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# Filippino Lippi in the Brancacci Chapel

Fumika Araki

...and those in the Brancacci Chapel, half by Masaccio and the other half by Masolino, with the exception of the Crucifixion of Saint Peter by Filippino Lippi<sup>(1)</sup>. (F. Albertini, 1510)

Filippo, therefore, gave it its final perfection with his own hand, and executed what was lacking in one scene, wherein S. Peter and S. Paul are restoring to life the nephew of the Emperor<sup>(2)</sup>. (G. Vasari, 1568)

## Introduction

The Florentine painter Filippino Lippi (1457–1504) started his first fresco

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- (1) F. Albertini, *Memorial of Many Statues and Paintings in the Illustrious City of Florence by Francesco Albertini (1510): A Critical Edition with Annotations by Waldemar H. de Boer*, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, Firenze 2010, p. 100.
- (2) G. Vasari, *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects: Illustrated - Biographies of the Greatest Artists of Renaissance, Including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Titian, Giotto, Raphael, Brunelleschi & Donatello*, trans. G.C. du de Vere, 2018, Kindle edition.



Fig. 1

work as an independent master in the early 1480s or shortly before<sup>(3)</sup>, which was the completion of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes in the Basilica of Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, which was undertaken by the early Renaissance masters Masaccio and Masolino around 1424 but remained unfinished<sup>(4)</sup> [Fig. 1]. As Giorgio

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(3) For the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel by Filippino Lippi, see P. Zambrano & J. K. Nelson, *Filippino Lippi*, Milano 2004, pp. 181–223, 327–334; P. Zambrano, “‘Gloria e fama grandissima’. Filippino Lippi al Carmine”, in *Filippino Lippi e Sandro Botticelli nella Firenze del '400*, ed. A. Cecchi, Roma 2011, pp. 27–39.

(4) The previous researches on the frescoes of Brancacchi Chapel by Masaccio and Masolino are compiled in N. A. Eckstein, *Painted Glories: the Brancacci Chapel in Renaissance Florence*, New Haven 2014; A. Ladis, *Masaccio, La Cappella Brancacci*, Torino 1994.

Vasari (1511–1574) described<sup>(5)</sup>, the narratives from the life of St. Peter painted in the 1420s, especially the frescoes depicted by Masaccio were considered to be the birth of a new style. As a result, all artists, not only Florentine including Filippino but also artists from other cities, came to visit the chapel to study. It became a kind of *scuola* [school].

The completion of the frescoes should absolutely be considered an important event both in the art scene of Florence in the late 15th century and in the career for still young painter Filippino himself. In fact, a contemporary Antonio Manetti (1423–1497) stated that the Brancacci chapel frescoes were painted by the hands of *tre maestri tutti buoni* [three good masters]<sup>(6)</sup>. The first clear statement about Filippino's involvement in the Brancacci Chapel had been made by Francesco Albertini (ca. 1469 – post 1510) as quoted at the beginning. He also referred to the subject of the fresco that Filippino had painted, *Crucifixion of St. Peter*. In 1550, Giorgio Vasari described in the first edition of *Le Vite* that Filippino had painted *St. Paul Visiting St. Peter in Prison* and *Disputation with Simon Magus* and *Crucifixion of St Peter* as well as completed the unfinished *Resuscitation of the Son of Theophilus* by Masaccio<sup>(7)</sup>. However, Vasari's description had not received attention of the critics after him. Instead, they interpreted the text of the second edition (which is the second quotation at the beginning) as Filippino had only painted the

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(5) G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari pittore aretino con nuove annotazioni e commenti di Gaetano Milanesi*, vol. II, Bologna 1973, pp. 297–299.

(6) A. Manetti, *Vite di XIV uomini singhulari in Firenze dal MCCCC innanzi*, ed. G. Milanesi, Firenze 1887, p. 165 ([Masaccio] “dipinse nella cappella de' Brancacci più storie, el meglio che v'è: è dipinta di mano di 3 maestri tutti buoni, ma lui, maravigliosa”). Three painters are Masaccio, Masolino and Filippino. However, the writer did not mention our painter's name directly.

(7) G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani da Cimabue, insino a' tempi nostri: Nell'edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentini*, ed. L. Bellosi & A. Rossi, vol. I, Torino 1986, p. 498.

unfinished area of *Resuscitation*. This understanding has been repeated unquestioningly. Some historians even went so far as to completely ignore Filippino's contribution to the project until the beginning of the 19th century. Filippino was rediscovered in more parts of the frescoes at that time, when that important and complex issue of how to divide the hands of Masaccio and Masolino became active<sup>(8)</sup>.

The previous discussions of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes by Filippino were mainly about the distinction between Masaccio, the similarities with his previous works, the suggestion of the person or the community who had commissioned to supplement the unfinished parts, and the identification of the models of many portraits attending the scenes from St. Peter's narratives. However, the relationship between the preceding frescoes and the parts painted by Filippino has not been fully discussed yet. In particular, the previous studies based on stylistic analysis have often overlooked this issue because they have devoted themselves to extracting the painter's original style from the whole chapel frescoes.

