure, \textit{Legenda Maior}, in Brooke, \textit{Image of St. Francis}, 237. For a discussion of how Franciscan cycles often created a visual connection between the stigmatization and the confirmation of the Franciscan Rule, see Donadieu-Rigaut, \textit{Penser en images}, 181-93.}

As a lawgiver and mystic, St. Francis was venerated as a new Moses, and these Italian hilltops became the equivalents of Mt. Sinai for the Franciscan Order.\footnote{On St. Francis as “another Moses” in early Franciscan writings, see \textit{Francis of Assisi: Early Documents}, vol.3, ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A., Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (New York: New City Press, 2001), 101, 111, 128-9, 416-7, 546, 548, 567, 717, 815.} A rare image of Francis bestowing the Rule appears in a fifteenth-century manuscript (fig.109), which
shows the saint standing between mountainous slopes.\textsuperscript{422} A more commonly depicted subject, the stigmatization of St. Francis, appears in the Church of San Francesco in Montefalco (1452; figs. 110-11) as part of another central Italian cycle by Benozzo Gozzoli.\textsuperscript{423} The accompanying inscription identifies the rocky outcropping as \textit{MO(NTE) ALVERNE}. Augustine’s bestowal of the Rule on Monte Pisano fits neatly into this hagiographic tradition. In his \textit{Defensorium Ordinis Sancti Augustini}, Ambrosius de Cora acknowledges the appeal of the mountain as an isolated locale where Augustine might have bestowed the Rule.\textsuperscript{424}

In Gozzoli’s frescoes in Montefalco and San Gimignano, the rising peaks of Mount La Verna and Monte Pisano parallel the ascending organization of each cycle and reinforce the metaphor of spiritual ascent. Like the \textit{Stigmatization of Francis} in Montefalco, Augustine’s \textit{Bestowal of the Rule} appears on the upper right wall and illustrates a culmination point in the narrative. Ahl has observed that Tuscan mural painters of this era rarely organized their fresco cycles in ascending registers.\textsuperscript{425} In the few known examples of this design, the arrangement symbolizes the protagonist’s

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\textsuperscript{422} \textit{Franceshina di Perugia}, Ms. 1238, \textit{Bibliothèque communale de Pérouse}, 1474, fol. 1v.
\textsuperscript{424} Ambrosius follows Jordan’s argument that Augustine bestowed more than one rule. He assigns the first one to the hermits on Monte Pisano. For the second Rule, he proposes several possibilities: the monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity at Centumcellis, or in Africa, either at the first monastery where he settled or “in a certain high mountain two thousand paces distance from that place, to which Augustine went to escape the hectic life of those seeking him out.” Trans.Saak, \textit{Creating Augustine}, 186.
\textsuperscript{425} Ahl, “Benozzo Gozzoli’s Frescoes,” 40-41.
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spiritual transformation. For Augustine’s life, in particular, the mountain setting provided a fitting allegory, given his dramatic journey from sinner to saint and the pervasive metaphor of ascent in his writings.

The metaphorical significance of Monte Pisano becomes clearer when the viewer considers the symbolism of Gozzoli’s landscapes in some of his other images of Augustine’s peregrinations. Of the nine frescoes that appear before his conversion, four scenes depict Augustine in the midst of travel. Throughout the Confessions and his other writings, Augustine employs the metaphor of physical pilgrimage to describe the spiritual journey of the soul. The unbeliever (homo erro) is likened to an aimless wanderer who strays from the Way, while the Christian (homo viator) is a homeward-bound pilgrim moving along the Way towards the heavenly fatherland. Augustine begins his memoir by addressing God, “Our heart is restless, until it rests in you.” The three registers on the right wall of Gozzoli’s chapel (fig.81) illustrate three stages in the transformation of Augustine’s soul. In the lowest register, the Departure from Rome (fig.86) depicts Augustine riding through a valley on horseback, dressed in worldly garb and escorted by extravagant company. The landscape shows several recognizable monuments of ancient and Christian Rome, including the Pantheon, the Basilica of St. Peter, and the Castel Sant’Angelo. Looking back on the futility of his life before his

426 Ibid.
427 The travelling episodes include: Journey to Rome, Arrival in Ostia, Departure from Rome, and Arrival in Milan.
430 Augustine, Confessions, 1.1.
conversion, Augustine recalled, “My stiff neck took me further and further away from you. I loved my own ways, not yours. The liberty I loved was merely that of a runaway.”

In the middle register, Augustine embarks on the Christian walk, indicated by a mountainous path that gives physical form to a laborious but rewarding ascent. It is faith, rather than reason, that is needed for the pilgrim to continue on the Way without an end in sight, a lesson learned by Augustine in the Parable of the Trinity. Augustine’s return to Africa in the far right of the adjacent fresco symbolizes the return pilgrimage of the soul. Here, he departs with book in hand, accompanied by his eremitic companions.

In the top register, Augustine rests in God as his soul returns to the heavenly homeland in the Death of St. Augustine (fig. 92). In contrast to the left-to-right movement of the episodes below, which emphasizes the transitory nature of earthly time, the centralized composition of the Death of St. Augustine alludes to the eternity of the heavenly homeland. The upward movement of the registers reinforces the essential purpose of the Augustinian peregrinatus – the soul’s return to heaven.

Petrarch also drew inspiration from the rich symbolism of the mountain in a famous, self-reflective account of his own spiritual transformation, which he associates with Augustine’s autobiographical and theological writings. He expounds on the connection between the Augustinian ascent of the soul and the image of a mountain in a letter addressed to Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro, an Augustinian friar who gave

\[\text{Ibid., 3.3.5.}\]
\[\text{Ahl has discussed the compositional layout of the frescoes (“Benozzo Gozzoli,” 363-69).}\]
Petrarch his copy of *Confessions*. Petrarch shared a close connection to several Augustinian communities in Italy. In Pavia he spent several summers in the friary of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro; in Florence he frequented the *studium generale* at Santo Spirito; in Padua he formed an intimate friendship with the friars at the Eremitani, particularly Bonaventura Badoer da Peraga, who delivered Petrarch’s funeral oration; and in Arqua he retired to an Augustinian house to spend the last years of his life. Petrarch revered Augustine as a model of Christian learning, and composed his *Secretum* (1347-53) as an imaginary dialogue with the saint about his own faith.

In his letter now known as *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, Petrarch turns to Augustine’s *Confessions* to learn the value of inward transformation as he climbs a mountain. Petrarch describes his mountainous ascent as an allegory for “the way toward the blessed life.” While his brother takes the most direct route up the mountain, Petrarch takes winding detours, a symbolic detail that indicates his erring ways. When he finally reaches the summit, Petrarch’s first thoughts are directed to the physical view and his own bodily exertion. He then turns his mind to a book that he always carries with him, Augustine’s *Confessions*, “now raising my soul, as I had done my body, to higher planes.” He opens to the tenth book and fixes his eyes this passage: “And men go about to wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide

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437 Petrarch, *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*. 
sweep of rivers, and the circuit of the ocean, and the revolution of the stars, but
themselves they consider not.” These words make him feel ashamed for having
enjoyed the earthly views, as he then “turned my inward eye upon myself.”

Petrarch’s letter, which has long been interpreted as the embodiment of a new
Renaissance humanist way of thinking, elucidates the connections between the physical
form of the mountain, the inward ascent of the soul, and Augustine’s Confessions.
Donald Beecher has suggested that the ascent motif may have originated specifically in
Augustine’s own symbolism of the mountain as “an object of conquest through labor.”
It is at the summit of the mountain, metaphorical for the moment of realization, that
Petrarch reads the Confessions and learns the value of spiritual sight as he meditates on
the progress of his soul.

In addition to providing a literary metaphor for Augustinian theology, the
mountain functioned as a visual metaphor as well. The seal of the hermitage at Lecceto
shows three mountains, representing the ascent of the soul, and a group of ilex trees, a
variety of oak from which Lecceto received its name. As a feature of the painted and
sculpted decoration of the hermitage, this seal (fig. 112) illustrates a symbolic (as well as
geographic) aspect of the Tuscan landscape that signifies an Augustinian ideal, while the
ilex trees represent the distinctive feature of the hermitage that made it suitable for the
life of the friar-humanist.

438 Ibid.
439 Specifically, in De beata vita I.3. Donald Beecher, “Petrarch’s ‘Conversion’ on Mont Ventoux and the
Patterns of Religious Experience,” Renaissance and Reformation XXVIII, 3 (2004), 71-72, n. 17.
440 Martin, “Giles of Viterbo,” 239.
441 The mountain and ilex tree remained important elements in later images of and from Lecceto. An image
of the hermitage from around 1500 (Ms. 1156, Biblioteca Angelica, Rome) shows mountainous peaks in
the background and a ring of ilex trees surrounding the hermitage. A seventeenth-century fresco decorating
Tuscany: Past and Present

In contrast to the mid-fourteenth-century sources, the later generations of Tuscan Hermits wrote about the sites associated with Augustine’s visit as if they were real places that formed part of their immediate surroundings. But, it was not merely the history of eremitism that made these sites holy, but the natural features of the Tuscan land, full of isolated and secluded places suitable for communal and solitary activities. Giles of Viterbo describes how the natural beauty of Lecceto, where he lived as an Observant friar, was evidence of its holiness. He writes: “Whenever I am forced to withdraw from holy Lecceto…, I seem to leave my heart affixed to the branches of the sacred ilex trees…. Our mountain, insignificant hill, has a certain sanctity, so that by the very nature of a peculiar tree, it promises ample fruit of the holiest people.” For Giles, the natural features specific to Lecceto, including the ilex trees, helped to make both the place and those who dwelled there holy. He goes on to compare a branch of an ilex tree to the charitable nature of love. In his treatise, addressed to a young friar Ludovico who had just committed to the Observant life, Biglia also evokes the appeal of Lecceto’s dense web of ilex trees, for providing a quiet setting for leisure and study.

the sacristy at Lecceto depicts the seal at the center of an image of the Crucified Christ. The cross is perched on the highest peak, and the branches of ilex trees intertwine around roundels of Leccetani Beati, forming a literal “tree” of the Augustinian Order at Lecceto. Images are reproduced in Alessi et al., Lecceto, 62, 63.

442 Giles of Viterbo, De Ilicetana Familia, 248: “Quotiens ego a sanctis ilicibus concedere iubeor, etsi nihil obedientis lucrosius religioso homini, videor tamen deficient paene anima ramis sacrarum arborum cor fabrasque affixas relinquere. Habet noster mons ille, aut tumulus optius perexiguus, omen quoddam numenque sanctimoniae, ut vel ipse peculiaris arboris ingenio frugem amplissimam sanctissimorum virorum polliceatur.” As George Radan observes, the Thebaid fresco in the Lecceto cloister illustrates ilex trees among traditional Egyptian flora. George Radan, “Lecceto: new light on the largest Augustinian fresco cycle in Italy,” in The Middle Ages: one or many?, ed. Louis Roberts (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies; State University of New York at Binghamham, 1994), 75.

443 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 217.
The sacred exemplars who had once dwelled in the Tuscan countryside also enhanced the region’s holiness. In particular, Augustine’s presence in Tuscany added to the unique sanctity of the region and those living there. Although Jordan of Quedlinburg does not display the same enthusiasm for the Tuscan region as Biglia and Giles, a passage from the *Liber Vitasfratrum* reveals his belief in the power of Augustine’s presence to make a person and place holier. Jordan quotes Augustine in a sermon delivered to a group of brothers in the wilderness: “the place does not make us holy, but a good life will sanctify both the place and ourselves.”444 As expressed in the cloister decoration, a place like Lecceto had become infused with sanctity, thanks, above all, to the long list of saints who had frequented this hermitage.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Hermits wrote with a certain familiarity about the Tuscan sites visited by Augustine, which suggests their active engagement with the natural landscape around them. Their remarks imply that these places were not only viewed as symbolic, but as part of their everyday environment, which many of them had quite possibly visited, with the hope of following in the footsteps of the saint, who had once walked the same paths. Indeed, some of the friars at Lecceto, such as William of Flete, had retreated to the caves and forest hermitages around the main complex for solitude and prayer. In his description of Monte Pisano, Andrea Biglia describes the peak of the mountain as high, suggesting that he had seen the site for himself (or at the very least, had heard or read about the locale).445 A passage from 1582 by the prior general of the Hermits, Michaelis Angelus Carolis, is also enlightening for

445 Biglia, *De Ordinis nostri forma*, 202: “Cacumen prealtum est.”
how the author sets Augustine’s life into the familiar Tuscan terrain. The prior interpolated the *vita* of St. William of Malavalle (1157-81), the founder of the Williamites, adding specific references to the Hermits’ original foundation site. Carolis describes how William journeyed to Tuscany to retrace the places visited by Augustine. Dressed in the black habit and the eremitic belt, William traveled from Monte Pisano to Centumcellis, where Augustine wrote *De Trinitate*, and finally to the Tyrrhenian sea, where the saint saw the vision of the Christ child. Here, Carolis reveals the ability of sacred topography to inspire emulation of Augustine’s *peregrinatus*.

Gozzoli’s fresco of the founding (fig.91) embodies many of these strands of thought. First, his image reveals the desire of Tuscan friars to situate Augustine’s eremitic and scholarly experiences in their own familiar surroundings. While art historians have focused on the mountainous setting illustrated in Gozzoli’s three-part fresco, the settings may be interpreted as a representation of multiple facets of the Tuscan landscape – forest, mountain, cave, and seashore. The natural topographical features represented recall the very names of many Tuscan houses, both real and mythical, which evoke the geographic landscape that made Tuscany suitable for the eremitic lifestyle – Monte Pisano (“Pisan mountain”), Centumcellis (“one hundred cells”), San Giorgio della Spelonca (“cave”), Lecceto (“oak trees”), Santa Maria di Lupacavo (“hollow rock”), San

447 Brunori, “L’Eremo della Trinita ‘de Centumcellis’,” 245: “…in monte Pisano, ubi compertum est Beatum Augustinum primam trium edidisse regulam. […] Sitibundus ad centum cellas et se contulit… construerat, dedicaverat, trinitati et habitaverat, cui tituli usque hodie, cultus sanctae Trinitatis a conditore inditus est… Eo quod librum de Trinitate didicitur peregisse, et emendasse, ibidem si quidem inceptum.”
Leonardo al Lago ("lake"), and Montespecchio ("mirror mountain," referring to the reflection of the streams). Gozzoli’s fresco also attests to the power of the past to inspire the present. Gozzoli showcases the Tuscan landscape as the most suitable place for the eremitic activity of the past and the conventual life of the present. Strambi gathers with his community of friars in the foreground, surrounded by the Tuscan sites associated with Augustine’s eremitic dwelling, theological meditations, and mystical vision.

Writings by Andrea Biglia and Giles of Viterbo illustrate the extent to which Observant friars privileged central Italy in general as a place above other Italian regions, and by extension the Tuscan friars above other members of the Order. Andrea Biglia likens the various orders that serve God under the patronage of Augustine to the many tribes of different nationalities who fought in the army of Hannibal. This passage seems to allude to the various geographic origins of those who followed the Rule of Augustine – the Hermits, founded in Italy, the Dominicans, established in Toulouse, and the Canons, whose origins Biglia locates in France. In another excerpt, Biglia describes the Tuscan brothers as the truest upholders of the Augustinian life. He also proclaims that the Order did not lose its identity after the Great Union when other religious communities were added to them, just as the Latins remained Latins after Aeneas’ Trojans were added to their number. He goes on to praise Tuscany for always being the most suitable region above other areas of Italy because it is alive with the devout. Biglia’s overt

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449 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 209: “Amplum enim [est] huius atris pallium, non aliter quam sub Hannibalis signis itidem Poeni diversissimarum gentium viri militabant.”

450 Ibid., 204: “Unum tamen perpetuum mansit in omni religione Augustini patris nomen, sub quo universi deinceps regerentur: tum quicunque ad ordinem subirent, eandem regulam profiterentur, ut ferme quondam Latini accessione Troianorum aucti tamen Latini stetere.”

451 Ibid., 201: “Quando quidem iter illi per Tusciam erat, que regio et semper fuit cerimoniis aptissima et eo Maxine tempore preter ceteras Italie nations devotoriiis flagrabant....”
A geographic analogy recalls the comparison to Noah’s sons made in the *Initium*.

However, Biglia focuses on a specifically Tuscan identity, rather than an Order-wide identity.

For Giles of Viterbo, the centrality of Tuscany in Augustinian history coincided seamlessly with his understanding of secular history, which centered on the ancient Etruscans. In his historical treatise, the *Historia viginti seculorum*, written between 1513 and 1518, Giles emphasizes Augustine’s choice of Tuscany as the Order’s foundation site. He writes that Augustine chose to “establish the Hermits not in Africa, not in Asia, but in Etruria on Monte Pisano.” In Giles’ vision of the past, Etruria lies at the heart of universal history, both Christian and pre-Christian. Like Biglia, he argues that the historical tradition of eremitism in Tuscany elevated the region above other places in the world. He contrasts the fame and flourishing of the eremitical tradition in Tuscany to the rise of false gods in the East. For Biglia and Giles, Tuscany was the only place that Augustine could have established the Order, and the optimal place for following the Augustinian way of life.

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454 Voci, *Petrarca e la vita religiosa*, 153: “…elegitque non Africam, non Asiam, sed… Ethruriam… atque inibi in monte Pisano… eremitas statuit....”
455 Giles likely included his native city of Viterbo and the rest of Lazio as part of his conception of Etruria. Amanda Collins discusses the centrality of the Etruscans in Giles’ *Historia*, but does not mention Giles’ religious works or how Augustine factors in to this history. Collins, “The Etruscans in the Renaissance,” 107-37.
456 Giles of Viterbo, *De Ilcetana Familia*, 249-50: “Anno tandem sexcentesimo, cum immanis in Oriente exoritur bestia et feralis factio Maumet, omnis Hetruscorum historia eremum sacrariumque vestrum floruisse ac iam celebrem fuisse testatur.”
The Topography of Religious Founding Narratives

As André Vauchez has noted, “Few historical figures have been as associated with a place, and more precisely, with a city than Francis of Assisi.” The Franciscan Order revered Assisi as the birth and burial place of St. Francis. Sites scattered around Assisi evoked specific moments from Francis’ life, such as the miracle of the crucifix at San Damiano and the establishment of the Order at the chapel of Portiuncula. St. Bonaventure (1221-74) reported visiting Mount La Verna, “seeking a place of quiet” in imitation of St. Francis. The Basilica of San Francesco, begun in 1228 just after Francis’ death, became the motherhouse of the Franciscan Order and one of Europe’s most popular pilgrimage destinations. Assisi remained synonymous with the Franciscan Order centuries after the passing of its founder. In fact, no other religious order was permitted to settle in the Umbrian town.

The most famous monumental fresco cycle of Francis’ life, painted along the nave walls in the upper basilica of San Francesco in Assisi (c.1300), includes recognizable architectural settings and landscapes, remarkable for their specificity and detail. The cycle depicts the crumbling little church of San Damiano, where Francis heard the voice

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458 For more on the tomb of St. Francis, see Donal Cooper, “‘In loco tutissimo et firmisso’: The Tomb of St. Francis in History, Legend, and Art,” in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William R. Cook (Leiden), 1-37.
459 In the prologue to the *Soul’s Journey to God*, Bonaventure explains that he received the inspiration for writing the treatise while meditating on Mount La Verna. Bonaventure, *Bonaventure – The Soul’s Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewer Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 54.
of God, and the valley of Spoleto, where he preached to the birds. These landscapes highlight Francis’ identity as an itinerant preacher, not confined by the walls of the monastery but eager to preach the Gospel far and wide. Their settings guide the viewer through the region of Umbria, appealing to the immediate surroundings of the local friar and the travelling pilgrim. The Franciscans emphasized the “modernness” of Francis’ life by depicting anachronistic architectural settings that appear as they looked at the moment of the cycle’s execution. Placed below an Old Testament cycle and a cycle of Christ’s life, the Legend of St. Francis casts Assisi as a new Jerusalem – a popular and more accessible pilgrimage destination honoring the alter Christus.

During the fifteenth century, Franciscan Observants demonstrated their connection to St. Francis by settling in places that recalled the primitive dwellings of St. Francis. Their first house, San Bartolomeo di Brogliano, was nestled in the Umbrian mountains, where Francis had established the Order. Many later settlements opted for isolated hilltops over urban centers. Their remote dwelling places exuded a sense of eremitic asceticism and distinguished the Observants from the city-dwelling Conventuals. Proximity to the places where Francis had prayed and worshipped, or simulation of these locales, inspired the friars to emulate the example of their founder saint. Observant friars were encouraged to pray outside following the example of St. Francis. The

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462 Kennedy, “In Search of Authenticity,” 78-89.
463 In the late fifteenth-century, the Observant friars applied this theory to the creation of the Sacri Monte, a group of chapels located in the northern Italian mountains that replicated the sites associated with the life of Christ. Established in 1486 by friar Bernardo Caimi, the Sacro Monte di Varallo simulated a pilgrimage to Jerusalem by reproducing events from Christ’s life with wooden and terracotta sculpture. In 1583, the Franciscans created a Sacro Monte devoted to the life of St. Francis on the shore of Lake Orta. See Cynthia Ho, “The Visual Piety of the Sacro Monte di Orta,” in Finding St. Francis in Literature and Art, edited by Cynthia Ho, Beth Mulvaney, and John K. Downey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 109-28.
Franciscan Observants even established a community at La Verna, where they embarked on a daily procession to the site where Francis had received the stigmata.\textsuperscript{464}

Since its establishment by St. Dominic in 1218, the convent of San Domenico in Bologna has held pride of place as the oldest and most prestigious Dominican house in Italy.\textsuperscript{465} The elite \textit{studium generale} in Bologna attracted distinguished theologians and made the city the Order’s leading intellectual center, along with Paris.\textsuperscript{466} The church of San Domenico in Bologna housed an elaborate thirteenth-century tomb monument containing the relics of St. Dominic, who had spent his last few years in the Bolognese convent.\textsuperscript{467} Three years after establishing the first Dominican house in Toulouse in 1215, St. Dominic arrived in Bologna, where he remained until his death in 1221. Like Assisi, Bologna was associated with the first generation of friars, having been the location of the Order’s first two general chapters.

Despite the historical importance of Bologna, artistic iconography associated the founding of the Dominican Order with Rome. The Dominican founding legend was not rooted in the place of the first settlement, like the Augustinian and Carmelite ones, but in Rome, the seat of papal power. The three episodes that commonly illustrate the Order’s foundation are all located in Rome and can be found on the sculpted reliefs decorating the Arca (fig.113): Pope Innocent III’s dream of the Lateran Basilica, papal confirmation by

\textsuperscript{464} Kennedy, “In Search of Authenticity,” 78-89.
\textsuperscript{465} On the importance of Bologna in the history of the Dominican Order, see Cannon, \textit{Religious Poverty}, 340.
\textsuperscript{466} For more on the Order’s Bolognese \textit{studium} and its connection to the Universit of Bologna, see Giovanni Bertuzzi, ed., \textit{L’origine dell’Ordine dei Predicatori e l’Università di Bologna} (Bologna: Edizioni Studi Domenicano, 2006).
Pope Honorius III, and Dominic’s vision of Peter and Paul in St. Peter’s Basilica.\textsuperscript{468} In his \textit{Legenda} (c.1247), Constantino d’Orvieto recounts Pope Innocent III’s dream of St. Dominic, holding up the Lateran Basilica.\textsuperscript{469} The same \textit{Legenda} describes Dominic’s vision of Sts. Peter and Paul in St. Peter’s Basilica, where he was praying for the expansion of his Order.\textsuperscript{470} The two saints presented Dominic with a staff and book, saying, “Go and preach, for you have been chosen by God for this ministry.” This association of the Dominican founding with Rome, rather than a particular friary, attests to the itinerant character of the mendicant founder, who was not attached to a single house like members of monastic orders.

