Washington and Lee University

# *Vox Clamantis in Deserto*: Carthusian Experience in the Papal Chapel at Villeneuve

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A Thesis Submitted for Honors in Art History

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unacknowledged aid on this paper.

*For my parents, without whose faith and many sacrifices I would not have made it this far.*

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## I. Introducing the Monastery

Incense wafts through beams of late-afternoon sun as about a dozen voices chant a solemn hymn. The song concludes and the men, dressed in voluminous, undyed wool robes, process out of the small chapel and step briefly under the Gothic vaulting outside. They continue into the hallway directly opposite and, as he enters, the last monk turns to catch a quick glance of the freshly-turned earth in the otherwise green field of the cloister. He crosses himself, then moves into the next space, another chapel, though one far more richly decorated than the last. As he enters, a fresco catches the monk's eye and he takes in the elements of the scene: two men lower a headless body into a colorful, marble sepulcher; two more stand by and watch, hands clasped in prayer; a final figure looks on from afar, their back turned to the monk; and in the background rises a thick tangle of trees and shrubs. The monk might remember his spiritual brother, whom he has just laid to rest in a like manner in the cloister behind him. He says a quick prayer—*requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine*—and then turns to join his brothers in the refectory beyond. But as he does so, he sees the scene to the left of the entombment. This register displays the feast of Herod, where regal figures dine in ostentatious splendor as a servant presents them with a man's head on a platter. A lithe, young woman dances before the men as hounds bark around her feet. It looks nothing like the meal the young monk will join in the next room, and the decapitated head causes him to shudder and hurry out of the chapel as quickly as possible. But the scene remains etched in his mind as he eats, giving him something to think about in the otherwise eternal silence.

Though fanciful, this narrative description emulates the sort of experience a Carthusian monk at the charterhouse of Val-de-Bénédiction in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon would have encountered in the 14$^{th}$ century. By analyzing the social history, formal qualities, and semiotic

elements contextualizing the chapel, I hope to shed light on the nature of Pope Innocent VI's patronage of the monastery; on Matteo Giovanetti's unique style and his arrangement of the scenes in the chapel of St. John the Baptist; and on how the Carthusian monks at Villeneuve would have interpreted and experienced these images.

The ideas expressed in this thesis seek to fill a general lacuna in fourteenth-century art history in two respects: the Carthusian monastery of Villeneuve has not received extensive academic attention, especially from English-language scholars, nor has the work of the artist Matteo Giovanetti, who painted the frescoes within its papal chapel. His Scenes from the Life of Saint John the Baptist represent the culmination of his understudied artistic career—one that spanned almost twenty years and consisted primarily of his role as *pictor papae*, or "painter to the pope." For such an important artist, and for such an important artwork within his *oeuvre*, the lack of in-depth scholarly discussion represents a serious gap in understanding Trecento art in Italy and southern France. The reasons for this lack of attention are understandable, if unfortunate. The art of the Avignon Papacy remains caught in a sort a limbo, viewed by art historians as a strange combination of French and Italian styles. It strangely belongs to both regions, as the popes who commissioned its art and architecture came from the Languedoc, which ostensibly belonged to France but did not share its famous High and Flamboyant Gothic styles. Furthermore, the Italian artists active in Avignon lie outside the traditional canon dominated by Florentines such as Cimabue, Giotto, Orcagna, and Masaccio. The ravages of time and the French Revolution have also greatly damaged the monuments and artworks associated with the Avignon Papacy, and the Palace of the Popes and the charterhouse of Val-du-Bénédiction are no exception in this regard. The severe loss of a great deal of Giovanetti's work in both locations, as well as a relatively poor documentation of his life, has minimized his role in

Avignon in comparison to more famous artists before and after him, especially Simone Martini and the Florentine successors of Giotto.

The scholarship that has dealt with Giovanetti tends to focus on his surviving works in the Palace of the Popes, especially the chapels of St. Martial and St. John. These spaces have survived more or less intact, and they have become the exemplars of Giovanetti's style for scholars such as Enrico Castelnuovo—his primary biographer—as well as Eileen Kane, Marilyn Lavin, Amanda Luyster, Margaret Plant, and Polo Gavino. The books and articles published by these scholars emphasize Giovanetti's work at the Palace of the Popes and have examined aspects of his work, such as his innovative use of vaulting and window embrasures as pictorial space, the consequentially unique organization of his narrative scenes, and the role of text in his images, that appear in his frescoes at Villeneuve; however, they do not expound upon the Villeneuve chapel at length and therefore have left behind a significant example of his genius. French scholarship, although more thorough in documenting the history of the charterhouse and its evolution over time, have also neglected to analyze the art executed within the chapel even when they mention its unique nature. Finally, late nineteenth-century publications in architectural gazettes provide a thorough analysis of the site's structural fabric, but they say little regarding its artwork. The entire charterhouse of Val-de-Bénédiction would be well-served by an English monograph, but I will content myself for now by only covering Innocent VI's chapel. It is my hope that my analysis will provide a better understanding of this overlooked gem of fourteenth-century art and the context in which pope, painter, and monk collaborated in creating and appreciating its messages.

## I. The Social History and Context of the Chartreuse Val-de-Bénédiction

St. Bruno of Cologne founded the what would eventually become the Carthusian Order with the approval of Pope Urban II in the mountains outside Grenoble, France in the year 1084.[1] Renowned throughout the Middle Ages for their strict piety and asceticism, the Carthusians maintained a longstanding tradition of coenobitic monasticism that emphasized contemplative silence and communal eremeticism as inspired by the lives of St. John the Baptist and the early Christian Desert Fathers. The eleventh-century Church witnessed the promulgation of the Gregorian Reforms, the height of the Benedictine Cluniac movement, and the foundation of several monastic orders characterized by a rigor similar to that of the Carthusians—namely, the Camaldolese, Vallombrosans, and Cistercians. However, unlike these and various other religious orders, including the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Carmelites, the Carthusians never became so lax in their practice as to inspire the creation of a reformed version of the Order.[2] The eremitic zeal exhibited by Bruno continued to inspire the followers of his order for centuries afterwards, and both the spirituality and the art and architecture associated with the Carthusians changed little over the years.

When he and his six companions settled in the Alps outside Grenoble, Bruno left behind no writings that firmly established a new rule or spirituality unique to the Carthusians—the original community saw itself as merely embodying the ideals laid down in the traditional

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[1] Mursell, Gordon. *The Theology of the Carthusian Life in the Writings of St. Bruno and Guigo I*. Salzburg: Instituit für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1988. 9-10. Mursell observes that the original foundations of the Grande Chartreuse and Santa Maria della Torre in Calabria were not initially seen as constituting a new order; rather, they emphasized a scrupulous adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict in the vein of the Benedictine reform orders. Only after prior Guigo I's election and the recording of the Carthusian *institutio*, or particular manner of liturgical observance, did the idea of the Carthusians as a wholly separate order truly emerge.

[2] This unique status has even coined a Latin proverb: *Cartusia numquam reformata quia numquam deformata*; "The Chartreuse was never reformed because it was never deformed." The Order never experienced major conflict in the same vein as the one between the Conventual and Spiritual Franciscans, nor did it produce notable unorthodox figures such as William of Ockham, Girolamo Savonarola, or Martin Luther.

Benedictine practice. What separated the Carthusians from their Benedictine brethren was their combination of eremitical and cenobitic monasticism similar to that practiced by the Camaldolese and Vallombrosan Orders founded in Italy. The first Carthusian communities grew slowly over the first several decades until the election of Guigo I to the rank of prior in 1109.[3] Guigo definitively shaped the Carthusian way of life with the publication of the first *Consuetudines*, or "Customs," in c. 1121-1128 that outlined Carthusian practices regarding the liturgy and monastic life. The *Consuetudines* therefore represent the earliest source of uniquely Carthusian spirituality and its expression within the walls of the monastery.

Beginning with the Grande Chartreuse, the standard charterhouse came to host twelve professed monks, each of whom lived in his own cell traditionally consisting of a small garden, a workshop, and a bedroom. These cells, which functioned as private apartments, encircled a large, normally empty cloister, often used as the burial ground for their deceased predecessors. The brothers received food and goods from the outside world via a small turntable on the front of their cells, with lay brothers bringing a tray daily and taking it away soon after. The monks only broke the strict observance of silence to celebrate the Mass and to sing the major divisions of the Liturgy of the Hours.[4] The Carthusian life thus emphasized solitude, silence, and an interior spirituality that stressed the individual's contemplation of God to a greater extent than any other mendicant or monastic order. This spirituality appealed both to the monks who joined the order and to the benefactors who patronized the Carthusians for a variety of reasons.

The man who would eventually become pope at the end of 1352 and a subsequent patron of the Carthusians was born in 1282 to the Aubert family, a line of minor nobility that ruled as

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[3] Mursell, 10-13.

[4] Maria, Ugo. *The Consuetudine of Guigo I, 5th Prior of the Carthusian Order*. St. Mary's Hermitage, U.K., 2018. 18-19. Guigo I's documentation of Carthusian life opens with an exhaustive recording of the liturgical practices unique to the order, emphasizing throughout their life of communal quiet.

*seigneurs* of Montel-de-Gelat in the Limousin.[5] Before becoming pope, Étienne taught civil law at Toulouse and became Bishop of Noyon in 1338, then Bishop of Clermont in 1340. He eventually rose to become Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia and Velletri, the highest-ranking suburbicarian diocese in the College of Cardinals.[6] At one point he was an advisor to the Valois king of France, Philip VI, and he travelled between the royal and papal courts at Paris and Avignon several times between 1337 and 1338. Aubert's personality contrasted markedly from his predecessor Clement VI's (1342-1352), which appealed to the conclave that saw Clement's exorbitant spending as a detriment to the continued strength of the papacy.[7] In this sense Aubert already had a practical affinity with the generally wealth-averse Carthusians, and his pecuniary habits harkened back to the days of the second Avignon pope, Benedict XII. Aubert's past experience with King Philip VI and overall friendly relationship with the French monarchy further recommended him to the position. Furthermore, Innocent dedicated the majority of his pontificate to ecclesiastical administrative reforms and the restoration of order in the Papal States in Italy, as well as attempts to mediate between France and England during the height of the Hundred Years' War.[8] When he died in 1362, he was buried in the monumental tomb he had had erected for himself in the Charterhouse of Val-de-Bénédiction in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, just across the river from the papal capital and its palace (Fig. 1). In order to understand why Pope Innocent chose such a course of action, we must turn to the historical context in which he found himself in the middle of the fourteenth century.

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[5] Mollat, Guillaume. *Les Papes d'Avignon*. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1966. 99-100.

[6] Rollo-Koster, Joëlle. *Avignon and Its Papacy, 1309-1417: Popes, Institutions, and Society*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015. 86-87.

[7] Renouard, Yves. *The Avignon Papacy*. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1970. 48.

[8] It was under Innocent that Cardinal Gil Albornoz waged two effective campaigns in Italy that eventually restored some measure of papal power to the peninsula and resulted in the publication of the *Constitutiones Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae*, the first official constitution of the Papal States which remained in effect until 1816. For more information, see Housley, Norman. *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

When Pope Clement VI died in December of 1352, the College of Cardinals once again convened to elect a successor to the Throne of St. Peter. In the traditional account recorded by the Carthusian historian Petrus Dorlandus, the consistory initially looked to Dom Jean Birel, a southern French Carthusian prior, for their candidate.[9] Only the cardinal-bishop Talleyrand de Périgord opposed this selection, claiming that in electing him the college would saddle the church with a second Celestine V, a weak-willed monk who had resigned the papacy out of overwhelming piety in 1293 and thus paved the way for the election of the infamous pope Boniface VIII. Boniface's conflicts with the French king Philip IV led to the eventual move of the papacy to Avignon in the first place, and the cardinals did not want to enthrone another pope who might sway to the demands of the French crown so easily.

