



## Survey of the Church of San Giovanni Battista, San Gemini, Italy Historical, Artistic, Iconographic Analysis: Field Notes

### **Historical analysis of the main altar painting, *Madonna del Rosario***

The following is a series of observations and notes gathered in the summers of 2010 and 2012 by students of the San Gemini Preservation Studies Program, which is conducting an ongoing survey of the church of San Giovanni Battista. The study is based on a variety of sources and at this point this should not be considered an academic publication.

Project Director: Max Cardillo





**Subject depicted:** Madonna del Rosario or Madonna della Vittoria (Our Lady of the Rosary or Our Lady of Victory)

**Location:** Church of San Giovanni Battista, San Gemini, Italy, main altar

**Time of painting:** Probably shortly after the patrons' wedding in 1622

**Style:** Late Mannerism

**Attributed to:** Benedetto Bandiera (b. 1557–1564; d. after 1650); also attributed by some to Simeone Ciburri (b.?.; d. 1625)

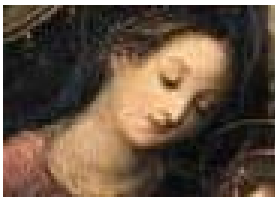


**Basis of attribution:** The painting does not have a visible signature nor is there known documentation of its commissioning or creation. Its attribution has been made by stylistic comparisons to known artists operating in the region. The best attribution is to Benedetto Bandiera, a painter from Perugia who studied under Stefano Barrocci (ca. 1535–1612) and was considered one of the exponents of his school of painting. Several paintings have been attributed both to Bandiera and to Simeone Ciburri. Both are known as followers of Barrocci, although Bandiera is documented to have worked directly with Barrocci. This is clear from the visible affinity between the two painters' work.

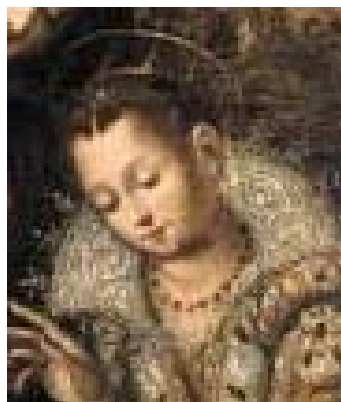
The work of Ciburri is stylistically more dissimilar to Barrocci's work and to the painting in San Gemini; the figures are heavier and have a brighter tonality. The painter of the *Madonna del Rosario* is very likely the same artist who painted *Mystical Wedding of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, which is generally attributed to Bandiera.



Details of *Madonna of the Rosary*,  
San Gemini



Details of *Mystical Wedding of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, Lot 690  
Christie's



Historic and Iconographic study of the painting Madonna of the Rosary at the church of San Giovanni Battista In San Gemini, Italy By students of the San Gemini Preservation studies Program in 2010-2011



The Mystical Wedding of St. Catherine of Alexandria, Lor 690 Christie's



Madonna con Bambino, santa Barbara e santa Maria Maddalena, Bettona



Madonna con Bambino e san'Anna in gloria, sant'Antonio da Padova, san Bernardino da Siena, san Francesco d'Assisi, santa Chiara e santa Elisabetta d'Ungheria, Chiesa di San Francesco , Foligno.





## Painting Typology and Iconography

The painting is done with oil paint on a canvas support. The theme of the painting is “The Madonna del Rosario” (Madonna of the Rosary) or “Madonna della Vittoria” (Madonna of the Victory).

The rosary is a tradition of repetitive praying using prayer beads in multiples of 5 or 15 decades (10 Hail Marys and 1 Lord’s Prayer) per session. Originally the 15 decades were called the rosary and the 5 decades were called the corona. In this painting Mary hands to Saint Catherine a bundle of 3 coronas one red one black and one white.

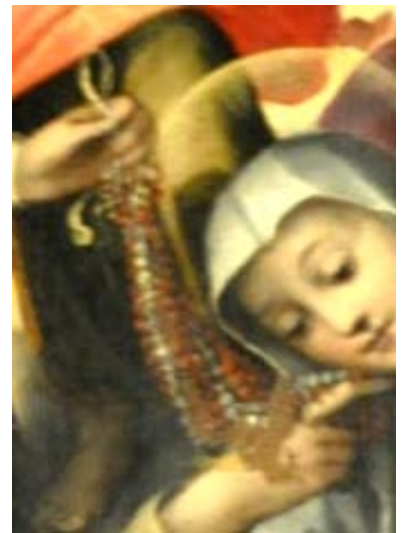
The iconography of the Madonna of the Roses is usually associated with the Dominican Order, because it depicts the Virgin appearing to St. Domingo Guzman, founder of the order in 1208 at Peouille, when she hands a rosary to him. Tradition assigns this event as the beginning of the devotion of the rosary, however, there is plenty of evidence that it was already well established before that date.

In the 15th century this form of devotion was promoted by the Blessed Alanus de Rupe (aka Alain de la Roche or St. Alan of the Rock), a learned Dominican priest credited with establishing the original 15 Mysteries of the Rosary.

This religious iconography becomes widespread in 1571–1573 in celebration of the naval victory against the Turkish Empire by the “Holy League” (Spain, Venice and the Papal State) at the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571. The victory was attributed to the protection of the Virgin Mary invoked by Christians reciting the rosary before the battle.

In 1572 Pope Pius V, a Dominican, declared the new feast of the Madonna of the Victory on October 7. The following year, 1573, Gregory XIII transforms the holy day to the Feast of the Madonna of the Rosary (Feast of the Holy Rosary) and encourages the formation of confraternities of the Madonna del Rosario.

Typically, the iconography of this type of painting has the Madonna and child at the center of the scene, surrounded by saints and angels. The Madonna is flanked by St. Dominic, since the iconography normally depicts her appearance to him, and often she is also flanked by St. Catherine of Siena, a prominent Dominican saint. The Madonna often is offering roses or rosary beads that she holds in her hand. Roses or rose crowns are also a common theme in the paintings, both as decorative elements or as iconic objects held by the various characters being portrayed.



Paintings representing the Madonna of the Rosary often, but not always, include images representing the (original) 15 mysteries of the rosary. They can be part of the main painting in the form of a border, medallions, or as separate images placed next to the central image.

The mysteries are a series of aspects of the life of Jesus and the Virgin Mary upon which those reciting the rosary should be meditating while reciting the prayers; each topic of a set should be meditated while reciting a decade. During the various days of the week, different sets of mysteries are considered.

### **The Five Joyful Mysteries**

The Annunciation: Humility

The Visitation: Charity

The Birth of Our Lord: Poverty, or detachment from the world

The Presentation of Our Lord: Purity of heart, obedience

The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple: Piety

### **The Five Sorrowful Mysteries**

The Agony in the Garden: Contrition for our sins

The Scourging at the Pillar: Mortification of our senses

The Crowning with Thorns: Interior mortification

The Carrying of the Cross: Patience under crosses

The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord: That we may die to ourselves

### **The Five Glorious Mysteries**

The Resurrection: Conversion of heart

The Ascension: A desire for heaven

The Coming of the Holy Ghost: The gifts of the Holy Ghost

The Assumption of our Blessed Mother into Heaven: Devotion to Mary

The Coronation of Our Blessed Mother: Eternal happiness

Pope John Paul II in 2002 introduced a fourth set of mysteries:

### **Luminous Mysteries**

The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. Fruit of the Mystery: Openness to the Holy Spirit, the Healer

The Wedding at Cana. Fruit of the Mystery: To Jesus through Mary. The understanding of the ability to manifest through faith

Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Fruit of the Mystery: Trust in God (Call of Conversion to Messiah)

The Transfiguration. Fruit of the Mystery: Desire for Holiness

The Institution of the Eucharist. Fruit of the Mystery: Adoration



Painting of the Madonna del Rosario, church of San Giovanni Battista , San Gemini, Italy.  
An iconographic and historical study by students of the San Gemini Preservation Studies in 2010-2011



Examples of paintings of the Madonna del Rosario. Some incorporate the mysteries, others not. In some cases they are separate paintings within a common frame; in some cases they are completely separate images set around the image of the Madonna.





The painting of the Madonna del Rosario in the church of San Giovanni Battista was originally located in the Chapel of the Confraternity of the Madonna del Rosario. That was dismantled around 1721, probably due to earthquake damages and the resulting restructuring of the church. The chapel was located in the area that is now a storage room of the sacristy. Traces of the stucco work still remain in the ceiling of the storage room.

The painting and perhaps also the chapel's wood altar were moved to become what is now the main altar of the church. The wood of the altar seems to have been designed for a larger painting than the Madonna of the Rosary and there seem to be some decorative infill panels around the canvas. This situation, and that some of the images, such as Saint Dominic, seem to have been trimmed off the painting, led us to think that the painting was larger, perhaps incorporating the mysteries along the border of the canvas, and that it was later resized by cutting off the mysteries.

In 2011, however, we found a document in Narni, dated 1721, that briefly describes the paintings in the chapel. It indicates that the mysteries were separate and were located along the chapel's walls. The painting may have been reduced a little to conceal damage along its edge.