\textbf{The Carmelites and Mt. Carmel}

A comparison between the Carmelites and Hermits is particularly interesting considering the similarities between their medieval histories and founding myths.\textsuperscript{471} Like the Augustinian Hermits, the Carmelites abandoned their eremitic roots to become a mendicant order in the thirteenth century. Historical documents attest to the presence of Western hermits in the Holy Land in the eleventh century, following the First Crusade.\textsuperscript{472}

\textsuperscript{468} Donadieu-Rigaut, \textit{Penser en images}, 172-80.
\textsuperscript{469} This legend also appears in Franciscan hagiography, in the \textit{Legend of the Three Companions} (1246), the \textit{Second Life} by Thomas of Celano (c.1245), and Bonventure’s \textit{Legenda} (c.1260). The image on the legend borrows from the fresco of St. Francis holding up the Lateran in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (c.1265). R. F. Bennett, \textit{The Early Dominicans}, 43, n.2; Cannon, \textit{Dominican Patronage}, 180, n.35.
\textsuperscript{471} On the similarities between the medieval histories of the Carmelites and Hermits, see E. Boaga, “Carmelitani e Agostiniani: sviluppo paritetico,” \textit{Analecta Augustiniana} 70 (2007): 99-118.
Sometime between 1206 and 1214, Albert of Vercelli, Patriarch of Jerusalem, gave a Rule to the community of hermits, which was approved by Honorious in 1226. In the face of Saracen invasions, the Carmelites began to spread westward beyond the Holy Land, and by the time of the fall of Acre in 1291, Carmelite presence in the Holy Land had disappeared. In the process of this Western migration, the Carmelites were transformed from lay hermits to itinerant mendicant friars. The 1247 papal bull *Quae honorem conditoris* allowed the Carmelites to amend the Rule of Albert, which had required habitation in solitary places. The Order founded several settlements in Italy between the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth. By the end of the fourteenth century, the Carmelites had established houses in most northern and central Italian towns.

Both the Carmelites and Hermits faced the threat of abolition at the Second Council of Lyons of 1274, which left them with the need to prove their historical legitimacy. As the Carmelite founding myth developed at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the narrative focused on the locus from which the Order acquired its name – the biblical mountain called Mt. Carmel. The earliest mention of the Order’s origins survives in the preamble to the 1281 Constitutions, known as the *Rubrica*

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474 This bull added the vows of chastity and renunciation of property, required members to eat together in the refectory and to recite the canonical hours together, and allowed foundations “in solitary places, where you are given a site that is suitable and convenient for the observance proper to your Order.” “The Carmelite Rule,” in *The Carmelite Tradition*, ed. Steven Payne, O.C.D. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 5-9. By 1326 the Carmelite Order had acquired mendicant rights to preach, hear confessions, and bury laymen. Cannon, “Pietro Lorenzetti,” 22, n.42.
475 For a list of the first foundations in Italy, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 26.
This passage traces the Carmelites back to Elijah, the earliest eremitic model, and Elisha, who had dwelled on Mt. Carmel. According to this account, Old and New Testament successors of the prophets continued to live on Carmel near the fountain of Elijah, and received a Rule from Albert of Vercelli, Patriarch of Jerusalem, during the thirteenth century. The anonymous *De inceptione* (1320) added that after the Incarnation of Christ, the followers of Elijah built a church dedicated to the Virgin near the fountain. In the 1320s, John Baconthorpe went so far as to claim that the Carmelites had honored the cult of the Virgin since the time of the Old Testament. John of Cheminot (1337) explained that the Order’s striped habit had originated with Elijah. With Elijah as their founder, the Carmelites predated every religious order, and even Christianity itself.

Pietro Lorenzetti’s altarpiece (1328-9) for the high altar of the Carmelite church in Siena is the best surviving *trecento* illustration of the Carmelite legend. The predella shows five scenes from the Order’s founding history. Beginning on the left, the Carmelite

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478 *Rubrica prima*, 40. The biblical Book of Kings records Elijah’s victory over the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.
successors of Elijah are foretold in a dream to Elijah’s father, Sobac (fig.114). In the second panel a group of Carmelites gather near the fountain of Elijah, where an oratory stands (fig.115). The central and largest portion of the predella depicts Albert of Vercelli presenting the Rule to a group of kneeling Carmelites, dressed in the pallium barratum, the original striped habit associated with Elijah (fig.116). The two scenes on the left show the papal confirmation of the Rule and habit (figs.117-18).

The scenes in Lorenzetti’s predella move chronologically from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and geographically from the East to the West. The first three scenes, including the large central panel, show the Eastern roots of the Order, while the final two scenes take place in papal Rome, though the presence of Eastern monks attests to the Order’s roots. At the midpoint of the predella stands Mt. Carmel, depicted as a rocky landscape, dotted with lions and hermits. The site is represented here as both the place of the earliest foundation and the location of the Order’s written approval of the Rule.

Just as the Hermits associated Tuscany with the Desert Fathers, many Carmelite writers embraced Mt. Carmel as the heart of monastic history by associating the site with well-known monastic figures. The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Carmelites propagated the belief that St. Basil had been a Carmelite in the Holy Land before becoming Bishop of Caesarea, and wrote his Rule based on the one established for the Carmelites by John of Jerusalem. In his Chronica brevis (1340/60), William of

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483 Donadieu-Rigaut identifies the witnesses as knights of the Order of Hospitallers of St. John, wearing black dress with white cross, who came from the Holy Land to confirm the Carmelites’ presence on Mt. Carmel. *Penser en Images*, 158-172.
484 Jotischky, *Carmelites and Antiquity*, 113. On Basil as a hermit, see ibid., 227-33.
Coventry credited Bernard of Clairvaux with the dedication of two works on the monastic life to the Carmelite monks in Cyprus upon his return from the Second Crusade.\footnote{Ibid., 128.}

For the fourteenth-century Carmelites, their birthplace was not a familiar, nearby site. As Frances Andrews has noted, fourteenth-century additions to the Constitutions described the location of Mt. Carmel as “not far from Acre,” suggesting that some friars might not have been familiar with the site by this time.\footnote{Andrews, The Other Friars, 57.} With the Carmelites’ diminishing presence in the Holy Land at the end of the thirteenth century, Mt. Carmel took a more symbolic significance for the Order.\footnote{Ibid., 23.} The Constitutions of 1294 granted special status to the prior of the Holy Land by allowing him to fill in for the prior general when he was absent “out of reverence for the sweetness of Carmel which is the principal locus of our religion.”\footnote{Ibid.} In addition, the Order’s official liturgy was altered so that it more closely followed the ordinal used by the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.\footnote{Cannon, “Pietro Lorenzetti,” 27.} The Carmelite Order also used visual imagery to harken back to their ancient roots. Many thirteenth-century Carmelite churches in Italy displayed on their high altars images of the Virgin believed to come from the Holy Land.\footnote{Andrews, The Other Friars, 55; Gardner von Teuffel, “Masaccio and the Pisa Altarpiece,” 37.}

As early as the thirteenth century, Mt. Carmel was invoked as a powerful symbol of the contemplative life. According to the Carmelite Nicholas of Narbonne, the original foundation on Mt. Carmel codified the contemplative purpose of the Order, and provided a model for the type of place where the Carmelite friars should dwell. In his attack on the
Order’s mendicant transformation, titled *Ignea Sagitta* (1270), Nicholas discusses the importance of mountains as divine loca and laments the Carmelites’ mendicant shift toward urban dwellings, which he considers to be contrary to their history. Nicholas believed that the mountains not only offered seclusion from the distractions of city life, but served as a metaphor for the brethren’s spiritual state. As he aptly puts it, “Why did you come down from the mountain…? And why indeed have you not the courage to ascend once more?”

The fourteenth-century Carmelites continued to revere Mt. Carmel for its sacred history and more generally, in terms of the biblical holiness of mountains. Jean de Cheminot argued that the “holiness of a place often draws out the devotion of souls.” He adds that John the Baptist lived on the River Jordan because of its holiness in connection with Elijah and Elisha. Jean de Cheminot recalls a number of biblical episodes that occurred on Mt. Carmel, while Baconthorpe observed that God showed many favors on other mountains in the Holy Land, such as Sinai, Calvary, Olivet, and Sion.

In addition to its Old Testament significance, Mt. Carmel became a symbol of the Order’s special devotion to its patron saint, the Virgin Mary. The Order placed great emphasis on its official title, *fratres beate Marie de Monte Carmelo*, which referenced both its origin site and its “spiritual mother,” the Virgin. In his *Laus Religionis Carmelitanae*, the friar John Baconthorpe elaborates on the physical characteristics of Mount Carmel that make it a suitable comparison to the Virgin Mary – beautiful

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splendor, contemplation, sweet fragrance, preeminence of place, delight of place, and abundance of fountain. In this metaphor for the Virgin’s superiority and grandeur, Carmel stands out against other lower mounts and flows with fountain waters, just as the Virgin stands above others and flows with the living waters of Christ. Baconthorpe even considers several (sometimes fanciful) etymologies of the word “Carmel,” connecting them to characteristics of the Virgin.

While the Carmelite authors agreed on the importance of Mt. Carmel in the ancient history of the Order, their accounts of the Order’s migration westward tended to reflect the regional preferences of both author and audience. For example, the Frenchmen Jean de Venette and Jean de Cheminot privilege France, and in particular Paris, as the geographic center of modern Carmel history. Contrary to historical evidence, these authors credit King Louis IX with bringing the Carmelites to Europe. On the other hand, the Englishman William of Coventry’s De adventu records that two English knights were responsible for the spread of the Carmelites into England.

There are several points of contact between the Carmelite and Augustinian literary traditions. For each group, the place of origin provided the connecting link between the Order and its founder. Like Tuscany, Mt. Carmel was deemed holy because of the devout men who dwelled there and the physical features that made it suitable for eremitism. Also like Tuscany, it was believed that the place itself had the power to lead people to live a holier life. While the Augustinian Observants celebrated the physical

496 Ibid. Elsewhere Baconthorpe goes so far as to argue that the Carmelite Rule illustrated the life of Mary.
498 Jotischky, Carmelites and Antiquity, 131.
beauty of the Tuscan landscape, the Carmelites were forced to conjure up the natural beauty of Mt. Carmel with evocative descriptions that created a mental imagery of the site. The textual traditions of both Orders also reveal the impact of regional preferences – accounts of the Carmelites’ more recent history catered to the regional origins of the authors, just as Tuscan friars located the ancient history of the hermits in their homeland.

Traditionally, mendicant hagiography has been associated with mobility, in contrast to monastic hagiography, which places greater emphasis on particular places, such as the location of holy relics or specific foundations.\(^{499}\) For example, hagiographic accounts of St. Benedict focus on the saint’s experiences at the foundations at Subiaco and Monte Cassino. On the contrary, late medieval \textit{vitae} of St. Francis, though centered in Umbria, trace the saint’s travels throughout Italy and beyond. Gerard of Frachet’s Dominican \textit{Vitas Fratrum} (1255-60), which records the lives of St. Dominic and his early followers, makes little mention of specific friaries. Artistic cycles of monastic and mendicant founders reflect these respective traditions. In late medieval and Renaissance cycles of St. Benedict, most of the episodes take place in Subiaco and Monte Cassino. In Florence, Spinello Aretino’s frescoes in the sacristy of San Miniato al Monte (c.1387, fig.119) and the cycle in the Badia cloister (c.1430s) both show Benedict present at the actual building of the monastery at Monte Cassino. Meanwhile, cycles of Sts. Francis and

\(^{499}\) Jotischky has pointed out this principle difference between monastic hagiography and mendicant narratives, which resemble the \textit{vitae} of desert saints. Jotischky, \textit{Carmelites and Antiquity}, 286. For the hagiography of early medieval desert saints, see Alison Goddard Elliott, \textit{Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints} (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1987).
Dominic represent their founding event by showcasing the papal confirmation of their Rules, rather the establishment of the first mendicant house.\footnote{For a discussion of the iconographic development of the Bestowal and Confirmation of the Rule, see Donadieu-Rigaut, \textit{Penser en images}, 126-204.}

The Carmelites and Augustinians departed from this mendicant tradition in their insistent preoccupation with their original foundations. Faced with a pressing need to defend their historical legitimacy, these two more recent mendicant orders emphasized the antiquity of their early foundations. St. Augustine’s life was refashioned to share the itinerant quality of Franciscan and Dominican hagiography. Like Francis and Dominic, he experienced a miraculous vision that set him off on his true religious mission to establish houses in Tuscany and Africa.\footnote{While alone in a church, Dominic experienced a vision of Peter and Paul, who bestowed the apostolic staff and book, symbols of his mendicant mission. In the Miracle at San Damiano, divine command ordered Francis to rebuild the church and eventually leads to his establishment of the Franciscan way of life. The \textit{tolle lege} recalls these miraculous visions, in which divine intervention directs the saint along a divinely sanctioned path.} However, the Hermits adopted the monastic tradition of representing the saint’s bestowal of the rule, rather than papal confirmation of the rule. Guariento’s cycle in Padua is a rare example, in which the artist combines both the mendicant and monastic tradition.\footnote{Another potential example of the papal confirmation of Augustine’s Rule is the cloister cycle at Lecceto. Although the image is illegible today, Emilio Giorgio, who describes the frescoes as they looked to him in 1936, identifies the third fresco in the lower register as Innocent I surrounded by Augustine and his hermit followers. Giorgio incorrectly writes 1406 as the date of this confirmation, and one wonders if the pope represented was instead Innocent IV, who united the Tuscan Hermits in 1243. Emilio Giorgi, \textit{Notizie storico-artistiche dell’Eremo di Lecceto} (Montepulciano, 1936), cited in \textit{Iconografica Agostiniana}, vol.2, 429.} As Jordan of Quedlinburg points out, the fact that the Hermits did not receive papal approval until the thirteenth century proved that they had existed before the custom of confirming orders was established.\footnote{Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 108.}
Conclusion

It is remarkable that the founding event, a crucial moment in the Order’s history and an iconic image in religious iconography, was represented in textual and visual sources with so many conflicting variations. Andrea Biglia’s quote, cited at the beginning of this chapter, provides valuable insight into how the friars viewed the uncertainties and inconsistencies present in their ever-changing founding narrative. Biglia considered the ambiguity surrounding the Order’s earliest history to be proof of its ancient origins, rather than a threat to its authenticity.504 Jordan of Quedlinburg makes a similar point when he explains that Augustine’s contributions to the Order (as its founder, author of its Rule, and bestower of its habit) were forgotten over time because of the saint’s antiquity. For this reason, he argues, the thirteenth-century Church carried out everything Augustine had already done himself.505 The uncertainty of the Order’s origins, which were supposedly so ancient that no clear historical account even existed, allowed various members and communities to selectively craft a founding narrative that best suited their particular interests and desires. The sculpted Arca presented Pavia as a revered center of Augustinian devotion, while the cycles in Montalcino and San Gimignano feature Tuscany as the landscape for Augustine’s legacy. Rather than viewing the textual and visual sources as historically accurate or inaccurate, the modern scholar should appreciate the innovation of artists and authors as they strove to legitimize the present by connecting themselves to the past.

504 Biglia, De Ordinis nostri forma, 194: “Denique ipse hanc ambagem non obscuritatis nostre, sed vetustatis indicium esse puto; novarum enim rerum nota ac designata origo est, antiqua autem se queri volunt, nec tamen adhuc tam fixa est multarum rerum intentio, ut non titubent autores.”
CHAPTER 3

St. Augustine in the Cappella Maggiore

On a typical morning, a bell rang at three o’clock in the fifteenth-century convent of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano. The Augustinian friar awoke in his cell and put on his black habit over a white tunic. He then followed his brethren through the cloister and entered the choir from the north side of the church. He walked to the cappella maggiore, genuflected before the high altar, and then turned around to find his assigned choir stall. In this private area of the church, separated from the rest of the nave by a bisecting wall, the friars began singing the day’s first set of prayers, known as Matins. If he looked eastward, the friar would face the altar wall, where Benozzo Gozzoli’s fresco of St. Augustine might remind him of the saint’s communal ideal, which he has aspired to uphold (fig.120).

The choir of the church was the primary location for the communal worship of the Augustinian friars, who gathered in the east end of the church eight times per day for

507 As instructed in the Constitutiones, I.6: “Audito primo signo ad Matutinum, festinent surgere omnes Fratres, munientes se signo crucis et honeste atque composite Ecclesiam adeuntes, antequam ingrediantur aqua benedicta se aspargant, et ingressi inclinent se ante maius altare profunde et reverenter, ac postea vadant stare in locis suis ordinate.”
Mass and the recitation of the divine offices. This area of the church, known as the *ecclesia fratum* (“church of the friars”), was the most common location for narrative cycles of St. Augustine’s life, which appear most frequently in the *cappella maggiore*, the central apsidal chapel in the east end of the church. In this chapter, I provide the first examination of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century pictorial cycles of Augustine in relation to their location in the *cappella maggiore*, the function of the *ecclesia fratum*, and the visibility of the images to both friars and laymen. The immovable and monumental nature of fresco painting necessitates a contextual investigation of how these images relate to the function of the space that they decorate. Like the Franciscans and Dominicans, the Augustinians designed their churches to accommodate both the private liturgy of the friars and the gathering of large congregations of lay worshippers.

After reconstructing the architectural settings for these cycles, I will discuss the *ecclesia fratum* as the setting for the friars’ daily worship and significant monastic rites. I demonstrate how the cycles of St. Augustine in the *cappella maggiore* reminded friars of the Rule’s emphasis on the communal ideal and focused the friars’ attention on the exemplarity of their founder. On the contrary, the laity in the nave was presented with monumental images of the Crucifixion and Last Judgment, which served as devotional aids during the liturgical Mass. The location of Augustinian imagery speaks to the concerns and objectives of the Hermits, which sometimes differed from their fellow mendicants. In addition to a close viewing of the architectural surroundings, several textual sources inform my analysis: the Augustinian Constitutions, which detail the religious exercises that should take place in the *ecclesia fratum*; the Rule of Augustine and commentaries on the Rule, which discuss the dangerous and positive effects of
“looking” around in the church; and documentary records, which reconstruct the original physical appearance of individual churches and describe their actual use.

**Locating Cycles of St. Augustine**

Almost every fresco cycle of St. Augustine’s life commissioned by the Hermits between 1300 and 1465 is located in the eastern end of the church, specifically the *cappella maggiore*. The cycles in Rimini, Padua, Montalcino, Gubbio, and San Gimignano are found in the *cappella maggiore*, and the frescoes in Fabriano in the right apsidal chapel. Likewise, the fresco program in San Leonardo al Lago (c.1360-70), which features narrative images of St. Augustine, St. Leonard, and the Virgin, decorates the *cappella maggiore* of the church. The exception to this trend is the frescoes decorating the monastery cloister at Lecceto, one of several fifteenth-century Tuscan Observant houses that commissioned elaborate fresco decoration in their cloisters. Fresco cycles

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510 The painted cloister at Lecceto seems to be part of a local trend that began in the fourteenth century, with the houses of San Francesco and San Domenico in Siena. During the fifteenth century, an increasing number of cloisters were painted in Florence, including but not limited to Reformed houses of various orders: Santa Maria del Carmine of the Carmelites, the Benedictine abbey of the Badia, the Olivetan cloister of San Miniato al Monte, the Camaldolese priory of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Dominican Observant house of San Marco, and the Chiostro Verde at Santa Maria Novella. William Hood has discussed Fra Angelico’s frescoes in the cloister of San Marco in the context of these other cloister projects, but he does not mention the Lecceto frescoes. See William Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 123-45. Anne Leader has pointed out that the Observant Benedictines, in particular, preferred the cloister as a space for narrative programs. The cloister program in the Badia in Florence was the first of seven other cloister programs commissioned by
of the lives of Sts. Augustine and Nicholas of Tolentino also once decorated the second cloister in the monastery of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro.\(^{511}\)

In addition to narrative cycles, the Hermits developed an allegorical iconography that presented Augustine as the *maestro* of the order, accompanied by allegories of the seven virtues and liberal arts.\(^{512}\) In contrast to the aforementioned narrative cycles, these allegorical fresco programs are not strictly associated with any one location within the church or monastery. The frescoes by Giusto de Menabuoi (1370), which depict St. Augustine enthroned among Allegories of Virtues and Liberal Arts, decorate the Cortellieri chapel in the Church in the Eremitani in Padua.\(^{513}\) Dedicated to St. Augustine, the private chapel extends off the right side of the nave. A slightly later fresco program by Serafino de’Serafini (c.1378, fig.4) was originally installed on the entrance wall of the Church of Sant’Andrea in Ferrara.\(^{514}\) In the *cappella maggiore* of Sant’Agostino in Benedictine Observant communities. Leader, *Badia*, 4. For an architectural history of the Lecceto cloister, see Franchina, “Il convento di Lecceto: crescita di un organismo,” 117-78.


\(^{512}\) For more on the iconographic development of Augustine as *maestro* of the Order, see Hansen, *Das Bild des Ordenslehrers*.

\(^{513}\) Ibid., 42-55; Gill, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance*, 59-60; Simone, “Giusto e gli Eremitani,” 371-82.

Montalcino (1380–88), Bartolo di Fredi’s life includes an allegorical image of Augustine’s triumph as part of the narrative cycle of the saint.\textsuperscript{515}

Other religious orders that revered Augustine as a monastic exemplar and Doctor of the Church also commissioned narrative cycles of the saint for their churches. However, these cycles do not share the same general correlation with the \textit{cappella maggiore}, as did those in Augustinian churches. In the Dominican church of San Domenico in Bolzano, a cycle of Augustine’s life was part of an extensive decorative program covering the contra-facade and left nave wall (late 1350s-1361).\textsuperscript{516} Guariento’s lost cycle for the Dominican church of Sant’Agostino in Padua (before 1351) originally decorated the tombs of Ubertino and Jacopo II Carrara, located on the side walls of the \textit{cappella maggiore}.\textsuperscript{517} Another cycle of Augustine’s life once adorned the narthex of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan (1498), which belonged to Benedictine monks and Canons Regular. Narrative episodes from Augustine’s \textit{vita} also appear in the Cathedral of Orvieto, in the vaults of the presbytery (c.1370-80) and in the vaults of the Cappella del Corporale (1357-64).\textsuperscript{518} Allegorical images of the \textit{Triumph of St. Augustine} decorate the

\textsuperscript{515} Hansen, \textit{Das Bild des Ordenslehrers}, 78-88; Freuler, \textit{Bartolo di Fredi Cini}, 233-39; Pittiglio, \textit{Iconografia agostiniana}, vol.1, 335.


\textsuperscript{517} A fragment of a nude young man (now in the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck), presumably being baptized, has led scholars to believe that the fragment once formed part of a cycle depicting the titular saint. Murat, \textit{Guariento}, 128-9; Franco, “Guariento,” 338; Spiazzi, \textit{Giotto el il suo tempo}, 317-18. For a reconstruction of the tombs, see Zuleika Murat, “Le arche di Ubertino e Jacopo II da Carrara nel percorso artistico di Andriolo de’ Santi,” \textit{Journal of Visual Arts} 33 (2013): 185-200.

\textsuperscript{518} In the Cappella del Corporale, frescoed by Ugolino di Prete Ilario, St. Augustine’s vision of Christ appears in the vault, among other hagiographic episodes from the lives of Sts. Jerome, Basil, and Thomas Aquinas. Each episode relates to the Eucharistic sacrament and complements the frescoes of Christ’s life on the chapel’s walls. The frescoes in the presbytery vaults, also painted by Ugolino di Prete Ilario, depicts St. Augustine among the Doctors of the Church. Ugolino shows the saint writing \textit{De Trinitate} in his study, while in the lower right he reappears, kneeling before a vision of Christ. Cosma, \textit{Iconografia agostiniana}, vol.1, 225-28; Eraldo Rosatelli, \textit{La Cappella del Corporale nel Duomo di Orvieto} (Rome: Edizioni Nuova
sacristy of Siena Cathedral (1411) and the left apsidal chapel of San Francesco in Pistoia (1430).519

The correlation between the cappella maggiore and Augustinian cycles in Hermit churches corresponds to the common practice of dedicating churches to the founder saint. As Augustinian friars transitioned from remote locations into the city centers in the wake of the Great Union of 1256, many Hermit communities were granted existing churches dedicated to the patronage of various saints.520 The dedication of a church to a certain saint typically corresponded to the dedication of the cappella maggiore and high altar, which often dictated the subject matter of the decoration in this area of the church. Despite various dedications, the Hermits often incorporated images of St. Augustine alongside murals related to the titular saints. For example, narrative episodes of Augustine appear in the Church of San Leonardo al Lago, the Church of Sts. Philip and James in Padua, and the Church of Sts. Philip and James in Montalcino.521 In other examples, the Order added a second dedication to Augustine, as was the case in Rimini and Fabriano. The cappella maggiore of Sant’Agostino in Rimini, originally dedicated to St. John the Baptist, displays frescoes depicting the lives of both titular saints.522 Founded in 1215, the church of Santa Maria Nuova in Fabriano was acquired in 1274 by the

Cultura, 2010), 31-32: Catherine Harding, Guide to the Cappella del Corporale of Orvieto Cathedral (Quattroemme, 2004), 51-52.
520 On the Order’s transition from rural hermitages to urban houses, with a variety of examples, see Andrews, The Other Friars, 107-12.
521 The reason behind this unusual dedication to a pair of minor saints remains unclear.
522 Turchini et al., Il Trecento riminese, 9-14.
Hermits, who rededicated the church to St. Augustine. The cappella maggiore was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, while the right apsidal chapel was consecrated to St. Augustine and illustrated episodes from his life.