At the time of Innocent's election, Birel held the position of prior at the charterhouse found outside the town of Glandier in the Limousin. Pope Innocent's family, the Auberts, appear among the foremost benefactors of the Glandier Charterhouse, as it was located near their ancestral hamlet and Innocent's place of birth, the hamlet of Beyssac.[10] Archambaud VI, Vicomte of Comborn, had established the monastery there in 1219, an early example of the precedent that Pope Innocent would follow some century-and-a-half later. Dorlandus's account suggests that Innocent founded his charterhouse as a gesture of gratitude to Birel for rejecting the papacy. Scholar Norman Zacour doubts the authenticity of these claims and instead has interpreted them as a means for Dorlandus to bolster the prestige of the Carthusian Order decades after the election. Whether the College of Cardinals ever truly considered Jean Birel as *papabile*, past historians have used his story as a convenient "short-cut" explanation for the

[9] I draw here primarily from Zacour, Norman P. "A Note on the Papal Election of 1352: The Candidacy of Jean Birel." *Traditio*, Vol. 13, 1957. 456-462.
[10] Boutrais, Cyprien-Marie. *La chartreuse de Glandier en Limousin*. Typographie de N.-D. des Près, 1886. 48-49. Bourtrais records that one of Étienne Aubert's uncles, Gérard del Mon, joined the Carthusian Order c. 1260.

otherwise somewhat puzzling decision on Innocent's part to convert his palace into a monastery. In doing so, they overlook the complex web of personality, familial history, and social context surrounding Innocent VI—all of which provide a far more convincing explanation behind the creation of the Chartreuse of Val-de-Bénédiction.

Although Innocent's predecessors had not seen fit to return to Rome, neither had they attempted to transform Avignon into a new Rome. Clement VI came the closest with his expansion of the Papal Palace and its "miniaturization" of Rome and the Lateran complex into a single structure, but even he did not establish a new papal burial ground, one of the most defining features of Rome and of St. Peter's Basilica today.[11] Beginning in 1314 with Clement V, the Avignon popes chose various churches and monasteries in southern France as the site of their tombs depending on their personal preference.[12] Clement specified in his will that he rest in the collegiate church at Uzeste, not far from his birthplace of Villandraut. John XXII erected a freestanding Gothic catafalque in Notre-Dame des Doms d'Avignon, perhaps tied to his simultaneous status as pope and as bishop of Avignon. Benedict XII also chose Avignon's cathedral for his tomb, despite his membership in the Cistercian Order and former positions as Abbot of Frontfoide, Bishop of Pamiers, and Bishop of Mirepoix. Clement VI, Innocent's immediate successor, chose the abbey where he first entered the Benedictine Order, that of Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne, for the site of his monumental tomb. Innocent's successor, Urban V, also a Benedictine, opted for the Abbey of St. Victor near Marseille, the motherhouse of his

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[11] For more on Clement VI's pontificate and the aspects of his reign that suggested the creation of a *Nova Roma* at Avignon, see Wood, Diana. *Clement VI: The Pontificate and Ideas of an Avignon Pope*. Cambridge, 1989. Under Clement, Avignon passed from Angevin control to direct papal ownership; Clement held the bishopric of Avignon in addition to his title as Bishop of Rome; and his additions to the Palais des Papes suggest a condensing of papal sites in the city of Rome, such as St. John Lateran and St. Peter's, into a single superstructure.

[12] Gardner, Julian. "Ubi Papa Ibi Roma: *The Curia Abroad*," from *The Tomb and the Tiara: Curial tomb Sculpture in Rome and Avignon in the Later Middle Ages*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. The information recounted in this paragraph derives primarily from this work. Gardner documents all the sepulchral monuments erected by the Avignon popes, the majority of which either do not survive or have suffered significant losses over the centuries.

native Priory of Chirac. Only Gregory XI, who finally returned the papacy to Italy permanently in 1377, was interred at the then-Olivetan church of Santa Maria Nuova in Rome.

None of Innocent's contemporaries, then, sought to tie their legacies to their newfound refuge on the Rhône. The closest to do so, John XXII and Benedict XII, seem to have been buried there more out of convenience than anything else—or, in Benedict's case, as a way to connect himself to the massive palace he had had constructed next to the cathedral. Rather, the popes chose burial sites connected in some way with their personal past, often in relation to the monastic orders they came from and the abbeys and monasteries near their hometowns. As a professor of law and a diocesan bishop, Étienne Aubert had no close ties with any of the monastic orders save for the Carthusians, to which he had connections in two ways. The first tie was his family's general patronage of the charterhouse at Glandier; the second and, I would argue, more influential reason was the general surge in popularity of founding Carthusian monasteries by the ecclesiastical and lay nobility throughout the Trecento.

Despite the catastrophes and social unrest in the fourteenth century—including the Hundred Years' War, the outbreak of the Black Death in 1348, and various peasant revolts across Western Europe—the Carthusian Order experienced an incredible surge of popularity as a recipient of ecclesiastical and lay patronage. The number of charterhouses founded in the 1300s surpassed that of the previous two hundred years by almost fifty percent, leading to a total of 99 monasteries founded between 1300 and 1399.[13] And, unlike the Cluniac movement some centuries beforehand, the expansion of the order's presence throughout Europe did not compromise their monastic rigor. One of the primary reasons so many patrons established Carthusian monasteries, as opposed to Benedictine, Cistercian, or mendicant houses, was the

[13] Martin, Dennis D. *Fifteenth Century Carthusian Reform: The World of Nicholas Kempf*. Leiden: Brill, 1992. 4–5.

strict adherence to the life of prayer and contemplation that rulers could count on being employed on behalf of their suffering souls in Purgatory after their deaths.[14] Carthusian monasteries provided the greatest return on investment in terms of intercessory prayer in the fourteenth century.

Pope Urban II, a past student of Bruno of Cologne's, confirmed the establishment of the Grande Chartreuse in 1084. The first ecclesiastic to patronize the nascent Order was Bishop Hugh of Grenoble, a partisan of the Gregorian Reform and possibly another student of Bruno's.[15] Hugh also assisted in founding the Order of Chalais nearby, which, due to its close proximity and similar spiritual discipline, was absorbed by the Carthusians in 1303; the similarity between the orders testifies to Hugh's interest in their generally similar practices and spirituality. The model life promulgated at the Grande Chartreuse under his auspices would come to be followed at the numerous daughter houses established in the subsequent centuries, and the proximity of Grenoble to Avignon means that Hugh's presence in cultural memory may have impressed itself upon Innocent when founding his charterhouse in Villeneuve.

Another prominent and early patron of the Carthusians was Saint Hugh of Lincoln, a bishop who spent time at the Grande Chartreuse and who became prior of Witham Charterhouse, the first of the Order's foundations in England.[16] Henry II had founded this charterhouse as part of his penitence for the murder of Thomas Beckett in 1170, demonstrating the tendency for earlier Carthusian settlements to have been founded by the nobility in more general acts of piety than for the express purpose of serving as a mortuary establishment as seen in the thirteen-hundreds. Prior to the fourteenth century, bishops like Hugh generally oversaw these new

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[14] Luxford, Julian. *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008. 217-218.
[15] Mursell, 9.
[16] Butler, Richard Urban. "St. Hugh of Lincoln." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. 7. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. The rest of the information recounted in this paragraph derives from this source.

establishments rather than initiating them themselves. Hugh petitioned Henry II for additional support in establishing a permanent monastic settlement at Witham, ensuring a strong Carthusian presence in England and the providing the inspiration for the eventual establishment of nine additional charterhouses throughout the Kingdom of England.

Later bishops actively founded charterhouses of their own accord, including the monasteries in the major bishoprics of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Wurzburg, Hildesheim, Pisa, and Milan.[17] These bishops benefitted from the establishment of charterhouses within their ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and the Carthusian Order with its focus on the *vita contemplativa* was far less likely to produce public theological malcontents like the Spiritual Franciscans and *Fraticelli* or Dominicans like Meister Eckhart and Girolamo Savonarola. A significant number of these bishops thus endorsed the Order and fostered its growth; furthermore, they took advantage of the construction of new monasteries and erected tombs of their own in these Carthusian spaces, much like their secular counterparts among the nobility.

Western Europe in the fourteenth century also witnessed the foundation of numerous Carthusian charterhouses by secular princes, including the famous institutions of Champmol and the Certosa di Pavia. In fact, the number of nobility largely outnumbers the number of clerics who patronized the Order. Under secular patronage, particularly prominent charterhouses often included accommodation for 24 choir monks, twice the usual number. In addition to erecting monumental tombs for themselves and their dynasties, kings, princes, and dukes also lavished their Carthusian foundations with stunning works of art and Carthusian spaces came to be known for their famous masterpieces, such as Claus Sluter's *Well of Moses* at Champmol and

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[17] I have complied a table of the major Carthusian foundations undertaken over the course of the fourteenth century, from which I have pulled this list of notable examples. To see the full table, which lists further examples of only slightly lesser import, please refer to the Appendix beginning on page 48.

Enguerrand Quarton's *Coronation of the Virgin* at Villeneuve itself nearly a century after Innocent VI's death. The accumulation of such opulence certainly clashed with the spiritual simplicity enjoined upon the monks, and the transformation of the Champmol into a small-scale pilgrimage destination led to conflicts between the monks and their Burgundian patrons over concerns that the quiet, eremitic nature of the monastery was being overrun by noisy, worldly laypersons.[18] Innocent's foundation at Villeneuve did not suffer the same fate during its founder's lifetime; however, in the centuries following, the Chartreuse of Val-de-Bénédiction grew to become one of the richest charterhouses in France, and it, too, admitted large numbers of visitors.[19] Nevertheless, despite encroachments into the silence of the charterhouse, the Carthusians recognized the benefits that wealthy patronage entailed and continued to serve the intercessory needs of western Europe's élites.

Notable foundations predating Innocent's election include the Austrian Dukes Frederick and Albert II's charterhouses at Mauerbach and Gaming, respectively; the Certosa di San Martino in Naples by Charles, Duke of Calabria; the Certosa del Galluzzo by Niccolo Acciaioli, Count of Melfi and Grand Seneschal to Queen Joanna of Naples, outside Florence; and the Kartause Mariengarten outside Prague by John the Blind, King of Bohemia.[20] All of these monasteries were set up with the expectation that they would serve as dynastic burial grounds for their patrons' families. As mentioned in the case of St. Hugh of Lincoln, secular princes sometimes also founded monasteries as a form of penance for particularly grievous crimes, as attested by Henry II in the twelfth century and Charles, Count of Valois in the fourteenth.

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[18] Lindquist, Sherry C. M. *Agency, Visuality, and Society at the Chartreuse de Champmol*. London: Routledge, 2008. 190-205.

[19] The popularity of the charterhouse is attested by the additional of the St.-Jean cloister and its striking fountain, the *Cour des Femmes* for female visitors—they were not allowed beyond this courtyard—and more monastic cells that almost doubled the original number. For more on these later additions, see Sonnier, Jean. "La Chartreuse de Vale de Bénédiction a Villeneuve-lès-Avignon," *Congrès archéologique de France* 121, 1963.

[20] Again, *cf* the Appendix for additional examples.

Themes of guilt and repentance resonated and united with the Purgatorial nature of these foundation's beginnings as sepulchral sites, as patrons expected the richly-endowed monks to pray for their souls after death.

King Philip VI of France stands out as the most important example of these secular precedents for the foundation of Val-de-Bénédiction. Innocent had once served as his personal advisor while still a cardinal, and Philip involved himself with the patronage of not one but two notable Carthusian monasteries throughout the period during which Innocent worked at his court.[21] The Valois king emulated his saintly Capetian predecessor Louis IX by bringing to completion the construction begun by Louis at Vauvert, the charterhouse located in Paris. Furthermore, Philip oversaw the work begun by his father, the aforementioned Count of Valois, on the Carthusian monastery of Bourgfontaine, north of the royal capital. Philip lavishly endowed both of these monasteries and even requested that the monastery receive his heart for burial after his death, which the monks enacted when the event came to pass in 1350.