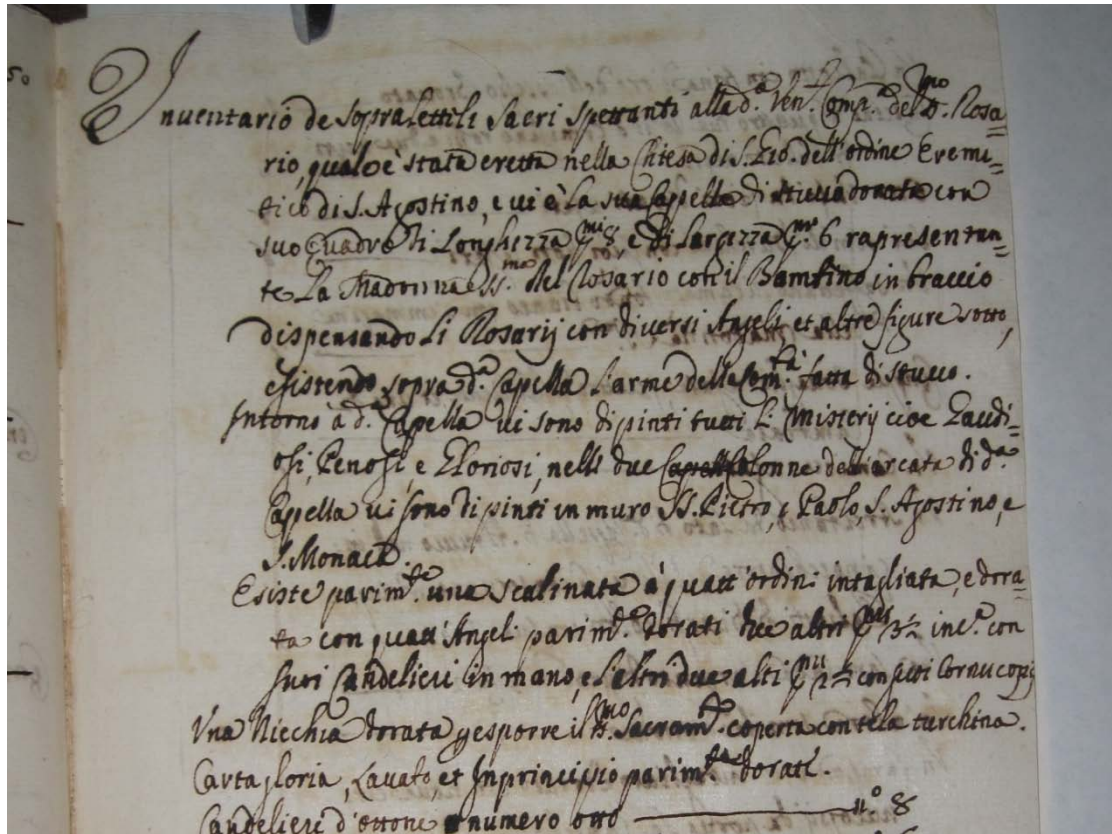


Main Altar in Church of San Giovanni Battista



Fragments of decorative stucco in the storage room ceiling. This space was part of the Chapel of the Confraternity of the Rosary. The angels portrayed are holding roses.





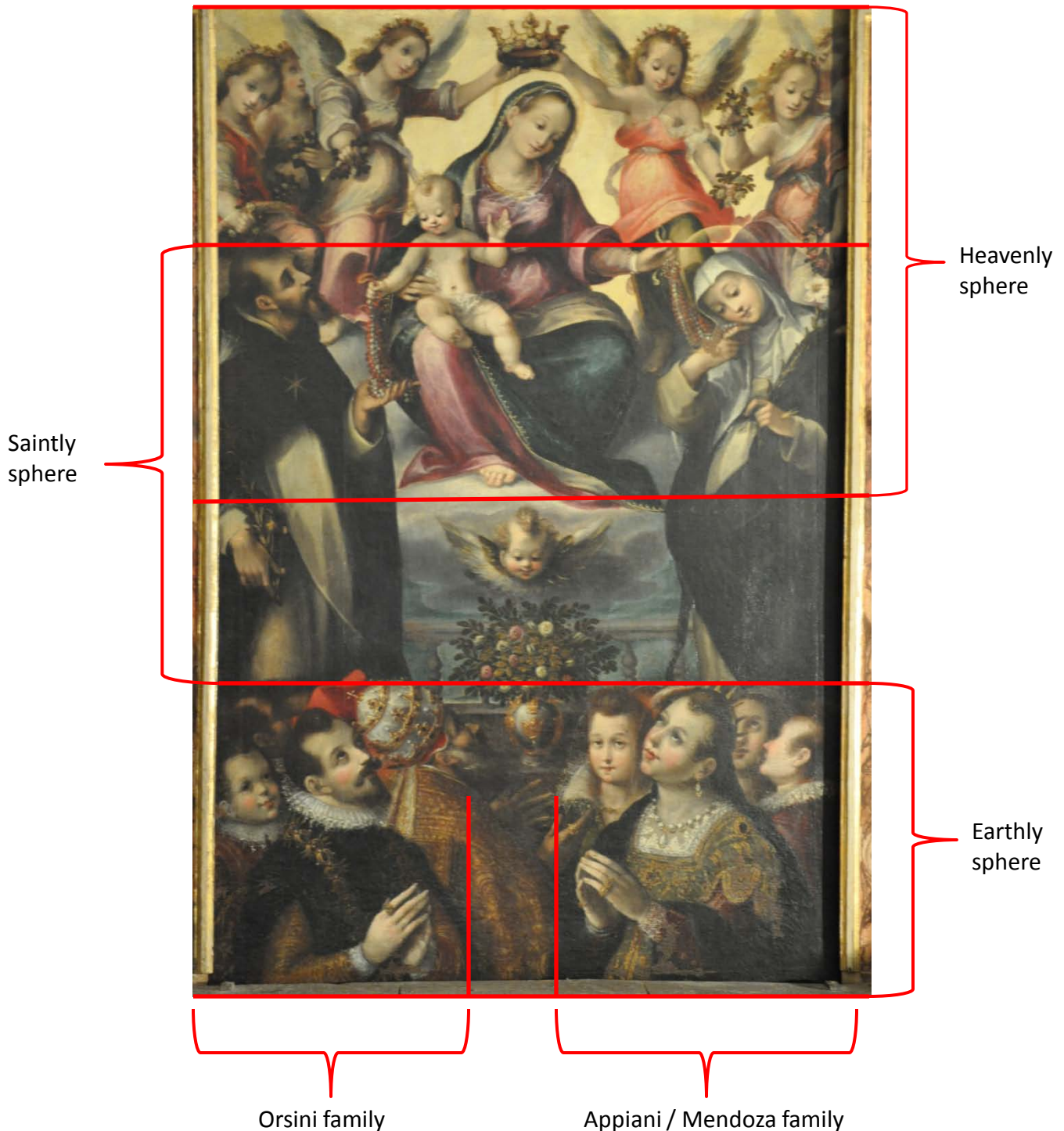
This document from the historical archive of the Diocese of Narni was written in 1721. It is an inventory of all the property belonging to the Confraternity of the Rosary in San Gemini. It was probably made on the occasion of the disbanding of the Confraternity. The document deals mostly with real property (real estate) and financial obligations, however, it also lists the liturgical objects in the chapel, among which the painting is mentioned. One of the things it states is that the images of the mysteries were located along the walls and were not part of the painting.

#### Main Altar in Church of San Giovanni Battista

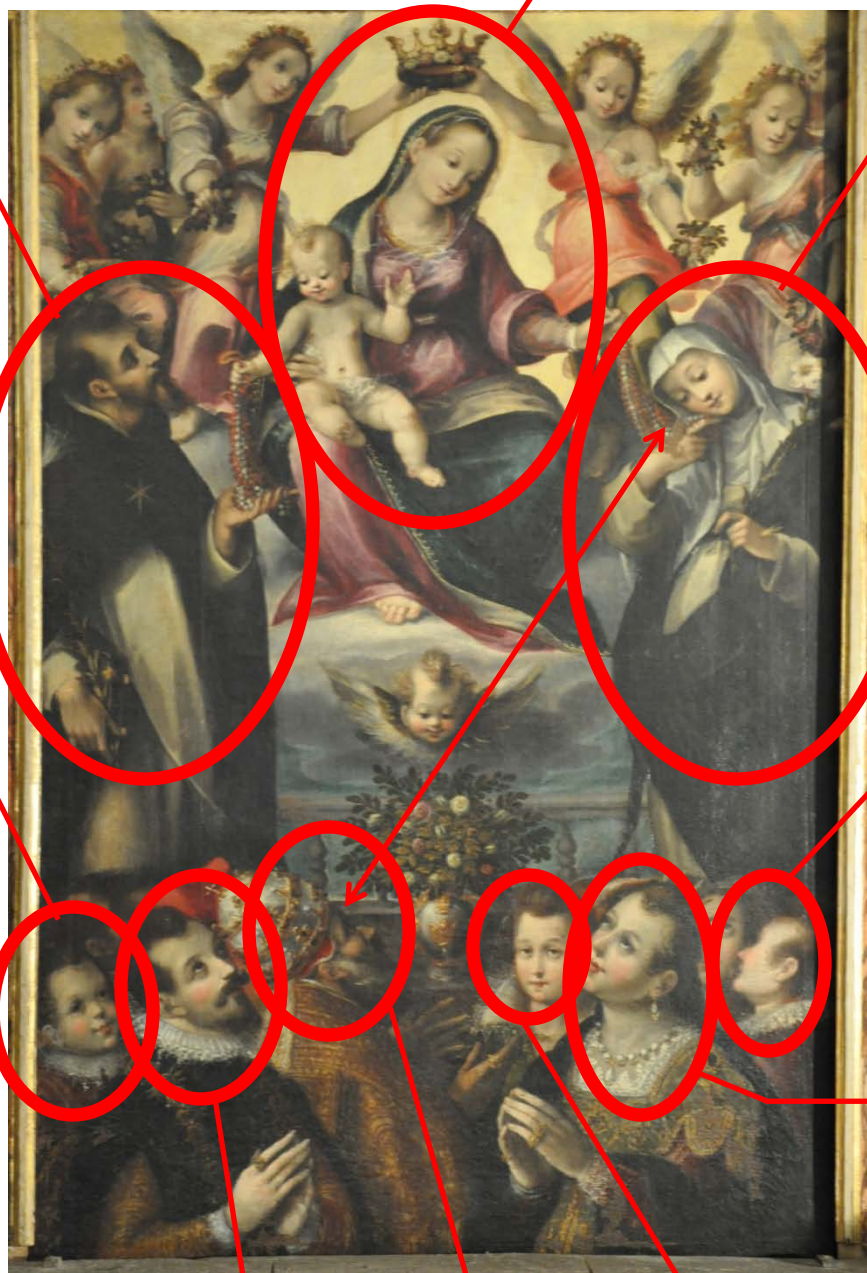
Clearly the canvas of this painting was not designed for this wooden altar structure, this is made evident by the marbleized filler boards placed around the painting. In fact after some research in the Sovrintendenza in Perugia, photographic records indicate that this altar probably until the 1950's and certainly in the 1930's had a different position ( the back wall of the bay facing the entrance door from the Piazzetta San Giovanni) and it did not hold this painting. It is not clear to us, at this point, what was in the place of the main altar nor where was the painting located before then.



