OVEREXPOSING FLORENCE: JOURNEYS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY,

CINEMA, TOURISM, AND URBAN SPACE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation examines the many ways in which urban form and visual media interact in 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-centuries Florence. More in detail, this work analyzes photographs of Florence's medieval and Renaissance heritage by the Alinari Brothers atelier (1852-1890), and then retraces these photographs' relationship to contemporary visual culture – namely through representations of Florence in international cinema, art photography, and the guidebook – as well as to the city's actual structure. Unlike previous scholarship, my research places the Alinari Brothers' photographs in the context of the enigmatic processes of urban modernization that took place in Florence throughout the 19th century, changing its medieval structure into that of a modern city and the capital of newly unified Italy from 1865 to 1871. The Alinari photographs' tension between the establishment of the myth of Florence as the cradle of the Renaissance and an uneasy attitude towards modernization, both cherished and feared, produced a multi-layered city portrait, which raises questions about crucial issues such as urban heritage preservation, mass tourism, (de)industrialization, social segregation, and real estate speculation. These questions

remain unresolved in contemporary Florence, and my dissertation explores them by following the influence of the Alinari's photographic gaze on contemporary representations of Florence in international cinema (Brian De Palma, Dario Argento, James Ivory, Ridley Scott), art and tourism photography (Gianni Berengo Gardin, Luigi Ghirri, Olivo Barbieri, Martin Parr, guidebooks by Italian Touring Club, Fodor and Frommer), and their relationship to contemporary urban development. Ultimately, my work aims to redefine the relevance of early photography as a unique tool for understanding contemporary urban space and its representation, thanks to its capacity to expose the contradictions of the present and look into the city's future.

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Introduction

The circumstances of the emergence of photographic discourses and practices in Italy have been frequently conceptualized through the country's – or, before its unification in 1860, its predecessors' – conflictual and delayed relationship with modernity. In "Note per una Storia della Fotografia Italiana" (Notes for a History of Italian Photography, 1981), one of the first attempts to historicize Italian photography, art historian Marina Miraglia connects the scarcity of documents as well as the absence of theoretical reflection on the new medium throughout the first years of photography to Italian bourgeoisie's lack of political power before 1860, which Miraglia sees more as an opposition intellectual elite than a ruling class. Following Giselle Freund's theory, Miraglia considers 19th-century photography as the tool for aesthetic expression of the rising bourgeoisie, whose late appearance on the Italian political stage also delayed the country's economic, commercial, and industrial-capitalist development, in turn a prerequisite for the development of photographic technologies.

The year before the publication of Miraglia's "Note", another seminal essay on Italian photography appeared in one of the volumes of *Storia d'Italia, Annali*, by cultural critic Giulio Bollati. In "Note su Fotografia e Storia" (Notes on Photography and History, 1980), Bollati complicates Miraglia's take and goes as far as to question the possibility of defining a photographic "modo di vedere italiano" (Italian gaze), precisely because of Italian specific involvement with modernity. Bollati argues that "il ritardo con cui siamo entrati a fare parte del mondo industriale avanzato ha prodotto … la persistenza di una tradizione culturale di antica ascendenza classica, la più antica e la più classica tra quante ne annovera il gruppo delle nazioni industrializzate" (the delay with which we became

part of the advanced industrial world resulted in the persistence of a classical cultural tradition, the most ancient and classical one among the industrialized countries, 129). In other words, Bollati relates Italy's "unusual reaction" to photography not only to political, economic, and cultural backwardness, but also to the presence of a lumbering cultural tradition – in particular visual – which couldn't but affect the production and conceptualization of photography in Italy. What in Miraglia's account was merely a void of resources, turns here into the uneasy coexistence between that same void and a pre-existing surplus of images and meanings, which deeply influenced the development of photography in Italy.

More recently, this topic has been once more addressed in Sarah Patricia Hill's and Giuliana Minghelli's edited volume of essays *Stillness and Motion: Italy, Photography and the Meanings of Modernity* (2014). This work addresses the relationship between Italian photography, modernity, and traditional visual culture with a stronger emphasis on the connection between the first decades of photography and the ongoing process that sees photographic practices still define the image of Italy. In the volume's introduction, Hill and Minghelli explicitly reference Bollati's remarks and reformulate his questions as: "How does the encounter between a country belatedly entering into the modern industrial age yet endowed with a sophisticated visual culture foreshadow issues that are central to the current global culture of the image?" (4). Later in the introduction Hill and Minghelli further clarify their position, linking Italian industrial backwardness and its pre-existing visual tradition to the precocious emergence of issues that would subsequently be addressed as postmodern. Indeed, since Italy enters modernization as a country that has already been countlessly visually represented, it held

the status of an image more than that of an actual space. As such, Minghelli and Hill confer a unique relevance to the Italian case, in that it presents the relationship between reality and its representation from a specific angle that in more advanced countries will appear only much later.

The narrative I have briefly sketched here is the point of departure for my own account of the complex encounter between Italy, modernity (as well as postmodernity), and photography: an encounter that in this work takes place in the modern environment *par excellance*, the city. More specifically, my research examines this encounter through the crucial case study of mid-to-late 19th-century photographs of medieval and Renaissance monumental Florence by the Alinari Brothers' atelier (1852-1890), and then retraces these photographs' relationship to contemporary visual culture – namely through representations of Florence in international cinema, art photography, and the guidebook – as well as to the city's actual structure.

My purpose is to further complicate the above-discussed discourse on early Italian photography as both affected by economic delay and connected to pre-existing visual traditions, rather seeing it as a propeller, an observatory, *and* a privileged site of the enigmatic processes of urban modernization that took place in Florence throughout the 19th century, changing its Medieval structure into that of a modern city and the capital of newly unified Italy from 1865 to 1871. The city's conflicted relationship to modernization, at once cherished and feared, was both questioned and amplified by photography in such a way that was not available to pre-existing media of visual representation such as painting, engraving, and drawing.

Such a perturbing photographic effect was elaborated by Walter Benjamin in *Little History of Photography* (1931), where he uses the notion of optical unconscious to describe "the different nature that speaks to the camera from the one which addresses the eye; different above all in the sense that instead of a space worked through by a human consciousness there appears one which is affected unconsciously" (7). Thus photography, as a "mediation and revelation" (Zervigon 44) between the modern subject and the fast-changing reality, exposes a hidden reality that otherwise would remain silent and unseen, revealing desires and anxieties that are embedded in the texture of things. The Alinari photographs' "tiny sparks of contingencies", as Benjamin famously called them, produced a multi-layered, powerful, and perturbing city portrait, where all the uncertainties, anxieties, and contradictions related to the modernizing process were exposed, though at times indirectly.

As Jonathan Crary has explained in *Techniques of the Observer* (1991), photography is an essential part of the shift that took place starting from the first decades of the 19th century and reconfigured the theoretical status as well as the actual possibilities of the observing subject, which became ready to experience and consume the photographic image and other forms of visual entertainment as new media progressively emerged. In this context,

> [p]hotography is an element of a new and homogeneous terrain of consumption and circulation in which an observer becomes lodged. To understand the "photography effect" in the nineteenth century, one must see it as a crucial component of a new cultural economy of value and exchange, not as part of a continuous history of visual representation. (13)

With photography, the new visual experience "is given an unprecedented mobility and exchangeability, abstracted from any founding site or referent": in this context "apparent similarities between photographs and previous forms of representation may well exist, but they are to some extent insignificant" (ibid.).

Accordingly, my work questions existing interpretations of the Alinari Brothers' photographs, which read them in terms of their adherence to previous representations in painting and the graphic arts, analyze their composition techniques as derived from linear perspective, and see them as completely removed from the urban upheaval that interested the city at large. Indeed, the relationship between the Alinari Brothers' work and linear perspective has even been naturalized as deriving from their geographical origin, as their photographs "methodically enact the rules of Renaissance perspective, so long cultivated by the figurative culture of Florence" (Valtorta 55). In line with Crary's remarks, my work argues that if a history of this kind is to be written, it needs to be a history of differences, not one of continuity. In particular, the difference is not to be looked for in the details of the image composition, but rather in the effect that the images and the practices to experience them produce on the observer.

My dissertation argues that it is the Alinari photographs' deep if problematic involvement with modernity, rather than their lingering on a pre-existing visual culture, that makes them still relevant today and has granted them a long-lasting influence on subsequent representations of the city, which are still unable to solve some of the issues that emerged in the 19th century. In this respect, my work argues for a continuity of modernity and post-modernity, as we are still dealing with changes that manifested

themselves throughout the 19th century, like those described by Crary and discussed above.

A few clarifications are in order here. The first one concerns the choice of Florence as the best observing point of the relationship between Italy, modernity, and photography, to which I add urban space. Indeed, there are many reasons that make Florence a place that both encompasses and exceeds Italy's condition in the 19th century. First of all, and significantly for the purpose of this work, Florence is the city where the Alinari enterprise, the most important and successful Italian photography studio, was founded and flourished. It is, also, its first and most represented subject. As the Alinari Brothers achieved international artistic recognition and commercial success as soon as 1855 – an year that Monica Maffioli defines the Alinari triumph ("Fratelli Alinari: Una Famiglia" 25) – and kept them for many decades to follow, one could contend that the above discussed economic and commercial delay was not always the case in 19th century Italy. Indeed, it has been argued that "the Italian States were notable for the delay in their recognition and introduction of scientific and technological advances from beyond the Alps. Photography, however, was an exception" (Cozzi and Zangheri 97). And yet, it is possible to go even further and conclude, as Roberta Valtorta does, that such a delay was more cultural than real, as it was related to the "idea of a fundamental rural Italy linked to a backwardness that is on the one hand a problem but on the other a sort of mythical, noble condition in a moral sense: an unchanging Arcadia" ("Photography and the Construction" 33).

Such a statement brings me closer to the core of Florence's relevance on a national as well as international level in the 19th century, as the city's status as a symbolic

and mythical place emerged "between the waning of the Enlightenment and the dawn of the Romantic age" (Fantoni 36) and was permanently established in the second half of the century. From that moment on, it has become impossible to think of Florence without the Renaissance and the Middle Ages immediately coming to mind. However, it would be erroneous to think that the establishment of the myth of Florence as inherently linked to the medieval and Renaissance past resulted in the perception of the city as detached from progress and modernization. On the contrary, such a link is precisely what inserted the city, which had been somewhat forgotten for centuries[1], in Western discourses on modernity. This process is essential for an effective appreciation of the relationship of Florence – perceived as a sort of quintessential Italy – to modernity, and to understand all the implications of the city's modernization in the second half of the 19th century. Thus, I will now briefly retrace this process.

Even though today we may take Florence's symbolic status for granted—such is still its power and hold on the global imaginary—it is important to remember that it is only at the end of the 18th century that the interest in Florence started to become prominent. As Chapter Three will analyze more in detail, from the 16th to the 19th centuries Italy was the main destination of the Grand Tour, an educational months-long trip that brought young and wealthy European males to discover antiquity and its Renaissance reinterpretation as the core of Western civilization (cfr. pagg. 156-158). As Florence doesn't hold remnants of antiquity, Grand Tourists would admire the Uffizi

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[1] Cfr. Eric W. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (1973).

Gallery collections and the classical and Renaissance sculptures in the Piazza della Signoria.

However, things started to change at the end of the 18th century, when a new appreciation arose for the medieval heritage and the Age of the Communes, both from an artistic and a historical perspective. Such an appreciation was strictly connected to the emergence of European and North American nationalism, which found in the Middle Ages the time in which distinctive national traditions first appeared. Of this age characterized by a circularity between great artistic achievements, political and economic expansion, and individual freedom, Florence offered the best and most accomplished example, which was increasingly interpreted as an anticipation of modern Europe[2]. Indeed, if travelers initiated the progressive international reappropriation of Florence, historians gave it the ultimate validation, reinforcing the topos of Florence as an Italian Athens and inaugurating "that process of re-elaboration of the past seen through the lens of the present" (Fantoni 42) that continues to this day.

One of the prominent figures in setting such a process in motion was Swiss historian and political theorist Jean Charles Léonard Sismonde de Sismondi, whose *History of the Italian Republics* (1809-1818) established Florence as the cradle of those values on which modern civilization is grounded. This is how Sismondi described Florence: "The genius displayed by some of its citizens, the talent and intelligence in

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[2] The program of reforms launched by Gran Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Lorraine, who ruled Tuscany from 1765 to 1790, facilitated Florence's reinsertion into political and social debate. These reforms are: the introduction of a new criminal code, which abolished death penalty and torture; the abolition of controls on trade in grain along with a range of feudal constraints; the strengthening of property rights of peasant landholders; the introduction of the latest methods in arable farming and animal husbandry; the abolition of the restrictions of the medieval guild system and the standardization of tariffs and duties; the reform of taxation, with the abolition of the system of tax farming; and the implementation of a new municipal code to promote the self-administration of the municipalities.

business to be found even in the mass of the people, the generosity which seemed the national character, whenever it was necessary to protect the oppressed to defend the cause of liberty, raised this city above every other" (120).

However, as Western history progressed, the revolutions of 1848 together with the rise of industrialization destroyed liberals' hope in a smooth and peaceful economic, social, and political growth, where the interests of different sections of society could complement each other. Thus, Florence's myth adapted to the new situation, retaining its preeminent role in international imaginaries but acquiring more nuanced features. It is in such a scenario that the notion of the Renaissance emerged as the contradictory place where one can find at once the origins of modernity, the anticipation of its decadence, and an aesthetic escape from it. As Wallace K. Ferguson argues in *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (1948),

> [t]he idea of progress had never been so generally accepted. Yet there were many who felt that contemporary civilization, despite essential progress, suffered from serious ills and that in the growth of bourgeois materialism, industrial mechanization, and democracy there were inherent damages to the life of the spirit. It was from this combination of faith in modern progress with revulsion against certain of its attributes that that men turned to the Renaissance as a cultural idea. (180)

This process is an extremely complex and broad one, and it would be impossible to describe it in its entirety. However, some of its aspects are essential for the present discussion, and need to be accounted for here. One such aspect is the progressive fusion of notions of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, with the latter gaining more and more preeminence while absorbing elements (and centuries) from the former—such as the emphasis on individual freedom and economic expansion. Accordingly, the degeneration

of medieval freedom into Renaissance despotism (central to Sismondi's interpretation)

partially lost its significance, as the Medici's rule was seen as a beneficent age of peace

and prosperity[3].

As historian Luigi Mascilli Migliorini argues in *Rinascimento Fiorentino e Crisi

della Coscienza Europea* (Florentine Renaissance and the Crisis of European Conscience,

1997), starting from the 1850s the Renaissance "tende ad annettere a sé i secoli

precedenti costruendo una gigantesca categoria della fiorentinità caratterizzata dalla

continuità della eccezionalità della sua vita artistica e non dalle discontinuità della sua

vicenda storica e politica" (tends to incorporate previous centuries, building an enormous

category of Florentine-ness characterized more by the continuity of its exceptional artistic

production than by the discontinuities of its historical and political life, 29). In this

category, the dichotomy between notions of the Italy of the city-republics and the

flourishing of culture and the arts under great patrons "come to the fore … and … – not

rarely – come together and are fused into one single image" (Fantoni 37).

The champion of such a category is Swiss culture historian Jacob Burkhardt,

whose *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) is arguably the most influential

work ever written on the notion of the Renaissance[4]. As a proof of the ever-expanding

chronological boundaries of such a notion, Burckhardt's starts his narrative with the age

of Dante, Petrarca, and Giotto and stops at the end of the 16th century. In Burckhardt's

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[3] This attitude towards the Medici rule emerged as early as 1795, when William Roscoe's *The Life of Lorenzo il Magnifico* was published in England. Roscoe's work became highly influential in Europe and was reprinted in several editions and languages.

[4] Burckhardt was a passionate collector of photographs of Italian art and architecture as an aid for his teaching and research activities. As Ulrich Polhmer recounts, during his 1875 six-month residence in Italy Burkhardt regularly visited the Alinari shop in Florence and in 1876 had his portrait taken at the Alinari laboratory. Even when he eventually stopped travelling due to old age, Burkhardt kept acquiring photographs, most of them from the Alinari atelier.

survey of Italian states' politics, the development of individual potentialities, the role of

antiquity, the flourishing of science, and societal as well as religious issues, Florence

retains its prestige as the place where "the most elevated political thought and the most

varied forms of human development are found united" to such an extent that the city

"deserves the name of the first modern State in the world" (48).

As Richard Sigurdson has recognized in *Jacob Burckhardt's Social and Political*

Thought (2004), an ambivalence lies at the core of Burckhardt's Renaissance, so much so

that "his book is for some commentators a loving tribute to Renaissance individualism

and its achievements, while to others it is a condemnation of unfettered subjectivity and a

profound critique of the modern age ushered in by the individualistic Italians of the

quatrocento" (sic, 41). To read the *Civilization*, Sigurdson continues, is to see "the

pathology of political individualism" that affected 19th-century politics and society (42).

As discussed above, the Renaissance, and in particular Renaissance Florence, becomes a

symbol of the origins of modernity while at the same time pointing toward its potential

for decadence. However, as in the Renaissance such a decadence was only implied,

Florence becomes the place of a balance that is lost in modern Europe. Thus, "Firenze e

la Toscana non sono state anticipatrici del moderno; non hanno conosciuto prima ciò che

l'Europa ha sviluppato poi, ma ciò che l'Europa moderna ha perduto" (Florence and

Tuscany didn't anticipate modernity; they didn't see in advance what Europe then

developed, but what modern Europe has lost, Mascilli Migliorini, *L'Italia*, 72).

If such a notion of Florence was produced mainly from outside of Italy,

throughout the 19th century Florence gained a prominent status in the Italian imaginary as

well, as the city that "era stata in grado di offrire agli italiani certezze di cui avevano

avuto bisogno acuto durante il Risorgimento e continuavano a sentire la necessità anche

dopo l'unità" (was able to provide Italians with certainties they dramatically needed

throughout the process that brought to unification, and which they kept needing even

after unification, Spini and Casali xii). Such certainties were grounded on Florence's

medieval and Renaissance past as the depositary of national language (that of Dante and

Petrarca) and a cultural heritage that validated the existence of a collective identity. Here,

too, (Florence's) past and (Italy's) present are strictly linked as the former is what

legitimized the latter. Therefore, "celebrating the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

[became] central to the discourse of identity politics throughout the history of modern

Italy" (Lasansky *The Renaissance* xxvii).

This all-encompassing notion of Florence, halfway between anticipation of the

present and nostalgia for the past, embracing the Middle Ages, Humanism, and

Renaissance, became progressively perceived as indistinguishable from the actual city.

Such an ahistorical myth was projected on Florence as the place of a "mai esistito

Rinascimento gotico, o … un Medioevo prospetticamente, simmetricamente

classicheggiante" (a never-existed gothic Renaissance, or … perspectically,

symmetrically classical-styled Middle Ages, Morolli 272). This myth, which opposed

Florence to the industrial degeneration of the present, was especially felt by those whose

country of origin was most affected by it. Thus, throughout the 19th century an ever

increasing number of Europeans (mostly English) and North Americans spent long

periods of time in Florence, often electing the city as their place of residence[5]. The list of

artists, writers, and philosophers that traveled or lived in Florence throughout the 19th

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[5] The number of visitors grows from 3,108 in 1811 to 12,984 in 1847.

century is endless. Just to mention a few names, Florence attracted people like Henry

James, Mary and Percy Shelley, Byron, Turner, Tchaikovsky, Degas, Schopenhauer,

Ingres, Hawthorne, Dumas, Flaubert, Dickens, Freud, Gide, Dostoevsky, Rilke, and

Nietzsche: all of them variously engaged in the process of defining and producing

modernity as they looked backwards at Florence's past. Not unfrequently these

visitors/residents acquired old palaces and refurbished them in neo-Gothic and neo-

Renaissance style, or even had 'period' palaces, "Renaissance-style' villas and gardens

built *ex novo*.

English art and architecture critic John Ruskin, who also visited Florence several

times starting from the 1830s, is an emblematic figure in whose work issues of

architecture appreciation and preservation, tourism, and photography converge.

Convinced as he was of the ethical and spiritual value of the built environment, Ruskin

saw in Gothic architecture the expression of the creative energy and morality of the

society that produced it. As he considered preservation an even worse form of destruction

that ruin itself, Ruskin regarded photography as the perfect medium to document the

status of buildings, and commissioned daguerreotypes of details of monuments in

Florence such as Orsanmichele, the Cathedral, Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistery[6].

Furthermore, as part of his effort to bring medieval and early Renaissance Florentine art

closer to his fellow British contemporaries, he published the guidebook *Mornings in

Florence* between 1875 and 1877, suggesting visits to artworks (mainly frescoes and

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[6] Paolo Costantini and Italo Zannier believe these daguerreotypes were produced in 1846. Some
daguerreotypes where acquired on site from local daguerreotypists, while others were produced under
Ruskin's supervision by John "George" Hobbes.

paintings) in the churches of Santa Croce and Santa Maria Novella, the Cathedral, and the Uffizi Gallery.

Such an intense flux of visitors made it necessary – or at least profitable – for the city to adjust to their practical needs and cultural expectations[7]. Hotels, cafes, restaurants, and reading rooms filled the city center, progressively changing its appearance from popular to middle-class[8]. The antiques market flourished with antiquarian shops popping up to occupy entire streets, where it was possible to purchase objects supposedly produced during the Renaissance. The city administration launched a set of restorations and completions of historical monuments grounded in the "diffuso culto della reintegrazione della presunta immagine archetipa, primigenia" (widespread cult of reinstating the supposedly archetypal, primordial image, Dezzi Bardeschi 5). These restorations, far from recovering the past, contributed to produce a new city. Just to give an example, during the 1860s one of the medieval city gates, Porta San Niccolò, acquired a brand new crenellation feebly justified by traces found on the cornice, meant to adjust its appearance to the idea of how a medieval tower should look.

On a more structural level, the city's image was progressively revamped as the "most artisanal city in Italy", as Florentine Fascist leader Alessandro Pavolini eventually defined it in 1929. A 'Florentine style' emerged throughout the 19th century, whose roots were grounded in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, shaping the production of furniture, frames, jewelry, clothes, mosaics, wrought iron, and books. Each of these

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[7] Starting from 1864, Florence was also the destination of tours organized by British tour operator Thomas Cook, which targeted middle-class tourists.

[8] The best-known reading room, the Gabinetto Viesseux, opened as early as 1820 and offered a growing number of European journals and books.

objects, witness of the continuity of past and present, "sembra portare con sè la storia e la sapienza dei secoli" (seems to bring back centuries-long history and knowledge, Paolini 148). However, as Anna Pellegrino has demonstrated in *La Città Più Artigiana d'Italia* (The Most Artisanal City in Italy, 2014), starting from the early 1880s the reference to Florence's long-established artisan vocation concealed a deliberate reorganization of artisan traditions into a modernized manufacture that could compete with mass production while retaining high quality levels. To this end, production was redirected from everyday objects to high-end products, while artisans upgraded their laboratories' organization, procedures, and machinery to obtain more serialized and standardized products adjusted to the new market conditions engendered by industrial development.

Photography, Pellegrino argues, is one of the fields where such a reorganization was most noticeable. Indeed, the production and consumption of photographs contributed to the above described process in which "le istanze di rinnovamento si coniugano … con le spinte al mantenimento della tradizione, la modernizzazione si intreccia con l'intervento di forze legate alla conservazione" (the need for innovation goes hand in hand with the observance of tradition, modernization and conservation overlap, Pellegrino 230). Pellegrino sees the Alinari Brothers as the example of an enterprise that, grounded in the traditional production of engravings, turned from an artisan and individual practice into a serialized and standardized production of excellent quality (197). And, with this, we come back to where we started. For the wealth of its heritage and cultural activities, for its relevance on the national as well as international stage, for the presence of travelers and foreign residents, and for the complex if uneasy coexistence of modernization and tradition, Florence was the perfect place to be fixed by a medium

that, as Hill and Minghelli argue, look both backwards to historic heritage and forward to the dissemination of serialized images.

The overview that I have sketched here is of the greatest importance to appreciate both Florence's modernization and the role that photography played in it. Chapter One, "Photographs of a Death Foretold", is devoted to these issues. The chapter analyzes photographs of monumental Florence by the Alinari Brothers as the place where the contradictions of modernity are exposed, questioned, amplified, and anticipated; where all that was being repressed in the actual city is recorded in the remnants of Florence's glorious past to be projected into the city's future. In order to do so, this chapter retraces Florence's urban modernization throughout the 19th century, from the first changes that characterized the Grand Duchy of Leopold II, the last of the Lorraine family to rule over Tuscany; to the more systematic plan for the city's growth that was carried out as Florence became capital of Italy; to the so-called *riordinamento del centro* (reorganization of the city center), that dramatically altered one of the most ancient and meaningful parts of the city at the end of the century.

These processes show how an initial if not so intense adhesion to innovation and industrialization progressively enmeshed with the reorganization of the city as a commercial and touristic hub, as the city was more and more assimilated to its global myth. And yet, myth and actual city never completely overlapped, and this movement remained ambiguously suspended between image and reality in all the aspects of the city's urban development: a process that the Alinari Brothers' photographs reveal in all its contradictions. Throughout this story Florence emerges as the paradoxical case of a city that became the first and most represented subject of the biggest photographic

archive in Italy – that is, of the modern medium *par excellance*, at least until cinema's appearance – while never reaching the status of an industrial city, lest that of a metropolis.

This is even more paradoxical if one considers that Florence is nowadays the center (at least culturally) of an urban agglomeration that includes the cities of Prato and Pistoia as well as many smaller centers. Accordingly, Florence has been defined a "Metropoli interrotta" (interrupted Metropolis, Muzzetto 128) for its conceptual rather than practical inability to fully embrace the social as well as aesthetic and ethical complexity and diversity of urban fragments, which is characteristic of the modern metropolis. The Alinari photographs take part in this difficult process of dealing with the appearance of a modern city built around, on top, and sometimes in place of the old one, by negotiating the interplay of past and modernization, nature and culture, commerce and art, heritage and industry. As the city where modernity is denied as it appears, and refused as it inexorably advances, Florence emerges as the best site to observe its contradictions, which become even more apparent as the Alinari's photographic focus is on the past.

Such desires and anxieties are not only those of the present, but look forward to a city that doesn't exist yet. As Shelley Rice argues in *Parisian Views* (1997), a study of the photographic representation of Haussmann's expansion of Paris (one of Florence's models), photography was able to "visualize not only the city that existed … but also the one that would be coming into being" (12). Merged as they are in the economy of dissemination and exchange brought forward by modernity, the Alinari photographs invest the historical landscape with a mobilizing power that makes it unstable and

restless, pointing at a future that is the one we still inhabit. Besides anchoring the

represented areas and monuments to an economy of nostalgia related to a "past that had

never existed or had ceased to exist, or … an imaginary place from which one felt

estranged" (Boyer 305), the Alinari photographs also activated the monuments by

negotiating their position and function in the future city that was just taking shape in the

second half of the 19th century.

