



# The Statutes of the Youth Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius in Florence, 1444–ca. 1742

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Article abstract

The illuminated statutes of the Florentine youth confraternity of the Purificazione, now in the Lilly Library of the University of Indiana, were approved by Archbishop Antoninus in 1448. They set out the key concerns of the confraternity: good governance in order to foster moral and spiritual rectitude in the brethren, entry into and departure from the group, duties towards the sick, the dying and the dead, and proper forms of devotion on ordinary Sundays and feast days. The Purificazione statutes also prescribe the performance of a *rappresentazione* for the confraternity's principal feast day. The statutes are translated here for the first time.

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# The Statutes of the Youth Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius in Florence, 1444–ca. 1742

Nerida Newbigin

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*Summary:* The illuminated statutes of the Florentine youth confraternity of the Purificazione, now in the Lilly Library of the University of Indiana, were approved by Archbishop Antoninus in 1448. They set out the key concerns of the confraternity: good governance in order to foster moral and spiritual rectitude in the brethren, entry into and departure from the group, duties towards the sick, the dying and the dead, and proper forms of devotion on ordinary Sundays and feast days. The Purificazione statutes also prescribe the performance of a *rappresentazione* for the confraternity's principal feast day. The statutes are translated here for the first time.

The youth confraternity of the Purificazione della Vergine Maria e San Zanobi (Purification of the Virgin Mary and Saint Zenobius) flourished in Florence from its foundation in 1427 until its suppression by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo in 1785. By the time these revised statutes were approved by Archbishop Antoninus in 1448, it had come under the protection of Cosimo “the Elder” de’ Medici, and at his instigation had been given space in the Dominican convent of San Marco. The original four youth confraternities – the Natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo (Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ) also known as the Arcangelo Raffaello or the *Scala*,<sup>1</sup> the Purificazione,<sup>2</sup> San Niccolò del Ceppo (Saint Nicholas of the “Ceppo”),<sup>3</sup> and San Giovanni Evangelista (Saint John the Evangelist) also known as the Vangelista<sup>4</sup> – were reformed and reconfirmed in 1442 in a bull issued by Pope Eugenius IV who had found refuge in Florence. They were to be guided by the Dominican Prior of San Marco and the Benedictine Abbot of the Florentine Badia, who met regularly with the four wardens in the Cistercian convent of Santa Maria Maddalena in Borgo Pinti.

In 1444, the warden of the Purificazione, the purse-maker Piero di Mariano Muzi, was given the task of updating the statutes, which were then

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<sup>1</sup> On the Natività, see Eisenbichler, *The Boys of the Archangel Raphael*.

<sup>2</sup> On the Purificazione, see Polizzotto, Lorenzo. *The Children of the Promise*.

<sup>3</sup> On San Niccolò, see Sebregondi, *La compagnia e l'oratorio di San Niccolò del Ceppo* and Sebregondi, *La Compagnia di San Niccolò di Bari detta del Ceppo*.

<sup>4</sup> On San Giovanni Evangelista, see Evangelista, “L’attività spettacolare.”

approved by Archbishop Antoninus in 1448. Piero di Mariano is not a skilled drafter: his language is clumsily formal as he enshrines the guardian's authority over the confraternity.

The oratory was in the north-western corner of the San Marco complex. A door from the street – what is now Via Cavour – opened straight into a chapel, dedicated to the medical saints Cosmas and Damian, and adorned with an altarpiece of the saints given to them by Cosimo himself.<sup>5</sup> The chapel served as a vestibule to the confraternity's oratory, which had desks for the officials on either side of the entrance door, benches or stalls along the side walls, and an altar at the eastern end, which would later be adorned with Benozzo Gozzoli's Purification Altarpiece (1461–1462).<sup>6</sup> Doors beside the altar led through to a sacristy.<sup>7</sup> The confraternity was also granted a courtyard, probably cloistered, a well, and a garden where it grew pomegranates in pots. The *Rappresentazione della Purificazione* (Play of the Purification), mentioned in these statutes, and documented from the following year in the confraternity's account books, was probably performed in the oratory before a relatively small audience.<sup>8</sup>

The purpose of these statutes was to create an administrative structure.<sup>9</sup> The names of the official roles in the confraternity are both familiar and remote. Their cognate terms survive in the obsolete terminology of ancient institutions. In translating them, I have generally avoided a term that is so current that it comes with fixed modern attributes attached to it, and selected instead an archaic term, still in use in some educational or ecclesiastical settings.

<sup>5</sup> See the proem to the *Capitoli* and chapter 23, as well as n. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Cole Ahl, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, 225. The central panel, representing *The Virgin and Child Enthroned among Angels and Saints* (161.9 × 170.2 cm) is in the National Gallery in London. The five surviving predella panels are dispersed: *Saint Zenobius Resuscitates a Child* (24 × 34 cm), Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; *Saint Dominic Resuscitates Napoleone Orsini* (25 × 35 cm), Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan; *The Fall of Simon Magus* (24 × 35.5 cm), Royal Collection, Hampton Court Palace, London; *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple* (24.8 × 36.4 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; and *The Dance of Salome* (23.8 × 34.3 cm), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

<sup>7</sup> On the oratory, see also Matchette, "The Compagnia della Purificazione," 74–101; and Polizzotto, *The Children of the Promise*, 97–98.

<sup>8</sup> On plays in the youth confraternities, see Newbiggin, *Making a Play for God*.

<sup>9</sup> Polizzotto proposed that the *Statuti e ordinatione dela compagnia over fraternitade de la purificazione de la vergine Maria* contained in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Aquisti e Doni 336 (Prov. Patetta, Ms. N<sup>o</sup>. 4), represent the earlier state of the Florentine confraternity's *capitoli*. The language, however, suggests an origin in the Veneto; and a reference on fol. 7<sup>o</sup> to the exit of members and their graduation to a "compagnia de madonna Santa Maria de Passione," a confraternity of Our Lady Saint Mary of the Passion, not known in Florence, suggests that it is not directly related. See Polizzotto, "The Medici," 98–113; and, in greater detail, in Polizzotto, *The Children*, 347–355; and also the justified caution expressed by Taddei, *Fanciulli e giovani*, 170–173.

The only permanent position was that of *guardiano*, guardian, protector of youthful souls, ‘warden’. He was assisted by a range of officials drawn by lot for a three-month term, in a process that mirrored that of the city’s government; *consiglieri* (‘councillors’ and ‘counsellors’); *infermieri* (men who took care of infirm members and dispensed alms, ‘orderlies’); a *scrivano* (scrivener, secretary, ‘clerk’); *camerlenghi* (chamberlain, treasurer, accountant, ‘bursar’), who is replaced by the eighteenth century by a *provveditore* with the same duties; *maestro de’ novizi* (‘master of novices’) who inducted new members; *pacieri* (people who carry around the *pax*, a framed image or plaque of Christ or the Virgin, to be kissed by the membership, ‘pax-bearers’). The confraternity appointed one or more ordained priests who acted as *confessori* and *correttori* (‘confessors’ and ‘correctors’), a combined chaplaincy role of hearing confession and giving penance and absolution, generally supervising the moral behaviour of the boys, and prescribing penalties. The term *proposto* or *preposto* occurs in several contexts: he is literally one who is set above the others, but in practice he is the elected or rotating presiding officer of a small group of officials – of councillors and orderlies, or of wardens – and I have called him ‘presiding official’ or ‘presiding warden’ for want of a better term. All of these officials presided over the *fratelli*, whom I generally prefer to call ‘brethren’, tending to distinguish them from ‘brothers’ who are members of a male religious order.

The statutes refer to a series of rituals that were central to confraternal life: admission of new members after their twelfth birthday, their exit when they turned twenty-four, and funerals for members and former members who died. There is only indirect evidence of the regular rituals of the members, but what we find may be supplemented by reference to *Libri da Compagnia*, constantly evolving service books for the use of members of adult flagellant communities, which have much in common with the rituals that can be gleaned from these statutes.<sup>10</sup> Some of their *laude* must have been in the vernacular, but the major prayers, hymns, and canticles were in Latin. We must accept that the boys and young men of the Purification simply learned these by heart (see chapter 18) and joined in singing and reciting them, while the rest was read by their chaplain.<sup>11</sup>

The period of Medici patronage, between these revised statutes and the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, were a high point of the Purificazione’s activities:

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<sup>10</sup> I do not find copies in the Purificazione’s early-sixteenth-century inventories, but in 1589 they owned “16 used confraternity books” (“16 libri da compagnie usato,” ASF, CRSPL 1647, fol. 330<sup>v</sup>). For printed copies, which mutate constantly, see ISTC, headword “Compagnia,” and Edit16, uniform author “Confraternita dei Battuti.” Manuscript copies are rare, but a fine example was sold by Christie’s on 12 December 2018, Auction 116019, *Valuable Books and Manuscripts*, lot 19. See Dondi, “*Libri da compagnia*.”

<sup>11</sup> Texts for the Latin prayers and hymns, with English translations, are available from *Preces Latinae*, <https://www.preces-latinae.org/index.htm>.

they performed plays, engaged in charitable activities, decorated their oratory, and kept extensive records.<sup>12</sup>

The present translation is based on my transcription of the illuminated codex now in the Lilly Library of the University of Indiana, MS Medieval and Renaissance 26,<sup>13</sup> read in conjunction with its seventeenth-century copy in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magliabechiano VIII.1500.11, fols. 80<sup>r</sup>–105<sup>v</sup> modern numbering (fols. 1<sup>r</sup>–26<sup>v</sup> old numbering), which does not include the eighteenth-century additions.<sup>14</sup> I have not been able to examine the related statutes of the confraternity of San Giovanni Evangelista, sold by Sotheby's in 1989 and now in a private European collection.<sup>15</sup> Both volumes were part of the collection of Charles William Dyson Perrins who had acquired them from Charles Fairfax Murray in 1905 or 1906.