## The painting is organized in three Iconic Zones







Our Lady of the Rosary  
and Child

St. Dominic de  
Guzman

St. Catherine  
of Siena

Ippolito Orsini  
(b. ?-1699)

? Jorge Mendoza

? Isabella Appiani  
(1577-1661)

? Paolo Gordano Orsini II  
(1591-1646)

Probably  
Gregory XI

? Polissenna Mendoza  
(b. ? – 1642)

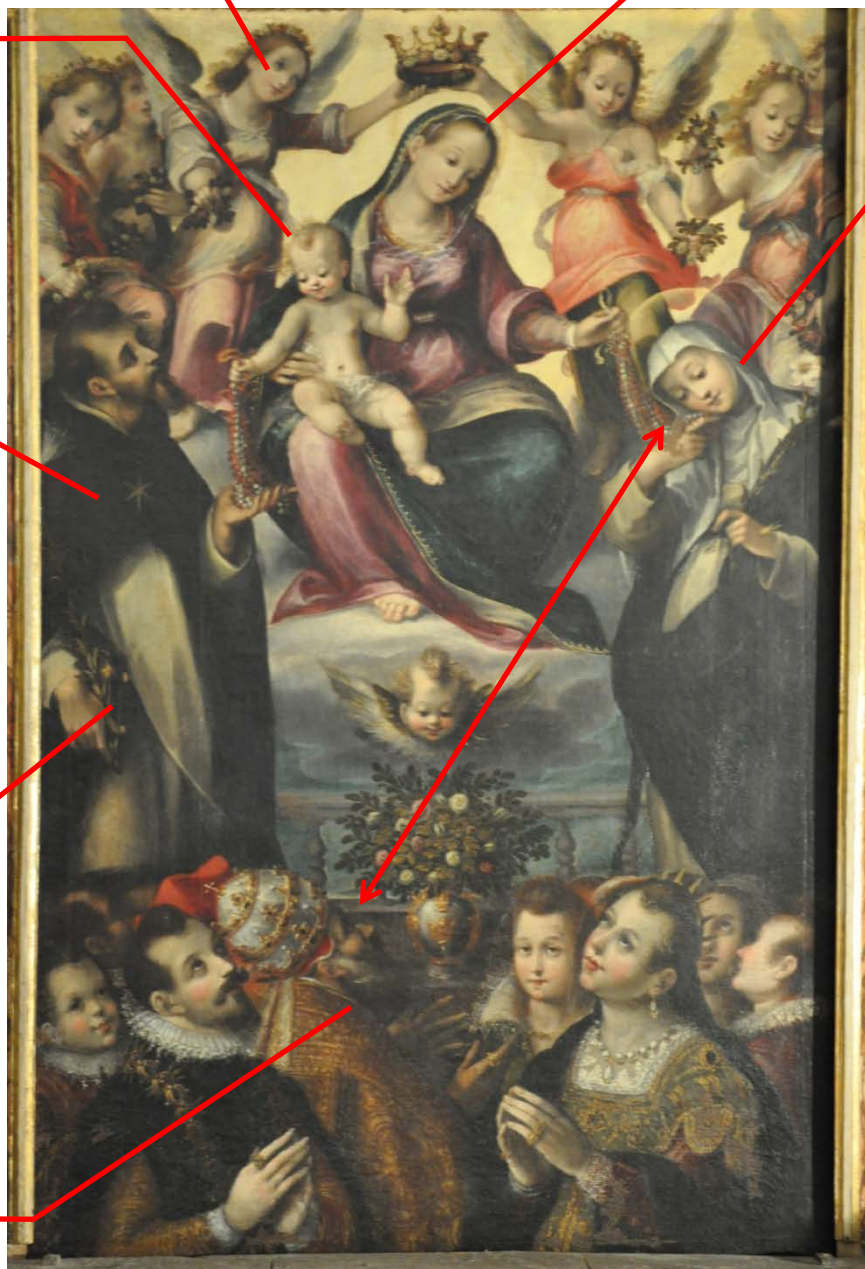




## Religious Iconography

Our lady of the rosary  
and Child hands Saint Catherine  
Rosary beads (15 decades)

Christ child hands St. Dominic  
rosary beads



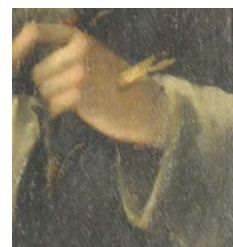
St. Catherine  
of Siena a major  
Dominican Saint

St. Dominic de  
Guzman,  
Founder of the  
Dominican Order,  
has apparition of  
the virgin who  
hands him a crown  
of roses in 1208

St. Catherine  
wears the black  
and white robes of  
the Dominican  
Order, holds a lily  
as a sign of chastity  
and has "invisible"  
stigmata in her  
hands

St. Dominic  
has white and  
black robes  
traditional of  
Dominicans, has a  
star in the chest  
and holds a lily as a  
sign of chastity

? Pope Gregory XI  
who corresponded  
with St Catherine



The Madonna del Rosario usually is a Dominican iconography. The Church of San Giovanni Battista was an Augustinian church and there was no Dominican presence in San Gemini, however, there was a Confraternity of the Rosary with a chapel located in this church until the 18th century. Such confraternities were associated with the Dominican Order.



**A list of the patrons.** Although there is no obvious reference to any specific individual, we have taken a series of guesses that seem to be logically consistent.

- Given the history of San Gemini, we assume that they are members of the ruling feudal family, the Orsini of Bracciano.
- The key identification was that of the male patron, whom we have identified as Paolo Giordano II Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, brother of Ferdinando Orsini, third Duke of San Gemini. This has been done mostly from the similarities of the facial features and dress between this image and other ascertained portraits of this person, in particular those that represent him as a young man with shorter hair. They resemble, in particular, the portrait attributed to Artemisia Gentileschi.
- There is often confusion between the portraits of Paolo Giordano II Orsini and his grandfather, Paolo Giordano I Orsini, however, considering the dates and clothing style, it is clear that the painting in San Gemini represents Paolo Giordano II. Part of the difference in appearance can be explained by youth and Bandiera's painting style: he usually portrays men with thin faces and long noses (see St. Dominic).
- The other important identifier is the family structure of the patrons.
- The figure seems to be wearing the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece. This is a bit perplexing: Paolo Giordano II was made a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, however, we are not aware of him being a member of the order. His father, Virginio Orsini, was a member of this order. If we are dealing with Paolo Giordano II this would be the only image showing such ornament. Perhaps there was the expectation he would also would become a member.



Image by Benedetto Bandiera



Bust by Gianlorenzo Bernini



Print by Moncornet 1560



Portrait by Artemisia Gentileschi



Plate by Ottavio Leoni





## The patrons

- Though there is no clear reference to any specific individual, we have taken a series of guesses that seem to be logically consistent. Given the time and place, we have assumed that they are members of the ruling feudal family in San Gemini, the Orsini of San Gemini.
- There is a substantial resemblance between the image of the male patron in this painting and documented images of Paolo Giordano Orsini.
- The family structures of Paolo Giordano Orsini and Isabella Appiani are consistent with the image of the patrons depicted in this painting.
- Isabella Appiani as a ruling Princess wears a crown.