In this paper the author introduces a new point of view to the study of the Brancacci chapel frescoes by Filippino. That is, to conceive it as a "collaboration" between the painter and antecedent artists. As Goffen argued, to maintain visual unity among all work was essential to artistic collaboration in the Renaissance period<sup>(9)</sup>. Consequently, painters who participated in a collaborative production tended to those who had already established a cooperative system. Masaccio and Masolino, who worked together in Brancacci Chapel in the 1420s, are a perfect example of what Goffen pointed out, or Botticelli and Filippino, who painted *Life of Esther* on cassoni can be given as another instance. Evidently, Filippino must

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(8) F. Gamba, *Filippino Lippi nella Storia della critica*, Firenze 1958, pp. 27–36; P. Zambrano & J. K. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

(9) R. Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian*, New Haven – London 2002, pp. 9–10.

have needed to create harmony with the preceding frescoes when completing the Brancacci Chapel mural decoration. However, as he is also a painter of the Renaissance who obtained a strong consciousness of individuality as an artist, Filippino would not have been satisfied with just imitating the past style like an artisan.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the actual situation behind the production by shedding light on the anti-Filippino style of Brancacci Chapel frescoes along with his originality. This is a new approach to the painter's psychology against the chapel wall. To discuss this issue, previous discussions about how Filippino was involved in the frescoes is examined first. Then, the texts of Albertini and Vasari quoted at the beginning of this paper will be re-read attentively, especially the former that has not been treated appropriately until now. Finally, the author discloses the multiple attitudes of Filippino toward the Brancacci chapel frescoes by focusing on *Resuscitation of the Son of Theophilus* and *Disputation with Simon Magus and Crucifixion of St Peter* located at the lower register of the wall in which the involvement of Filippino can be pointed out.

## **1. Lower register frescoes in Brancacci Chapel and the involvement of Filippino**

The present Brancacci Chapel frescoes are divided into three registers. The upper register is comprised of the paintings on the ceiling and the left and right lunette. The decoration of the middle register were co-produced by Masaccio and Masolino and the lower register frescoes were begun by Masaccio and then completed by Filippino<sup>(10)</sup>. The last, which is the main subject of this article, is

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(10) A large-scale renovation of the upper part of the chapel was carried out from 1746 to 48. According to Vasari's description, a cross vault was applied in the ceiling before that renovation and figures of four evangelists were painted there. On the left and right lunette, *Vocation of St. Peter and St. Andrew* and *Navicella* were painted but they have also been lost. Similarly, on the rear wall, *St. Peter Weeping* and *Denial of Christ* are



Fig. 2

conceptually divided into three groups. The left area consists of the left wall and the pilaster on the left side of the arch-shaped entrance [Fig. 2], the right area is composed of the right wall and the pilaster on the right side of the entrance [Fig. 3], and the rear wall which is the left and right rectangle compartments across the window.

On the left area, the three narratives told in *Legenda Aurea* (ch. 44) unfold in chronological order from the front to the back. The story is as follows. The first is

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believed to have been painted. The present middle register of the chapel consists of both sides of the entrance pillars, the right wall, the left wall, and the rear wall across the window. The narratives painted there are as follows: *Original Sin* is on the right entrance pillar and *Expulsion from the Paradise* is on the pillar of other side. On the right wall, *Resuscitation of Tabitha* and *Healing of the Cripple*, and *Tribute Money* are on the left wall. On the right side of the rear wall, *Baptism of the Neophytes* and *St. Peter Preaching* are on the left across the window.



Fig. 3

*St. Paul Visiting St. Peter in Prison* [Fig. 4] on the pilaster. St. Paul learned that St. Peter was imprisoned by prefect Theophilus while preaching in Antioch. St. Paul cleverly negotiated with the prefect and he made a promise to release St. Peter if he can revive the son of Theophilus who died 14 years ago. On the rectangle wall, the two saints are separated by a wall with a barred window. It differs from the description of *Legenda Aurea* in which St. Paul embraced St. Peter, who was weakened in prison. A sense of urgency can be seen from the appearance of St. Peter listening to St. Paul by leaning out and pushing his right shoulder against the bars. In front of the building stands St. Paul. Quite dignified is his appearance captured from behind, that is strikingly similar to the figure of St. Peter standing in the direction indicated by St. Paul in the next narrative *Resuscitation of the Son of Theophilus* on the adjacent wall [Fig. 5]. According to *Legenda Aurea*, St. Peter prayed with all his heart in front of the tomb opened by the people and, just then,



the dead boy was revived. After that, all the inhabitants of Antioch including Theophilus came to believe in Christianity and built a majestic church. And they prepared a cathedra for St. Peter inside the church.

In the horizontal scene, St. Peter is blessing a kneeling naked young man and Theophilus is watching on the side. Between the two, St. Paul gets down and looks up to heaven. The area around them is filled with witnesses of the miracle. On the right side, St. Peter sits on the cathedra made of cloth on the outer wall of the building, which also differs from the original text. St. Peter's seat is located higher than that of Theophilus, possibly to indicate the superiority of St. Peter. Three people worship on their knees in front of him and Carmelite monks stand on the left. Also, Meller points out that the group of people on the right end includes portraits of Filippo Brunelleschi, Leon Battista Alberti, Masaccio himself, and Masolino from the right<sup>(11)</sup>.

This series of stories unfolding in this area can be described as a collaboration beyond the time between Masaccio and Filippino. For Filippino's involvement in the Brancacci Chapel frescoes, the description of the second edition of *Le Vite* by Vasari had been repeated or sometimes the painter's participation itself had been denied as mentioned above. In 1827, Rumohr was the first to shed light on the description of Vasari's first edition<sup>(12)</sup>. He attributed the central part of *Resuscitation* together with *Disputation and Crucifixion* on the right wall to Filippino's hand based on stylistic analysis. This proposal was supported by Gaye<sup>(13)</sup> and Cavalcaselle<sup>(14)</sup>. In particular, Cavalcaselle put the portrait of five people standing on



Fig. 4

(11) P. Meller, "La Cappella Brancacci. Problemi ritrattistici ed iconografici", in *Acropoli*, III, 1961, pp. 186 ff. and IV, pp. 273 ff.

(12) C. F. von Rumohr, *Italianische Forschungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1920, pp. 378–80.