The Hermits’ focus on St. Augustine in their church dedications and artistic projects is due in part to the fact that there was only one other saint belonging to the Order – St. Nicholas of Tolentino, who was not canonized until 1445. For this reason, Order-wide devotion was concentrated for the most part on its founder, in contrast to the Dominicans, who honored a triad of Dominicans saints (Sts. Dominic, Peter Martyr, and Thomas Aquinas). The Franciscans, too, boasted several renowned saints, including Anthony of Padua, who was canonized as early as 1232. As for the Carmelites, they could claim only Elijah, but they made up for their lack of saints with special devotion to the Virgin Mary, who became the subject of many artistic projects.

Given the numerous churches dedicated to St. Augustine in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, it is likely that more cycles of the saint’s life once existed in the cappella maggiore of other churches. Even churches dedicated to other saints sometimes housed chapels and altars devoted to Augustine in the eastern end of the church, which raises the likely possibility that images of the saint once decorated the interior of these churches.

523 R. Sassi, Le chiese di Fabriano (Fabriano, 1961), 52. For a history of the church, see also Cleri, “La Chiesa di Sant’Agostino,” 7-72.

524 When the chapel of St. Augustine was renovated in 1449, the central apsidal chapel was destroyed, and the right and left chapels were enclosed. All that survives today are the partially damaged frescoes in the left chapel, dedicated to Mary Magdalen, and those in the right chapel, dedicated to St. Augustine. Although the original decoration in the central apse has been lost, it was likely decorated as part of the same artistic program with frescoes of the Madonna, the original titular saint of the church. Flansburg, “The South Chapel Fresco Cycle,” 687.

525 There are numerous examples of Madonna altarpieces, intended for the high altars of Carmelite churches: Masaccio’s Pisa Altarpiece, the Florentine Madonna in the Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, Pietro Lorenzetti’s altarpiece for the Carmelite church in Siena, and the Madonna Bruna of the Carmine in Naples. See Gardner von Teuffel, “Masaccio and the Pisa Altarpiece,” 37, n.44.
spaces. The church and convent of Santo Spirito in Florence is one example of an Augustinian house, whose original trecento decoration no longer survives. 526

**Reconstructing the Church Interior**

Augustinian churches built in duecento and trecento Italy show a general adherence to the standard model of mendicant architecture established by the Franciscans and Dominicans. Drawing from Cistercian traditions, these Franciscan and Dominican churches typically consisted of a nave that ended in an apse at the eastern end. 527 The so-called *chiesa-granaio* (“barn church”) facilitated the friars’ mission of preaching by providing an open space in the lower nave for large gatherings and a timber roof that offered good acoustical conditions. Both the Franciscan and Dominican Orders issued legislation with specific regulations regarding church building, reflecting their desire to establish a uniform architecture that exemplified mendicant poverty. 528

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526 The original church was destroyed when a new building campaign began between 1434 and 1436. The original church, cloisters, refectory, and chapter room featured frescoes by a number of distinguished artists, including Taddeo Gaddi, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Memmi, Cimabue and Stefano Fiorentino. Blume and Hansen, “Agostino pater et praeceptor,” 78; Arbesmann, “Vita Aurelii,” 327; Acidini Luchinat and Elena Capretti, *La Chiesa e il Convento di Santo Spirito* (Giunti, 1996), 18, 49, 81, 152.


church and specified that vaulting should only cover the choir and sacristy. As the fourteenth century progressed, many of these mendicant churches were elaborately decorated and enlarged by side chapels, constructed along the nave as private devotional spaces for wealthy lay patrons.

The Augustinian Constitutions make no reference to specific regulations regarding the building of convents and churches, but the architectural evidence indicates that the Hermits followed the example of their fellow mendicants. At the end of the thirteenth century, many Augustinian communities began enlarging existing churches or building anew, in order to accommodate growing congregations. Augustinian churches in central and northern Italy adopted the model of an aisleless nave with a trussed roof, ending in a single apse (more common in central Italy) or a triple apse (more common in northern Italy), covered in masonry vaulting. The convent was typically attached to the north side of the church via the sacristy.

Although these mendicant churches stand as vast, open spaces today, the interiors of their fourteenth- and fifteenth-century naves were typically bisected by a choir screen.

The tramezzo (also referred to as the verone, podiolus, and pontile) divided the choir

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529 Sundt, “Mediocres domos et humiles habeant fratres nostri,” 398.
precinct (the area reserved for the friars) from the lower nave (the gathering space for the laity). Almost every fourteenth-century *tramezzo* from Italy has been destroyed. A rare example survives *in situ* in the Dominican Church of San Domenico in Bolzano (fig. 121). Documentary evidence shows that choir screens were common features of Franciscan and Dominican churches. As early as 1249, the Dominican Order required choir screens in every church so that the friars could privately proceed in and out of the choir precinct. The 1259 general chapter acts suggest that *tramezzi* were already considered customary by this early date. Before the 1970s, art historians ignored the ubiquitous presence of the *tramezzo*, since most choir screens had been dismantled in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Led by the groundbreaking research of Marcia Hall, more recent scholars have directed serious attention to the form and function of these structures, which demarcated a distinct separation between lay and religious spaces.

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532 There are a greater number of *tramezzi* that survive from the fifteenth century, including examples in Santa Maria delle Grazie at Varallo, the Basilica di Sant Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice, San Rocco in Vicenza, and San Michele in Isola in Venice. See Hall, “The ‘Ponte’ in S. Maria Novella,” 157-73.


535 Although the decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-63) make no reference to *tramezzi*, the demolition of choir screens, beginning in the late sixteenth century, coincided with the Council’s efforts to increase the layman’s participation in the Mass. Hall has explained Duke Cosimo de’ Medici’s removal of the choir screens in Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce in Florence as a desire to follow the ideals upheld by the Council of Trent. On the role of the Counter-Reformation in the destruction of *tramezzi*, see Marcia Hall, *Renovation and Counter-Reformation: Vasari and Duke Cosimo in S. Maria Novella and S. Croce, 1565-77* (Oxford-Warburg Series, 1979); Ibid., “The ‘Tramezzo’ in the Italian Renaissance, Revisited,” 224-26.

In the choir precinct, the friars had privileged access to the apsidal chapels, including the *cappella maggiore*, the liturgical focus of the Mass. A door, usually located on the north wall of the choir precinct, led to the convent and allowed the friars to enter and exit with optimal privacy. The choir itself typically stood in front of the *cappella maggiore*, with choir stalls organized in a U-shape, either free-standing or attached to the *tramezzo.*\(^{537}\) Choir stalls typically designated different seats for older and younger friars.\(^{538}\) The painting of the *Crib at Greccio* (c.1300, fig.122) in the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi provides a glimpse of a Franciscan interior, complete with a choir screen.\(^{539}\) The painting of St. Vincent Ferrer by Agnolo and Bartolomeo degli Erri (c.1460-80, fig.123) shows a Dominican example of a *tramezzo*, decorated with painted roundels and topped by a sculptural group.\(^{540}\) These two images give an idea of the dominating presence of the *tramezzo* in the interior space, as well as their importance to understanding the production and reception of church decoration. The *tramezzo* provided a more private viewing experience for the friars in the choir, while blocking or selectively framing the layman’s view of imagery located east of the screen.

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\(^{538}\) The exception is Franciscan churches in Umbria, which usually featured retro-choirs, located behind the high altar. See Donal Cooper, “Franciscan Choir Enclosures and the Function of Double-Sided Altarpieces in Pre-Tridentine Umbria,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 64 (2005): 1-54.


While recent studies on choir screens have focused primarily on Dominican and Franciscan examples, documentary and physical evidence shows that *tramezzi* were common in Augustinian churches as well.\(^{541}\) A fresco fragment from the Augustinian church of San Lorenzo in Piacenza (fig. 124), now housed in the Musei Civici di Palazzo Farnese, depicts the *Celebration of the Mass* in a typical church interior.\(^{542}\) Although the fresco does not depict a choir screen, it does show two Hermits gathered around a lectern, with choir stalls behind them and the altar before them. A lectern probably stood in the center aisle between the choir stalls, and a chest in the choir or sacristy held the books used on the lectern.

I will begin with the Church of the Eremitani in Padua and other Augustinian houses in the Veneto, before moving on to examples in other regions in northern and central Italy. Regarding the original organization of the church interior, I will point out how the *ecclesia fratrum* was distinguished from the *ecclesia laicorum* by the architectural articulation and the presence of a choir screen. These architectural elements distinguished the *cappella maggiore*, in particular, as the focal point of the church interior.

Erected in 1276, the Church of the Eremitani in Padua originally consisted of a single nave ending in a triple apse, with the door to the convent located to the left of the

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\(^{541}\) Among the exceptions are Valenzano, who has included Augustinian churches in her discussion of mendicant architecture in the Veneto, and Carlo Pùlisci, who has discussed the *tramezzo* in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua in the context of mendicant churches in northern Italy. Valenzano, “La suddivisione della spazio,” 102; Carlo Pùlisci, “Il complesso degli Eremitani a Padova: l’architettura di Chiesa e convento dale origini a oggi” (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Padova, 2013), 83-106.

choir precinct (fig. 125). During the fourteenth century a series of side chapels were built along the right side of the nave, as well as the Ovetari chapel, which was added to the south wall of the left apsidal chapel between 1371 and 1372. A number of documents also refer to a fourteenth-century choir screen. The earliest of these documents, dating from 1382, records the location of an altar of Santa Maria Nuova in a chapel under the tramezzo, which was attached to a pulpit. In his 1623 account, Angelo Portenari confirms that a verone had once traversed the nave and blocked the view of the monks’ choir from the rest of the nave. A document from 24 March 1470 mentions a door located in the center of this screen, which would have been opened during the elevation of the Eucharist. Located about sixty meters from the entrance door, the tramezzo was originally topped by a monumental painted crucifix by Nicoletto Semitecolo (fig. 126), which now hangs over the altare maggiore. Four altars adorned the tramezzo on the west side facing the nave. On the other side of the screen, a lectern

543 On the history and architecture of the church, see Bettini and Puppi, La chiesa degli Eremitani di Padova, 8-16.
544 On the documentary history of the Ovetari Chapel, see Shaw, The Ovetari Chapel: Patronage, Attribution and Chronology.
546 “…nelli seguenti tempi, fu ornata d’altari e di choro, il quale secondo il costume antico era un verone che traversava la Chiesa.” A. Portenari, Della felicità di Padova (Padova, 1973), 447.
548 These four altars are among those listed in the fourteenth-century inventory, partially transcribed by Gargan: altars dedicated to Santa Maria Nuova, Santa Caterina, Santa Maria Antica, and the Holy Trinity. Gargan, “Libri di teologi agostiniani a Padova nel Trecento,” 15; Aristoteles latinus, Ms. 848, Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova, fol.194v-196. There are two late-fifteenth-century altar frontals, now placed against the northern nave wall, dedicated to Mary and San Nicola da Tolentino. The altar frontal of Mary originally adorned the west side of the tramezzo. The location of the other altar frontal, sculpted by Andriolo de Santi, has been debated. Gulli and Pùlisci locate it against the tramezzo, while Murat and Moschetti place it on the
stood in the center of the choir. A late fourteenth-century inventory mentions a textile antependium for the lectern and several *pallia* for the *altare maggiore*.

Fourteenth-century terminology confirms that the areas on either side of the choir screen were considered to be separate spaces in the Augustinian church in Padua. In contrast to the *ecclesia fratrum predictorum*, a 1382 document calls the space located west of the choir screen the *coro mulierum*, or “women’s choir,” a common term for the lower nave. In the lower nave, the women were often separated from the men, as depicted in Guariento’s fresco of Augustine’s *Vestition* (fig.15), where a group of lay women gather on the left (inferior) side of the church.

In addition to the choir screen, some architectural elements articulated the demarcation between the *ecclesia fratrum* and *ecclesia laicorum*. As Giovanna Valenzano has pointed out in her study of mendicant churches in the Veneto, the architectural form of the interior roof frequently differentiated the two spaces. While a wooden roof often covered the nave, vaulting was usually employed in the apsidal chapels. In Padua, the wooden roof, built by the Augustinian friar Giovanni degli Eremitani, drops in height in the eastern part of the church, where the choir was originally located. The height and width of the polygonal *cappella maggiore* also

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550 Aristoteles latinus, Ms. 848, Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova, fol.194v-196.
551 Portenari, *Della felicità di Padova*, 447.
552 For insights on the separation of men and women in sacred spaces (both within the church and in outdoor spaces used for preaching) see Adrian Randolph, “Regarding Women in Sacred Space,” in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson and Sarah F. Mathews Grieco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17-41.
distinguishes the central chapel from the rectilinear lateral chapels. In addition, the selectively placed windows, which include a rose window on the contra-façade and Gothic lancets in the *cappella maggiore*, create a powerful spotlighting effect that directs the eye along the vertical axis of the church.

A look at some other Hermit churches in the Veneto reveals that the spatial organization of the church in Padua, with a visually distinct choir, was far from an anomaly in Augustinian architecture. Vasari mentions a *tramezzo* in the church of Sant'Eufemia in Verona.  

555 Similarly, a choir screen and monumental cross located *supra corum* is recorded in the Augustinian church of Santo Stefano in Venice.  

556 The expansive church that stands there today originated as a three-nave structure with a choir occupying two bays. Based on Sansovino’s 1550 description of its *tramezzo*, Maria Agnese Chiari Moretto Wiel has suggested that this marble screen probably featured an opening in the center, separating the nave from wooden stalls.  

557 Documentation related to the Augustinian church of Santa Margherita in Treviso provides additional insight into the furnishing and use of the church interior. A communal decree issued by the Consiglio dei Treviso in 1282 required that the construction of the church follow the *modum et formam* of the existing Dominican church of San Nicolo in

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556 “…pro illa lampida, quam teneo nunc ad praesens ante crucem magnam positam supra corum in ecclesia Sanct Stefani, quam debeat accenti, et ardere in nocte, et in die perpetuo ante dictam crocem magnum.” Valenzano, “La suddivisione della spazion,” 112.  
557 Sansovino’s description: “Il coro è diviso da un parapetto di marmo, sopra il quale collocate alquante nobili colonne, sostengono gli Apostoli di marmo grandi al naturale solpiti da Vittorio Gambello.” Maria Agnese Chiari Moretto Wiel, in *Chiesa di Santo Stefano: arte e devozione*, ed. Chiari Moretto Wiel, Maria Agnese, Andrea Gallo, and Ettore Merkel (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), 20. The current choir stalls were built in the 1480s, arranged in the nave with the entrance on the west end. They were moved to the apse after the construction of a new presbytery around 1610. Ferdinando Apollonio, *La chiesa e il convento di S Stefano in Venezia: memoria* (Venice, 1911) 24-5; Allen, “Choir Stalls in Venice and Northern Italy,” 107, n.8.
Treviso.\textsuperscript{558} This decree also specifies different measurements for the \textit{choro fratum} and \textit{corpore laicorum}. The testament of Giovanni dei Barisani from 1414 indicates the presence of a \textit{podiolus} in the church of Santa Margherita.\textsuperscript{559} As in Padua, several elements of the original architecture distinguished the choir and nave as two distinct spaces. Voltarel has noted the splayed character of the choir area, where the width of the apsidal chapels extends further than the width of the nave.\textsuperscript{560} The original church probably featured a wooden truss ceiling over the nave and cross vaults over the choir area, in imitation of the Dominican church of San Nicolo. Furthermore, the arched opening of the \textit{cappella maggiore} is higher than the left and right apsidal chapels, which might have been elevated above the floor of the nave.\textsuperscript{561}

Outside the Veneto, the churches featuring Augustinian cycles show similar trends in their architectural layout. The original church of Sant’Agostino in Rimini was begun in the last decades of the thirteenth century and completed by the beginning of the fourteenth (figs.127-29).\textsuperscript{562} Originally consisting of a single nave with three apsidal chapels, the church was expanded at the end of the fourteenth century to include lateral chapels along the nave. Renovations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

\textsuperscript{558} “…quod Ecclesia S. Margherita fratum Heremitanorum fieri debeat ad modum et formam ecclesiae Sancti Nicolai fratum predicatorium de Tarvisio latitudine, altitudine et longitudine […] que ecclesiae S. Nicolai est per longum de 24 perticas de quinque pedibus pro pertica videlicet undecim pertiche in choro et […] fratum et tresdecim perticarum in corpore laicorum et ubi manentur mulieres et aliae persone et ampla est per transversus septem perticas a quinque pedibus pro pertica.” “Decretua Tarvisi pro constructione ecclesiae S. Margherite,” in Voltarel, \textit{La chiesa di Santa Margherita}, 27.

\textsuperscript{559} Valenzano, “La suddivisione della spazio,” 113, n.23.

\textsuperscript{560} Voltarel, \textit{La chiesa di Santa Margherita}, 37, 134.

\textsuperscript{561} Ibid., 141; 142, n. 330.

closed up the side apsidal chapels and added extensive stucco work to the ceiling. A *tramezzo* was present by the second half of the fifteenth century, although the date of its original construction and placement is unclear. The early-fourteenth-century painted crucifix that now hangs on the right wall of the nave probably stood atop this choir screen (fig. 130).

A choir screen also once traversed the single nave of the Tuscan church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano (fig. 120). The friars here could proceed privately from their choir stalls to the door on the left wall of the upper nave, leading to the fifteenth-century cloister. Begun in 1280, the church ended in three rectilinear apses, covered by a wooden roof. As in the Augustinian church in Padua, the *cappella maggiore* stands taller and wider than the lateral chapels, and its rounded arch contrasts with the pointed arches of the side chapels.

Both the Tuscan church of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (fig. 131) and the Umbrian church of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio (figs. 132-33) have a single apsidal chapel in the east end of an aisleless nave. Topped by a wooden truss roof, the church in Montalcino was begun in the late thirteenth century and completed by the early

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563 On post-fourteenth-century renovations to the church interior, see Lugato, “Gli Agostiniani a Rimini e gli affreschi in Sant’Agostino,” 82-93; Marchi et al., *Il Trecento riminese*, 9-12.
564 Valdameri has shown that the earliest explicit mention of the *tramezzo* appears in a 1485 document. The structure was implied in a 1478 document. In 1595, the *tramezzo* was still in place, as evidenced in documentary mention of the destruction of chapels beneath it. Valdameri concludes that the structure was probably built right after 1469, when the church was repaired after the siege of Rimini. Cesare Clementini also describes the *tramezzo*, with a walkway on top and four altars facing the nave. See Carlo Valdameri, “Considerazioni sullo scomparso pontile di San Giovanni Evangelista in Rimini e sulla presenza a Rimini di Fra Carnevale,” *Romagna arte e storia* anno XXXI, no. 91 (2011): 15.
In the church of Sant'Agostino in Gubbio, built in the second half of the thirteenth century, a series of masonry arches running along the wooden ceiling echo the shape of the apse and lead the eye to the eastern end. The large expanse of the painted arch over the *cappella maggiore* dominates the interior. Today, eighteenth-century choir stalls lean against the walls of the *cappella maggiore*, and cover the lower portion of the frescoes. During the fifteenth century, the original stalls probably stood further back in the choir, possibly in front of a *tramezzo*, offering an unobstructed view of the frescoes to those in the *ecclesia fratrum*. Although I have found no documentary references to *tramezzi* in the Hermit churches in Gubbio, Montalcino, and Fabriano, it seems likely that screens originally spanned these churches, given the evidence of choir screens in other Augustinian churches in central Italy (including San Nicolo in Tolentino, Santo Spirito in Florence, and Sant’Agostino a Siena).

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**Ecclesia Fratrum: Function and Vision**

**The Cappella Maggiore**

The architectural setting of the *cappella maggiore* suggests that the cycles of St. Augustine’s life decorating this area were intended primarily for an audience of friars. A

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569 For the early history of the church, see Cece and Sannipoli, *La chiesa e il convento di Sant’Agostino*, 8-9.
570 Ibid., 77.
571 *San Nicola da Tolentino nell’arte: corpus iconografico*, vol.1 (Tolentino: Biblioteca Egidiana, 2005), 326.
572 Acidini Luchinat and Capretti, *La Chiesa e il Convento di Santo Spirito a Firenze*, 42.
close examination of the Augustinians Constitutions provides valuable insight into the daily use of the choir by the Augustinian brethren. The *Constitutiones Ratisbonenses*, approved at the general chapter of 1290 in Regensburg, supplemented the Rule of St. Augustine as the Order’s chief legislative text. The 1308 general chapter required every prior to have a copy of the Constitutions, the Rule, the commentary on the Rule by Hugh of Saint Victor, and the liturgical *Ordinarium*. Along with the contemporary commentary by Jordan of Quedlinburg, these texts illuminate the potential meaning and function of the imagery in the *cappella maggiore* in relation to the customary function of the choir.

The friars gathered in the choir to attend Mass and pray the divine offices seven times throughout the day. The recitation of the divine hours was an integral part of the friars’ communal worship, and more generally, the Augustinian ideal upheld by the Rule, which instructs the community to assemble for prayers at the appointed hours. Hugh of Saint Victor reiterates this command in his commentary, showing that praying at the appropriate times was an example of obedience to the Rule. The fourteenth-century commentary of Jordan of Quedlinburg provides additional insights into the importance of the divine hours in the common life of the friars. Jordan’s detailed instructions and examples for how to remain engaged and reverent during the divine hours form part of the *Liber*’s second section, which explains the meaning of having one heart and one soul.