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<sup>12</sup> The statutes do not tell us about all the activities of the confraternity, omitting mention of its commitment to charitable works. Although Polizzotto argues that their charity in this period was confined exclusively to their own members (*The Children*, 99), they made an annual donation of blankets to the Ospedale di San Matteo di Lemmo (or dell'Elmo) in Piazza San Marco; see, for example, ASF, CRSPL 1654 (P.xxx.29), fol. 172<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> de Hamel, *Gilding the Lilly*, 136–137; Leader, “Capitoli!” In the 1501 inventory of the confraternity, the volume was described as: “a book where are statutes are written in ink on good paper, and they are signed by the hand of the Blessed Antoninus, who was our archbishop, bound in leather, with silver corners and clasps and bosses, and on it there is a[n image of the] Virgin with silver decoration, and it is kept in a leather holder” (“1° libro dove sono scritti e nostri chapitoli in penna in charta buona e sono sottoscritti di mano del beato Antonino arciveschovo nostro per il pasato, choperto tutto di chuoio con chanti e serrami e bulletti d'ariento e chosi v'è sù una Vergine ornata chon ariento e tiensi in vesta di chuoio,” ASF, CRSPL 1646, fol. 213<sup>v</sup>); see also Matchette, “The Compagnia,” 99.

<sup>14</sup> My transcription of the Lilly manuscript is posted on [https://italian-renaissance-theatre.sydney.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Purificazione\\_Capitoli\\_1444\\_c1742.pdf](https://italian-renaissance-theatre.sydney.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Purificazione_Capitoli_1444_c1742.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Alexander and de la Mare, *The Italian Manuscripts*, 32–35 and Plate B; *Catalogue*, lot 3020; Cleaver, “Charles William Dyson Perrins.”

## **Statutes of the Confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius**

### **Table of all the statutes**

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In praise and honour of almighty God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and of the glorious ever-virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, and of the precious prophet Saint John the Baptist and of the most holy apostles Peter and Paul, and of master Saint Zenobius our leader and guide, and of the most blessed martyrs Saints Cosimo and Damian<sup>1</sup> and of all the triumphant, celestial court of eternal life, and in exaltation of the Holy Roman Church and of the merciful Christian religion and of the most holy Pope Eugenius IV, and of all the other Roman popes who succeed him in order, and of all his most reverend brothers the lord cardinals, and of the most reverend lord archbishop of our city of Florence, and for the benefit and consolation and peace of all the devout brethren of this confraternity called the Confraternity<sup>2</sup> of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius and these are our principal feast days. And the confraternity meets and has its residence with the friars of San Marco in an oratory<sup>3</sup> that Cosimo di Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici built or commissioned to be built for this activity and for the salvation of his soul, as appears in his constructions book on pages that itemise the payments he made, and he chose for the confraternity Piero di Mariano.<sup>4</sup> And in the entrance of the oratory is a chapel dedicated to Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian. And Cosimo gave us an altarpiece painted with the figures of these saints, that is, Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian, to be used on the altar of this chapel.<sup>5</sup> Beyond the chapel is our oratory, called the Oratory of the Purification of the Virgin Mary mother of Jesus Christ and of Saint Zenobius, with sacristies and other rooms belonging to the oratory, with a courtyard and well and garden. And Cosimo gave us possession in the year of Our Lord

<sup>1</sup> For the twin medical martyrs Cosmas and Damian, see Jacobus, *The Golden Legend*, 1: 196–198. In Florence, San Cosma became San Cosimo, and was closely identified with Cosimo de' Medici ('of the doctors'). Dale Kent sees Cosimo's baptismal name as evidence that he was himself a twin whose brother did not survive; see Kent, *Cosimo*, 11 and 393n24.

<sup>2</sup> 'Confraternity' translates *scuola*. I have avoided using 'school' because it has an instructional rather than confraternal sense in English. When the text uses both terms, *scuola e compagnia*, I use 'confraternity and school'.

<sup>3</sup> I have used 'oratory' to translate *luogo*; it includes all the rooms used by the confraternity. 'Oratory', however, also translates *oratorio*, which is the principal devotional space within the *luogo*, distinct from the chapel at the entrance and the sacristy behind the altar. The devotional space consisted typically of an altar, flanked by doors leading to the sacristy, two rows of seating along the side walls, facing inwards, and at the desks for the office-bearers, flanking the entrance door; on confraternal furnishings, see Sebregondi, "Religious Furnishings."

<sup>4</sup> Piero di Mariano Muzi, purse maker, was warden of the confraternity. His brother, the notary Ser Antonio di Mariano Muzi, was warden of the confraternity of the Arcangelo Raffaello.

<sup>5</sup> The painting has not been identified. A possible candidate is an anonymous Florentine panel dating to 1420–1430 of the *Presentation of Christ at the temple, between Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian, with the Crucifixion of Christ between Saint Dominic, Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Virgin, Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Peter Martyr, and Saint Anthony Abbot* (52 × 41 cm), Museo Nazionale di Piazza Venezia, Rome.

1444 on 29 June, that is, on the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and there was a solemn procession with all the brethren of the confraternity dressed in white, and he had Ser Alesso di Matteo<sup>6</sup> give us the keys to the oratory on his behalf, and he constructed the oratory with the permission of the friars of San Marco, and the friars freely granted him the land to build the oratory because they were certain that it was a good deed. And we intend to praise God there always in our assemblies and to pray to God on behalf of Cosimo that he should grant him grace for this good deed he has done for us and reward him in the everlasting life. Amen.

*Chapter 1: The revision of the present statutes and how we can prepare ourselves for God*

These are the statutes and constitutions of our confraternity revised in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1444 on 29 June, that is the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, and our warden had full authority for the [revision] from all the brethren of the confraternity unanimously. I, the abovementioned warden by the grace of God, considering the commission I have received, and reviewing the old statutes of the confraternity which were not adequate for modern times, by the grace of God and to do them honour, will take parts of them in various places, as I will indicate further on, so that God will be honoured. And urging us to this, the Holy Spirit speaks by the mouth of the prophet David, Psalm 33, where he says: *Dicliua a malo e fac bonum.*<sup>7</sup> Which is to say, “Abandon evil and do good.” These words declare the two parts of righteousness, for the one without the other does not have the degree of perfection to enable us to gain eternal life, because if one does good and does not turn away from evil, one could not achieve any perfection of the health of the soul. And therefore, I order you to choose a form of life that contains and is founded and constructed on three perfect and excellent degrees that are confirmed by the Holy Scriptures and commended by the teachings of the Holy Doctors and practised in the lives of many saints and servants of God who constructed their lives in such a way that they have everlasting life in eternity. The first degree is the contemplative life, which consists of lifting your mind and your soul to God with devotions and prayers and holy meditations. The second is the active life, which consists of helping one’s neighbour in his need with fervent charity and pure intentions, for the love of God. The third degree is the moral life, which consists of ordering oneself to live an upright and virtuous life and commendable behaviour. And, therefore, these degrees will be

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<sup>6</sup> On Ser Alesso di Matteo Pelli, see Kent, “A Window.”

<sup>7</sup> “Turn away from evil and do good,” is, in reality, from Psalm 36:27, but it is found in so many confraternity statutes that it is probably taken from another unidentified set of statutes, on which these were modelled, rather than directly from a book of Psalms.



arranged through these statutes and constitutions for the perpetual memory and devotion and commendation of the confraternity.

*Chapter 2: Record of how our confraternity began*

We find that it was begun in honour of God and of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius in the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ 1427 on 8 September in the church of Santa Maria de' Servi, which was the old meeting place of our brothers of the confraternity of the Natività di Nostro Signore Gesù Christo which now meets and has its oratory at the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala.<sup>8</sup> And our warden at that time was Biagio di Lorenzo, the wool-shearer. And, in agreement with that confraternity we left that place, and there were twelve us, each bound by love on both sides, and they gave us an altarpiece freely, along with other things. And we did this so that our laudable and charitable work should be carried out in more than one place. And so doing, persevering in the way of God, in a state of innocence and purity, we turn our feet from the ways of sinners, from the wicked behaviour and corruption of the world, and as far as possible we sow in our youth the fruits of our old age, by living a moral and continent life in the flower of virginity and chastity, which will bear fruit in eternal life. And in order that we lead a spiritual life within our secular world, and from our human condition create an angelic life, and to save us sheep who move through this world as if through a forest full of wolves and fierce wild animals, and to lead us to eternal and incorruptible pastures and to the company of angels and to the vision of God and to eternal joy, we urge each person to follow our company, persevering in virtue and obeying these statutes.

*Chapter 3: How we are to organize ourselves*

Therefore, since is good practice in every congregation, that there be somebody to ensure that good behaviour and order and habits are maintained, we therefore ordain that our confraternity shall have a warden and various office-bearers of various kinds as we shall say in each case, with this proviso, that in no way can anybody be held guilty of mortal sin if they fail to meet or observe in full what all the statutes contain, except for those who despise or mock or slander them, in which case let it be on their conscience. And so that we will make this provision by the grace of God they will be confirmed by our father the archbishop of our city or his vicars as we will say at the end.

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<sup>8</sup> On the Confraternity of the Arcangelo Raffaello e della Natività, called *la Scala*, see Eisenbichler, *The Boys*.

*Chapter 4: The insignia of our confraternity*

The insignia of our confraternity is the glorious Virgin Mary with her sweetest Son swaddled in her arms, and she shall have two white doves on her right arm, signifying that she is the mother of all faithful Christians and our advocate, and just as she offered her sweet son Jesus at the temple, so we offer our souls to God. This insignia is to be carried on one side of our banner when we go in procession, and on the other the figure of Saint Zenobius. And if our insignia is to be placed anywhere, such as on altar frontals or other property, then the letters that make up this insignia should be used, that is *Purificatio Sancte Marie and of Saint Zenobius*, as will be shown at the beginning of this chapter.

*Chapter 5: How to choose the warden*

If our confraternity for any reason should come to be without a warden, we intend that the [new] warden shall be a prudent man and a good example. Therefore we ordain that when the present warden or any future one feels departure is imminent, either through death or for some other reason, he shall nominate one or up to three people, and the first-named shall be the first to be submitted to the abbot of the Badia of Florence and to the prior of San Marco and to the wardens of the companies of the Natività and San Niccolò del Ceppo and San Giovanni Evangelista and to the presiding official of the councillors and orderlies in our confraternity, to establish whether the person proposed is acceptable to them or to two-thirds of them; so that the abbot and prior and presiding official of the councillors, or two of the three, shall approve him if he seems suitable to them. And if the first does not seem suitable, they shall take the second and then the third if the second does not please them, and if the third were not accepted, they shall find a warden to their liking, making every effort to have an upright man, a lay person, and they shall also ensure that he is not less than twenty-five years old.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I have translated the expressions of ages literally, but it is important to understand the meaning. To say that the warden must have reached “the age of twenty-five years” means strictly that he must be ‘in his twenty-fifth year’; modern Italian clarifies by using ‘già compiuti’ to distinguish between being twenty-five years old already and being in one’s twenty-fifth year.