(13) G. Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI, pubblicato e illustrato con documenti pure inediti*, Firenze 1839–49, II, p. 469.



Fig. 5

the left end (except the Carmelite monk which is the fourth from the left) to contemporaries of Filippino and attributed these figures to the hand of the painter. Their opinion forms the basis of the current view on Filippino's involvement in this section as the monograph of 2004 also followed their precedent opinions where Zambrano listed parts that Filippino had painted: the revived boy, nine of the witnesses to the miracle on the right including the child, St. Peter's arm below the elbow, and the group standing on the left edge, except the Carmelite monk<sup>(15)</sup>. She also noted that Filippino had erased the hand of a figure regarded as a self-portrait of Masaccio that stands on the right, which was reaching out to St. Peter. Indeed, the way two painters collaborate on this fresco is more complicated than she described. Also, to decipher it is quite a pleasant task.

As Zambrano states, the arm below the elbow of St. Peter in the blessing is painted by Filippino but, apart from that, it is by Masaccio [Fig. 6]. Its clearest evidence is the color of the saint's arm which is distinctly separated in the middle. When completing the Brancacci Chapel frescoes, it would have been impossible for Filippino to create the exact same colors as it was about 50 years ago. In addition,

(14) J. A. Crowe & G. B. Cavalcaselle, *A New History of Painting in Italy, from the second to the sixteenth century*, vol.1, London, 1864, pp. 276–279.

(15) P. Zambrano & J. K. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

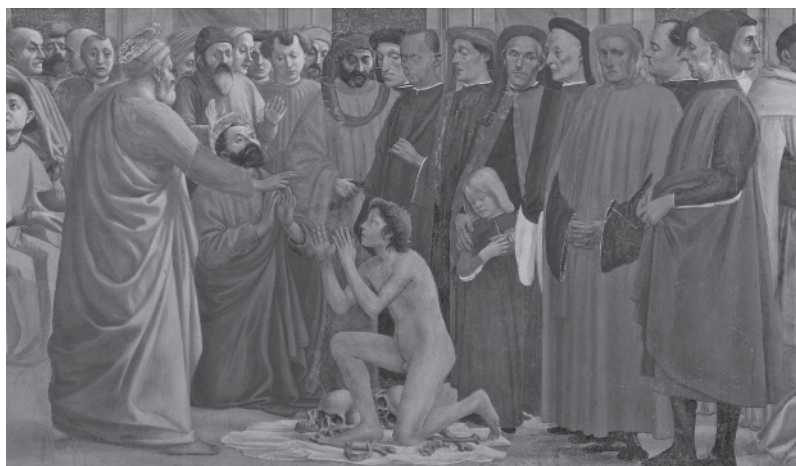


Fig. 6

when the painter started to work, the wall would have been much darker than when it was first painted by Masaccio and Masolino due to the passage of time. The difference in the painted periods of frescoes has become observable by the modern restorations that unveiled the illuminant coloring by Masaccio. For example, it can be said from the different color intensity that the head of St. Paul who kneels beside St. Peter was painted by Masaccio and below the neck was the work of Filippino. The same is true for a bearded figure in green clothes standing to the right of St. Paul. Furthermore, by comparing the colored plane with *Giornata*, which shows the progress of work on a daily basis, it will be possible to make a broad division between the hands of Masaccio and Filippino in this fresco [Fig. 7]. The figure standing on the left edge, which corresponds to Giornata No. 34, is clearly by Filippino from the usage of color and the manner of profile depicted in detail which shows his typicality such as the portrait of Francesco Del Pugliese in *Virgin in apparition to St. Bernard* (ca. 1484–85, Badia Fiorentina, Florence) [Fig. 8]. How about Giornata No. 33, the pillar at the left end which had been depicted just before Giornata No. 34? When this pillar [Fig. 9–1] is compared with another one at the



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9-1



Fig. 9-2



Fig. 9-3



Fig. 9-4

\* The colored images of Figs. 6 and 9.1–4 can be consulted now on the following website.  
<https://app.box.com/s/pilx6tq5rfqg24nvis338amxyaqoeyqp>

right end of the same fresco [Fig. 9–2] and with the pillars at both ends of the fresco in front (those are sure to have been painted by Filippino)[Figs. 9–3, 9–4], it can be seen that the pillars on the right wall [Figs. 9–3, 9–4] are more bluish in both the brick-colored capital and the white prism than those on the left wall [Figs. 9–1, 9–2]. Therefore, the pillar of Giornata No. 33 can be identified as not having been painted by Filippino. Here it is possible to draw a boundary of the time between Masaccio and Filippino. To supplement the unfinished area of the left wall was such a complex work.

Regarding *St. Paul Visiting St. Peter in Prison*, despite Vasari having attributed it to Filippino in his first edition, it was considered as Masaccio's work until Cavalcaselle rediscovered our painter on this fresco in 1864<sup>(16)</sup>. Although Cavalcaselle's proposal was not immediately accepted, it is now arguably admitted.

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(16) *Ibid.*, p. 277.

However, some art historians in the 20th century, such as Salmi and Fiocco suspect that Filippino may have used a *sinopia* [underpainting] prepared by Masaccio as it is because the style of this fresco is very close to that of Masaccio<sup>(17)</sup>. This matter will be discussed again in detail in Chapter 3 of this paper.

Then the lower right register of the chapel will be examined. *St. Peter freed from prison* is painted on the entrance pilaster [Fig. 11]. This narrative is based on the story described in *Acts of the Apostles* (12:1–11). It is a miracle that St. Peter who was imprisoned by King Herod escaped under the guidance of an angel, without being noticed by guard soldiers. In this scene, St. Peter captured from the rear left is coming out of prison, with his hand taken by an angel. Beside them, a soldier is sitting in front of the building. He is sound asleep and unaware of the liberation of the saint.