The complexity of this city portrait, I argue, is the reason for its lasting

dissemination, a dissemination that existing interpretations have explained through the

photographs' apparent visual as well as conceptual plainness and simplicity. On the

contrary, it is precisely their complexity as well as their power to embrace the

contradictions of the present and anticipate those of the future, which make them a

compelling precedent that subsequent visual representations of Florence have confronted

up to this day. Chapter II, "A Pose is Still a Pose," follows the relationship between the

Alinari gaze on Florence and contemporary global cinema set in the city and analyzes the

ways in which the persistence of the Alinari gaze on Florence haunts the city's cinematic

representations, and the films at large.

The Florentine episode from Roberto Rossellini's seminal neorealist film *Paisan*

(1946) provides the framework through which subsequent cinematic representations of

Florence are examined. As the episode set in Florence depicts the city's monumental

landscape as the battlefield between Nazis and partisans, the film deeply contributed to

reassessing the relevance of the city on a global scale after Fascism and WWII as the

stage on which present events unfold. As such, its discourse on the city is the base on

which the city's role in films shot between the 1970s and the 2000s is analyzed. Such

films are Brian De Palma's *Obsession* (1976), James Ivory's *A Room with a View* (1986),

Dario Argento's *The Stendhal Syndrome* (1996), and Ridley Scott's *Hannibal* (2001).

The goal of this chapter is to reveal how frames reminiscent of some of the most

famous Alinari photographs open up the films to a set of issues that are of the greatest

importance for contemporary urban space. By drawing on the vast repository of meanings

embedded in the Alinari photographs, monumental Florence enables a discourse on urban

space that unfolds in the rest of the films. The persistence of the Alinari gaze helps bring

to the fore the conflicting needs of a speculative and an affective approach to architecture

(*Obsession*), the possibility of an emotional interaction with the city (*A Room with a*

View), the mediated nature of the relationship with the urban environment (*The Stendhal*

Syndrome), and the overlapping of tourist and surveillance gazes (*Hannibal*).

As Graham Swift argues in his reading of James Ivory's *A Room with a View*,

photographs work as a "catalyst" that brings into being the story's potential. Smith makes

reference to a scene in which some photographs are thrown into the river since they are

covered with blood. This fact seems to confirm the traditional notion of photography as

fixity and death as opposed to cinema as movement and progression, as the photographs

need to be purified and dispersed into the cinematic flow. However, as Swift argues, it is

only thanks to the act of throwing the photographs into the river that a first contact

between the two main characters takes place, bringing forward the plot.

My reading of films set in Florence inserts Swift's remarks into a broader context.

More specifically, I argue that it is less the presence of actual photographs than the

reference to pre-existing photographic representations to enable the film's development,

for the reference to the Alinari photographs makes available their complex and multi-

layered discourse on urban space. As such, the above discussed dispersion of the photographs into the rivers' flow can be considered as a means to disseminate their potential onto the entire film, expanding the floating meanings that the photographic images present and anchoring them to specific scenes or locations and characters appearing in the film.

The focus on monumental, touristic Florence, which distinguishes its cinematic rendering, can also be detected for the city's representations in contemporary art and tourism photography, which is explored in Chapter Three, "Group Portrait with Gaze". This chapter analyzes photographs from Gianni Berengo Gardin's *Viaggio in Toscana* (1967), Ghirri's *In Scala* (1977) and *Still Life (*1981), Olivo Barbieri's *site specific_FLORENCE 09* (2009), and Martin Parr's *Small World* (1997 and 2003); it then turns to the photographs of Florence from guidebooks *Tutto Firenze* (Rizzoli and Italian Touring Club, 1985), Frommer's *Florence & Tuscany day by day* (2006), and Fodor's *Florence, Tuscany &Umbria* (2007). In both cases, the chapter aims at uncovering the role that the Alinari iconography plays in these representations.

The chapter's first part, focused on art photography, highlights the enduring perception of Florence as limited to its monumental heritage, and is grounded in the theoretical discourse that sees tourism as "a central component of modern social identity formation and engagement" (Franklin 2). In this respect the reference to the Alinari photographs, a product of the decades that saw photography and travel emerge and grow inextricably linked, provides the opportunity for a self-referential practice through which photography interrogates its ability to represent, interpret, and engage urban landscape. Rather than involving the Alinari photographs in a centrifugal move that projects their

multiple meanings onto characters and other locations, as was the case for cinematic representations of Florence, contemporary art photography uses the Alinari photographs in a centripetal scrutiny that sees them as the first modern photographic depiction of a landscape that has been ever more shaped by tourist practices.

In this scrutiny, the Alinari photographs are perceived as the threshold that must be crossed in order to test the conditions of photographically seeing (in) an urban space saturated with old and new gazes. Thus, as this section provides a history of the progressive involvement with the discourse of tourism, it also marks the steps of a closer and closer confrontation with what is perceived as the 'canonical' representation of the view. In Berengo Gardin, the presence of mass tourism as well as pre-existing representations of Florence are deliberately avoided, as the idea of tourism still goes undistinguished from the nobler, more sophisticated notion of travel. With Luigi Ghirri such an innocence is no longer possible, and the photographs represent the city through its reproductions, which directly or indirectly reference Alinari photographs. Finally, Olivo Barbieri and Martin Parr project the city on a global scenario, respectively that of widespread urbanization and that of the interchangeability of tourist destinations. The city's pre-existing representations are no longer ignored as in Berengo Gardin or displaced as in Ghirri but finally taken for granted: Barbieri replicates them from a higher point of view, so as to absorb the presence of tourism within an all-encompassing perspective and reinsert the city in a process of change; Parr goes even further and hides the memory of the view behind other places' tourist representations.

The second section of this chapter examines photographic rendering of Florence in contemporary guidebooks. Clearly, the theoretical context of tourism continues to be

of use here. Within such a different context, however, the reference to pre-existing representations doesn't trigger a penetrating analysis of tourist discourse and practices; rather, it participates in a circular movement that establishes the tourist gaze less as the consumer of the view than as its very source. Thus, the self-referential discourse detected in contemporary art photography of Florence gives way to a discourse that justifies rather than scrutinizes the tourist gaze and establishes it as the only one possible.

As Chapters Two and Three reveal, the focus on monumental landscape in contemporary representations of Florence enables a deep analysis and understanding of contemporary urban space as shaped by forces that emerged in the second half of the 19th century, and were fixed by the Alinari photographs. Chapter Four, "Florence Reloaded", moves back to actual Florence and looks at its urban development in the 20th and 21st centuries in order to examine how these same forces shape the contemporary city, in continuity with the previous century. This account is grounded on the notion of abstract space described by Henry Lefebvre, as the geometric, visual, and repressive space produced by capitalist and then neocapitalist modes of production. The fascist era, WWII, post-war reconstruction, the economic boom, and deindustrialization are all accounted for in this chapter, revealing how the contrasting needs of heritage preservation and modernization still clash in contemporary Florence – a contrast that has been exacerbated by the 1982 nomination of the entire Florence's historical center as a UNESCO World Heritage site[9].

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[9] The two characteristics of Florence on which the UNESCO decision was grounded—its "monumentality and its complete representation of the concept of the Renaissance"—show how the city is still indebted to the myth of the cradle of the Renaissance established throughout the 19th century (Francini 435). More in detail, Florence met six of the ten UNESCO criteria that assess a site's exceptional value. According to these criteria, Florence: 1. Represents a masterpiece of human creative genius; 2. Exhibits an important

Within this context, the last part of this work examines post-2000 architectural and infrastructural developments in Florence, looking for places, ideas, or desires for which the Alinari photographs and their elusive relationship with both monumental heritage and modernization can still speak to today's Florence. This chapter does not search for visual correspondences between the Alinari photographs and contemporary Florence; it rather looks for the conceptual permanence of a residual, denied, or incomplete modernization, which also lies at the photographs' core. The notion of Florence as 'interrupted Metropolis' comes back to the fore as a city that has entered a post-industrial era without having fully entered modernity (Fei, Sica and Sica 172). As a result, modern and postmodern issues both find their way in contemporary Florence's structure, showing the city's urban development as the site of a fragmented continuity – precisely a continuity that moves forward through gaps and fractures – that calls for further analysis.

This last section does not claim to be exhaustive; rather, I consider it to be the first step towards the mapping of contemporary Florence's connections with its 19th-century past. The three case studies included here are the long-awaited inauguration of the first line of the new tramway (2010); the construction of the new Palace of Justice (2012); and the repurposing of the old penitentiary Le Murate into a residential and

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interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world (as it influenced the artistic and architectural development of Italy and Europe); 3. Bears unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared (the Middle Ages and the Renaissance); 4. Is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural of technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history (in particular, majestic buildings and palaces built by bankers and princes); 5. Is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, which is representative of a culture; and 6. Is directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Neoplatonic Academy, where the notion of artistic rebirth was forged).

cultural hub (2007). To follow the development of these contemporary structures allows

for a further immersion into the city's past, be it the first emergence of public

transportation, the previous fragmentation of the legal system, or the appearance of a new

form of detention, more apt to the needs of capitalism.

By exploring the connections of the three contemporary developments with urban

issues emerged in the Alinari photographs, this chapter reveals how today's Florence is

still indebted – for better or worse – to its 19th-century development. More specifically,

the tramway T-1 line shows the enduring ambivalence of abstract space as the place of

inclusion, as the need for mobility and the fear of social contagion keep fighting over the

city center; the Palace of Justice highlights the persisting preeminence of the monument

as the vehicle for conveying meanings and organizing practices – a preeminence that is

used in the effort to transfer to the periphery some of the prestige of the city center; and

finally, Le Murate complex exposes the increased accessibility for leisure and tourist

activities as a development of the 19th-century dream of total visual control, that both

photography and the new type of detention tried to achieve in different ways.

A last, essential point that needs to be clarified concerns the influence of the

Alinari photographs, which is at the base of the present work. As previous pages show,

my research does not look to retrace the ways in which the Alinari photographs were

disseminated throughout the decades and came to influence subsequent representation

and the city's contemporary structure. Rather than a topic to discuss, this is an

assumption on which the present work is grounded, to be verified in contemporary visual

culture and not retraced in the many ways that transferred 19th-century iconography of

Florence to the present day. Indeed, the very first idea of my research was born out of this

assumption, as I read that the Alinari photographs enjoyed such an enduring success that

they ended up replacing the places and monuments they represent (Bollati 48). The aim

of this work is precisely to understand why this has happened rather than how, and to

reconstruct the ways in which these photographs still speak to today's world.

Photography historian and critic Carlo Arturo Quintavalle perfectly summarizes

this point as he asks

> come mai gli Alinari, … sono stati cosi importanti per tre generazioni e come mai hanno determinato un modo di ripresa delle architetture, delle sculture e delle pitture; e come mai sono stati imitati dai fotografi locali; e come mai hanno finito per imporre non solo una tipologia fotografica di ripresa a livello europeo ma un'immagine dell'Italia e dei suoi monumenti che é stata recepita, attraverso quelle fotografie, e quindi collezionata ma anche copiata in molti atelier dell'Occidente. Insomma che cosa c'é di nuovo in queste fotografie che, troppe volte viste, finiscono per sembrare obsolete dopo decine di 'passaggi' nelle illustrazioni dei manuali, sulle copertine dei quaderni di scuola, in ogni genere di icone del sacro, in ogni tipo di riproduzione di opera d'arte e che, adesso, sono vendute tramite Internet? (22)

> why the Alinari were so important for three generations and why did they establish a specific way of looking at architecture, sculpture, and painting; and why did local photographers emulate them; and why did they end up imposing not only a photographic gaze at a European level but also an image of Italy and its monuments that was embraced, through those photographs, and then collected but also copied by many ateliers in the West. In other words, what is new about these photographs that, seen too many times, end up looking outdated after appearing endless times in textbooks illustrations, notebooks' covers, religious images of all kinds, all sorts of artworks' reproductions, and that are now sold online?

Quintavalle's remarks make it clear that the Alinari Brothers established a photographic

gaze on Italy and more specifically Florence that imposed itself on a scale that exceeded

the Italian (and even European) boundaries, and that became the canonical way to image

the Italian urban and monumental landscape. Therefore, it is not necessary to assume a

direct link between the Alinari photographs and the photographic or cinematic work that in various ways engage them. Rather, it is possible to postulate that the Alinari gaze was absorbed and then worked as an implicit reference associated with the places it has represented.

Partially in contradiction with what I just said I want to mention that many North American departments of art history and architecture acquired Alinari photographs of Italian architecture (and to a lesser extent from other Italian photography studios) as a visual aid for classes on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. D. Medina Lasansky in *Renaissance Perfected* (2004) reminds us that in the second half of the 19th century the private collections of Alinari photographs of Andrew Dickson White and Henry Hobson Richardson ended up respectively at Cornell University and Harvard University, "provid[ing] the basis for a study collection for … students for the next one hundred years" (50). This did not happen only at Harvard or Cornell: indeed, many Alinari photographs of Florentine and Italian architecture figure in the collection of the Department of Art History of Rutgers University, and it is possible to hypothesize that this was the case for many other North American universities as well.

This means that, for several generations of students, the first contact with Florentine architecture happened through the Alinari photographs. These collections, as it is easy to imagine, have progressively lost their function throughout the last few decades, replaced by the instant availability of all types of images on the Internet. Thus, it seems that the Alinari gaze will lose at least part of its prominence in constructing people's visual imaginary of Florence. From now on, it is only possible to imagine what the future of these images will be.

Chapter 1

Photographs of a Death Foretold

1.The Year 1852: A Good Start

Our story starts in 1852 Florence, when Leopoldo Alinari (1832-1865), a young

apprentice of the copper engraver Giuseppe Bardi, took on photography and with his two

brothers Giuseppe (1836-1890) and Romualdo (1830-1890) fixed his hometown's

monumental heritage in images that were both commercially successful and critically

acclaimed. In a few decades the Alinari Brothers produced a vast and ever increasing

archive of views of medieval and Renaissance Florence and then the rest of Italy, which

is to this day one of the most extensive and influential depiction of a city, and of a

country as well. This chapter aims to reveal the deep, if sometimes elusive, relationship

of the Alinari Brothers' work with the processes of urban development that took place in

Florence in the second half of the nineteenth century, a relationship that has been

overlook by existing scholarship on the Alinari Brothers. As this chapter argues, the

Alinari gaze on the city exposed, however at times indirectly, the contradictions and

anxieties inherent in Florence's modernization, and are therefore a unique tool for

understanding the modern city, and the contemporary one as well. In order to carry out

such a plan, this chapter retraces the first four decades (1852-1890) of the Alinari

Brothers' activity; analyzes the ways in which their work has been conceptualized;

follows Florence's urban development throughout the nineteenth century; and finally

looks at the Alinari photographs within the context of the city's modernization.

Before we begin, it is important to underline the implications of starting a

photographic venture with an emphasis on architecture in 1852. Indeed, according to

Richard Robertson, architectural photography's coming of age had happened only one year before, in 1851 (2). Photography had been officially invented twelve years before when, in January, 1839, an announcement published in the official bulletin of the French Academy of Sciences in Paris had revealed Louis Jack Mande Daguerre's invention of the daguerreotype, a direct positive image obtained by exposing a sensitized silver-coated copper plate to light[10]. In February, William Henry Fox Talbot announced in London the rival calotype process, destined to a much longer life than the daguerreotype in that it allowed the production of a limitless number of prints from a single negative. Consequently, the new invention reached across the globe and the 1840s and 1850s saw professional photography studios spring everywhere, especially in Europe and the United States. In Italy, this happened with a concentration in renowned cities such as Rome, Venice, Naples, and Florence, whose wealth of monuments was extremely appealing for the new medium's initial focus on architecture.

Throughout the first years of photography architecture looked like the perfect match for the burgeoning photographic medium, whose long-time exposure required static objects – preferably merged in natural light – and whose accuracy for details and proportions could best be explored through the clear-cut masses and sharp angles of palaces and churches. Even though the more detailed and defined daguerreotype seemed to offer the best visual rendering of architecture, the fact that it could not be reproduced made it soon unsuitable for a potentially extensive commercial use. In 1851, Frederick Scott Archer's wet-collodion process and glass plate negative appeared, which could

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[10] In August of the same year François Arago with Daguerre presented the invention to a meeting of the Academics of Sciences and Fine Arts.

record fine detail and, together with the albumen print, were destined to become the dominant method for architectural photography for about 30 years.

The year 1851 also marked the intersection of architectural photography with the rise of European and to a lesser extent American nationalism, resulting in what James Ackermann calls the "urge of both the practitioners and the public to celebrate the monuments and scenery they saw as most indicative of the national identity" (77). In Europe, such an urge was primarily directed to historical monuments and sites, which came to represent the essence of national culture. The French Mission Heliographique is a compelling example of the relationship between architectural photography and nationalism. In 1852, the French Historical Monuments Commission charged five French photographers with the task of photographing historical (mainly medieval) buildings across France, in order to ensure the knowledge of the national architectural heritage and record its state before restoration works. Even though it is impossible to find such a massive state intervention in architectural photography's history in other countries, everywhere in the West early photography played a decisive role in the establishment of a national canon of ancient and modern buildings, and became all the more essential for architects engaging with both the restoration of ancient buildings and the construction of new ones.

Another factor contributing to the increasing significance of architectural photography was the awareness of the commercial value of the photograph, which in 1851 brought Louis-Désiré Blanquart-Evrard to open the *Imprimerie Photographique* in Lille, the first printing factory with a large number of employees. Although Blanquart-Evrard's experiment only lasted four years, it showed that "by 1851 the essentials [for the

commercialization of photographs] seemed to be there: the ability to produce durable, high-resolution prints in sufficient numbers to moderate the price and the institutional framework and recognition needed to ensure distribution on a scale that could provide a living for photographers" (Robinson 3). Indeed, thanks to photography's documentation value and accuracy of depiction, it immediately became a means to travel vicariously, making far and renowned places available even for those who could not directly experience them. Photographs soon replaced drawings, paintings, and engravings as a tool for armchair travels of a rising bourgeoisie more and more eager to have the whole world in the palm of their hands. Photography contributed to what Jean-Louis Comolly famously called the 'frenzy of the visible', which emerged in the second half of the 19[th] century and was provoked by the "geographical extension of the field of the visible and the representable" and rendered "the whole world … visible at the same time that it bec[a]me appropriatable" (122-23). If this is true in general, it is even more so in the case of Italy, where "a thriving commercial market for photographs of buildings was created by the boundless appetite of Grand Tourists for pictorial mementos" (Elwall 21). Indeed, the early photographic depiction of Italy was bound to a touristic appetite coming from abroad, and those who first captured the Italian landscape with the camera were 'foreign amateurs' such as the French Frederic Flacheron and Eugene Costant and the British Alfred-Nicolas Normand, John Alexander Ellis, Calvert Richard Jones, and George Bridges.

2.Leopoldo Founds the Alinari Firm, Or: How Florence Met Photography

Florence's first encounter with photography dates as back as 1839, when scientist Tito Puliti demonstrated the procedure to obtain a daguerreotype at the Museum of Physics

and Natural History on September 2. In 1842, engineer and physic Giovan Battista Amici introduced the calotype process in Florence, thanks to his acquaintance with Talbot.[11] Throughout the 1840s, Florence was the subject of foreign traveler photographers such as daguerreotypist John Alexander Ellis and calotypists Calvert Richard Jones and William Robert Baker. In 1851 Florence's engagement with photography became official, when the Italian Photographic Society was established by pharmacist Pietro Semplicini and painters Vero Veraci and Francesco Bensa and professional studios were established by, besides Leopoldo Alinari, John Brampton Philipot (1850), Anton Hautmann (1858), Alphonse Bernoud (1859), and Giacomo Brogi (1864), just to mention a few.

With Leopoldo Alinari, joined in 1854 by his two brothers Giuseppe and Romualdo respectively as a technician and an administrator, the relationship of photography and the city takes on a systematic and consistent character. Due to the scarcity of documents, critics have struggled to retrace Leopoldo Alinari's and his brothers' initial sources, contacts, and technical knowledge[12]. As for Leopoldo's background, the traditional story tells us that he was exposed to the work of Venetian-based photographer Bresolin and Roman-based photographer Anderson while still working for *Stamperie Bardi* (1852-54), as chronicles of the time record that the engraver sent the young photographer to Venice and Rome in order to have him acquainted with the latest achievements in the photographic field[13].

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[11] Giovan Batista Amici is also the founder of the factory Officine Galileo, which we will encounter later in this chapter.

[12] As Monica Maffioli states, "no trace remains today within the firm of the original documentation of the Stabilimento Fotografico Alinari, whether administrative or of a working nature" ("Gli Alinari: Una Famiglia" 27).

[13] See 'Rivista Enciclopedica Italiana', April 1855, II.4, p. 65. Bresolin's influence on young Leopoldo Alinari is suggested by Zannier; Leopoldo's exposure to the work of Anderson and Lorent (respectively on

While such an influence is not to be denied, Quintavalle suggests that Leopoldo's and his brothers' training had a much broader scope. Indeed, the Alinari Brothers' early close relationship with the European – in particular French and British – photographic community is documented by a series of articles written by critic Ernst Lacan for the leading French photography journal "La Lumiere. Revue de la Photographie, Beaux Arts, Heliographie, Sciences" starting from 1855[14]. Furthermore, Wladimiro Settimelli has recently recovered the correspondence of Leopoldo and Giuseppe Alinari with Giuseppe Mazzoni, a previous official of the temporary government of Tuscany who was exiled in Paris after Leopold II came back in power and there became the Alinari firm's representative. These letters, written between 1855 and 1856, bear witness to the many interactions that the Alinari Brothers had with French photographers such as Auguste Rosalie Bisson and other photography commercial firms, Leopoldo's many trips to Paris, London, and Vien, and Giuseppe's various experiments[15].

However, it seems undeniable that the apprenticeship at the *Stamperie Bardi* was of the greatest importance for young Leopoldo, since he was exposed there to the commercialization of engravings taken from landscape and architectural daguerreotypes. Moreover, *Stamperie Bardi* also provided the place where the Alinari Brothers could sell their first photographs. In July 1855 the Alinari images were already 84, with as many as 39 representing Florence, while the remaining ones focused on Pisa, Siena, and different

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Rome and Venice) is mentioned by Miraglia (460). Maffioli also includes the above-mentioned Florentine photographic community as part of Leopoldo's training ("Gli Alinari: Una Famiglia", 12).

[14] Leopoldo's trips to London are documented by a letter published on the October 6, 1855 issue of "La Lumiere". In this letter Leopoldo recounts his experimentation with the Sutton fixing technique, which he learned about while in London.

[15] The letters are kept at the Biblioteca Forteguerriana in Livorno. They have been analyzed by Wladimiro Settimelli (Fotologia 18-19, 1997, pp. 18-25) and published in Quintavalle's 2003 monography on the Alinari.

towns of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The year 1856 was of the greatest importance for

the Alinari Brothers, as the Alinari firm was officially established with a small laboratory

on Via Cornina in Florence (occupied by Leopoldo since 1852), while the first two

catalogues were published respectively in April and September. The first catalogue,

published in French, contained 110 photographs. Again, most of the photographs focused

on architecture, and Florence still retained the first place for the number of subjects. The

September catalogue, which also included photographs of towns and cities of the

Pontifical State and Umbria such as Perugia, Assisi, Viterbo, and Orvieto, was the first

step in a path that brought the Alinari to capture the whole peninsula within their

photographs.

From the beginning, the Alinari photographs stood out for their excellent

quality both in terms of shooting and printing. Such a high quality was the result of the

Alinari Brothers' clever experiments with the lighting of the photographed scene, the

use of different chemicals to sensitize the glass plate, and the fixing of the image on

paper, for which they were in touch with some of the most advanced photographers in

France and England. As a consequence, business flourished in and outside Italy and in

1863 the Alinari Brothers moved their company to a bigger and more prestigious

location on thevia Nazionale (part of which has since been renamed Largo Alinari). This

new location served at once as residence, printing and fixing laboratory, office, and

storehouse of an endlessly-growing collection of glass negatives. The Alinari building

still exists and holds their archive, where photographs are still printed from the original glass plate negatives[16].

As soon as 1855 the Alinari Brothers took part in the World Fair in Paris, where they got recognition on an international level. Above mentioned Ernst Lacan wrote the text accompanying the photographs presented in that occasion. In this and other texts Lacan praised the Alinari's photographs for their "choix intelligent des effets de lumière, la pureté des lignes et une transparence dans les ombres" (brilliant choice of light effects, the purity of lines, and transparency of shadows, qtd in *Dictionnaire des Photographes: Les Dictionnaires d'Universalis*), which are some of the critical remarks still made about the Alinari photographs. Moreover, from the same year 1855 the Alinari photographs were sold in Paris through the Bisson Frères, Daziario, and Goupil, and in Berlin through the atelier of Hanns Hanfstaengl. The foreign markets were indeed of the greatest significance for the success of the Alinari Brothers, who in the 1870s reported to a governmental committee that most of their photographs were sold abroad, especially in France, England, and Germany. The Alinari photographs also reached the United States, though indirectly, since some of the photographs sold to Britain were from there sent overseas.

In 1865 Leopoldo died. However, the firm's guidelines had been more than established by then and the enterprise was not affected by its founder's death. Significantly, in the same year the Alinari Brothers published their fourth catalogue containing 235 photographs, out of which nearly half had been taken in Florence.

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[16] No negative has survived until 1863.

Throughout the decades, even when the Alinari Brothers' activity reached almost the whole peninsula, the city of Florence retained the first place as the object of their photographs, and the number of the photographed places and monuments in Florence kept growing: in the 1873 catalogue, out of 2794 photographs as many as 601 represented views, monuments, and statues in Florence. In 1867 the Alinari Brothers again presented their photographs at the World Fair in Paris. At that time the Alinari firm printed 60.000 photographs per year, both for the national and the foreign markets, and hired 17 employees (Maffioli, "Gli Alinari: Una Famiglia" 34). Even though architectural photography was the main product of the Alinari firm, they were also renowned for their photographs of painting and sculptures[17], and devoted part of their production to portraits, to which genre specific rooms were destined in the new building. From the 1870s the Alinari Brothers expanded the field of their activity and reached Milan and Naples in 1873, Rome in 1876, Arezzo, Bologna, and Ferrara in 1881, Genova, Padua, Turin, and finally Venice in 1887. In 1890 both Giuseppe and Romualdo died, and Leopoldo's son Vittorio took the reins of the family business. This is when we leave the Alinari Brothers, since at that point both the so-called 'Alinari style' and its influence on the perception and representation of Florence were both established.

3.Views on the Alinari Photographs

The first catalogue, as all the following catalogues in the first years of the Alinari's activity, follows a very specific pattern in approaching the urban landscape. It starts with

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[17] In 1858 the Alinari Brothers were commissioned by Alberto d'Inghilterra a series of photographs of Raffaello's drawings held at the Academy of Venice and in the private collection of Charles of Hasburg in Vienna. In 1860 they were granted one-year permission to photograph the most famous paintings in the Uffizi Gallery and the Pitti Palace. In 1876 John Ruskin commissioned them to photograph Botticelli's frescoes.

a view of the city taken from the distance. Then, the main monuments follow: in the case

of Florence, the Cathedral, the Giotto Bell Tower, the Baptistery's doors, Palazzo

Vecchio and the Signoria Square, the Loggia dei Lanzi with its sculptures, the most

important churches (Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, San Marco), the bridges, some

palaces (Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Palazzo Strozzi, and Palazzo Pitti), and the Boboli

Garden. After that, some of Florence's most renowned paintings and statues follow (the

Medici Venus in the Uffizi Gallery, Giambologna's *Mercurio*, and Sansovino's *Baccus*,

to mention a few). The same pattern applies to the other represented cities as well: as for

the first catalogue, Pisa and Arezzo follow the same view that zooms from the enclosing

view to the details[18].