*Chapter 6: How to approve the warden*

Any person who is appointed our warden in the future must make his confession to one of the confessors of our confraternity, and if this confessor so advises, he shall be put to the vote by the brethren, assembled in as large a number as possible and at least twenty-five, except in time of plague or if membership of the confraternity has diminished, in which case that number is not required, but as many as possible shall assemble, all having confessed within the last eight days. The aforementioned fathers, that is, the abbot and prior and other wardens shall vote to approve the warden and decide by two thirds of those present, and if he does not win approval, those whose task it is shall find another who will be approved by them. And this warden is to be the person who will watch over and protect and govern us, and all the brethren are to obey and revere him as the spiritual father and protector of our souls. And he will always be our presiding officer and without him no decision or vote can be taken, by ballot or on the voices, and, if it is taken, it will not be valid unless he has given particular authority to the presiding official of the councillors or to some other person of his choosing, whom he judged would not overstep his authority.

*Chapter 7: The ceremonies to be performed when the warden assumes office*

When the aforesaid warden comes to our confraternity to take up and exercise his guardianship role, if it is possible for the abbot and prior and the wardens of the other companies to be there, then each one shall be invited and shall make the effort in charity to be there. And if the clergy cannot come, then they should send a cleric in their place. And the warden shall put on a white robe and undergo all the ceremonies of a novice when he enters our confraternity. And he shall make an offering at the altar of two wax candles weighing 3 lb. Finally, he shall take his place in the warden's seat and the present statutes shall be read. And he shall be urged and encouraged by the abbot and the prior or their representative to obey these statutes and ensure that the brethren to obey them, and to be just and holy in his government; and the brethren shall be encouraged to obey and revere the warden as their spiritual father.

*Chapter 8: The election of councillors and orderlies*

*Chonsiderate, fratres, ex vobis viros boni testimonii qui chonstituantur super hoc opus*, that is, Consider from among yourselves young men of good fame and repute who might be selected for this work.<sup>10</sup> These words are written to

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Acts 6:3: "Considerate ergo, fratres, viros ex vobis boni testimonii septem, plenos Spiritu Sancto et sapientia, quos constituamus super hoc opus" (Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among

guide us, and we therefore ordain that on the second Sunday of December, April, and August, when our devotions are over, our warden shall organize that we have four people who could be called as councillors and orderlies,<sup>11</sup> and these people will sit alongside our warden, and they will do what he commands, and they will urge the brethren to confession and they will visit any brothers who fall ill, and the appointment of these brothers will proceed as follows. The names of every brother in their eighteenth year will be read in the presence of the whole confraternity, that is, those who are eighteen years old, that is, who have had their seventeenth birthday, and have been in our confraternity for one year. Nobody can be one of the councillors nor elected to become one if it is more than four months since his last confession and since he attended the confraternity, unless the warden declares that there has been just impediment. Nor can it be anyone who is absent from the city, unless he is at his house in the country and due to return shortly: this does not apply to such people. Then, after reading out the brothers who are eligible to be councillors, the warden shall go to the altar and write on a voting paper the name of the brothers whom he thinks shall be the new councillors and he shall stand there to receive the voting papers. The councillors shall follow and do the same, that is, write on a voting paper the name of the brother they think should be a new councillor. Then they shall go and sit down, and likewise all the brethren who have been in our confraternity at least four months and who are fifteen years old, that is, they have had their fourteenth birthday, shall go one by one and write on their voting paper in the same way. And anyone who is not fifteen years old or who has not been in the confraternity for four months cannot vote on paper or on the voices to create the councillors. When each of them has handed in his voting paper, the warden and the councillors, having examined all the voting papers, shall take the four names that have the most votes. And these four are to be the councillors and orderlies, and if there are more than four with equal votes, then four should be drawn by lot; and their names shall be announced to the brethren, and the *Te Deum laudamus* shall be sung and then they shall say the prayer for Peace<sup>12</sup>; and they are ineligible for the same office for eight months. Then four papers shall be made with the names of the new councillors and the warden shall put them in a box and draw one out, and this first drawn will preside over his companions for one month. Straight away he shall draw out the other three, and whoever is drawn first will follow him as presiding official for one month and will sit next to the warden and do whatever is asked by him. In the creation of these councillors,

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you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business).

<sup>11</sup> ‘Orderlies’ translates *infermieri*, men who attend to the physical needs of the sick.

<sup>12</sup> Possibly Philippians 4:7: “Et pax Dei, quae exuperat omnem sensum, custodiat corda vestra, et intelligentias vestras in Christo Jesu” (And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus), used as the prayer of dismissal in various liturgies.

no brother shall ever dare or presume to discuss or debate together, saying: "Let's make brothers such and such councillors," so that the process is pure and holy, and it is the Holy Spirit who instructs each person on what he has to do, and anyone who goes against this can be struck off by our warden.

*Chapter 9: The entry of the councillors and orderlies*

Our councillors and orderlies shall make their entry at the first assemblies in January, May, and September. And before they take up their office, the warden will send them to the altar and instruct them in what they have to do. Then the presiding official of the old councillors shall take the statute book and, together with his companions, they shall offer the pax to the new councillors as they kneel in the middle of our oratory. Then the new councillors shall go and sit in their place. And the old councillors remain kneeling, and the warden reproaches them for any failing or act of negligence they may have committed, and they confess and ask forgiveness of God, of the warden, and of the brothers. The warden will tell them that for their correction they should bring the stamped confirmation of their confession within fifteen days.

*Chapter 10: The clerk of our confraternity*

The warden himself shall choose one of the brethren to be the clerk and keep one or more books where the names of all the brethren are recorded, and all the decisions or payments that are made, and the names of our brothers who take the cloth, and where, and those who make their legitimate exit, that is, who persevere as these statutes lay out, and those who depart this wretched life, and all our confessors and wardens or other officers created from time to time, and when they take up their office or other things according to requirements, and all the brethren's robes; and above all he shall keep a separate notebook in which are written all the names of the brethren, and every Sunday, after our office, they shall be marked off. And every time new councillors take up office, the list shall be written out of all the brethren who have come to the oratory during the term of the old councillors; and the others who have not come in that time shall not be listed until such time as they come to the confraternity. And when they do come, then they shall be listed. And for those who have not come and who are not listed, the councillors are required to contact them in writing and urge them and name them before the confraternity and get the brethren to urge them as well. And the clerk shall also record all the brethren who are struck off and deprived of our confraternity. And his office shall continue for as long as our warden sees fit, and he shall do for him whatever is asked and not otherwise. And the clerk is not barred from any office in our confraternity except that he cannot be sacristan.

*Chapter 11: Sacristans and bursars*

Our warden shall also elect two sacristans, also called bursars.<sup>13</sup> These shall be diligent in caring for items in the sacristy and keeping the oratory clean. And they shall be assiduous in arriving early at our assemblies.<sup>14</sup> And likewise, they shall keep account of the money that comes in any way to our confraternity as income or expenditure and they shall account for it to their successors at the end of their period of office or whenever the warden deems fit. And likewise, they shall keep an inventory of all property that is in the confraternity or comes to it in the future during their tenure. And at the end of their term of office they shall account for it to the new sacristans. And the inventory shall be read before the whole confraternity at the second assembly after they have taken office, so that all the brethren are edified and cheered by our possessions and remember whether anything has been lost. And these sacristans shall have a chest with two keys for two different locks, one kept by the warden and the other kept by them, and in this box they are to keep all the money that comes in to our confraternity. And they cannot spend any money without the permission of our warden and councillors, who will decide among themselves and allocate it, with at least three votes in favour. And when the councillors are not present, our warden can fill their places with whomsoever he sees fit to meet any needs of the confraternity. And our warden, on his own and without any vote, can take from the chest and spend up to twenty *soldi* at a time, when he sees that it is required for the confraternity. The sacristans and bursars are not required to keep account or inventory of the books of Holy Scripture; we want the warden together with the councillors to have custody of these books and keep account of them; and every time the councillors take up office, they shall state how many there are and what they are about in the presence of the confraternity, and they shall be kept in the warden's desk. And the books cannot be removed from the school, nor any other thing, without the permission of our warden and councillors, who shall decide among themselves and vote with at least three of them voting in favour; and anyone who contravenes this can be penalised by him with whatever penalty he deems the matter deserves, even expulsion; and the sacristans shall take up their office at the same time as the councillors, and likewise end their office.

*Chapter 12: The masters of the novices and pax-bearers*

Our warden shall choose two of the brethren, who have been in our confraternity a year, to be masters of the novices, who are to inform the novices of

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<sup>13</sup> The words "also called bursars" have been crossed out, but are included in **M** and reintegrated here. It is clear that these two people are responsible both for property and for money.

<sup>14</sup> The sentence following "assemblies" is lightly crossed out, but is included in **M** and is reintegrated here.

what they have to do and accompany them when they make their entry and do all the other things that will be indicated in the chapter on novices. Our warden shall also choose two of the brothers to be responsible for carrying the pax with the image to the brethren for the kiss of peace when we sing the *Magnificat*. And the masters of novices and the pax-bearers shall begin their term of office at the same time as the councillors and likewise end their term. And before they begin their term, the warden shall advise them on what they have to do and how important it is and that they should discipline the old office-bearers and send them to the altar and oblige them to deliver the confirmation of confession within fifteen days. And if the warden were to deem that these officers, both councillors and the others, were not acting uprightly and not carrying out their duties with assiduity and love and diligence, he can and may, on his own, deprive them of their office and put in their place brothers of his own choosing.