On the right wall, two narratives set in Rome unfold [Fig.10]. First, *Disputation with Simon Magus* is painted on the right side of the fresco. Here St. Peter and St. Paul discuss with Simon Magus in front of Emperor Nero on the throne. The story had been told in *Legenda Aurea* and *Acts of the Apostles* but the exact source of this scene is still unknown. On the left side of the same fresco, St. Peter is just now being crucified upside down by three executioners. Here many portraits of Filippino's contemporaries can be pointed out at the groups of figures in these frescoes, as Vasari has described. The young man looking at viewers at the right end of *Disputation* is regarded as Filippino's self-portrait and the figure next to his left is Andrea del Pollaiuolo<sup>(18)</sup>. Among the crowd to the right of *Crucifixion*, the painter's self-portrait is repeated on the man who looks at viewers again and the profiled figure who stands next to his right is considered to be Botticelli. The

(17) M. Salmi, *Masaccio, Masolino, Filippino Lippi: la cappella Brancacci a Firenze*, Milano 1949, vol. 2, p. 9 ; G. Fiocco, "Incontro tra Filippino e Masaccio", in *Saggi su Filippino Lippi: celebrazioni di Filippino Lippi nel V. centenario della nascita*, Firenze 1957, pp. 87–94.

(18) P. Zambrano & J. K. Nelson, *op. cit.*, p. 332.





Fig. 10

background of the scene is closed by Roman walls with a pyramid and a landscape captured by a fresh touch can be seen from its arch-shaped opening at the middle.

Among the attribution of lower right register frescoes, the whole central part which includes *Disputation and Crucifixion* was described as Filippino's work in the first edition of Vasari. Rumohr once again attributed it to the painter in 1827<sup>(19)</sup>. Besides, Gaye claimed the attribution of *St. Peter freed from prison* to him, which was formerly believed as it was wholly painted by Masaccio<sup>(20)</sup>. Currently, their views are accepted without any objection.

*St. Peter Healing the Sick with His Shadow* (Acts 5:12–14) painted on the left across the window at the lower register of the rear wall is attributed to Masaccio unanimously [Fig. 12]. Also, *Distribution of Alms and Death of Ananias* (Acts 5:1–11) is basically regarded as a work of Masaccio [Fig. 13]. However, in 1986 Baldini expressed an opinion that the involvement of Filippino can be pointed out at the clothes and feet of St. John who appears at the right end, and hands of Ananias lying on the foreground<sup>(21)</sup>. Indeed, his argument is convincing. For

(19) C. F. von Rumohr, *op. cit.*, pp. 394–397.

(20) G. Gaye, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

(21) U. Baldini, "Restauro della Cappella Brancacci, primi risultati", in *Critica d'Arte*, IX, 1986, pp. 65–68.



Fig. 11

instance, the color of St. John's feet is darker when compared with his face which indicates the difference of when it was painted. Furthermore, his clothes show some typical examples of Filippino's style: voluminous cloth draped over his bent elbow, with undulating color and touch. Those features can also be observed in the figure in black clothes who stands on the left edge of *Resuscitation* [Fig. 14] and other Filippino's works painted in the same period such as Virgin Mary in *Madonna adoring Christ child* (ca.1483, Florence, Uffizi Museum) [Fig.15]. In addition, the posture of the feet of the figure in *Resurrection* shows a striking resemblance to St. John. From the above, the author agrees with Baldini's opinion.

As discussed previously, the "involvement" of Filippino in the Brancacci Chapel frescoes can be divided into two categories. The first including the left and



Fig. 12



Fig. 13





Fig. 14



Fig. 15

rear walls are supplemental work to the frescoes that have already been painted to some extent by Masaccio.

The second means a new work for Filippino to paint the frescoes from the beginning on the right wall that has been left blank. Interestingly, the idea to distinguish the two different nature in frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel seems to be common to Albertini and Vasari's texts quoted at the beginning of this article. Furthermore, as it can be interpreted from his work, even Filippino himself had also shared this same view.

## 2. The texts by Francesco Albertini and Giorgio Vasari

Francesco Albertini (ca. 1469 – post 1510) was a Florentine cleric. He was also known as an antiquarian and dilettante<sup>(22)</sup>. Albertini lived in Florence since the

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(22) For Francesco Albertini, see F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstem, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–37 : [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-albertini\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-albertini_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (Last

1470s. He was designated to be a chaplain of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence in 1493, then its canon in 1499. He was indeed Filippino's contemporary. He became interested in art under the guidance of the painter Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–1494) who was also active at the same period as Filippino. In addition, Albertini had served in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence that houses the mausoleum of the Medici family. Considering these facts comprehensively, it is natural to think that Albertini and Filippino were also direct acquaintances.

*Memoriale di molte statue e pitture della città di Firenze* is a short guidebook of Florence written by Albertini and published in 1510. It includes brief descriptions of more than 200 paintings and sculptures that he had seen in major churches, public and private buildings in Florence. The quoted texts below are all references to the works of Filippino and Masaccio to examine how Albertini describes them.

1. The freestanding altarpiece in the main chapel was started by Filippino Lippi and finished by Pietro Perugino, after the death of Filippino <sup>23</sup>

This text refers to the Filippino's final work, *Annunziata Polyptych*, commissioned by the Basilica della Santissima Annunziata in Florence. Now its main panel is divided between the same as above and the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence and its six smaller panels are now located in the Lindenau-Museum of Altenburg, the Metropolitan Museum of New York City, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Rome and in a private collection. Here, Albertini describes where

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access date 11. 04. 2021).