Royal patronage at Vauvert and Bourgfontaine also consisted of papal involvement in several aspects. Charles of Valois and Philip both had to seek permission from Popes Clement V and Clement VI to have their bodies divided after their death, including the burial of Philip's heart at Bourgfontaine. In addition, Pope Innocent's predecessor John XXII granted Bourgfontaine special privileges at the monks' request, including freedom from local episcopal control, the grant of direct papal protection, exemptions from mandatory council attendance and the paying of certain tithes. According to Bonde and Maines, all of these privileges had already been granted by previous popes to other Carthusian houses. Innocent VI would have assumed the

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[21] Bonde, S. and Maines, Clark, "The Heart of the Matter: Valois Patronage of the Charterhouse at Bourgfontaine" (2013). *Faculty Scholarship* 21. The remainder of this paragraph and the whole of the next one derives primarily from this article.

duties of papal protection for Bourgfontaine and these other charterhouses upon becoming pope, and his earlier friendship and working relation with Philip and the zeal with which he ensured the completion of these monasteries guarantees that Innocent was aware of the precedents set by the French king. Thus, when Pope Innocent established the Carthusians at Villeneuve, he was operating within the context of a popular surge in the foundation of charterhouses by both secular and religious leaders. He had familial ties of patronage to the charterhouse in Glandier, and he had served under a king who assiduously supported two prominent Carthusian foundations. After his election, Innocent became both the spiritual head of the Church and the temporal head of the Papal States. As an ecclesiastic he generally avoided nepotism, but nevertheless his "dynasty" consisted of his two cardinal-nephews, one of whom continued to expand the monastery after his uncle's death and both of whom would eventually be buried alongside their uncle in Villeneuve.[22]

Although Innocent became pope in 1352, it was not until June 2, 1356 that he published a papal bull officially establishing a charterhouse on the site of his cardinal-*livrée*.[23] In order to ensure adequate accommodation for the individual cells necessary for the monks and their expansive, cemeterial cloister, Innocent had worked through the intermediary of his cardinal-nephew Ardouin Aubert to purchase plots of land bordering the palace. Structures already extant at the time that would be repurposed for monastic life included the grand tinel, or banqueting hall, and Innocent's personal chapel, which Matteo Giovanetti would later fresco with scenes from the Life of Saint John the Baptist. The monastery as outlined in this bull consisted of a prior, twelve conventual monks, two "*infermiers*," two oblates, fourteen *conversi*, and nine

[22] Mullins, Edwin B. *The Popes of Avignon: A Century in Exile*. New York: BlueBridge, 2008. 167.
[23] *Origine et esquisse topographique de la Chartreuse de Villeneuve-lez-Avignon (Gard)*. Avignon: Bonnet, 1868. 12-13. This work provides the majority of the information presented in this paragraph as well as the following one.

servants, all of whom occupied the renovated structure of Innocent's former palace. The charterhouse received benefices sufficient for its upkeep and was permitted to augment or diminish the number of monks according to the prosperity of its revenues. The foundation bull also specified the name of the monastery as "St. John the Baptist," indicating its special connection to the saint from its earliest days; the name would only change to "*Val(lée)-de-Bénédiction*" in 1362 with the promulgation of a second bull by Innocent at the request of the prior and the chapter of the order assembled at the Grande Chartreuse.

The construction of the monastery occupied a large part of Innocent's pontificate, and the consecration of the main church did not occur until August 19th, 1358. Cardinal Guy de Boulogne celebrated the Mass with the pope in attendance alongside dozens of cardinals, a number of chaplains and prelates, and a large crowd of knights and nobles. Despite the completion of the space, Innocent did not formally charge the prior with the construction of the chapel that would later house his tomb until October 1360, almost two years before his death at age 80. Dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the chapel now contains a Gothic catafalque similar to the one erected for John XXII in the cathedral of Notre-Dame-des-Doms across the river in Avignon (Fig. 2).

Because of the proximity of rocky Mount Andaon to the town and the fact that Innocent founded the monastery within the pre-existing structural fabric of his *livrée*, the Villeneuve charterhouse differed markedly from the "standard" layout followed at many other sites. Scholars often turn to the charterhouse at Clermont as an example of the standard plan—in part because of its illustration by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc—and its regularity (Fig. 3). The Chartreuse Clermont follows a broadly rectilinear plan oriented east-to-west; sixteen cells surround a large rectangular cloister located behind the monastery's main church, with the various spaces for the

refectory, kitchens, workshops, and other work-related areas clustered around the church to the north, south, and west. Compared to Clermont, the charterhouse at Villeneuve immediately stands out for its unique footprint and irregular orientation (Fig. 4).[24] The longer, trapezoidal Cloister of the Dead ringed by twelve cells lies along a north-northeast axis that does not align with Villeneuve's orthogonal streets save for the *Chemin des chartreaux*. A small chapel stands at the southwest corner of this cloister, directly across from the larger chapel of St. John the Baptist. Connected to the St. John chapel, the great-hall-turned-refectory abuts the Church Cloister to the southeast, the entrance to the church to the south, and the remains of Étienne Aubert's apartments to the west. Unlike at Clermont, the additional spaces where the lay brothers and servants worked occupy various scattered locations around the monastery, including the northeast corner beyond the monastic cells; the mill, located to the north near the *Rue porte rouge*; the bakery directly northwest of the chapel of St. John the Baptist; and the chapterhouse hall to the east of the Church Cloister. Later additions greatly expanded the monastery's footprint and included the construction of the Cloister of St. John and its additional monastic cells, as well as the Women's Court, its monumental gateway, and the nearby pharmacy.[25]

The unique history and layout of the Villeneuve Charterhouse therefore represent a willingness to adapt the Carthusian standards to the particular environment and the importance of the patron in shaping the architectural fabric of the monastery at its foundation. By incorporating and transforming the chapel of St. John the Baptist and the great hall already constructed for his *livrée* into new, monastic spaces, Pope Innocent directly affected the way in which the monks

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[24] Once again, comparisons to the later foundations at Champmol and Pavia shed further light on the typical layout of a Carthusian monastery and highlight the unique nature of the foundation at Villeneuve.
[25] Sonnier, 163-167.

would experience and interact with their setting. The only thing that remained for him to do with these spaces was to have them suitably decorated for their new monastic inhabitants.

## II. A Formal Analysis of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist

As I have emphasized already, the frescoes executed by Giovanetti in the Chartreuse Notre-Dame Val-du-Benediction have not received extensive scholarly attention. As the primary painter to the popes for over twenty-five years, Giovanetti occupies an important, yet understudied, place in the history of late Medieval art. Centuries of neglect and poor maintenance have led to significant losses in pigment and plaster, but enough remains for the viewer to work around the lacunae and get a sense of the original scope of Giovanetti's work. Here, small elements of asymmetry enliven an otherwise regular chapel that must have awed visitors in its small, jewel-box-like effect (Fig. 5). Because of its relatively small size and the simplicity of the narrative on display, the St. John the Baptist cycle in the charterhouse does not include letters to guide the viewer through the various scenes from the life of the saint, unlike the Saint Martial Chapel in the Avignonese Palace of the Popes.[26] However, Latin texts run across the spaces between the upper and lower narrative registers, presumably commenting on the scenes on display to the Carthusian or papal viewer. Were these texts in better condition and more legible, I would include them in my analysis of the fresco cycle; however, their poor condition leaves me to consider only the painted images and their orientation within the chapel. Starting with the simple figures decorating the ceiling and the northern walls, I will procede to the more enigmatic non-narrative scenes and then finish with the Life of the Baptist.

Unlike the chapels of Saint Martial and Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist in the Palace of the Popes, the Saint John the Baptist chapel in the Villeneuve Charterhouse does

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[26] Luyster, Amanda. "Christ's golden voice: the chapels of St. Martial and St. John in the Palace of the Popes, Avignon." *Word & Image* 27, no. 3 (2011): 334-346. Luyster details how Giovanetti had to add golden letters to the chapel of St. Martial in order for his viewers to understand the order in which the scenes must be read. The greater simplicity and familiarity of the scenes from the Life of John the Baptist in Villeneuve suggests that such a measure was not necessary.

not include narrative scenes embedded in the framework of the ceiling's rib vaulting. Rather, Giovanetti painted a host of angels with superficial similarity to the Old Testament Prophets that he had painted in the starry vaults of the Papal Palace's audience hall in Avignon (Fig. 6). Like these prophets, the Carthusian angels stand in statuesque and static poses, perched on individual banks of clouds, and interact minimally with each other (Fig. 7). The Carthusian proscription against gold and silver ornamentation within the charterhouse likely precluded Giovanetti from surrounding his angels with golden stars as he had with the Avignonese prophets. Nevertheless, the placement of these angels in the vaults overhead succeed in communicating the standard Medieval conflation of the ecclesiastical ceiling with the "dome of heaven."

The spandrels of the walls below once contained the Four Evangelists, though now the only major fragment survives on the northeast wall (Fig. 8). Pieces on the East and West walls indicate that an Evangelist originally occupied each section. Assuming a symmetrical arrangement, another Evangelist would have occupied the spandrel of the northwest wall. None of the plaster survives in the north lunette, creating a minor problem of identifying whether an additional fifth figure occupied this space, or whether Giovanetti left it blank. The surviving fragments show that Giovanetti arranged the Evangelists seated on additional banks of clouds in accordance with the constraints of the pictorial space, one of the hallmarks of his style.[27]

The Twelve Apostles flank the windows of the northeast, north, and northwest walls, each holding a scroll and, where possible, an iconographic identifier of their martyrdom (Fig. 8). For example, St. James the Greater stands in the upper-right of the northeast wall with a scallop shell emblazoned on his pilgrim's staff. St. Paul occupies the same space on the northern wall,

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[27] Giovanetti's clouds appear repeatedly in his surviving works as a clear indicator that the figures upon which they stand should be understood as occupying the heavenly realm. Compare the Old Testament Prophets in the Audience Hall and various other angels in the St. Martial and Sts. John chapel in the Palace of the Popes.

holding the sword symbolizing his martyrdom. The Apostle directly beneath Paul holds only a scroll, on which the lettering has faded considerably, making his identification far more difficult. Some figures, such as the one opposite St. Paul on the north wall, have disappeared entirely, leaving only a conjectural identification based on broad iconographic traditions: as the personal chapel of the pope, one may reasonably assume that St. Peter occupied St. Paul's complementary register as the co-patron of Rome. Concurrently, the Twelve Apostles may also parallel the twelve choir monks provided for by the monastery.

Giovanetti's distinctive style, drawing as it does from the influence of Giotto and the Roman school's tendency towards monumental form inspired by Classical examples, combined with his complex sense of space and use of the architectural aspects of the pictorial field, allows these individual figures to exert a strong presence in the chapel. They function much as statues would, observing the space and bringing the viewer into their divine realm during the liturgy.

Below the north wall, Giovanetti frescoed a powerfully simple depiction of the Crucifixion of Christ that, despite lacking some of the spectacular elements of its counterpart in the Sts. John chapel in the Palace of the Popes, nevertheless succeeds in communicating the profound sorrow of the event (Fig. 9). Smaller than the apostles and angels above, the persons appear to float atop a simple ochre-hued ground with a dark sky looming behind them. Jesus hangs from a thin cross, arms outstretched, and knees bent to his right. A thin cloth barely conceals him from the waist, and his legs fit together awkwardly due to the position of his feet, one on top of the other. The crossbar for the sign showing "INRI" is present, but the sign itself is not. Four saints flank the cross, two on either side. From left to right appear St. John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Beloved Disciple, and an unrecognizable bishop saint. Each reacts to the tragedy before them with restraint: the Baptist gestures to the cross while pulling his cloak

around himself; Mary folds her hands in resignation, head bowed in sorrow; the Beloved Disciple wrings his hands, shoulders hunched, grief etched upon his face; and the bishop saint, unfortunately marred by a large loss of plaster, likely mirrored the Baptist in pointing to Christ with his left hand while holding his crozier in his right. Here, as in the rest of the chapel, significant parts of the original composition have degraded, and some of the surviving underdrawing shows how quickly Giovanetti must have executed the fresco.