#### *Chapter 13: Confessors and correctors*

The Holy Spirit speaks by the mouth of the holy prophet Malachi: *Labia sacerdotis chustodiunt scientiam e-llegiem require et ex ore eius, quia angelus domini est*;<sup>15</sup> as much as to say: The mouths of the priests or rather their tongues preserve knowledge, and to him should be addressed questions on divine law, because he is an angel, that is, a minister of God. And, so that the brethren of our confraternity should have a place to which they turn at all times for advice, [it is ordained] that we shall have one or more priests, as our warden sees fit, to be our correctors, and shall give them a stamp; and our brothers shall bring a stamped confirmation that they have confessed and present it our warden and to the councillors; and a notebook shall be kept in which to record the names of all those who bring the stamped confirmation. And it shall be tallied month by month as the brethren bring it, and the councillors shall be required to urge the brothers to confession and to keep the notebook.

#### *Chapter 14: Assemblies and prayers and devotions*

In order that we should be obedient to the Holy Spirit who calls us saying: *Venite exultemus Domino, iubilemus Deo salutari nostro*,<sup>16</sup> that is: Come let us praise the Lord with joy, let us joyfully sing to God our saviour, we therefore order that we must gather in our oratory for our devotions and prayers every

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<sup>15</sup> Cfr. Malachi 2:7: “Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore eius, quia angelus Domini exercituum est” (For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts).

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. Psalms 94 (95):1: “Venite, exultemus Domino; jubilemus Deo salutari nostro” (Come let us praise the Lord with joy: let us joyfully sing to God our saviour).

Sunday and all the highest feast days,<sup>17</sup> all the feast days of the Virgin, and all the feast days of the Apostles, and all the other days of obligation of the Holy Church, and the feast of our father Saint Zenobius, and all the other feast days after supper, and at other times as our warden sees fit, following this order. Our warden shall elect whatever number of brothers he sees fit to stand guard at the door, and the first of them to arrive shall stand guard (since it is understood that the warden and the councillors and the sacristans do not stand guard), and the one who comes in after him shall tell him to go in peace, and likewise one after the other there shall always be somebody on guard at the door. And the last to arrive shall remain until the warden sends for him. And when the brother enters the oratory, let him say: God grant us peace, and let him go to the altar and say one *Ave Maria*. And then he shall bow to the warden and go and sit down. And while we take our time assembling, there shall be readings from the Holy Scripture or singing of *laude* or hymns, as the warden wishes. And when the office is about to begin, the bell shall ring and all the brothers shall come into the oratory and sit in an orderly fashion. And our devotions and prayers are these. The warden shall require that two of the brothers sing one or more *laude* as he sees fit; that they recite the Confession and the Prayer of the Archangel Raphael, and for the highest feast days and the feasts of Our Lady and the Apostles and Saint Zenobius and other solemn days, they shall say only the Vespers of Our Lady.<sup>18</sup> And after vespers, they shall recite the hymn appropriate to the feast day. And when it is not a feast day, they shall proceed in this way: one Sunday they will recite the Penitential Psalms<sup>19</sup> with the litanies and prayers<sup>20</sup> that follow the psalms, and then the Vespers, that is, of Our Lady. And the other Sunday they shall recite the Fifteen Gradual Psalms, and then the said Vespers. Except that once a month they shall say the First Nocturn of the Dead, called the Vespers for souls that have departed this life, and especially for those who have been members of this confraternity, or our father or mother or brothers or benefactors of the confraternity. And on those Sundays when no feast day hymn is sung, they shall recite the [Apostles'] Creed after vespers, and the following prayers, that is, the prayer of the Trinity,<sup>21</sup> and of Our Lady, and of Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian, and of Saint Zenobius,<sup>22</sup> and for Peace. These prayers are to be said

<sup>17</sup> The term *pasqua* extends beyond Easter to include Christmas, Ascension and Pentecost.

<sup>18</sup> *Libro da compagne*, 60–64.

<sup>19</sup> *Libro da compagne*, 74–80.

<sup>20</sup> *Libro da compagne*, 80–84.

<sup>21</sup> Possibly the Major Doxology, “Gloria in excelsis Deo.”

<sup>22</sup> *Libro da compagne*, 134: “S. Zanobi Vescovo di Firenze a di 25 di Maggio. *Versus*. Ora pro nobis sancte pater Zanobi. *Responsus*. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi. *Oratio*. Propitiare quesumus domine, nobis famulis tuis per sancti Zenobii confessoris tui atque pontificis merita gloriosa, ut eius pia intercessione ab omnibus semper protegatur adversis. Per domin[um nostrum Iesum Christum.] Amen” (Saint Zenobius, Bishop of Florence, on 25 May. *Verse*: Pray



at all our assemblies. And when it is a feast day, the prayer required for that feast day shall be added. And at every assembly, at the end of vespers, the *Salve Regina* and the prayer of Our Lady shall be said. And every second Sunday we shall recite a general recommendation, and especially for the Holy Church and for our city and for the confessors, wardens, and those of our brothers who have entered religious life, and for those of our brothers who are absent from the city and from the confraternity, and for those who have made their proper exit, and for those who have departed this life, and for everything else, as God will instruct us. All these things are to be said or intoned by our warden, either chanting or speaking low, as he sees fit, then he shall send to the altar anyone who has contravened our statutes in any way and he shall impose penalties every first and third Sunday of the month. And in particular, if any of the brothers has strayed, the warden is permitted to correct him at any time. And when our devotions are over, the brothers shall sit down and complete the necessary business of our confraternity. And as they go out, they shall make their Sunday offering in the box as the following chapter describes. And when the *Ave Maria*<sup>23</sup> sounds, everybody shall kneel and recite it. And remember the assembly and the *laude* at San Marco and everyone shall be assiduous.<sup>24</sup>

*Chapter 15: Life and good behaviour*

The Holy Spirit sings: *Qui statis in domo Domini, inn atris domus Dei nostri, in noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta et benedicite dominum*,<sup>25</sup> that is, O you who stand in the house of the Lord and in the dwelling place of our God, lift up your hands in the temple and bless the Lord. And because in our school it is as if we are in the house of God, and want to do what the Holy

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for us, Holy Father Zenobius. *Response*: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. *Prayer*: Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to us Thy servants, in the name of Saint Zenobius, that through his pious intercession we may always be protected from all our adversaries. Through [Jesus Christ our] Lord. Amen).

<sup>23</sup> The signal for the evening prayer of the *Ave Maria* was rung out by *il Leone*, the great bell of the Palazzo Pubblico, and marked the end of the working day; see Atkinson, “The Republic of Sound,” 74.

<sup>24</sup> The last sentence seems to be a marginal note that has been incorporated into the chapter without explanation; possibly a reference to a collaboration between the Purificazione and the *laudese* confraternity in San Marco. The confraternity’s income in 1447 included £7 14s. from the “Compagnia de le lade di Santto Marcho,” ASE, CRSPL 1654 (P.xxx.30), fol. 10<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Compare the last of the Gradual Psalms (*Cantica quindecim graduum*), Psalms 133 (134): 1–2: “Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini: qui statis in domo Domini, in atris domus Dei nostri. In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta, et benedicite Dominum” (Behold now bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless ye the Lord.)

Spirit commands, we order that anyone who is or will be one of our brothers shall be required to know the Ten Commandments of God's Law and to obey them. And he is required to know the Twelve Articles of the Faith. And if old enough, he shall fast on the days commanded by the Holy Church. And anyone who is not old enough shall instead say fifteen Paternosters and Ave Marias. And he shall be required to obey our statutes, and to say, every day, five Paternosters and Ave Marias in honour of the five wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And when he sits down to eat, he shall say one Paternoster and one Ave Maria for the souls of the dead. And each person shall preserve his chastity, and his virginity, if he has that precious gift. And he shall hear a full mass on every feast day, and on workdays if he can, and if he cannot, he shall see it celebrated. And every Sunday he is required to make an offering of one penny in the alms box of our confraternity. And if he cannot, he should say three Paternosters and Ave Marias, asking God to provide for the needy. And nobody shall play any game that is prohibited by the Holy Church, nor stand and watch it. And he shall not blaspheme, or swear, or spread discontent, and he shall not tell lies or make public anything that is done in our confraternity except what is permitted by our warden. And no one shall go to the tavern except in case of need and he shall leave early; and he shall not go where there are places for music or dancing or frivolous singing or jousting or fencing, and other disreputable places. And anybody who is or will be a member of our confraternity shall not belong to any other school or confraternity that meets by day or by night, without the permission of our warden, and if anybody who did join without permission, our warden could expel him from our confraternity, acting on his own. And each of the brethren shall be advised by the confessor that he should take communion every year in our oratory for the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our warden shall be required to remind the brethren a month before the feast day so that each one can set his affairs in order to take communion devoutly. The brethren shall be required to take advice in that month and go to confession every month with one of our confessors and bring the stamped confirmation of confession or else a statement.

#### *Chapter 16: The entry of novices*

*Probate Spiritus se ex deo sunt.*<sup>26</sup> The apostle Paul teaches us that when someone wants to join us as a brother, we should seek diligently to establish what spirit is guiding him and whether it is godly or not. And this is the responsibility above all of the masters of novices. And if it seems to them that he is good, they shall inform our warden. And if he sees fit to announce him to

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<sup>26</sup> 1 John 4:1: "probate spiritus si ex Deo sint" (try the spirits if they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world).

the brethren, then he shall come to an assembly to listen to our ceremonies and offices in the chapel at the entrance to our oratory. And he shall be confessed by one of our confessors, and once he has come and been announced and confessed at one assembly, at the next he shall be received, after it has been put to the vote with black and white beans, and won with two thirds of the brothers who are there in the confraternity on the day. And for his entry our novice must bring ten *soldi* and give them to our bursars. And if he were poor with the result that he could not pay, then he shall be received for the love of God, on the word of our warden. And when he enters the oratory, he shall be told to say: God send us peace. And He shall kneel at the altar as the warden begins to recite the *Miserere mei Deus*.<sup>27</sup> When he has finished, the warden shall stand at the altar and ask the masters of novices: What does he seek? They shall reply: God's mercy and the peace of this confraternity, and he wants to be one of our brethren. The warden shall say to the novice: Is this what you are asking for? And the novice will reply: Father, yes. And the warden will say: We are happy to accept you. We ask you to obey God's commandments and our statutes, and in doing so you will find grace in this world and glory in paradise. The brothers shall reply: Amen. Then the warden shall dress him in a white robe saying: *Indua te Dominus novum hominem qui secundum Deo creatus est in iustitia sanctitatis et veritatis*.<sup>28</sup> The brothers shall reply in the same fashion, and then the *Veni, Creator spiritus* begins. When that is finished, they shall say the prayer of the Holy Spirit, and then intone the *Te Deum laudamus*. The novice shall then take the pax with the image to the brothers. And when these ceremonies are over, his robe shall be removed, and he shall be sent to sit down. And after our office, our chapter on honourable and upright behaviour shall be read to him, with the declaration that nobody who is not thirteen years old, that is, who has not had his twelfth birthday, can be received. And if anybody is brought forward as a novice who is more than twenty-one years old, he cannot be accepted as one of our brethren, except if he has already been a member before and wants to return. Such people can be accepted and stay as long as is indicated in the statutes. And if someone who has been one of our brethren wanted to return, then he is to be treated like a novice, except that he is not robed, and we do not recite *Veni, Creator spiritus*, or the *Te Deum laudamus*. And for his return he shall bring five *soldi* and give them to our bursars.