<sup>23</sup> F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 96. In the original, "La tavola insulata in cappella maggiore è incominciata per Filippo, et finita per Pietro P., morendo Filippo" (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 13). I would like to thank Prof. Jonathan K. Nelson for providing me a notice about *Annunziata Polyptych*. For the altarpiece, see J. K. Nelson, "The High Altar-Piece of SS. Annunziata in Florence: History, Form and Function", in *the Burlington Magazine*, vol. 139, 1997, pp. 84–94.

the work is located, the names of the two painters involved in the production and how it was completed. This polyptych had *Descent from the Cross* and *Assumption of the Virgin* on the front and back of the main panel and it was accompanied by six smaller panels for each depicted with a saint. However, these structures or a subject of each panel are not mentioned at all. Also, how the painters shared the work is not explained.

2. The main chapel with the freestanding altarpiece is by Domenico Ghirlandaio, whereas the Strozzi Chapel is by Filippino Lippi; both are beautiful <sup>24</sup>.

Here Albertini attributed the Strozzi Chapel frescoes to Filippino. Then he states his expression as *cose bellissime* [both are beautiful] together with the main chapel on the next to the left which was decorated by Ghirlandaio. The positive attitude of Albertini toward Filippino's paintings can be read from this text.

3. In the church of San Pancrazio there are paintings by Filippino Lippi, Mariotto Albertinelli and other modern masters<sup>25</sup>.
4. In the room of the Consiglio Antico ["Ancient Council"], there is an altarpiece by Filippino Lippi<sup>26</sup>, ...

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(24) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 97. In the original, "La Cappella maggiore con la tavola insulata è di Domenico G., et quella delli Strozii è di Philippino; cose bellissime" (F. Albertini, 1863, pp. 13–14).

(25) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 97. In the original, "Nella chiesa di Sancto Pancratio sono picture di Philippo et Mariotino, et di altri moderni maestri" (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 14).

(26) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 99. In the original, "Nella sala del consiglio antiquo è la tavola di Philip., ..." (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 15).

5. In addition there are the altarpieces by Filippino Lippi at San Donato (1) and in the Church of the Campora (2)...<sup>27)</sup>

All three of the texts above only refer to the name of church and the painter. 3: *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Dominic*, originally painted for the Rucellai Chapel in San Pancrazio, currently housed in National Gallery in London. 4: *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints John the Baptist, Victor, Bernard and Zenobius*, originally painted for Sala dei Dugento in Palazzo della Signoria, currently housed in the Uffizi Gallery. 5: (1) *Adoration of the Magi*, commissioned by the monks of San Donato on the Bellosguardo Hill, currently housed in the Uffizi Gallery. (2) *Apparition of the Virgin to Saint Bernard*, originally painted for a chapel dedicated to Saint Bernard which was located in Santa Maria alle Campora di Marignolle outside the Porta Romana, currently housed in the Badia Fiorentina.

As we have seen so far, when Albertini describes Filippino's work he never mentions its subject or the details of the work such as the place where it had been installed or where in the room the painting or frescoes are located. Its only exception is the Brancacci frescoes which is quoted at the beginning of this paper: "...and those in the Brancacci Chapel, half by Masaccio and the other half by Masolino, with the exception of the Crucifixion of Saint Peter by Filippino Lippi"<sup>28)</sup>. Meanwhile, the mention of Filippino's *Nerli Altarpiece* cannot be found in the description of Basilica di Santo Spirito, despite the fact that he certainly should have seen the work. Here he explains about the works by Filippo Brunelleschi, Taddeo Gaddi, Andrea Sansovino, Michelangelo, and Giotto instead. It seems

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<sup>27)</sup> F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–101. In the original, "Lascio stare le tavole di Filippo sono a Sancto Donato, et alle Campora, ..." (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 17). The numbers in the parentheses are added by the author.

<sup>28)</sup> F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 100. In the original, [Masaccio] "et la cappella de' Brancacci meza di sua mano, et l'altra di Masolino, excepto sancto Pietro crucifixo per mano di Filippo" (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 16).

that Filippino is not the most preferable artist of Albertini.

Turning to Albertini's text of works by Masaccio, some differences from those of Filippino can be found. They include much more detailed information about its subject or the division of the painters.

1. It contains an altarpiece by Masaccio, and the predella and the arch above are by Uccello<sup>(29)</sup>.

This is the so called *Carnesecchi Triptych* originally located on the second altar on the north side of the nave in Santa Maria Maggiore. Although the opinion about attribution of the altarpiece is currently divided<sup>(30)</sup>, Albertini affirms it as Masaccio and Uccello, and clearly indicates the section that each painter has depicted.

2. This church has a very large altarpiece by Cimabue next to the beautiful crucifix by Filippo Brunelleschi, and the Trinity by Masaccio<sup>(31)</sup>.

The *Holy Trinity* in Basilica di Santa Maria Novella is a masterpiece by Masaccio. Here Albertini refers to its subject with the name of the painter.

3. In it [the Carmine] are paintings by ancient masters, especially the ones in the first cloister above the door by Masaccio, and those in the Brancacci Chapel, ...

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(29) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 96. In the original, “nella quale è una tavola di Masaccio: la predella et l’arco di sopra è di Paulo Uccelli” (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 12).

(30) For Carnesecchi Triptych, see A. Cecchi, *Masaccio*, Bologna 2016, pp. 64–75.

(31) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 97. In the original, “In decta chiesa è una tavola grandissima per mano di Cimaboue, allato al bello Crucifixo di Philipppo Brunel., et la Trinità è per mano di Tho. Masacci” (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 13).

The Saint Peter next to the chapel decorated by Starnina is by Masolino, and the Saint Paul is by Masaccio<sup>32</sup>.