The choice of saints depicted is somewhat unusual and requires explanation to make sense. The distinctly Carthusian nature of the scene helps to elucidate the program. As with the lack of golden stars above, so too do the haloes of the four saints appear to have lacked gold ornamentation in keeping with the monks' aversion to ostentatious shows of wealth. Again beginning from the left, John the Baptist, though not present at the Crucifixion, understandably appears because Innocent VI dedicated the chapel to him, and as one of the patrons of the Carthusian Order he could effectively intercede for the Carthusian viewer. The Virgin Mary canonically appears at the cross in the Gospel of John, as does the Beloved Disciple, indicating that Giovanetti likely chose to base his depiction on John's account. The Carthusians also claimed Mary as their primary patron saint, dedicating all of their churches and charterhouses to her, again reiterating the Carthusian nature of the scene. A possible interpretation for the fourth and final saint, the unidentified bishop, may identify him as Hugh of Châteauneuf, Bishop of Grenoble, the cleric who helped to establish the Carthusians in the Alpine mountains near his see. The figure cannot represent Bruno of Cologne, founder of the Order, as he had refused the episcopal office in the hopes of maintaining his eremitical lifestyle; nor can it represent any of his companions with whom he established the Carthusians, as they consisted of an assortment of three canons, a chaplain, and two lay brothers. Furthermore, Hugh's episcopal status and support

of the fledgling Order find a ready parallel in the figure of Innocent VI, himself bishop of both Rome and Avignon and the patron of the newly-founded Villeneuve Charterhouse.

Unlike Giovanetti's other scenes and the individual apostles, the Crucifixion lacks a strong sense of depth. Perhaps this effect served to place the emphasis on what happened directly in front of the image, rather than the image itself—for it was before this scene that the priest celebrating the Mass in the chapel would elevate the Host at the consecration. Thus, the Crucifixion becomes, in effect, a non-narrative scene in its ahistorical disjunction and greater stylistic abstraction.

Directly to the right of the Crucifixion, beneath the Apostles on the northeast wall, Giovanetti executed another unusually simple image: an enthroned Madonna and Child, venerated presumably by Innocent VI himself (Fig. 10). On the shallow throne, Mary holds a standing Christ Child on her lap—both figures nimbed by white-and-yellow haloes rather than gold ones—while pointing to the pope in front of her with her right hand. Jesus mimics her gesture with his own right arm, but in his left hand he holds an unrolled scroll or slip of paper indicating speech, similar to the apostles above and numerous other figures throughout Giovanetti's œuvre.[28] Mary's deep blue gown cascades down the throne and over her feet, coming to rest in front of Innocent's three-tiered papal tiara. This gesture of humility carries over to Innocent, who kneels in a standard profile donor pose before the Madonna and Child. Unlike a typical donor portrait, however, he has been shown in the same almost life-size scale as Mary and Jesus. Unfortunately, another large lacuna in the fresco prevents the viewer from seeing Innocent's face, and any similarity with the sculpted *gisant* of his tomb remains uncertain. The

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[28] For a thorough analysis of this phenomenon in Giovanetti's works, see Luyster, Amanda. "Christ's golden voice: the chapels of St. Martial and St. John in the Palace of the Popes, Avignon." *Word & Image* 27, no. 3 (2011): 334-346.

pope's sumptuous embroidered cope flows and pools on the floor like Mary's mantle, but with Innocent the fabric highlights the surface on which he kneels. Unlike the predominantly two-dimensional Crucifixion to this scene's left, Giovanetti has here displayed the fullness of his spatial awareness and composition. Innocent kneels upon a painted ledge, a continuation of the solid ground under Mary's throne, but now cantilevered out into the viewer's space and supported by painted brackets, which naturalistically conceals the faux marble panels beneath. Painted curtains frame the scene, further emphasizing the three-dimensionality of the image. Giovanetti consequently establishes a complex interplay between image and viewer. The curtains offer an intimate glimpse into the pope's private devotion to mother and child, while the artificial ledge breaks the picture plane to place its occupant alongside the viewer. Such an interest in dimension and depth appears throughout Giovanetti's various works in the Palace of the Popes and particularly in the scenes from the life of John the Baptist within the same chapel.

A doorway leading to the Cloister of the Dead interrupts the lower register of the chapel's east wall. Here, Giovanetti painted three saints, each dressed in a dalmatic and holding various iconographic attributes that identify them as deacons, the first of the three ranks of sacerdotal ordination in the Medieval Catholic Church (Fig. 11). Few saints during the Middle Ages were explicitly depicted as deacons, as the role of the deacon gradually declined in prominence in the Western Church.[29] Of the figures, the one standing to the right is easiest to identify, holding aloft a simple grill. He must be Saint Lawrence, whom the Roman Emperor Valerian had roasted alive in the mid-third century. Already the central figure becomes harder to identify, but given the relative paucity of saints both recorded as deacons and typically depicted as such, the field of candidates from which to choose narrows. If the object held in his hands reads as a stone, then

[29] For example, St. Francis of Assisi, although he remained a deacon and never advanced to the level of priest, was never depicted in the characteristic dalmatic that marked his ecclesiastical office.

this is likely St. Stephen, deacon and protomartyr of the faith. Further support for this interpretation comes from the fact that, prior to his election to the papacy, Innocent VI's name was Étienne Aubert. Stephen's centrality emphasizes his importance among the three figures, making it likely that Innocent requested that Giovanetti emphasize his patron and namesake.

The leftmost deacon remains the most mysterious of the three, due to a combination of the fresco's poor state of preservation and the vague nature of the saint's iconographical attribute. He holds what appears to be a small palm branch, symbolizing martyrdom. Castelnuovo identifies this deacon as St. Vincent of Saragossa, the Protomartyr of Spain who was killed in the early 4th century, not long after Saint Lawrence. He lacks Vincent's usual, later iconographical attributes, however, which normally include a St. Andrew's cross and/or a rope around his neck tied to a millstone. Still, the paucity of other deacon saints makes this identification likely.

The question now becomes: why these saints? Innocent must have specified that they appear in the chapel with the intent of emphasizing their shared status as deacons and martyrs of the early Church. Both of these qualities would have resonated with the pious monastic community in the charterhouse. An additional reason for their inclusion stems from both of these aspects and their similarity with the ministry of John the Baptist. Deacons functioned as the ordinary ministers of the Word in the context of the Medieval liturgy—that is, they proclaimed the Gospel—and the Carthusian liturgy in particular prescribed that the deacon preside over the preparation of the gifts prior to the consecration.[30] Mentioned among the martyrs in the Litany of Saints, Stephen, Lawrence, and Vincent held places of high honor within the context of the

[30] Maria, 14. Chapter 4, Section 27 details the Eucharistic part of the celebration of the Carthusian liturgy.

Catholic Mass.[31] They all suffered under the persecutions of the Roman emperors like Valerian and Diocletian, much as how John the Baptist was martyred by the secular authority of Herod Antipas. Just as the deacon in the liturgy and, implicitly, these deacon martyrs proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, so too did John the Baptist, described as a "voice crying out in the wilderness," bring the good news of Jesus' salvific mission. Thus, in their ministry, these deacon saints followed the example given by the Baptist, thereby reinforcing these themes for the audience of Carthusian monks who would have seen their images when passing from the chapel into the eremitical cloister beyond.

The standalone papal saint found to the upper-left of the doorway also eludes easy identification (Fig. 12). The words originally shown on his unfurled scroll have faded and cannot link him with any elucidating texts, and aside from the scroll, the figure lacks iconographic attributes. He does, however, bear a halo, indicating his status as a saint, thereby eliminating the possibility of his representing Innocent VI again. Three candidates emerge: perhaps this figure represents Urban II, who, despite only receiving beatification in 1881, appears in Catholic Martyrologies shortly after his death in 1099. Urban had held the papacy when St. Bruno first founded the Carthusians, and prior to his election as pope he studied under Bruno. Taken in combination with the representation of Hugh of Grenoble, shown in the Crucifixion in the same chapel, and with Bruno of Cologne, important enough to receive his own chapel in the monastery church, Urban would complete a trifecta of saints associated with the founding of the Carthusian order. Urban famously called the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in southern France in 1095, providing an additional link between himself and Innocent VI, who harbored ambitions to

[31] The Litany groups Stephen, Lawrence, and Vincent together; the *Communicantes* and *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* sections of the Roman canon include both Stephen and Lawrence, though not in the same spot, and omit any mention of Vincent. I believe, for the reasons expounded above, that the three saints were visually placed in relation to one another and only loosely reference the texts cited.

call another Crusade and to attempt a reunion between the Eastern and Western Churches. Thus, Urban's inclusion may have been chosen to further cement the particular Carthusian nature of the chapel space and to provide an additional patron saint corresponding to Innocent in a manner similar to the three deacon saints. If, however, the saint represents one of Innocent VI's predecessors of the same name, he may represent either Innocent I or Innocent V, both of whom are recognized currently as saints by the Catholic Church; the former reigned during the early fifth century, and the latter briefly occupied the throne of St. Peter in 1276. Given the lack of documentation on the chapel's program and the lack of strong cults around these saints, I hesitate to assign definitively an identification to either of them.

We may now turn our attention to the most prominent—and indeed, the most impressive—of Matteo Giovanetti's frescoes executed in the Villeneuve Charterhouse for Innocent VI. On the east and west walls of the chapel appear two self-contained cycles depicting scenes from the life of Saint John the Baptist. Although I would normally begin by starting with the leftmost images and describing them left-to-right, the earliest part of the cycle, the *Annunciation to Zechariah*, and the rest of the Baptist's infancy appears on the eastern wall to the right, and thus I shall begin there.

Divided into four nearly equal quadrants and pierced by a window, the east wall contains four scenes related to the birth of John the Baptist (Fig. 13). The narrative begins in the upper left, where the angel Gabriel appears in a vision to Zechariah as he performs his duties as priest in the Jewish Temple (Fig. 14). Zechariah stands with his back to the picture plane gesturing towards the angel, separated from him by the Temple altar. Gabriel in turn points to Zechariah and holds a scroll containing the Latin text of his greeting as recorded by the Gospel of Luke:

> Ne timeas, Zacharia, quoniam exaudita est deprecatio tua: et uxor tua Elisabeth pariet tibi filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Joannem: et erit gaudium tibi, et exsultatio, et multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt: erit enim magnus coram Domino: et vinum et siceram non bibet, et Spiritu Sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suæ: et multos filiorum Israël convertet ad Dominum Deum ipsorum: et ipse præcedet ante illum in spiritu et virtute Eliæ: ut convertat corda patrum in filios, et incredulos ad prudentiam justorum, parare Domino plebem perfectam.[32]

As in the chapels at the Palace of the Popes, Giovanetti made use of the window frame to extend his pictorial compositions and to endow them with a greater sense of depth and space. Here, he places a small crowd of figures just outside the space occupied by Zechariah and Gabriel, looking in towards the discussion, but not a part of it. The *Visitation* in the opposite frame across the window continues the play with space, as a group of women, likely members of Zechariah's household, stand with their backs to the viewer on the left of the composition (Fig. 15). In the middle foreground, Saint Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary move to embrace each other, while in the background, distanced by the architectural columns and frame of a great house, Zechariah stands with another male figure. Several additional background figures stand behind Mary, one curiously garbed like contemporary depictions of Saracens or Moors.

The story continues with the Birth of the Baptist in the lower-left quadrant (Fig. 16). Here the degradation of the fresco has created several lacunae in the image, but none are so great as to

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[32] "Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John: And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his nativity. For he shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink: and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias; that he may turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare unto the Lord a perfect people." (Luke 1:13-17 DRA 1899) The angel's scroll cannot have included the entirety of this passage, but the text which appears beneath the scene—which I do not address at length because of its poor condition as with the other examples of text throughout the chapel—may have contained the remainder.

ruin the scene. In the middle of the picture, the Virgin converses with another woman dressed in green, awkwardly turned from the viewer, while Mary gestures to the bedroom in the background. There, two handmaidens attend to Saint Elizabeth resting in bed, now mostly lost to time. Below them sits another handmaid with the infant John in her arms, a large washbasin and what may be understood as a cushion lying at her feet. John's baby face has also disappeared thanks to degradation, diminishing the tenderness with which the servant strokes his cheek. The reddish lines cutting through the woman's seated form and outlining features such as Elizabeth's bed and the ceiling beams testify to the careful planning that Giovanetti undertook to create the impressive sense of depth and recession in this scene and the others.