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<sup>27</sup> For the order of service, see *Libro da compagnia*, 1–5.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. Ephesians 4:24: “et induite novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in iustitia, et sanctitate veritatis” (And put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth); used in the prayer of vestition of the *Ordo professionis religiosæ*.

*Chapter 17: How our warden can accept pilgrims into our confraternity*

Our warden, acting alone, can accept anyone as a pilgrim,<sup>29</sup> whether cleric or layperson, on this condition: that he shall not receive anyone who is less than ten years old. And he shall not receive more than twenty-five of them. And if such people continue up to the age of thirteen years, then they shall enter the confraternity as our statutes command, but until they do enter, we do not wish them to take part in ballots or in voting on the voices [in matters] pertaining to our confraternity, and when they do enter, they shall bring another five *soldi*. And if it appears to the warden that these boys are not attending the confraternity, or for any other reason, then he can dismiss them and put in their place whomsoever he pleases, as long as they do not exceed twenty-five in number. And if any of the boys should enter the confraternity, he can do the same. And if our warden accepts adult men as pilgrims, he shall be required to tell them to confess every month. Such men shall be upright and humble and make a good example of themselves. And it is up to the warden whether he wants them to be put to the vote or not.

*Chapter 18: On the behaviour and discipline of the brothers*

*Fili mi, ne ambulaveris cum impiis, neque cum peccatoribus posueris pedem tuum, ne forte te ducat in interitum.*<sup>30</sup> Consider these words that say: My son, do not walk with the wicked, or put your feet in the footsteps of sinners, lest by chance they lead you to perdition. And, therefore, we ordain that our brothers meet together as much as possible, so that we are kept pure, fleeing corrupt company, and that they consort with each other, like with like, that is, with people of the same age, and the warden shall be assiduous in this. And also if he sees that brothers are keeping company in cases where their ages do not make it easy to consort together, or if they are the same age and he sees that it is not right that they should be consorting with each other, each brother shall obey him, without asking for any other reason. And if the brothers do not obey him, the warden may, on his own, expel such a brother from our confraternity for disobedience. Each brother is obliged to visit churches and holy places with reverence, and to talk about matters of God and the Holy Scriptures as they walk along, and to attend sermons on feast day mornings or when we leave our devotions, and each shall be modest and grave in his conduct. And he shall respect his father and mother and his superiors, and strive diligently to learn by heart the office that we say at our assemblies. And they are required to observe chastity, and anyone who has a wife shall

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<sup>29</sup> 'Pilgrim' is a literal translation of *pellegrino* and seems to be used for a prospective member or postulant.

<sup>30</sup> Source not identified, but compare Proverbs 1:15: "fili mi, ne ambules cum eis; prohibe pedem tuum a semitis eorum" (My son, walk not thou with them, restrain thy foot from their paths).

observe the bond of matrimony as the Holy Church commands. And if anybody were to fall into such sin – which does not happen except through bad company – that he has committed the wicked and horrible sin of sodomy, the warden, as soon as he learns the truth, is required to announce his expulsion, under the grave weight of his conscience. And as well, anyone who sins against the statutes of our confraternity in other such disgraceful things and refuses to amend his ways, he shall be expelled by the warden acting on his own. And anyone who stays away from our confraternity and our assemblies for eight months and does not go to confession, he shall be notified by our councillors that he must confess and come. And if he refuses, his name shall be read to the brothers, so that they can each one urge him to do so. And after a year, if he does not do these things, our warden is required to announce his expulsion, unless he is absent from the city, or ill, or has some other legitimate reason, on the warden's word. And without having to wait this time, anyone who behaves disgracefully can always at any time be corrected by our warden.

*Chapter 19: On the departure of brethren and at what age*

When one of our brothers reaches the age of twenty-four years, our warden is obliged to require him to leave our confraternity and the brother is required to do so, unless there is some just impediment, as stated by the warden. And the warden can require him to leave before he is twenty-four, if he sees that it would be best for the confraternity and for the brother. And this is to be at his discretion, with everybody obeying him. And if one or more of the brothers reaches the age of twenty-four, and the warden sees fit, they shall delay making their departure to wait until there are more brothers to do it. In this case the warden can wait until there are seven brothers making their departure, so that they support each other in the supper or the gift of alms that they decide to leave to the confraternity. And in making their departure, they shall follow this procedure. It shall take place on the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, or on some other feast day if it cannot be done on that day. At the end of our office, the person who is making his departure shall kneel in the middle of our oratory and begin to recite the psalm *Miserere mei Deus*. And the brothers reply. When he has finished, the warden shall dress him in a green robe and place a wreath of olive leaves on his head representing the perseverance and crown of virtues learned in our school. And as he is dressing him in that robe, they shall sing *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*. And while it is being sung, he shall offer the pax with the image to the brethren. When he has finished, the warden will say a prayer to Our Lady, then each shall take a seat and the brother shall, as a charitable gesture, offer a simple light supper to the brothers that are in the confraternity, taking care not to procure sweetmeats of any kind, or make them in any way, and not to procure silverware to present the supper, because we desire that everything should be pure and simple as we have said

above. And the warden shall be required to take care to advise the brethren of this. When the supper is over, the *Te Deum laudamus* shall be sung, and when that is finished, the warden shall say the prayer of Perseverance and then ask for silence. And he shall deliver a sermon on the departure of the brother for his consolation and instruction and for the consolation of all the other brothers. Then the brother shall say a few words of comfort to the brothers who are remaining. Then he shall go to the altar and thank God for the grace he has received, and he shall make a small offering of alms to the school, as he sees fit. And two brothers, dressed in white, shall accompany him to the front door of our oratory and take off his green robe and tell him to go in the peace of our lord Jesus Christ. And these men who have left can nevertheless meet in our oratory with the permission of our warden but not otherwise, and, if they do meet, they must behave virtuously, and be silent like pilgrim members, having no vote by ballot or by voice in our confraternity. And, if they come, they shall bring the stamped confirmation of their confession, as indicated in the chapter on novices. And if the warden arranges a brother's exit as described above for an appointed day and the brother did not come to school on that day, and if he shall hear that it was out of malice or because he did not wish to obey the warden on that day, then he shall announce his expulsion before the whole confraternity.

*Chapter 20: Brothers who become ill, and almsgiving*

*Beati qui respiciunt super egenum e pauperem: in die mala liberabit eos.*<sup>31</sup> So that these words shall be written in our hearts, meaning: Blessed are they who watch over the poor and needy, because God will free them and make them safe on Judgement Day and from his wrath, this is the foundation of all our charity. Here can be seen the wisdom of the virtues taught in our school. Here the fruit of our devotions is apparent. And therefore, if it should happen that any of our brothers should fall ill, we shall send to the house of this invalid one of our confessors and likewise our orderlies, and they shall ensure that he is completely provided for in body and in soul. And to assist this invalid all the better, the warden shall ensure that, along with the orderlies, we have the service of the most capable doctor possible, who shall be doctor to the brothers of our confraternity, and give him every year the fee that they think is right. And this doctor shall be required to treat any of our brothers who falls ill, with the agreement of his family. And in particular he shall go to visit those indicated to him by our warden and orderlies. And if on account of poverty this invalid is unable to help himself in his need, he shall be supported and assisted in charity. And in order for us to be able to provide for such cases, we

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<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Psalms 40:2: "Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem: in die mala liberabit eum Dominus" (Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day).

desire that in our oratory there shall be a box attached to the wall next to the altar, called the alms box. And this box is to have two keys that are different from each other: one held by our warden and the other held by our bursars. And the alms that are offered by the brothers on Sunday, as described in the chapter on uprightness and good behaviour, are to be placed in that box. And this money is to be spent on helping our poor and sick brothers. And in this case, the warden, on his own, can spend as much as he sees fit, and without any further vote he can take it from the box, on this condition: that the bursar shall keep a record of it, under income and expenditure. And if this money is not spent on our sick brothers, it can be used in whatever way our warden and councillors believe is to the advantage and meets the needs of our confraternity, which shall be put to the vote and with at least three in favour. And if there is not enough money in the box to be able to support the invalids, then he shall be supported and assisted by the brothers from their own money and by their friends, and if the warden sees that they cannot help him, then he can help him with the confraternity's money, even selling items and property that it holds, and the orderlies can do the same if our warden falls ill. And the same can be done for someone who has exited the confraternity in the regular fashion, if he has been living a righteous life since his departure, and on the word of the warden we shall do whatever he sees fit.