According to Quintavalle, through the catalogue's structure a specific narrative

of the city unfolds, one that also informs each one of the photographs. Quintavalle is the

critic that has so far given the most extensive and articulate interpretation of the Alinari

photographs. With his interpretation, he has managed to turn the characteristics usually

ascribed to them (sometimes in a derogatory, or at least condescending, fashion) such as

their clarity, precision, and plainness, into the result of a coherent and conscious

conceptual plan. Indeed, if one excludes Quintavalle's monograph *Gli Alinari* ("The

Alinari"), published in 2003, the literature on the Alinari photographs does not offer

many surprises and rather follows the same patterns over and over again. In fact, all the

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[18] Starting from the 1873 catalogue, images are listed differently. The first pages present an alphabetical index of the cities represented in the photographs, and for each city there is a list, also in alphabetical order, of the subjects (for example, in the case of Florence, the Baptistery, the Cathedral, the Pitti Palace, etc.), indicating the pages where one can find them. The proper catalogue follows, where all the available views of each subject are listed. The left section of each page presents a tab with all the different formats in order of increasing size (*carte de visite*, stereoscopic, album, small, medium, small, extra, big), indicating in what formats each specific view is available and the number that identifies the format/view combination.

critical readings of the Alinari photographs focus on their relationship with the previous

pictorial and graphic tradition, and analyze the photographs mainly in terms of their

composition techniques, barely taking into account the different medium involved. This

has prevented an in-depth and focused analysis of the photographs outside the frame of

reference of painting and graphic arts, to such an extent that categories such as

perspective and *chiaroscuro* often dominate such analyses. Furthermore, the Alinari

photographs' great influence and widespread diffusion, rather than pushing critics to

analyze their specific features, has actually brought them to assume that the photographs

must be a certain way, e.g. plain, clear, and obvious, precisely because of their success.

As a result, the Alinari photographs have somewhat been taken for granted, and a

singular process of effacement of the photographs themselves has occurred.

The collection of essays in the exhibition catalogue *Gli Alinari Fotografi in

Firenze 1852-1920* (The Alinari Photographers in Florence 1852-1920, 1977) can be

considered the first chapter of this critical history. In the first essay "La Famiglia Alinari

e la Fotografia Italiana dell'Ottocento" (The Alinari Family and 19th-Century Italian

Photography), Wladimiro Settimelli argues that the Alinari's technical mastery is not an

end to itself as much as the tool necessary to offer "un'opera di lettura" (action of

interpretation) of the represented objects (28). The goal of such a technical virtuosity is to

obtain an image that can be easily and clearly read: "la fotografia … viene utilizzata al

massimo delle sue possibilità per rendere, nel modo giusto, un palazzo, una scultura, un

quadro, la piazzetta di un paese, un rudere, una strada, gli interni di una chiesa"

(photography is used at its highest in order to convey a building, a sculpture, a painting, a

small town's plaza, a ruin, a street, or a church interior in the right way, *ibid.*) .This 'right

way' is a representation that makes the represented object immediately understandable in all its characteristics. Settimelli's notion of photography is more real than the real, since it can capture an object in such a way as to show its essence.

In the already mentioned *Note su fotografia e storia* (1980), Giulio Bollati recognizes the widespread influence of the Alinari photographs and goes as far as to say that the Alinari gaze, "filtrando nelle strutture percettive di generazioni di Italiani, ha finito per sostituirsi nella loro cultura agli stessi oggetti della visione" (penetrating the perceptual system of generations of Italians, ended up replacing the places and objects they represent" (151). Such an achievement, grounded in the effort to produce a national visual rhetoric, was obtained thanks to what Bollati calls the photographs' "integerrima neutralità e…quadrata ovvietà" (upright neutrality and … square obviousness, ibid.). In other words, so lasting a success stems not from the images' power and complexity, but rather from their being banal and predictable images, visual stereotypes.

In 1991, Italo Zannier in *Architettura e fotografia* ("Architecture and Photography") goes even further and argues that the Alinari photographs' clarity and legibility are no less than responsible for the common belief that photographs are but a mechanical and faithful reproduction of reality: "l'equivoco è stato accentuato proprio da una raffigurazione accurata e sistematica … che presume immagini nitidissime, con soggetti decontestaulizzati e privi di inquinamenti ambientali" (this misinterpretation has been emphasized precisely by an accurate and methodical depiction … producing clear images whose objects are decontextualized and free from environmental contamination, 25). Although conceding some unconventionality in the Alinari photographs' perspective and *chiaroscuro*, Zannier concludes that, since the photographs must submit to the

medium's rules, "esse non sono mai trasgressive rispetto alle regole dell'ortogonalità delle linee verticali e di un chiaroscuro moderato, onde ottenere il massimo di leggibilità sia delle ombre che delle grandi luci" (they never break the laws of the vertical lines' orthogonality and a moderate *chiaroscuro*, so that both the shadows and the big lights are as legible as possible, 71). So to speak, legibility is the highest value in the Alinari photographs, to which originality is sacrificed.

In her 1996 monograph *Il Belvedere. Fotografi e Architetti nell'Italia del dell'800* ("The Belvedere. Photographs and Architects in Nineteenth-Century Italy"), Monica Maffioli reiterates the influence of the previous graphic and pictorial tradition on the Alinari photographs. As a result of this influence, the photographs' depiction of the urban and architectural space is described as decontextualized, frontal, symmetrical, free from deformation, and highly linear, as it follows the type of vision established by the graphic tradition (40). Furthermore, Maffioli argues, while the Alinari photographs' draw on the graphic tradition for the *chiaroscuro* effects, they rather rely on the Renaissance perspective for the rendering of architecture. As a consequence of this perseverance in the choice of the formal models, the Alinari photographs feature a consistent "rigore compositivo" (composition strictness), whose results is "uno stile costante dalle prime foto fino alle ultime campagne realizzate negli anni Venti di questo secolo" (a fixed style that stays constant from the first photographs until the last campaigns in the 1920s, *ibid*.). Therefore, the relationship with the graphic and pictorial tradition provides an all-inclusive reading for the photographs and exempts the critic from the task of analyzing the single Alinari photographs in their specificity.

Things do not get much better when one considers the (scarce) critical literature that has appeared in English. In *Photography and Italy* (2003), Antonella Pelizzari points out that "the early Alinari view rendered the massive volumes and tight perimeters of medieval cities like Florence and Siena airy and spacious… due to the choice of central and symmetrical compositions" (46). While behind the Alinari photographs' airiness, spaciousness, and symmetry one can easily see a connection to their traditional description as clear and plain images, the reference to such tradition becomes apparent in the following passage. Indeed, Pelizzari contends, "a significant transformation took place from the earliest photographs … to the progressive creation of a codified 'Alinari style' " (48). Then, Pelizzari moves on to describe the Alinari photographs' sales network and their value as "a complete topography for the entire country" (*ibid.*). So deep-rooted is the traditional interpretation of the Alinari style that Pelizzari does not find it necessary to describe it: either because it is well-known, or because it is self-evident in the photographs themselves[19].

In her 2003 monograph *The Renaissance Perfected. Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy*, D. Medina Lasansky links the Alinari photographs to the mid-to-late nineteenth-century establishment of Tuscany as the cradle of the Renaissance. Lasansky reiterates the already discussed remarks that the Alinari photographs represented the monuments in isolation, with "carefully staged and framed" shots that adopted Renaissance system of perspective and "helped turn buildings into icons" (52).

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[19] On a similar note, see Victoria Mills' contribution to *Travel Writing, Visual Culture and Form, 1760-1900*: "The [Alinari] firm marketed photography as a transparent medium that was unimpeded by the vagaries of human agency. Photographers were not credited and there was a strong emphasis on producing a standardized product, which did not allow for signs of individual expression through the selection of a unique viewpoint or mode of lighting. …. Italy appears unchanged, untouched by modernity and able to provide a direct link to the classical past" (68).

Even though Lasanksy recognizes the Alinari photographs' mediated and constructed

nature, she reads them as representations "of a pristine and nostalgic past guided by

Renaissance models of composition and perspective", where all references to modernity –

be it the one that was shaping the urban space, or photographic experimentation – are

removed (55). Indeed, Lasansky argues that even when elements of urban modernization

enter the photographs, they are always framed by historical architecture, keeping the

city's perception anchored to the past.

In *Looters, Photographers, and Thieves* (2011), Pasquale Verdicchio focuses on

the Alinari photographs' value as a "nationalist repertoire" and "a visual stock of the

country and its inhabitants that … still holds its place in the imaginary of people around

the globe" (69). According to Verdicchio, the Alinari photographs' influence is based on

their "read[ing] their subjects through a variety of angles that offer up their most intimate

details and information" (73). As such the photographs, precisely thanks to their

reproducibility, are able to "reactivate" the object in a different context and end up being

"the sole holder of existing remnants of a disappearing, hidden, and often inaccessible

past" (74). While Verdicchio makes an effort to link the Alinari photographs to a broader

cultural context, his analysis doesn't engage the images' specificity, since the only

characteristics of the photographs that he mentions are their reproducibility and use of

diversified camera angles.

The last chapter of this history is the massive monograph *Gli Alinari* by

aforementioned Quintavalle, appeared in 2003. As discussed above, Quintavalle

undertakes a much more thorough and deep analysis of the photograph. In his analysis, he

describes how both throughout the catalogue and within each photograph the city is

produced as a consistent and coherent whole that unfolds around the famous historical monuments. Just like the catalogue brings the viewer to discover the city as an ordered and meaningful group of buildings and monuments, moving from the distance view to the details, so does every photograph, showing the objects and places they represent as an enclosed and harmonious system. Every single element plays a specific role in making the image readable and clear, and gently leads the gaze from the foreground to the background. Quintavalle understands the Alinari photographs as clear, symmetrical, and easily readable images. The main monument is usually at the center of the image, and the composition guarantees a harmonious relationship between it and the surrounding landscape.

As Quintavalle argues, in an Alinari photograph "la ripresa assiale, il paesaggio con al centro il monumento visto da lontano e il percorso di avvicinamento, il dettaglio, tutto deve essere organizzato in modo da permettere un'analisi precisa, una lettura assolutamente chiara dell'oggetto, tutto deve essere a fuoco, illuminato e leggibile, tutto deve essere privo di deformazioni" (everything – be it the axial take, each and every detail, the landscape with the monument in the background, and the visual path towards it – must be organized so to allow an accurate analysis and a clear-cut reading. Everything must be in focus, well-lit, and legible. There must be no deformities at all, 169). Quintavalle concedes that this is the result of the massive process of urban reconfiguration that took place in Florence in the second half of the nineteenth century, which changed the city's appearance by turning its medieval structure into a modern one. In fact, Quintavalle reads the Alinari photographs as an effort to produce an ordered and harmonious urban space, where everything is connected, precisely when the city was

being dramatically modified: "Si cerca di costruire una forma della città anche se essa quasi sempre è senza più limiti, senza margini, senza chiusure esterne, puntando l'obbiettivo verso il centro storico, verso alcuni luoghi nodali del sistema e usando, per organizzarli, una veduta centrica, simmetrica, un forte canale mediano che conduca dal primo piano al fondo" (They tried to produce a city-shape even though in most cases the city had no longer limits, edges, or closures. They accomplished that by pointing the camera at the city center and some of its crucial places and then organizing them in a centered and symmetrical view and through a strong middle path from the foreground to the background, 301). In other words, Quintavalle sees the relationship between the Alinari photographs and the modern city as one of mere opposition, as if their focus on the city center had the purpose to avoid what was going on in the rest of the city.

This view is shared by many of the Alinari photographs' critics. For example, Lasansky maintains that "by allowing any other structure [beside the monument] to enter into the frame, the photographer successfully reinforced the idea of Florence as a sequence of monuments" (52). Accordingly, Graham Smith argues that the Alinari photographs ca be considered the visual counterpart of one of the most disseminated mid-century guidebooks, the *Murray Handbook for Travelers to Northern Italy*, which will be discussed in Chapter Three[20]. In this respect, Smith maintains that the Alinari photographs "isolate the historical monuments from its ambience and from contemporary life, investing it with an abstract and somewhat remote character (2005, 27). The goal of this chapter is to reveal how all these interpretations overlook the deep, if elusive, interaction between the Alinari photographs and the processes of Florence's urban

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[20] Smith refers to the 1856 edition of the Handbook.

development. Such processes, I argue, affected the way the city was represented even when they did not directly appear in the image – or were not going to change the represented areas and monuments. Later in this chapter the analysis of the Alinari photographs will reveal the different ways in which this happened. For now, it is time to look at the process of Florence's modernization more in detail.

4.1830s-1890s: Florence Grows Up

Such a process sheds light on the specific characteristics of a city that based its centuries-long unique development on an original and fertile coexistence of, as architecture historian Franco Borsi explains, beauty and collective utility – be it economic, social, or public. In this view, all Florence's achievements in the arts are both based on and justified by the search for "una coerenza interna ,… un profondo equilibrio" (an internal consistency, a profound balance) that cannot be separated by the practical needs of the collectivity (Borsi, *Firenze* 10). This happy marriage is exemplified by the symbolic fusion of aesthetics and functions in Orsanmichele, a majestic building erected in 1337 for the commerce and conservation of grain. For its architectural type, a loggia surmounted by two stories covered with wide vaults, Borsi defines it "the cathedral of grain"[21](*Firenze* 12). However, as this chapter will show, this balance seems to progressively lose ground throughout the 19th century. At this time, the choices that city administrators as well as citizens had to face when confronted with what was going on in part of Europe, that is, industrial revolution, progressively pushed the city to image itself

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[21] Such a remark is proved by the fact that, in the second half of the 14th century, the building's first ground was turned into an oratory.

as leaning towards the side of beauty, refusing to embrace a new type of utility that appeared more and more frightening.

These choices, clearly, are not specific to Florence's history, as arguably every city in Western Europe was summoned to choose its future. However, the answers that Florence provides when confronted with industrial modernization are less in line with the city's history than with the interpretation of that history that was being projected on the city from the inside as well as the outside. As discussed above, this interpretation sees Florence as the birth place of a Renaissance read as only grounded in the arts, in humanistic (rather than technological) culture, and in the monopoly of formalism (Borsi, *Firenze* 15). The unfolding of the 19th century in Florence shows at first an at least partial adhesion to the needs of the new international economic order, and then a progressive retreat into the realms of a specific notion of (touristic) beauty, perceived as less related to the present than to history. And yet, the process that I have just outlined is a very ambiguous and elusive one, and needs to be addressed very cautiously. First of all, it must be observed that Florence's industrial development, however partial, irregular, and only in few cases detached from craftsmanship, is not completely absent as it is overlooked, dismissed, removed, and finally circumscribed to a peripheral area where it will have a somewhat short life. Furthermore, the progressive tertiarization of Florence, which makes it today the capital of tourism, commerce, and distribution rather than that of production, can be seen as another way to modernization rather than an antithesis to it. Of this, more will be said in Chapters Three and Four.

As for 19th-century Florence, urban modernization started during the grand duchy of Leopold II (1824-1859) who, despite the administrative, economic, social, and legal

reforms enacted by Pietro Leopoldo (1765-90) and the grand projects planned during the

Napoleonic state (1801-1814), found a city's structure that was still medieval. In fact,

Florence's urban fabric was condensed in central areas and along the main arteries, while

the medieval walls encircled an external belt of still undeveloped, green areas. The

coexistence of residence, commerce, and handicraft production was still predominant, for

houses, markets, and workshops in most cases occupied the same buildings. However, the

first decades of the 19th century saw a situation that was slowly but inexorably changing,

as Florence's population rose by 15% from 1833 to 1850, the manufacturing production

kept expanding, and the first industrial complexes arose in different areas of the city (cfr.

pag. 70 in this chapter). At that moment, it became necessary to adapt the city to the new

needs of residents, businesses, and goods. The Grand Duke's interventions included the

widening of streets such as the Via dei Calzaioli (connecting the Cathedral to the Signoria

Square, where the customs of goods were located); the construction of residential

neighborhoods in replacement of vegetable garden fields within the medieval walls[22]; the

production of the first railroads to Leghorn, Pistoia, and Arezzo[23]; the inauguration of

two iron bridges connecting the sides of the Arno River at the far ends of the city, in

addition to the existing three stone bridges[24]; and the renovation of the sewage system as

well as the introduction of public gas lighting.

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[22] The new neighborhoods are the Barbano around Piazza Indipendenza (1844-55) and the one around the Cascine Park (1850-55).

[23] The railroads were built respectively from 1838 to 1848, from 1847 to 1851, and from 1850 to 1861. This achievement is even more impressing if one considers that the Leghorn-Pisa railroad is the second built in Italy after the Naples-Portici appeared in 1839.

[24] Opened in 1837, the two identical iron bridges were planned and built by the French Seguin Brothers. The Ferdinando Bridge, built by the San Niccolò Gate, was destroyed by a flood and rebuilt in 1853. In 1890 it was definitively replaced by a new bridge more apt to host the increasing traffic of vehicles. The San Leopoldo Bridge, built by the Cascine Park, was dismantled in 1932, when the new Vittoria Bridge appeared.

The appearance of the iron bridges and the railroads (replacing the transportation by water), together with the new embankments appeared in the 1860s, dramatically altered the centuries-long interaction between the city and the river. Mills, ports, wash houses, and old "tiratoi della lana" (wool dryer-houses) progressively gave way to homes, hotels, and official buildings such as the Stock Exchange (1858-60), "alterando i tradizionali rapporti di compresenza topografica e formale fra strutture delle attività produttive e monumenti per privilegiare forme e funzioni rappresentative nel centro della città borghese" (altering the traditional topographic and formal coexistence of productive structures and monuments in order to favor forms and functions of bourgeois decorum, Fanelli, *Firenze* 199). This way, a process was set in motion that eventually turned the relationship between Florence and the Arno River from personal and direct to mediated and contemplative[25] (Orefice, "L'Arno a Firenze" 64). As we will see, the same shift interested the city at large.

The processes of urban reconfiguration launched during Leopold II's Grand Duchy reached an unprecedented momentum after Italy became a unified nation in 1861 and its was moved from Turin to Florence in 1865 (and until 1871). At this point, a new housing plan was necessary to meet the needs of fifteen to twenty thousand officials, bureaucrats, and courtiers that were going to move to Florence together with the government and the court. Also, industries and businesses were expected to move to Florence from cities such as Genoa, Turin, and Milan, further expanding the city's economic and productive potential. As Florence for the first time needed a comprehensive plan for its future

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[25] Accordingly, by the end of the 19th century the gold laboratories and smithies that had occupied the Ponte Vecchio since the 16th century were replaced by standardized stores, which sold luxury jewelry produced elsewhere in the city.

growth*,* architect Giuseppe Poggi was appointed to design such a plan in 1864. Poggi

planned the demolition of the medieval walls (1865-69), replaced by a circuit of broad

tree-lined avenues connecting wide squares in which the old city gates were left as lone

fragments from the past[26]. All along such avenues and beyond them the city suburbs

popped up (Fig. 1). The new neighborhoods created by the Piano Poggi (together with

those built in previous decades) established for the first time the difference between the

"centro storico" (old city center) and its periphery, which was "fatta tutta di palazzine

ordinate ed uniformi suddivise in appartamenti di abitazione, contrapposta

all'articolazione, all'intreccio e alle varietà funzionali e spaziali dell'edilizia e

architettura della città pervenuta da secoli di storia" (composed of orderly and uniform

apartment houses, in turn divided in apartments, as opposed to the organic, intertwined,

and varied functions and spaces of the centuries- old city's architecture, Ventura 23). The

production of periphery as an undifferentiated and exclusively residential space, lacking

all the services and functions that remained a prerogative of the city center, caused the

city center to adapt to the needs of the newly produced suburbs, defining itself as an

administrative and tertiary hub.

Together with the *riordinamento del centro* (rearrangement of the city center) that

will be discussed later and the above mentioned urban modifications of the first half of the

century, the Piano Poggi gave a brand new structure to Florence, one that was in sharp

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[26] Critics have indicated the boulevards of Hausmann's Paris, Vienna's Ringtrasse, and London's parks as Poggi's main influences. Gabriella Orefice has added to that Alfred Guesdon's and Jules Arnaud's aerial images appeared in *Voyages Aerien en France* (1846). In particular, Orefice maintains that images of cities such as Orleans and Angers influenced Poggi's choices, as the two cities share several common traits with Florence (2011, 50-51). The Poggi Plan works were carried out by English company Florence Land Company Limited.
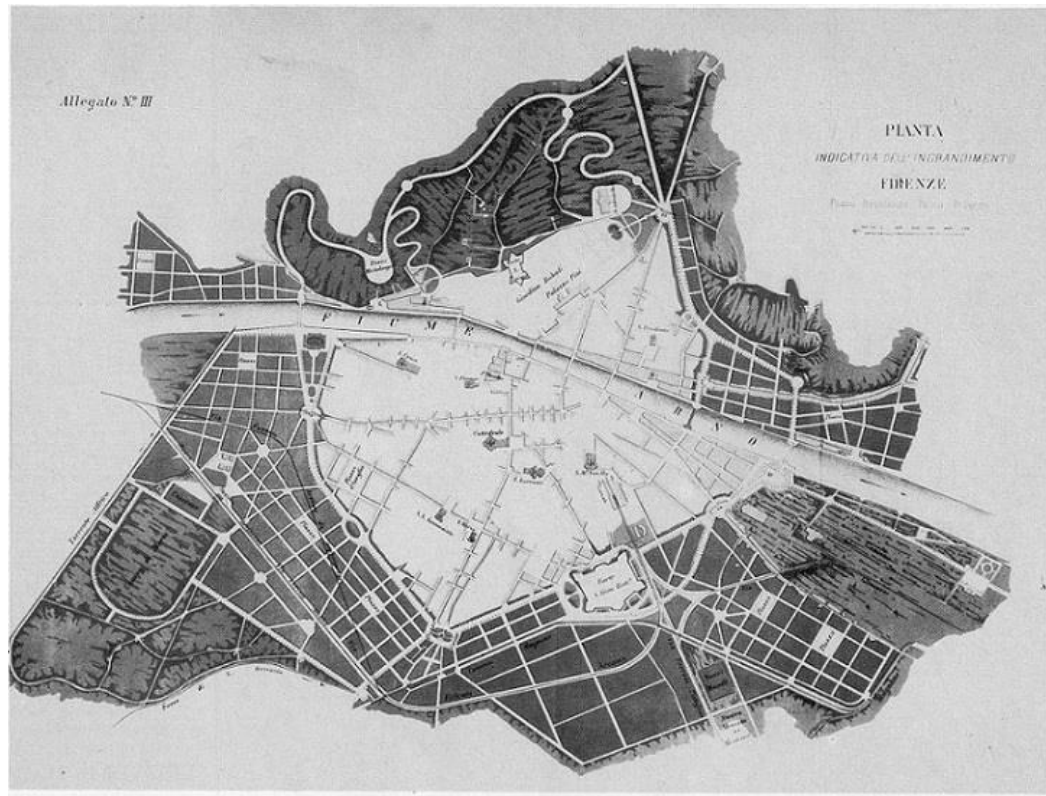
Fig. 1. The Poggi Plan for Florence

contrast with the old city layout: "the city center was to be regularized by opening up broad perspectives which would find their emphasis and conclusion in the city's historic buildings and monuments, so that these became testimonials to Florence' civic history and therefore occasions for gratifying self-regards" (della Torre and Pracchi 195). This process finds its perfect example in the new role ascribed to the medieval city gates, which is revealing of a deep change in the relationship between Florence and its past. Indeed, the gates turned from functional points of exchange between the city and its territory to scenographic structures, only serving to visually organize new urban spaces. What Shelley Rice writes about the Tour St. Jacques in Paris, photographed by Henry Le Secq in 1853, holds for Florence's city gates: it "remains as an object (art for art's sake, as it were), its community functions destroyed to underline its interesting historical and architectural shape" (17). Poggi himself, in his 1882 memoir on the works for the modernization of Florence, asserts that the medieval gates, rather than being diminished by their new function, acquired a new relevance as they became the visual catalysts of space. In Poggi's own words, "le disposizioni [sulle porte] date negli studi particolareggiati del Progetto furono tali da conseguire non solo la conservazione, ma di porle anco in maggiore evidenza situandole nel centro, o nei punti più importanti delle nuove piazza" (the directions [on the city gates] provided by the plan's detailed studies achieved not only their preservation, but their enhanced visibility by putting them in the middle of the new squares, or in their most relevant spots, 255).

As if trying to fill the gap between the city center and the suburbs, Poggi also planned the Viale dei Colli, an avenue that crosses the hills around Florence and connects the old and the new part of the city. In Poggi's view, the Viale dei Colli was meant to

provide Florence's residents with a modern version of the *veduta* from the hills, one that could be easily reached by omnibus from the train station. Halfway through the Viale dei Colli, and close to the church of San Miniato, there is a panoramic overlook from which the whole city center is visible, which codifies and fixes the experience of looking at Florence from above that generations of visitors to Florence had enjoyed, and not unfrequently sketched (Lasanski, *The Renaissance* 30). As a proof of the "self-referential nature of this viewing experience" (Kirk 194), the panoramic square was entitled to Michelangelo, and a bronze replica of Michelangelo's *David*, "a full-sized version of the souvenir simulacra sold to tourists in stalls beneath it" (*ibid.*), was placed at the center of the square.

According to Quintavalle, the Alinari photographs show a similar self-referential nature. As discussed above, Quintavalle and many other critics interpret them as focusing exclusively on the old city center, leaving outside of the frame all the changes that the city was undertaking as the Alinari Brothers were producing their images. This is a crucial point that has many implications and therefore needs to be evaluated from different angles. First of all, and from a very practical perspective, this reading overlooks the fact that the Alinari photographs also represent newly built structures, although they were not the main focus of their production. Indeed, by reading the Alinari catalogues from 1856 to 1887 it is possible to retrace the growing number of newly built structures that were deemed worthy of being included in the photographers' expanding archive of Florentine prides. In the 1850s catalogue, only the 1737 Triumphal Arch of the Lorraine and the 1827 English Cemetery exceeded the Alinari's Medieval and Renaissance

focus[27]. From the 1860s on, more and more nineteenth-century architectures are included in the Alinari catalogues: the iron bridges, the Piazza Indipendenza in the Barbano neighborhood, the new Arno embankments, aristocratic palaces springing along the Arno River, and the 1874 cast-iron Central market. However, even when the focus was on historic areas or monuments, which is the case for most photographs, it needs to be stressed that some of these monuments or areas were going to be restored, reshaped, converted to different purpose, or even demolished in the following years. Consequently, there was no harmonious city to oppose to the one that was undergoing big changes: the entire Florence was involved in the process of modernization that had started in the 1830s.