The *Naming of the Baptist* concludes the early part of the Biblical account of John's Nativity in the lower-right section (Fig. 17). Giovanetti has divided the scene into two distinct parts using the architecture of the imagined setting to do so. On the left, Elizabeth brings John to a pedestal flanked by two men, a crowd of women standing behind her. This likely represents the saint's circumcision as a young Jewish male. To the right, a seated Zechariah, his voice not yet restored, writes on a scroll that his son's name is John. The inquiring men standing around him and gesture amongst themselves, much like the women behind them. Damage to the fresco behind the leftmost man prevents the viewer today from seeing what clever extension of the scene Giovanetti may have conjured up in the space between wall and window, but aside from this the fresco remains in overall good condition.

The western wall differs markedly from its eastern counterpart in several aspects (Fig. 18). First, the condition of the frescoes has, unfortunately, degraded far more significantly, leading to the loss of the upper lunette region, the top two-thirds of the left and right narrative scenes, and the bottom half of the lower-right scene (Fig. 19). Second, the narrative shifts to the

later life and eventual martyrdom of John the Baptist, culminating in the burial of his body by his followers. The middle part of his life, which Medieval hagiographies described with vivid detail, has been omitted. Third, Giovanetti's clever use of window embrasures receives a further emphasis in the replacement of the window panes with more wall space made available for the fresco (Fig. 20). Both the complexity of the scenes shown and the prominence with which this wall was viewed, as I will discuss later, must have necessitated the additional surface area.

Once more the cycle begins in the upper-left section, now almost completely lost save for the bottom strip, which shows a riverbank flush with fish and cattails (Fig. 19). The river flows into the window inset, where a figure sits above the water, perhaps on a rock or other sort of outcropping. His face has unfortunately faded, leaving his identification a mystery. A large red circle seems to be tucked under his arm. Scholar Margaret Plant recognizes this and the complementary scene to the right as *Miracles of Christ*, scenes from Christ's ministry after Herod had already imprisoned John the Baptist.[33] I defer to her judgment here, though I suspect that the original frescoes may have fixed on John the Baptist and consequently shown his own preaching and baptizing at the Jordan rather than that of Jesus. The counterpart to these scenes in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in the Palace of the Popes in Avignon clearly show John the Baptist preaching to a crowd by the river Jordan, dressed in his camel-hair shirt and red cloak (Fig. 21). The overwhelming similarities between the

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[33] Plant, Margaret. *Fresco Painting in Avignon and Northern Italy: A Study of Some Fourteenth Century Cycles of Saints' Lives Outside Tuscany*. University of Melbourne: Melbourne, 1981. 84-85. Plant connects these scenes to the Gospel of Matthew's account of the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Plant claims that the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voraigne and the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* by pseudo-Bonaventure form the primary source for Giovanetti's depiction of the life of the Baptist. As I demonstrate elsewhere in this thesis, I strongly agree with the cycle's debt to the *Golden Legend*, but I am less certain about the *Meditations*, leading me to question Plant's assumption that these scenes originally depicted Christ's miracles, rather than the Baptist's preaching ministry at the Jordan river. The overwhelming focus of the rest of the scenes on the east and west walls focus on the Baptist, rather than Christ, and the dedication of the chapel to John indicates to me that Giovanetti would have arranged the compositions accordingly.

compositions suggests that Giovanetti repeated the imagery when he painted the Villeneuve chapel some years later.

All that remains the lower-left quadrant consists of the ceiling of the *Banquet of Herod*, once more exhibiting Giovanetti's exquisite rendering of architectural design in conjunction with the window embrasure (Fig. 19). To understand what the original composition looked like, we may compare the surviving fresco from the *Banquet of Herod* in the Sts. John chapel in the Avignonese Palace of the Popes (Fig. 22). If Giovanetti repeated himself at Villeneuve, as the framing of the scene would suggest, then one may surmise that the original composition consists of several men seated behind a long table, talking amongst themselves, while the young Salome stands or dances in the foreground with a dog at her feet. A servant to the right enters with the head of the Baptist on a platter, offered to the man seated to the far right. Herod presumably occupies the central seat at the table, and he appears more preoccupied with the man talking to him on the left than with Salome or the gift-laden servant. Returning to the surviving fresco at Villeneuve, we see that to the right, a man enters through the pointed doorway, drawing the eye to the two standing figures of Salome and Herodias. Both women hold on to the platter bearing the severed head of the Baptist between them. The actual beheading of the saint appears in the panel directly to the right, where a bearded man stands with a sword over the body of the Baptist, which appears protruding from an open doorway behind, the head also present at his feet.

Last of all appears the burial of the saint's headless body in the lower-right quadrant (Fig. 23). In order to maintain the natural setting, Giovanetti has refrained from including an architectural frame; rather, he employed an unusual sort of earthen archway, under which stands a robed figure with its back to the viewer, face indiscernible. The focus of the scene revolves around the deposition of John's headless body into a shallow tomb decorated with marble slabs

reminiscent of the faux marble panels painted by Giovanetti in the registers beneath the chapel's figurative frescoes. The background consists of a lush landscape filled with various trees and shrubs, recalling the lavish decoration of the *Chambre du Cerf* in the private apartments of the Palace of the Popes that Giovanetti either executed personally or at least oversaw. Medieval depictions of the burial of John the Baptist were relatively rare, making Giovanetti's example here an unusual occurrence and one lacking in immediate precedent. The closest example, as noted by Castelnuovo, may be a set of frescoes executed by the Roman School of artists in the cathedral of Beziers that depicts scenes from the life of Saint Stephen, including his inhumation (Fig. 24).[34] Like this anonymous Roman painter, Giovanetti's style communicates a strong sense of monumentality and a visual effect that makes his figures appear almost sculptural.[35]

These various scenes from the life of the Baptist also employ a highly illusionistic rendering of space, such as may be found in works by other members of the Sienese school with whom Giovanetti often receives inclusion. Simone Martini's Scenes from the Life of Saint Martin in the Lower Basilica of Assisi, painted in c. 1328, contain various architectural framing devices similar to Giovanetti's. The Lorenzetti brothers' *Nativity of the Virgin* and the *Presentation in the Temple*, originally painted in the 1340s for two altars in the cathedral of Siena, similarly illustrate spatial boxes of surprising complexity. Thus, Giovanetti's style, especially in its incarnation at Villeneuve, combines the monumentality of earlier Roman artists

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[34] Castelnuovo, Enrico. *Un Pittore alla corte di Avignone: Matteo Giovanetti e la pittura in Provenza nel secolo XIV*. Torino: Einaudi, 1962. 15. Castelnuovo mentions the frescoes at Beziers as a precedent for Giovanetti as the work of Italian—and particularly, Roman—artists being called up to southern France to execute works for high-ranking ecclesiastics; in this case, the anonymous painter was evidently patronized by Cardinal Bérenger Frédol, the bishop of the city.

[35] For more on Giovanetti's other works and specifics related to his life, which I cannot delve too deeply into in this thesis, see Castelnuovo's highly informative biography on the artist.

with the spatial innovations of the Sienese artists he appears to have studied alongside either before or during his stay in Avignon.[36]

With a formal and stylistic analysis of the scenes complete, we may now address the question of why this chapel, previously used only by Innocent VI as a cardinal, contains a cycle dedicated to John the Baptist and not to a saint more relevant to the pope. The reason almost certainly stems from the particular relationship the Carthusian Order had with the Baptist. Tradition holds that St. Bruno established his first hermitage in the mountains on June 24th, the feast of the Nativity of St. John, thus providing the new community with a particularly prominent patron saint. This dedication was later reinforced with the dedication of the Church of the Grande Chartreuse by Hugh of Grenoble to the Virgin Mary and to Saint John the Baptist equally. Consequently, every daughter charterhouse was dedicated to both the Blessed Virgin and to the Baptist, a fact confirmed by the standard profession of faith by novices entering the order as recorded in Guigo I's *Consuetudines*:

> I, Brother [Name], promise stability, obedience, and conversion of my life, before God, his saints, and the relics belonging to this hermitage, which was built in honour of God, the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, and Saint John the Baptist, in the presence of Dom [Name], Prior.[37]

Carthusian spirituality held the Baptist in high esteem for the eremitical life he led in the desert before prophesying the coming of Jesus. John's Medieval hagiography describes how he left his parents as a youth and spent his days fasting, surviving on locusts and wild honey, and silently

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[36] For an overview of the artistic environment of Avignon up to the pontificate of Urban V (1362-1370) and more on the possible influences on Giovanetti's style, see Tomei, Alessandro. *Roma, Napoli, Avignone: Arte Di Curia, Arte Di Corte: 1300-1377*. Torino: SEAT, 1996. 57-91.

[37] Maria, 38. The opening of Chapter 23; a nearly identical profession of faith was additionally recorded for the lay members of the Order in Chapter 74, with the added stipulation that a charterhouse could forcibly return a lay brother who left or ran away without permission.

serving God.[38] The *Consuetudines* also mention the feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist as one of the primary feast days of the Order, consisting of Sundays and other solemnities, for which the community gathered together to celebrate the Catholic Mass.

Castelnuovo appears to have been unaware that every charterhouse dedicated itself to both Mary and John the Baptist, and he takes the dedication of Innocent's chapel as evidence that Aubert had the chapel decorated with scenes from the Baptist's life while still a cardinal.[39] However, given the true nature of the dedication, I believe it far more reasonable to suspect that Giovanetti only executed the frescoes for the pope after his election in 1352, a position further supported by the fact that he no longer had to work on any commissions for the recently-deceased Clement VI. In addition, the fresco of Innocent kneeling before the Madonna and Child clearly shows him in the garb of a pope, with the triple-tiered tiara on the ground before him, suggesting that it—and likely the rest of the images present—would not have been executed until after Aubert became pope. The quality of images also calls into question the autograph hand of Giovanetti. Margaret Plant believes that Giovanetti's workshop may have executed a large portion of the images, and I am generally inclined to agree with her analysis.[40] Nevertheless, the chapel clearly evinces the work of a skilled master artist whose vision took into account his monastic audience when arranging the scenes.

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[38] Most importantly, the *Golden Legend* recounts this extrabiblical material under the feast day of the Nativity of the Baptist—see Jacobus, and Ryan, William Granger. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

[39] Castelnuovo, 123.

[40] Plant, 83. I speculate that, given the quick timeframe in which the chapel was executed, Giovanetti either passed most of the work on to his workshop and added the finishing touches, or he did most of the work himself in a hurried, less technically-impressive manner. In either case, his brilliance in using the architectural space to the full advantage of his illusionistic scheme is on full display—as evident from the now-visible sinopia guidelines—leading Castelnuovo to note the chapel as the pinnacle of Giovanetti's skill.

## III. The Carthusian Experience in the Chapel and the Monastery

In order to understand the unusual physical arrangement of the fresco cycle executed by Giovanetti, I turn to the scholar Marilyn Lavin and her work in categorizing Medieval narrative cycles spanning over one thousand years, from the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore to the frescoes adorning the Sistine Chapel.[41] In her work *The Place of Narrative*, Lavin examines the growth in popularity of the private chapel and its decoration with narrative cycles between the early and mid-fourteenth century. She specifically analyzes three examples pertinent to Innocent VI's chapel at Villeneuve: the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels by Giotto at Florence, the Saint Martin Chapel by Simone Martini at Assisi, and the St. Martial and St. John Chapels frescoed by Giovanetti for Clement VI in the Palace of the Popes.[42]

In her analysis of Medieval fresco cycles, Lavin has created a categorization system based on the arrangement of individual narrative registers within the church or chapel space. The organization of scenes in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels consist of two patterns later conflated by Giovanetti at Villeneuve: the "Linear Boustrophedon" and the "Straight-Line Vertical," both of which Lavin has discovered to have dominated Trecento narrative cycles. The subjects of the Bardi and Peruzzi chapels are the individual Life of St. Francis, arranged in the boustrophedon pattern that invites comparison with the saint's "peripatetic life," and the lives of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, laid out in vertical parallelism with the implication that the reader ought to view the corresponding registers in tandem. The St. Martin Chapel at Assisi evinces the far more complicated "Cat's Cradle" pattern, which Lavin argues has intimate ties to the liturgy enacted in the space. These three precedents set a general tone for Giovanetti's

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[41] Lavin, Marylin Aronberg. *The Place of Narrative: Mural Decoration in Italian Churches, 431-1600*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
[42] Ibid., 51-59, 84-88. The broad analyses of these chapels that I present here derives almost entirely from Lavin's work and overwhelmingly informs my own perspective on the chapel of St. John the Baptist at Villeneuve.

subsequent work, but Lavin's final analysis deals directly with his work in Avignon that anticipates his chapel at Villeneuve.

The chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in the Avignon palace employs two "boustrophedon" arrangements that move in opposite directions and which, therefore, function in much the same way as the earlier Peruzzi Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence. Perhaps Giovanetti sought to emphasize the wanderings of both St. Johns in their lives as Giotto seems to have in his Florentine frescoes. In addition, Giovanetti painted the scene of *St. John the Evangelist at the Porta Latina* "out of order," most likely in order to emphasize its parallel with the scene of the *Crucifixion of Christ* in the same chapel. He would later employ this same strategy—for a different purpose—in the depiction of St. John the Baptist's martyrdom in the Carthusian chapel across the river. The St. Martial chapel does not employ the "boustrophedon" pattern, but it does exhibit Giovanetti's keen awareness of how a complicated and unfamiliar narrative could become, in conjunction with his unique use of architectural elements to enhance the narrative, a confusing and twisting affair that required some method of clarification for the reader. Large, golden letters from A to U organize the narrative scenes in conjunction with the lengthy painted texts that accompany them.[43] Lavin characterizes the general schema as a "left-right Wraparound," and she, like Luyster, comments on Giovanetti's need to cue the reader by using elements that go beyond the formal qualities of the scenes and of the chapel's architecture.[44]

[43] Luyster, 334-346. Painted texts also originally appeared extensively in the chapel of St. John the Baptist in Villeneuve, but they have degraded to a far more fragmentary degree than the chapel in Avignon; for this reason, I have chosen to omit any analysis of the texts and have focused instead on the narrative images and the physical layout of the chapel.
[44] Lavin, 86.

The arrangement of the frescoes in the chapel of St. John the Baptist at the Val-de-Bénédiction also follows an unusual pattern that does not fit neatly into Lavin's schema (Fig. 25). The two distinct parts of the Baptist's life appear on opposite walls, inviting comparison between them and particularly between the arrangement of their narrative sequences. On the western wall, Giovanetti has painted the Beheading of the Baptist and the Presentation of his head "out of order," drawing the viewer's eye and causing a visual break in their reading of the scenes. If one were to read the images in the proper chronological sequence, they would read the Presentation and the Feast of Herod from right-to-left, combined with the Beheading and Entombment from left-to-right. The linear directions created by this reading points the viewer in two different ways, suggesting that the narrative does not flow neatly from one scene to another, thereby signaling a change in interpretation. Further support for this bifurcated message stems from the physical layout of the chapel and its relationship to the spaces surrounding it.

By the mid-fourteenth century, a longstanding tradition of orienting standalone churches towards the east had emerged and solidified. William Durandus of Mende, a late-thirteenth century bishop from Southern France, explains the significance of this orientation in his *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, a work concerning the symbolism of Christian churches, the liturgy, and their symbolism:

> A church should also be built as follows: that its head properly look towards the east […] namely, towards the rising point of the equinoctial sun, thus signifying that the Church, while battling in this world, should display moderation and equanimity, in both prosperity and adversity; it should not therefore face the rising point of the midsummer sun, as some do.[45]

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[45] Durand, William and Thibodeau, Timothy M. *The rationale divinorum officiorum of William Durand of Mende*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 14.

Thus, churches traditionally faced east in connection with the rising of the sun; elsewhere, Christian commentators linked the rising and setting of the sun with the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. Smaller chapels within the church could face in other directions, but the preference remained for at least the altars within the chapels to face in the same direction as the high altar in or near the apse.[46] At Villeneuve, the papal chapel has been oriented towards the north, continuing the axis established by the adjacent great hall. Perhaps, as the space constituted a standalone private chapel unconnected to a larger church, Innocent did not deem it necessary to have the chapel face east when he originally had it constructed as part of his palace complex. Furthermore, given the later charterhouse's reliance on the *livrée*'s pre-existing architectural plan, the chapel's new, practical function as a connection between the former Grand Tinel of Aubert's palace and the monks' cloister prevented the impractical contortion that an eastwards-facing renovation would entail.

This unusual orientation allowed Giovanetti to take advantage of the traditional liturgical symbolism in a unique way: just as churches had faced east for centuries because of the Christian association between the east, the rising sun, (re)birth, and Christ's Resurrection, Giovanetti could paint the eastern wall with scenes related to John the Baptist's own birth. The association of the rising and setting of the sun resonates with John the Baptist's primary feast day, June 24th, which commemorated his Nativity.[47] The Baptist's birth was an event seen as the fulfillment of the prophet's own words in parallel to Christ: "I decrease that he may increase."[48] Located within the calendar only a few days after the summer solstice, the Baptist's feast day also marked the

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[46] For precedents relevant to the Villeneuve chapel, see the floorplans of Santa Croce in Florence and the Palace of the Popes in Avignon.

[47] The *Golden Legend* elucidates this point: "According to Master William of Auxerre, John's birth or nativity is celebrated for three reasons. […] The second is the dignity of the office to which he was born, for he came as a bearer of light and was the first to announce eternal joy to us." For more on John's birth, see the *Golden Legend* ch. 86: The Birth of Saint John the Baptist.

[48] John 3:30.

onset of shorter and shorter days until the winter solstice and the Nativity, marking the return of light to the world as allegorically linked to Christ's own birth. As a consequence of the eastern wall's emphasis on life and the rising sun, the west carried more implicit but equally understood connotations of the setting sun, the mortal world, death, and martyrdom. It should come as no surprise, then, that the west wall of Innocent's chapel contains the ministry and beheading of John the Baptist. The educated Carthusian monk viewing the scene would have connected the separation of the Johannine narrative between the two walls with the two feast days and the cardinal directions associated with the events celebrated on those feasts.

The monastic viewer also likely interpreted the images on the western wall of the chapel in a more directly personal way, as evidenced by the space's proximity to the cemetery cloister and chapel of the dead lying beyond the eastern doorway. On the occasion of the death and burial of a monk, the Carthusian prior Guigo I records that the Carthusian community observed a greater degree of fellowship and ate together more frequently: "On the very day when the deceased is buried, the brothers are not obligated to remain in the cell, and, for consolation, they take the meal together twice, unless it is a Principal Fasting day."[49] Thus, the narrative connection between the *Feast of Herod* and the *Entombment of the Baptist* reinforced Carthusian practice within the monastery. As the monks left the Cloister of the Cemetery and proceeded to the refectory to eat together, they would pass through the chapel frescoed by Giovanetti with scenes from the life of their patron saint. Entering from the door to the east, they would have looked up and seen the ministry, martyrdom, and entombment of the Baptist, made all the more

[49] Maria, 27. In Chapter 6 of the *Consuetudines*, Guigo also states that "It should also be known that we do not make any processions for Solemnities, and that we do not conducting any transfers of Feasts or Vigils" (Maria 18). This further emphasizes the importance of the funeral procession in relation to the chapel of St. John the Baptist, as the monks did not regularly process through the space except in the contexts of burying their dead and eating together in the refectory, thereby cementing the association between the two activities within the chapel.

poignant if they had just come from burying a fellow brother or commemorating him in the *chapelle des morts* directly across from the space. As they turned left to process into the refectory, they would have also viewed the *Feast of Herod* fresco and been reminded of the meal they were about to partake—one which would contrast markedly from Herod's.

Where the *Entombment* would remind the Carthusian monks of their fellow brothers who had already died—or perhaps of their own sacrifices, which urged them to "die to themselves" in pursuit of their love and contemplation of God—the *Feast* preemptively admonished them as they prepared to eat together, serving as a Medieval *exemplum* of what not to do. The *Feast of Herod* as depicted by Giovanetti in the Palace of the Popes shows a scene that would have "sounded" incredibly noisy—the men at the tables all gesture amongst themselves; Salome receives John's head from her mother and also prepares to dance before the king; the servant enters with the Baptist's head on his platter to present before Herod; and two dogs run underfoot, implicitly barking at one another. This sort of meal did not reflect the sort shared by the Carthusian monks, who only gathered for food communally once a week—on Sundays—and who normally ate alone in the cells. At the Chartreuse Val-de-Bénédiction, this meal took place in the refectory located on the other side of the southern entrance to Innocent's chapel. This refectory would have changed little from its role as the *tinel*, or dining hall, of Innocent's *livrée* when he was a cardinal, although the sort of meals offered then would have had more in common with the *Feast of Herod* than with the simple Carthusian fare.

Giovanetti had executed an earlier set of scenes from *The Life of John the Baptist* in 1347 for the chapel of the titular saint in the Palace of the Popes in Avignon (Fig. 21). The overall composition provides the viewer with a good idea as to what the west wall of Innocent's chapel once looked like, showing the *Baptism of Christ*, the *Ministry of John the Baptist*, the *Feast of*

*Herod*, and the *Beheading of the Baptist* in four distinct zones, though without the extra space afforded by the filled-in Gothic window found at Villeneuve. Unlike the cycle in the Villeneuve charterhouse, these scenes from the *Life of the Baptist* in the Palais placed a far greater emphasis on the *Beheading* rather than the *Entombment*, supporting the idea that Giovanetti modified his narratives to suit the specific Carthusian context of Innocent's chapel and its proximity to the *chapelle des morts* and Cloister of the Cemetery. The scene of the *Entombment* does not appear at all in Avignon, where the artist made full use of the lower-right register to portray a grandiose, dynamic decapitation of the Baptist compared to the spatially cramped instance at Villeneuve. For the monks, the emphasis shifted to a scene of the burial of their patron saint, which occurs out-of-doors and appears directly opposite the space where the burials of their own brothers took place. Interestingly, the order of reading the scenes in the Avignon chapel still differs from a left-to-right, bottom-to-top order as one might expect, and Giovanetti instead placed them in what Lavin would characterize as a boustrophedon arrangement. The reasons for doing so in the Palace of the Popes chapel remains unclear, although the connection between communal dining and the subject of the *Feast of Herod* at least partially explains its design.[50]

The complexity of the arrangement and interpretation of the frescoes on the western wall of the chapel consequently calls into question the nature of the scenes displayed on the corresponding eastern side. Assuming that Giovanetti took into account the movement of the monks and the surrounding spaces as he likely did for the first wall, I hypothesize that he encoded another layer of meaning within the images on the latter one. These narrative scenes focus on the naming, recognition, birth, and circumcision of John the Baptist, all presaging his

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[50] The chapel of St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist opened to the Consistory Hall, which hosted the conclaves and papal elections; it may have also functioned as a refectory or dining hall, as the *tour de cuisinier* and kitchens connected to its western end.

later role as the final prophet of the Old Testament and as a herald of Jesus Christ to come. The Medieval account of the Baptist's life included the belief that he entered the wilderness at a young age, having received his parents' blessing, and there he began his life of pious ascetism and prayer before proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. Guigo himself invokes this account in chapter 80 of his *Consuetudines*:

> Also John the Baptist, of whom, according to the eulogy of the Saviour, no one has risen greater among those born of woman, shows clearly how much security and usefulness is procured from solitude. Not trusting in the divine oracles which had predicted, filled with the Holy Spirit from the mother's womb, he would have been the precursor of Jesus Christ with the spirit and strength of Elijah, neither for his marvellous nativity nor for the sanctity of his parents, he fled the company of men as full of danger and chose the safe solitude of the desert; and as long as he lived alone in the hermitage, he knew neither dangers nor death. To have baptised Christ and faced death for justice demonstrate how much strength and merit he had acquired. Loneliness in fact had made him the only one worthy to baptise Christ who purifies everything and does not retreat either in front of the prison or in front of death for the truth.[51]

The Carthusian monks that passed under these images as they returned to their individual cells likely understood these scenes as a reminder of their own calling to follow in their saint's footsteps and to return to their own wilderness in prayer and contemplation of God—after all, the cells themselves are referred to as "deserts" or "hermitages," strengthening the association with solitude and the precedents set by the Baptist and the Desert Fathers.[52] The first and last scenes

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[51] Maria, 75-76.