### ? Ippolito Orsini

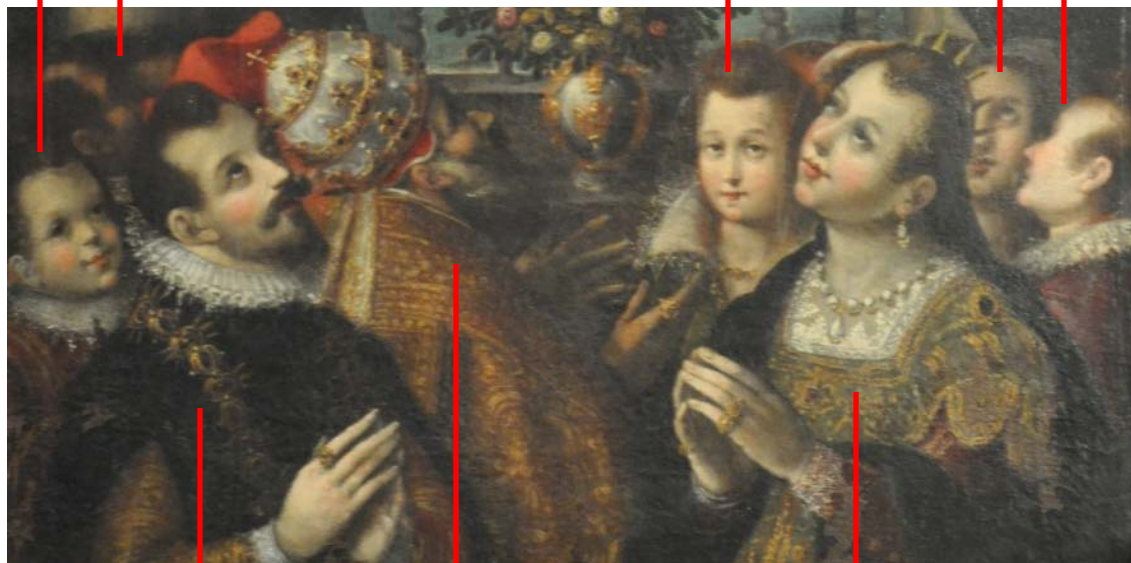
Son of Paolo Giordano Orsini and Maria Camozzi born out of wedlock but legitimized (boy behind father facing viewer) ??

### ? Polissenna Mendoza

daughter of Isabella Appiani from her first marriage to Jorge Mendoza (young woman at side of mother facing viewers)

? Jorge Mendoza , 1<sup>st</sup> husband of Isabella Appiani dead at the time (behind Isabella facing Madonna)

??



? Paolo Gordano Orsini II, Duke of Bracciano, older brother of Ferdinando, Duke of San Gemino, married to Isabella Appiani in 1620(22) (image has strong resemblance to other portraits)

Perplexing figure of Pope standing in Orsini group. **Gregory XI** is the likeliest candidate (seems to be dialoging with Saint Catherine of Siena looking away from viewer.

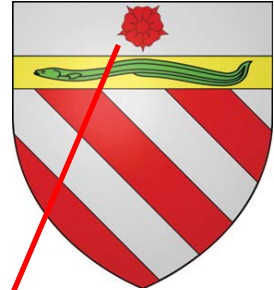
? Isabella Appiani Princess of Piombino Her 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage was to Paolo Giordano Orsini II, Duke of Bracciano. The crown, to indicate her princely status, slightly higher and more prominent than husband probably reflects, her greater wealth, age and rank. She may also be the one who commissioned the artwork





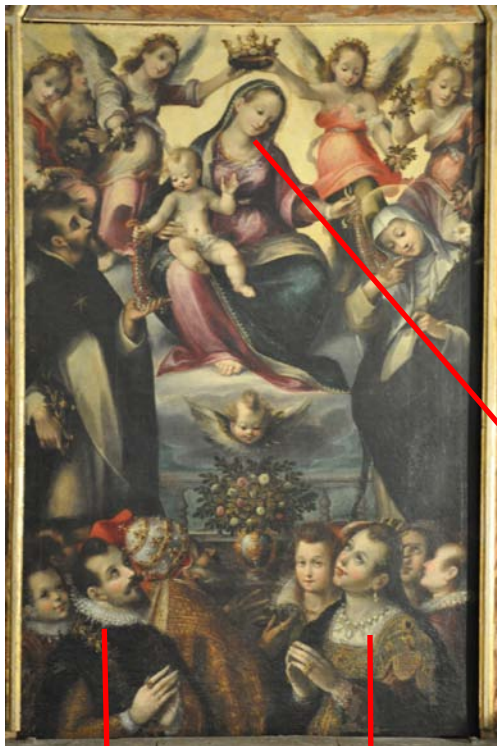
## Orsini Family Iconography

- Paolo Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, was the senior leader of the Orsini's Bracciano line. Though San Gemini was ruled by Orsinis of the Gravina line, his younger brother, Ferdinando, marries into the San Gemini line and purchases the right to the San Gemini fiefdom from Pietro Orsini Duke of Gravina. Fernando becomes the Duke of San Gemini and later Duke of Bracciano. Paolo Giordano when this painting was made had already arranged the deal and represents the new leadership of the Orsini family in San Gemini.
- The rose plays a prominent role in the Orsini coat of arms.
- Family military glory as defenders of the faith: Progenitors of both patrons fought in the Battle of Lepanto; this is symbolized by the theme of **Our Lady of Victory/Our Lady of the Rosary**.
- Painting celebrates the recent marriage of the couple.



The Orsini Family coat of arms has a prominent red rose at the top

This image typology is also known as "Our lady of Victory" because the Virgin is credited with having protected the Christian fleet during the battle of Lepanto against the Turks in 1571



Paolo Gordano Orsini II,  
Duke of Bracciano,  
his grandfather  
and name sake,  
Paolo Giordano Orsini I,  
participated in the  
battle of Lepanto

Isabella Appiani  
Princes of Piombino  
Her great uncle, Alfonso Appiano  
d'Aragona, fought in the battle  
of Lepanto



## Orsini Family Iconography, Cont.

In the church of San Giovanni Battista, there are two major paintings, both done at the beginning of the 17th century between 1618 and 1625. Both were painted by very skilled artists, who, however, were not major masters. Both portray among their patrons members of the Orsini family. Both paintings' religious iconography is fairly clear, but they also contain an Orsini iconography, which is less obvious.

One painting, done in 1618 by Giovanni Manna, is *Vergine della Cintola*, a typical Augustinian iconography. In the lower center is a kneeling young man (possibly Ferdinando II future Gran Duke of Tuscany) being presented to Saint Augustine by his mother Maria Maddalena of Austria wife of Cosimo II Gran Duke of Tuscany. Cosimo II was a first degree cousin of Paolo Giordano and Ferdinando. This painting would represent the close family ties of the Orsini of Bracciano to the powerful Medici family in Florence. Behind Maria Maddalena there is a woman with a prominent rose on her forehead, she could be Giustiniana Orsini daughter of the Ginantonio Orsini 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of San Gemini and wife of Ferdinando Orsini 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of San Gemini.

The second painting, *Madonna del Rosario*, probably celebrates the marriage of the family of the Duke of Bracciano, Paolo Giordano II Orsini, and his wife, Isabella Appiani, Princess of Piombino, and their children. This painting is not necessarily tied to this church, it could have been painted elsewhere and donated to the church to celebrate the upcoming merger of the families and/or the creation of a confraternity of the rosary in this church.

In that period, the second Duke of San Gemini was Don Giannantonio (1567–1639). He ruled San Gemini from 1573 to 1639. He was part of the Gravina line of the Orsini. and had only one daughter, to whom he could not pass the inheritance of the family's feudal holdings. However, by marrying into the Bracciano branch of the family, plus a payment by Fernando Orsini of 75,000 gold Ducati to Pietro Duca di Gravina to relinquish his claims to the feudal holdings of San Gemini, he consolidated the two lineages.

Paolo Giordano II Orsini, fourth Duke of Bracciano, fails to have a legitimate male heir with his wife Isabella Appiani, so eventually his brother Ferdinando becomes Duke of Bracciano. These paintings were done before it was known that Paolo Giordano would fail to have an heir but after the marriage between Ferdinando and Giustiniana Orsini had been arranged. These paintings in some way probably celebrate the process of bringing the San Gemini and the Bracciano Orsini together.



Madona del Rosario By Benedetto Bandiera, after 1622



Madonna della Cintola  
by Giovanni Manna 1618

## The Orsini of San Gemini

### Orsini, Feudal Overlords of San Gemini, 1530–1698

In 1530, after San Gemini is ransacked by various armies during the wars against Charles V, Pope Clement VII grants the Orsini family (Gravina line) the feudal title to San Gemini. The deal is made with Ferdinando Orsini, fifth Duke of Gravina and his younger brother, Don Giannantonio Orsini, as payback for services and loans incurred during the war. The Orsini, besides paying taxes, pledged to reconstruct the town, which had been heavily damaged during the war. This event was part of an anachronistic attempt to revert to feudalism for the purpose of regional “development” and to raise money for the large reconstruction efforts in Rome at St. Peter's; similar deals were done nearby at Acquasparta with Pier Luigi Farnese in 1538.

**Don Ferdinando Orsini, fifth Duke of Gravina** (b?, Naples; d. 1549), was never directly overlord of San Gemini but was the main signatory to the feudal concession of 1530. His brother, Don Giannantonio, was Lord of San Gemini and his son Virginio was the first Duke of San Gemini.

Full title: 5° Duca di Gravina, Conte di Campagna e Terlizzi (1503–1529), Patrizio Napoletano confirmed 1507; 1° Conte di Matera (until 1529); Signore di Sant'Agata, Acerenza, Genzano, Spinazzola, Ruoti, Canosa, Delisio e altri feudi; Nobile Romano.

**Don Giannantonio Orsini, Lord of San Gemini** (?–1562), title [1530–1562] (brother of Don Fernando, fifth Duke of Gravina)

Full title: Conte di Nerola, Signore di Cantalupo, Nobile Romano e Patrizio Napoletano, Signore di Tolfa Nuova, Valle Marina, Monte Castagna e Ferrara from 1515, Signore di San Gemini from 1530, sells Tolfa Nuova in 1524; General Capitan of the Church from 1558.