On a different level, it must be observed that photography was not a passive observer of the processes of modernization, as it played a very active role in shaping it. In other words, photography not only represented monuments that had changed or were going to change, but varioulsy contributed to these very changes. As Elwall has it, "the reason for [photography's focus on historic monuments] lay variously in the historicist nature of the period's architecture, which led architects to look to the past for inspiration; the early use of photography in building restoration; the concern that there was a fast disappearing world that should be recorded; the popularity of photographs of historic monuments as tourist souvenirs; and, above all, the continuing lure of the picturesque" (10). As Elwall suggests, the relationship between past and present is more complex than Quintavalle puts it. The recording of a both appealing and disappearing past goes hand in

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[27] The catalogues also represented the Tribune of Galileo, a neoclassical addition built by orders of Leopold II within the first floor of the Science Museum of La Specola and completed in 1841.

hand with its use as a model for the construction of modern buildings as well as the restoration of old ones. Past architecture is photographed not only to preserve at least its photographic memory, but also to be re-used and copied by contemporary architecture and restoration. The past falls back onto the present, and is at the same time affected by it.

In this respect, the Alinari Brothers played an important and multifaceted role in Florence, as they were variously involved in all the sets of changes that took place in Florence in these decades. As for the Poggi Plan, Poggi himself commissioned and used some photographs by the Alinari Brothers as a tool to check both the planning and the executive stages of its project[28]. The same can be said for the *riordinamento del centro*: some of the Alinari photographs represent areas of Florence that were going to be demolished, like the Mercato Vecchio and the Jewish ghetto areas, and whose memory only remains today in their (and other photographers') images. Finally, the Alinari Brothers were also involved in the process that, through three different competitions, led to the construction of the new Cathedral's façade in Neo-Gothic style (1876-1887), following a project by Emilio De Fabris. Before the selection of the winning project, the Alinari Brothers were asked to help visualize the potential results of the competitors' projects through photomontages.

The Alinari Brothers didn't include the photographs they took for architects in their catalogues (though they did include a photograph of Poggi Plan in the 1865 catalogue and one of the photomontages for the Cathedral's façade in the 1873

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[28] These photographs represent the medieval city gates.

catalogue[29]). However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the reshaping and completion of renowned monuments is well documented in the Alinari catalogues, as are the Old Market and Jewish Ghetto areas in their pre-demolition state. Such photographs bear witness to the Alinari's engagement with the processes of urban modernization that were taking place in Florence, and show once again how such processes need to be taken into account when analyzing the more famous and canonic images that were on sale both in Italy and abroad. Indeed, they reveal a deep, if sometimes indirect, interplay between past and present (and future) that must be retraced in order to understand the influence of the Alinari photographs' on subsequent representation of Florence. It is to such an interplay that I will now turn.

5.The Strange Case of the Alinari Photographs and the Cathedral's Facade

The most important church in Florence, the Cathedral is linked to two of the most prominent architects active in the city between the 13th and the 15th centuries: Arnolfo di Cambio and Filippo Brunelleschi. The first one, also the builder of the third and last medieval circle of walls (then demolished by the Poggi Plan), planned and started building the church on a pre-existing structure in 1296. Completed after the architect's death in 1367, but still lacking a façade[30], the church gained the renowned dome during the 15th century, following a plan by Filippo Brunelleschi. Next to the Cathedral is the

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[29] The photomontage included in the catalogue show the project by architect Andrea Scala.

[30] When Arnolfo died in 1310, half of the façade was completed, decorated with sculptures by the same architect. In 1586 Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici had the statues removed and placed in the Museum of the Cathedral as he decided to build a new façade. In 1688 the façade was painted as part of the celebrations for the wedding of Grand Prince Ferdinand of Tuscany with Violante Beatrice of Bavaria. This decoration is still partially visible in 19th century photographs taken before the new façade was built.

equally famous Bell Tower by Giotto, completed in 1359; in front of it stands the

Baptistery, one of the most ancient churches in Florence.

The Cathedral, together with the Bell Tower and the Baptistery, is the

monumental core of Florence. As such, in the Alinari catalogues from 1856 to 1865, the

Cathedral and a lateral view taken from Orsanmichele occupy the second and third place,

right after the panoramic view of the city from the Monte Alle Croci[31]. In the 1873

catalogue, as for the first time the subjects are organized in alphabetical order, the façade

loses its position but gains an increased number of views taken from 10 different angles.

One of them, the first one in which the entire façade is taken frontally, is described as

"Duomo da via Martelli, con la facciata senza intonaco tolto nel 1871 sotto la direzione

dell'Ingegnere De Fabris" (Cathedral from the Martelli Street, the façade has no plaster

as it was removed in 1871 under the supervision of Engineer De Fabris, 13)[32]. Removing

the plaster form the incomplete façade was the first step in the process that was going to

provide the church with a brand new façade. Construction works, as already mentioned,

started three years after the catalogue came out. The increased number of photographs

representing the Cathedral, while clearly justified by the expansion of the Alinari archive

of images, also bears witness to a new perception of the monument, whose visual

potential was amplified by the process of its completion.

Such a process is testified by the second and third appendices to the 1873

catalogue, published respectively in 1881 and 1887. While in the former the cathedral is

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[31] I am here considering the photographs of the "first series", which are 35x27 cm. The 1863 and 1865 catalogues also include 44x33 cm images (the "second series"), large images composed of two or three photographs, small photographs (25x18 cm), *cartes de visit*, and stereoscopic views. The first format includes the highest number of views.

[32] These views are available in one or more formats. This one is only available in the medium size.

shown with part of the façade under construction, temporarily exposed in 1879[33], the

latter represents an almost completed façade, exposed in 1883 with the two lateral parts

built differently[34] to let the citizenry decide whether "it should be crowned in a pointed

neo-Gothic style or with what is commonly described as a heavy horizontal Renaissance-

style cornice" (Medina Lasansky 26)[35]. The Renaissance solution in the end prevailed:

one more proof of the fact that Florence was perceived as the site where the Middle Ages

and the Renaissance were inextricably fused together. In the 1891 catalogue, after the

death of Giuseppe and Romualdo, the Cathedral appears finally completed, as one of the

Cathedral's entries reads "LA FACCIATA scoperta il 12 maggio 1887, opera del Prof.

Emilio De Fabris e terminata dal Prof. Luigi Del Moro (THE FAÇADE revealed on My

12, 1887, planned by Professor Emilio de Fabris, terminated by Professor Luigi Del

Moro, 13)[36].

With its incomplete and then new façade, the Cathedral is a perfect example of a

monument that was photographed before, during, and after it changed its appearance. As

mentioned above, the Alinari Brothers took active part in the process of renewal: first by

producing the photomontages and even showing one in the 1873 catalogue, and then by

documenting the different stages of construction works. However, as the present

discussion will show, the role played by the Alinari photographs goes far beyond their

participation in the competition for and the construction of the new façade. Indeed, I

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[33] This image is available in the small and extra formats.

[34] This image is available in the small, big, and extra formats.

[35] As Lasanksy explains, "the right band portion of the facade has been crowned with a Gothic gable constructed of painted wood and plaster. The right-hand portion of the facade has been crowned with a cornice "(26).

[36] The 1891 catalogue includes three photographs of the facade: two taken from two different angles, and a detail.

argue that the Alinari photographs of the Cathedral with the incomplete façade,

disseminated from the 1850s on, are one of the main factors accelerating the process that

in the end brought to the completion of the facade.

I will start my discussion with the 1856 photograph showing the lateral view of

the Cathedral taken from the vantage point of Orsanmichele (Fig. 2)[37]. The Cathedral's

side horizontally lies at the center of the image, whereas Giotto's Bell Tower and

Brunelleschi's dome occupy respectively the left and right section of the image.

Underneath the monument, in the foreground, an expanse of roofs appears, while on the

left side a line of buildings, corresponding to Via Calzaioli, points at the Bell Tower and

the incomplete façade. Taken from a vantage point, this photograph confirms the effort to

visually dominate and conceptually possess the city, stated by the panoramic view

opening the catalogues[38].

Quintavalle reads this photograph as an example of the Alinari's technique of

producing a regular, ordered and perfectly readable space by taking advantage of every

available urban element. According to Quintavalle, the line of roofs in the foreground is

cleverly used as a visual path establishing a threshold into the image's primary object,

leading the gaze towards Giotto's Bell Tower and the Cathedral's façade. As a result,

Quintavalle observes, the cathedral appears as if generated by the houses' roofs on which

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[37] In the 1856 and 1857 catalogue, the photographs are available in two formats: 35 x 27 cm and 41 x 31 cm. The photographs reproduced in this chapter belong to the second format.

[38] The number of panoramic views keeps expanding throughout the decades, with the 1891 catalogue including as many as fourteen, taken from eleven different vantage points – Bellosguardo, the Boboli Garden, Santo Spirito's Bell Tower, Orsanmichele, Palazzo Pretorio's Tower, San Miniato al Monte, the Gardens of san Miniato, San Salvatore, Piazzale Michelangelo, Torre del Gallo, and Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory. The proliferation of panoramic view can be connected to the imbrication of notions of visibility and control, which will be analyzed more in detail in Chapters Two and Four.

it rests. On the other side, Giotto's Bell Tower is counterbalanced by Brunelleschi's dome, while the short, dark building right in front of the Cathedral's side produces a visual indicator of the center of the image (151-2). However, one could also note that the symmetry and stability that the photograph is meant to produce through its balanced compositions is questioned by the appearance of the unfinished façade right behind the Bell Tower, a blank spot that denies the Bell Tower's and the Cathedral's clear and geometrical appearance. The façade is a sort of puddle within the image, whose elusiveness is at once stated by the line of roofs that points at it and denied by the rest of the Cathedral and Giotto's Bell Tower, whose assertiveness and symmetry are meant to balance the fleeting appearance of the façade.

The unfinished façade works as a "blind field," an expression that Roland Barthes uses in *Camera Lucida* (1980) to define a photograph's *punctum* as opposed to the *studium*. While the *studium* is the information that one can get from a photograph – be it in a historical, political, or any other sense – the *punctum* is "this element which rises from the scenes, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me" (26). In this photograph, one could think of the façade as the *punctum*, as it is something that escapes the regularity and order that the photograph tries to establish by injecting a stain of visual uncertainty into the image, the remnant of a random and accidental past, which was not able to produce a definite and definitive product of itself. The same failed effort to neutralize the façade's disturbing power appears in the 1855 photograph showing the Giotto's Bell Tower in its entirety with the sequence of the Baptistery, the Cathedral's façade, and the dome on the left (Fig. 3). The façade appears trapped and almost crushed

within the tight sequence, as in an effort to destroy it or least assimilate it to the other buildings.

As the unfinished façade was soon to be completed, it is possible to analyze these photographs through the mix of past and future that Barthes ascribes to photography again in *Camera Lucida*. In order to describe photography's relationship to time, Barthes makes reference to the photograph of Lewis Payne, a young man about to be put to death, taken by Alexander Gardner. In the photograph the man is still alive, but in reality he is already dead: "I read at the same time: *this will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future" (96). Therefore, Barthes goes on to argue that the verbal tense through which photography should be defined is not simple past, but a mix of future and past – which is to say future perfect – since the photograph shows a fragment from the past whose future has already taken place: "I shudder … over a catastrophe which has already occurred. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe" (*ibid*.). In other words, photography's ambiguity is related to the coexistence of the presence/present of the object photograph, the past of the moment when it was taken, and the future that is already implied in it. As Shelley Rice argues, in photographs "a *this will be* [is] merged with a *this has been* in such a way that it becomes impossible to separate the past from a future that, simultaneous with being predicted, has aleraldy occured" (13).

Fig. 2. Alinari Brothers. *The Cathedral's Lateral View*, 1855

Fig. 3. Alinari Brothers. *Giotto's Bell Tower*, 1855

Even though the mix of past and future described by Barthes makes more intuitive sense if applied to photographs of people (clearly, sooner or later any photograph of people will become a photograph of dead people), it can also pertain to photographs of monuments. A paradox seems to be at work here, between the concept of timelessness and immobility ascribed to monuments (as mentioned above, architectural photography flourished because monuments did not move or change their state) and the idea, also enhanced by photography, that nothing is destined to last, and the past can only be recollected through memory and, from 1839, photographs. Indeed, it is precisely photography's shifting relationship to time that triggers a complex and fertile interaction with historical monuments, whose notion was significantly institutionalized throughout the 19th century as the Industrial Revolution made apparent and painfully perceived "the uncrossable dividing line between a 'before' to which the historic monument was relegated, and an 'after', where modernity begun" (Choay 83).

As photography turned to monuments in order to find a stable focus in a world that was literally and metaphorically moving too fast, the burgeoning medium's mix of "radicalism of means and nostalgia of vision" transported the monument itself into a new dimension where its stability was questioned and its fixity mobilized (Rice 53). By representing at once the façade's presence and its unfinished character, the façade's *has been there* irremediably turned into a *has not been there yet*, therefore predicting – and even demanding – its *this will be* in the form of its completion. Thus the catastrophe of the unfinished façade, perceived as unable to trigger that feeling of nostalgia that historical monuments were summoned to excite, gave way to that of the new façade, constructed through an endless process of debates and competitions and adapted to the

neo-Renaissance revival that was shaping Florence's look at large. In this respect, it is important to underline that early photography turned to historical monuments in an effort to preserve "a heritage that was being threatened not only by industrialization but also by restoration" (Rice 52). Even though the Cathedral's new façade cannot be considered a restoration in strict terms, it is part of the effort to recover an 'ideal' state of the historic monument that, to use Viollet-le-Duc's famous notion of restoration, "may never have existed at any given moment in the past". As the example of the Cathedral has revealed, photography played a multifold part in this process, portraying historic monuments as part of a lost past only retrievable through nostalgia, but at the same time inserting them in the modernizing frenzy that was bound to modify them to bring forth a perfected version in which the line between past and future was blurred.

A similar emphasis on the processes of restoration and renovation can be detected in the Alinari catalogues' treatment of the two most important churches in Florence after the Cathedral: Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce, both of which appear in the catalogues since 1856. As symbols of medieval devotion, both churches underwent big changes in the second half of the nineteenth century, the former seeing a sequence of processes reorganizing the relationship between the church complex and the surrounding area, and the latter earning a new neo-Gothic façade (1857-65)[39]. Just like they did with the Cathedral, the Alinari catalogues recorded the interventions on the two churches. As for Santa Maria Novella, the 1873 catalogue represented the church "con i nuovi restauri

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[39] The complex of Santa Croce was also interested by a wider set of changes, as Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel was restored between 1870 (when architect Emilio De Fabris replaced three external columns and renovated the balustrade) and 1886 (when architect Luigi Del Moro renovated the lantern).

fatti nel 1870 dall'Ingegner Luigi Del Sarto"[40] (with the new restorations realized in 1870

by Engineer Luigi Del Sarto, 19), who had nine of the eleven niches of the cemetery next

to the façade rebuilt in neo-Gothic style to make room for the new street opened along the

cemetery. As for Santa Croce, the 1865 catalogue presented a stereoscopic view showing

the church's new façade at its first appearance ("scoprimento della facciata", the façade

revealed, 74), while the 1873 catalogue included a photograph of the façade before

completion as a "ricordo artistico" (artistic memory, 16) and one of the church "con la

facciata in marmo dell'Ingegner Nicolo Matas 1857-1863" (with the marble façade by

Engineer Nicolo Matas 1857-1863, *ibid*.) in the formats album and extra. Although the

ways the photographs represented the two churches remained mainly homogeneous

throughout the above discussed renovations, the emphasis placed on the process

themselves (both described in the catalogues and shown in the images) bear witness to

the relevance that was attributed to them.

The mobilizing power at photography's core can be appreciated in an 1855

photograph showing the church of San Miniato al Monte, which provides another

example of the ways in which the Alinari photographs confronted the urban changes that

were soon to modify the city's structure (Fig. 4). The church of San Miniato, standing

atop a hill on the south-eastern side of Florence, is one of the vantage points most

frequently used by photographers to take panoramic views of the city. It is, also, a

monument in its own right. Built between the XI and the XIII centuries, a stunning

example of the Romanesque Florentine style, the church appears in the Alinari catalogues

since 1856. In this photograph the church is at the center of the image, surrounded by the

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[40] This image is available in the small format.

Bishop Palace (1294) on one side and the Bell Tower (1524) on the other. An expanse of trees underneath the church occupies half of the image. The typically Florentine and geometrically patterned marble façade is the main point of attraction, while the less-refined looking buildings at its sides work as visual mediators between the geometrically organized façade and the tree-covered hillside beneath it. Thus, an opposition between nature and culture is produced, with the façade representing a linear and geometrical order opposed to the vagueness of the green area. As such, it is possible to argue that in this image the façade works as a harbinger of the urban modernization that, in a few years after this photograph was taken, was going to bestow a geometric feature to the entire hill, soon to be crossed by the Vial dei Colli and the ramps that connected the gate of san Niccolo with the Piazzale Michelangelo. Here modernization is not a void within the image, waiting to be filled, as it was the case with the photograph of the Cathedral. In this case, modernization is implied in the façade, whose geometric organization is the cypher for the changes that were going to interest the entire area.

6.The Effacement of the New

A compelling example of displacement is offered by another photograph from 1855, one of the best known and most quoted photographs by the Alinari Brothers. This photograph shows the left side of the Palazzo Vecchio and the two wings of the Uffizi Gallery (Fig. 5), the latter serving the purpose of indicating the latter, as Quintavalle would have it. However, what is striking here is that the Uffizi Gallery's wings are the arrows pointing at the center of the image (occupied by the Palazzo Vecchio) as well as part of one of the two monuments that the photograph is meant to show. The presence of visual arrows in a

Fig. 4. Alinari Brothers. *The Church of San Miniato al Monte*, 1855

Fig. 5. Alinari Brothers. *Palazzo Vecchio from the Uffizi Gallery*, 1855

photograph is something more than a mere accident and a clever use of casual urban

elements. As Henry van Lier argues in *Philosophy of Photography*, a photograph presents

both *indices* and *indexes*. The *indices* are the elusive mass of information that comes

from the represented scene, which the photographer is by all means unable to control.

According to Van Lier, this results from the lack of actual connection between the

represented objects and the film, since it is rather the photons emanating from the objects

that imprint themselves on the film. Consequently, the photographer only has access to

the *indexes,* which are the means to enhance or direct the *indices*. The *indexes* include the

choice of the film, the framing, the depth of field, the brightening or darkening of certain

parts of the photograph, and so forth. In defining the *indexes*, van Lier points out that

"they indicate objects much in the same way the index finger or an *arrow* might point to

an object" (17, emphasis added).

In this photograph the Alinari seem to have tried to turn some *indices* into

indexes, by using two of the main elements of the represented scene to point at another

one. This last element is clearly Palazzo Vecchio, left to play the confused and vague part

of the *indices*, successfully indeed. As a matter of fact, this photograph only shows a

small section of its side, the oblique and dark façade, and the tower. While the tower

visually escapes the space indicated by the Uffizi Gallery's wings, the façade once again

is more a disturbing and ambiguous appearance than an assertive presence. Furthermore,

it does not occupy all the space highlighted by the arrows-wings, but it shares it with a

blank (as always in the Alinari photographs) and dull sky, which works less as a

background than yet another lack right at the center of the image.

As it seems, in this photograph there is no contrast between modernization and the past. However, the void right at the center of the image, and the failed effort to use historical monuments both as tools and objects of a clear image, shows a confused and contradictory rendering of the city rather than an assertion of perpetual clarity and order. Even when the process of modernization is not directly represented in the photograph – which is often the case in the Alinari photographs – its presence cannot be denied, and it taking on different ways and shapes. Consider, for example, two photographs of Florentine bridges. One of them, taken in 1856, represents the bridges Santa Trinita and Carraia taken from yet another bridge, the Ponte Vecchio (Fig. 6). The two bridges occupy the middle section of the image and, together with the lines of buildings, produce a sort of barrier that defines the space within which the gaze is allowed to linger. Beyond this circumscribed space only the hills and a row of trees are in sight, while the suburban part of the city, located between the bridges and the hills, is overlooked.

Such a process can be observed in a more explicit fashion in an 1855 photograph showing the Ponte Vecchio and behind it the bridges Santa Trinita and Carraia (Fig 7). Quintavalle describes how the Vasari Corridor, vertically crossing the image, leads the gaze towards both Ponte Vecchio and the image background. This is how Quintavalle describes this photograph: "Oltre l'"Arno ecco la sequenza bellissima degli affacci delle case sul fiume, e, alla destra, la sovrapposizione prospettica dei tre ponti e, in primo piano, l'arenile e l'acqua dentro cui si specchiano le immagini delle botteghe e le arcate del ponte" (Beyond the Arno River is the wonderful sequence of houses overlooking the river; to the right, the bridges overlapping in perspective; in the foreground, the shore and water reflecting the workshops and the bridge's arches, 151).

Fig. 6. Alinari Brothers. *Santa Trinita and Carraia Bridges*, 1855

Fig. 7. Alinari Brothers. *View of the Ponte Vecchio*, 1855

However, just as in the previous photograph, it could be observed that this process is more a process of effacement and exclusion that one of underlining. Again, the main bridge produces a barrier that is reinforced by the two following bridges and keeps outside whatever is beyond them: in this case, one of the main emergencies of industrial Florence, the Pignone foundry[41]. Also known as the second fusion iron Foundry, this factory was built in 1842 on the left bank of the river and there remained active until the 1920s, when it was moved to the peripheral area of Rifredi (cfr. Chapter Four, pag 239-41). The old factory complex, however, was not dismantled until 1937. Together with the close-by gasometers, appeared in 1846, the Pignone Foundry is part of what can be considered the first proto-industrial district in Florence[42], employing hundreds of workers that lived in the same neighborhood in an increasing number of council projects[43].

The factory's success is underscored by the fact that, as early as the 1840s, it was commissioned to produce pieces for the Leghorn-Pisa railroad and obtained a contract with the city administration for the production of streetlamps for the gas and then electric public lightning[44]. Furthermore, the Pignone Iron Foundry produced some

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[41] The name "Pignone" refers to the port that used to be in the same area as the Foundry. A "pignone" was a stone cone placed against the river bank to sustain it and provide docking for the ships that arrived from and to Livorno. The port, which was one of the main reasons for the Pignone Foundry to appear in that area, was gradually supplanted by the emergence of the railroad connected to the Pignone area by one of the iron bridges.

[42] Proto-industrialization is the period that sees the emergence of the conditions necessary for the industrial development, which in Italy started in the last five years of the 19th century.

[43] The Pignone Foundry employed 120 workers in 1877 and 480 in 1910.

[44] The other main factories in Florence were the Officine Galileo and the Società delle Strade Ferrate Meridionali. Officine Galileo started its activity as a laboratory of mechanical and optical instruments, telescopes, and microscopes in 1831, when Leopold II called to Florence scientist Giovan Battista Amici and a group of specialized workers from Modena. In 1870, as the laboratory turned into a more structured factory, Officine Galileo was moved to the peripheral Cure neighborhood. The Officine delle Strade Ferrate Meridionali was the factory connected to the railroad system, where tracks and railroad-cars were produced. It was located by the Leopolda Train Station and included a foundry and warehouses for the assembly of cars. At the end of the 19th century it employed one thousand workers. Other important Florentine productions, although not industrial, were cigars and straw hats.

components of the first internal combustion engine, designed by Niccolò Barsanti and Felice Matteucci, which was patented in UK in 1854.

Notwithstanding such accomplishments – or precisely because of them – the Alinari photograph presents the area beyond the bridges as blurred, faint, and hardly noticeable. Interestingly, an almost invisible smokestack – a cypher for the whole foundry – is unable to continue the sequence of two bell towers and a dome that starts in the left side of the photograph. After the long and pointy bell tower of Santo Spirito, the flat tower of San Jacopo Sopr'Arno, and the round dome of the Cestello, visually connected by the hills behind them, the thin smokestack is unable to assert its own particular and functional shape, which looks like it is dissolving in the air because of the smoke that comes out of it. Interestingly enough the smoke, a result of the activity of the smokestack, is used to neutralize the appearance of the smokestack itself. The industrial area is denied not only through its location within the image, but also by its own product.

The relationship between past and modernity in the Alinari photographs is a complex and multi-layered one. In the oppositions between old and new, nature and culture, art and industry, and center and periphery, nothing is fixed and every element can take on different meanings in different photos: the historical monuments can play the role of culture in relation to natural elements, but they can also work as a sort of a codified nature in relation to new constructions, areas, and functions. The opposition can even emerge within the same building: consider, for instance, a photograph of Palazzo Vecchio, also taken during the first years of the Alinari activity (Fig.8). The photograph is taken from a slightly high and slightly oblique angle. We see the entire Palazzo Vecchio and, on the right side, part of the Loggia dei Lanzi and part of the Uffizi Gallery.

Palazzo Vecchio is one of the symbols – maybe the symbol – of historical and

monumental Florence. It used to be the center of the political power from the times of the

Commune to the years of Florence capital of Italy, when it served as the seat of the Italian

Parliament. However, the Signoria Square was also the custom house for all the goods

entering the city, while Palazzo Vecchio itself housed the offices of customs. This shows

that Palazzo Vecchio was directly involved in the process of urban reconfiguration one of

whose goal, as discussed above, was to make the city suitable to the increasing traffic of

goods.

The photograph apparently does not show any direct reference to this process.

However, the renowned clarity of the Alinari photographs is here troubled by the huge,

triangle-shaped shadow under the Loggia dei Lanzi. Such a clear-cut shape works as an

arrow: while it can generically point at Palazzo Vecchio, just like the Uffizi Gallery's

wings in one of the previous photographs, a deeper look cannot but pinpoint a lone cart

right in front of the famous palace. One should not forget that, in the first years of

photography, the long exposure necessary to the recording of the image on the sensitive

surface made it very hard to take photographs of people, unless they were willing to stand

still for some minutes. As a result, lone objects usually appear in the first photographs.

While this might be the reason why the cart appears in this photograph, it also

metonymically works as a reminder of goods and the commercial traffic that was rising in

Florence in the same years the photograph was taken. The cart's location right in front of

Palazzo Vecchio questions the status of the palace as a monumental symbol, while its

insignificant size with respect to the building makes it possible to still represent it as

Fig. 8. Alinari Brothers. *The Palazzo Vecchio* (Old Palace), 1855

such. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the cart, as it is pointed at by the shadow, is visually associated with darkness, while Palazzo Vecchio is merged in clear light. As if the cart represented a sort of dark side of Palazzo Vecchio, exactly at its foot, while the rest of it rises to get the light from the sky, as far as possible from the lone cart. While the unsettling presence of the cart is removed in subsequent Alinari photographs showing Palazzo Vecchio from the same angle, the triangle-shape shadow at the palace's feet remains, as a remainder of the double nature of the monument.