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574 On the degree to which this mandate was followed, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 95-6.
575 In 1571, the Constitutions officially replaced Hugh of Saint Victor’s commentary on the Rule with Jordan’s *Liber Vitasfratrum*. Arbesmann and Hümpfner, “Introduction,” lxxii.
576 The seven offices are referred to as Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 124-7.
in God (the fundamental precept of the Rule).\textsuperscript{579} Jordan writes that “the first and most important thing which religious who live a common life under a rule must attend to is the worship of God,” principally by the divine office.\textsuperscript{580} He cites prior general William of Cremona as an exemplary friar who maintained the communion of the common life by devoutly singing the divine office.\textsuperscript{581} While discussing the value of the cenobitic life, Jordan remarks that it is better for the friars to recite the divine offices together in the church than alone in their cells, to encourage each other’s devotion.\textsuperscript{582} The fourteenth-century prior general Gregory of Rimini also stressed the importance of the divine hours to the Augustinian \textit{vita communis}. In response to lax observance and the decline of the communal ideal, in 1357 Gregory composed a list of ordinances to be read aloud monthly in each house. Foremost among Gregory’s concerns was observance of the divine hours. A friar’s failure to keep the hours resulted in a penalty that suited his rank within the Order.\textsuperscript{583} In the fifteenth century, observance of the communal life became one of the dual tenets of the Observant Reform, which sought to restore Augustinian spirituality (through the individual’s commitment to prayer, study, and meditation) and community (by worshipping and living together like the Apostles of the Early Church). The recitation

\begin{footnotes}
\item[580] Ibid., 194. Jordan of Quedlinburg, \textit{Liber Vitasfratrum}, II.15: “Primum et praecepuum in communi vita, quam Regula sacrae Religionis instruit, observandum debet esse cultus divinus.”
\item[581] Ibid., \textit{Life of the Brethren}, 91.
\item[582] Ibid., 73.
\item[583] “In primis, monemus et hortamur in Domino omnes et singulos fratres tue provincie, et ab eis volumus inviolabiliter observari, ut ad dicendum divinum officium tam in die quam in nocte in ecclesia conveniet, prout quilibet eorum secundum suum statum convenire debet iuxta nostril ordinis instituta; convenientes vero devote et in silentio maneant, divinum officium punctatim dictant et morose, tam legend quam cantando rubricas ecclesie diligentius observantes.” “Litterae Prioris Generalis Ordinis Fr. Gregorii Ariminensis,” \textit{Analecta Augustiniana} (IV) 1911-12: 373.
\end{footnotes}
of the canonical hours was one way that the Observant friars focused their attention to
prayer and spiritual community.\footnote{Andrews, Other Friars, 165.}

Given the importance of communal worship to the Augustinian life, it seems
fitting that images of their founder saint stood before the friars as they gathered in the
cappella maggiore. The Constitutions instruct the friars to look toward the cappella
maggiore on several occasions during the recitation of the canonical hours. When they
hear the sign for Matins, they are directed to approach the church, making the sign of the
cross. Upon entering the church, they are instructed to sprinkle themselves with holy
water and bow before the high altar, then walk to their assigned seats.\footnote{Constitutiones, I.6: “Audito primo signo ad Matutinum, festinent surgere omnes Fratres, munientes se
signo crucis et honeste atque composite Ecclesiam aduntes, antequam ingrediantur aqua benedicta se
aspergant, et ingressi inclinent se ante maius altare profunde et reverenter, ac postea vadant stare in locis
suis ordinate.”} After reciting an Our Father and Matins, they should turn to the altar and make the sign of the cross.\footnote{Constitutiones, I.7: “Pulsato itaque ultimo signo, et ad signum Maioris dicto sub silentio Pater noster,
Fratres dicant Matutinum de beata Virgine, versi ad altare et crucis signaculo se signantes.”}
Likewise, during conventual Mass the brothers are instructed to turn toward the cappella
maggiore.\footnote{Ibid., VI.37: “Dum autem Missa Conventus celebratur, Fratres omnes qui in choro sunt sic intendant ad illam.”}

In addition to these regular liturgical practices, the choir played an important role
as the setting for the rites of vestition and profession. The fifteenth and eighteenth
chapters of the Constitutions describe the sequence of events involved in the initiation
rite. If the novitiate is deemed acceptable for entrance into the Order, he enters the
chapter room, where his secular clothes are removed and the habit is put on.\footnote{Ibid., XV.98-99: “Si quis in Ordine nostro recipe petierit, non statim annuatur ei, quicumque ille sit, sed
probetur spiritus eius si ex Deo est. Quod si perseveraverit in proposito, et fuerit persona idonea, post
oblatae ei spera a Priore et a maiore parte Capituli suae receptionis, hora, quam Prioris et aliorum Fratrum
...”} A cantor
begins the hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, which the brothers continue to sing as they proceed into the church. The novitiate lies prostrate before the high altar, while the friars proceed into the choir as they finish singing the hymn. When the novitiate rises, he receives the kiss of peace from the prior and other friars. Then the Master of the novitiates hands him the Rule and Constitutions, which he regularly reads to the novitiates so that they might learn and understand them.

Following a probation period of several months, the novitiate is dressed in the cowl and makes his profession either in the chapter room or in the church choir. Surviving records of actual professions in Sant’Agostino in Gubbio confirm that professions did indeed take place in the choir. The prior dresses the novitiate with the cowl, saying, “God dresses you, a new man, who was created according to God, in justice and sacred truth.”

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589 Ibid., XV.100: “Tunc, tonsis crinibus, vestibus saecularibus exutus et Religionis habitu indutus, cantor incipiat Hymnum *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, quem Fratres alii prosequantur, et ordinate intrent Ecclesiam, atque receptus a cantore et duc tus ante maius altare prosternat se, donec Hymnus finiatur in choro, et oratio Deus, qui corda etc., da famulo tuo in eodem, etc. Qui postea surgens, et instructus ab eodem cantore, recipiat pacem primo a Priore, postea ab aliis Fratribus utriusque lateris subseu- nter.”

590 Ibid., XV.101: “Et sic tradatur Magistro Novitiorum de Regula et Constitutionibus, de Officio et cantu, de moribus et signis, et aliis observantiis Ordinis instruendus. Et legat sibi, ipse Magister suus aut ipsum, Regulam et Constitutiones seorsum ab aliis, pluries in anno, ut discat Novitius, si se Ordini voto professionis astrinxerit, sub qua lege militare debeat. Atque in ipso primordio receptionis suae generalis confessionem eius audiat Prior solus ut cognoscat vultum pecoris gregi suarum ovium sociandae.”


592 *Constitutiones*, XVIII.116: “Induat te Deus novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est, in iustitia et sanctitate veritatis.”
Augustine in his hands, and makes his verbal profession.\textsuperscript{593} After promising to live according to the Rule, the professed rises and receives the kiss of peace from the prior and his fellow brethren.\textsuperscript{594}

Given the importance of the choir as the setting of the profession rite, the images of Augustine in the \textit{cappella maggiore} reinforced a sense of belonging among the community of friars. First, the image of Augustine’s vestition, included in almost every cycle, connected the viewer to previous generations of the Order who partook in the same ritual of initiation as their founder. This image stood before the eyes of the newly professed at the high altar, and could continue to foster a sense of collective community long after his official entrance into the Order. Guariento’s fresco of Augustine’s \textit{Baptism and Vestition} in Padua (fig.15) situates the rite of initiation in a church choir, mirroring the setting of the fourteenth-century friar viewing the frescoes. Standing before two rows of choir stalls, a group of friars sing a hymn just as the Constitutions instructed. Their singing recalls the Order’s requirement that the novitiate be able (or at least willing to learn) to sing and read.\textsuperscript{595}

Images of Augustine bestowing the Rule also acquire a more powerful meaning when viewed in light of the profession rite. The ubiquitous image of Augustine bestowing the Rule visualizes the passing of the Rule between prior and novitiate. Every image of the subject shows the friars reaching out their hands towards the Rule, just as the


\textsuperscript{594} Ibid., XVIII.119.

\textsuperscript{595} Ibid., XVI.104: “Pro Clerico autem nullus Novitius recipiatur ad Ordinem, nisi legere vel cantare sciverit competenter, vel sit docibilis aut aptus ad addiscendum”.
novitiate received the Rule from the hands of the prior at his vestition. This physical touching of the Rule was a visual sign of the friar’s commitment to uphold its spiritual principles. In San Gimignano (fig. 91), Gozzoli endows this image with a particular sense of immediacy by conspicuously including a novitiate, dressed entirely in white. His position just outside the circle of Hermits recalls the requirement that novitiates separate themselves for several months from professed friars in the monastery. Kneeling before Augustine is Domenico Strambi, the prior of the monastery, who was entrusted with upholding strict observance of the Rule. From the newest members of the Order to its highest leaders, each and every one of the friars could identify with the brethren depicted in Gozzoli’s fresco. In sum, the frequently represented subjects of the vestition and bestowal of the Rule could conjure up tangible memories of the friar’s initiation, which is relived every day when he put on the habit and read the Rule.

As the setting for the Eucharistic liturgy, the cappella maggiore was, by definition, the holiest area in the church. The architectural separation of the chapel from the nave by a choir screen helped to protect the Eucharistic mystery by concealing it from the laity in the nave and making it accessible only to the clergy and religious. The mere presence of the Host granted a particular sanctity to the space where the sacrifice of Christ was reenacted. Similarly, the very sight of the Host granted a special grace and protection to the viewer who laid eyes on the body and blood of Christ. In his commentary on the Dominican Constitutions, Humbert of Romans (1190-1270) explains his preference for praying offices in the church because the veneration of the body of

Christ confers a special grace on this space. While Mass could be said in private side chapels, the *cappella maggiore* enjoyed its privileged position in the east end of the church, which was associated with the Second Coming of Christ. Just as the friars were the privileged audience for the liturgy, so they were also the privileged audience for the imagery located there. The select community of viewers who could access the choir and witness the Eucharistic celebration was able to view the frescoes, clearly and intimately, which enhanced their sense of belonging to Augustine’s Order.

Additionally, the artistic cycles of St. Augustine’s life reminded members of the Order of their recently established founding narrative. It is telling that the Hermits in Padua chose to decorate the *cappella maggiore* with a narrative of Augustine’s life, rather than an allegorical program, which appeared in a private side chapel dedicated to St. Augustine nearly a decade later. These narrative murals provided a visual counterpart to the written sources, which also aimed to educate members of the Order, particularly young recruits. Henry of Freimar opens his treatise with this statement: “Since some are unaware of the manner of conversion and the way of life of the great Doctor of the Church, Saint Augustine, the eminent father and patron of our Order, they may likewise be unaware of the reasons why the brethren of our Order, in preference to other religious professing the Rule of Saint Augustine, are called the Brothers of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine.”

In his compilation of sacred *vitae*, the anonymous author of the *Vita

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Aurelii Augustini also directs his text to younger members of the Order. Likewise, many surviving fourteenth-century sermons on St. Augustine were delivered by Augustinian preachers to new members of the Order. The Hermits were not the only order faced with the need to educate their members about their history. A Carmelite author writing in the early fourteenth century admitted that his motivation for recounting the Order’s history was the ignorance of members, who did not know how to answer when asked about their origins.

To this general end, the narrative cycles of Augustine focused attention on the exemplary role of the Order’s founder. Contemporary theories of vision attested to the power of visual imagery to impress itself on the viewer’s soul and move him to imitate the mental or physical image before his eyes. When applied to the context of fresco cycles in Augustinian churches, these theories illuminate the way that early Renaissance friars might have thought about the power of vision and the function of artistic imagery. As an order that embraced intellectual scholarship (particularly of

dubitare, ex qua ratione fratres nostrae religionis prae ceteris religiosis suam regulam profitentibus fratres ordinis eremitarum sancti Augustini specialiter dicentur.”
601 Arbesmann, “Vita Aurelii,” 323 (fol.46r): “...ut iuvenes frateres, qui eos in corpore non viderunt, ista licet paucia de eis audientes, ad imitationem sanctorum operum incitentur.”
603 “Rubrica prima,” MCH, 41; “Cum quidam fratres in ordine iuniores, quarentibus a quo et quomodo ordo noster habuerit exordium, iuxta veritatem nescient satisfacere, pro eis in scripto formulam talibus reliquentes volumus respondere.” Similarly, in the prologue of his Libellus the Dominican Jordan of Saxony explains the reason for compiling a history of the order’s beginnings – to satisfy the requests of younger members, who have asked about the origins of the order.
605 Theresa Flanigan has discussed early Renaissance theories of vision in relation to how laymen and friars perceived the interior architecture and decoration of the Dominican church of San Marco in Florence. Theresa Flanigan, “Ocular Chastity: optical theory, architectural barriers, and the gaze in the Renaissance
Augustine’s works) and established *studia generalia* in the leading intellectual centers, the Hermits were likely well-versed in these visual theories, just as Theresa Flanigan has argued for the Dominicans and Franciscans.  

Based on Augustine’s study of vision, the optical theory of the Franciscan friar Francis Bacon (d.1292) remained the dominant theory of vision in the late medieval and early Renaissance periods. Augustine and Bacon both believed that the object and the viewer were active agents in the process of vision. According to this view, when the viewer sets his eye on an object, rays are emitted from both the object and the eye towards one another. The rays from the object penetrate the eye, move into the brain, and impress the object’s form on the soul, which can then direct the will to move the body. The viewer becomes a reflection of the object that he is seeing, and the object becomes stored in the soul’s memory.

The act of looking could be potentially dangerous if the viewer fixed his eyes on an unchaste object. As Flanigan points out, the presence of the choir screen prevented the friars from gazing at women, which Augustine forcefully warns against in his Rule.

The Rule of Augustine includes a long section on how the friar should “look”:

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606 Ibid. Cynthia Hahn also has demonstrated that people of varying levels of understanding comprehended these visual theories (“Visio Dei,” 169-96).


608 The primary sources for their optical theories are Augustine’s *De Trinitate* and Roger Bacon’s two treatises, *De multiplication specierum* and *Perspectiva* (1260s). Miles, “The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind,” 125-42; Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, 73-84.


Even if your eyes do fall upon some women, fix them on none. [...] The desire for men is stirred, and stirs, not only by touching and by inviting glances, but even by looking. You cannot say that you have shamefast minds if you have shameless eyes, for a shameless eye is the messenger of a shameless heart. And if people, even when their tongues are silent, exchange glances that tell of their shameless hearts, and with their ardor give each other pleasure as the flesh desires, though they may never touch each other’s bodies impurely, true chastity has gone from their lives.611

The Rule goes on to instruct the reader specifically about how to direct their eyes while in the church: “So when you are together in church, and anywhere else where women are also present, guard each other’s chastity.”612 The Rule then informs the reader how to confront and punish a fellow friar who is caught with a “roving eye.”613

The Augustinian Constitutions restate Augustine’s own cautionary instruction in the Rule.614 In his commentary, Hugh of Saint Victor reiterates the importance of guarding the eyes, or “windows of our house,” because they can corrupt the “interior house” of the mind.615 Jordan of Quedlinburg repeats Augustine’s admonition to guard one another’s chastity in the church and outside the monastery, and includes a lengthy excerpt from the Rule about correcting a fellow friar for showing “wantonness of the


612 Constitutiones, IV.24: “Quando ergo simul estis in ecclesia et ubicumque ubi et feminae sunt, invicem vestram pudicitiam custodite.”

613 Ibid., IV.7: “Et si hanc de qua loquor oculi petulantiam in aliquot vestrum adverteritis, statim admonete, ne coepta progrediatur, sed de proximo corrigitur.”

614 Ibid., XLVIII.498: “Si quis procedens ubi feminae sunt oculum fixerit, so tamen hoc in usu habuerit, vel cum feminas solus non de confessione locutus fuerit, nisi, breviter interrogans vel respondens aliquid petierit vel responderit.”

eyes.” 616 Jordan explains that the friar was not forbidden to see women, but he was prohibited from fixing his eyes on them for fear that this might lead to lust, for “the soul within is corrupted by what is seen without.” Jordan supports this warning by citing several Biblical passages and sayings of the Church Fathers, including a monk from the Vitae Patrum who did not want to see women because “our thoughts are like painters, disturbing us by recalling what we have seen.” 617 Jordan also assembles a list of sixteen precautions for guarding one’s chastity, beginning with “custody of the eyes.”

While certain objects and images could impact the viewer negatively, the viewer could choose to concentrate his energy toward imagery that might lead the soul in a positive way. 619 In his commentary On Painting (1435), Leon Battista Alberti recognizes that the istoria, his preferred term for a narrative painting, had a particular ability to move the soul. 620 He urges artists to paint figures that reflect the character of the people represented, so that they can provide moral exemplars. A figural image could impact both the viewer’s soul, and subsequently his body, which might be moved to imitate the represented figure’s actions. Other contemporary sources confirm the belief in the power of religious images to inspire. The thirteenth-century Franciscan Salimbene de Adam tells the story of Gerardino Segalleli, who was moved to found the Order of Apostolic Friars after examining pictures of the Apostles on a church wall in Parma. Although

616 For the latter reference, Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 158-59. For the former reference, Jordan quotes this line from the Rule three times: ibid., 89, 259-60, 279.
617 Ibid., 158-59.
618 Ibid., 268.
619 Flanigan has discussed how the opening in the tramezzo would have focused and framed the lay viewer’s gaze on the Host or the high altarpiece.
Salimbene’s intention is to mock Segalleli’s literal imitation of the Apostles’ dress, the story speaks to the ability of sacred images to inspire its viewers to imitation.  

Standing before the eyes of the friars in the choir, frescoes of Augustine provided a moral exemplar for them to imitate. The friars could be inspired to mirror the actions of the saint, as Augustine himself had instructed the readers of the Rule to read it once a week so they would see themselves in the book, as in a mirror. Jordan of Quedlinburg employs the same metaphor in the prologue of his Liber Vitasfratrum. He instructs the friar to read his handbook so that “by reading it any brother will be able to discover, by a comparison of what he finds there with his own life, whether or not he is a true son of our most holy father Augustine, and thereby a true brother of his Order.”

The Augustinian Hermits recognized the value of recalling the lives of earlier friars in order to edify friars and to incite emulation. In the final chapter of his treatise, Henry of Freimar explains the reason for remembering the virtues of certain members of the Order: “In order to edify the brethren, therefore, I have striven to record in an appendix the names of those brethren of our Order whom I have found to be renowned for holiness.” In the preface to the Vita brevis aliquorum fratrum heremitarum, the author describes his objective: to incite the brethren to imitate the actions of earlier

621 Jotischky, Carmelites and Antiquity, 69-70.
622 Augustine, “The Rule,” 295: “And so that you may look into this little book as though into a mirror, and nelect nothing through forgetfulness, it should be read aloud to you once a week.”
623 Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 57-8. Ibid., Liber Vitasfratrum: “… tum quia eius lectione frater quilibet, an sit verus filius Pater nostril sanctissimi Augustini ac per hoc verus frater Ordinis sui, ex vita propria sua cognoscere valebit supererogationis operibus plurifariis in eodem contentis nihilominus circumscriptis.”
624 Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 120. Ibid., Tractatus, 118: “…ideo sub comepndio pro aedificatione fratrum fratres famose et notoriae sanctitatis huius nostri ordinis, de quibus comptertum habui, studui annotare.”
exemplars. Of course, Augustine was revered as the ultimate “exemplar and rule of all our actions,” in the words of Jordan of Quedlinburg, who encouraged the readers of the Liber Vitasfratrum to imitate their founder saint.

The story of Augustine’s conversion, in particular, illustrates the power of saintly examples to rouse hearts to salvation. Augustine’s vita is not simply a series of isolated episodes that illustrate the saint’s holiness. Cycles of Augustine depict remarkably few of the miracles associated with the saint. Before his conversion Augustine did not exhibit the holy behavior of a typical saint, but his story shows how one might become holy by following the example of holy men. His conversion story illustrates a “pattern of exemplary behavior,” whereby Augustine becomes worthy of imitation by imitating others who came before him. His vita shows how the preaching of God’s word, the lives of saints, and the reading of Scripture can transform the soul. Fourteenth-century Hermit authors emphasized the steps that brought about Augustine’s conversion. Henry of Freimar repeats that Augustine had been led to conversion not only by divine intervention, but also by meditating on the holy example of earlier hermits, such as Anthony Abbot.

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625 Arbesmann, “Vita Aurelii,” 323: “…ut iuvenes fratres, qui eos in corpore non viderunt, ista licet paucha de eis audientes, ad imitationem sanctorum operum incitentur.”

626 Saak, “Creation of Augustinian Identity, II,” 251-86.

627 Cynthia Hahn has discussed how medieval hagiography and imagery typically presented the saint’s life as a series of episodic units. Cynthia Hahn, “Picturing the Text: Narrative in the Life of the Saints,” Art History 13 (1990): 1-32.


629 For example, in a sermon on St. Augustine, Hermán de Schildesche attributed the saint’s conversion to the doctrine of Ambrose and the eremitic examples of Anthony and Ponticianus. Rano, “San Agustin y su Orden,” 42-45.

630 Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 25-7, 36-41.
In the eighth book of the *Confessions*, Augustine recalls how the stories of several holy men stirred his heart, provoking self-reflection and stimulating his desire to imitate them. Simplicianus tells Augustine the story of Victorinus, an African scholar, who worked as an erudite philosopher and teacher in Rome. Later in his life, Ponticianus made a public profession of the Christian faith and became a baptized member of the Church. Augustine sees himself in Victorinus and is eager to imitate his life, particularly his abandonment of a secular career for the Christian faith. In another example, Ponticianus recounts to Augustine and Alypius the story of how two imperial officials were converted upon reading the life of St. Anthony. Augustine admits that this story of conversion forces him to reflect upon himself:

>This was the story Ponticianus told. But while he was speaking, Lord, you turned my attention back to myself. You took me up from behind my own back when I had placed myself because I did not wish to observe myself, and you set me before my face so that I should see how vile I was, how twisted and filthy, covered in sores and ulcers. And I looked and was appalled, but there was no way of escaping from myself. If I and you once again placed me in front of myself, you thrust me before my own eyes so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it. I had known it, but deceived myself, refused to admit it, and pushed it out of my mind.

Later on, when Augustine hears the command to “take up and read,” he remembers that Anthony had been converted after accidentally entering a church and hearing a random verse of Scripture. This is when Augustine himself picks up the Book of Romans, and is converted by the first verse that he reads. In this moment, Augustine is moved by the example of a previous hermit, and in turn imitates the

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631 Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.2.3-8.2.5.
632 Ibid., 8.5.10.
634 Ibid., 8.7.16.
635 Ibid., 8.12.29.
conversion of the imperial officials. When he shares the passage from *Romans* with Alypius, he is also converted upon reading the subsequent verse written by Paul.\(^{636}\) Nicholas of Alessandria adds to this lineage of influence, by including an anecdote of Augustine’s narration of the life and miracles of Anthony to his brethren, just as they were told to him by Ponticianus.\(^{637}\)

Petrarch consciously plays on this “pattern of exemplarity” in his *Ascent of Mount Ventoux*.\(^{638}\) After reaching the summit of Mont Ventoux, he opens the *Confessions* and recalls the conversions of Augustine and Anthony Abbot, whose similar chance readings resulted in their own inner transformations.\(^{639}\) Like Augustine in his account of his conversion, Petrarch describes how reading about this event leads him to ponder his own soul and reject his trivial enjoyment of earthly views. In the process, Petrarch inserts himself in a spiritual lineage and recognizes the power of narrative to move the soul to salvation.

The Augustinian life illustrates the exemplary character of Augustine’s conversion in various ways. Two commonly represented episodes show events that contributed to the saint’s conversion: the preaching of Ambrose (in Pavia (fig.39), Montalcino (fig.50), Gubbio (fig.65), San Gimignano (fig.88), and Lecceto) and the visit to Simplicianus (in Pavia (fig.40), Gubbio (fig.67), and Lecceto). In his instructions for representing the life of Augustine (*Metrum*), Jordan includes both the preaching of

\(^{636}\) Ibid., 8.12.30.

\(^{637}\) Nicholas of Alessandria, *Sermo*, 366.

\(^{638}\) Robbins, “Petrarch Reading Augustine,” 58. Scholars have pointed out that the date cited in the letter (1336) is fictional, and the real date was probably 1352. The earlier date might have been symbolic, since it would have made Petrarch thirty-two years old, like Augustine at the point of his own conversion.

\(^{639}\) Petrarch, “The Ascent of Mount Ventoux.”
Ambrose and the visit of Ponticianus, who tells the story of Anthony and other hermits. It is worth noting that many of the churches decorated with narratives of Augustine’s life also contained cycles of St. Anthony, which, while located elsewhere in the church, encouraged a visual connection between these two eremitic exemplars. Images of the vestition also placed Augustine in a lineage of holy models. For Henry of Freimar, Augustine’s vestition connected him both to the past, to an earlier eremitic tradition, and to the future, to the later generations of the Order. He explains that Augustine had donned the eremitic habit because it was the dress worn by Simplicianus and the Desert Fathers before him, as well as the later Tuscan hermits, for whom he would become “future father and leader.”

640 Jordan, Metrum, 244-45. Divided into forty-eight scenes, Jordan’s programmatic guide consisted of a series of mnemonic verses, meant to accompany images from Augustine’s life. The opening of the Metrum explains Jordan’s purpose: “If it would occur to anyone to depict the life of blessed Augustine, one would be able to order and decorate the pictures with these verses. Thus, because each of the verses will have either a couplet or a quatern in keeping with the requirements of the material, picture, and figure, they are to be ordered as fitting. The rubricated title, however, or prosaic notes should be placed above the pictures. The verse, however, is placed below, or vice versa as is clear.” Trans. Saak, Creating Augustine, 149. For a discussion of the Metrum’s importance in Augustinian myth-making, see Saak, Creating Augustine, 148-54.