*Chapter 21: Brothers of our confraternity who die*

If one of our brothers departs this life, and it seems to our warden that he has lived a good and upright life, he shall send the brothers to him dressed in white when it is time for him to be buried, and they shall bring the funeral bier of our confraternity and two torches to the dead person's house. And in his house they shall recite the *Vigil of the Dead*.<sup>32</sup> And then they shall accompany him to the church where he is buried, then they shall return to the oratory chanting psalms for his soul, and singing *laude*. And the same is to be done for those who have exited the confraternity, if they have lived a righteous life, in the opinion of the warden. And these things shall be done with the agreement of the father or mother or others who are responsible for the dead person. And we shall send to enquire on behalf of our warden whether they agree that these ceremonies shall be held. Then, a month later, a mass shall be said in our oratory for his soul, but not if it conflicts with another mass that would normally be said on that day; it is enough to say a prayer for his soul within the mass. At the end of the mass, the brethren shall recite the *Vigil of the Dead*. And while they are reciting the vigil, the sacristans shall distribute a candle to the value of four pence to each of the brothers. And the brothers that can pay for it shall pay, and keep it lit while they are reciting the vigil. The sacristans shall collect the candles that have been lit in this way, that is, whatever

<sup>32</sup> *Libro da Compagnie*, 85–107.

remains, and use them for the confraternity's purposes. And, likewise, every year, early on the morning of the Day of the Dead, the office shall be recited for the souls of all the dead of our confraternity. And that morning the clerk is to read aloud to the brothers the names of the dead of our confraternity. And if it is not possible to have a priest to say the mass, one of our confessors shall say it for the soul of the brother who has died, within a month, as we have said above. And for every brother who dies, each brother, as soon as he hears the news, is to say within eight days twenty-five Paternosters and Ave Marias, and the Penitential Psalms with the litanies and prayers that follow the psalms, once. And anyone who does not know how to read shall say fifteen Paternosters and Ave Marias instead of the psalms. And if anyone who has died does [not] have his own robe, then one shall be taken to his home, of a quality to be determined by our warden, and he shall go dressed in that when he is carried to the grave for burial. If the people at his home agree, an olive wreath shall be placed on his head.

*Chapter 22: How to go in procession, and robes*

If our city orders a solemn procession of any kind or if our warden sees fit to go out at all,<sup>33</sup> so that we can go with greater humility, each brother who can is required and obliged to make or buy a white robe to fit him and this robe shall have an image of Our Lady on the right shoulder. And each shall wear it when we go in procession, or if our warden deems fit to make an excursion out of the city; it is up to him whether to wear our robes or not. And when we go in procession, we go in order, two by two, singing psalms and hymns or *laude*, as the warden deems fit. And we shall go modestly and meekly, setting a good example for those who see us. And if they have a robe that belonged to some brother who has been expelled from our confraternity or for any other reason, the warden can allocate it to another brother who does not have one, on this condition, that the brother shall pay the confraternity twenty *soldi* for the robe. And if any of the expelled brethren ever returns at any time, his robe shall be returned to him, if he had had it made himself. And if he bought it from the confraternity and it has been assigned to somebody else, he shall be given a robe, as our warden determines. And likewise, one shall be assigned to the person who bought the one that belonged to the returning brother who had had it made himself, as we have said above. And these robes cannot be taken outside, without the permission of the warden, because we intend that when a brother has made his robe or bought it or brought it, the robe belongs to the confraternity for the use of the brother while he is a member; and if he makes his exit or is expelled, then the robe remains with the confraternity.

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<sup>33</sup> Confraternities were regularly required by the Commune to take part in processions for San Giovanni Battista, to honour visiting dignitaries, and when the miraculous image of the Virgin was brought from Impruneta to seek or give thanks for the protection of the city.



*Chapter 23: Our festa of the Purification of Our Lady and those of Saint Zenobius and of Saints Cosmas and Damian*

In praise and honour of the glorious Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, our advocate and guide, we ordain that every year, on the day of her Purification, a most solemn *festa* be held with devotion in our oratory, and in order to do this, our warden shall adopt the following procedure. He shall elect the number of brethren that he deems sufficient to be the *festaiuoli* in charge of the *festa*,<sup>34</sup> and these *festaiuoli* shall be diligent in adorning our oratory properly with laurel or myrtle, and bench-drapes,<sup>35</sup> or other things, such as are appropriate for our oratory, and are virtuous and devout. And if it is possible to get enough priests to sing a high mass, then let that be done in the name of God, otherwise let one or more low masses be said, as our warden deems fit. The warden shall give orders for a sufficient number of buns to be made to give one to each brother, and they shall be blessed by the priest, and the priest who says mass shall hand them out himself and the brethren shall take them devoutly, and if it is possible to give a candle that has been blessed along with the bun, then our warden shall arrange for them to be bought. And to save our confraternity expense and to be able to hand out buns on that morning, we desire that in the month of January every year, each of the brethren be required to give and to pay two *soldi di piccioli* and this money shall be collected by the bursars and they shall keep a record of it in an account book called the Subscription Book, and this money is to be spent on making the bread and on buying wax and the other things for the *festa* and the buns shall each weigh two ounces and up to three and no more. And on the day of the Purification of Our Lady, and afterwards at the supper, the brethren shall be assiduous in singing hymns and solemn [canticles].<sup>36</sup> Afterwards, the representation shall be done of the *Purification of Our Lady*, that is, when she took our Lord Jesus Christ to the temple with her tiny offering. And we also ordain that on the morning of Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian each year they shall celebrate a solemn *festa* in our oratory, and the warden shall choose *festaiuoli* as he sees fit. One or more masses shall be organised for the morning, as our warden sees fit, and the *festaiuoli* shall decorate the oratory in the same way as indicated above for the feast of the Purification, and the brethren shall return assiduously after lunch for solemn vespers to be said. And likewise we desire that every year on the morning of Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian there shall

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<sup>34</sup> *Festaiuoli* are simply members of a committee appointed to organize decoration, entertainment, food and

<sup>35</sup> In its immediate context, *pancali* seems to indicate a form of decoration, whence ‘bench-drapes’, but it can, by extension, mean the benches they cover.

<sup>36</sup> A word is omitted and a space left in both manuscripts; the formula of “laude e cantiche” is found elsewhere.

be a solemn *fiesta* in the chapel of the saints at the entrance to our oratory. And because this is not a holy day of obligation and everybody is working, we ordain that the *fiesta* shall be celebrated the Sunday after the feast of the saints, that is, of Saint Cosimo and Saint Damian. And one or more masses shall be said, as our warden sees fit. And on that morning, the door of the chapel shall remain open to the public, so that anybody who so desires can visit the saints.

*Chapter 24: The authority of our warden*

It is our wish and desire that our warden shall always be the governor and overseer of our confraternity, and to appoint and announce him, our oratory is sufficient, with the entire and universal membership of the confraternity and the councillors and nine assistants. And even if he has never been declared governor, we agree that he shall be, and we want anything that he has done or will do to be as if it had been solemnly done by the universal membership of our confraternity. And, likewise, he is always to be the master, and he shall receive full obedience and respect, like a father and protector of our souls, and in matters that pertain to his guardianship and our advantage, when he acts and provides them, everyone shall be glad and forbearing, without opposition and without complaint. Because it is not by him, but by God through him, that we are governed and ruled, it is right for him to correct, reproach, and warn the brethren and ban them from the confraternity, and even expel them when he deems that these people and their ways and their lifestyle deserve it, for sowing discord or causing scandal, or disturbing unity and fraternal peace. If any question should arise among the brethren concerning the present statutes, or some difference of opinion, the warden's interpretation or exposition of them shall prevail, and everyone must accept meekly whatever he feels and judges. And he shall have full authority to be able to follow these statutes with a pure and clear intellect and for a good and holy purpose, not deviating from their intent but always fostering the honour of God and honest living and good government and peace in our confraternity. And let nobody dare to oppose him as he governs according to the present constitutions. And anyone who opposes and remains obstinate can be expelled from the confraternity, by the warden acting on his own, and this is left to his conscience. And the warden shall keep all the confraternity's keys except those of the money box, which are dealt with in the chapter on the bursars. And the warden shall give these bursars the keys that he deems that they need.

*Chapter 25: On the independence of the confraternity*

It is our wish and determination that this confraternity shall never ever submit itself to any person or any other school or confraternity meeting by day or by night, or to any religious or lay individuals. Likewise, that within our

oratory no other confraternity but our own shall ever meet, neither by day nor by night, but it shall be at the sole decision of the warden that God has given us or will give us in the future, through the hands of the abbot and prior and wardens and presiding official of the councillors, as is the intent contained in the papal bull,<sup>37</sup> in the manner set out above. And even though the bull does not mention the nomination that the previous warden is to make, of up to three people whom he regards as suitable to be his successors, and neither does it mention that the presiding official of the councillors of our confraternity should take part in the election of [our] warden, [we wish, for the] peace of our confraternity and its happiness, that if it is the will of those who are named in the bull, then this process shall be observed and followed. And we, in the love of Jesus Christ, beseech them that in this they will be patient and accepting, that is, that in some honourable way they will allow the presiding official of the councillors and orderlies to participate in the election of the new warden, and that those who have the task in the future will be asked to choose the person or one of those people nominated by our previous warden.

*Chapter 26: Observing the statutes*

The present statutes and constitutions shall be observed in accordance with what they contain. Brethren shall live in accordance with them, and form their lives as a mirror of them, always trying to enrich them with the righteousness and discretion of the warden, rejecting, striking out, and annulling any other statute, deliberation, or decision that in any way breaches them or in any other way contradicts them. And our warden shall ensure that every Sunday, in the full meeting of the confraternity, one of the present statutes shall be read, so that by ringing often in the ears of the brethren they will enter into their hearts and minds too. Then let us put them into practice and they will make us live a holy life, as is pleasing to God, and we also wish that in the future no new statutes can replace these, without the permission of our warden and the full membership, and if there are fewer than thirty members, the votes in favour should be seven-eighths of them.

*Chapter 27: The request and grace sought from the Lord Archbishop of the city of Florence and his vicars*

With all due reverence and devotion, the brothers of our confraternity humbly ask the most reverend in Christ father and lord archbishop or his vicars in the city of Florence that in all good conscience we in our confraternity may celebrate and say mass with any priest at all. And likewise recite the divine office with any priest or with any brother. Likewise we ask that you agree to

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<sup>37</sup> For a transcription of the 1442 bull, see Puccinelli, *Istoria*, 310–311; and Aranci, “La catechesi,” 82–84 (*scheda* 4.9).

grant permission and special licence to the present and future wardens to be able to elect one or more priests, secular or regular, even if they did not at present have the cure of a church, so that such priests can administer to them the sacrament of the body of Christ in any place and as often as necessary, freely and rightfully, on this condition, that the brethren are required to receive communion in their own parishes on Easter Sunday, unless they have permission from their parish priests. And likewise we ask that the warden can elect one or more correctors or confessors from among those priests, as he wishes, and that those priest be allowed, according to our request, to administer the sacraments with out further permission. And the same is requested for anyone who wants to enter our confraternity or who has made his exit, or any other devout person, that he shall have the same freedom as one of the other brothers of the confraternity.