7.The Void at the (City) Center

In June 1877, architect Felice Francolini submitted to the municipality of Florence a proposal of urban intervention on the Old Market area. This was the first step toward the aforementioned *riordinamento del centro*, which took place in the last decade of the nineteenth century and completely changed the appearance and function of one of the oldest and most significant areas in Florence historic center. Indeed, the Old Market was located on the site where the Roman forum used to be, and the column at its center marked the crossing of the ancient city's main streets (the Roman *cardo* and *decumanus*). In the Middle Ages the square became a market – Florence's pole of commerce as opposed to the religious and political ones occupied respectively by the Cathedral and Palazzo Vecchio. Throughout the centuries the main square kept its commercial function, and all around it small popular buildings popped up as vendors' and artisans' houses, small shops, and workshops, which filled the entire area with wells, ovens, little churches, towers, loggias, and alleys.

Next to the Mercato Vecchio area was the old Jewish Ghetto, built by Cosimo I of the Medici Family in 1571 for Florence's Jewish population. The Ghetto was a

compound of buildings attached to each other, connected to the rest of the city by three iron gates that were closed at night. During the 1840s, Grand Duke Leopold II sold the buildings to the Jews, and in 1848 set them free from the obligation of residing in the Ghetto. At this point the Jewish population moved to more pleasant areas outside of the city center and rented their old houses to those who would benefit from living in the Old Market area, which soon hosted an even denser population of artisans, street vendors, beggars, workmen, and unemployed people.

The gathering of a significant amount of lower-class people gave way to issues concerning the hygiene of the entire area and, even more importantly, made the area worrisome from a political angle. As for the political resonance of Florence in the 1860s and 1870s, it would suffice to mention that in 1864 Michail Bakunin resided in the city, from where he contributed to the diffusion of anarchism. Furthermore, the press office of the Italian Anarchist Federation was moved to Florence at the end of 1873; in 1874 a revolt planned by the insurrectionist party was carried out in the city, with no success; in 1876 the second Italian congress of the International Party was held in Florence; and in 1878, during a monarchic demonstration against anarchic Passavante's attack against King Umberto I, a bomb exploded causing injury and dead. As a result, 1880s Florence has been defined the Italian capital of Internationalism (Cresti, *Firenze Capitale* 100).

Not surprisingly, from the late 1860s requests and proposals of intervention became more and more frequent as the area troubled the ruling class as much as it promised easy profit by way of real estate speculation. In 1881 the Mayor created a committee in charge of investigating and reporting on the social and sanitary conditions of the Ghetto, whose results – which according to someone were overtly and purposely

exaggerated – gave rise to the decision to evacuate the area in view of its demolition. By 1885 the two areas were both evacuated. After its evacuation the Ghetto lived a last moment of bliss when, during the Carnivals of 1886 and 1888, a group of artists turned it into respectively an Arab and a Chinese city, disseminating the area with temporary structures and disguised characters that changed its ghostly appearance for a few weeks. Demolition works began in 1890, and in 1895 the big arch was inaugurated, which gave entrance to the large square that replaced the old maze of narrow streets, alleyways, yards, and squares. All around the square, wide orthogonal streets, majestic palaces, department stores, banks, and cafes replaced the popular nature of the area and made it suitable for the practical and representative needs of the ruling class, while the lower-classes were forced to move to the suburbs.

The demolition of the Old Market and the Jewish Ghetto areas perfectly represents Florence's failure in embracing the challenges and contradictions of a modern city. Antonio Muzzetto explains the destruction of the old center as a "sacrificio rituale …, [che] non ha esorcizzato il demone della città antica" (ritual sacrifice …, [which] did not exorcised the ancient city's demon), as the new square was unable to replace the old center's symbolic significance with a new one. By occupying the symbolic and geographic core of the city center, by hiding the "orribile quotidiano" (everyday horrific, *ibid.*) of the Old Market area, and by relegating its social and political conflicts at the outskirts of the city, the *riordinamento* dissolved the plan of urban modernization, making it impossible for Florence to develop its potential as a metropolis. As a result of the *riordinamento*, Florence's city center became empty, for it turned the traditional proliferation of architecture types, practices, exhanges, social relations, and functions into

a "spazio isotropo dell'indifferenziazione" (isotropic space of the undifferentiated, Muzzetto 129)[45].

Besides the political, social, and sanitary reasons that provoked the *riordinamento del centro*, other elements contributed to the city administration decision not to preserve the city's oldest core, despite the increasing international appreciation for Florence's history. Indeed, although the notion of historic monument was well established by the end of the 19th century, such a notion interested less the urban fabric than specific and isolated monuments. As Choay explains, "[u]p to and including the nineteenth century, learned monographs on cities do not dwell on their physical space except through the mediation of monuments" (119). Thus, the intricate maze of alleys and yards that constituted the Old Market area hardly fit into the category of monuments worth preservation. Furthermore, Bernd Roeck underscores the difference between history and historicization in *fin de siècle* Florence as the historian explains how "the historicization of daily life went hand in hand with the destruction of history" (124). As Florence's history was adapted to the taste of a refined foreign population as well as to the cultural needs of the newly unified country, only those elements that could contribute to the production of Florence as the cradle of the arts were strengthened[46].

Significantly enough, the Old Market and Jewish Ghetto areas only entered the Alinari catalogue after their evacuation, when they finally became representable as free from the embarrassing and troublesome presence of beggars, street vendors, and lower-

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[45] Billi and Muzzetto explain Florence's failure in becoming a metropolis through the choice of an open square with porticoes over a covered *galleria* (shopping arcade), which could have become the center of commerce and exchange rather than a mere passing space.
[46] There were, however, protests from inside and outside Florence and Italy to the destruction of the old city center. The Associazione per la Difesa di Firenze Antica (association for the Preservation of Ancient Florence), founded in 1898 by a group of Florentines and foreign residents such as British author Vernon Lee, aimed to raise awareness in the citizens of the value of historic buildings.

class people. Indeed, eleven photographs of such areas – seven photographs of squares and yards in the Ghetto and four of the Old Market's main square with the Fish Loggia – were included in the 1887 third appendix to the 1873 catalogue[47]. Again, while the process of urban reconfiguration is not explicitly represented in the Alinari photographs, it nevertheless stands at the very core of their photographs. In this case, the ghostly and indefinite feature of the evacuated areas – literally on the verge of destruction – indirectly emerges from the photographs, which unfold around the failure to find a center. Due to the narrowness of the spaces, the angle is closer than usual to the represented architectures, so that they are not shown in their entirety and occupy all the available visual space. Walls, arches, columns, facades, wells, and windows crowd on each other with no apparent order. Even the opposition between light and darkness cannot give the image a definite and clear organization, as if these dismissed areas were no longer able to take on a definite identity. While in previously discusses Alinari photographs there appeared a subtle line dividing order and chaos, past and future, persistence and change, the Ghetto's and Old Market's photographs lean on the side of change – a change that is as visually apparent in the photographs as it was going to be traumatic outside the photographic frame.

As the architectural equivalent of Barthes' photograph of Lewis Payne, who at once will die and is already dead, the space depicted in such photographs is the realm of chaos, as if the disintegration that was about to happen outside the photographs were already working within them. One of the photographs of the Jewish Ghetto's Piazza della Fonte (Well Square, Fig. 9) shows the square through an arch that, far from providing

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[47] The Ghetto and Old Market photographs are available in the album and small formats.

https://www.google.com/search?q=alinari+piazza+della+fonte&source=lnms&tbm= isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjO7rndranbAhWPt1kKHbQHB3AQ_AUICygC&biw= 1366&bih=651#imgrc=oJ4asMQRvdnC5M:

Fig. 9. Alinari Brothers. *Piazza della Fonte*, 1885 ca.

https://www.google.com/search?q=alinari+cortaccia&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa= X&ved=0ahUKEwjKq5SyrqnbAhXHxlkKHVBFBEYQ_AUICigB&biw=1366&bih =651#imgrc=XwPyxZUqjEW1qM:

Fig. 10. Alinari Brothers. *The "Cortaccia",* 1885 ca.

visual access to the square, rather works as an obstacle that effaces part of it. Likewise

the well, instead of being the point of attraction of the whole image, both covers and

disguises the wall in the background. And finally, the wall is an irresolute amass of

diffuse light and small spots of shadow. As the actual place's functions are fading, every

element in the photograph contributes to visualize a process of loss of meaning. The

photograph of the Ghetto representing the "Cortaccia," (the Yard, Fig. 10) shows an

image that is even harder to decipher. Receding and advancing surfaces, different degrees

of lighting, and contrasting architecture elements produce a chaotic and fragmentary

whole. While in Barthes' discussion past and future were only connected in the

observer's mind, these photographs show the two temporal dimensions as falling onto

each other, as the still-existing but soon-to be demolished architectures already show

their being on the verge of dissolution.

As for the Old Market, the photographs from the 1887 appendix show its square

from four different angles. One of such photographs (Fig. 11) shows the Colonna

dell'Abbondanza (Column of Abundance) in the foreground, and the Loggia del Pesce

(Fish Loggia) in the background. The ostensible geometric composition of the

photograph fades into disorder and shows a world that is gradually deteriorating. Just like

in the photographs discussed above, the main point of attraction of the photograph – in

this case the Column – is not able to provide the center around which all the other

elements take their place. Right at the center of the photograph, it overlaps and exceeds

the square's floor and the buildings in the foreground more than it provides an access to

them. The geometric pattern of the square's floor drips outside its border and toward the

https://www.google.com/search?q=alinari+mercato+vecchio+e+colonna+abbondanz a&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwijxarWrqnbAhVkw1kKHQHNA mUQ_AUICigB&biw=1366&bih=651#imgrc=Ch7eAMt9JsE4oM:

Fig. 11. Alinari Brothers. *The Old Market Square with the Loggia del Pesce and the Column of Abundance,* 1880s

edge of the photograph, confirming the centripetal force that pervades the photograph. If in other photographs the renowned composition techniques of the Alinari photographs were able to (at least ostensibly) contain and negotiate the chaos of modernization, here they are no longer able to control it.

It is significant to compare a different photograph of the Old Market square (Fig. 12) and one that was taken a few years later, after the new Vittorio Emanuele Square replaced the Old Market (Fig. 13). The first photograph shows the same disorder and instability at work, with all the elements unable to keep their position and rather melting into each other: consider, for instance, the uncertain division line between the buildings in the Old Market square and the dome's cupola. On the contrary the second photo, taken in 1890 in the new square, shows a world where everything has found again the right place and the elements are distinguished from each other by straight lines – be they the lines of the architectures or those between light and darkness. However, the result of such a sharpness of definition is less consistency than a different kind of disintegration, as if the different pieces were only juxtaposed to each other. While the pre-demolition photographs foreshadowed and objectified the soon-to-come destruction by showing places deprived of their original functions and therefore melting into each other, the reconstruction photograph shows an artificial world, where the different sections (and functions) are too sharply divided from each other. The sky section with the Dome's cupola and the Giotto bell tower is attached (but not connected) to the section occupied by the new buildings surrounding the square. The floor section follows, in turn sharply divided into a shadowy and a well-lit area, where figures darkened by the deep light appear unable to fill the empty space with life and activity. The photograph's failure to

https://www.google.com/search?biw=1366&bih=651&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=fHYMW

_3tJLHt5gL9rbWgDg&q=alinari+mercato+vecchio&oq=alinari+mercato+vecchio

&gs_l=img.12...74828.74828.0.86062.1.1.0.0.0.0.92.92.1.1.0....0...1c.1.64.img..0.0.0....0.

f1TFwWC_22g#imgrc=Z62gs8oVqbCluM:

Fig. 12. Alinari Brothers. *The Old Market Square*, 1880s

https://www.google.com/search?biw=1366&bih=651&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=_nYMW-

zDKMOE5wKw7ZfgCQ&q=alinari+piazza+della+repubblica&oq=alinari+piazza+

de&gs_l=img.1.1.35i39k1l2.4003.7221.0.8438.17.17.0.0.0.0.251.2231.0j9j4.13.0....0...1

c.1.64.img..4.13.2222...0j0i8i30k1j0i10k1j0i5i30k1j0i30k1j0i24k1.0.hV7iM1zzGaA#i

mgrc=mXAMQOcml07kWM:

Fig. 13. Alinari Brothers. *The Piazza della Repubblica*, 1890

produce a coherent whole after the old center destruction can be related to the character of the new square, whose new functions are unable to replace the ones that used to unfold in the Old Market area: as discussed above, "il centro è vuoto" (the city-center is empty), and this emptiness is objectified in this last photograph.

This chapter has explored the many ways in which the Alinari Brothers' photographs negotiate 19th-century Florence's modernization, at times trying to conceal it behind the monuments' appearance, other times employing the monuments themselves as harbingers of the soon-to-come urban changes. One way or the other, Florence's historical landscape doesn't appear in the photographs as inert matter untouched by the modernizing processes, as exixting interpretations of the images claim. On the contrary, monuments are completely insert in the modernizing frenzy that interested Florence in the second half of the 19th century, as the completion of the Cathedral's façade – and its photographic representation – reveals.

Chapter 2

A Pose is Still a Pose

1. Florence, Love it and Leave it

In Chapter One we followed the many ways in which the Alinari Brothers' photographic portrait of monumental Florence interacted with the processes of modernization that interested the city in mid-to-late 19th century. This chapter explores the relationship between that portrait and contemporary international films set in Florence through the analysis of Brian De Palma's *Obsession* (1976), James Ivory's *A Room with a View* (1986), Dario Argento's *The Stendhal Syndrome* (1996), and Ridley Scott's *Hannibal* (2001). The purpose of this chapter is to reveal how the wealth of meanings and implications embedded in the Alinari photographs is still able to inspire contemporary cinematic representations of Florence as well as trigger a compelling discourse on contemporary urban space. The analysis of the four films is introduced by a discussion of the Florentine episode of seminal neorealist film *Paisan* (1946) by Roberto Rossellini. As the first post-WWII representation of Florence, *Paisan* reasserts the city's international relevance less on an artistic than on a historical level by opening the monumental landscape to a contamination with – and even participation to – historical events. As *Paisan* establishes monumental Florence as the place where the issues of the present take shape and unfold, it provides the threshold to explore the city's role in contemporary international cinema.

The choice of films conceived for international audiences (to which category *Paisan* and *The Stendhal Syndrome* belong as well) is based on the assumption that the

impact of the Alinari gaze can be better appreciated if traced outside the national borders, also considering the photographs' massive international diffusion starting from the mid-nineteenth century (cfr. Chapter One, pag. 36). Accordingly, the emphasis on a (at least partially) external gaze puts in even sharper relief the issue of the city's significance within a discourse on urban space that cannot but take into account its status as a tourist attraction. Indeed, all these films share a common feature, which is Florence's peculiar status as a city that attracts characters, but is in the end unable to keep them there. All the films analyzed in this chapter are only partly set in Florence: the protagonists cannot resist its call, but end up leaving the city after a while. Cinematic Florence is, in the words of Paolo Frosali, "un luog[o] elettiv[o] … chiamat[o] ad accogliere fughe internazionali e sfogare umori randagi" ("an intentionally selected place… in charge of hosting international escapees as well as giving vent to stray moods" 62). Such a turn however, rather than causing the city's power to diminish, only enhances Florence's influence on the characters' lives. More specifically, Florence is the site where something happens that deeply affects the characters and sets in motion the course of the plot, which then takes place elsewhere: even those who initially live or work in Florence are portrayed as travelers or tourists there. The protagonists' status as wanderers is made apparent by their long walks through the city, which allow the camera to engage with famous monuments and their even more famous photographic representations.

The role of Florence as a limited but crucial part of a film's setting is foregrounded in the films discussed here: *The Stendhal Syndrome* opens with police officer Anna Manni who is in Florence to investigate reports of a serial rapist and killer. While there, she is tracked down and raped by the villain. She returns to her hometown in

Rome, where the rest of the film is set. In *Hannibal*, Florence is the place where Hannibal

Lecter chooses to live after escaping prison. After he kills a police inspector, he has to

flee back to the United States. In *A Room with a View*, young English Lucy visits the city

and meets a man who later becomes her husband. The film does not return to Florence

until the very end of the film for their honeymoon. *Obsession* starts with the kidnapping

and killing of the wife and daughter of the wealthy New Orleans real estate developer

Courtland. Through snapshots of the couple's history, viewers learn that they met in

Florence. Fifteen years after his wife's death, the protagonist goes back to the city on a

business trip and meets a girl that looks just like his dead wife.

2. Round Trip from City to Cinema

 The emphasis on transit and movement that the analyzed films share – a movement that

connects Florence to other locations as well as different places within the city – is a trait

that has interested cinema since its beginning. Indeed, the relationship between cinema

and the modern city has often been articulated in terms of their respective link to

"mobility and visual and aural sensations" (Shiel 1) as well as "transit and transition"

(Webber 1). As Giuliana Bruno argues, it is thanks to "such venues as arcades, railways,

department stores, the pavilions of exhibition halls, glass houses, and winter gardens"

(*Atlas* 17), that the modern city became the unprecedented site of transit (both within and

outside of it), which "prepared the ground for the invention of the moving image" (*ibid*).

Accordingly, in *Theory of Film,* Siegfried Kracauer defines cinema's ability to

reproduce reality through the notion of "the flow of life," which reaches its highest level

in the city street: "The street in the extended sense of the word is not only the arena of

fleeting impressions and chance encounters but a place where the flow of life is bound to

assert itself" (72). As David Green points out, such a description of the street is meant to evoke the experience of watching a film: "The restlessness of the city street finds its direct analogy in the relentless movement of the film, in the fluidity of the camera and the rapid spatial transitions of montage" (12). Due to its intrinsic characteristics, cinema is able "to capture and express the spatial complexity, diversity, and social dynamism of the city" (Shiel 1). Camera movements, together with editing, produce a visual equivalent of the experience of traversing and inhabiting the modern city amidst rapid changes of scenery and random and unexpected encounters.

The films analyzed here exploit such a possibility to a large extent, as they are all based on encounters that take place in or outside renowned monuments. To be sure the monuments, rather than slowing down the flow that characterizes both cinema and modern city, emerge as point of attraction that heighten it. In *The Stendhal Syndrome*, the encounter of Anna and the villain takes place in the Uffizi Gallery; *Obsession*'s protagonist Courtland accidentally meets a woman that resembles his dead wife during his visit to the Church of San Miniato al Monte; as for *A Room with a View*, Lucy witnesses a knife-fight in Piazza della Signoria, which will mark the beginning of her involvement with her future husband; and finally, *Hannibal* is based on Lecter's walks throughout the city, which leads him to interact with the police inspector he will end up killing. Architecture, and in particular monumental architecture, is the element around and through which the plot unfolds.

Bruno points out that the close relationship between cinema as montage and city as architecture was brought on by Sergei Eisenstein as soon as 1930. In his *Montage and Architecture*, the Russian director draws a parallel between cinema and architecture

through the analysis of Athens' Acropolis. Indeed, the disposition of the monuments in the Acropolis makes it necessary for an observer to keep moving and constantly shifting her/his point of view in order to fully appreciate the architectural complex. Eisenstein argues that architecture is the most cinematic of the arts, since it can only be experienced and traversed – or, more accurately, experienced *as* traversed– by a moving subject. Bruno explains that

> the (im)mobile spectator moves across an imaginary path, traversing multiple sites and times. Her fictional navigation connects distant moments and far-apart places. Film inherits the possibility of such a spectatorial voyage from the architectural field, for the person who wanders through a building or a site also absorbs and connects visual spaces. In this sense, the consumer of architectural viewing space is the prototype of the film spectator. (*Atlas* 19)

However, the interaction of cinema and actual space (particularly in terms of city and architecture) is manifold and cannot be limited to cinema's fascination with the city. Indeed, films produce space as much as they rely on it as a setting, and cinema is an essential component of our perception of urban space: "Cities are filmic afterimages imprinted on our own spatial unconscious" (Bruno, *Atlas* 66). Films shot in cities produce a notion of the urban space that affects the perception of actual and lived places, which goes beyond the mere experience of watching the film. This happens through city shots and their articulation in terms of editing – together with the narrative and the interaction of the characters with the places they inhabit. Consequently, "the moving image plays a crucial role in the process of constructing the architectonics of lived space" (ibid). Rather than just employing cinematic means to depict the city and the experiences related to it, films "invent the city, enable its imagination and creation, and bring out the hidden, silent and invisible features of the city to public consciousness" (Penz and Lu 10).

The ability of cinema to produce – even more than re-produce – a space that is inhabited by both the film's characters and those who watch the film has been analyzed by a number of studies in the last decades. In these studies, cinema is described as a cultural practice which is highly influential in "shaping […] lived urban spaces" (Shiel 5). According to Shiel, this is partly a consequence of the "spatial turn" that began in the 1970s, which has increasingly recognized the importance of the notion of spatialization, "for the analysis and description of modern, and (even more so) postmodern society and culture" (5). As Shiel suggests, the attention paid to how films affect the perception and production of actual space emphasizes the shift from a modern to a postmodern concept of the city, which entails an ever increasing presence of images, signs, and symbols as loose signifiers detached from their original meanings: "postmodernism cultivates … a conception of the urban fabric as necessary fragmented, a 'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral" (Harvey 66). As opposed to the modern city, where functions and social purposes inform space, the postmodern city is "shaped according to aesthetic aims" (*ibid*). The postmodern city's spectacle – be it advertising, eclectic architecture, reconstructions, festivals, heritage museums and the like – is meant to "draw a veil over real geography" (Harvey 87). Filmic representations of the city have a great influence on the very structure of contemporary cities, since "reality … is being shaped to mimic media images" (Harvey 86).

In the complex interaction of cinema and city, photography plays a crucial role. Such interaction has many facets and can be approached through different angles, one of which being movement. Indeed, the relationship of city and cinema in terms of

movement has been problematized through cinema's recurring references to the railway station starting from Lumiere Brothers' *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat* (1895)[48]. Andrew Webber argues that the railway station is the very place that incorporates the duality of the city's and cinema's relationship to motion and transit: as the railway station is a place of departure and arrival, and is at once a fixed site within the city, so that "the city is understandable as a spatial structure, a more or less fixed system of spaces and places, and as the motions and transitions that traverse that structure" (2). The reference to the railway station as a site of both transit and permanence brings to the foreground cinema's ambiguous relationship to movement in terms of its link with photography. In this respect, the photographic medium can be seen as cinema's subconscious, since films represent an urban space that has already been represented by photographs. As Webber explains,

> [w]hen Walter Benjamin aligns railways stations with the already historical technology of still photography, and Siegfried Kracauer extends this to the railway system as a whole, they indicate the element of fixture of space in time that is transmitted from photography into its motion picture form. If city films celebrate transition, they also depend upon – and may be revisited by – the station from which they depart. (2)

When engaging with urban space, the ambiguity of cinema's relationship with movement is not only related to the city's same duality, but is also based on cinema's connection to photography as a film is, or at least used to be, a collection of photographs projected on a screen at a certain speed. A film, then, employs photography in each and

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[48] The connection between cinema and the railroad has been analyzed by different critics, and is grounded on the unprecedented visual experiences and possibilities that the two technologies made available. Cfr. Chapter Four, pag. 236. n. 143.

every one of its frames. Moreover, the notion of cinema as mobilized photography

becomes all the more important when dealing with representations of cities, since the

frames representing city views and architecture incorporate the memory of the

photographs of the same scenes. The close link between photography and cinema has

inspired a whole field of theoretical study[49]. However, when it comes to the analysis of

specific films, the focus is usually on the role that actual photographs play in the diegesis

as well as the use of freeze-frame (and other devices) as a visual or conceptual reference

to photography.

In the case of Florence, a city whose repertoire of photographic portraits has kept

growing and growing throughout the decades, a more complex type of interaction

between cinema and photography needs to be taken into account. Indeed, not only do

films set in Florence make reference to photography's stillness and/or incorporate actual

photographs; even more significantly, they imply already existing photographic

representations of the city – in particular, as this chapter aims to reveal, those produced

by the Alinari Brothers. Such reference works more as an evocation than an actual

quotation, and engages with the complexity of the photographs' representation of the

modern city discussed in Chapter One. As the analyzed films variously draw on the vast

repository of meanings embedded in the Alinari photographs, monumental Florence is

inserted in a discourse on contemporary city that is then projected on the film at large.

The result is a multi-layered portrait of the city, a "sistema di segni pronti a trasformarsi

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[49] See Garrett Stewart, *Between Film and Screen: Modernism's Photo Synthesis* (1999); David Green and Joanna Lowry (editors), *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image* (2006); Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006); David Campany, *Photography and Cinema* (2008).

nelle tessere di un gioco misterioso" ("systems of signs on the verge of turning into the

tiles of a mysterious game," Giannelli 85), which subtly interacts with the characters,

events, and locations recounted by the films.

3. *Paisan*

Released in Italy in 1946 and worldwide the following year, Rossellini's *Paisan* retraces

the process of the Liberation of Italy from 1943 to 1945 through six episodes that cover

the peninsula from South to North, following the itinerary of the Allies' advance from

their landing in Sicily to their participation to the Resistance war against the Nazis in the

Po Valley. The six episodes, set in places as diverse as Sicily, Naples, Rome, Florence,

the Apennines, and finally the Po River Valley, are based on events that were

dramatically close and whose consequences where still deeply felt when the film first

appeared, so much so that "*Paisan* performs an essential role in the reconstruction and

renovation of Italy's historical and moral unity" (Mosci 32).

As the different locations are meant to offer a synthesis of the linguistic, cultural,

and geographical variety of Italy, it is of the greatest relevance that the Florence episode

is the only one set in a specific, recognizable monumental built environment, as if

Florence were once again summoned to take on a national role in the aftermath of war

and destruction[50]. Indeed, such is the prominence that the monumental landscape acquires

in the episode (and therefore in the film al large) that, in Peter Brunette's words, "the

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[50] It must also been noted, as Brunette does, that the fact that the Roman episode is "one of the least specially marked … could easily be attributed to the exhaustion of Rome's signifying capability in *Open City*" (62).

Duomo, the Uffizi Gallery, and the entire tourist panoply of 'sights' … cause the city to become an active 'character' every bit as present as any human" (62).

The episode focuses on Massimo, an Italian man, and Harriet, an American nurse, in their dramatic effort to cross the Arno River from the side of the city that is already freed to the one where partisans are still fighting against fascists and their German allies. Both characters have something very valuable to look for on the other side of Florence, as Massimo is trying to reconnect with his wife and son and Harriet is desperately looking for Guido, a painter that is now the leader of the Resistance fight, as she finds out at the beginning of the episode. As the Nazis have blown up all the city's bridges except for Ponte Vecchio, Massimo and Harriet are forced to pass through the monumental Vasari Corridor, built by architect Giorgio Vasari in 1565 to provide the Medici Family with an enclosed, elevate passageway from Palazzo Vecchio (the government palace) to their residence the Pitti Palace on the other side of the river.

It is this tragic, actual contingency, rather than the prestige of the place *per se*, that pushes the monumental landscape back into history, turning the Vasari Corridor from a remnant of the past into a "mobilized and militarized foreground" (Marcus 31). Accordingly the corridor, no longer serving the needs of safety and protection of the elite, becomes an essential element of common people's survival. As Vito Zagarrio has underscored, the Vasari Corridor scene is the core of the Florence episode, as it occupies the center of a five-section structure that brings the viewer from the infirmary, where we

first meet Harriet, to the characters' arrival at destination where Harriet learns that Guido is dead[51].