641 Frescoes of Anthony Abbot decorate a side chapel in the Church of the Eremitani in Padua (Guariento di Arpo, c.1362) and the south wall of the church of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino (Bartolo di Fredi, after 1401). The Church of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano includes a chapel dedicated to St. Augustine. The cloister frescoes at Lecceto also featured scenes from the life of Anthony Abbot. Diana Norman, “St. Anthony Abbot in Sant’Agostino, Montalcino: an Augustinian image in the Sienese contado,” in Art and the Augustinian Order in early Renaissance Italy, ed. Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 143-161; Zuleika Murat, “Sant’Antonio Eremita e propaganda agostiniana: considerazioni sul ciclo dipinto da Guariento agli Eremitani di Padova,” in Alberto da Padova e la cultura degli Agostiniani, ed. Francesco Bottin (Padua: Padova University Press, 2014), 97-114; Catoni, “Dai padri del deserto,” 109-28; Freuler, Bartolo di Fredi Cini, 220-22; Murat, Guariento, 41-2, cat.16. For images of St.Anthony Abbot in art from Siena, where there was an active cult around the saint, see F. Bisogni, “Il culto e l’iconografia di S. Antonio Abate in Siena,” in La Misericordia di Siena attraverso i secoli dalla Domus Misericordia all’Arciconfraternita di Misericordia, ed. M. Aschei and P. Turrini (Siena, 2004), 177-89.

642 Henry of Freimar, Treatise, 207. Ibid., Tractatus, 95: “Tertio, quia congruum fuit, ut ille, qui futurs erat pater et dux fratrum eremitarum pauperum per sacrae regulae conscriptionem et traditionem, etiam ipsis conformis existeret per sacrae religionis habitum et conversationem…..”
After being spurred on by the examples of those before him, Augustine becomes a preacher and defender of the faith like them – the converter of Alypius (in Padua (fig.14) and San Gimignano (fig.89)) and refuter of heretics (in Pavia (fig.44), Gubbio (fig.74), and San Gimignano (fig.93)). The cycles decorating the Arca and the chapels in San Gimignano and Gubbio locate the baptism at the midpoint of Augustine’s life, contrasting his actions before and after his conversion. On the east and west sides of the Arca, Augustine graduates from disciple in the *Preaching of Ambrose* (fig.39) to preacher in the *Refutation of Fortunatus* (fig.44), and from baptized to baptizer in the *Baptism of the Manicheans*. In Gubbio, Augustine’s upward gesture in the *Refutation of the Heretic* (fig.74) mirrors the gesture of Ambrose in the preaching scene located in the second register (fig.65). Like the episode carved on the Arca, Nelli’s fresco of the refutation shows Augustine wearing episcopal garb in imitation of Ambrose, even though Augustine was not yet ordained bishop when he debated Fortunatus. Surrounding the saint is a group of black-clad Hermits, who observe the saint’s exemplary preaching abilities. Gill has noted that the inscriptions accompanying the cycle of St. Augustine in San Gimignano begin with “quem ad modum,” indicating its function to spur emulation. In contrast, the inscriptions accompanying Gozzoli’s fresco cycle of St. Francis in Montefalco begin with “qualiter” or “quando,” suggesting that the images were intended to demonstrate, rather than inspire action.

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The Church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro

In the Church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia, the friars shared the choir with the neighboring Canons. The high altarpiece, now housed in the Pinacoteca Malaspina in Pavia (c.1370-80, fig.134), attests to this shared usage of the choir.\(^647\) The central panel of the polyptych depicts Augustine bestowing the Rule to a Hermit on one side, and a Canon on the other.\(^648\) The 1327 papal bull by John XXII specified that the friars should have direct access from their convent to the church by a side door.\(^649\) The 1634 plan (fig.135), drawn by Tiberio Romussi, shows the monastery of the Hermits, accessible by a door on the right side of the church, and the monastery of the Canons on the left side.\(^650\) A document from 1331 refers to the Canons assigning choir stalls to the Hermits.\(^651\) Both communities assembled in the church for the divine office and Mass. If the office of the day was common to both groups, they would chant it together, and they were charged to celebrate solemn Masses together.\(^652\) A record of the Hermits’ expenses includes payment for a wooden pulpit and a large cross for the middle of the church, presumably to be attached to a choir screen.\(^653\) The Hermits commissioned other projects for the church as


\(^{651}\) Maiocchi and Cassaca, *Codex diplomaticus*, 40-1.

\(^{652}\) Hackett, “San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro,” 205.

\(^{653}\) A list of artistic projects executed by the Hermits is mentioned in a dispute document of the 1390s, transcribed in Maiocchi and Cassaca, *Codex diplomaticus*, 154-180. See also Giacinto Romano, “Eremitani e Canonici Regolari in Pavia nel secolo XIV e loro attinenze con la storia cittadina,” *Archivio Storico*
well, including a Maestà for the high altar, an organ for celebrating the divine office, paintings in the tribune and vaults above the high altar, and glass windows to prevent wind and rain from hindering Mass and the offices.  

It is in the choir of the church, where the Hermits wished to place the Arca di Sant’Agostino. In 1365, the Arca was documented in the sacristy, labeled “A” on Romussi’s plan. But other documents indicate that the Hermits eventually desired to move the Arca to the choir of the church. In 1366, Pope Urban V interceded on behalf of the Hermits, who complained that the Canons were preventing them from transferring the Arca to the choir. In the cappella maggiore the Arca di Sant’Agostino would have provided the dominating focal point of the church. The current location of the Arca over the high altar provides a glimpse of what this arrangement might have looked like. The Arca also would have been closer to the relics of Augustine in the crypt, accessible by a set of stairs that leads to underneath the choir. As Bourdua has noted, the crypt seems to have been the former locus for the cult of St. Augustine, who was buried in the church along with Boethius (c.480-524), the medieval Christian philosopher. The Pavese priest Opicino de Canistris reports that the eighth-century Lombard King Liutprand had

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565 On 20 August 1365, Antonio da Tortona recorded that the base of the Arca was moved into the sacrestie nove. R. Maiocchi, L’Arca di S. Agostino in S. Pietro in Ciel d’Oro (Pavia: Fratelli Fusi, 1900), 11; Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder,” 36.

566 Dale, Arca, 66.

567 Ibid.


569 For plans of the crypt, see Gianani, La basilica di San Pietro, 32-33; Erba, “La chiesa, l’arca. Le reliquie,” 42, 50, 51. The stairs, labelled, “X,” are located at the entrance to the choir.

570 Bourdua “Entombing the Founder,” 29-50. Boethius’ relics remain in the crypt of the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro.
placed the relics in a “deep and most secret place” in the crypt.\(^{661}\) Vincent of Beauvais documents a well in the crypt, which overflowed miraculously every year on the saint’s feast day.\(^{662}\) In 1394, an altar is recorded in the crypt near Augustine’s remains.\(^{663}\)

Despite Pope Urban V’s efforts, the Arca remained in the Hermits’ sacristy, probably due to the Canons’ refusal to acquiesce to any relocation plans. We may assume that the Canons objected to the Hermits’ request for fear that the friars would continue to encroach on their allotted space in the church. In 1400, Pope Boniface IX divided the church in half along the east/west axis in response to escalating disputes between the two groups.\(^{664}\) The Canons also must have opposed the overtly eremitic focus of the Arca and disliked the idea of showcasing such a monument in the most visible part of the church interior. In 1406, the friars still had hopes of moving the Arca, as indicated by Giacomo dal Verme’s funds to move the Arca from the sacristy to the *loco debito*.\(^{665}\) Other documents attest to the Hermits’ desire to relocate the physical body of Augustine to the Arca. The will of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, executed between 1397 and 1402, requested that the Arca be completed and the body of Augustine be placed in it.\(^{666}\)

Instead, the Arca di Sant’Agostino remained in its original location in the new sacristy of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, accessed through a door on the right side of the nave.\(^{667}\) The sacristy typically functioned as a room where the clergy dressed in their

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\(^{662}\) Ibid., 23.

\(^{663}\) Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder,” 40.

\(^{664}\) The friars had access to the right side of the church and were ordered to alternate use of the high altar. Maiocchi and Cassaca, *Codex diplomaticus*, 219-220; Gill, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance*, 41-42.


\(^{666}\) Cesare Ferreri and Defendente Sacchi, *L’Arca di Sant’Agostino* (1833, Pavia), 47, n.1.

\(^{667}\) For more on the sacristy space, see Luisa Erba, “San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro. La distrutta sacrestia dell’arca,” in *Sant’Agostino e gli Agostiniani in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro*, ed. Luisa Erba and Carlo Mazzoleni (Pavia, 2013), 382-402.
liturgical garb. However, given the unusual conditions in this church, the sacristy seems to have played a greater role as a place of daily worship for the Augustinian Order.

Furnished with a high altar and fresco decoration, the new sacristy of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro functioned similarly to the *cappella maggiore* of more typical Hermit churches, serving as a location for liturgical worship.\(^{668}\)

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**Ecclesia Laicorum: Access and Visibility**

**Lay Access to the Ecclesia Fratrum**

According to the Augustinian Constitutions, which were modeled after the regulations used by the Dominican Order, the laity had limited access to the area east of the choir screen. Women were permitted to enter the choir on special occasions, including Good Friday and certain feast days, and for particular ceremonies, such as funerals, church dedications, and Masses said on behalf of a confraternity or other organization. Women could also proceed to the high altar to take religious vows. While the divine office was in session, the choir was open for laymen, while women were restricted to the outer church (*exterior ecclesia*). At other times, men were not allowed to enter the choir without special permission from the prior.\(^{669}\) Further research is required.

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\(^{668}\) *Liber A Expensarum*, f.4v; Bourdua, “Entombing the Founder,” 29-50. The account book records payment for glass windows and the painting of the sacristy vaults in 1381. Maiocchi and Cassaca suggest that the sacristy functioned more like an oratory (*Codex diplomaticus*, 131, n.1).

\(^{669}\) *Constitutiones*, XII.77: “Chorum et claustrum in proprio festo loci, et cum Officium in funere agitur alicuius solemnis personae, et etiam pro praedicatione audienda, se in magna sexta feria, scilicet, Parasceve, introitus dari multieribus consuevit. Necnon et ad maius altare ingredi permittatur pro voto reddendo; et cum Sacerdos novus celebrat primam Missam, vel causa alicuius Confraternitatis, seu
to determine the extent to which regulations like these were followed in mendicant churches. Early findings suggest that during Mass and the offices, the laity was typically prohibited from passing beyond the *tramezzo*. 670

In addition to the Augustinian friars and celebrants of the Mass, the *cappella maggiore* was accessible to lay patrons and the family members who used the space as a funerary chapel. But, scarcity of documentation makes it difficult to conduct a study of lay patronage in an Augustinian context, as has been done for the Franciscans. 671 Nonetheless, a selection of surviving documents and visual clues indicates that the *cappella maggiore* was indeed financed by lay donors.

The coat of arms of the Malatesta lords of Rimini appear in the presbytery frescoes of Sant’Agostino. 672 The numerous financial donations made by the family suggest that they were financers of the chapel decoration. 673 In Sant’Agostino in Fabriano, an unidentified coat of arms, consisting of a red and yellow shield, appears in the frescoes of Sant’Agostino. 672 The numerous financial donations made by the family suggest that they were financers of the chapel decoration. 673 In Sant’Agostino in Fabriano, an unidentified coat of arms, consisting of a red and yellow shield, appears in the frescoes of Sant’Agostino.

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670 Machtelt Israëls, ed., *Sassetta: Borgo San Sepolcro* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press), 127-131. It is interesting that the Augustinian Constitutions allows laymen to pass the *tramezzo* during the divine office.
671 Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage*.
673 The location of the 1318 general chapter meeting was requested by Malatesta da Verucchio, who established in his testament from 18 February 1311 that his heirs would pay for the general chapter for the Augustinians. Lugato, “La Comunità Agostiniana,” 19-27.
the cornice of the chapel of St. Augustine. The large number of donor figures depicted in the decorative program and the representation of several miracles suggests that these frescoes were designed, at least in part, for a lay audience. The paintings in the *cappella maggiore* of Sant’Agostino in Montalcino were possibly commissioned by the noble widow Petra Cacciati, whose name appears on the large window. Jacopo di Vanni, rector of the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, probably financed the decorative program in San Leonardo al Lago. In 1383, a testamentary bequest from Giacomo Del Serra left one hundred florins for the painting, decoration and repair of the *cappella maggiore* of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio. In this chapel’s frescoes, the large number of secondary figures, dressed in lay clothing, leaves open the possibility that many of them might actually be donor portraits (fig.64). Among these examples, Gozzoli’s frescoes in San Gimignano stand apart as the exception. In 1464, the prior Domenico Strambi acquired the rights of the *cappella maggiore* from the Dietiguardi family. Nevertheless, the left and right apsidal chapels in this church probably attracted lay worshippers to the east side of the choir screen at certain moments.

In the Church of the Eremitani in Padua, surviving heraldry on the transverse arch, two kneeling donor figures among the *Blessed* on the apse wall (fig.108), and numerous donor portraits in the cycles of the saints attest to the involvement of lay

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677 Cece and Sannipoli, *La chiesa e il convento di Sant’Agostino*, 54.
678 Gill notes that Nelli includes the unusual subject of Augustine introducing themselves to Milanese nobles, an episode that probably reflects the taste and interests of the artist’s patrons. Gill, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance*, 66, 75-76.
donors. Zuleika Murat and Giovanna Valenzanno have proposed that the patrons and financers of the *cappella maggiore*’s frescoes were the family of the friar Bonaventura da Peraga. They have identified the portrait of Francesco il Vecchio, the Carrara lord of Padua, as one of the laymen in the *Bestowal of the Rule* (fig.17), and female members of the Carrara family in the *Vestition of Augustine* (fig.15). As the lords of Padua and most prestigious artistic patrons in the town, the Carrara had close relationships with every mendicant order. While the Dominican church of Sant’Agostino was the principle church of the Carrara family, the Augustinian Church of the Eremitani still attracted the patronage of several Carrara supporters, and perhaps the Carrara themselves.

For lay patrons viewing the decoration of the Augustinian *cappella maggiore*, the dramatic narratives of Augustine encouraged the power of intercession for the salvation of souls. Lay patrons could also identify with the intercessory figure of St. Monica, in particular. Her prominent presence in these cycles, where she is shown aiding and inspiring the conversion of her son, provided a model for the laity, as they prayed for the souls of deceased relatives. In Guariento’s *Vestitio* in Padua (fig.15), a group of laywomen appear in the left side aisle of the church interior, imitating the supplicant pose of Monica. For the more common viewer, Augustine’s life was remarkable for its transformation from sinner to saint, but at the same time, it provided an example of the everyman, guided by God’s hand through the journey of life.

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The View from Outside the Choir

In most of the examples included in this study, the interior architecture of the church denied a view of the Augustinian narratives to the lay congregation in the nave. The images in the east end of the church that were most visible to the laity in the nave were the frescoes decorating the exterior arch over the *cappella maggiore*, and the crucifix topping the choir screen. In some cases, the laity might have been able to see a portion of the altar wall decoration, which featured imagery that evoked the ritual significance of the apse. These images aided in the contemplation of Christ’s sacrifice during the liturgy, and suited the funerary function that the chapel held for its lay patrons.

In the Church of the Eremitani in Padua, the location of Nicoletto Semitecolo’s painted crucifix over the *tramezzo* focused the viewer’s attention towards the east end of the church. In many mendicant churches, these crucifixes replaced a view of the actual Host, which might not be visible through the small opening in the *tramezzo*. This imagery also enhanced the significance of receiving communion by facilitating the viewer’s understanding of the parallel between the elevation of the Eucharist and Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.\(^68^2\) From the nave in Padua, the only visible imagery in the *cappella maggiore* was the upper parts of the *Last Judgment* (fig. 20) on the altar wall. With his special emphasis on the theme of resurrection, Guariento’s innovative *Last Judgment* provided a visual accompaniment to the liturgy.\(^68^3\) The subject was particularly suitable

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\(^{68^3}\) Elliott, “Augustine and the New Augustinianism,” 99-126. Elliott has pointed out the common placement of the Last Judgment in or over the apse in Augustinian churches in northeast Italy (123-25).
for the lay funerary function of the chapel, since this imagery emphasized the power of
intercession and the hope of salvation for those who commit their lives to Christ.

The Augustinian church in Rimini follows a similar pattern in its decoration. The
lay churchgoer could view a portion of the altar wall decoration, the painted crucifix, and
the Last Judgment that originally decorated the triumphal arch (fig.136). Together,
these images presented three representations of Christ’s person, vertically aligned along
the central axis of the church – Christ Crucified on the cross, Christ the Judge in the Last
Judgment, and Christ the Father in the Deesis with John the Evangelist and John the
Baptist, painted on the upper portion of the apse wall. Below the Deesis were two other
images of Christ – the Christ Child in the arms of the Madonna, and the Risen Christ in
the Noli Me Tangere. The Noli Me Tangere, in particular, alludes to the tangible body of
the Resurrected Christ, which Mary Magdalen seeks to touch and which the Christian
consumes in the form of the Eucharistic Host. The Last Judgment on the triumphal arch
relates the narrative of Christian history to the viewer, who imagines his eventual place
among either the Blessed or the Damned.

In the church of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio, the Last Judgment decorates the
triumphal arch and a painted cross now hangs over the altare maggiore. Like the
examples in Padua and Rimini, the Gubbio Last Judgment frames the narrative cycles of

684 In 1926 the Last Judgment frescoes were moved to the Sala dell’Arengo in Rimini. Boskovits, “Per la
storia della pittura tra Romagna e le Marche,” 103-104; Marchi et al., Il Trecento Riminese, 28; Benati, Il
Trecento Riminese, cat.16, 290. For a discussion of Last Judgment imagery on the eastern wall of the
church, see Jérôme Baschet, “L’Enfer en son lieu: rôle fonctionnel des fresques et dynamisation de l’espace
culturel,” in Luoghi sacri e spazi della santità, ed. Sofia Gajano Boesch and Lucetta Scaraffia (Turin:
Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990), 551-64.
685 Pasini, Guida breve, 21.
686 Cece and Sannipoli, Sant’Agostino a Gubbio, 46-47, 49-53; Ettore Sannipoli, “Sui rapporti artistici tra il
Nelli e i Salimbeni. Il Giudizio universale di Sant’Agostino a Gubbio e una traccia per Jacopo Salimbeni,”
in I Da Varano e le arti. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Camerino, Palazzo ducale, 4-6 ottobre 2001, ed.
Andrea De Marchi and Pier Luigi Falaschi (Maroni, 2003), 579-610.
saints within a wider context of Christian history. The Last Judgment illustrates a moment outside of earthly time, in contrast to the temporal passing of time represented in Augustine’s Departure from Carthage (fig.61), which appears conspicuously in the central lunette. Augustine himself compares the two parts of the Christian life – the old man and the new man – to the two kinds of humans present at the Last Judgment – the Damned, who live as earthly men for their entire lives, and the Blessed, who turn toward God. He explains that at the Last Judgment the Blessed will lose the last pieces of the old man and complete the final transition into the new man, while the Damned will experience their second death. Below the central lunette appear two frescoes of Ambrose preaching, a subject that is also given central focus in Sant’Agostino in Montalcino, where it occupies the lunette on the apse wall. These images of Ambrose would mirror the friar preacher, as he expounded upon the Word of God to the lay congregation in hopes of initiating a spiritual transformation like that of Augustine.

Images of the Crucifixion and Last Judgment reappear in the central apsidal chapels of several other Augustinian churches, where fresco fragments remain. The altar wall of the Chapel of St. Augustine in Fabriano (fig.137) shows the Crucifixion below an image of Augustine delivering the soul of Hugh of Fontenay. The church of Sant’Agostino in Como has a Crucifixion scene on the apse wall, and the Crucifixion and Last Judgment reappear in the Augustinian church of San Lorenzo in Piacenza. Watercolors and drawings kept in the Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso show the trecento

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687 Augustine, Of True Religion, xxvii.50.
fresco imagery in the *cappella maggiore* of Santa Margherita in Treviso before the destruction of its murals.  

The left wall shows narratives of Christ (*Noli me tangere*, Journey to Emmaus, and other fragments depicting unidentified episodes from the life of Christ), and the apse wall shows Christ on the cross flanked by angels. A small fragment of a Hell scene decorates the upper part of the northern wall, which was perhaps part of a Last Judgment scene. In Sant’Agostino in Bergamo fragments of the Crucifixion also appear on the apse wall, along with images of Paradise and the Annunciation on the exterior arch.

In the church of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano, only the top register of the apse wall might have been visible from the nave above the *tramezzo*. These frescoes show Augustine’s ministry as bishop, not the scenes most personal to the friars. On the upper part of the apse wall the two frescoes flanking the window depict the active and contemplative pursuits of Augustine’s spiritual life: the *Refutation of the Heretic* (fig. 93) and the *Vision of Jerome* (fig. 94). In the *Vision of Jerome*, Augustine sits in his study contemplating the bliss of souls in heaven when Jerome appears in a vision at the precise moment of his death. The upward gaze of Augustine directs the viewer’s attention up to the heavens. For viewers in the choir, the middle register shows Augustine’s baptism, the ritual reenactment of Christ’s sacrifice. The lowest register shows Monica praying at the altar, illustrating the power of intercession for the salvation of souls.

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Although Augustine did not outwardly support the creation and use of visual images, he considered sight the noblest of senses because it is most like spiritual vision. Margaret Miles has discussed how Augustine considered physical vision to be akin to spiritual vision, for both types of vision could unite the object with the viewer and affect the state of the soul. Jordan of Quedlinburg used Augustine’s writings on mental imagery to justify the use of artistic images as powerful devotional aids. Jordan cites a sermon by Augustine, *On the Contemplation of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, as evidence for the power of mental images of the Crucifixion to extinguish lustful passions. He quotes Augustine: “When some base image or thought comes upon me I have recourse to the wounds of Christ. When the flesh weighs me down I rise up by recalling the wounds of my Lord. When the devil lies in ambush I take flight to the heart of the Lord and he departs from me. If the fire of passion enters my body, it is quenched by thinking on the Son of God.” Jordan then proceeds to explain how visual images aided a certain friar, who whenever he felt rising passion went into the church and “fixed his gaze on the image of the Crucified” and felt healed. Jordan subtly uses Augustine’s own experience to validate the function of both mental and visual imagery.

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696 Elsewhere in the *Liber* Jordan cites examples in which images act as valuable devotion aids for friars (207-8, 285). He describes a brother, who was so devoted to the feasts of Christ that he posted an image of each one in his cell so that he could “gaze at it devoutly, praying, lamenting, and shedding tears.” Another brother revered an image of St. Jerome in his cell, and the saint helped him to overcome his lustful desires.
Images of Founder Saints in Mendicants Churches

The Franciscans began promoting the cult of St. Francis in artistic images immediately after his death. They favored painted narratives that represented the life of St. Francis, initially in the form of panel paintings displayed inside their church. A proliferation of painted panels survives from the thirteenth century, depicting the figure of St. Francis surrounded by narrative scenes of his life and miracles. By the turn of the thirteenth century, the Order had commissioned two monumental fresco cycles of Francis’ life in the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi. The five frescoes decorating the nave walls of the lower church (1253) are the earliest extant murals of the saint’s life. Located near the saint’s tomb, the lower church frescoes were aimed at detractors of the stigmata, showing the side wound of Francis for the first time, rather than miracle episodes. Around the turn of the thirteenth century, the Franciscans commissioned the more extensive cycle in the upper church, which consists of twenty-eight scenes. Located on the nave walls, these frescoes presented the story of St. Francis to crowds of visiting pilgrims and local laity.

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698 On early vita panels of St. Francis, see Brooke, Image of St. Francis, 160-91.


700 Ibid. On the respective functions of the upper and lower churches of San Francesco during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Brooke, Image of St. Francis, 70-3.