**Don Virginio Orsini, first Duke of San Gemini** (?–1573) title (1562–1573) (son of Don Fernando, 5th Duke of Gravina)

Full title: Signore di Montelibretti, Correse, Monticello, Scandriglia, Cerdomaro, Monte Flavio, Monte Maggiore, Configni, Lugnola; 1° Duca di San Gemini from 1562; Conte di Nerola, Signore di Cantalupo, Bardella e Roccagiovine from 1562; Nobile Romano and Patrizio Napoletano.

**Don Giannantonio Orsini, second Duke of San Gemini** (1567- Rome, 1639) Title (1573–1639)

Full title: 1° Principe di Scandriglia, 2° Duca di San Gemini, Conte di Nerola, Signore di Cantalupo, Bardella, Roccagiovine, Corese, Monte Flavio, Monte Maggiore e Monticello from 1573, Nobile Romano e Patrizio Napoletano, Cavaliere dell'Ordine dello Spirito Santo from 1608.

**Don Ferdinando Orsini, third Duke of San Gemini** (ca. 1594-Rome, 1660) title (1639–1660)

Full title: 4° Duca di Bracciano, Conte di Anguillara, Principe del S.R.I., Signore di Trevignano, Galeria, Serufano, Cerveteri, Vicovaro, Bardella, Saracinesco, Monterano, Fornello, Nerola (from 1646) e Grande di Spagna di prima classe 1646–1660, Nobile Romano, Patrizio Napoletano, Patrizio Veneto, 3° Duca di San Gemini, 2° Principe di Scandriglia (from 1639); Principe Assistente al Soglio Pontificio.

**Fourth Duke of San Gemini** – ?? Not clear why title was skipped.

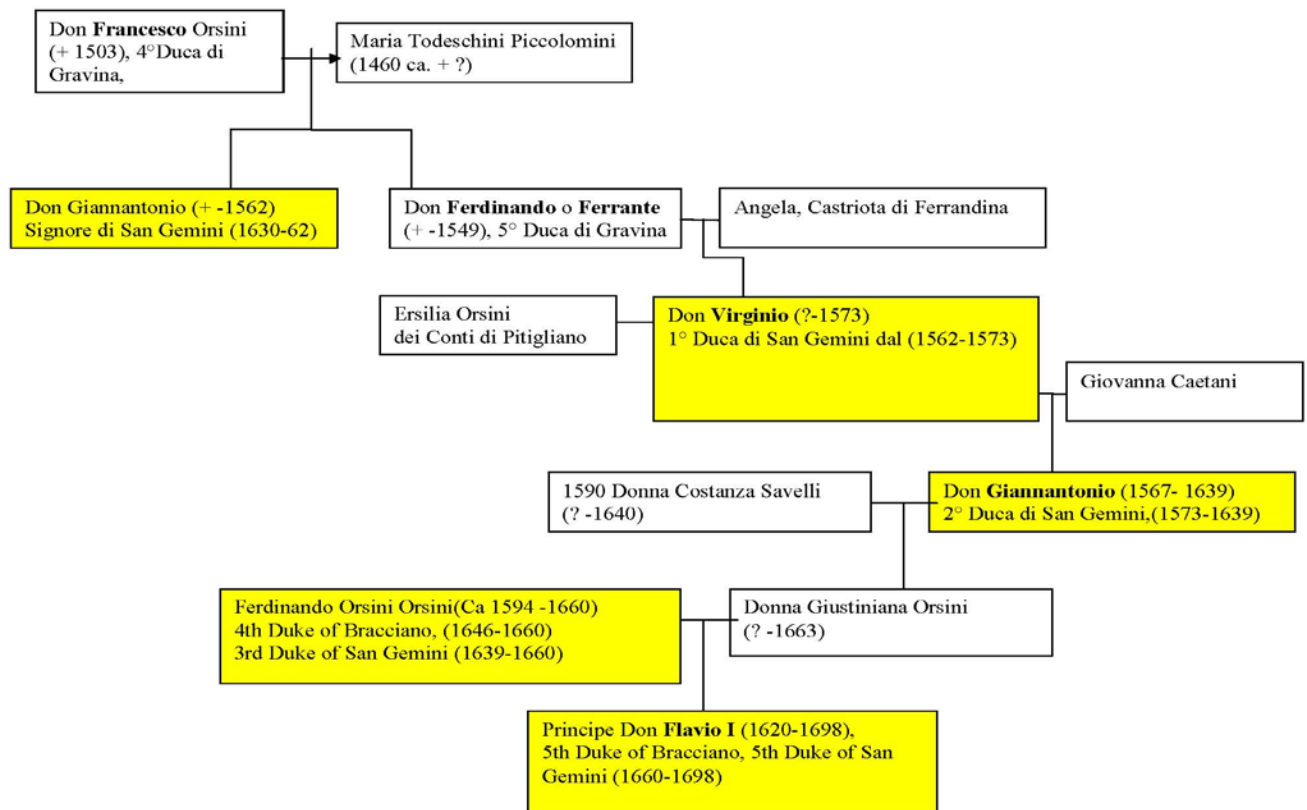
**Prince Don Flavio I Orsini, fifth Duke of San Gemini** ( b. Rome, 1620; d. Rome, 1698) title [1668-1698]

Full Title: 5° Duca di Bracciano, Conte dell'Anguillara, Principe d'Albano (1661), Principe di Scandriglia, Principe del S.R.I., 5° Duca di San Gemini, Signore di Trevignano e Galeria e Grande di Spagna di prima Classe dal 1660, Principe Assistente al Soglio Pontificio, Nobile Romano, Patrizio Napoletano, Patrizio Veneto; Cavaliere dell'Ordine dello Spirito Santo from 1675.





## Orsini Dukes of San Gemini 1530-1698 Family Tree



## Orsini Family Structure

### Family Structures of the Orsini of San Gemini

#### **Don Virginio, first Duke of San Gemini**

Marriage: Virginio Orsini = Ersilia Orsini

1) Daughter: Donna **Beatrice** (1556 –?)

Marriage: 1566, Virginio Orsini = Donna Giovanna Caetani

2) Daughter: Donna **Cornelia** (b.?: d. Rome, 1643)

3) Daughter: Donna **Caterina** (b. Rome, 1566; d. Trento, 1600)

4) Son: **Giannantonio** (b. 1567; d. Rome, 1639), second Duke of San Gemini

5) Daughter: **Livia** (b.?: d. Rome, 1619)

#### **Don Giannantini, second Duke of San Gemini**

Marriage, 1590: Don Giannantini = Donna Costanza Savelli

1) Daughter: Donna Giustiniana Orsini

#### **Don Ferdinando Orsini, third Duke of San Gemini**

Marriage: Don Ferdinando Orsini = Donna Giustiniana Orsini

1) Son: Don **Virginio** (1615–1676)

2) Son: Don **Flavio I** (1620–1698)

3) Son: **Lelio** (d. 1696)

4) Daughter: Donna **Flavia** (1635–1645)

5) Daughter: Donna **Giovanna**

#### **Family Structure of Paolo Giordano II Orsini, third Duke of Bracciano**

Marriage: Paolo Giordano II Orsini = Isabella Appiani, Princess of Piombino

1) Daughter: Polissenna Mendoza (daughter of Isabella and her first husband, Jorge de Mendoza)

2) Son: Ippolito Orsini (out-of-wedlock son of Paolo Giordano and Maria Camozzi, recognized by his father but he could not inherit the title)

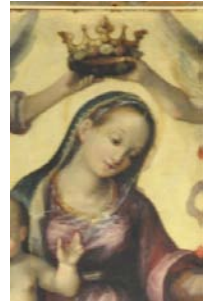


## **Mary of Nazareth**

aka: Mary Mother of God, Virgin Mary, Madonna, Our Lady, Queen of Heaven.

The Blessed Virgin, Mother of Christ

(Born late first century BC, died beginning of first century AD) was mother of Jesus of Nazareth and wife of Joseph. Christians believe she was mother of the incarnated god. Catholics believe that she has a semi-divine nature, which includes qualities such as the “immaculate conception” (born without original sin), the virgin birth (Jesus was conceived through divine intervention without sexual intercourse), and the Assumption (that upon her death her earthly body ascended into heaven).



She is believed to play an important role in the heavenly world as “Queen of Heaven” and to be able to protect humans both spiritually and physically on earth. She has a very important role in the worship of Catholic and Orthodox Christians.

She is normally represented in key moments of her earthly life, in her heavenly role as queen of heaven or as an apparition to humans on earth.

In this painting, the Virgin is represented in her role as an apparition to a Spanish preacher, Domingo de Guzman, in Prouille in France in 1208; he was there preaching against the Cathar “heresy.” During the apparition, the Virgin urges St. Dominic to encourage the recitation of the rosary as a tool to fight evil and heresy.

## **Jesus of Nazareth**

aka Christ , the Messiah, God, God the Son, the Savior, the Nazarene, the Child (b. 7–2 BC; d. 30–36 AD); traditional (0–33 AD)

Rabbi who preached in Palestine at the beginning of the first century AD; Christians believe him to be the Christ or Messiah, the earthly incarnation of God.

Usually he is portrayed as an infant with his mother Mary, as an adult preaching, at the Last Supper, in the passion during the crucifixion, rising from the dead or on the throne in heaven.





## Angels

Angels are spirits mostly of a heavenly nature. They often, but not always, have wings. Their origin precedes the Judeo-Christian tradition; many of the qualities of angels can be found in various mythical creatures in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece.

The Old and New Testaments mention angels. In the medieval Christian tradition, various theologians talk of and define the nature of angels. The most influential on the matter is probably Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the fourth or fifth century in *De Coelesti*. The roles of angels vary; they can be messengers, guardians or assist God in various ways. In medieval and later paintings, unless performing a specific role, they tend to be background decorative figures.