Most relevant to the present discussion is that, as Harriet and Massimo approach, walk through, and leave the Vasari Corridor, the main monuments of Florence appear. We see the Cathedral's Dome and the Giotto Bell Tower, the Ponte Vecchio, the Palazzo Vecchio, and the Cathedral's façade in shots that are reminiscent of the photographic representation that was established throughout the 19th century by the Alinari Brothers. The Cathedral's dome and Giotto's Bell Tower are visible as in the Alinari photograph representing the Cathedral's side (only taken from the other side of the city), but here the foreground is occupied by a ruined building that Harriet and Massimo need to cross. Harriet and Massimo see the Ponte Vecchio from one of the windows of the Vasari Corridor, and the view closely resembles another Alinari photograph, also taken from the corridor. And yet, as the two characters move frantically in an effort not to be spotted by the Germans, the view is disturbed by the materiality of the window. The Palazzo Vecchio appears in a shot similar to the Alinari photograph representing the palace in between the two aisles of the Uffizi Gallery, but the camera immediately pans down to detect the presence of Germans on the street (Figg. 1-4).

Millicent Marcus explains this treatment of the monuments as a "withholding strategy that negate[s] the touristic view" (29). However, more than negating the view in itself, *Paisan* seems to negate its self-containment and detachment from history, as it

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[51] After the infirmary scene, Harriet moves to the Pitti Palace, where she runs into a Massimo and together they decide to try to cross the Arno River. Then, after the Vasari Corridor scene, there is a section that Zagarrio defines of "tetti, scale, muri" (roofs, stairs, walls, 85), as the two protagonist need to travel though different environments to get to San Jacopino, the area where Massimo' family and Guido should be.

Figg. 1-4. *Paisan*. The views in the Florentine episode

anchors it to specific, contingent, and material elements – the ruined building, the window, the menacing presence of the Germans – that turn the monuments into the meaningful, active container that shapes humans' actions and direct their struggle for freedom. According to Mascilli Migliorini, Florence's long underground opposition to Fascism and the city's participation in the Resistance reinserted the city's symbolic landscape into the flow of history after the break caused by the regime[52] (*L'Italia* 131).

While Mascilli Migliorini is primarily concerned with the perception and interpretation of the history of Florence, *Paisan* seems to attest that the role of the monuments is not relegated to the past that produced them. Indeed, they are still relevant – even necessary, as the film states – to present life. This is the background on which the analysis of the contemporary international cinema will unfold: not because these films represent contemporary historical events, but because the monuments are made contemporary through the discourse on urban space they elicit. This discourse, as the rest of this chapter will reveal, is triggered by the reference to Alinari photographs.

4. *The Stendhal Syndrome*: The View and Metamorphosis

The film revolves around the character of Roman policewoman Anna Manni (played by Asia Argento, the director's daughter), who is in Florence to track down a serial rapist and killer named Alfredo. While at the Uffizi Gallery, where an anonymous tip locates him, she is overcome by the Stendhal Syndrome and rescued by the villain himself, who then follows her at her hotel room and rapes her. Anna goes back to her native town in Lazio and takes sessions with a psychologist to deal with the trauma, but is again attacked

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[52] Mascilli Migliorini makes reference to such works as *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)* by Nicolai Rubinstein (1966).

and raped by Alfredo. This time, however, she manages to fight back and kill him, throwing him into a river. Doubting that Alfredo is really dead and therefore still troubled by his presence, Anna goes back to Rome and falls in love with French art student Marie, who is soon found dead at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome. Anna kills her psychologist, who has realized that Anna is Marie's real murderer, and is then arrested by the police.

As this brief synopsis reveals, works of art and museums play a crucial role in *The Stendhal Syndrome*, as they provide the circumstances for the plot to be set in motion and unfold and for the characters to reveal their nature and motivations. More in detail, it is at the Uffizi Gallery that Anna experiences her deep involvement with artworks and Alfredo is able to approach her and then show his real nature; whereas the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome provides the occasion for Marie's murder, which in turn leads to the revelation of Anna's new identity as a killer. In more theoretical terms, the film deals with the relationship between cinema and visual arts, with an emphasis on classic figurative painting and photography. In doing so, and in ways that I will analyze in detail, the film confers a specific and unique power to the city and, more specifically, to its photographic reproduction. It is no coincidence that Florence, a city whose historical center is itself a museum and hosts one of the most famous museums of paintings in the world, plays a crucial role in providing the conditions for this dialogue between cinema and painting, and subsequently photography. The intersection between different media in turn triggers a metamorphic attitude that allows exchanges between characters, genders, places, and time frames. This happens on a metacinematic level as well, as the film engages with a "cross-contamination of genres" that span from horror to noir to detective

film, with elements drawn from subgenres such as slasher movie, rape-revenge film, and noir (Ross 113). The conditions for such a metamorphic attitude, which is the focus of my reading, are provided by Florence as it is represented in the first section of the film.

From the very beginning of the film, the relationship between cinema and painting is put on the table: as soon as the opening credits appear, a sequence of famous paintings roll up on the right side of the frame, one after the other[53]. The sequence of paintings makes implicit reference to the title of the film, which concerns a psychosomatic illness that occurs as a reaction to physical exposure to artworks, and which the protagonist experiences during the film's first scene[54]. Furthermore, "the square images are fitted together in such a way that they resemble a strip of film running through a projector" (Gallant 232). Thus, the strip of paintings can be seen as a reference to cinema itself, since a film is (or used to be) a celluloid strip on which a series of still photographs are juxtaposed. The almost imperceptible difference between the still photographs, projected one after the other at the speed of 24 frames per second, produces cinema's impression of movement. Since the still paintings in the sequence are very different from each other,

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[53] Among the famous paintings that such scene shows are Goya's *The Shootings of May Third* (detail, 1808), Piero della Francesca's *Madonna del Parto* (c. 1460), Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* (detail, 1890), Paolo Uccello's *Saint George and the Dragon* (detail, c. 1470), Rembrant's *Anatomy of Dr. Nicholaes Van Tulp* (detail, 1632), Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (detail, 1827), Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed* (detail, 1844), Toulouse Lautrec's *Yvette Guilbert* (1894), Hieronymus Bosch's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (detail, c. 1510-1535), Henry Matisse's *Dance* (detail, 1909-10), Caravaggio's *David with the Head of Goliath* (detail, 1607), Leonardo's *St Jerome in the Wilderness* (c. 1480), Claude Monet's *Nymphéas* (detail, 1905), Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment* (detail, 1535-41) Johannes Vermeer's *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter* (detail, c. 1663–64), Gustav Klimt's *The Three Ages of Woman* (detail, 1905), Andy Warhol's *Marilyn* (detail, 1967), Jackson Pollock's *Alchemy* (detail, 1947), Jacques-Louis David's *Death of Marat* (detail, 1793), Botticelli's *Calumny of Apelles* (detail, 1485), Egon Schiele's *Double Portrait* (detail, 1913).

[54] The Stendhal Syndrome was named after the French writer by Italian psychiatrist Graziella Magherini in 1979, after she observed and worked on hundreds of cases in Florence. Stendhal experienced this condition in 1817 during a trip to Florence than he then described in *Rome, Naples and Florence* (1817). This is how the writer recounts his experience: "As I emerged from the porch of Santa Croce, I was seized with a fierce palpitation of the heart (the same symptom which, in Berlin, is referred to as an attack of the nerves); the wellspring of life was dried up within me, and I walked in constant fear of falling to the ground" (72).

they could hardly turn into a film. Therefore, the subtle mix of cinema and painting can be considered a cypher of the instability between the two media that the film is about to enact both on the diegetic and on a more conceptual level, which I will analyze in more details.

The narrative begins with Anna visiting the Uffizi Gallery where, according to an anonymous phone call, the serial killer and rapist she is looking for should be. The viewer follows Anna as she walks from her hotel to the renowned gallery. Shots of Anna walking through the crowd are juxtaposed to point-of-view shots of a tourist wedding ceremony and three male statues taken form below, which she meets throughout her walk – Enrico Pazzi's *Dante* in Piazza Santa Croce (1865), Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* (1534) and the copy of Michelangelo's *David*, both located in Piazza della Signoria. After standing in line, she finally enters the museum as yet another tourist. Walking among bustling groups of museum goers who jostle her as they comment on the paintings, take photographs, and flit around, Anna becomes progressively overwhelmed and is so overcome by the barrage of great works of art gathered together, that she is struck by the Stendhal syndrome and faints. A blond, handsome man helps her out of the museum. Alfredo, who turns out to be the criminal she has been looking for, puts her in a cab, follows her back to the hotel, sneaks into her room, and rapes her. He then kidnaps her and forces her to assist in another woman's rape and murder. After that, Anna is finally able to escape and get treated at the local hospital. This is the end of the Florentine episode of the film.

As mentioned above, the Florence section is of vital importance for the development of the film, and the city plays a crucial role in setting the conditions that

inform the entire film. It is important to remark that, in the museum scene, there is a

strong instability between Anna's looking *for* and her looking *at*: while she is in a place

where one is supposed to look *at* artwork, Anna is in the museum because she is looking

for someone. This makes the nature of her gaze extremely unstable, since the purpose of

her gaze constantly shifts from one to the other modality. As soon as Anna enters the

gallery, she distractedly glances at two marble sculptures: a *Spinario* (a Hellenistic

sculpture of a boy withdrawing a thorn from the sole) and a classical bust by the wall.

She then shifts her attention to the frescoed ceiling: a *trompe l'oeil* sky with clouds and

saints arranged in a circular fashion. First Anna and then the camera rotate and pivot in

order to better appreciate the scene represented on the ceiling, whose circularity works as

a harbinger of Anna's perturbation. After looking at the ceiling, Anna goes to the glass

wall to look at the city outside and underneath the museum, but is soon disturbed by two

tourists who have the same idea. The intrusive nature of the tourists causes her to leave

the spot. Not so for the camera: for the first time since the beginning of the film, the

camera momentarily detaches itself from the protagonist, leaving Anna alone and

disregarding her search. The camera stays with the two tourists but soon goes even

beyond them in order to show what is outside of the window, and lingers on the scene for

a few seconds. The scene is a view of the Ponte Vecchio and the two bridges beyond it

(Ponte Santa Trinita and Ponte alla Carraia): from the bottom left corner of the screen the

roof of the Corridoio Vasariano leads to Ponte Vecchio. The famous bridge occupies the

entire middle section of the images, beyond which the other bridges appears on the left,

and the expanse of buildings of *diladdarno* (the part of the city beyond the Arno River)

on the right. The angle is very similar – if not exactly the same – to the one that the

Alinari Brothers used for one of their first and most famous photographs (cfr. Fig. 7 in Chapter One, pagg. 68-71).

The reference to the Alinari photograph will be analyzed later; for now it suffice to say that, since the city view evokes a famous photograph, and the film shows it in a still frame, the fixed city view is presented less as a real-life space than a picture. Since this happens right before Anna gets to see the actual paintings, it also prepares for the appearance of the artworks. From this moment on through the rest of the scene, the world is somewhat haunted and dominated by the presence and power of the museum artworks. Indeed, right after the city view, the camera goes back to Anna as she gazes at Paolo Uccello's *The Battle of San Romano* (1438). After spending a few seconds on part of the painting, the camera focuses on Anna's face. She appears to be trapped between the two portraits that form Piero della Francesca's *Double Portrait of the Dukes of Urbino* (1465-72), as if to remark on the inescapable power of the artworks (Fig. 7). Then the camera goes back to Paolo Uccello's battle, zooms, and moves through the painting, mimicking the increasing perturbation with which Anna looks at it.

Anna moves on to Sandro Botticelli's room, and looks at the *Primavera* (1482) and *The Birth of Venus* (1482-85). While looking at the latter, Anna tries to touch the painting, but is forced back by the sound of the security alarm. In this shot, her face is reflected on the glass that covers and protects the painting, so that her image is actually able to do what her fingers cannot, which is fusing with the artwork. Her yearning to engage with the paintings continues with Caravaggio's *Medusa* (1597) and becomes increasingly intense as she looks at the choppy waters of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's

Figg. 5-6. *The Stendhal Syndrome*: the view from the Uffizi Gallery.

Fig. 7. *The Stendhal Syndrome*: Anna and the Dukes of Urbino

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus[55] (1560s)*. She becomes so overwhelmed that she

falters, and faints to the floor while dreaming that she is plunging into the water of the

painting scene. There, she encounters a big-mouthed fish, who swims towards her. They

kiss, and then she plunges back out of the water, and out of the dream. The museum

scene sets the conditions for the development of the movie plot and for its resolution as

well. This scene produces a metamorphic attitude that affects at once the diegesis and the

formal characteristics of the film. The effects that the artworks have on the protagonist

are triggered by their power of attraction, stemming from Anna's desire and repulsion to

mix with them. This dynamic of simultaneous desire and repulsion is apparent in two

scenes that happen later in the film, during which Anna is actually able to penetrate the

paintings' fictive space. However, the metamorphic attitude that is triggered by the

artworks is not limited to the protagonist's relationship with them. Rather, it extends to

the circumstances of Anna's meeting with the villain Alfredo, since his first appearance

in the film takes place just before she faints as she experiences the Stendhal syndrome.

Alfredo appears right before Anna faints and goes "underwater," and is present

when her fusion with the artwork reaches its highest. In the following scene, Alfredo

introduces himself and takes her to a cab. After she gets in, her face is seen through the

car's window. While she closes the window, the reflection of Alfredo's face appears next

to hers. This is very similar to the previous shot of Botticelli's *Primavera*. Even though

the spectator is not given enough information to understand it, the process of fusion

between Anna and Alfredo has already begun, triggered by the metamorphic attitude

provoked by the artworks. While in the following scene the encounter between Anna and

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[55] This painting is actually located in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium.

Alfredo takes a much more violent and traumatic character, the nature of their relationship has somehow been set by the scene at the museum. As with the artworks, Anna is both attracted to and repelled by Alfredo, and the result of their relationship is a fusion between the two characters. In the same way that she enters the fictional space of the paintings, Anna later turns into Alfredo, taking on both his appearance and his murdering attitude. The visible cypher of Anna's and Alfredo's fusion is the blond wig that she puts on after she kills him, which she will wear almost until the end of the film.

It is now time to go back to the reference to the Alinari photograph, which is the very element that produces the metamorphic attitude that, in the end, results in Anna turning into Alfredo. Indeed the view of Florence from the museum, while apparently casual, plays a crucial role in establishing and clarifying the film's path. It appears as a transition from the sculptures and frescoed ceiling that Anna walks past in the Uffizi's corridor to the paintings that she focuses on. In a way, we can read the presence of the city view as Anna's effort to find a stable and firm ground to her perceptions and feelings, just before she engages with the perturbing artworks. In this respect, the classical sculptures and the frescoed ceiling are a sort of container and frame for the artworks, even though they are artworks themselves. As if in a last minute effort to save herself from the power of the artworks, Anna looks out of the window to search for something that is supposedly neutral and anchored to reality: the city. This view shows that in actuality, the world outside the museum's walls is no more real or stable than the artwork inside, as also proven by "the presence of so many frames within the museum— not only of the works of art but also the windowpanes and the doorways" (Nerenberg 95).

Anna is soon to experience that even outside the museum, there is no escape from images, artworks, reproducible, and reproduced scenes.

As mentioned above, the urban scene outside the museum's window is not a casual scene but rather one that has already been seen, photographed, reproduced, and made famous by the Alinari Brothers. It is just a demonstration that everything is (or could be) a picture, that the inside and the outside coincide and can easily melt into each other. Just as the museum is a repository of paintings, the city is but an archive of already (or potentially) taken pictures. The photograph that the film evokes is highly appropriate to the task it is called to accomplish, being simultaneously a famous photograph and the actual scene outside the museum. As discussed in Chapter One, the Alinari photograph produces a subtle ambiguity between what the photograph includes and what it excludes even while representing it: the signs of modernization are left outside of the visual barrier produced by the bridges, even while actually appearing in the photograph. Accordingly, this scene reveals that the separation between the museum's inside and its outside is but a porous membrane that does not separate two completely different spaces. This porousness is what keeps the movie going, since it sets the process of fusion between Anna and Alfredo in motion[56].

The porousness of the film can also be interpreted in another way: *The Stendhal Syndrome* produces a dialogue between media, a sort of subtle and unstable transition from painting to cinema, which is made possible by photography. The first part of the

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[56] As Simone Arcagni points out, "*La Sindrome di Stendhal* è la summa della casa-museo, in cui tutti gli ambienti si trasformano in musei di arte" (*The Stendhal Syndrome* is the summa of the museum-house, where every location turns into an art museum, 161).

film states the inescapable power of painting, which is what sets the plot in motion. This is both because the first encounter between Anna and Alfredo takes place in a museum, and because the nature of their relationship is shaped by the relationship between Anna and the paintings. The discourse on the ways in which different types of media can interact with each other is re-emphasized throughout the film. An example of this is when Anna enters a painting, which then triggers the strictly cinematic device of a flashback, a scene to which I'll now turn.

After the museum scene, Anna sits in her hotel room. She is haunted by the power of the original paintings to such an extent, that the power extends to the photographic reproductions of paintings in her room. Distressed by a reproduction of Rembrandt's *The Nightwatch*, Anna tries to cover it. She then changes her mind, and decides to face it. Her perturbed contemplation of this reproduction makes it possible for her to intentionally penetrate the fictional scene represented in the painting, stepping into it as if it were a 3D space. The result of this action is a flashback night scene set in Rome, in which her boss decides to send her to Florence to investigate Alfredo's case. It is crucial to remark that the only time when the contemplation of an artwork leads to a flashback, something inherently cinematographic, the cause is not an actual painting as much as its photographic reproduction. Also, it is important to note that this scene takes place in Florence, the city that triggers such porousness between states, places, and times. In L. Andrew Cooper's words, "this scene illustrates that the Stendhal syndrome causes not only a misperception of reality but a blurring of the border between the real world and the world of art: Anna passes from the hotel, through the art, into her own memory, back through the art, and back to the hotel room as if they all have the same status as reality"

Fig. 8. *The Stendhal Syndrome*: the view from Anna's hotel room

Fig. 9. *The Stendhal Syndrome*: Anna's new look

(18). However, it is key to remark that the presence of a city that is halfway between art, reality, and memory is what enhances this blurring of borders, even more than the Stendhal syndrome.

This point is made even more apparent by the fact that Anna is framed looking out the window of her hotel room just before she focuses on Rembrandt's painting. There she sees the Arno River with the buildings on the other side of it, and immediately feels the need to close the curtains, just like she will try to cover the painting in the following shot. Again, the metamorphosis between statuses that follows is made possible by the picture-like feature of the city (Fig. 8). The *lungarni* are some of the most represented parts of Florence, and this scene makes reference to the importance of having *a room with a view* while visiting Florence, which exploits the city as a bi-dimensional image – as will be analyzed more in detail in *A Room with a View*. The film produces a discourse on media through a trajectory, starting with paintings, then to photography, and moving finally to cinema itself. A proof of that is Anna's switching from her natural long and brown hair to a blonde wig: While her natural hair makes her look like one of the women represented in Renaissance painting (think, for example, of one of the most famous sixteenth-century portraits, Leonardo's *Monna Lisa*), the blonde wig references a more cinematographic style (Fig. 9). Critics have usually interpreted the switch to the blonde wig as a mere statement of femininity: "she adopts an overtly feminine persona" (Gracey 130); "she adopts a more feminine persona (Gallant 235); "she changes … adopting exaggerated femininity" (Cooper 19). On the contrary, it can be argued that such an overstatement is an open reference to a staged and fictional female representation (as Marilyn Monroe's, just to name one), whose effect is enhanced by the white dress and sunglasses Anna

wears in the last part of the film. Such a fictional character, I argue, plays a part in the process of leaving Anna's old identity and fusing with Alfredo's persona.

The end of the film's focus on cinema, as suggested by Anna's different appearance, is all the more revealed by the scene in which Anna kills her new French boyfriend in the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome. This scene marks the return to a more conventional killing scene, one that might remind of earlier Argento's films such as *The Byrd with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) or *Deep Red* (1975). These films belong to the genre of *giallo*[57], a thriller focused on the main character's investigation on a series of murders that leads to the revelation of the killer's identity at the end of the film. According to Chris Gallant, in *The Stendhal Syndrome* Argento "rejects many of the conventions of the *giallo*, most notably the fevered desire to conceal the identity of the killer" (233). If this is true for the first part of the film, the second museum scene leaves again the viewer wondering who has done the killing, as in a traditional *giallo*. Furthermore, in the museum scene "once again we see events from the killer's point of view: we stalk Marie through the room full of sculptures before his death in the museum" (*ibid.*). The camera is still replicating Anna's point of view; however, since her identity as the killer is not yet revealed, the viewers do not know that they are still watching through her eyes.

Accordingly, this scene offers a more common cinematic rendering of a museum - at least in the sense of Argento's cinema. The artworks, in this case sculptures, are not the site of an inescapable power, nor are they meant to trigger a process of fusion between

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[57] The definition *giallo* (yellow) references the color of detective novels' cover published by Mondadori starting from 1929.

painting and film's characters[58]. On the contrary, they are used as a tool for producing a suspenseful effect: shots of Marie as looked at by the unknown killer, showing the man's increasing agitation, are juxtaposed to perturbing details of the sculptures (human noses, mouths, eyes, a horse's suffering face), thus producing a thrilled feeling of expectation which culminates in his dead body.

The camera works very differently in the two museum scenes, showing how the camera's gaze shifts from an emphasis on the artworks to an attitude more focused on the cinematic conventions of the *giallo*. Indeed, in the Uffizi Gallery the camera moves in tandem with Anna's gaze, showing her perspective as it switches back and forth between looking *for* and looking *at*. The camera also reveals the shift from Anna looking at artwork to her being looked at by Alfredo, so that Alfredo becomes visually in power and looks at her while she faints. Such reversal of roles allows Alfredo to take advantage of her, setting the process of their fusion in motion. Furthermore, Anna's looking at the three male statues while walking to the museum could be considered as a prefiguration of this ambiguity between looking-at and looking-for: she looks at the statues with a partially touristic attitude, but at the same time the three statues can also work as signs of the man she is looking for. In the museum scene in Rome, the camera focuses on the statues but is detached from the protagonists' gaze: the killer's gaze is shown as a disembodied one (since we don't see the killer), while the shots of the sculptures serve more to produce a suspense effect than to illustrate one of the characters' point of view.

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[58] The sculptures of the National Gallery of Modern Art scene are also very different form the well-known paintings shown in the Uffizi Gallery scene. Rather than famous artists' works exposed in the main gallery, they are clay sculptures located in what looks like a warehouse, probably copies of marble sculptures and/or students' practices.

The montage of the sculptures' details produces a pressing and hallucinated rhythm, which leads to the appearance of the killer's gun and then Marie's dead body on the floor.

5. *Hannibal*: The View and Surveillance

Hannibal is the sequel to Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), a thriller based on the relationship between Clarice Sterling, a young F.B.I. trainee, and Hannibal Lecter, a former psychiatrist and incarcerated cannibalistic serial killer, whose help might prove crucial in the pursuit of yet another serial killer nicknamed "Buffalo Bill". While their cooperation in the end proves successful to catch Buffalo Bill, Clarice and Hannibal also develop an unsettling personal relationship. Indeed, when Hannibal escapes from prison at the very end of the film, he gives her a phone call promising he will not pursue her, and asking for the same favor in return.

Hannibal starts ten years after *The Silence of the Lambs*' end. Clarice Sterling is still working in the F.B.I, and Lecter is living in Florence under the false identity of Doctor Fell. In the very first scene Clarice leads a raid against a band of drug dealers, during which a woman is killed carrying her baby in her arms. As a punishment for this accident, Clarice is reassigned to Hannibal Lecter's case. The scene of Clarice's reappointment is intertwined with shots of the woman trying to locate Lecter after receiving a letter from him. Even though Clarice finds out where he is during the Florentine section of the film, she never sets foot in the city. This is because, right after she finds out where Lecter is, the villain kills Florentine Inspector Pazzi (who discovered Lecter's real identity and tried to capture him by himself) and is then forced to leave Florence, going back to the United States – where all the rest of the film is set.

As the description of the film's Florentine section makes clear, the film revolves around a search: a search that is twofold because, while Clarice and Inspector Pazzi (and other characters as well) are looking for Lecter, the criminal is also following his pursuers' actions. The film's emphasis on surveillance is underscored by the recurring presence of videos taken by closed-circuit security cameras. The intersection between cinema and surveillance, by now a common presence in contemporary films, can be traced back to the origins of cinema itself, and is grounded on the notion of surveillance as "production of knowledge through visibility"[59](4). The deep knot between visibility and power is set forth by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) through the analysis of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, an architecture model that allows all the occupants to be observed by a watchman without them knowing whether they are actually being watched or not (cfr. Chapter Four, pag. 279). This knot has then been variously extended to photography and cinema as "producer[s] of modern forms of identity and identification" (*ibid*.)[60], which I will discuss in the rest of this section. Within this framework, I will now explore the ways in which the surveillance attitude that permeates the Florentine section intersects with the reference to pre-existing photographic representation of Florence monumental landscape.

Hannibal Lecter chooses Florence as his site of residence precisely for its status as a museum-city: a very sophisticated and educated serial killer, he could never

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[59] Catherine Zimmer argues that surveillance "has been both a theme and practice" in early cinema, deeply contributing to shaping cinematic narrative language (4). For example, the Lumiere Brothers' *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), focusing on the Lumieres' own workers, can be considered an act of surveillance (Levin 581). In more general terms, many early films represented 'caught on the act' or chase stories, around which not only genres, but also narrative techniques such as continuity editing developed.

accept to live in a vulgar place like Las Vegas: as Clarice states while trying to locate him, Las Vegas would be "an assault on his sense of taste". As a proof of Lecter's engagement with Florence's art and history, at the beginning of the Florence section we are informed that he - as Doctor Fell - is about to be appointed assistant curator and caretaker of the Capponi antiquarian library.

The beginning of the film seems to suggest that the status of Florence as one of the most famous and visited cities in the world has a lot to do with Lecter's choice of Florence as a place to hide. In fact, while it might seem an odd choice to hide in one of the most "visible" places in the world, such visibility is precisely what makes Florence a place where nothing is really noticeable: after all, as Auguste Dupin argues in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, the best place to hide something is where everybody can see it. And people do look at things in Florence: as mentioned above, the entire Florentine section is based on the act of watching for the purpose of following someone's actions. The film plays on the ambiguity between (sight)seeing and monitoring, between tourist gaze and surveillance: something similar to what happened in the Uffizi Gallery scene in *The Stendhal Syndrome*. Indeed, Lecter inhabits some of the most renowned places in Florence, and we are allowed to see some of the sites that masses of tourists inhabit daily. However, after Florentine chief inspector Rinaldo Pazzi realizes Lecter's true identity, the criminal's admiration for historical and artistic sites gets mixed with a different type of gaze, which affects the image of those very places. Lecter walks, works, and kills in sites that have been endlessly reproduced – *in primis* by the Alinari Brothers – and the police's quest for him gives them a whole new dimension. I will turn to the role

of the Alinari photographs later; now, it is time to analyze Lecter's interaction with Florence.