701 For the extensive scholarship on the upper church frescoes in Assisi, see n.223.
The upper church became the primary model for a number of later cycles, as demonstrated by Dieter Blume. Blume studied fifteen cycles located in the east end of Franciscan churches, from the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century. Some of these were located specifically in the cappella maggiore – San Francesco Rieti (c.1300), San Francesco in Pistoia – but not all of them – the right apsidal chapel of San Francesco in Gubbio (c.1280), a side chapel in San Fortunato in Todi (c.1340), the north transept of San Fermo Maggiore in Verona (shortly after 1260), and the right apsidal chapel of Santa Croce in Florence (1325-8). Other contemporary cycles appeared in various locations. A lost cycle from the late thirteenth century, probably by Pietro Cavallini, once covered the walls of the nave in San Francesco a Ripa in Rome. Another lost cycle by Cavallini (1300-20) decorated the Savelli Chapel in Santa Maria in Aracoeli in Rome. Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes (1425) decorated the cappella maggiore in San Francesco in Montefalco. The variety in location of Franciscan

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Blume, Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda, 100-101.


Blume, Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda, 49-54.

Ibid., 23-25; 32-35.

Blume, Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda, 13-17, 59-62, 74-5


imagery suggests that these fresco functioned as religious propaganda for the friars, as well as preaching aids for the friars.\textsuperscript{711}

Cycles of St. Francis located in the eastern end of the church often showcased the stigmatization episode in a location visible to the laity over the choir screen. For example, Giotto’s Bardi chapel in Santa Croce (1325-8, fig.138) includes a large fresco of the \textit{Stigmatization of St. Francis} on the exterior of the triumphal arch.\textsuperscript{712} In San Francesco in Montefalco, the \textit{Stigmatization} appears in the upper parts of the right and center walls of the \textit{cappella maggiore} (fig.111).\textsuperscript{713} In contrast, in Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano, the episode most important to the Order, the \textit{Bestowal of the Rule}, appears in the second register on the right wall, too low to be visible over the choir screen. Likewise in Padua and Rimini, each cycle of Augustine is depicted in the lowest register at the eye level of the friars sitting in the choir. These Augustinian narratives seem to be more strictly directed towards a target audience of friars. Even the Arca di Sant’Agostino divides the biographical reliefs, which exemplify Order-wide themes, from the miracle episodes, aimed at an audience of lay pilgrims.

Regarding cycles of St. Francis and St. Augustine, the different patterns of location reflect differences in the two \textit{vitaes} and in the desires of their respective Orders. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Franciscans faced the challenge of spreading the cult of a near-contemporary saint beyond his native Umbria. Fortunately, the mystical

\textsuperscript{711} On the role of early cycles of St. Francis as religious propaganda, see Blume, \textit{Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda}. On the Franciscan Order’s use of imagery as preaching aids, see Cannon, “Giotto and Art for the Friars,” 103-34. For an examination of a Franciscan choir program in relation to the function of the space, see Nancy M. Thompson, “The Decoration of the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Croce in Florence,” \textit{Gesta} 43.1 (2004): 61-79.


\textsuperscript{713} Ahl, “Benozzo Gozzoli’s Cycle of the Life of Saint Francis in Montefalco,” 198-99.
experiences of St. Francis appealed to lay spirituality at the time and further explain the appearance of Franciscan cycles in the nave. Meanwhile, St. Augustine was already widely renowned in the Christian tradition by the time that the Hermits claimed him as a founder. As the Augustinian founding narrative began to evolve, the Hermits became concerned with the education of its members. Locating Augustinian imagery in the cappella maggiore reinforced the textual narratives circulating within the Order and represented the Hermits’ primary efforts to assert an exclusive claim to the saint (rather than promote an inclusive devotional cult like the Franciscans).

Images of the bestowal of the Rule that stand apart from larger cycles are located in a wider variety of places within Augustinian churches. The earliest fresco of the subject (completed after 1274) decorates the refectory or chapter room of Sant’Agostino in Fabriano (fig.2).\textsuperscript{714} Another early fresco of the subject appears on the altar wall of the right apsidal chapel in Rimini (before 1303, fig.139).\textsuperscript{715} Examples produced in other media include a relief on the monument of Sacra Spina in the oratory of Madonna dei Lumi in Sant’Elpidio a Mare (1371), an exterior lunette on the entrance portal of the former convent of Santo Stefano in Venice (15\textsuperscript{th} century), and the high altarpiece in San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro in Pavia (c.1370-80).\textsuperscript{716} These images can be compared more closely to isolated images of the stigmatization of Francis, which also appear in various parts of the church. For example, Giotto’s Stigmatization of St. Francis (c.1290-1300) was originally placed over the tramezzo in the Franciscan church of San Francesco in Pisa.\textsuperscript{717}

\textsuperscript{714} Blume and Hansen cite the refectory, but Boskovits argues for the chapter room. Blume and Hansen, “Agostino pater et praeceptor,” 77; Boskovits, “Insegnare per immagini,”129.
\textsuperscript{715} Da Gai, Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 179-80.
\textsuperscript{717} Cooper, “Experiencing Dominican and Franciscan Churches,” 52-3.
The same subject is painted on a pillar on the left side of the nave in San Francesco in Lodi (c.1300) and the arch of the south transept in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (c.1320).\footnote{For a catalogue of early images of St. Francis, see Cook, \textit{Images of St. Francis of Assisi}.}

The Dominicans did not share the same enthusiasm for fresco paintings of their founder saint.\footnote{Joanna Cannon, \textit{Religious Poverty}, 130, 278.} Following St. Dominic’s death, the Dominicans had initially hesitated to encourage cultic devotion to their founder, fearing that such promotion conflicted with the humility upheld by the Order.\footnote{On the cult of St. Dominic, see Canetti, \textit{L’invenzione della memoria}.} Jordan of Saxony records that the ex-votos, left by lay worshippers at the tomb, were removed and the cult of the saint discouraged.\footnote{Jordan of Saxony, \textit{Libellus de principiis ordinis Praedicatorum}, 123-124; Cannon, “Dominic ‘Alter Christus’,” 30-31.} Even after the Order began more fervently promoting St. Dominic’s cult in the second half of the thirteenth century, they produced relatively few large-scale pictorial narratives of the saint’s life.\footnote{In 1254 and again in 1256, the Order encouraged every church to display images of St. Dominic and St. Peter of Verona, another Dominican saint. In 1233, the Order moved the body of Dominic from underneath a stone slab in the eastern part of the Dominican church of San Niccolò in Bologna to an area west of the choir screen, where the tomb would be more accessible to pilgrims. On 3 July 1234, Gregory IX canonized Dominic, and in 1265, the Dominicans began collecting funds for an elaborately carved tomb monument, sculpted by the Pisan artist Nicola Pisano. Kennedy, “The Art of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders,” 12-13. Cannon, “Dominican Shrines and Urban Pilgrimage,” 143-45.} Three rare examples of murals of St. Dominic are the late-thirteenth-century frescoes in the nave of San Domenico in Arezzo, the fragmentary cycle in the \textit{cappella maggiore} of the SS. Domenico e Giacomo in Bevagna from the first half of fourteenth century, and the early fifteenth-century cycle of Dominic in San Domenico in Fano by Ottaviano Nelli.\footnote{The cycle in Arezzo depicts Dominic’s vision of Peter and Paul and unidentifiable scene, later thirteenth century. The cycle in Bevagna illustrates Dominic’s miracle of the loaves and miracle of the books. Cannon, \textit{Dominican Patronage}, 194; R. Longhi, “La pittura umbra della prima meta del Trecento,” ed. M. Gregori, Paragone, 282-3 (1975), 29. Battistini, “I dipinti mura,” 69-83.}
Joanna Cannon’s study of Dominican patronage in central Italy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the most recent, comprehensive survey of Dominican art, and a useful resource for thinking about trends in the Order’s patronage. Surviving fresco painting in the *cappella maggiore* seem to be the products of local tendencies, while the paucity of nave murals (compared to Franciscan examples) suggests that the Dominicans relied more on preaching than imagery to instruct the laity. Most surviving frescoes located in the naves of Dominican churches are images of saints or the Virgin and Child, rather than narrative subjects.

Beginning around 1300, the Dominican Order favored polyptychs as a visual medium for illustrating the Virgin and important Dominican saints in the *cappella maggiore*. In fact, Cannon has argued that Dominican patronage encouraged the production and experimental design of polyptychs in the Sienese region. Regardless of the chapel’s dedication, the Order often adorned the high altar with a commemorative polyptych, representing images of the Virgin, St. Dominic, and other saints belonging to the Order.

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726 Compared to the Franciscans, the Dominican Order was slow to dedicate churches to St. Dominic, a circumstance that is reflected in the fact that the *cappelle maggiore* in their churches were often dedicated to other saints. Cannon has shown that only half of Dominican churches were dedicated to Dominic by the middle of the fourteenth century. Even the church that housed Dominic’s relics was originally dedicated to another saint, St. Nicholas delle Vigne. The Church of San Nicola delle Vigne was rededicated to Dominic in 1251, but the high altar remained dedicated to St. Nicholas. Cannon, *Religious Poverty*, 95, 145, 278.
Speaking generally, it seems that narrative images of St. Dominic were usually designed for specific audiences, while Franciscan art was aimed at wide audience and appeal.\textsuperscript{729} Narrative episodes from St. Dominic’s life appear frequently in choir books, intended strictly for an audience of friars and viewed in a more intimate context.\textsuperscript{730} On the other hand, the altarpiece by Francesco Traini, made for a private chapel in Santa Caterina in Pisa (c.1345, fig.144), appeals to a lay audience by presenting an uncommon emphasis on the personal biography of St. Dominic.\textsuperscript{731} In particular, the panels highlight healing episodes that would have promoted the saint’s cult to lay viewers.\textsuperscript{732}

The exception to this common pattern in Dominican patronage is the Arca di San Domenico, a monumental image of the saint made for both lay and religious audiences. Yet, even this more public monument differentiated between the episodes visible to the laity and those visible to the friar. Today, the Arca stands in the right aisle of San Domenico in Bologna, but the monument was probably first installed in a location, immediately west of the choir screen.\textsuperscript{733} In this position, the side of the Arca that today faces the nave originally faced the laity.\textsuperscript{734} Cannon has pointed out how the episodes presented to the friars in the choir feature more complex compositions and illustrate episodes that relate to Dominic’s role as founder: the vision of Blessed Reginald and the

\textsuperscript{729} Kennedy, “Sanctity Pictured,” 16.
\textsuperscript{730} Examples include: Gubbio, Archivio Comunale, Cor. D, fol.153v; Cor. C, fol.76v; Perugia, Biblioteca Augusta, MS.2795, fol.46v. Cannon, Religious Poverty, 130-37; ibid., Dominican Patronage, 194-7, 480-91; ibid., Religious Poverty, 119-37.
\textsuperscript{731} Cannon, Religious Poverty, 264-72.
\textsuperscript{732} Cannon interprets the unusual iconography of the altarpiece as a product of the work’s location in a lay space within the church. Cannon, Religious Poverty, 264-69.
\textsuperscript{733} Cannon, “Alter Christus,” 43-44, n.42; Berthier, Le Tombeau de Saint Dominique, 8, 23, n.1, 24. On the multiple translations of the saint, see Moskowitz, Arca di San Domenico, 5-8; Cannon, Dominican Patronage, 169-75.
\textsuperscript{734} For a plan of the Church of San Domenico, with the location of the tramezzo and the Arca, see Cannon, “Dominican Shrines and Urban Pilgrimage,” 145.
papal confirmation of the rule.\(^{735}\) Cordelia Warr has also noted that in the sculpted Vision of Reginald, the Virgin looks downward at Reginald, but extends the habit outward toward the viewer, anticipating the gaze of the friar.\(^ {736}\) On the reverse side of the Arca, the reliefs represent two miraculous events, Dominic’s miracle of the book and his resurrection of Orleans, which might have fostered the cult of the saint among visiting pilgrims.

**Conclusion**

While it remains likely that not every Augustinian cycle has survived to the present day, the pattern observed in the location of extant examples is telling and worthy of investigation. The tendency to present monumental imagery of Augustine to an audience of friars asserted the privileged status of its viewers as the saint’s only true sons. The most frequently represented episodes (the bestowal of the rule and the vestition) formed a suitable backdrop to the recitation of the offices and initiatory rites by reinforcing Augustine’s communal ideal. In addition, the exemplary character of Augustine’s life encouraged the friars to meditate on his life, presented before their eyes on a daily basis.

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\(^{735}\) Cannon, “Alter Christus,” 43-44, n.42.
\(^{736}\) Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*, 97.
CHAPTER 4

St. Augustine as Mendicant Model

The term “mendicant” emerged in the late thirteenth century to describe the four orders that embraced a religious life of pastoral ministry. Derived from the Latin word mendicare (“to beg”), “mendicant” referred specifically to the radical form of poverty, practiced by the followers of Sts. Francis and Dominic. While traditional monks upheld individual vows of poverty by holding all possessions in common, the friars forbade the personal and communal ownership of possessions and property, and required friars to rely solely on begging. The “mendicant” title referred more generally to the friars’ rigorous interpretation of the vita apostolica, as summarized in a passage from Acts 2:42-45:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

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The mendicants maintained the importance of communal living, but they embraced as their fundamental mission the pastoral care of the laity through preaching, hearing confessions, and performing burials. Even as itinerant friars became more rooted in permanent convents over the course of the thirteenth century, they continued to settle in urban centers.\textsuperscript{740}

This chapter explores how the lives of the three principle mendicant founders (Sts. Francis, Dominic, and Augustine) exemplified the mendicant mission, as expressed in both written \textit{vitae} and narrative imagery, with a primary focus on the fourteenth century. In particular, I examine two fundamental components of the mendicant life that distinguished it as a new class of religious order – poverty and preaching. Several scholars have recently questioned the appropriateness of the title “mendicant” to designate the Franciscans and Dominicans, since preaching, not poverty, was the primary component of their identity.\textsuperscript{741} I will expand this discussion to include the Augustinian Hermits by examining how St. Augustine was presented as a model of poverty and preaching in artistic and textual narratives. This study reveals how the Augustinian Hermits approached the challenge of reconciling their mendicant status with the antiquity of their eremitic founder, who had lived centuries before the mendicant movement began. By examining the four orders together, I hope to challenge and deepen our understanding

\textsuperscript{740} For historical background on the emergence of the mendicants, see Lawrence, \textit{The Friars}; Herbert Grundmann, \textit{Religious Movements in the Middle Ages}, trans. Steven Rowan (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1995).

of the title “mendicant,” and reveal the diverse roles of founder saints in exemplifying the mendicant ideals.

The New Class of Religious Order

Papal legislators initially categorized the Franciscans and Dominicans as belonging to a separate type of religious group because of their common commitment to pastoral responsibilities. By the middle of the thirteenth century, the secular clergy had also grouped the two orders together in their critiques of the mendicant lifestyle. The pastoral duties of the mendicant orders attracted congregations away from parish churches belonging to the secular clergy, who initiated a series of attacks throughout the second half of the thirteenth century. In 1255, William of St. Amour, a Master at the University of Paris, published a critique of mendicant poverty in a treatise, titled *Tractatus brevis de periculis novissimorum.* He argued that the complete renunciation of property and the practice of begging were not based on Christ’s teachings.

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742 Papal legislation first grouped the two founding mendicant orders in a bull that granted them the right to hear confessions. Thompson, “The Origins of Religious Mendicancy,” 21-29.
745 Although the papacy denounced William’s treatise in 1256, secular attacks continued throughout the thirteenth century, and provoked responses from several members of both orders. For secular attacks on mendicant poverty and responses by the Franciscan St. Bonaventure and the Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *The Poverty of Riches: St. Francis of Assisi Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 100-104.
In 1255, the Dominican Master General Humbert of Romans and the Franciscan Minister General John of Parma led a joint encyclical, encouraging both orders to support one another. Addressing the Orders as a united pair, the letter reads: “Although your profession differs slightly, you are so similar that we mutually love you as identical creatures.” Several painted panels from the late thirteenth century, including an early *trecento* Madonna in the Uffizi (fig.140), pair Sts. Francis and Dominic as leaders in the face of secular attacks. In the 1270s, the Franciscans and Dominicans faced the additional threat of rival orders. The Second Council of Lyons in 1274 addressed the emergence of several smaller mendicant orders that had adopted the way of life espoused by the Franciscans and Dominicans. Indeed, these new mendicant groups not only stood as competition for the two original orders, but likely threatened to worsen the conflict with the secular clergy. Richard Emery has pointed out that the initial idea to reduce the number of smaller mendicant groups came from the Dominican friar Humbert of Romans.

The first textual reference to a “mendicant” order appears in a late-thirteenth-century source, which describes the four orders included in the 1274 Second Council of

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747 Ibid.
748 Also known as the Contini Bonacossi Madonna, this panel is typically attributed to the workshop of Cimabue. Another example is the Tuscan triptych of the Virgin and Child with Sts. Francis and Dominic at the Yale University Art Museum (1871.4). On the Uffizi panel, see Alessandro Tomei, *Cimabue* (Giunti Editore, 1999), 46; Angelo Tartuferi, *La pittura a Firenze nel Duecento* (A. Bruschi, 1990), 46 97; Gloria Fossi, *Uffizi: arte, storia, collezioni* (Giunti Editore, 2004), 96-97. On the Yale triptych, see Cannon, *Religious Poverty*, fig.188.
750 Ibid., 259.
Lyons. In 1303, the Augustinian Hermits were officially considered part of the same legal category as the Franciscans and Dominicans, and in 1326, the Carmelites joined them. United by a common vocation, the four orders continued to defend their pastoral mission against the secular clergy throughout the fourteenth century, sometimes unifying as a single force to bolster their resistance.

The Meaning of Mendicancy in the Lives of Founder Saints

Poverty

Despite the etymological significance of the term “mendicant,” Dominican hagiography suggests that mendicancy was not the primary component of the Order’s identity. In his examination of the vitae of St. Dominic and other thirteenth-century Dominican saints, Donald Prudlo concluded that the Order’s hagiography did not emphasize poverty or mendicancy as an essential element of their conception of sanctity. St. Dominic and later generations of friars embraced poverty as a means to achieving the ultimate objective: to convert souls to salvation by preaching. He believed that preachers were more successful if they demonstrated austerity and true holiness.

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751 However, “mendicant order” did not form its own legal, papally-sanctioned category until well into the fourteenth century or perhaps even later. Thompson, “The Origins of Religious Mendicancy,” 28-31.
752 Ibid., 27-28. In 1303, Boniface VIII confirmed the Hermits’ full rights to the privileges of preaching, confession, and burial. Inter sollicitudines (8 January 1303), in Alonso, Bullarium, I, 91-92.
through their own actions. The Dominican Constitutions of 1220 reiterated Dominic’s convictions by declaring that the Order was founded “precisely for the sake of preaching and the salvation of souls.”755 Although early Dominican writers elaborate on St. Dominic’s love for poverty, they frame this virtue as a manifestation of the saint’s holiness, and not necessarily a trait to be imitated.756 Instead, the vitae of early Dominican saints highlight humility and obedience as the most important traits of the friars.757 The friar Gerard of Frachet (1203-70) even considered the practice of strict poverty to be a potential impediment to the Order’s overall mission.758

In contrast to the Dominicans, poverty played a central role in the formation of Franciscan identity because of its centrality in Francis’ life and Rule, and the Order’s fervent devotion to the cult of its founder.759 In the two principle vitae of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano’s Second Life (1244-47) and Bonaventure’s Legenda Maior (1263), Francis’ disdain for the material world appears as a running theme throughout his vita.760 Bonaventure describes Francis’ visit to St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, where he is inspired to join beggars outside the church.761 Shortly after, Francis hears an influential sermon that urges him to relinquish his possessions: “Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts – no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for

755 Tugwell, Early Dominicans, 457.
757 For example, mendicancy is hardly mentioned in the vitae of Thomas Aquinas. Prudlo, “Mendicancy among the Early Saints,” 85-116.
760 Bonaventure, Legenda Maior, 1.6.
761 Legend of the Three Companions, 3.10, in Prudlo, “Mendicancy Among Early Saints,” 94.
the worker is worth his keep” (Mat 10:9-10). Perhaps Francis’ most vivid display of his austerity is his renunciation of his father’s inheritance, when he removes his clothing in a public demonstration of his commitment to the mendicant life. The lower church of San Francesco in Assisi depicts the episode as one of only five images, painted along the nave wall (c.1265). The subject reappears in the upper church cycle (c.1300, fig.100), followed by several other fresco cycles: the murals in San Francesco in Gubbio (c.1280), the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce in Florence (1325), and San Francesco in Montefalco (1425).

As Prudlo has demonstrated, St. Francis’ commitment to poverty was unique to himself, and not presented as a common trait in the vitae of other early Franciscan saints. Within a few generations from the time of the early Franciscans, the Order relaxed the strict policy on poverty embraced by their founder. As Minister General of the Order, St. Bonaventure encouraged a moderate stance on communal possessions.

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763 Ibid., 2.4; Blume, *Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda*, 29-32.
765 Ibid., 23-25; 32-35.
Beginning in the 1270s, poverty came to the forefront of the discussion about the Franciscan life with the emergence of the Spirituals, a branch of Franciscans who endorsed a return to absolute poverty based on Francis’ Rule. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Franciscan Order, known as the Conventuals, argued for the validity of limited possession of goods. Although Pope John XXII excommunicated the Spirituals in the 1320s, this dispute resulted in the permanent division of the Franciscan Order into two branches, the Conventuals and Observants. Rona Goffen has argued that the presentation of St. Francis in the Bardi chapel as a model of both poverty and preaching reflected the efforts of the Conventual Franciscans at Santa Croce to make peace with the Spirituals. Designed in the midst of these conflicts, the seven frescoes illustrate only one episode related to the saint’s poverty (the renunciation of worldly goods). At the core of Goffen’s argument is her interpretation of Giotto’s *Apparition at Arles* (fig.141), where the active gestures of Anthony of Padua are given central focus and serve as a compliment to the contemplative figure of the friar Monaldo. The two Franciscan friars represent a balanced vision of the Franciscan friar, as both ascetic and preacher.

While the Franciscan tradition illustrates Francis’ love of poverty in dramatic anecdotes from his *vita*, artistic images of St. Dominic focus on the divine approval of this mendicant practice. For example, the miracle of the bread first appears in the

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773 Ibid., 59-77.
documentary record of Dominic’s canonization process.\textsuperscript{774} The friar Buonviso of Piacenza provides an eyewitness account of how bread miraculously appeared in his convent’s refectory. When Dominic learned that there was no bread for the friars, he praised the Lord, and suddenly two men entered the refectory with abundant baskets of bread.\textsuperscript{775} Other written accounts of this miracle recall Dominic’s instructions to the friars to pray, so that the Lord will provide.\textsuperscript{776} Recalling Christ’s miracle of the loaves and the last supper, the miracle of St. Dominic focuses on God’s divine sanction of the mendicant life. The earliest surviving image of St. Dominic (c.1230-40, fig.142) depicts this episode on a wooden panel, which is believed to be the original refectory table used by Dominic to serve the miraculous bread to his brethren.\textsuperscript{777} The haloed figure of Dominic sits in the center of a long panel, surrounded by his seated brethren, with bread before them.\textsuperscript{778} The table resides in the place where the miracle supposedly took place, the Bolognese house of Santa Maria della Mascarella.\textsuperscript{779} The Dominicans first resided in Santa Maria della Mascarella, before moving to the convent of St. Nicholas delle Vigne in 1219. The subject’s representation in later cycles, including Dominic’s official tomb monument, attests to the popularity of this miraculous story.\textsuperscript{780}

\textsuperscript{774} For a discussion of the textual record, see Cannon, “Dominic ‘Alter Christus’?,” 33-38.
\textsuperscript{775} Ibid., 33-34.
\textsuperscript{776} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{778} For a discussion of Dominic as a Christ-like figure in this image, see Cannon, “Dominic ‘Alter Christus’,” 26-48
\textsuperscript{779} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{780} For a discussion of the relief of the Mirror of the Bread located on the Arca, see Ibid., 33-48; Moskowitz, Nicola Pisano’s Arca, 11. The episode is also included in the early-fourteenth-century cycle in SS. Domenico e Giacomo in Bevagna and the early fifteenth-century cycle in San Domenico in Fano by Ottaviano Nelli. For the Fano cycle, see Battistini, “I dipinti murali,” 69-83. For the Bevagna cycle, see Cannon, Dominican Patronage, 194.
In contrast to the Franciscans and Dominicans, mendicancy was not fundamental to the late medieval beginnings of the Augustinian Hermits, who originated from disparate religious groups with divergent policies regarding property possession. Nor was mendicant poverty essential to the life and teachings of their founder, since the Rule of St. Augustine allowed common property to be distributed according to need. Instead, as we will see, the efforts of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century prior generals to enforce strict poverty were motivated by a desire to fit in with their fellow mendicants, to maintain mendicant privileges, to create uniformity, and to avoid dispute from the laity or secular clergy regarding their mendicant status.