[52] Evidence of this is found in Guigo I's *Consuetudines*—see Maria, 29. Guigo states that the prior of the monastery, after having been elected, "never leaves the boundaries of the desert," a clear reference to the charterhouse environment.

may emphasize this understanding in that the first one, the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel to Zechariah, marks the moment when John's father is struck mute and cannot speak until his son's birth. Silence played an important part in the rigorous discipline of the Carthusian life, and monks only rarely broke the quiet of the monastery to speak or to participate in the liturgy. Giovanetti's fresco may have therefore acted as a visual reminder and admonishment for the monks to maintain silence as they moved between the spaces of their charterhouse.

The last scene, that of John the Baptist's presentation in the Temple and his circumcision, may also have resonated with its monastic viewers in a special way. Circumcision marked the entrance of the Jewish infant into the salvific covenant between God and His people, and the presentation in the Temple functioned as the infant's official introduction to the Jewish community. They also happened to typologically connect with Jesus's—and all subsequent Christians'—Baptism, which enacted a spiritual rebirth and the entry into the Church. For John the Baptist in particular, these events marked his life indelibly as consecrated to God, and they presaged his future ministry. As a sort of new beginning, the scene may have reminded the Carthusian viewer of their own rebirth and entry into the Carthusian Order and the vows they took upon entering. This theme recalls the physical orientation of the chapel once more, and reaffirms the connection invoked by Durandus in his *Rationale divinorum officiorum* between the cardinal directions and concepts of birth, death, and resurrection.

With the erection of the church of the Holy Trinity and the chapel of the dead within the palace-cum-monastery, Innocent's chapel became more and more of a transitional space and less of a place for actual worship. Its small size made it unlikely that a proper choir was ever constructed within the space, unlike in the full-sized church of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the *Consuetudines* state that the order celebrated Mass at a comparatively lower rate than other

monastic communities, owing in large part to the Carthusian emphasis on solitude and silence.[53] The chapel, therefore, appears to have functioned as more of a liminal space than a standard devotional chapel, strengthening the idea that the monks interpreted its frescoes within the context of their own movement within the space, rather than in the context of regular liturgical celebration.

[53] Mursell 174.

## V. Concluding Remarks

Matteo Giovanetti remained the *pictor papae* after Pope Innocent VI's death in 1362, though by then he no longer worked on large-scale projects as he had in Villeneuve or at the Palace of the Popes. Giovanetti's primary biographer, Enrico Castelnuovo, records that the artist traveled with the papal court when Pope Urban V left Avignon to return the papacy to Rome in 1367, the first pope to do so in over sixty years.[54] Urban sought to renovate the Lateran Palace, which had fallen into disrepair thanks to the papacy's long absence, in time to receive homage as the head of the Church from a number of high-ranking rulers including King Peter I of Cyprus, Queen Joanna I of Naples, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, and the confession of faith from the Byzantine Emperor John V Palaeologus. Hosting such a panoply of princes required suitably impressive accommodations, and Urban tasked Giovanetti, in addition to a team of northern Italian artists including Agnolo and Giovanni Gaddi, Bartolommeo Bulgarini, Giottino, and Giovanni da Milano, to execute a no-longer-extant series of frescoes in the Vatican-St. Peter's complex. As Castelnuovo explains, Giovanetti must have died shortly after arriving in Rome because his name no longer appears in the payrolls alongside his Florentine peers; nor is he mentioned in any capacity after Urban V's return to Avignon in 1370. After two and a half decades of service as painter to the popes, Giovanetti passed his torch to the leading painters of Tuscany who would become the leading artistic school in Italy and the source of the eventual masterpieces of the Roman papal Renaissance in the fifteenth century.

Because what little art he may have executed in Rome has faded with the passage of time, the Chapel of St. John the Baptist in Villeneuve remains the best example of Matteo Giovanetti's late work, wherein he evinced a masterful understanding of narrative arrangement, sense of

[54] Castelnuovo, 137.

depth, and audience experience. The scenes depicting the life of St. John the Baptist exhibit a thoroughly Carthusian spiritual sensibility in both subject matter and in their unique arrangement within the chapel space. The themes conveyed rely on the simultaneous convergence of Giovanetti's superb style, Carthusian monastic practice, and the constraints placed upon the chapel space by the footprint of Pope Innocent VI's former cardinal palace. In founding a Carthusian monastery across from the papacy's erstwhile home in Avignon, Innocent had patronized the creation of one of the Middle Ages' most incredible—and understudied— artistic achievements.

# VI. Appendix

## Carthusian Monasteries Founded in the Fourteenth Century

| Name | Year | Location | Patron/Founder | Patronage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Chartreuse d'Abbeville** | 1300 | Abbeville, France | | |
| **Valprofonde Charterhouse** | 1301 | Béon, France | | |
| **Certosa di Padula** | 1306 | Padula, Italy | Thomas II Sanseverino, Count of Marsico and of Tricarico | Secular |
| **La Part-Dieu Charterhouse** | 1307 | Vaudens, Gruyères, Switzerland | | |
| **Noyon Charterhouse** | 1308 | Noyon, France | | |
| **Mauerbach Charterhouse** | 1314 | Vienna, Austria | Frederick the Fair, Duke of Austria | Secular |
| **Kartuize Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Kapelle** | 1314 | Herne, Belgium | | |
| **Certosa di Maggiano** | 1316 | Siena, Italy | Cardinal Riccardo Petroni | Religious |
| **La Lance Charterhouse** | 1317 | Concise, Vaud, Switzerland | | |
| **Chartreuse de Bompas** | 1318 | Caumont-sur-Durance, France | | |
| **Mainz Charterhouse** | 1320 | Mainz, Germany | Peter of Aspelt, Prince-Archbishop of Mainz | Religious |
| **La Loubatière Charterhouse** | 1320 | Lacombe, France | | |
| **Certosa di Monte San Pietro** | 1320 | Toirano, Italy | | |
| **Červený Kláštor** | 1320 | Lechnica, Slovakia | | |
| **Chartreuse de Bourgfontaine** | 1323 | Valois, France | Charles, Count of Valois; Philip VI, King of France | Secular |
| **Montreuil Charterhouse** | 1323 | Montreuil-sur-Mer, France | | |
| **Kartuize t'Kiel** | 1324 | Antwerp, Belgium | | |
| **Certosa di San Martino** | 1325 | Naples, Italy | Charles, Duke of Calabria | Secular |
| **Kartause Allerengelberg** | 1325 | Schnals, South Tyrol, Italy | Henry, Duke of Tyrol and of Carinthia | Secular |
| **Isles Charterhouse** | 1325 | Troyes, France | | |
| **Val de la Paix Charterhouse** | 1327 | Chandrossel, Switzerland | | |
| **Grunau Charterhouse** | 1328 | Schollbrunn, Germany | Elisabeth von Hohenlohe, daughter of the Count of Wertheim | Secular |
| **Kartuize Koningsdal** | 1328 | Rooigem, Belgium | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kartuize Sint-Jansberg** | 1328 | Diest, Belgium | | |
| **Basseville Charterhouse** | 1328 | Pousseaux, France | | |
| **Cahors Charterhouse** | 1328 | Cahors, France | | |
| **Fontenay Charterhouse** | 1328 | Beaune, France | | |
| **Vauclaire Charterhouse** | 1328 | Montignac, France | | |
| **Kartuize Sint-Martens-Bosch** | 1329 | Geraardsbergen, Belgium | | |
| **Val Saint-Esprit Charterhouse** | 1329 | Béthune, France | | |
| **Gaming Charterhouse** | 1330 | Gaming, Austria | Albert II, Duke of Austria | Secular |
| **Tárkány Charterhouse** | 1330 | Felsőtárkány, Hungary | | |
| **Kartause Koblenz** | 1331 | Koblenz, Germany | Baldwin of Luxembourg, Prince-Archibishop of Trier | Religious |
| **Kartause Trier** | 1331 | Trier, Germany | Baldwin of Luxembourg, Prince-Archibishop of Trier | Religious |
| **Cologne Charterhouse** | 1334 | Cologne, Germany | Walram of Julich, Prince-Archbishop of Cologne | Religious |
| **Bologna Charterhouse** | 1334 | Bologna, Italy | | |
| **Monnikhuizen** | 1335 | Arnhem, Netherlands | Juliers Dynasty, Dukes of Guelders | Secular |
| **Mortemart Charterhouse** | 1335 | Mortemart, France | | |
| **Raamsdonk Charterhouse** | 1336 | Raamsdonkveer, Netherlands | Willem van Duvenvoorde, Lord of Polanen | Secular |
| **Farneta Charterhouse** | 1338 | Lucca, Italy | | |
| **Guglionesi Charterhouse** | 1338 | Termoli, Campobasso, Italy | | |
| **Certosa del Galluzzo** | 1341 | Florence, Italy | Niccolo Acciaioli, Count of Melfi, Malta, and Gozo | Secular |
| **Kartause Mariengarten** | 1342 | Prague, Czech Republic | John the Blind, King of Bohemia | Secular |
| **Certosa di Pontignano** | 1343 | Pontignano, Italy | Bindo di Falcone Petroni, nephew of Cardinal Riccardo Petroni | Religious |
| **Beauvale Priory** | 1343 | Nottinghamshire, England | | |
| **Cartoixa de Vallparadis** | 1345 | Barcelona, Spain | Blanca de Centelles, daughter of the Count of Barcelona | Secular |
| **Belriguardo Charterhouse** | 1345 | Siena, Italy | | |
| **Kartause Sankt Johannisberg** | 1346 | Freiburg, Germany | | |
| **Lővőld Charterhouse** | 1347 | Lake Balaton, Hungary | | |
| **Garegnano Charterhouse** | 1349 | Milan, Italy | Giovanni Visconti, Bishop and Lord of Milan | Religious |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Montello Charterhouse** | 1349 | Montebelluna, Italy | | |
| **Tückelhausen Charterhouse** | 1351 | Ochsenfurt, Germany | | |
| **Val-de-Benediction** | 1352 | Villeneuve-les-Avignon, France | Pope Innocent VI | Both |
| **Engelgarten Charterhouse** | 1352 | Wurzburg, Germany | Prince-Bishop of Wurzburg Albrecht von Hohenlohe | Religious |
| **Koenigshoffen Charterhouse** | 1355 | Strasbourg, France | | |
| **Mont Cornillon Charterhouse** | 1357 | Liège, Belgium | | |
| **Podiebrad Charterhouse** | 1360 | Poděbrady, Czech Republic | | |
| **Catania Charterhouse** | 1360 | Catania, Sicily, Italy | | |
| **Grabow Charterhouse** | 1360 | Grabow, Poland | | |
| **Belvezer Charterhouse** | 1361 | Castres, France | | |
| **Certosa di San Giacomo** | 1363 | Capri, Italy | Count Giacomo Arcucci | Secular |
| **Certosa della Santa Croce** | 1363 | Rome, Italy | | |
| **Cadzand Charterhouse** | 1364 | Oostburg, Netherlands | King Edward III of England (Planned but never realized) | Secular |
| **Certosa di Pisa** | 1366 | Pisa, Italy | Francesco Moricotti, Archbishop of Pisa | Religious |
| **Koningsfield Charterhouse** | 1370 | Brno, Czech Republic | John Henry of Luxembourg, Margrave of Moravia | Secular |
| **London Charterhouse** | 1370 | London, England | Baron Walter Manny and Michael Northburgh, Bishop of London | Both |
| **Kartause Sankt Salvatorberg** | 1371 | Erfurt, Germany | | |
| **Gorgona Charterhouse** | 1373 | Livorno, Italy | Formerly Benedictine; monastery granted to the Carthusian by Pope Gregory XI | Religious |
| **Chartreuse de Chercq** | 1375 | Chercq, Belgium | Jean de Werchin, Lord of Werchin | Secular |
| **Roermond Charterhouse** | 1376 | Roermond, Netherlands | | |
| **Hull Charterhouse** | 1377 | Kingston upon Hull, England | Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk | Secular |
| **Eisenach Charterhouse** | 1378 | Eisenach, Germany | Frederick III and Balthasar, Landgraves of Thuringia; and William I, Margrave of Meissen | Secular |
| **Aggsbach Charterhouse** | 1380 | Aggsbach, Austria | Baron Heidenreich von Maissau | Secular |
| **Marienparadies** | 1380 | Kartuzy, Poland | Teutonic Knights | Secular |
| **Kartause Marienzell** | 1380 | Nuremberg, Germany | | |
| **Coventry Charterhouse** | 1381 | Coventry, England | Richard II, King of England | Secular |
| **Champmol** | 1383 | Dijon, France | Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy | Secular |
| **Christgarten Charterhouse** | 1383 | Ederheim, Germany | Ludwig and Friedrich von Oettingen, Counts of Oettingen | Secular |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kartuize Genadedal** | 1383 | Sint-Kruis, Belgium | | |
| **Bordeaux Charterhouse** | 1383 | Bordeaux, France | | |
| **Chartreuse Notre Dame de la Rose** | 1384 | Rouen, France | | |
| **Pierre-Châtel Charterhouse** | 1384 | Virignin, France | | |
| **Vall de Crist Cartuja** | 1385 | Valley of Christ, Spain | King Martin I of Aragon | Secular |
| **Certosa d'Asti** | 1387 | Asti, Italy | | |
| **Kartause Marienkloster** | 1388 | Hildesheim, Germany | Gerhard vom Berge, Bishop of Hildesheim | Religious |
| **Dolany Charterhouse** | 1389 | Olomouc, Czech Republic | | |
| **Monastery of El Paular** | 1390 | Madrid, Spain | Henry II and John I of Castile | Secular |
| **Utrecht Charterhouse** | 1391 | Utrecht, Netherlands | Zweder van Gaasbeek, Lord of Putten and Strijen | Secular |
| **Certosa della Valle di San Nicolò** | 1392 | Chiaramonte, Italy | | |
| **Amsterdam Charterhouse** | 1392 | Amsterdam, Netherlands | | |
| **Kartause Marienkron** | 1394 | Karlino, Poland | Adelheid, Duchess of Pomerania | Secular |
| **Marienkron Charterhouse** | 1394 | Rugenwalde, Germany | | |
| **Certosa di Pavia** | 1396 | Pavia, Italy | Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan | Secular |
| **Chartreuse d'Oyron** | 1396 | Oiron, France | | |
| **Kartause Barmherzigkeit Gottes** | 1396 | Frankfurt, Germany | | |
| **Kartause Marienehe** | 1396 | Rostock, Germany | | |
| **Kartause Marientempel** | 1397 | Ahrensbök, Germany | | |
| **Thorberg Charterhouse** | 1397 | Krauchthal, Berne, Switzerland | | |
| **Axeholme Charterhouse** | 1397 | Epworth, Lincolnshire, England | Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham and Duke of Norfolk | Secular |
| **Santa María de las Cuevas** | 1398 | Seville, Spain | | |
| **Mount Grace Priory** | 1398 | North Yorkshire, England | Thomas Holland, Duke of Surrey | Secular |
| **Valldemossa Charterhouse** | 1399 | Valldemossa, Majorca, Spain | King Martin I of Aragon | Secular |