The fact that Florence is looked at from a surveillance angle is apparent from the film's very beginning: during the opening credits, we see black and white images of Florence that clearly come from surveillance cameras placed in various locations in the city (Fig. 10). The images are blurred, sometimes pixelated, sometimes fast-forwarded, and represent famous sites such as Piazza della Signoria and Piazza del Duomo from unusual angles. We see fragments of the Cathedral's dome and the David, of bridges and streets, buses running, tourists and policemen walking, pigeons eating off the pavement, all accompanied by police radio chattering and announcements in Italian. In the scene's final shot, a group of pigeons occupy a square's floor in such a way, so as to take the shape of Lecter's face – just for a moment, before they fly away and the credits scene comes to an end.

After the surveillance camera videos, the first shot of Florence appears while Clarice listens to the recordings of her old conversations with Lecter: he complains about having spent the last eight years in the same room, of which they will never let him out. He says: "What I want is a view. I want a window where I can see a tree, or even water". While these words are pronounced, the panorama of Florence appears and the Florentine section starts (Fig. 11). The film turns the banal view Lecter is craving for, one that could even include only a tree, into the view of Florence, where he now lives. Again, we are reminded of Florence's status as a view, a place not only to be inhabited but also, and perhaps primarily, to be looked at. The view that Lecter mentions is something that can be enjoyed— forcefully in his case—through a window, without being involved in it:

Fig. 10. *Hannibal*: surveillance camera video in Florence
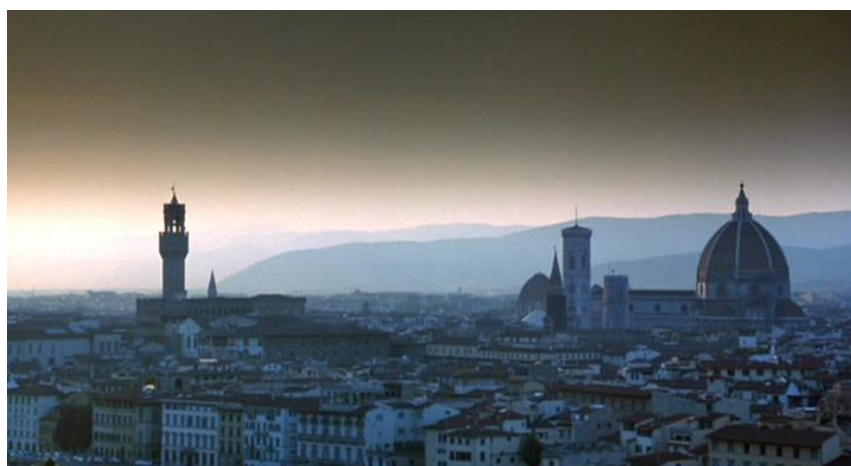
Fig. 11. *Hannibal*: the view

something that we will discuss more in detail with *A Room with a View*. However, thanks to both the opening credits scene and the status of Lecter as an ex-convict and fugitive, the notion of view and the act of viewing are also related to surveillance, as the characters spy on, control, and follow each other.

The protagonists' actions revolve around a limited number of exterior locations in Florence: Piazza Della Signoria and the outside of the Uffizi Gallery (usually in connection with each other), the Piazza della Repubblica area, and Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, where Lecter/Dr. Fell has his apartment and the Capponi Library is located. Of these three locations, only the first two play a crucial role in the play of gazes between characters, and in particular Lecter and Inspector Pazzi[61]. Indeed, as Pazzi finds out before everyone else that Dr. Fell and Hannibal Lecter are the same person, he chases Lecter in order to get the reward for Lecter's seizure, which is offered through the FBI by Mason Verger, the only surviving (albeit disfigured) Lecter's victim, a former pedophile now self-confined to his mansion. When Clarice realizes that this is Pazzi's plan, she tries to make him aware of the dangers of chasing Lecter by himself, but fails. Lecter, who also realizes that he is being sought after, kills Pazzi by spectacularly hanging him from the balcony of Palazzo Vecchio, thus putting an end to the Florentine section.

The focus on surveillance of the interaction between Inspector Pazzi and Lecter is reinstated by the fact that the process leading Pazzi to discover Lecter's true identity is set in motion as the former accidentally sees the security camera video from an old

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[61] Piazza della Santissima Annunziata, while clearly associated with Lecter, mainly serves to announce that the scene is taking place at his house and does not offer many occasions of interaction between him and Inspector Pazzi.

Florentine perfume shop, which one of his colleagues is copying for the FBI (without the

FBI revealing why they are interested in the video)[62]. As Pazzi finds out Dr Fell's

identity, he starts to chase him. However, as Pazzi is spying on Lecter, Lecter too is

checking on Pazzi's actions, so much so that their gazes intersect, and their paths meet,

affecting the representation of Florence's architecture. Piazza della Signoria/Uffizi and

the Piazza della Repubblica are associated respectively with Lecter and Pazzi, not

because the other character is not allowed in the other's space, but rather because there is

a sort of division of their power of surveillance. Right after the view of Florence triggered

by Lecter's words to Clarice, the character of Pazzi is introduced. This actually happens

in Piazza della Signoria, but the angle is so high and oblique that we only see the square's

pavement and Pazzi on it, while the Palazzo della Signoria is left out of the frame –

visually suggesting how Pazzi has no power over that site (it is here that Lecter will later

kill him, Fig. 12).

On the contrary, as Pazzi appears in the following scene, he crosses via Strozzi

(with Piazza della Repubblica's arch visible in the background) at total ease with and

completely immersed in the city scene surrounding him. The Piazza della Repubblica

area, where the police have their headquarters, is Pazzi's realm. In fact, when Pazzi hires

a local pickpocket with the task of following and purposely bumping into Lecter to get

his fingerprints on a metal bracelet (the proof of identity needed to reclaim the reward), it

is under the portici, or covered walkway of Piazza della Repubblica that the chase takes

place. The *portici*, a space that is adjacent to but partially detached from the nearby street,

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[62] The FBI asks for surveillance videos from a small number of perfume shops around the world, where a specific essence that is illegal in the US is available. Suh essence has been recognized by experts on the letter that Lecter has sent to Clarice, and is used as a tool for locating the criminal.

Fig. 12. *Hannibal:* Inspector Pazzi in the Piazza della Signoria

Fig. 13. *Hannibal*: manhunt under the *portici*

provides the perfect place for a manhunt, as it offers both apertures useful to spy on those who are walking under them, and huge pillars that can hide those who are following. The hunt scene is a perfect example of the surveillance-focused nature of the Florentine section of the film, based as it is on the intersecting gazes of the pickpocket and Lecter who immediately realizes he is being followed. While the two characters walk in the same direction, facing the camera, they keep exchanging places, in turn occupying either the space underneath the *portici* or the street (Fig. 13). The hunt proves to be as successful for Pazzi as it is lethal for the pickpocket: while the pickpocket manages to catch Lecter's fingerprints, Lecter is fast enough to stab and kill him.

At this point, it can be useful to bring to mind the role of Piazza della Repubblica at the time of its construction in the1890s, which the Alinari Brothers witnessed and captured in their photographs (cfr. Chapter One pagg. 82-84). As a replacement of the lower-class nature of the Old Market area, the new Piazza della Repubblica was meant to provide a more respectable space for the rising Florentine bourgeoisie, with offices, stores, restaurants, and cafes. It was still a commercial area, as the Old Market had been, but one that was more appropriate to the demands of decorum of a social class anxious to show its rising power, so much so that Piazza della Repubblica's majesty actually hid its nature as a place for commerce. Thus, it can be argued that the choice of the Piazza della Repubblica area as the spatial equivalent of Rinaldo Pazzi is meant to describe his nature, providing a reference to both his institutional role and greed for money. The pollution that contaminates the Piazza della Repubblica area, which makes the air appear smoky and murky while Pazzi is walking around, is yet another reference to "his own ambiguous moral code" (Freeman 221).

Lecter himself makes a subtle reference to Pazzi's avidity during his lecture on the medieval representations of hanging Judas, who was hanged precisely because of his greed. As Lecter explains to his audience (among which Pazzi stands, waiting to consign him to Verger's men) "avarice and hanging are linked in the medieval mind". By hanging Pazzi right after the lecture, he implicitly declares that his gesture is a condemnation of Pazzi's ethical baseness. On the other hand, Lecter's taste and education are associated with the outside of the Uffizi Gallery and Piazza della Signoria. The first scene that establishes a link between Lecter and the Uffizi Gallery takes place while Clarice is reading Lecter's letter. We hear the whole letter as read by Lecter himself, and at the end of the letter we see him mailing the letter. The mailbox is aptly located on one of the columns that support the short side of the Uffizi Gallery, the one that runs parallel to the river Arno, so that the entire structure appears in the shot (Fig. 14).

This shot recalls the famous Alinari photograph with the two sides of the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio in the background (cfr. Chapter One page 65-68), but the film shot is taken from a further angle than the Alinari photograph, so that the columns are included and only the main corpus of the building is visible, leaving the Palazzo Vecchio's tower outside of the frame. As discussed in Chapter One, the Alinari photograph's core is occupied by a blank spot, which ultimately defies the visual trajectory produced by the two sides of the Uffizi Gallery. Unlike the Alinari photograph, this shot manages to find a focus at the end of the visual path: namely, the two statues located right outside Palazzo Vecchio, the replica of Michelangelo's *David* and Baccio Bandinelli's marble group *Hercules and Cacus* (1534). Therefore, the partially empty image becomes full, and this turns the emphasis from the act of looking – an act that, in

the photograph, cannot find a stable object – to the focus of the gaze. Thus, the inquisitive nature of the gaze is put in sharp relief.

The analysis of two subsequent scenes, which evoke this shot and put the two statues right at the center of the image, will help elaborate this point. These two scenes still focus on the Uffizi Gallery, but show it from the opposite side, which is to say from Piazza della Signoria. Interestingly, one of the early photographs by the Alinari Brothers is taken from a similar angle, consequently replacing the void at the center of the image with the short side of the Uffizi Gallery (whose assertiveness produces an image weaker than the other one, which in fact didn't enjoy the same success). Unlike the Alinari photograph, every time the camera shows the Uffizi Gallery from Piazza della Signoria, it also includes both the copy of Michelangelo's *David* and *Hercules and Cacus*. The two statues, taken from the side of Piazza della Signoria, first appear when Inspector Pazzi begins his surveillance operation. At this point Pazzi is aware that the FBI is looking for Dr. Fell but still does not know his real identity, which he discovers in the following scene by checking the FBI website. Pazzi is shown sitting at a fancy cafe in Piazza della Signoria and spying on Lecter who usually goes there for a coffee.

A shot of the two statues and one of the Uffizi Gallery's lateral aisle opens this scene, during the rest of which neither the statues nor the Uffizi Gallery are shown again. Part of this shot is occupied by the upper body and head of the David replica, while the rest of it shows the almost entire body of Hercules from the other sculpture. Behind them is the Uffizi's aisle and part of the street (Fig. 15). The sunlight hits the street in such a way, that the division between light and darkness produces yet another line that perspectively goes in the same direction as the different levels of the Uffizi aisle. While

the focus of the perspective lines remains out of the frame, the shot shows the statues, whose heads both turn left, gazing in the same direction as the perspective lines. This shot can be read as a mix of the two Alinari photographs, since while its angle is closer to the Alinari photograph showing the Uffizi Gallery's short aisle, it also plays with the absence/presence of the central focus of the photograph that includes Palazzo Vecchio.

The lack of a visual focus, together with the fact that such visual focus is announced by the perspective lines and even more explicitly by the two statues caught in the act of looking, again puts the act of looking in sharp relief. However, while in the Alinari photograph the focus is at once present and absent (a hole that is actually *there* where something should be), in this shot the focus is announced and then denied by its actual absence from the frame. Instead of replicating the Alinari photograph's impossibility of a center, the examined shot announces and then displaces it in the rest of the café scene, where the act of looking implied by the opening shot unfolds. That a film uses the previous scene to produce the need of the following one is nothing new in cinema. However, what is announced is not (or not only) what is going to happen, but that what follows is mainly an act of surveillance – and it does so by rearranging the Alinari photographs of the Uffizi Gallery.

The reference to the Alinari photograph as a cipher for surveillance can be related to the role of photography as a means for social intervention in the second half of the nineteenth century, which I mentioned at the beginning of this section. In "The Body and the Archive" (1982), Allan Sekula retraces the ways in which the use of photography as a tool for describing, cataloguing, and regulating the criminal body was institutionalized in the decades that saw the emergence of the Alinari archive. Sekula analyzes the formation

of archives for, respectively, identification and typology designed by French criminologist Luois Adolphe Bertillon and English statistician John Galton. If Bertillon system sought to identify criminals by juxtaposing body measurements and photographic portraiture, Galton's procedure aimed at producing the average criminal type (or other categories of individuals) through "a process of successive registration and exposure of portraits in front of a copy camera holding a single plate" (49). This can be related to the role of photography in the film – or better to say, its reference – as a cypher for the surveillance of the cannibal "monster". The presence of shots reminiscent of the Alinari photograph organized around the lack of a focus, in which the statues are inserted as bodies that are both object of the gaze (as sculptures) and viewing subjects (as stressed by their very positions within the frames), highlights the protagonist's unstable position as both objects and subject of the disciplinary gaze.

Indeed, in the Foucauldian Panopticon, "he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles" (Foucault 202-3). In the film, this means that Lecter is at once object and subject of the surveillance gaze[63]. This can be related to the above discussed ethical ambiguity that pervades all the institutional power figures in the film: as Freeman has it, "in this despicable world of corrupt chief inspectors, misogynistic government agents, and vengeful pedophiles – each defined by such traits as

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[63] The film makes this point visible as Lecter sees Pazzi on a screen when the latter pays the former a visit, and rings the former's doorbell, which is connected to a surveillance camera.

Fig. 14. *Hannibal*: Lecter mails the letter

Fig. 15. *Hannibal*: the two statues

Fig. 16. *Hannibal*: Inspector Pazzi hanged from the Palazzo Vecchio

greed, amorality, and sadism, Lecter is perhaps the closest thing to a hero" (221). The film's ethical ambiguity, in sharp contrast with *The Silence of the Lambs*' clear-cut division between good and evil, "inverts the moral order" in a way that disconcerted the first film's fans[64] (Fuller 828). In this perspective, Hannibal becomes a "hybrid, abject figure, [which] both repels and fascinates" (Creed 201).

The last Florentine scene produces even another twist in the representation of the Uffizi Gallery, related to the representation of the killing of the supposedly righteous character, Inspector Pazzi. Right before Lecter pushes Pazzi from the Palazzo Vecchio's balcony, there is a shot similar to the same Alinari photograph, though from a further and higher angle that includes the balcony with Lecter and Pazzi. After Lecter's killing of Pazzi, the same scene is taken from a lower angle. Now the upper part of the two statues occupies the bottom part of the frame, and the short aisle of the Uffizi Gallery regains the central part of the image, although it is obscured by the body of Pazzi hanging from the balcony. The scene is very ambiguous. First of all, the regularity of the composition is at once enhanced and denied by the presence of the body, which at once puts an emphasis on the central focus of the image and obscures it; such an ambiguity is enhanced by the fact that the hanged body swings, moving between the building's façade and the statue of Hercules (Fig. 16).

This shot complicates the film's discourse on surveillance. Indeed, the overlapping of Pazzi's body and the Uffizi Gallery's short side comments on Pazzi's surveillance as a failing act: he is now the spectacle, both for the tourists in the piazza and

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[64] While Fuller is discussing Thomas Harris's novels *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) and *Hannibal* (1999), of which the two movies are adaptations, his remark can be easily applied to the films as well.

for Clarice and Verger, who are (separately) watching it through surveillance cameras. One more proof of that is the absence of the two statues – another cypher for Pazzi's act of looking - in the final shot. However, since the Uffizi Gallery's short side still appears through the body's motion, the act of looking at is not denied as much as it is again displaced. From this moment on, the quest for Lecter moves back to the States, where someone better fit for it is going to do the job. Interestingly, Pazzi's hanging body catches the attention of the tourists seated on the Loggia dei Lanzi, at first are amused by what looks like some sort of tourist attraction. As the tourist gaze takes over the surveillance gaze, the Florentine section is declared as finished and the film moves somewhere else.

6. *A Room with a View*: The View and Emotion

A Room with a View can be considered a classic Florence film. Based on E. M. Foster's 1908 novel with the same title, it tells the story of a young British woman named Lucy, whose intense experience in the city will affect and direct the rest of her life. As the title reveals, the view from the windows of their room in the *pensione* Bartolini plays a significant role in the development of the plot for Lucy and her middle-aged chaperone, Charlotte. Indeed, the title implies a specific perspective from which one might experience Florence: the view that the protagonists enjoys from her hotel room implies the presence of the window as a threshold to the city itself, and allows her to enjoy it from a separate space. As Anne Friedberg argues, "the window opens onto a three-dimensional world beyond: it is a membrane of where surface meets depth, where transparency meets its barriers. The window is also a frame, a proscenium: its edges hold a view in place. The window reduces the outside to a two-dimensional surface; the

window becomes a screen" (1). As such, the window is a trope for the transformation of a

three-dimensional space to a frame, as Leon Battista Alberti in *On Painting* instructed the

painter to consider the frame of painting as an "open window". To experience the city

through a window, thus, means to see it as an image, which does not require any kind of

interaction beside that of a detached, if aesthetically moved, contemplation. The window

works as a frame that encircles the view and masters it from above, turning it into a

faraway image. Furthermore, since it can be closed, the window protects the observer

from any engagement with the city as a real space.

The title and the first scene allude to this detached type of engagement with the

city, which is precisely what Lucy seems to be searching for. Finding themselves

assigned two rooms that overlook a dark and un-picturesque alley, Lucy and Charlotte are

so disappointed that they are offered to switch rooms with two other guests of the

pensioner, a young man named George and his father. After the rooms are exchanged,

Lucy is finally able to enjoy a more standardized view of Florence through her new

window (Fig. 17). However, despite the fact that the encounter with George initially

enables this detached appreciation of the view, it eventually contributes to deny such a

passive experience of the city. More specifically, throughout the Florentine part of the

film Lucy develops a different attitude towards the city space, and begins to see it as a

three-dimensional space that also involves motion and emotion that, as Giuliana Bruno

describes in *Atlas of Emotion*, are inextricably linked in cinema's representation of

space[65].

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[65] Bruno's discussion of Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy* (1954), which recounts the trip to Naples of
an English woman, Katherine, played by Ingrid Bergman, can be applied to Lucy's experience in Florence:

Lucy is initially enchanted with the two-dimensional city view from her window. The first morning, waking up in the new room, she immediately opens the window to enjoy the panorama of the Arno with the Cathedral and Palazzo Vecchio in the background, and also gazes at the side of the Cathedral. In appreciating the monumental view as a two-dimensional surface, the film makes implicit reference to photography, as both shots viewed from Lucy's window resemble photographs by the Alinari Brothers. In particular, the second one can be compared to the photograph showing the side of the cathedral since they were taken from a similar angle.

In the following scene, Charlotte and another woman from the *pensione* decide against following the tourist handbook, and enjoy the city streets "With no Baedeker." As one of the most popular travel guides for foreign tourists of the time, Baedeker's *Handbook to Northern Italy* suggested the best views as well as the specific routes through which to enjoy them, therefore reminding the attitude that sees the city as merely a collection of views (cfr. Chapter Three pag. 214-15). However, while Charlotte's and Eleanor's unconventional attitude and their refusal to have the Baedeker guide them through Florence, is shown to be harmless for two older women, the same attitude proves to be more risky for the young and inexperienced Lucy. Left behind at the *pensione*, Lucy is seen as she practices playing the piano. A reverend and friend of the family, who is also staying at the *pensione*, observes that, "if Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting... for her." Stung by this remark, Lucy is motivated to leave

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"the voyage to Italy has functioned for Katherine as it did for many female travelers before her, whose diaries testify to a rite of passage by way of geographic motion" (396).

the *pensione* and look for some real adventures. Unattended, she sets out to see the city as more than just a detached viewer.

Her exploration of the city begins with a visit to Santa Croce, where she observes Giotto's frescoes portraying the life of San Francis in the Bardi Chapel (1325 ca.). She sees George and his father there, and briefly interacts with them. Still motivated to engage with Florence face-to-face, she continues on to Piazza della Signoria. Upon arriving at the square, Lucy picks out some postcards at a newsstand. These photographs are never made visible to the viewer; however, the fact that Lucy buys them in Piazza della Signoria can connect the presence of the postcards to the detached view of the city that Lucy saw through her hotel window. Thus, the existence of these postcards can be seen as a reference to the famous Alinari representations of the city, which at that time were sold to tourists throughout the city[66].

As Lucy takes her postcards and passes through the square, the camera begins to zoom back, reducing her to just one of the minuscule characters walking underneath the Palazzo Vecchio, while an increasing portion of the square, the Palazzo Vecchio, and the Loggia dei Lanzi become visible (Fig. 18). Sarah Gibson contends that this scene references the unseen postcards that Lucy has just bought, claiming that "as film viewers,

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[66] The novel is explicit about the fact that Lucy buys the postcards from the Alinari shop. They are not, however, photographs of architecture but of paintings: "There she bought a photograph of Botticelli's "Birth of Venus." Venus, being a pity, spoilt the picture, otherwise so charming, and Miss Bartlett had persuaded her to do without it. (A pity in art of course signified the nude.) Giorgione's "Tempesta," the "Idolino," some of the Sistine frescoes and the Apoxyomenos, were added to it. She felt a little calmer then, and bought Fra Angelico's "Coronation," Giotto's "Ascension of St. John," some Della Robbia babies, and some Guido Reni Madonnas." (www.gutenberg.org).

Fig. 17. *A Room with a View*: Lucy enjoys the view from the *pensione*

Fig. 18. *A Room with a View*: Lucy in Piazza della Signoria

we are not privileged to see the postcards which Lucy buys in the piazza; instead the high angle long shot displays a large-scale postcard image of Florence for the viewer" (168).

However, it is possible to argue that this shot intentionally evades a stereotypical, tourist-like view of the square. Indeed, the camera stops zooming out before we are able to see the entire Palazzo Vecchio and Loggia dei Lanzi, refusing to visually replicate one of the Alinari photographs (cfr. Chapter One pag. 72-74). In doing so, the film subtly comments on the relationship between the view and the character, as I will now show. Zooming back to encompass the almost entire monumental view of the Palazzo Vecchio, the camera detaches itself from Lucy, who becomes an indistinct black dot. The new perspective seems to acknowledge the film's inevitable choice between focusing on the view and following the inner life of the characters. At the same time, this shot also reveals Lucy's involvement with the space of the piazza, since she is physically contained in it, no longer able to safely observe it from a distant, higher point of view. Rather than just providing a substitute for the postcards, this shot is the first step in a process that will force her out of her former attitude as a sightseer.

In fact, the rest of the scene unfolds to explicitly and dramatically impose a more involved interaction with Florence than Lucy would have experienced from her window. The camera cuts to the statues under the Loggia dei Lanzi. These are shown, however, in an unconventional fashion. Instead of lingering on the famous sculptures in their entirety, the camera presents them as scattered fragments and enlarged details of violent acts[67].

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[67] The Loggia dei Lanzi hosts some of the most famous sculptures in Florence: Benvenuto Cellini's bronze *Perseus* (1545-54) and marble group *Rape of the Sabine Women* (1579-83), Jean de Boulogne's *Hercules beating the Centaur Nessus* (1599), Roman marble group *Menelaus supporting the body of Patroclus*, Pio Fedi's marble *Polyxena* (1865), and five Roman marble female statues in the back.

The montage includes images of Cellini's bronze *Perseus* and his raised arm, showing Medusa's detached head, as well as his sex and left hand gripping a dagger; Giambologna's marble *Hercules*, brandishing a stick against Nessus's arched body and disfigured face, trapped between Hercules' thigh and arm; Pyrrus' raised arm in Pio Fedi's *Polyxena,* poised to kill Hecuba at his feet; a detail of Giambologna's *Rape of the Sabine Women*, showing an old man's face twisted in despair (Fig. 19-21). Right after the statues' shots Lucy's attention is caught by a knife-fight between two Italian men, who get into a fight over an insignificant 'cinque lire' (five liras). The square becomes more and more noisy and crowded, as people shove closer to the fight. One of the men is stabbed and severely injured. Lucy sees him laying wounded on the pavement as people rush forward and is pushed aside as the disfigured and bloody man is carried past her. Overwhelmed and frightened, she faints and drops the postcards onto the pavement. Just as she falls, George appears and catches her.

The aggressive images of the statues can be interpreted as an announcement of the violent scene that is about to take place in the same area as, in June Perry Levine's words, the "punchy montage depicting mythic violence quickly evolve[s] into modern violence" (73). Indeed, while the statues' close ups are somewhat photographic in their being fixed, they present the world in a way that denies the view that Lucy has looked for so far: the photographic, picturesque, and harmless view that one can enjoy from the distance is suddenly unavailable to her. Unlike the view that Lucy was able to enjoy from her hotel room, the shots of the statues are taken from a close angle, and most of them from a lateral and oblique one, thus suggesting a proximity that is incompatible with the conventional tourist view. Furthermore, the shots are disorienting in that they do not

show the entire statue, sometimes making it hard to figure out what the characters are doing.

The statues' close ups suggest a new type of engagement with artworks, one that takes into consideration their emotional nature. By showing a specific point of view of a specific detail, these shots acknowledge the presence of the viewers as well as their potential emotional responses to artworks (something that *The Stendhal Syndrome* pushes to the most dramatic consequence). As the camera refuses to show the entire Palazzo Vecchio, the film begins to explore a new way to deal with monuments and architecture. Veering away from Lucy's original attitude, the emphasis is now on how people relate emotionally and personally to artworks. During the first scene, the monuments and architecture become a real space where actions take place, rather than a view to be enjoyed from a distance. For this reason, the viewer is never exposed to Palazzo Vecchio, the Loggia dei Lanzi, or the statues of the Nettuno fountain in their entirety.