The variation in poverty policies among the five groups included in the Great Union of 1256 perhaps inevitably became the subject of considerable dispute, initiated by friars who wished to enforce a strict stance on the ownership of possessions. In 1257, Alexander IV attempted to resolve the dispute with the papal bull *Ils quae nostri*, which defended the right to common possessions in adherence to the Rule of Augustine, and permitted monasteries to maintain, acquire, or dispose of communal property as they saw fit. In essence, the bull granted the right of individual houses to decide whether to hold common possessions or to live as a true “mendicant” order.

Despite the flexibility provided by the 1257 papal privilege, Augustinian prior generals continued their efforts to enforce absolute poverty, beginning in 1284 and continuing into the fourteenth century. The prior general Clement of Osimo (1271-4,

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781 On the policies of individual groups included in the Great Union, see Andrews, *Other Friars*, 72-83.
1284-91) attempted to fix reported abuses by adopting a uniform policy on poverty at the general chapter of 1290 in Regensburg. This chapter approved the Order’s official Constitutions, which required monasteries to rely on alms and discouraged common possessions despite papal privilege. The acts of the general chapter meeting suggest that the 1290 legislation came from a desire to establish uniformity across the Order, rather than a theological concern about the correct interpretation of apostolic poverty.

In 1318, Alexander of San Elpidio (1269-1326) revived a program of reform, partly aimed at the practice of absolute poverty. He proclaimed that the Order should not make use of its papal privilege and urged the few monasteries that owned common possessions to denounce them. Alexander also expressed his concern that the Hermits might not be able to enjoy mendicant privileges if they did not practice pure mendicancy. Fulgence Mathes has interpreted Alexander’s comments as a response to the controversy surrounding the Spirituals. The Hermits viewed the papally-approved definition of Franciscan poverty as a model for their own practices. The bull *Exiit qui seminat* (1279), which defined poverty for the Franciscans, praised total renunciation of possessions as in accordance with Christ’s teaching.

William of Cremona (1326-44) continued these efforts to reform abuses to poverty, as did Gregory of Rimini (c.1300-58), who adopted a more lax interpretation of

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785 *Constitutiones*, XLII-XLV.
786 “We define that our order should be uniform, and that all our houses rest on the foundation of poverty.” Mathes, “The Poverty Movement,” 31 (1968): 78; Cannon, *Dominican Patronage of the Arts*.
788 Ibid., 106-07.
mendicant poverty by recognizing the lawfulness of common ownership of possessions. According to Gregory, this policy was not in contradiction of the Order’s Rule and Constitutions, nor the papal privilege of 1257. While the Hermits felt the pressure to conform to the policies of the other mendicant orders, Gregory of Rimini’s legislation reveals that definitions of poverty remained fluid even among the Order’s leadership. The Order’s policies, which depended largely on the particular prior general, were not universally agreed-upon.

In late medieval and fourteenth-century vitae of St. Augustine, poverty was emphasized as crucial to his institution of the common religious life, but not necessarily a required personal trait. Possidius, who devotes most of his biography to Augustine’s preaching against heresy, includes only brief notes about the saint’s modesty regarding food, clothing, and accepting gifts. His most extensive reference comes after Augustine’s conversion and baptism, when he gave up all his possessions to follow Christ. Possidius quotes the biblical verse where Christ tells the disciples to sell all their goods and give alms (Luke 12:33). Possidius also notes that the principle rule of Augustine’s community was that no one should possess anything of his own, but hold all possessions in common. In the Golden Legend, Jacobus da Voragine devotes a similar passage to the subject of Augustine’s austerity. He illustrates the saint’s denial of material goods by

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790 For more on William of Cremon and Gregory of Rimini, see Gutiérrez, The Augustinians in the Middle Ages, 1256-1356, 81-82; ibid., The Augustinians in the Middle Ages, 1357-1517, 15-16. On Gregory of Rimini’s wider program of reform, see Saak, High Way to Heaven, 315-44.
792 Possidius, Sancti Augustini Vita, 42-45.
793 Jacobus da Voragine, Golden Legend, 502-518.
citing a passage from Augustine’s *Soliloquies*, in which the saint renounced all desires for wealth, a wife, and worldly honor.\(^{794}\)

Henry of Freimar’s treatise on the Order’s origins makes hardly any explicit mention of poverty. But he refers to poverty, at least implicitly, in his assertion that Augustine praised the eremitic way of life (founded on the renunciation of goods) and instituted the way of life established by the Apostles (based on the common ownership of possessions).\(^{795}\) However, nowhere does Henry indicate that Augustine’s community was modeled on a form of poverty followed by the mendicants. Henry closes his treatise with a list of prior generals, followed by a series of brief notes on members of the Order, who were known for their holiness.\(^{796}\) In his section on prior generals, poverty does not figure prominently among his series of admirable qualities, which include prudence, eloquence, reverence, clarity of teaching, and zeal for the good of the Order.\(^{797}\) Meanwhile, the holy men are admired more for their miracles than earthly behavior.\(^{798}\)

Other contemporary texts reveal a similar trend. Based largely on Possidus and the *Golden Legend*, the anonymous *Vita Aurelii* alludes to Augustine’s poverty only in his emphasis on the eremitical life.\(^{799}\) Similarly, in the *Initium*, poverty is implied as a part of the apostolic life taken up by the earliest Hermits. In his list of the twelve prior generals, the author praises them mostly for their perfection of teaching and wisdom.\(^{800}\)

\(^{794}\) Ibid., 517-518.  
\(^{795}\) Henry of Freimar, *Treatise*, 200-21, 103-22.  
\(^{796}\) Ibid., 110-22.  
\(^{797}\) Ibid., 110-19.  
\(^{798}\) Ibid., 120-22.  
\(^{799}\) Arbesmann, “*Vita Aurelii,*” 319-55.  
In his sermon on Augustine, Nicholas of Alessandria calls Augustine a lover of poverty in direct reference to his Rule. 801

The collection of fourteenth-century sermons edited by Balbino Rano also provides insight into how contemporary Hermits viewed the role of poverty in Augustine’s life. 802 The Rule of Augustine is the most frequently cited example of Augustine’s denial of the material world. In several instances, Henry of Freimar draws attention to the fact that Augustine not only preached and practiced apostolic poverty, but also instituted it with his Rule. 803 As he puts it: “For mightily he looked down upon the riches of the world, since he was the most able follower of apostolic poverty, which he kept in himself, and instituted.” 804 An anonymous sermon echoes Henry’s remarks, noting that Augustine taught and explained poverty by both his example and his words when he wrote and promulgated the Rule. 805

In the Liber Vitasfratrum (c.1357), Jordan of Quedlinburg’s lengthy discussion of the Order’s poverty policies betrays a greater cognizance of the need to defend the mendicant ideal and the status of the Hermits as mendicant. 806 Jordan traces the

801 Nicholas of Alessandria, Sermo, 247.
802 Rano, “San Agustin y su Orden,” 5-93.
803 Ibid., 28-29: “Ipse, exemplo Christi, fuit omnium rerum perfectissimus abdicator, quia omnia voluntaria contempsit, ut exemplo pauperatis Christi possit perfectius conformari, cuius quidem voluntariae paupertatis non solum fuit fervens imitator, sed diligens institutor, quia in sua Regula mandavit omnibus suis sectatoribus districte servare paupertatem Christi, quam nobis exemplariter in seipso ostendit. […] non solum fuit imitator [paupertatis evangelicae], sed etiam praeccepto et institutor, eius observantiam mandans omnibus suam Regula profitemitus.” Ibid., 31: “Inter apostolos [Augustinus] respersit odorem voluntariae paupertatis per vitam apostolicam, quam elegit et instituit.”
804 Ibid., 22: “Potenter etiam despexit mundi divitas, quia fuit potissimus spectator apostolicae paupertatis, quam in ipso servavit, et servanda alius instituit.”
805 Ibid., 74: 84.
806 Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 301-56. Mathes has proposed that Jordan’s lengthy discussion of poverty in the Liber Vitasfratrum was in part a defense of the attack on the mendicant orders led by Richard FitzRalph in 1350. Saak disagrees with Mathes’ conclusions. He points out that FitzRalph’s attack focused less on apostolic poverty and more on the mendicant privileges of hearing confessions and
mendicant tradition back to Christ, who embodied evangelical poverty by practicing and teaching it. Jordan credits Augustine with the restoration and renovation of apostolic poverty by instituting the lifestyle described in the Acts of the Apostles. While the Rules of Basil and Benedict permitted the ownership of estates and the Rule of Francis forbade the acceptance of proceeds from sale, the Rule of Augustine fell somewhere in between, because it allowed common ownership, but not private ownership of possessions. Jordan emphasizes the Rule’s contribution to the preservation of apostolic poverty, as a kind of precursor to mendicant poverty. The friar Geoffrey Hardeby (c.1320-c.1385) had also pointed out that Augustine practiced and established the tradition of eremitic poverty long before Sts. Francis and Dominic.

Writing at the height of the poverty controversy, Jordan tries to reconcile a host of concerns – defense of the mendicant ideal, defense of the Order’s mendicant status, poverty as defined by the Rule of Augustine, the Order’s actual practice of poverty, papal decree, and the policy of their fellow mendicants. First, he recognizes the Rule’s flexible stance on the ownership of possessions. He believes that the common ownership of possessions did not violate the Rule, nor was it essential to observing the Rule. The number of different orders (mendicant and monastic) that followed the Rule demonstrated that a religious community could effectively adhere to the Augustinian Rule, regardless of whether it shared common possessions. Nevertheless, Jordan admits

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807 Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 303.
that it seems more in line with the spirit of the Rule to renounce one’s possessions. On the one hand, he argues that common ownership in and of itself would not conflict with the mendicant status of the Hermits, since that policy does not violate their Rule, Constitutions, or profession (as it might for the other mendicants). On the other hand, he concludes that the Hermits should not take advantage of their right to own common possessions for two reasons – because a preacher ought to be without all possessions and the Hermits should avoid scandal by preserving its reputation as a mendicant order.810

The Augustinian artistic tradition shares several points of contact with its textual one. Artistic cycles of St. Augustine’s life include no biographical episodes that explicitly illustrate his poverty. As a result, only the ubiquitous image of Augustine’s bestowal of the Rule can be read as an implicit illustration of the ideal of poverty. This pictorial trend mirrors the textual sources, which place less emphasis on the saint’s personal asceticism, and more on the importance of poverty in the communal ideal, as established by his Rule. It is noteworthy that many images of Augustine bestowing the Rule illustrate not merely an exchange of the book, but also the communal life shared between Augustine and his brethren. In Guairotto’s fresco in Padua (fig. 17), friars engage in various communal activities, such as worshipping and conversing. In Bartolo di Fredi’s fresco of the same subject (fig. 53), the presence of hermits in the desert landscape reminds the viewer that Augustine not only instituted the common life, but practiced it by living in community with the hermits.811 In Gozzoli’s frescoes in San Gimignano (fig. 91), the artist alludes to

810 Ibid., 316-19.
the friars’ physical and spiritual communion by the presence of the hilltop monastery, and the gathering of Augustine and his friars in the foreground.

Preaching

St. Dominic’s first encounter with the heretical Cathars, during a political mission in southern France, inspired him to devote his life to preaching, specifically in defense of the faith against heretical sects. Following their founder’s footsteps, the Dominicans directed their attention to training preachers, and, by 1231, papal inquisitors. Once again, artistic images of St. Dominic as a preacher focus on the divine sanction of his pastoral mission through the representation of a miracle. In his Libellus, Jordan of Saxony describes Dominic’s disputation with the Cathars in Fanjeux, in southern France. According to Jordan, Dominic cast one of his authored books into the fire to prove its doctrinal truth. While the heretical texts were consumed by the fire, Dominic’s book survived the flames three times. Nicola Pisano gives the miracle of the book prominent placement on the long side of the Arca di San Domenico (fig.143). Nicola shows Dominic holding his book above a fire, while observers point to the saint in awe of his miraculous demonstration. Francesco Traini included the episode in the multi-paneled

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812 For a more detailed account of Dominic’s early life, see Lawrence, The Friars, 65-88.
815 Jordan of Saxony, Libellus, 24-25.
altarpiece made for a private chapel in Santa Caterina in Pisa (c.1345, figs.144-45). The book hovers over a flame, separating the heretical Cathars from St. Dominic and a fellow friar.

The sculpted Arca and the Traini altarpiece represent another testament to the Order’s divine approval in the Vision of Sts. Peter and Paul. Nicola Pisano shows the saint kneeling before the two Apostles of the Church, receiving the staff and book, two symbols of the pastoral mission (fig.146). Constantine d’Orvieto’s Legenda (c.1247) reports that following the appearance of Peter and Paul, Dominic envisioned his followers spreading the Gospel throughout the world. In the adjacent relief on the Arca, Dominic is shown delivering the book to a kneeling friar, as he charges him to go out and preach. Here, Dominic’s preaching is evidenced not by the saint’s own example, but rather by his obedient execution of the divine command. Together, the miracle of the book and the vision of Peter and Paul refer to two key aspects of the Dominican mission – the defense against heresy and the preaching for the salvation of souls.

Led by Master General Raymond of Capua (c.1350-1399), who called for a strict program of reform in 1390, the Dominican Observance strove to replace the Order’s strong focus on study with a greater emphasis on pastoral ministry. The Observant branch considered its members to be true sons of St. Dominic because they observed the Order’s Rule and Constitutions more closely than the rest of the Dominican Order.

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817 Ibid., 131; Moskowitz, Nicola Pisano’s Arca, 12. Other examples of this image can be found in the damaged cycle on the north nave wall of San Domenico in Arezzo (c.1290), Ottaviano Nelli’s frescoes in Fano, and numerous choir book illuminations.
818 On the legend, as recorded in Constantine d’Orvieto’s Legenda (c.1247), see Vicaire, Histoire de saint Dominique, vol.2, 83-4; Mulchaney, “First the Bow is Bent in Study,” 24-25.
819 Hood, Fra Angelico, 22-27.
referred to as the Conventuals. Raymond described the dual objective of Observant friars as practicing regular observance and working for the salvation of souls. He instructed the Observant friars “simply to follow in the footsteps of our saintly forefathers in the Order – the men who founded it and developed it in coherent fashion.” In their efforts to return to the Order’s more pristine origins, the Observants revived the interest in representing artistic images of Dominic’s life. Fra Angelico (c.1395-1455) alone created three altarpieces for Observant houses, each including biographical episodes from the life of St. Dominic in their predellas. His Coronation altarpiece, originally located on a tramezzo altar in San Domenico in Fiesole (1432-34, figs.147-50), provided the visual source for the later altarpiece from San Domenico in Cortona (c.1437). Both predellas depict the vision of Peter and Paul and the miracle of the book. Together with the miracle of the bread, these selected episodes speak to Raymond of Capua’s emphasis on the fundamental preaching ministry of the Observant Dominicans.

In contrast to St. Dominic, Francis did not have a formal education, nor did he emphasize fighting against heresy. In fact, Francis warned against overemphasis on learning, although fourteenth-century Franciscans embraced theological training as a

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820 Huijbers, “‘Observance’ as Paradigm,” 132.
821 Ibid.
823 Lawrence Kanter and Pia Palladino, ed., Fra Angelico (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 59-78; 178-79; Hood, Fra Angelico at San Marco, 66-72, 77-82. As for the third altarpiece, Lawrence Kanter has proposed that the Miracle of the Bread (Staatgalerie in Stuutgart) might have been part of a single predella along with two other panels: the Dream of Innocent III and the Vision of Sts. Peter and Paul (Yale University Art Gallery) and Christ on the Cross with Saints (Metropolitan Museum of Art). See Kanter, “Cat.37C,” in Fra Angelico, 217-221.
necessary part of the friars’ education.\footnote{Michael W. Blastic, “Preaching in the Early Franciscan Movement,” in \textit{Franciscans and Preaching}, ed. Timothy Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 15-40; Carolyn Muessig, “Bernardino da Siena and Observant Preaching as a Vehicle for Religious Transformation,” in \textit{A Companion to Observant Reform}, ed. James D. Mixson and Bert Roest (Leiden: Boston, 2015), 185-203.} Instead, Francis’ preaching was the product of prayer and divine illumination.\footnote{Brooke, \textit{Image of St. Francis}, 267.} Images of Francis’ preaching often highlight the miraculous result of his abilities. In a particularly common subject for representation, St. Francis shares the Gospel with a group of birds, who flutter their wings in response to hearing his blessing (fig.151).\footnote{Bonaventure, \textit{Legenda Maior}, 8} In addition to demonstrating the saint’s well-known affection for the created world, the anecdote illustrates his desire to preach to all levels of society, symbolized by the assortment of birds described in Bonaventure’s account.\footnote{Ibid; Frugoni, \textit{Francesco e l’invenzione della stimmate}, 236-53.} Thirteenth-century \textit{vita} panels testify to the popularity of the episode in early Franciscan iconography. In Bonaventura Berlinghieri’s panel (1235, fig.152) for the church of San Francesco in Pescia, this episode appears along with the stigmatization and four posthumous miracles.\footnote{Ibid., 321-56; Brooke, \textit{Image of St. Francis}, 168-72.} The scene appears again in Giotto’s \textit{vita} panel for San Francesco in Pisa (c.1300) and the altarpiece from San Francesco in Pistoia (c.1250).\footnote{On Giotto’s panel, see Brooke, \textit{Image of St. Francis}, 172-73; Gardner, “The Louvre Stigmatization,” 217-47; Donal Cooper, “Redefining the Altarpiece in Early Renaissance Italy: Giotto’s Stigmatization of Saint Francis and its Pisan Context,” \textit{Art History} 36.4 (Sept 2013): 686-713. On the role of these \textit{vita} panels in early Franciscan art, see Bradley Franco, “The Functions of Early Franciscan Art,” in \textit{The World of St. Francis of Assisi}, ed. Bradley Franco and Beth Mulvaney (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 19-44.} The episode remained popular in monumental fresco decoration of the Renaissance, appearing in the influential cycle in the upper church at Assisi (c.1300), and, over a century later, in the \textit{cappella maggiore} of San Francesco in Montefalco (1425).\footnote{Ahl, \textit{Benozzo Gozzoli}, 41-80; Ibid., “Benozzo Gozzoli’s cycle of the Life of Saint Francis ,” 191-213; Morghen, “Tradizione religiosa e Rinascimento,” 149-56.}
A range of other anecdotes from Bonaventure’s *Legenda Maior* illustrate different facets of Francis’ preaching. In the episode known as the trial by fire, Francis visited Sultan Al Kamil of Egypt during the Fifth Crusade (1213-1221). Following an unsuccessful attempt to travel to Jerusalem, Bonaventure reports that Francis challenged the Sultan’s priests to walk through fire to prove the veracity of the Gospel. Giotto’s fresco on the right wall of the Bardi chapel (fig.153) shows the enthroned Sultan gesturing to his priests, who shudder in fear of the flames. While Bonaventure records that the Sultan refused Francis’ offer, later sources claim that Francis successfully withstood the fire. Bonaventure does add that the Sultan eventually was converted in secret as a result of Francis’ visit. In another legend, known as the crib at Greccio (fig.122), Francis created the first Nativity scene to celebrate the Christmas season. According to the first record of the miracle in Thomas of Celano’s *First Life* (1230), a knight named John saw a vision of Francis embracing a live child in the manger, attesting to the powerful effects of the sermon that Francis had just preached.

The pastoral mission was not an inherent part of the Hermits’ late medieval history, as it was for the Franciscans and Dominicans. The Hermits faced the challenge of explaining how their eremitic origins (and Augustine’s embrace of the eremitic life)

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835 Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior*, IX.7-8; Dodson, “Trial by Fire, 76.
contributed to their current identity as mendicant preachers. Henry of Freimar explained the transition from eremitic to mendicant as a natural step in the Order’s evolution, rather than a change in its essence. He implies that Alexander IV’s call into the cities “for the strengthening of faith and morals” was a response to of the changing the needs of the time.  

Henry explains that St. Augustine appeared to Pope Alexander IV in a vision, urging him to reunite his original eremitic community and join them to other similar eremitical groups. This vision moved Alexander IV to unite the Hermits with other eremitical orders, and proclaim that whichever friars were “suited to nourishing the people through the teaching of God’s word ought to live in the cities and provide the people of God with exemplary life, sound teaching, and confessions.”

The inclusion of Augustine’s miraculous appearance in Henry’s account grants agency to the saint, as if the modern transition of the order from eremitic dwellers to mendicant preachers came originally from the founder himself. Henry mentions prayer and the study of Scripture, but not apostolic evangelism, as a fundamental aspect of the monasteries established by Augustine. However, he does cite a passage from the apocalyptic writings of the mystic Joachim di Fiore (c.1135-1202), whose prophecy alludes to both the eremitic past and mendicant future of the Order:

An order will arise which seems new and yet is not. Dressed in black habits, girded by a belt, that is, a cincture, these will spring up and their fame will spread far and wide. In the spirit of Elijah they will preach the faith which they will also

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defend even to the end of the world. […] Rejoice, therefore, you hermits, whose father is Paul the first hermit. 843

In this excerpt, Joachim endorses the Order’s claim to descend from the ancient hermit Paul, and references its preaching mission, which easily could be interpreted as a prefiguration of their activities as mendicants.

Jordan of Quedlinburg shows a greater awareness of the need to link the founder of the Hermits to the mendicant mission. He asserts that the pastoral ministry of the mendicants originated with St. Augustine, who imitated Christ’s perfect combination of the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. 844 He also argues that Christ, who followed his retreat to the desert and mountain with a more public mission of preaching, provided an ideal model of the passage from solitude to preaching. Similarly, Bishop Augustine often retreated to dwell among his brothers in the wilderness, and then returned to the community of his episcopal monastery. Jordan adds that Augustine taught the hermits in his second monastery in Hippo to study and meditate on Scripture, in order to put forth to others what they have learned in solitude. 845 Therefore, Jordan concludes that Augustine originally gave the Order the duty of preaching and hearing confessions, which the Church subsequently confirmed these rights through their mendicant transformation. 846 In his iconographic program described in the *Metrum*, Jordan includes an episode, where

844 Jordan of Quedlinburg, *Life of the Brethren*, 84-86.
846 Jordan of Quedlinburg, *Life of the Brethren*, 108. Jordan argues that the move to the city lifted the Order to a greater state of perfection, because it charged the brothers to serve the Church, rather than live for themselves. Ibid., 100-101.
Augustine bestows to his sons the right to preach and hear confessions. In this way, Jordan frames the thirteenth-century papal command as a return to the original state of the Order.

Other Hermit authors also credited Augustine with founding the apostolic mission of preaching. In a sermon, the German preacher Hermán de Schildesche (d.1357) claimed that Augustine had pursued an anchoritic life, until God revealed to him that he should live for Christ by evangelizing and living in a community. During the fifteenth century, Ambrosius de Cora presented a similar version of this argument in his Chronica (1481), by claiming that the Hermits were the first fathers to preach the Gospel.

The Order’s emphasis on theological study and pastoral ministry conveniently coincided with the legacy of their founder saint, who left behind a wealth of surviving sermons. The first generation of Augustinian friars might not have been inherent preachers, but Augustine was a preacher at heart. Anecdotes of his encounters with heretics fill the pages of Possidius’ biography, which recounts his battles with the Manichean Fortunatus, the Donatist Bishop Emeritus of Caesarea, and the Arian Pascentius. Possidius reports that the earlier Bishop of Hippo, Valerius, had granted...
Augustine the right to preach as a priest, contrary to custom. The *Golden Legend* also praises Augustine for his wisdom, defense of the faith against heretics (in verbal and written disputations), and subtle expounding of Scripture.853

A number of fourteenth-century sermons elaborate on Augustine’s role as an exemplary doctor and preacher as one of his singular qualities to be imitated by the friars. In five sermons addressed to the clergy, the friar Augustine of Ancona (1243-1328) presents Augustine as an Apostle of preaching.854 He distinguishes three principle reasons for Augustine’s excellence above all other doctors: his understanding of the mystery of the Trinity, his acuity and perfection of his understanding, and his subtle exposition of sacred Scripture.855

In their artistic commissions, the Hermits illustrate the importance of their preaching mission through Augustine’s personal narrative, where his example attests to the power of preaching both before and after his conversion. As a receptive listener of Ambrose’ preaching and active preacher against heresy, Augustine’s apostolic ministry is motivated by his own errant ways before his conversion. In Bartolo di Fredi’s frescoes in Montalcino, the *Preaching of Ambrose* appears prominently in the central lunette (fig.50), where Augustine exemplifies the power of effective preaching as an intent listener. Ottaviano Nelli also gives the episode visible placement in the *cappella maggiore* of Sant’Agostino in Gubbio, where the upper part of the apse wall shows Augustine listening to Ambrose’s sermon and discussing doctrine with the bishop (figs.55, 65, 66).