In this description of several frescoes by Masaccio in Santa Maria del Carmine, Albertini makes relatively detailed explanations of the location of frescoes and division between Masaccio and Masolino, together with its subject.

As previously stated, the attitude of Albertini varies between the two painters. Taking them into consideration, it is highly probable that the background of the text of Brancacci frescoes “excepto sancto Pietro crucifixo per mano di Filippo” was Albertini’s intention to clarify the area that was painted by Masaccio, rather than to point out Filippino’s hand. In other words, he believed that *Resuscitation* is a work by Masaccio even though he must have known how the frescoes had been developed. Moreover, although in reality the lower register of the right wall that includes *Disputation and Crucifixion* and *St. Peter freed from prison* are fully attributed to Filippino today, Albertini had little intention of giving that detailed information throughout his text. For these reasons, the opinion of Albertini can be summarized that the Brancacci frescoes are painted by Masaccio and Masolino, with the exception of the lower register of the right wall that includes *Crucifixion* by the hand of Filippino. Also, the lower register of the left side wall is wholly attributed to Masaccio, despite the fact it includes supplemental work by Filippino to *Resuscitation*.

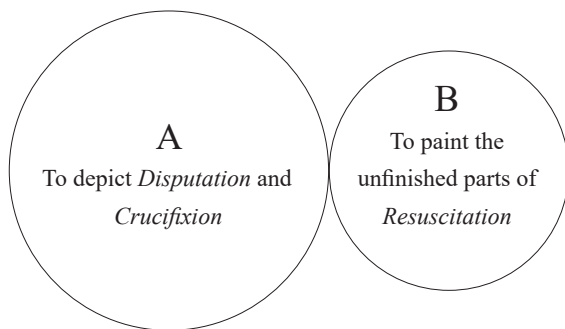
This interpretation becomes even more probable when the first edition of *Le Vite* is taken into consideration, since the similar mentality of the writer can be found there. In its “Life of Filippino Lippi”, Vasari describes as follows.

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(32) F. Albertini, ed. M. W. Kwakkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 100. In the original, “nella quale son picture di antiqui maestri: et maxime nel primo claustro sopra la porta per mano di Tho. Masacci: ... El sancto Pietro allato alla cappella dello Starnina è per mano di Masolino, et sancto Paulo di Masaccio” (F. Albertini, 1863, p. 16).

In his earliest youth he completed the Chapel of the Brancacci in the Carmine of Florence, begun by Masolino, and left not wholly finished by Masaccio due to his death. And so, Filippo led it into its perfection with his own hand together with a rest of the story that Saint Peter and Saint Paul resurrect the emperor's nephew. And (stories) that Saint Paul visits Saint Peter in prison, then all of *Disputation between Simon Mago and Saint Peter in front of Nero*, and his *Crucifixion*<sup>(33)</sup>.

In this text, “together with a rest of the story that...” (in original, “insieme con un resto della storia, quando...”) should be interpreted as “he has led Brancacci chapel into completion by his hands by (A) depicting the *Disputation* and *Crucifixion* in addition to (B) painting the unfinished parts of *Resuscitation*. The figure below is a schematic diagram of this idea.




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(33) The original text was translated into English and the word in the parentheses is added by the author. In the original, “Nella sua prima gioventù diede fine alla cappella de’ Brancacci nel Carmine di Fiorenza, cominciata da Masolino e non finita da Masaccio per la morte sua; e così Filippo di sua mano la ridusse a perfezzione insieme con un resto della storia, quando San Piero e San Paolo risuscitano il nipote dello imperatore. E quando San Paolo visita San Pietro in prigione, così tutta la disputa di Simon Mago e di San Pietro dinanzi a Nerone, e la sua crocifissione. Et in questa storia ritrasse sé et il Pollaiuolo, per la quale gloria e fama grandissima apportò nella sua gioventù” (G. Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani da Cimabue, insino*

Because, when Vasari uses *insieme con* in his text, the word(s) following it represent(s) another element (which corresponds to circle B in the diagram) that accompanies a main topic (corresponds to A), regardless of whether it is a personal pronoun or a common noun.

In order to understand the usage of *insieme con* by Vasari, quoted below are some examples from the second edition of “Life of Filippo Brunelleschi” where a significantly large number of its usages can be found.

1. In Florence, a little later, there was a statue of lime-wood to be made for the Friars of S. Spirito, representing S. Mary Magdalene in Penitence, to be placed in a chapel; and Filippo, who had wrought many little things in sculpture, desiring to show that he was able to succeed in large works as well, undertook to make the said figure, which, when put into execution and finished, was held something very beautiful; but it was destroyed afterwards, together with [= *insieme con*] many other notable works, in the year 1471, when that church was burnt down<sup>34</sup>.

In this case, (A) represents Brunelleschi’s statue and (B) stands for many other notable works.

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a’tempi nostri: Nell’edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentini, ed. L. Bellosi e A. Rossi, vol. I, Torino 1986, p. 498).

(34) G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition. In the original, “Avendosi poi in Fiorenza a fare, per i frati di Santo Spirito, una statua di Santa Maria Maddalena in penitenzia, di legname di tiglio, per portar in una cappella; Filippo, che aveva fatto molte cosette piccole di scultura, desideroso mostrare che ancora nelle cose grandi era per riuscire, prese a far detta figura: la qual finita e messa in opera, fu tenuta cosa molto bella; ma nell’incendio poi di quel tempio, l’anno 1471, abbruciò insieme con molte altre cose notabili (G. Vasari, II, 1973, pp. 331–332)”.



2. The Consuls besought Filippo to undertake the work in company with [= insieme con] Lorenzo, but he refused, being minded rather to be first in an art of his own than an equal or a second in that work<sup>35</sup>.