In this painting there is a series of angels that hover around the Madonna and hold her crown. They are unusually décolleté, more like Nike the winged goddess of victory than Christian angels. Given the theme of this painting this feature was not accidental.



Angel – Madonna del Rosario



Roman Nike

## Cherub

The biblical description of such a strange angel may be based on a misunderstood verbal description of a pagan chimera-like guardian figure.

What we normally call a cherub is a Renaissance/Baroque iconography that has little to do with the biblical description of a cherub, which was a four-headed angel with the heads of a man, a bull, an eagle and a lion. This modern version is a simplified version of a seraphim, with the head of a baby and with only two wings instead of the seraphim's six. This type of figure is mostly decorative, like putti and amorini.



Cherub – Madonna del Rosario



Examples of Baroque and Renaissance cherubs



### Biblical Cherub:



### Seraphim



### Putti/ Amorini/ Eros/ Cupid



### Domingo de Guzman: aka St. Dominic (1170–1221)

Founder of the Dominican Order (Order of Preachers, OP), Domingo de Guzman is born in Castille, in the town of Caleruega, to a family of the local nobility. He studies art and theology in Palencia for 10 years, he is ordained as a priest and is based at the cathedral of Osma. While accompanying Bishop Diego Acevedo on their way to Denmark, he is exposed to the Cathar religious movement, which was taking hold in the Languedoc. The exposure to Cathars affects him greatly and marks the rest of his religious career. From Denmark he travels to Rome where he meets like-minded people who want to counter the spread of heretical movements.

In 1205, after returning to the Toulouse area, with the permission of the bishop of Toulouse, he establishes a monastery in Prouille where he houses a group of women who had abandoned the Cathar heresy and were interested in entering a religious life. At Prouille, in 1208, Dominic has a vision of the Madonna, who hands him a rosary as an instrument to combat the heresy. This experience establishes Marianism as an important spiritual theme with Dominic and later with the Dominican Order.



In the period between 1205 and 1209, Domingo is involved in an intense effort to stop the Cathar movement. This is done by preaching, public debates, education and conciliation efforts. Domingo is impressed by the austerity and simplicity of Cathar preachers and their ability to communicate effectively with common people.

In 1209 Pope Innocent III declares a crusade against the Cathar heresy (the Albigensian Crusade, 1209-1229), following the failure of more peaceful efforts to stop the spread of the Cathar religion. The war is triggered by the murder of the papal legate Pierre de Chatelneau after an angry meeting with Raymond VI of Toulouse. The war was probably more about politics, power and culture than about religion. Most of the fighting is done against the local Catholic rulers in the Languedoc region who refuse to carry out the religious repressions demanded by the pope. The Albigensian crusade was mostly a war between the King of France and his nobility, led by Simon de Montfort, and the nobility of Languedoc, led by Raymond VI of Toulouse. The reason was not religious, it was mostly a desire of the former to extend their dominion to what is now southern France.

The war was a fairly long and messy enterprise with quite a bit of brutality, like the killing of the entire population of Beziers, and the mass executions of unrepentant Cathars in Minerve and Aimery de Montréal. The majority of Cathars willing to recant received light sentences or were pardoned. Those who refused to give up their faith were treated very harshly and often burned to death.





### Domingo de Guzman (St. Dominic), Cont.

The role of Domingo de Guzman, who preached in the area during the first phase of the crusade of 1209-1215, is not completely clear. At the moment his hagiographers portray his role in a benign fashion, being a merciful conciliator who fought heresy through preaching, public debates and persuasion. However, many question this rosy picture given his support for the crusade and close involvement with its leaders as well as his involvement with the Inquisition. Though the Dominicans were officially put in charge of the Inquisition in 1233 after the death of St. Dominic, it seems that he was involved with it in the Languedoc during the crusade and that it was his intention that Dominicans play a leading role in such operations of religious enforcement.

In 1215 St. Dominic travels to Rome and requests the General Council to have his community approved as a new order. His request is refused, so he returns to Toulouse and in 1216 his group adopts the Augustinian Rule, which was very flexible and lent itself to Dominic's need. However, in 1217, the new pope, Onorius III, approves the charter and rules for a new order, which takes the name of Order of Preachers (OP) which later comes to be known as Dominicans, Black Friars (in England), or Jacobins (in France). Dominic's rules required monks to take vows of poverty and to adopt a very simple and direct form of preaching, something he had learned from the Cathars.

In 1218 Dominic returns to Italy, where he has gained considerable influence in Rome. He is given the basilica of Santa Sabina on the Aventine as the headquarters of the OP. In 1220 and 1221 he travels to Bologna where he is involved with redrawing the charter of the order. It is here that he dies in 1221.

Saint Dominic's following and his order grow and spread quickly throughout Europe. One of his innovative ideas, which he adopts during his efforts against the Cathars, is to fight heresy through education. He establishes schools for the study of religion by lay persons. Once his order is established, he sends his disciples systematically throughout Europe to set up monasteries, particularly in university towns such as Paris and Bologna. This process is strongly favored by Pope Honorius III, who helps overcome local opposition by issuing the Papal Bull of February 1218, ordering all prelates to assist the Dominicans. In 1233 the pope puts the Dominican Order in charge of the Inquisition and turns the order into the papal enforcers of Catholic orthodoxy. In 1234, 13 years after his death, Pope Gregory IX canonizes Domingo de Guzman and makes his cult obligatory.

In art, St. Dominic is normally portrayed in his monastic tunic of black and white, holds a white lily as a sign of chastity, and has a golden star in his chest or forehead. The star represents a star his nurse is said to have seen shining on his forehead as he was being baptized.



### Caterina Benincasa, aka St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380)

Caterina Benincasa is born in Siena, one year before the black death strikes the city. Her parents are Giacomo Benincasa and Lappa di Puccio Piagenti. Her father is a prosperous craftsman and merchant, a wool dyer, which is a lucrative craft in medieval Tuscany. She is the 24th of 25 children; about half of her siblings die at an early age, including her twin sister Giovanna, who dies shortly after birth.

Catherine grows up a troubled child, suffering from "anorexia mirabilis" and religious visions at an early age. She is stubborn and recalcitrant toward her concerned parents. At the age of six she has a vision of Jesus surrounded by the saints Peter, Paul and John hovering above the Church of San Domenico in Siena. At the age of seven she makes a vow of chastity that she keeps secret until she is older. She practices fasting and physical privations that she couples with religious and spiritual activities. She engages in various religious fantasies, such as associating her father to Christ, her mother to the Virgin and her brothers to the apostles.

At the age of 16 she refuses to marry her sister's widowed husband, as her parents demand (something that was common in medieval Italy) and, after she undergoes an extreme fast and cuts off her hair, her parents give in and concede to her wishes. A sickly child, she is taken to be cured at the spa in Bagno Rivoly by her mother, Lappa, who at this point consents to Catherine joining the "Mantellate," a local group of Dominican Tertiaries, an order of nuns that do not live in a convent but at home. The Tertiaries, who are usually older widows, accept Catherine reluctantly, under political pressure.

Catherine, with the Dominicans, is involved in helping the poor and the sick. She has a charming and forceful personality. Her mysticism has a following in a pestilence ravaged Siena. She preaches and travels around Tuscany. She advocates peace between Italian city states, reform of the church and the return of the papacy to Rome from Avignon.

In 1374 Florence, one of the most powerful cities in Europe, sends Catherine on an important diplomatic mission to the pope in Avignon, a very unusual situation in the Middle Ages for a semiliterate woman with no official church position; this testifies to Catherine's communication skills, her charm and her power of persuasion. Though the diplomatic mission fails, she makes important contacts in the papal court. She maintains a correspondence with Pope Gregory XI in which she urges him to return the papacy to Rome. She is partially credited for the return of the popes to Rome in 1377.

On a spiritual level she continues her extreme ascetic practices, which include extreme fasting, isolation and entering states of trance where she has mystical visions. Some of her mystical experiences include a "mystical wedding" and receiving invisible stigmata. In 1371 she is interrogated by the Dominican Order (the Inquisition) on her theological opinions, as the church hierarchy becomes suspicious of her mystical experiences and her unabashed communications with high church officials and political figures.



### **Caterina Benincasa, aka St. Catherine of Siena, Cont.**

In 1378 she is summoned to Rome by Pope Urban VI. There she works until the end of her life for the reform of the church. She is greatly distraught by the schism in the papacy of 1378-1415.

Catherine, though semiliterate (there is no evidence she ever wrote), is known for several writings that she dictated to scribes. The most important ones are a series of over 400 letters to friends, colleges and important church and political figures, prayers and *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*, a dialogue in heaven between a human soul and God wherein she reveals her mysticism.

She dies in Rome in 1380 at the age of 33, weakened by her eating disorders. Though her health problems are often associated with her mysticism, her family and religious colleagues had always been concerned about her health. The Catholic Church has usually discouraged extreme forms of physical deprivation for religious purposes. Catherine's anorexia probably was related to digestive tract problems that kept her from holding down food.

Pope Pius II canonizes her as St. Catherine in the year 1461. Pope Pius XII in 1940 names her a joint Patron Saint of Italy, a title she shares with Saint Francis of Assisi. She is given that title for her efforts to promote peace among Italian states and for the return of the papacy to Rome.

In art, Catherine of Siena is usually portrayed in her black and white Dominican tunic. Her iconographic attributes are commonly white lilies, which symbolize her chastity; details in her hands, which symbolize her invisible stigmata; and she is often portrayed along with St. Dominic. Often, although not in this painting, she wears a ring symbolizing her mystical wedding to Jesus or she may have a crown of thorns.