[*Under a cloth veil, pasted to the page:*<sup>38</sup>]

We, brother Antonius, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, archbishop of Florence, having seen these statutes of the confraternity of the Purification of the Virgin Mary and of Saint Zenobius, since they contain things that are righteous and useful for the salvation of souls, approve and confirm these statutes, granting to those who assemble in the said place contrite and confessed for every day forty days of indulgence, and we had these words written to witness this, on the 13th of April in the year of Our Lord 1448.

And I, the said brother Antonius, wrote this in confirmation of the above with my own hand. [*Seal of Antoninus, archbishop of Florence.*]

*The obligation we have to Filippo di Zanobi Migliori, banker*

Agreement made on 14 April 1437, in which Filippo di Zanobi Migliori, banker, reassigned 100 florins invested in the Monte in favour of the confraternity and school of the Purification of Our Lady and of Saint Zenobius for the love of God on this condition: that we are required and obliged every year on the feast of St Anthony [Abbot], that is on 17 January in our oratory, to do suffrage with three solemn masses, and he also wishes to share in all our good deeds, processions, alms and offices and every other good deed past and present performed by the confraternity and school, always for the love of God, and so we promise to keep this agreement.

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<sup>38</sup> The presence of the signature in the hand of Antonio Pierozzi, canonised on 31 May 1523, makes this page, and indeed the whole volume, a precious contact relic of the saint. On the status of Saint Antoninus's relics, see Cornelson, *Art and the Relic Cult*.

*Chapter 29: The suffrage mass for Piero di Mariano, our previous warden*

Since there is nothing more likely to close off and block the flow to mankind of the fountain of divine grace than being ungrateful for divine grace received (such that the most devout doctor Bernard says, ingratitude is that howling wind that dries up the fountain of divine pity), and since, on the contrary, in the presence of God and of men, gratitude is very acceptable and commendable, therefore, as our society and confraternity remembered the many and great spiritual benefits which it has received from God through the study, care, and effort of our past warden of blessed memory, that is, of Piero di Mariano, purse-maker, and wishing to avoid any note of ingratitude, but rather to find grace with Him and receive whatever spiritual benefits it possibly can, it was decided to offer prayers and supplications for his soul before God, so that if by some chance he were suffering in purgatory, through this he might soon be liberated and go to enjoy the benefits of eternal life. And so that this should have effect, we were pleased to propose a collective motion, which was universally supported and decided, that every year in August, on the third Sunday, we should say an office in our confraternity and, if it were possible, have a mass with this office for the soul of the aforesaid Piero di Mariano, and, if this should not happen, it should be a weight on the soul of the present warden or on any future warden. And so that this remains in force in perpetuity, it was resolved and passed that this decision should be written in our book of statutes, as appears in the book of decisions and minutes, marked B, on fol. 70.

*Chapter 30: Seeking grace for Domenico di Stefano, our warden*

The apostle Paul compares the congregation of the faithful to the human body, because just as in the body many different limbs are connected together, so in any holy college many different members are united through charity in Christ. *Multi*, he says, *unum corpus sumus in Xpisto, singuli autem alter alterius membra*.<sup>39</sup> Now just as we see through experience that the health of the limbs depends on the health of the head, on account of which nature teaches us to take great care to preserve the head, so it must be the highest desire in spiritual matters in every holy confraternity for its head, that is its pastor or governor, to be directed in every aspect of its activity according to divine will, because on him depends its perfect spiritual and holy existence. But certainly, this cannot be had without the gift of God, because the Saviour says: Without me you can do nothing. Wherefore, as we thought on this, we decided that we must take devout steps to pray for such grace at the fount of divine pity.

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<sup>39</sup> Romans 12:4–5: “Sicut enim in uno corpore multa membra habemus, omnia autem membra non eundem actum habent: ita multi unum corpus sumus in Christo, singuli autem alter alterius membra” (For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another).

And so that this decision should take effect, it was put to the vote of our whole confraternity and in the end the vote was passed and resolved by everyone that each year, on 29 August, that is, on the day of the Beheading of the glorious Precursor of Christ, Saint John the Baptist, we should recite an office, here in our oratory, with a mass if one is possible, and if not, that one of our correctors should recite it, for our present warden Domenico di Stefano, so that almighty God will always guide him according to his will, in such a way that our oratory can continue and grow in his honour and praise, and then, when his life is over, grant him the repose of the blessed in eternal life. And if this is not carried out, let it be on the conscience of the present warden and his councillors. And so that this resolution shall be followed in full, it was determined that it should be written in the book of our statutes, as appears in the book of decisions and minutes marked B, fol. 70.

[*In a later hand*, 1478]

We, the wardens of the five ancient companies or schools,<sup>40</sup> founded in charity and righteousness for young boys and consequently for our Lord God, who says to his disciples in the Gospel: Suffer the children to come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,<sup>41</sup> wishing to follow in the footsteps of the good and excellent wardens who have preceded us, with God and good character before our eyes, resolve and ordain that the following eight things that will be written here shall be observed without fail and without interruption by each of the five youth companies and schools.

In honour of the most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of the prophet David, says: The law of God continues and endures forever.<sup>42</sup> On these words, the Gloss of the Saints says that the good shepherds and guardians of their flocks are the instrument, manner, order and way of making this law endure; wherefore we will endeavour, in the role of holy shepherds, to offer some sign of holiness.

Of the eight things we wish to reform, we begin, then, at the end, with the memory of death, *ut iacto fundamento optime possimus edificare*, so that on a sound foundation we can build well.

[1.] Therefore, to remedy whatever in the lives of each of us five wardens might through negligence be lacking, as soon as word arrives that one of the wardens of these five companies has gone to eternal life, the companies are required in their first assembly to say a solemn Office of the Dead, and at that

<sup>40</sup> The confraternity of Sant'Antonio in Costa San Giorgio has been added to the original four.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 19:14.

<sup>42</sup> Not found in Psalms, but related perhaps to Psalms 18 (19), the beginning of v. 8, "Lex Domini immaculata, convertens animas" (The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls) and v. 10, "Timor Domini sanctus, permanens in saeculum saeculi" (The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever and ever).

assembly, each bursar of the five nominated companies shall go to their correctors and give them whatever offering their funds will permit for Masses of St Gregory<sup>43</sup> to be said as soon as possible, and this with our fail, and requiring all the wardens to be at each other's funeral.

[2.] And, henceforth: when their time comes, the plants in the garden of Jesus Christ shall be renewed, through departures, as our statutes command, and the new plant-youths shall be qualified to enter into the companies, both now and in the future, and they shall never be taken from another confraternity, except in accordance with the statutes. This 'renewal' refers to those who are qualified to make their departure, and only those should leave for whom it is advantageous for both parts that they should leave, as the statutes command.

[3.] Next, all of us wardens, every first Sunday of the month, shall meet at Cestello<sup>44</sup> or wherever the presiding warden wishes, and every three months the presiding warden shall be drawn by lot from among us, that is, on the first Sunday of the third month, and we will discuss in secret among ourselves the needs of our companies. And one of the correctors will be asked to be present on occasions as determined, so that he can record whatever is necessary and the conclusions of our discussions together.

[4.] They shall continue, without any interruption, to observe this practice: that is, within every three-month cycle, each confraternity, either in full or the majority of members, shall go once to visit the confraternity from which the presiding warden has been drawn by lot. And this visit must be four or six together, each from the confraternity, in a civil, dignified manner, and this visit, even in procession, although once a sign of devotion and good order, has thoughtlessly fallen from use and is forgotten.

Our reform is that henceforth we shall pay visits, as we did in former times, according to the form of our statutes. We say that this visitation is necessary so that the fraternal charity ignited by our virtuous and holy forebears is preserved and not extinguished. The presiding warden, on that day, will order some spiritual recreation to be prepared in his confraternity, so the confraternity, with good order and effect, will endeavour to send out at the beginning or at the end, someone to say some spiritual words. If he does not wish to speak, then the corrector shall do it, and he should be asked so that he can share in such a benefice.

5. And we order that this to be observed in perpetuity: that one of the youths of the five companies – and it will always be the turn of the confraternity from

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<sup>43</sup> Here in the sense of an unbroken series of thirty masses, offered for a soul in Purgatory.

<sup>44</sup> In the Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena in Borgo Pinti, called Cestello.

which the next presiding warden will come, at whatever time is deemed appropriate by the warden of his own confraternity – shall recite a sermon on whatever subject he chooses, as a sign of the fact that we are all brothers in Christ. The warden or the corrector shall speak briefly, so that everything is done quickly, in this form. And even though the corrector is present, if the boy is prepared to recite the sermon, then the corrector shall say nothing. But if the boy is not prepared to speak, and only rarely will this happen, then the corrector shall take his place.

6. In conclusion, then, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, whenever one of the aforesaid companies goes to the particular *fiesta* of one of the other companies, and the *fiesta* falls in the three-month period, then it is understood to have satisfied the requirements for those three months in which everyone is required to pay at least one visit to the presiding warden. And our feast days and saints' days shall henceforth be celebrated only with vespers, hymns, prayers, wall-hangings, lights and greenery, so that by wanting to adorn the walls we do not sully the inner man.

7. In this way and in this time, we believe that it is sufficient to meet together, so that by wasting our time, the spiritual love and fraternal charity among us is not wasted and consumed. Nobody shall engage in other gatherings, neither in houses in the country nor in Florence, unless the warden father is present at such spiritual recreations, and in every case he shall seek permission from the warden, who will kindly give it in reasonable cases, so that everything is done with God's blessing and reward.

8. If anyone does presume to do this without permission, it is within the warden's authority to prescribe penance, and so that every spirit shall praise God, so each warden shall appoint one of the presiding officials or rectors who can give this permission, when the warden cannot be found or else was absent.

Written by me, Guido, monk of the Cistercian order, 26 July 1478, in the time of the warden and pastor and upstanding man, Domenico di Stefano.