In this case, (A) is equivalent to Filippo Brunelleschi and (B) is Lorenzo Ghiberti.

3. And as Donato went on to describe the method that the master of that work had used in its execution, and the finish that was to be seen therein, together with [=insieme con] the perfection and the excellence of the workmanship, Filippo became fired with an ardent desire to see it, and went off on foot just as he was, in his mantle, cap, and wooden shoes, without saying where he was going, and allowed himself to be carried to Cortona by the devotion and love that he bore to art<sup>36</sup>.

In this case, (A) equates to the master's method and finishing of the work and (B) means their high leveled workmanship.

What is common in all of these examples is that the word(s) after *insieme con* represent(s) a different element (B) from the main topic (A) and the text of the Brancacci frescoes should be no exception. In short, Vasari also recognized

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<sup>35</sup> G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition. In the original, "Fu da' consoli pregato Filippo che dovesse fare l'opera insieme con Lorenzo; ma egli non volle, avendo animo di volere essere piuttosto primo in una sola arte, che pari o secondo in quell'opera (G. Vasari, II, 1973, p. 336)".

<sup>36</sup> G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition. In the original, "e così seguendo Donato il modo che aveva usato quel maestro a condurre quell' opera, e la fine che vi era dentro, insieme con la perfezione e bontà del magisterio; accesei Filippo di una ardente volontà di vederlo, che così come egli era in mantello ed in cappuccio in zoccoli, senza dir dove andasse, si partì da loro a piedi e si lasciò portare a Cortona dalla volontà ed amore che portava all'arte (G. Vasari, II, 1973, p. 340)".

Filippino's involvement with the Brancacci frescoes in two divisions, that are supplemental work on the frescoes by Masaccio that have remained unfinished, and Filippino's own work on the blank wall.

For a long time, many art historians had interpreted the text of the second edition as completion of the frescoes is equivalent to the supplement of *Resuscitation*. But when the text of this first edition is taken into consideration, the second edition should also be interpreted by the supplement of some words as follows.

Filippino, therefore, gave it its final perfection with his own hand by depicting *Disputation and Crucifix*, and then executed what was lacking in one scene, wherein S. Peter and S. Paul are restoring to life the nephew of the Emperor<sup>(37)</sup>.

### 3. Filippino in the Brancacci Chapel

The texts by Albertini and Vasari suggest that both writers may have considered that the supplement of the frescoes were left unfinished and the execution of new paintings on blank plane possessed a different nature. To compare the manner of depicting *Resuscitation* with *Disputation and Crucifixion* reveals that Filippino himself shared the same recognition. In the former, the painter is quite conscious of the style of the period of Masaccio, which were already painted on the Brancacci Chapel wall. Meanwhile, in the latter, he is more freely demonstrating his characteristics while giving consideration to the harmony of the whole.

First, the author would like to point out that the painter consults Masaccio's work carefully when he paints the clothes of the crowd that witnesses the miracle of the Resuscitation. As confirmed in the first chapter, Filippino depicted four

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(37) G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition. In the original, "Filippo, dunque, le diede di sua mano l'ultima perfezione; e vi fece il resto d'una storia che mancava, dove San Pietro e Paulo risuscitano il nipote dell'imperatore; (G. Vasari, III, 1973, p. 462)".



Fig. 16

people standing in front of the building on the left side and the right half of the group surrounding the revived boy in the narrative [Fig. 5]. All of them are wearing plain garments that cover their whole body. Those bulky and simple clothes are common to that of the figures painted by Masaccio in the same scene and the decoration of clothes can be found only at St. Peter's collar and sleeves of Theophilus.

Next, attention should be paid to the drapery that is arranged into a number of straight lines, which appears on the surface of their clothes. It resonates with the expression of the clothes of the figures in the same scene, namely Theophilus, the upper body of the figure sitting in front of him, the Carmelite monks standing to the left of St. Peter on the cathedra and the central figure kneeling in front of the saint<sup>(38)</sup>. Looking over the entire chapel, it has a close affinity with drapery that can be found on the clothes of the tax collector in *Tribute Money* painted above this scene [Fig. 16] and that of the figures in *Resuscitation of Tabitha and Healing of the Cripple* painted

(38) It brings to mind the text of Vasari, "And he painted his works with good unity and softness, harmonizing the flesh-colours of the heads and of the nudes with the colours of the draperies, which he delighted to make with few folds and simple, as they are in life and nature (G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition)".



Fig. 17

by Masolino [Fig. 17]. Interestingly, the expression of linear drapery shows a higher similarity to Masolino's style than that of Masaccio.

In addition, the direction of their feet can also be pointed out. There are only two patterns. One is to stand with one foot forward like the figure in black clothes on the left edge of the scene. The other is to stand with both feet pointed outward as the figure in red dress to his right. It shows some sense of awkwardness especially in



Fig. 18

the former because both feet are depicted in almost the same size and it seems that both feet are evenly weighted. This depiction once again shows a closer similarity to the figure attributed to Masolino today such as St. Peter preaching [Fig. 18] and the two male figures walking as if they are dancing in the center of *Resuscitation of*



Fig. 19

*Tabitha and Healing of the Cripple* rather than the figures by Masaccio.

These characteristics are incompatible with the figures that the painter depicted at the same time. As Vasari described in “Life of Filippino Lippi”, he has a reputation for dressing his figures in various ways<sup>(39)</sup>. The distinction is obvious when looking at the group of figures watching over the Holy Family in *Adoration of Magi* (ca.1480, National Gallery, London) [Fig. 19]. In this work, nobody wears the same clothes. The different styles include a belt fastened around the waist, voluminous clothes that hang down from the shoulder, a collar, feathered hat and so on. Also, linear drapery is almost never seen. Instead, a complex drapery can be found, which is one of the characteristics of Filippino’s style. The figures are

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(39) “Such was the intelligence of Filippino, and so abundant his invention in painting, and so bizarre and new were his ornaments, that he was the first who showed to the moderns the new method of giving variety to vestments, and embellished and adorned his figures with the girt-up garments of antiquity (G. Vasari, 2018, Kindle edition)”.