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## VII. Images

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**Figure 1**: View of the Chartreuse of Val-de-Bénédiction in Villeneuve-lès-Avignon from the Fort St.-André

**Figure 2**: Mausoleum of Innocent VI in the church of the Holy Trinity

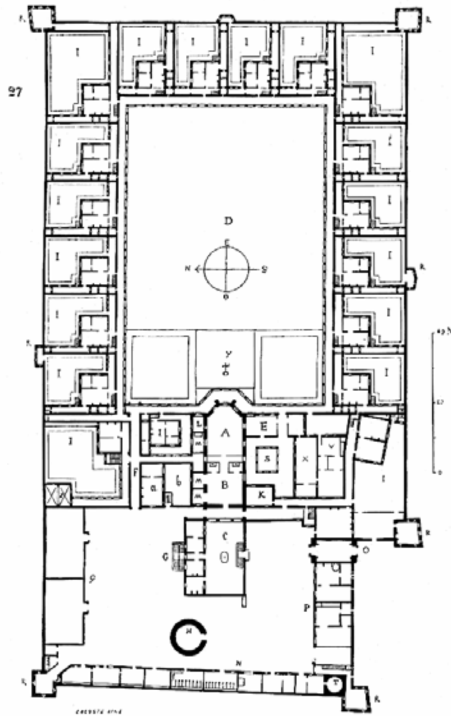

**Figure 3**: Plan of the Clermont Charterhouse

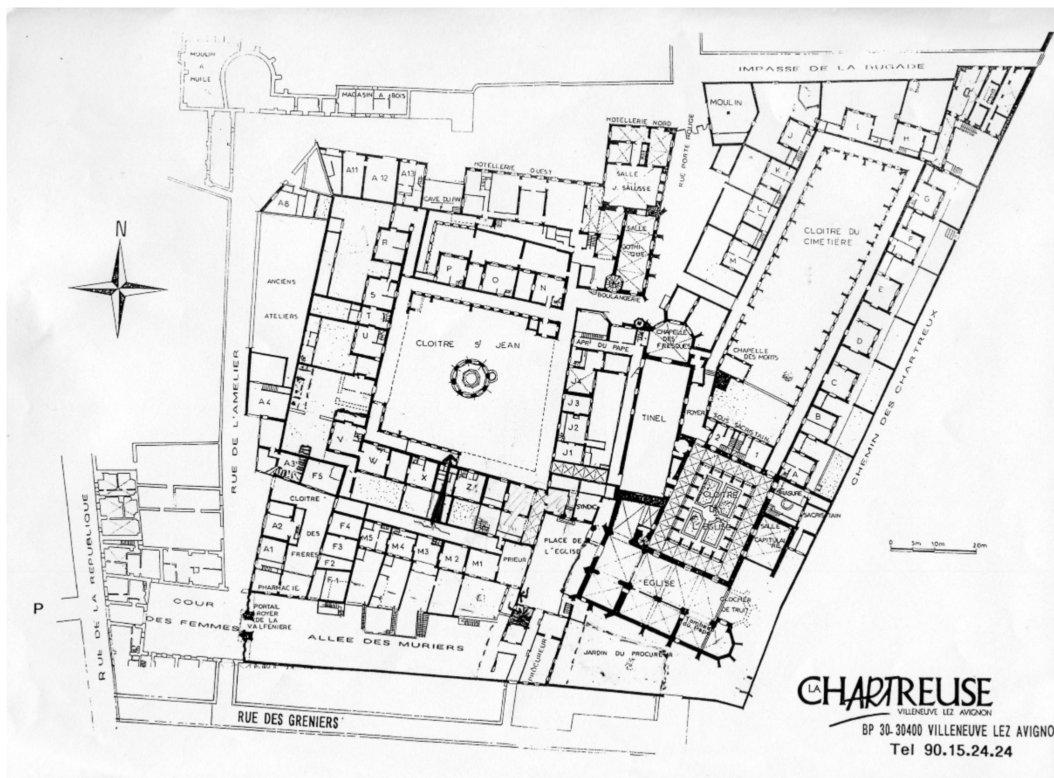


**Figure 4**: Plan of the Villeneuve Charterhouse; the core of Innocent's foundation lies to the northeast

**Figure 5**: Interior view of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist facing north

**Figure 6**: Old Testament prophets painted by Giovanetti in the Palace of the Popes

**Figure 7**: Detail of the vaults in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist depicting angels

**Figure 8**: Detail showing the Twelve Apostles and one of the Evangelists looking north-northeast

**Figure 9**: Crucifixion scene located on the north wall of the chapel

**Figure 10**: Madonna and Child Enthroned, venerated by a kneeling Pope Innocent VI

**Figure 11**: Deacon saints found on the eastern wall to the upper-right of the doorway leading to the Cloister of the Dead

**Figure 12**; Unidentified papal saint, located opposite the three deacon saints on the eastern wall

**Figure 13**: Detail of the eastern wall showing narrative scenes from the Life of John the Baptist

**Figure 14**: Annunciation to Zechariah from the angel Gabriel

**Figure 15**: The Visitation

**Figure 16**: The Nativity of John the Baptist

**Figure 17**: The Naming and Circumcision of John the Baptist

**Figure 18**: General view of the western wall of the Chapel of St. John the Baptist

**Figure 19**: Detail of the western wall of the chapel showing degradation of the fresco cycle

**Figure 20**: Detail of the frescoed-over window space

**Figure 21**: Watercolor painting preserving the Ministry of John the Baptist as painted by Matteo Giovanetti in the Chapel of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in the Palace of the Popes in Avignon

**Figure 22**: Detail showing the Feast of Herod from the Chapel of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in the Palace of the Popes

**Figure 23**: Entombment of the Baptist

**Figure 24**: Detail of the chapel of St. Stephen in Beziers Cathedral, painted by an unknown artist of the Roman School

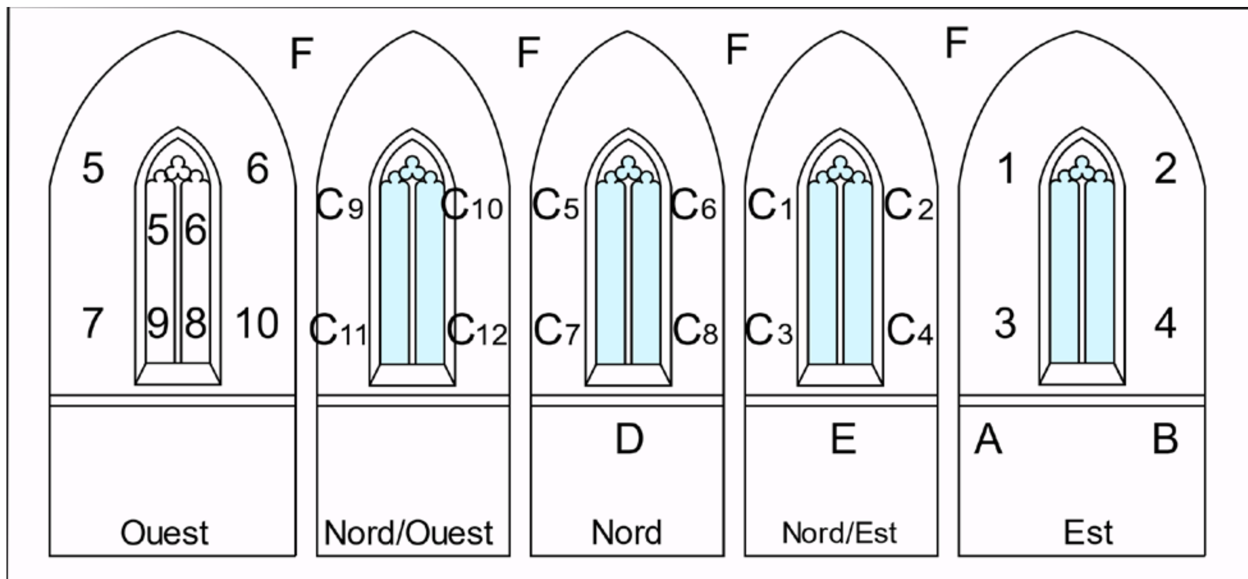


**Figure 25**: Schema outlining the fresco arrangement in the chapel of St. John the Baptist, with the following images labelled in sequential narrative order:

1. The Annunciation to Zechariah

2. The Visitation

3. The Nativity of John the Baptist

4. The Naming and Circumcision of John the Baptist

5. The Baptism of Christ at the Jordan (?)

6. The Ministry of Christ (?)

7. The Feast of Herod

8. The Beheading of John the Baptist

9. The Presentation of the Baptist's Head by Salome to Herodias

10. The Entombment of the Baptist

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