The others, therefore, who preside in authority over the other companies and confraternities, and in unanimous agreement reformed all that is approved and written above, are the good men, whose names and titles are as follows:

Domenico di Stefano, the present senior warden of this holy confraternity of the Purificazione di Santa Maria

Lorenzo, of San Raffaello, or the *Scala*

Donato, of San Niccolò, or the *Ceppe*

Cristoforo, San Giovanni Evangelista

Antonio, Sant'Antonio, or San Giorgio.



*Reform of Chapter 24 of our statutes, which discusses the authority of our Warden, enacted by a general vote of our Brothers on 19 April 1739, after lunch*

The assembly was held and the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin were sung and afterwards, we voted on three propositions chosen by Monsignor the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Vicar General of Florence Giulio del Riccio, and transmitted by his note of 7 March last to our Bursar, the Most Illustrious Lord Marquess Francesco Antonio Feroni. These three propositions and note are placed in our File no. 1 of Justifications at n. 37, and these were made public in our confraternity on the morning of the 12th of the present month, after the usual assembly, and then affixed to the door of the confraternity, so that each brother who desired to be fully apprised of their contents could, in this week just passed, read them at his convenience, as everyone was informed by a printed invitation, delivered to every person by our steward, in which, as well, our brethren were invited to attend the regular assembly for this day in order to be present for the vote. It was further announced, that, by the decree of the aforesaid Monsignor the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Vicar General, on the 17th of this present month, repealing on this occasion the provision of our statutes, it was ordered by His Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lordship that after the three propositions had been put to the vote, the one that received the greatest number of votes in favour should be adopted and observed, even if none of them passed with two-thirds of the votes, as is our custom, provided however that the said greatest number of votes in favour was greater than half the brothers present, as per the said decree, copy of which is preserved in the aforementioned File of Justifications, at no. 39. Wherefore, twenty-three of us gathered together, and having read all the aforesaid propositions, the one that begins *That the warden must in future discuss all temporal business* etc., was put to the vote first and lost, given that there were 15 votes against and only 8 votes in favour. Secondly, the one that begins *That the Warden may on his own authority dispose as he wishes* etc. was put to the vote, and passed, with 18 votes in favour, and 5 against. In the third and last place, the other proposition that begins *That future Wardens shall be required to discuss* etc. was put to the vote and did not pass, with 12 votes against and only 11 votes in favour. And after the usual thanks, the assembly ended.

Copy of the pro[position] that was won in the second vote held as indicated above:

That the Warden may, on his own authority, deal as he wishes with any transaction that does not exceed in total in the course of the year the value of twenty *scudi*, but in any matter that by itself or when combined with other matters exceeds this sum, he may not do any business without the approval not only of the four Councillors in office at the time, but also of another four, who will

be elected as Syndics and Conservators; and by the vote and approval of these eight people, and in no other way, all transactions of our statutes exceeding the sum of twenty *scudi* will be determined and resolved, and such resolution must be passed by two thirds of them, and of those among them who attend the meeting to pass this business. And in the case of a tied vote, it shall be put to a meeting of the whole confraternity, to be called with notice in the usual way, specifying the matter that is to be resolved.

It would be proposed to hold the election of such Conservators or Syndics once a year, two at a time, so that there can always be two people who are experienced, except for the first time when all four shall be created by drawing their names from the purse containing the names<sup>45</sup> of all brothers who have paid their dues and are not in arrears on the first Sunday of June, or any time that is held to be more appropriate.

Equally, for the satisfaction of all, it would be proposed that, on that day that is deemed to be more appropriate, we shall, every year, require the Bursar or Clerk to read publicly, in the full assembly of brothers, all those decisions on transactions exceeding the value of twenty *scudi* that have taken place that year.

[*In another hand:*] We approve the above motion, and order that it be observed. Issued by the Archbishop's Palace, Florence, 21 April 1739, Giulio del Riccio Vicar General.

*Reform of Chapter 8 of our statutes, which relates to the election of councillors and orderlies of this confraternity, decided on 5 February 1740, ab incarnatione,<sup>46</sup> in the morning*

This morning, as usual, we held our assembly and sang the Office of the Dead for the soul of Messer Sigismondo Landini, Lieutenant of the Fisc and our late brother, formerly Warden of the venerable confraternity of the Arcangelo Raffaello, called *la Scala*.<sup>47</sup> And because, with the opportunity of sending the general invitation to all our Brethren on the occasion of the exposition in our oratory of the Holy Sacrament for the customary Forty Hour Devotion and also for our subsequent solemn feast day of 2 February, the brethren were also invited to come to this morning's general assembly, after which a vote would be taken on a change for future elections of our Councillors and Orderlies, to this purpose and to notify everyone, a notice was placed on the board of our oratory, for the required time, indicating this fact, in accordance with

<sup>45</sup> Elections at many levels were made by drawing names from a leather bag. Where secret ballot was required, voters placed a black 'bean' (in favour) or a white 'bean' (against) into a box.

<sup>46</sup> Until the calendar reforms of 1750, the new year began on the Feast of the Annunciation (25 March) following 1 January; the year is thus 1741 by the modern calendar.

<sup>47</sup> On Sigismondo di Raffaello Landini, warden of the Arcangelo Raffaello from 1707 until his death at the end of 1740, see Eisenbichler, *The Boys*, 315.

the ordinances. And when the aforesaid Office was over, after Holy Mass and the usual prayers, our Most Illustrious Bursar, the Lord Marquis Francesco Feroni, beloved brother, expounded in clear and intelligible tones, what seemed relevant in this matter, not only the inconveniences that are believed to have arisen in the past, or at least might arise in the future, but also the new method to be followed for the relevant election, in accordance with what is set out in at length in our *Filza I* of the Justifications at no. [-]. Then a head-count was made of the brothers present and they were found to be forty-four, and they were counted again for the vote in which the proposed proposition passed, notwithstanding eight votes against. And the motion is:

That from this day forth, repealing in this regard the arrangement that we have, and in particular in Chapter 8, the election of Councillors and Orderlies, that are to be held every second Sunday in the Months of April, August and December, shall not continue in the way we have done it until now, but in this way, that is:

There shall be two purses, and in one of them shall be placed the names of the brothers who can be selected to perform the duties of Councillors and Orderlies, and in the other the names of those who have been drawn, and on the days chosen as we have said above, at the end of our usual devotions, after the customary hymn *Veni, Creator spiritus* with its prayer, our Father Warden is to extract from the purse of brothers to be extracted the name of a brother, and he shall give it to our Father Corrector, who is to read it aloud to all the brethren, and this person so selected is to be a Councillor for the next four-month period. Then, in the same manner, the names of the other three brothers are to be extracted, who will fill this office, and then the names so drawn are to be placed in the other purse and shall remain there until the first purse of brothers to be extracted is empty. The first-drawn brother is to be the presiding officer over his companion councillors for the first month of his office, the second-drawn for the second month, the third-drawn for the third month, and the fourth for the fourth month of their office, and the role of this person while he is presiding officer is to sit next to the Father Warden, [and] do whatever he asks of him, and fulfil the role of the Warden in his absence as our statutes command.

And following the election in this form, the usual hymn, *Te Deum laudamus*, shall be sung, with the prayer for Peace.<sup>48</sup> All brothers who are in arrears and who are not paying their dues are exempt from having their names placed in the purse, and if it should happen that when the officials are being elected somebody is drawn who has stopped paying his dues, the voting slip shall be torn up, and if he regularises his position within the day, he shall be placed in the purse again and again enjoy full benefits.

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<sup>48</sup> Possibly Numbers 6:24–26, also known as the Seraphic Blessing, or blessing of Saint Francis on Brother Leo.

According to our statutes, those who are absent from the city cannot be Councillors, except those who are at their houses in the country or away for some short time, and if such people are drawn, they shall be returned to the purse, and not regarded as drawn.

And all those who are not seventeen, or who have not completed their year of novitiate, cannot be placed in the purse, and therefore on the days appointed for the election, as set out above, before we come to the drawing of the Officials, the names of all those who have finished their seventeenth year or have completed a year since they enrolled in the confraternity, will be placed in the purse, so that they can enjoy full benefits, like the other brethren.

Then, when we had given thanks, and received the Lord's blessing from our Father Corrector, the assembly ended.

[*Another contemporary hand:*] We approve the above decision, and order that it be observed. Issued by the Archbishop's Palace, Florence, 7 April 1742, G[iulio del] R[iccio].

[*Rubric illegible:*]

[...] gathered in the usual place in our oratory in sufficient number to be able to conduct the business of our confraternity, the following, namely:

Benedetto Barchetti, Warden  
 Liborio Farolfi, Presiding Officer of the Councillors  
 Conte Francesco Guicciardini )  
 Giuseppe Lelli ) Councillors  
 Amerigo Barsotti )  
 Filippo Canucci, one of the Syndics;

in the absence of:

Sigismondo Burroni  
 Gian Giuseppe Giacomelli, and  
 Francesco Micheli, Syndics

even though they too had been invited, like everyone else, by our steward;  
 and in the presence also of:

Messer Francesco Antonio Feroni, Bursar  
 Anton Maria Lapini, Assistant Bursar,

after long and serious discussion among themselves, it was their considered opinion that to resolve the financial affairs of our confraternity it was necessary to have people who were familiar with them, so that any decisions that were made did not prejudice our holy Oratory; and the Councillors and Syndics, who must, under the terms of the reform to Chapter 24 of our confraternity's statutes, conduct our financial affairs, are replaced, according to the provisions of our statutes, from time to time, the first every four months, the second every two years, and as a result, as soon as they begin to have some understanding of our Holy Oratory's affairs, they come to the end of their term. Since these officials are drawn by ballot from the general purse of all the paid-up brethren, it could happen that people were drawn who were not

capable of handling financial matters, and as a result of their decisions, the confraternity could suffer damage. Therefore, in order to remedy this concern, they decided unanimously, by virtue of the authority granted them in the above reform of Chapter 24, that all decisions in excess of the value of twenty *scudi* shall be passed by two-thirds of those present at meetings called for that purpose, and henceforth our Bursar and Assistant Bursar must be admitted to cast their votes in all sessions that concern the good government of our Confraternity, as people who by reason of their office are familiar with all the matters of importance, and that their resolution should be inserted into our book of statutes, so that is observed to the advantage and benefit of our Holy Oratory.

[*Approval illegible*]

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