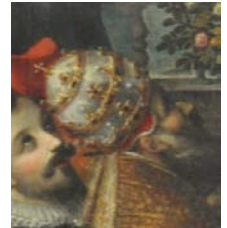


## Papal Figure

There are no specific identifying features. He stares at St. Catherine and seems to be talking with her. He stands among earthly figures in the Orsini side of the family group. There are three Orsini popes: Celestine III (1191–1198), Nicholas III (1277–1280) and Benedict XIII (1724–1730) (none contemporary to the patrons, nor having any special relation to St. Catherine).

We considered four popes as possibilities for the figure in the painting:

Gregory XI  
Pius V  
Sixtus V  
Gregory XV



### Gregory XI (1330–1378)

Born Pierre Roger de Beaufort in the *Castell of Maumont*, he is the likeliest candidate because he probably knew St. Catherine personally and had a well-documented correspondence with her. In the picture, he seems to be talking to Catherine. However, he is not related to the Orsini, so it is unclear why he is placed among the patrons on the Orsini side.

### Pius V (1504–1572)

Pius V is often portrayed in this typology of painting; he was a Dominican pope who institutionalized the cult of St. Mary of the Victory. There is no particular relation between him and St. Catherine. He was also canonized shortly after his death and in this painting he would have a halo. If this were Pius, he probably would be looking at Mary not at Saint Catherine.

### Sixtus V (1520–1590)

Sixtus was related to Paolo Giordano II Orsini through his mother, however, we are not aware of any specific relation with St. Catherine.

### Gregory XV (1554–1623)

Gregory was a contemporary of the patrons. His nephew, Niccolò Ludovisi, eventually, in 1632, marries Polissenna Mendoza (in this painting), daughter of Isabella Appiani. Gregory is always portrayed wearing a goatee-type beard, not a full beard as in this painting. We are not aware of any special relation between Gregory and St. Catherine. Unless it is shown that the marriage between Niccolò and Polissenna was arranged early on by Gregory, he is to be excluded.



### **Pierre Roger de Beaufort, aka Pope Gregory XI**

b. 1330, *Castell of Maumont*; d. 1378, Rome

Papacy 1370–1378

Gregory XI is born Pierre Roger de Beaufort in Maumont (Rosiers-d'Égletons, Limousin), around 1330. He is the son of Count William of Beaufort and of Marie du Chambon and nephew of Pope Clement VI. He studies at the university at Angers and also at that of Perugia. Thanks to his uncle, he rises quickly in the church hierarchy and succeeds Pope Urban V at the papal conclave of 1370 and is pope until his death in 1378 . He is the seventh and last of the “approved” Avignon popes.



During his pontificate, vigorous measures are taken against the heresies that had broken out in Germany, England and other parts of Europe; a sincere effort is also made to reform the various monastic orders.

He probably meets Catherine of Siena when she visits Avignon while conducting an embassy on behalf of Florence. They maintain contact by correspondence, and Catherine of Siena is partially credited with convincing Gregory XI to return to Rome.

The popes wish to return their seat to Rome to avoid the heavy influence of the French king. During the papacy of Clement VI, Egidio di Albornoz is sent to create order in the papal territories and prepare the ground for a papal return. In Italy, however, the French pope and his legates are not viewed favorably. Florence, in particular, is not interested in there being another strong papal presence in Italy. Florence leads a revolt of several cities, known as the War of Eight Saints. Following negotiations that include the threat of excommunication, the war is resolved temporarily. Gregory moves to Rome in 1377.

The return turns out to be very problematic. Once in Rome, popular disturbances force Gregory to take refuge in Agnani. He returns to Rome once the disturbances are quashed, however, he dies soon after in 1378. The election of the next pope brings major problems to the Catholic Church. Romans refuse to elect French popes or to have a College of Cardinals controlled by the French. This situation lead to the Western Schism, and for forty years there are two popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon.



### **Paolo Giordano II Orsini, third Duke of Bracciano (1591–1656)**

Paolo Giordano is born in Rome at the Montegiordano Palace of the Orsini, the son of Virginio Orsini, second Duke of Bracciano, and Flavia Peretti Damasceni. He is the grandson of Paolo Giordano Orsini and Isabella de' Medici (daughter of Cosimo I). He is the oldest of several siblings: Alessandro, Ferdinando, Don Carlo, Cosimo, Don Ferdinando, Don Raimondo, Don Virginio, Donna Isabella and Maria Camilla.

*His full title: Don Paolo Giordano II, third Duca di Bracciano, Conte d'Anguillara, Signore di Campagnano Trevignano, Galeria, Fornello and Vicovaro, Great of Spain First Class (1615–1646), Nobile Romano, Patrizio Napoletano, Patrizio Veneto; Principe of the Holy Roman Empire with grade "Illustrissimus" by imperial decree (July 17/18, 1623), concession of coat of arms and confirmation of title of Prince of the H.R.E. (June 25, 1625), right to coin money by Imperial decree of (October 20, 1629), ruling prince of Piombino from 1624; Principe Assistente al Soglio Pontificio.*



Paolo Giordano II Orsini is a leading member of the Roman nobility. Not only does he have substantial wealth and power associated with being Duke of Bracciano and Anguillara, but he is also related to powerful families, such as the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, through his grandmother Isabella Medici, and to Felice Peretti (Pope Sixtus V), through his mother. He spends part of his youth with his uncles and cousins at the Medici court in Florence during the reign of Ferdinando I de' Medici and is the same age as Cosimo II de' Medici. The Orsinis own the villa of Poggio Imperial, which they inherit from their grandmother Isabella. This is sold in 1618, probably by Paolo Giordano, to Maria Maddalena of Austria, wife of Cosimo II.

As a young man in 1609, Paolo Giordano does a grand tour of Europe, visiting many of the important courts. Upon his father Virgionio's death at the age of 24 in 1615, he becomes second Duke of Bracciano. At some point, before his marriage, he conceives a child out of wedlock with Maria Camozzi. The child's name is Ippolito Orsini; he is recognized by his father but his illegitimate status does not allow him to inherit the title of duke.

In 1622, after an extensive and at times unsuccessful marital search, he arranges a marriage with Isabella Appiani of Aragon, reigning Princess of Piombino (1577–1661). She is substantially older than him but meets his requirements in terms of wealth and high rank. They try several times to have children. Paolo Giordano hires a very expensive doctor, Giuliano Manenti, to follow her pregnancies; unfortunately for the couple, none successfully come to term and he never has a legitimate heir. Upon his death in 1646, his younger brother, Ferdinando Duke of San Gemini, inherits the title of Duke of Bracciano, bringing about the complete consolidation of the San Gemini and Bracciano lines of the Orsini family. Isabella Appiani has a daughter from her first marriage.





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### Paolo Giordano II Orsini, third Duke of Bracciano, Cont.

Rome in the 17th century is still the most important center for the arts in Europe and Paolo Giordano II is very much involved in the artistic and cultural scene of the city. He is an important art collector and patron. Some of the artists he commissions and maintains good personal relations with are Gianlorenzo Bernini, Artemisia Gentileschi (perhaps), Ottavio Leoni, Orfeo Boselli, Johan Jacob Kornmann and Parmigianino. He is often consulted by foreigners on matters of art in Rome. For example, he seems to have been involved in facilitating some commissions for Bernini by the French court. His brother, Cardinal Alessandro Orsini, is a friend and patron of Galileo Galilei. Paolo Giordano II Orsini is himself involved in the arts, and is a well-respected poet. He publishes *Rime* in 1648, is a publisher, plays music, even invents a new instrument, and seems to have dabbled in painting.



He carefully nurtures a princely image through a lavish and refined lifestyle. He makes a major effort to have himself portrayed both in private and public settings. In fact, there is an abundance of images of him still in existence. He also nurtures an image abroad through friendships and contacts with many of the important political figures in Europe. He has this opportunity in Rome, as many of these figures visit the city to meet the pope, as well as in his youth when he takes a grand tour of European courts. He keeps a voluminous correspondence with important persons, among which are Louis IV of France, Cardinal Mazzarin and Queen Cristina of Sweden. In 1623 he is declared Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, with the title, "Illustrissimus." This title makes Paolo Giordano II Orsini the highest ranked prince in Rome in his time. His extravagant lifestyle is often blamed for the financial demise of the family. This may not be entirely true. Some financial problems are inherited and the other members of the family lead no less a luxurious life.

In the latter part of his life he dedicates quite a bit of effort to managing his estates and those of his wife in Tuscany. He works on developing agricultural production and improves the iron works in Bracciano with the new iron supplies from the island of Elba, which are part of his wife's estate.

The Bracciano branch of the Orsini was not directly related to the Orsinis of San Gemini, who came from the Gravina line and were given the feudal holding in payment of old debts by the pope in 1530 and as part of an anachronistic policy of reviving feudalism in the 16th century both to raise money and to bring development to the province. The merging of the San Gemini branch and the Bracciano line is probably the doing of Paolo Giordano II, who probably helps arrange the marriage of his younger brother, Ferdinando, to Giustiniana Orsini, daughter of Giannantonio Orsini, second Duke of San Gemini, who has no male heirs and risks losing the feudal holding. This arrangement is probably done before it becomes clear that Paolo Giordano II himself will not have legitimate male heirs and that the Bracciano title will go to his brother, Ferdinando.