855 Ibid.
Later on in the cycle, Augustine himself disputes a heretic, reversing his own former sins (fig.74). In Nelli’s *Refutation of Fortunatus*, friars witness the saint’s preaching, a right that he himself had bestowed to them. Images of Augustine as teacher follow the same narrative pattern. On the Arca di Sant’Agostino, Augustine appears as secular teacher of rhetoric on the north end of the Arca (fig.38), and as sacred doctor in the *Bestowal of the Rule* (fig.43). The similarity in composition draws an obvious visual parallel between the two reliefs.

In San Gimignano, the altar wall depicts Augustine as both converted and converter through the repetition of visual elements. The left side of the apse wall, in particular, presents a striking vertical alignment of episodes. In the lowest register, St. Monica prays at an altar for the salvation of her son, as he departs for Italy in the next fresco (figs.82-83). The middle register depicts the *tolle lege* (fig.89), where Augustine sits reading the Book of Romans. The lunette in the upper register shows the saint refuting the heretic Fortunatus (fig.93). Some versions of the episode credited Augustine with not merely refuting Fortunatus’ heretical pronouncement, but actually converting him to the Christian faith. An enigmatic figure in red, who appears in the background of both the *Tolle Lege* and *Refutation of Fortunatus*, connects the two episodes as visual pairs. The figure seems to play no function in the individual narratives, but serves as a visual marker between the two frescoes. Gozzoli illustrates another aspect of the saint’s pastoral ministry with the less common subject of the *Blessing of the Faithful in Hippo* in the right lunette (fig.95). More than their fellow Observants in other mendicant orders,
the Reformed Augustinian friars embraced a complementary life that combined the eremitical tradition with the active life of pastoral and academic work.  

Augustine’s reputation as a fierce defender of the faith remained relevant in fourteenth-century Europe, where the mendicant orders served as papal proxies in the ongoing battle against active heretical groups.  

Claudio Lugato has connected the image of Augustine preaching in Rimini (fig.33), which is one of only three episodes in this cycle, to the Hermits’ struggle against heretical sects in this city. The mendicant orders in Rimini acted as extensions of the papal government in its battle against the Catari, Patarani, Patarini, and Manichi. Placed below the Resurrection of Drusiana (fig.31), where the Malatesta rulers appear among the crowd of observers, the Preaching of Augustine reminds the friars of their role as the religious counterparts of the city’s political rulers. Sharon Dale has connected the Arca’s relief of St. Augustine’s Refutation of Fortunatus to the Church’s battle against the Pelagians at the time of the monument’s execution. Pelagianism was one of the most active heresies during Augustine’s time, and experienced a revival of sorts in the middle of the fourteenth century, when Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury, defended Christian Doctrine by using Augustine’s own arguments.

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856 Walsh, “Papal Policy and Local Reform. b) Congregatio Illicetana,” 142.
858 Lugato, “La Comunità Agostiniana,” 317; Turchini et al., Il Trecento riminese, 12-13, 30.
859 Dale, Arca di Sant’Agostino, 126.
860 Ibid.; Leff, Heresy in the Later Middle Ages, 301-14.
The life of St. Nicola da Tolentino (1246-1305), the other major saint belonging to the order, also illustrated the importance of education and preaching. The remarkably well-preserved fresco program in the chapter house of the Augustinian friary in Tolentino (1320-25) shows Nicolas attending school as a child (fig.154). In a subsequent scene, Nicholas listens to a sermon delivered by an Augustinian friar before receiving the habit (fig.161), imitating the sequence of events in the story of the Order’s founder. In his vita of Nicolas (c.1326), Pietro di Monterubbiano records that Nicholas heard a verse that moved him to enter the religious life, a detail repeated in the Liber Vitaefratrum.

Augustine’s early life was not a particularly holy one in the traditional hagiographic sense of the word, and even following his conversion, he was revered primarily for his written legacy, rather than his exemplary behavior. Augustine’s preaching episodes are not notable for their connection to miracles, like images of St. Francis and St. Dominic. Aside from the Golden Legend, on which the Fabriano cycle

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864 Jordan of Quedlinburg, Life of the Brethren, 332.

865 For a study of the conventional modes of early medieval hagiographies and artistic cycles, see Hahn, “Picturing the Text,” 1-32.

866 In contrast, the episodes depicted on the predella of Fra Angelico’s Cortona polyptych are almost all miracles or visions: Pope Innocent III’s Dream of the Lateran, the Meeting of Sts. Francis and Dominic,
is based, the texts and cycles examined here place little emphasis on Augustine’s miracles.\footnote{On the specific episodes represented in the Fabriano cycle, see Marcelli, “Devozione e propaganda agostiniana,” 164-179; ibid., “Devozione e propaganda agostiniana: gli affreschi di Fabriano,” 49-56; Cleri, “La Forza di Persuasione di Sant’Agostino,” 43-50.} Even the miracle reliefs decorating the Arca di Sant’Agostino are, primarily, specific to Pavia and occupy a smaller space than the larger rectangular reliefs. This notable absence of miracles can be explained in part by the fact that the Hermits did not need to promote Augustine’s cult or canonization, as was the case with early Franciscan and Dominican programs. Nor were the Hermits compelled to justify the creation of a new class of religious order in quite the same way as the Franciscans and Dominicans, who represented miraculous episodes as visible signs of God’s approval of their mendicant mission.\footnote{On the development of the legendary dream of the Lateran in iconography, see Cannon, Dominican Patronage, 180, n.35. On the iconography of the papal confirmation of the rule, see Doandieu-Rigaut, Penser en images, 158-204. On the papal significance of the frescoes in the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi, see Cooper and Robson, The Making of Assisi.} As Rosalind Brooke has pointed out, these papal connections emphasized the papacy’s support of the mendicant ideal in the face of secular attacks.\footnote{Silvia Nocentini, “Mendicancy in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries: ‘Ubi necessitas non urgeat’: the Preachers Facing the ‘refrigescens caritas’,” in The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies, ed. Donald Prudlo (Boston: Brill, 2011), 338.} In his response to William of St. Amour’s attack, Bonaventure argued that the Franciscan policy on poverty was based on an agreement between the friars and the pope.\footnote{Brooke, Image of St. Francis, 189-90.} 

While the Hermits seem to have made little attempt to highlight Augustine’s poverty in artistic imagery, they do reveal an interest in illustrating Augustine’s mystical experiences, likely in response to contemporary mysticism. As Donal Cooper has shown, the Hermits appealed to the expectations of the lay believer, like Franciscan images of the Vision of Peter and Paul, the Resurrection of Orsini, the Miracle of the Book and the Miracle of the Bread. The only other image depicted on this predella is the death of the saint. Kanter and Palladino, Fra Angelico, 218-9.

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stigmatization. Visionary episodes became increasingly popular in fifteenth-century cycles. Benozzo Gozzoli includes three visionary episodes – the Parable of the Trinity (fig.91), the Vision at Ostia (fig.92), and the Vision of St. Jerome (fig.94) in the cycle at San Gimignano. Likewise, Nelli’s cycle in Gubbio includes Augustine’s Vision of St. John the Baptist and his Vision of the Trinity. At Lecceto, the second fresco in the lower register shows fragments of Augustine in his study and may also depict the vision of St. Jerome. Aside from the tolle lege, these visions are among the relatively rare examples of miraculous events represented in these artistic cycles.

The Carmelite Order

The Carmelite founder, Elijah, did not provide an obvious connection between his eremitic lifestyle in the desert and the mendicant modus vivendi imposed upon the late medieval Order. Nor did the original Carmelite rule allow for the communal dwelling of the typical friary. In 1247, the papal bull Quae honorem conditoris amended the Carmelite Rule so that the friars could live “in solitary places, where you are given a site that is suitable and convenient for the observance proper to your Order.”

The Carmelite Order linked itself to the mendicant tradition by employing images of papal approval in the tradition of the Franciscans and Dominicans. On Pietro Lorenzetti’s predella (figs.114-18), episodes from the Holy Land are paired with two

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871 Cooper, “St. Augustine’s Ecstasy,” 188-204.
873 Some fourteenth-century Carmelites such as Philip Ribot argued for a connection between prophetic ministry and mendicancy. Jotischky, Carmelites and Antiquity, 145.
874 Andrews, The Other Friars, 15. This bull also required the Order to adopt a more mendicant view of property ownership and embrace elements of the communal life. For an overview of the history of the Carmelite Order’s transition into a mendicant order, see ibid., 22-68.
scenes of papal approval. Donadieu-Rigaut has shown that the choice of popes highlights the Order’s inclusion among the mendicants.\textsuperscript{875} The fresco painted by Fra Filippo Lippi in the cloister of Santa Maria del Carmine (c.1432, fig.156) also pairs an image of Elijah’s foundation site on Mt. Carmel in the background, with an episode of papal confirmation in the lower foreground.\textsuperscript{876} The hermits on Mt. Carmel anachronistically wear the habit of contemporary friars, rather than the striped mantle, and as Megan Holmes has suggested, might be interpreted as exemplars for the mendicant Carmelites.\textsuperscript{877} The Thebaid-like landscape setting is distinctively eastern, but can also be read as an analogue to the fifteenth-century cloister, where Lippi’s fresco is located.

Complete with trees, a fountain, and a chapel, Mt. Carmel resembles the outdoor space of the Florentine cloister of Santa Maria del Carmine, and recalls the etymological significance of carmel, which means “garden.”

The now lost fresco of the Sagra, painted by Masaccio around 1427, stood adjacent to Lippi’s image over the door leading to the convent. According to written sources and surviving copies, Masaccio’s image, depicted in terra verde the consecration of the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in 1422, an event that the artist himself had attended.\textsuperscript{878} Through its proximity to Lippi’s image, Masaccio’s fresco represents another stage in the Order’s history, this time a contemporary, local event. Together, these frescoes place the Florentine Carmelites within a broader vision of history that extends

\textsuperscript{875} Donadieu-Rigaut has discussed the significance of the particular popes represented in the predella. \textit{Penser en images}, 158-72.
\textsuperscript{876} In 1939, the fresco was detached from the east wall and relocated to the present-day monastery bookstore. Gilbert, “Some Special Images,” 196-99; Rowlands, \textit{Masaccio}, 77-79; Holmes, \textit{Fra Filippo Lippi}, 72-79.
\textsuperscript{877} Holmes, \textit{Fra Filippo Lippi}, 72-79.
from the Order’s beginnings on Mt. Carmel to the present day. Inside the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, Masaccio’s Brancacci chapel (1426-27, fig.157) makes a more explicit claim regarding the Carmelites’ connection to the apostolic tradition. In the cycle of St. Peter, Masaccio depicts a group of Carmelites in the Preaching of St. Peter and the Chairing of St. Peter. Their inclusion asserts their presence at the time of the Apostles, and associates the Order with both the preaching mission, and the apostolic origin of Church authority.\(^{879}\) As the first pope, St. Peter stands as a witness to the Order’s beginnings.\(^{880}\)

The Carmelites also linked themselves to the mendicant tradition by associating historically important Carmelites with St. Francis and St. Dominic. In the Life of St. Angelo, a text supposedly written by the Old Testament prophet Enoch but actually written in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, the author connects the Carmelite saint (b.1185) to St. Francis and St. Dominic.\(^{881}\) Known for his asceticism and healing miracles, St. Angelo was an exemplary Carmelite, who supposedly lived on Mt. Carmel before journeying to Italy.\(^{882}\) According to this text, Angelo encountered Sts. Francis and Dominic in Rome, the seat of papal power. All three of them appear in a fresco decorating the Cappella dell’Incontro (fig.158) in Santuario del Carmine in San Felice del Benaco, painted by the Master of San Felice in 1488.\(^{883}\) The story draws inspiration from


\(^{881}\) On this legendary anecdote and the hagiographic tradition of St. Angelo, see Jotischky, *Carmelites and Antiquity*, 192-96.

\(^{882}\) Ibid.

the legendary encounter between Francis and Dominic, which emerged around the same time in the hagiography of both orders. According to the legend, God appeared individually to Francis and Dominic to tell them that two apostles would help convert souls to the Christian faith. When the two saints subsequently encountered each other in St. Peter’s Church in Rome, they realized that they were the two apostles mentioned in the vision. Gozzoli’s fresco in San Francesco in Montefalco (fig. 159) depicts the two saints in an embrace, standing before the portico of St. Peter’s Basilica. Jotischky has pointed out that St. Angelo’s legendary meeting with Francis and Dominic was historically impossible since neither Francis nor Dominic was in Rome at that time. But true or not, this legend attempted to justify the Order’s status as a mendicant order by connecting the chronology and geography of the three saints’ lives.

Although the Hermits could not plausibly foster a chronological connection between the lives of their founder and Sts. Francis and Dominic, one image produced in a Dominican context clearly identifies Augustine as a mendicant founder. Giovanni di Paolo’s altarpiece predella of St. Catherine of Siena shows the saint being invested with

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885 In artistic imagery, the episode appears first in the nave fresco in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (1260), which became the visual source for the sculpted relief of St. Dominic Holding up the Lateran on the Arca di San Domenico in Bologna (1267). Cannon, “Dating the Frescoes by the Maestro di S. Francesco at Assisi,” 66-69.

886 Ibid., 195-96.

887 Ibid., 198.

888 The vaults in the Scala Santa of the Benedictine Sacro Speco in Subiaco are the earliest example of an image of Augustine as founder of the Hermits, commissioned by another order. Augustine appears in the eremitic habit, along with Sts. Francis, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Dominic. For the image of Augustine in Sacro Speco, see Iconografia agostiniana, vol.1, 178, n.181.
the habit by Dominic (Cleveland Museum of Art, fig.160). Possibly commissioned for the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, the panel comes from a cycle of ten episodes that present the first visual narrative of Catherine’s life. The image in question is based on a vision recorded in Catherine’s biography by Raymond Capua (c.1300-99). Raymond describes how Catherine, motivated by a deep desire to be clothed in the Dominican habit, prayed to St. Dominic, and was granted a vision of “all the founders of the various orders.” Raymond does not provide the identities of the other founders, but Giovanni di Paolo clearly depicts the two other most recognizable mendicant founders, St. Augustine and St. Francis. Augustine appears in episcopal garb over the Augustinian habit, complete with cincture. Francis and Augustine each hold their own habit, but Catherine reaches for Dominic’s garment. Here, Augustine is presented as a mendicant founder by association with Francis and Dominic, as well as Catherine herself. The Dominican Observants, such as the friar Tommaso Caffarini, considered Catherine the founder of the Dominican Third Order for women, even though that Order would not be established until two decades after her death.
Conclusion

In his analysis of historical narratives written by members of religious orders, Andrew Jotischky has observed that the mendicants did not all agree on the historical roots of the mendicant movement, despite embracing a common vocation. In the treatise *De ortu et prioritate ordinis monachorum* (c.1394), a Benedictine author exposes the discrepancies in mendicant founding narratives that attempt to predate St. Benedict. He points out that Elijah could not have been a mendicant, since Jews were prohibited from begging, while the ancestors of the Augustinian Order, the Desert Fathers, had been hermits, not mendicants. He also criticizes the Dominicans who traced the origins of their preaching mission to Jacob in an effort to acquire greater antiquity. The author’s critique exposes the inconsistencies between the orders’ claim to historical antiquity and their inclusion in the relatively “new” class of mendicants.

When viewed together, artistic images of mendicant founders also reveal divergent interpretations of the mendicant ideals. While preaching was fundamental to each order’s mission, the ideal of poverty was manifested in diverse forms in the written and visual lives of the mendicant founders. When viewed in the context of the Dominican and Augustinian traditions, the Franciscans stand out for their exceptional emphasis on poverty. Italian cycles of St. Augustine show little attempt to fit St. Augustine into a specifically mendicant context, given the lack of episodes related to the renunciation of possessions, miracles, and papal power. The fourteenth-century Order considered strict poverty to be important to its status as mendicant, but not to their identity as Augustinian.

893 Jotischky, *Carmelites and Antiquity*, 305.
894 Ibid., 302-3.
Artistic imagery reflects the secondary role of poverty in the Order’s identity, as the bestowal of the Rule is the only image that can be implicitly read as a reference to this component of the mendicant life. On the other hand, the Hermits presented Augustine’s exemplary preaching as a fundamental part of his Christian ministry and the product of a dramatic personal transformation from heretic to defender of the faith.
CONCLUSION

The Augustinian Hermits and Mendicant Art

The thirteenth-century papal confirmation of the Augustinian Hermits and the Carmelites added a rich variety to the group of religious orders classified as mendicant. In claiming St. Augustine and Elijah as their founders, the Hermits and Carmelites altered the traditional model of the mendicant founder. The mendicant mission was no longer inherent in the historical origins of the order, nor was the founder identified as a near-contemporary European saint. These mendicant orders were not defined by their radical “newness,” but by their antiquity, which became essential to their legitimacy as religious groups.

In some instances, the Hermits adapted Augustine’s *vita* to fit the traditional model of the mendicant founder. The second chapter shows how the Order transformed the saint from North African bishop into European itinerant, in the tradition of the mendicant preacher. Augustine’s life fit easily into the itinerant hagiographic tradition of Sts. Francis and Dominic. As retold in the *Confessions*, his early life was a pilgrimage, beginning and ending in North Africa. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *vitae* emphasized his foundation of many houses in Italy and Africa, and several artistic cycles highlighted his Italian journey. In particular, these images privileged the saint’s Italian sojourn and transposed the Egyptian Thebaid onto the Tuscan countryside.

As the Hermits’ historical origins became increasingly important in the aftermath of the Second Council of Lyons (1275), their specific founding site gained greater focus
in visual and textual sources. These sources highlight the two places in Italy most closely associated with the Order, Tuscany and Pavia. Their emphasis on these two places in texts and images harkened back to the monastic hagiographic and iconographic traditions. The iconic image of the bestowal of the rule was represented against innovative landscapes that referenced specific places. Other cycles illustrated detailed images of the translation of Augustine’s body to Pavia. The Franciscans and Dominicans, instead, depicted papal Rome as the source of their legitimacy. The Carmelites often combined mendicant and monastic visual traditions by representing papal approval of the Order as a confirmation of the original founding, represented by the site of Mt. Carmel.

The emphasis on Augustine’s bestowal of the rule also changed the relationship between the mendicant founder and the friars from fellow brethren to father and sons. While Sts. Francis and Dominic appear as fellow friars in images of the confirmation of the rule, Augustine sits enthroned as the Order’s father and head. Guariento’s cycle, in particular, draws inspiration from the father-son rhetoric employed in fourteenth-century textual sources. The Hermits transformed his natural paternity of Adeodatus into a foreshadowing of his spiritual fatherhood of the Hermits in the saint’s Vestition.

The addition of the Hermits and Carmelites as mendicant orders also made a significant statement about religious history and the mendicant life. By transforming the Hermits and Carmelites into mendicant orders, the papacy confirmed that mendicancy was not an innate quality of an order’s founder. In other words, history did not necessarily dictate an Order’s present mission. Nevertheless, the Augustinian friars tried to address the tension between their historical past and their present identity by tracing the mendicant ideals to earlier moments in history. St. Augustine became a proto-
mendicant model of pastoral preaching, represented in this role in almost every cycle of
the saint. An examination of the Order’s stance on poverty, in light of the conspicuous
lack of images related to this subject, reveals that the Franciscans were indeed the
exception to the rule in their prominent focus on this aspect of the mendicant life. Images
of papal confirmation and divine approval have been discussed as typical features of
“mendicant” (i.e. Franciscan and Dominican) art, but the notable lack of these images in
the Augustinian tradition challenges these assumptions.

A comparative examination of mendicant art also forces us to reevaluate our
understanding of patterns in church decoration. The Hermits resembled the Franciscans in
their focus on the cult of their founder, who formed the core of the Order’s communal
identity and the center of its historical narrative. They also follow the Franciscans’
affinity for monumental life cycles representing their founder’s life. However, regarding
the location of these images, the Franciscans, rather than the Dominicans, seem to be the
exception in presenting monumental narratives of their founder to the laity.

If the Franciscans have been associated with narrative art, and the Dominicans
with non-narrative subjects, then the Hermits seem to fall somewhere in between the two
traditions. While the Order developed allegorical programs as early as the middle of the
fourteenth century, narrative imagery was also integral to the Order’s representation of
Augustine for multiple reasons. First, a narrative format best illustrated the dramatic
transformation of Augustine’s soul, as told in the introspective narrative account of the
Confessions. The episodic nature of Augustinian cycles imitate the literary narrative of
the autobiography, and seek to do more than represent merely the episodes that show
virtues or miracles. Fifteenth-century cycles, in particular, reveal a desire to depict the
character of Augustine’s inner spiritual journey, illustrating a large number of episodes before his conversion.

Secondly, subtle chronology played a crucial role in the newly edited version of Augustine’s life, developed by the Hermits in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The task of adjusting an existing narrative, rather than creating the hagiography and iconography of a new saint, encouraged the Hermits to embrace the narrative format in both textual and visual sources. Details such as when Augustine received the eremitic habit and bestowed the rule had enormous impact on his identity as hermit and founder of the Order.

The Order’s desire to develop a more specific founding narrative encouraged artists to experiment with the visual representation of narrative time and place. The bestowal of the rule is one example of how the Order transformed a traditional allegorical episode into a narrative one. Louise Bourdua has referred to Guariento’s *Bestowal of the Rule* as an “allegorical” episode, but this label ignores the artist’s creative manipulation of this traditionally static subject into a narrative image.\(^{895}\) In a later example, Gozzoli conflates several historical moments and physical locales in a sophisticated and unprecedented image of the order’s founding moment.

Despite its focus on Augustine’s personal narrative, the Order successfully incorporated their founder’s personal *vita* and the Order’s corporate history into the most important images of the saint. In fact, I would argue that the Hermits were more successful than the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Carmelites in this regard. The most frequently represented subject, the bestowal of the rule, illustrated a defining moment in

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\(^{895}\) Bourdua, “*De origine et progressu,*” 166.
the Order’s history, and represented the culmination of the saint’s written legacy. In images of Augustine’s vestition, the black habit became both a signal of the saint’s new commitment to chastity and his role as father of the Hermits in the tradition of the ancient eremitic exemplars. Preaching episodes, the other type of image that has been given particular focus in this study, illustrate the central component of the Order’s mission and the product of Augustine’s edifying transformation from sinner to saint. In contrast, the stigmatization of Francis, the Order’s iconic image, did not relate to Franciscan history in any obvious way and focused on the personal life of the saint instead. Two of the episodes commonly represented in the Dominican tradition (papal confirmation of the Order and Pope Innocent III’s dream of the Lateran Basilica) were not unique to the Order, but also a part of Franciscan iconography. Finally, the prophet Elijah played only a minor role in the Carmelite founding narrative, since he was neither the author of the Rule, nor present at the papal confirmation of the Order.

Further research on the Hermits will continue to illuminate the production and reception of Augustinian art. As scholars continue to study the mobility of the laity within the church interior, we can learn more about the intended audiences of mural decoration. Studies on Augustinian preaching, including a wealth of unedited sermons, can also enhance our understanding of how these cycles functioned as preaching aids. A deeper investigation into specific commissions and geographic regions of Italy might reveal local tendencies in the decoration of Augustinian churches. Coupled with an increasing focus on the Carmelite Order, further studies on Augustinian art will help provide a mode complete and nuanced understanding of mendicant patronage in early Renaissance Italy.
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