Fig. 20

showing various postures, and as a result, the placement of their feet is also diverse.

Turning to *Disputation and Crucifixion*, Filippino depicted an architectural structure of white and vermillion in the background and placed two narratives at the foreground. It reflects the painter's awareness of *Resuscitation* in front of this fresco. In particular, the same composition is adopted into both frescoes, that is the emperor (Nero and Theophilus) sitting on the throne with two attendants on both sides of him. It brings harmony to the walls facing each other.

However, Filippino's original style that emerged from the observation of *Adoration of Magi* is engraved firmly also in this fresco. For example, the figure standing to the left of the upside-down cross wears a cloak over a glittering armor with gold ornaments. Moreover, the cloaks of the figures who show their backs appearing in the center and on the right edge of the scene are boldly lifted up and the various draperies displayed attract viewers' eyes, while linear draperies are not noticeable. The finely decorated clothes and throne of Emperor Nero on the right side of the scene are depicted with a delicate touch which is reminiscent of northern arts. Also, those of the two attendants on either side of him are rounded like



Fig. 21-1



Fig. 21-2

inverted tulips, with overlapping trains. The expression can be associated with the clothes of the female figures that appear at the foreground of *Esther Faints Before Ahasuerus* (ca. 1470–75, Paris, Louvre) [Fig. 20] from *Life of Esther*, which was painted by Botticelli and Filippino in the 1470s, although the drapery line of the attendants is much simpler<sup>(40)</sup>. By using the same composition of the Emperor (Nero and Theophilus) with two attendants, viewers should have been urged to compare the works by two artists, Masaccio and Filippino [Figs. 21-1, 21-2]. They must have enjoyed the sharp contrast between rigid figures sitting calmly in plain clothes in Masaccio's area, and finely decorated clothes with a wide array of draperies or livery posture of Nero who sticks out his right arm while talking loudly in Filippino's section. It is reasonable to think that the painter must have aimed for viewers to enjoy their works in such a way that would differentiate his own style from that of Masaccio. Venture to be said, the painter may have even fostered some sense of competition toward his great predecessor. In addition, the voluminous drapery, or the solemn expression of the regularly arranged hem of the white clothes of Simon Magus are also not able to be found in any frescoes by Masaccio

(40) For the Esther panel, see ed. A. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–96.





Fig. 22

and Masolino in Brancacci Chapel. Instead, a similar expression can be found frequently in Filippino's paintings, for example *Tondo Corsini* (ca.1480, Florence, Collezione Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze) [Fig. 22] which was painted at the same period as the Brancacci frescoes, or his later works such as the clothes of Virgin in *Apparition of the Virgin to Saint Bernard* (1486, Florence, Badia Fiorentina) [Fig. 8]. It should also be pointed out that everyone shows a different foot position according to his posture.

As discussed previously, when comparing *Resuscitation* with *Disputation and Crucifixion* and other Filippino's works of the same period, it was confirmed that Filippino adopted obviously an archaic style in *Resuscitation*: simple and bulky clothes, linear drapery, peculiar foot positions and restrained gestures. St. John in *Death of Ananias*, that was added by Filippino, is showing an awkward posture by standing with one foot forward, which reflects the paintings of two generations ago. It reinforces the painter's awareness of the previous styles of the supplemental



work.

Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 1, St. Paul standing with his back to the viewers in *St. Paul Visiting St. Peter in Prison* [Fig. 4] had been considered to be the work of Masaccio by many historians. Some scholars still assumed that it was based on a sinopia prepared by Masaccio, even after the entire involvement of Filippino in this fresco become clear. However, in the light of Filippino's attitude toward *Resuscitation* revealed above, it is more natural to think that the painter has recognized that this fresco thematically relates to *Resuscitation* as a part of the supplemental work. He must have been in that mentality and dared to bring his style closer to Masaccio.

## Conclusion

No historical document has been found yet to explain how this important task of completing the Brancacci Chapel frescoes was commissioned to Filippino. Thus, there is no way to know if the differentiation of the style between *Resuscitation* and *Disputation and Crucifixion* was ordered from the patron. What is certain is that, for Filippino himself, this project was a great showcase to demonstrate his versatility as a painter, that is to say, a skill of imitation as an artisan and outstanding characteristic as an artist at the same time in a single space. These multiple attitudes toward the project are clearly marked on both the fresco by Filippino and the texts by Albertini and by Vasari examined in Chapter 2.

Previous researches based on stylistic analysis had pointed out his attractive originality from the Brancacci Chapel frescoes. Those are the realistic portraits of which Vasari devoted almost all space of the text about the Brancacci Chapel frescoes in the second edition of "Life of Filippino Lippi", his emotional expressions that emerges from dramatic gestures of figures or detailed depictions and landscapes influenced by northern paintings. Somehow, the comments upon Filippino's frescoes in recent publications tend to be a refrain of similar substance.

The author has introduced a new point of view to the study of the Brancacci chapel frescoes by Filippino, that is to conceive it as a “collaboration” between the painter and antecedent artists while focused on the anti-Filippino style. Consequently, it has revealed the painter’s multiple mentality on the scaffold of frescoes seesawing between imitation and innovation. The completion of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes should be recognized again as a very significant work for Filippino Lippi in the sense that he was able to construct his identity by confronting his own characteristics more intensely than usual.