### **Paolo Giordano II Orsini, third Duke of Bracciano, Cont.**

There are many images of Paolo Giordano II Orsini, as drawn and painted portraits, and also marble and bronze busts made by some notable sculptors. He is also known to have commissioned a portrait of his wife, Isabella Appiani, by Parmigianino. Internet sources often confuse him with his grandfather, Paolo Giordano I, husband of Isabella Medici, whom he is reputed to have murdered out of jealousy.



#### **Chronological notes**

1615: Virginio Orsini dies, leaving Paolo Giordano II to become third Duke of Bracciano and head of the Bracciano branch of the Orsini line. Paolo Giordano inherits a family estate that already is showing financial problems.

1622: Alessandro Varotari (Parmigianino) is hired to paint portrait of Isabella Appiani.

1623: By imperial decree of July 12, 1623, he becomes Prince of the Holy Roman Empire with the predicate of Most Serene Highness, which places him above the other Roman princes in status. In 1638 Emperor Ferdinand II confirms his title and grants him the right to mint gold and silver coins.

1631-1643: Records show that the iron works in Cerveteri are doing well.

1636: Invents a new type of the sordellina (a portable organ).

1640: Paolo Giordano Orsini corresponds with some important persons, such as Cardinal Mazzarin in France. He often discusses the art scene in Rome with Mazzarin. He seems to have been involved in arranging contacts between Mazzarin and Gianlorenzo Bernini, which lead to commissions and Bernini visiting Paris for the design of the enlargement of the Louvre.

1644: Paolo Giordano Orsini sells several properties to pay debts. In this part of his life he spends a great deal of time managing his real estate properties in Rome, the agricultural estate in Bracciano, and the iron mining and works in Piombino that belong to his wife.

1647: A ship owned by the Orsinis burns in the port of Naples with substantial material loss.

1649: Paolo Giordano Orsini starts a correspondence with Queen Cristina of Sweden, which becomes fairly intense and intimate.





### **Paolo Giordano II Orsini, third Duke of Bracciano, Cont.**

1652: Louis XIV, king of France, gives him several diplomas and assigns some substantial pensions to him. In this period he maintains a correspondence with Louis XIV.

1566: Is forced to sell land holdings to pay debts.

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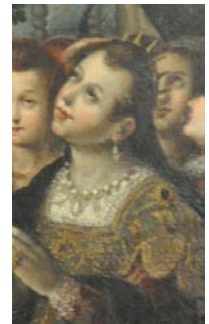
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**Maria Isabella Appiani of Aragon, Princess of Piombino (b. Genoa, 1577; d. Rome, 1661), aka Isabella Appiani, Princess of Piombino**

*Full Title: Maria Isabella Appiano d'Aragona, Principessa sovrana di Piombino 1611-1624, Marchesa di Populonia, Signora di Scarlino, Populonia, Vignale, Abbazia del Fango, Suvereto, Buriano, dell'Isola d'Elba, Montecristo, Pianosa, Cerboli e Palmaiola.*



Isabella is ruling Princess of Piombino from 1611 to 1628. She is one of the few examples of a European woman ruler who rules as of right. She lives and rules during a difficult and complicated period in Italian history, when the Spanish had a growing influence. This concludes with the Italian campaign of Charles V, when he defeats a coalition of Italian states including Florence, Venice and the papacy.

Isabella is the daughter of Alessandro Appiani, ruler of Piombino, and Isabella De Mendoza. Her father is murdered in a plot by the local nobility in 1589 (supposedly led by her mother's lover, the head of the Spanish garrison), and her brother Jacob VII, an infant, succeeds under the regency of his mother. Jacob dies young in 1603 and Piombino comes under the control of Don Felix de Aragon, head of the Spanish garrison, until 1611 when the Appianis (a different branch of the family) take back Piombino from the Spanish. As a compromise, Isabella, who is married to a Spanish nobleman, is made ruling princess of Piombino until 1626 when the Appianis are pushed out again by the Spanish and the Medici. At this point Piombino comes under direct Spanish rule. In 1636 she regains Piombino indirectly when her son-in-law, Prince Niccolo Ludovisi, is assigned to be Prince of Piombino. Isabella Appiani marries twice. Her first marriage is with Jorge Mendoza (1560-1619), a member of the transplanted Spanish nobility in Italy. They probably meet in Genoa, where the Mendoza family are ambassadors to Genoa from the king of Spain. Jorge dies in 1619. They have had two children, a boy who dies young and a daughter, Polinessa.

Isabella marries her second husband, Paolo Giordano II Orsini, duke of Bracciano, in 1622. He is 14 years younger than her. They attempt to have children, but she is unable to successfully complete her pregnancies. Isabella dies in Rome in 1661, at the age of 83, having outlived two husbands, her daughter and her grandson.

In this painting, Isabella looks the same age as her husband, but her image is slightly larger and more prominent. It may indicate that perhaps she or someone close to her commissioned the painting.

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Medici Archive Project

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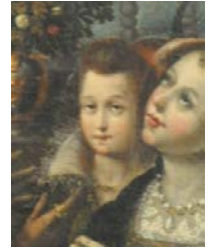
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### **Polissena de Mendoza, heir Princess of Piombino (b.?: d. 1642)**

Daughter of Jorge de Mendoza, second Count of Binasco, ambassador of Spain to Genoa, and Isabella Appiani, ruling princess of Piombino. Stepdaughter of Paolo Giordano II Orsini after 1622.



With the death of her only sibling, she is the heir Princess of Piombino. In 1618–1619 her father dies; her mother remarries Paolo Giordano II Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, in 1622. In 1626, after various pressures by Florence, Isabella Appiani, Princess of Piombino, and her second husband, Paolo Giordano Orsini, are forced out of their principality, which is taken over under direct rule by Spain. Polissena is never able to inherit the position personally.

In 1632 Polissena marries Niccolo Ludovisi Buoncompagni and in 1634 she regains Piombino indirectly, through her husband, who is appointed to the position of Prince of Piombino by the king of Spain. Polissena has a son, Don Filippo Gregorio Boncompagni. He is a Roman nobleman and a patrician of Bologna.

Source

Grandes de Espagna

<http://www.grandesp.org.uk/historia/gzas/canete.htm>

### **Ippolito Orsini (b.?: d. 1699), son of Paolo Giordano II Orsini, duke of Bracciano (1591–1656) and Maria Camozzi**

Ippolito is born outside of wedlock and at this point we do not know much about him or his mother. We do know that Paolo Giordano recognizes him as his son and leaves him at least part of his wealth. We think that his mother must have come from a prosperous if not a noble family. His out-of-wedlock condition probably keeps him from inheriting the title of Duke of Bracciano, which is owned by the family rather than by the individual duke. Upon the death of Paolo Giordano II, the title of duke passes to his younger brother, Ferdinando, Duke of San Gemini.



We know that Ippolito Orsini lives in Rome and marries two times with:

- 1) Margherita Picenardi (b.?: d. 1689)
- 2) Antonia Pepoli (b.?: d. 1716)

Sources

<http://www.genmarenostrium.com/pagine-lettere/letterao/Orsini/ORSINI-BRACCIANO.htm>



### **Jorge (Giorgio) de Mendoza, Count of Binasco (1560–1618)**

Born in Genoa, dies in Piombino. Son of Pedro González de Mendoza y Briceño, first Count di Binasco (Italy, September 13, 1589), ambassador of Spain to Genoa. The name of his mother is not known.

Jorge de Mendoza is a member of the transplanted Spanish nobility that populates Italy in the 16th century as most of it comes under Spain's effective control. He marries his first cousin, Isabella Appiani, Princess of Piombino, around 1600–1602. They have two children, first a boy who dies young, and a second child, a girl, Polissena, who lives to adulthood. Jorge de Mendoza dies in Piombino (1618–1619?) and his wife remarries in 1622 to Paolo Giordano II Orsini.



#### Source

Grandes de España

<http://www.grandesdeespana.org.uk/historia/gzas/canete.htm>





## Painting, *Madonna del Rosario*, Issues to Be Resolved

- 1) Are the patrons represented really Paolo Giordano Orsini (PGO) and his wife Isabella Appiani or other persons.
- 2) Of the following, who commissioned this painting:
  - ⤴ Paolo Giordano II Orsini
  - ⤴ Isabella Appiani (wife of PGO)
  - ⤴ Ferdinando Orsini, third Duke of San Gemini (brother and successor of PGO)
  - ⤴ Gianantonio Orsini, second duke of San Gemini (father-in-law of Ferdinando Orsini)
  - ⤴ The congregation of San Giovanni Battista (SGB), perhaps in thanks for a gift.
- 3) Was this painting commissioned for the church of SGB or for another site and then transferred there.
- 4) Some figures among the patrons are looking backwards. Does this mean they were dead?
- 5) Does any documentation exist on the commissioning of this painting to Benedetto Bandiera (this would be a good research project for persons in Los Angeles, where there is access to the Orsini Archives at UCLA).
- 6) Why is the pope figure (perhaps Gregory XI) placed among the patrons on the Orsini side.
- 7) Who are the various unidentified figures among the patrons.
- 8) Why is PGO wearing the medal of the Order of the Golden Fleece (his father, Virginio Orsini, was a member of the order, but PGO was not).
- 9) Why did PGO receive the title, Prince of the Holy Roman Empire.
- 10) When and where was this painting done.
- 11) Why did PGO receive a pension from the king of France.
- 12) How close was PGO to his cousin, Cosimo II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and did they do the grand tour of Europe together.
- 13) Why is this painting in San Gemini and in this church?

Anyone who knows answers to these questions or has some ideas about these paintings please contact us.