A clear example of the emotional interaction between characters and city views is to be found in the following scene. George and Lucy talk to each other for the first time, with the Arno River in front of them and the Uffizi Gallery behind them. As Graham Swift points out, the postcards play a crucial role in this scene. As the packet of postcards appears six times throughout the scene, the film makes it clear that "the photographs serve first to connect George and Lucy and then to bind them into an intimate an inescapable destiny" (*Light* 97). I will come back to the role of the photographs; for now, it is essential to underscore that photography works at a deeper level in this scene. In fact, this shot closely evokes the Alinari photograph with the two
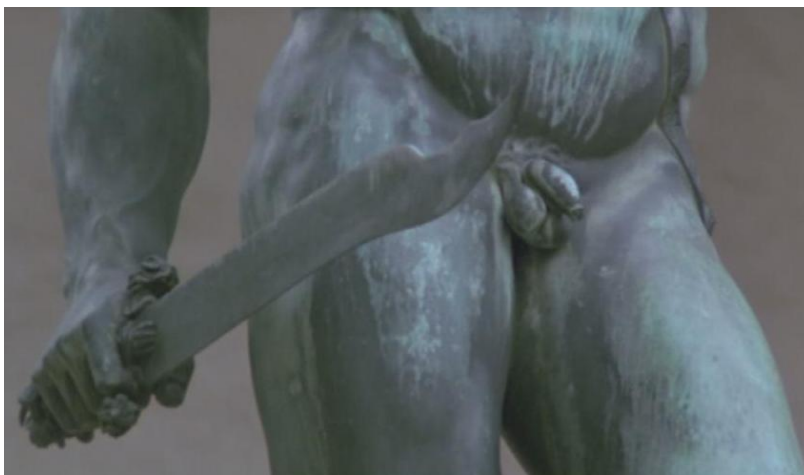
Figg. 19-21. *A Room with a View*: Cellini's *Perseus*

sides of the Uffizi Gallery loosely pointing at Palazzo Vecchio discussed in Chapter One
(cfr. pagg. 65-68). While referencing the Alinari photograph, this shot focuses on how the
scene affects the characters. This is because it is taken from a farther and lower point of
view, so as to include the balustrade on which the two characters lean. As a result, only
Palazzo Vecchio's tower is visible, while the rest of it is left outside of the frame. Also,
the balustrade cuts the Uffizi Gallery's sides, so as to obscure where their ends point
towards the Palazzo Vecchio's tower. The ambiguity of the Alinari photograph is
replaced by a straight composition that produces a geometric space at the end of the
image, occupied by Palazzo Vecchio's tower (Fig. 22).

When the two characters appear, they cover the wings of the Uffizi Gallery.
Since the view is traditionally focused on a lone tower, the presence of the two characters
talking to each other alters the composition. Their bodies, lacking the geometric nature of
the Uffizi Gallery, create a less clear-cut relationship with the tower. The tower itself is
no longer the focus of the image but rather turns into a permeable barrier, which makes
George's and Lucy's approach possible. By marking the space that divides them, the
tower announces that same space as one that can be crossed and lived, rather than just
looked at from the distance. The reference to the Alinari photographs enables a process of
interaction between the monuments and the characters, which turns the view into a three-
dimensional space that has relevance for the characters' lives. This happens due to the
overlapping of the view and the characters, the latter replacing the space that in the
photograph belongs to architecture. This reference to the existing photograph sets this
visual interaction into motion. The characters act on an already established scene, which
resonates with suggestions and memories of a multitude of pre-existing scenes.

After a few moments of talking by the Arno River, George unexpectedly produces Lucy's postcards and tosses them into the water. He explains that they were covered with blood from the fight. As the characters affect the view, making it less a space to look at and more a space to live in and interact with, so does the blood with the postcards, making them vulnerable to life. The postcards being enveloped in the river can be read as a yet another version of the interaction between the monumental view and the character's lives. Indeed, the photographs get mixed with organic matter, and then become lost in the flux of water, as if losing their fixity to gain a different involvement with life. As the view gets visually fused with the characters, it gains a new meaning and a new shape from that interaction. This scene goes beyond the consumption of the view as an exclusively visual and detached perception of architectural space, and reaches a different dimension that include the characters and their emotional involvement.

At the end of the film, the camera goes back to the view from the window. In doing so, it completes the process of Lucy experiencing the view in a new way, as Lucy and George, now married, are seen in front of the view of the windows of the *pensione* Bartolini. Rather than looking at the view, they sit in front of it and interact with each other. Instead of contemplating the view, Lucy is now using it as the background for her life, setting and acting in the three-dimensional space created by its presence (Fig. 23). As Levine points out, "although the audience sees the view in the background, Lucy and George are totally engrossed in each other" (81). The focus of attention is not on the view but on Lucy's life, which unfolds against a scenery that has acquired the power to host life and action.

Fig. 22. *A Room with a View*: the conversation of Lucy and George

Fig. 23. *A Room with a View*: Lucy and George back in Florence

7. *Obsession*: The View and Money

Loosely based on Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958)[68], *Obsession* focuses on the wealthy

New Orleans land developer Michael Courtland and his guilt complex for his wife's and

daughter's death, which leads him to fall in love with a young woman who resembles his

dead wife. From the opening credits scene, which is in different ways connected to

Florence's monumental landscape, *Obsession* focuses on such themes as the

representation of city architecture as well as the relationship of photography and cinema.

Indeed, as the opening credits scene unfolds through a sequence of photographs

alternating with shots of the San Minato al Monte façade, it intentionally detaches the

representation of Florentine architecture from its photographic representations. The

photographs show Courtland and his soon-to-be wife as a happy couple in such common

areas of Florence as Piazza della Signoria, San Minato itself, and Ponte Vecchio. Since

the photographs show the monuments only partially, as the mere background for the

characters to appear, they do not resemble the Alinari photographs but rather make a

strong reference to the genre of vernacular travel photography. On the contrary, the shots

of the San Miniato al Monte façade and its external staircase put all the emphasis on the

architectural complex. This is clearly represented through cinematic means, since the

camera keeps moving throughout the entire scene, zooming on the church's façade until

only its upper part remains in sight (Fig. 24).

Several elements contribute to producing a sharp contrast between the two types

of shots. First of all, the music accompanying the photographs is smooth and mellow,

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[68] *Obsession*'s score was composed by Bernard Hermmann, who also wrote the music for *Vertigo*.

while the music accompanying the architectural shots is disquieting and thrilling. In this

way, the photographs take on a reassuring and familiar character, which suits their

belonging to the genre of vernacular travel photography. Alternatively, the scenes of San

Miniato al Monte resonate with a much more anxious atmosphere, which rather connects

to the genre of a thriller movie. This disturbing atmosphere is enhanced by the camera

movements, which produce a feeling of increasing expectation that are left unfulfilled in

this scene. The photographs' quiet and soothing nature is in deep contrast with the

architecture shots also because the latter are deserted, charged with the uncanny absence

of human beings, whose presence and activity is nevertheless suggested by the camera's

fast motion.

The tension produced by the reference to photography is all the more apparent in

the following scene, which takes place eleven years later in New Orleans. The

protagonist and his wife, now wealthy from his real estate development business, are

having a tenth wedding anniversary party in their mansion, during which they project for

an enthusiastic audience the same photographs that appeared during the opening credits.

However, the scene is taken from the outside of the house, and the viewers recognize the

photographs, which they don't see, thanks to Courtland's comments to them. The camera

slowly but steadily approaches the house with a movement reminiscent of the one

zooming on the façade of San Miniato al Monte. The anxiety from the previous scene is

replicated here, as the light from the house's front entrance becomes obscured every time

the sound of the projector announces that it has switched to the following photograph.

When the camera finally enters the house, the last slide is visible, which reads, *And they*

lived happily ever after: "as if theirs was a picture-perfect romance, supernally and

eternally flawless" (Keesey 83). Since this scene presents the photographs as being projecting on after the other, it is possible to argue that the film is trying to turn the sequence of photographs into a cinematic spectacle. Accordingly, the last slide provides a sort of cinematic ending to an otherwise scattered group of images, like the conclusion of a story.

It is crucial to remark that such happy life is never represented in the film: The ellipsis of the eleven years that have passed between the photographs and the party scene leaves the couple's happiness outside of the film narrative, so that only the photographs bear witness to it. In fact, the rest of the scene proves the turning of the photographs into film impossible, since the party night is unfortunately the very end of the happy life they announce. Indeed, Courtland's wife and daughter are kidnapped right after the party, and the kidnappers demand an exorbitant ransom, which the police advise that Courtland replace with shredded paper. A car chase ensues, and both kidnappers and victims die in an explosion. Blaming himself for the deaths of his wife and daughter, Courtland is consumed with guilt and remorse. From this moment on, the happy story implied by the photographs becomes a golden age that is nowhere to be found in the film itself.

The credit scene's sharp contrast between the reassuring and animated travel photographs and the disquieting cinematic representation of a deserted architecture seems to connect photography with a happy life based on affective ties. However, the party scene proves the film to be unable to turn the photographs into cinema. Accordingly, the rest of the film reveals that the focus on happiness and life, suggested by the opening credit scene's photographs, is incompatible with the quest for profit and money, which the rest of the film subtly relates to a more conventional type of photography: the view.

Right after the death of Courtland's wife and daughter, a crucial scene brings forward the unstable relationship between cinema, photographic view, and money. This scene revolves around the grave that Courtland builds for his wife and daughter, which is located on an undeveloped expanse of land that Courtland and his business partner had planned to exploit for much more profitable buildings. As this scene starts, the camera follows a bulldozer arm putting the tympanum on the grave (Fig. 25). As the grave is completed, it becomes clear that it is a replica of the San Miniato al Monte's façade. Then the camera cuts to Courtland's face, showing his apparent despair and grief. The following shot shows the passage of time as it encircles the façade: in Douglass Keesey's words, "one seemingly continuous 360-degree arc shot … take[s] us from Michael in 1959, overseeing the construction of Elizabeth's memorial, to Michael in 1975, gazing upon the completed monument" (84). As sixteen years pass, the wild background of bushes and trees turn into a neat and tidy memorial garden (Fig. 26). While the land has been minimally developed, it has not been used for its original purpose as a real estate enterprise. As Keesey remarks, this shot makes it clear that the years have not passed for Courtland, who has remained fixated on his wife's death.

As a sacrifice to his lost loved ones, Courtland has maintained the land as a memorial in the shape of the San Miniato al Monte's facade. Interestingly, the grave only replicates the church's façade, so that the architecture is actually only a two-dimensional surface. It is then possible to read the façade as a sort of objectified photograph, both built and experienced through cinematic means. Indeed, while this scene begins by showing the grave from a frontal angle, somewhat hiding its flat nature, the rest of it makes clear that the façade is only a surface, which the camera can easily turn around

through its circular movement in space and time. The connection between photography and architectural city view, which the film has displaced up to this point, is alluded to by the very presence of the two-dimensional tomb. The flat façade elusively establishes the conventional link between photography and absence—Barthes' famous "that has been"—both through its function as a grave and by its being inaccessible, a flat surface that prevents any interactions with human beings (recalling the notion of view that the beginning of *A Room with a View* establishes). Furthermore, the very presence of the grave/façade prevents the underdeveloped land's exploitation, thus producing yet another link between photography and absence. On the contrary, the camera's movement through place and time bears witness to the tension towards a different and more profitable use of the land, which seems to belong not only to Courtland' business partner, but to the protagonist as well. In fact, the presence of the tomb has been interpreted as "an ostentatious attempt to show others—and to prove to himself—that he does value love over money", as the fact the he offered a ransom of blank paper rather than money seems to attest (Keesey 83).

The instability between an affective and a profit-based attitude in the perception of architecture and land brings to mind some of the issues raised by the Alinari photographs and their relationship with the contemporary processes of urban reconfiguration in Florence. In particular, the Alinari photograph showing the same façade of San Miniato al Monte has been discussed as producing a subtle opposition between nature and culture, past and modernization, heritage and new architecture (cfr. Chapter One, pagg. 64-65). In this photograph, the geometrical church's façade works at once as a metaphor and an anticipation for the soon-to-come modernization, which

Fig. 24. *Obsession*: the church of San Miniato in the opening credits
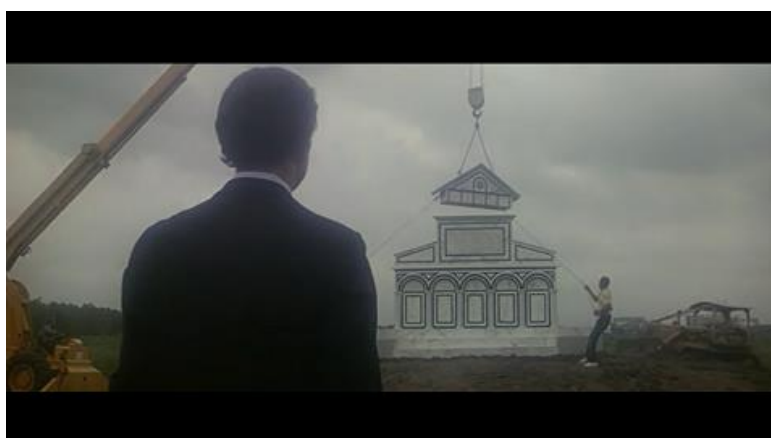
Fig. 25. *Obsession*: the building of the grave

Fig. 26. *Obsession*: the memorial garden

entailed the construction of thee Viale dei Colli and the subsequent real estate

exploitation of the hill on which the church rests, as opposed to the presence of a wild

and unorganized nature. In the film, the tomb/façade rather works as a metonymy, being

that which substitutes the unbuilt new buildings, while Cortland's lone car at once

indicates and displaces the potential mobility associated with the rising of new suburban

areas.

As discussed above, while money and profit are not explicitly implied in the

tomb scene, it is clear that Cortland sees it as a sort of compensation for not providing the

kidnappers with the monetary equivalent of his wife's and daughter's lives. A connection

seems to hold here between the tomb as an incomplete, bi-dimensional building, which

works as a cipher for photography, and the fact that it is meant to make up for the

absence of real money, which Courtland sees as the cause of his loss. The tomb at once

makes reference to photography and stands for the money that Courtland did not provide,

also taking into account the loss of profit that the presence of the tomb causes. This

brings to mind the connection between photography and money that Crary suggests in

Techniques of the Observer, where he contends that "photography and money become

homologous forms of social power in the nineteenth century …Both are magical forms

that establish a new set of abstract relations between individuals and things and impose

those relations as the real" (13).

As suggested by the tomb scene, money is always present throughout the film as

that which produces ties between the characters: implied as it is in Courtland's career as a

real estate developer and the couple's rich mansion, the presence of money becomes

crucial through the unpaid ransom that haunts Courtland and a continued plot against him

to retrieve it. The rest of the film builds on such a view of (post)modern society as based on profit-based relations, rather than affective ones. Indeed when, after sixteen years, Courtland travels to Florence and meets Sandra, a woman that looks like Elizabeth, he soon decides to bring her to New Orleans and marry her, in an effort to fix his previous mistakes. However, things are more complex than they look, since the man does not know that Sandra is actually his daughter. As viewers and Courtland find out at the end of the film, the protagonist's business partner planned the kidnap and rescued Sandra to get a second chance to put his hands on Cortland's money. Sandra agrees to the plan out of hatred, convinced as she is that her mother died because Cortland did not love her enough to deliver the requested cash. Interestingly, until the film's last scenes, money is presented only in a displaced fashion, since the spectator is twice shown the blank paper that stands for the money Courtland is supposed to pay to the kidnappers[69]. While in the end father and daughter are reconciled in a happy ending, the idea that everything is measured in terms of money, and that even the deepest affective ties are based on competition and power, haunts the entire film. Put differently, as M. Leary does, *Obsession* revolves around the classical De Palma's theme of the "intermingled family trauma and capitalist exploitation" (www.theotherjournal.com). From a different angle, David Graven describes De Palma's work as based on "the logic of male homosociality, which entails an understanding of heterosexual relations as an outgrowth, point of exchange within, and battleground for relations between men" (120). *Obsession*, with the

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[69] Before Courtland and Sandra get married in New Orleans, Sandra too is (apparently) kidnapped and a ransom note is left in her place, which looks exactly like the one that was used the first time. Although Courtland this time wants to provide real money, his business partner switches the briefcases behind Courtland's back, so that history repeats itself. Courtland confronts him and, after the latter has admitted the whole plot, kills him.

twisted relation between Courtland and his friend and business partner, makes no exception to this pattern, in that the latter sees Courtland/Sandra relationship as merely a potential source of money.

This instability is apparent in the film's section set in Florence. The city, as Chris Dumas maintains, plays the role of New Orleans' "ghostly double", replicating *Vertigo*'s relationship between San Francisco and the mission (58). In Florence, the schizoid way the film treats the view and alludes to photography functions as a destabilizing reminder of the dark (financial) side of human relations, and in particular the one that starts in this very section of the film, as Courtland meets Sandra and the criminal plot unfolds. Courtland's business trip to Florence provides the opportunity for dealing with the city's representation and the camera, while following Courtland and his partner in business meetings, runs into famous sites such as the Uffizi Gallery, Piazza della Signoria, Ponte Vecchio and, of course, San Miniato al Monte. Although the spectators are not aware that a new plot is being planned against Cortland, the instability between the view, photography, and cinema produces a tension that affects the entire section and makes implicit reference to the mix of guilt, love, and money that the film unfolds but is unable to solve, in spite of its happy ending[70].

Such tension is objectified in the Florentine scene through the movements of the camera dealing with the city's monumental view. This scene replicates the tension from the opening credits scene by showing the explicit effort that the camera makes in order to

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[70] In the film's original version, Courtland and Sandra do get married and spend the night together. However, such an explicit reference to incest scared all the distributors, so that De Palma had to change the marriage sequence, which in the final version looks as if it were a dream of Courtland. This way, father's and daughter's reunion at the end of the film is made possible.

appropriate the views. Indeed, the camera goes out of its way to capture monumental views, so that architecture and characters remain disconnected. The very first glimpse of Florence is a view of the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio that is yet another quotation of the Alinari photograph. However, rather than providing the background for the characters' intimacy through their interaction with the view, as it was the case in *A Room with a View*, this shot captures the view and references the photograph *despite* the characters' actions. In fact, after showing the view, the camera needs to move down and backwards in order to follow the characters who, turning their back on the view, walk in the opposite direction (Fig. 27-28). The physical proximity between view and characters does not result in their dwelling in the space created by the view, to the extent that they are not shown together.

The fast and abrupt movement from the view to the characters can be analyzed through the Alinari photographs of the Uffizi Gallery and the side of Palazzo Vecchio. As that photograph showed the lack of a center that was nonetheless announced by the museum's aisles, this shot references that photograph and immediately leaves it, as if looking for its center. In trying to complete the photograph, the camera can only abandon it and move to those who are actually at the center of the film – its protagonists. However, this also means that the reference to the photograph is only possible by mobilizing it: in other words, by treating it as a cinematic spectacle. Such ambiguity, which characterizes the rendering of Florentine architecture in the film at large, recalls the Alinari photographs' ambiguity between past and present, history and modernization, but turns it into something different, where the photographic view is displaced,

mobilized, as if it could only be captured through a movement that immediately abandons and effaces it.

This process is all the more apparent in the scene where Cortland and his partner have breakfast in a café right across Palazzo Vecchio. The two characters discuss how they are going to spend the rest of the day. While Cortland even suggests they do some sightseeing, he and his partner seem to be paradoxically unaware of the view right next to them – just beyond the window they are sitting by. Ironically, only the camera acknowledges the presence of the view and, rather than presenting their conversation through a more conventional shot-reverse-shot, looks at the two characters from the side and keeps switching between the two, blurring them as it focuses on the view of the statues in front of Palazzo Vecchio's façade between them. Again, the camera's movement captures the view *despite* the characters: we see either the view or the characters, never the view and characters together (Fig. 29). The result is another disconnected shot, in which the view is by no means connected to the characters and their actions.

This process is exposed again, and more explicitly, after Cortland's encounter with Sandra. The two characters are outside San Miniato al Monte, when Cortland decides to take some photographs of Sandra on the church's staircase. As in the opening credits scene, the film makes reference here to vernacular photography: as if Courtland were trying to reproduce the life that the photographs in the credit scene announced. Since, then, these photographs are meant to represent a private event and not a view, the photographs focus on Sandra more than they do on the church and the staircase. In a reverse shot, the camera shows first Sandra through Cortland's camera lens and then

Figg. 27-28. *Obsession*: the camera leaves the view to follow the characters
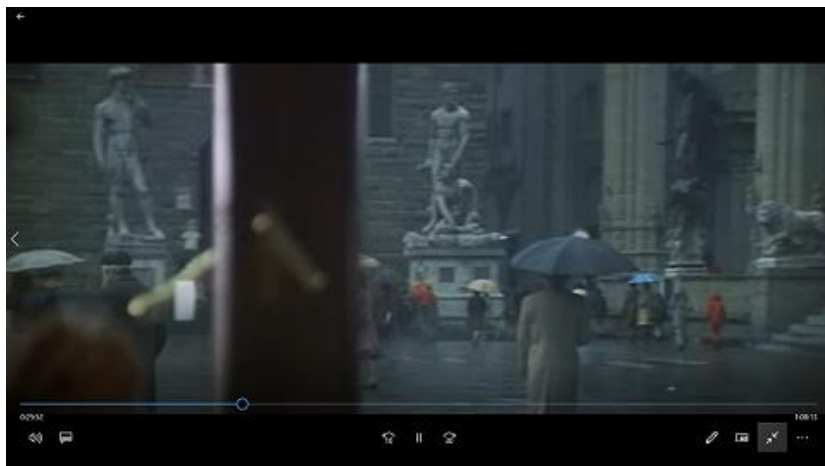
Fig. 29. *Obsession*: the view outside the window

Cortland against the background of Florence, with the camera in his hands. As mentioned, the photographs that Cortland is taking are disconnected from the view, as they are rather related to vernacular photography and to the private subject they represent, Sandra (Fig. 30). Furthermore, Cortland in the act of taking the photos is juxtaposed to one of the best-known views of Florence – the view from San Miniato, which the Alinari took since the very first years of their activity. Cortland is, again, totally unaware of the view that unfolds behind him: a fact that is even more noticeable as he is holding a camera, which could be used to fix the view behind him. Thus, the spectator is once more confronted with a view that has no connection to the characters, and that only the film (and nor Courtland) takes charge of showing (Fig. 31).

The instability that the film produces in dealing with the view, which reaches its climax as Courtland photographs a private scene in complete disavowal of the famous scene behind him, is an indicator of the ambiguity that pervades the Florence section. Indeed, although Florence is the "location of love" (Keeney 83), it is also the place where business dealings are made, which will bring more money to Courtland and his partner. Also, the love affair blooming in Florence is, in reality, the beginning of a new plot that will bring Courtland to face not only his past guilt and mistakes, but also the truth about his business partner and daughter. All such contradictions will explode as the film goes back to New Orleans: while in Florence, they seethe behind the façade of things, objectified in the characters' dismissive attitude towards the view.

The ambiguity of the reference to the photograph of monumental Florence in *Obsession* speaks to the Alinari photographs' character at large. Indeed, as the photographs captured Florence's polymorphic status at the time as a city of residence, culture, industry,

commerce, political power, and tourism, they produced a subtle and protean city portrait that is still relevant to today's discourse on urban space. As the analyzed films show, the Alinari photographs provide a crucial visual and conceptual tool for addressing a wide range of issues related to the contemporary city and its relation to subjectivity and identity. In *Obsession*, the memory of the Alinari photograph of San Miniato al Monte helps bring to the fore the opposition between a profit-based approach to architecture and one enabled by aesthetic and affective appreciation – a theme that interests the entire film, since the plot to seize the protagonist's company share is what brings the plot forward. As for *A Room with a View*, the switch from a detached relationship to urban space to one that sees it as the permeable container of subjects' feelings and thoughts is propelled by the characters' interaction with the photographic view of the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio. In *Hannibal*, the coexistence of a surveillance and a touristic attitude towards Florence's monumental landscape reveals the dark side of the renowned monuments, which are the object (and subject) of a gaze that is not only appreciative, but also predatory. And finally, *The Stendhal Syndrome* employs the reference to the Alinari famous photograph of Ponte Vecchio to turn the city outside the museum into yet another form of representation, thus suggesting the fictional and mediated nature of any supposedly stable reality and identity: something that the rest of the film will explore through Anna's process of metamorphosis.

Fig. 30. *Obsession*: Sandra through the camera lens

Fig. 31. *Obsession*: the view behind Courtland

Chapter 3

Group Portrait with Gaze

1.What We Talk About When We Talk About Tourism

After cinematic Florence explored in Chapter Two, this chapter investigates

contemporary photography of Florence in the fields of art and tourism through Gianni

Berengo Gardin's *Viaggio in Toscana* (Journey to Tuscany, 1967), Luigi Ghirri's *In

Scala* (To Scale, 1977), Olivo Barbieri's *site specific FIRENZE_09* (2009), Martin Parr's

Small World (1996 and 2007) as well as guidebooks published by Italian Touring Club

(1985), Frommer (2006), and Fodor (2007). While the three guidebooks analyzed here

have been selected among a countless number of publishing houses, languages, and

editions, the choice of the four photographers has been somewhat inevitable, for the

presence of Florence as a subject of contemporary art photography is all but widespread.

Not surprisingly, the scarcity of contemporary representations of Florence in art

photography and the proliferation of the city's images produced by tourist industry are

not unrelated. Indeed, the elimination and/or concealment of industrial presence and

social contrast in Florence in favor of the city's artistic, historic, and touristic nature (cfr.

Chapter One for the 19th century and Chapter Four for the 20th century) is precisely what

has kept Florence outside post-WWII photographic projects aimed to assess the evolution

of Italian urban landscape and update its representation.

When contemporary photography does point the camera at Florence (which

doesn't happen very often), it reveals that the city is perceived within an almost

exclusively monumental and touristic framework. As a result, art and tourist photography

tend to focus on the same areas and monuments in Florence, which in turn were the

subjects of the Alinari photographs as well. While reducing the range of subjects to be photographed, the perception of Florence as limited to its historical center and touristic appreciation has pushed photographers to a hand-to-hand combat with its previous representation. Indeed, rather than looking for alternative places and scenes off the tourist paths, contemporary photographers of Florence work on what feels like a visual ready made, beyond which the rest of the city barely exists.

As discussed in Chapter One, the Alinari photographs have produced one of the first and most pervasive visual portrait of monumental Florence from the time when the city's myth as the cradle of Renaissance was established. Indeed, these photographs captured both the increasing international resonance of the city's artistic and historic heritage and its conflicted relationship with urban modernization, at once cherished and feared. Each and every Alinari photograph lives on the opposition between notions of memory and progress as well as past preservation and modernization, thus producing the powerful portrait that Chapter One has analyzed in detail. Such portrait has deeply affected the rendering as well as the role of Florence in contemporary international cinema. As analyzed in Chapter Two, the reference to the vast repository of meanings embedded in the Alinari photographs reverberates on the films at large – on the characters as well as on the other locations. As a result, cinematic Florence brings to the fore crucial urban issues such as real estate speculation, surveillance, the emotional relationship to the urban environment, and the intersection of tourism and surveillance, which the rest of the films then takes pains to develop.

While cinematic Florence incorporates such a vast range of issues related to urban space, a more circumscribed attitude can – and will – be detected for the

representation of Florence in contemporary photography: more in detail, photographic Florence needs to be analyzed within the framework of contemporary tourism practices and discourses. While this is no surprise with respect to tourism photography, the deep relationship between tourism and contemporary art photography of Florence can be explained through the perception of the city as only limited to its monumental and touristic heritage, which has been previously discussed. In this respect, the relationship between contemporary art photography of Florence and the Alinari images, which will be examined in what follows, is very different from that observed for cinematic Florence. Rather than a vast repository of urban issues that enhance both the narrated story and the representation of other locations, the Alinari photographs are perceived by contemporary photography as an unavoidable precedent, the normative visual discourse that has deeply contributed to shape the perception of Florence as it is still experienced: that is, the tourist-oriented cradle of Renaissance. Consequently, photographing contemporary Florence is to delve in the images that have once and forever established the city as such, exploring their mechanism in order to assess what the city has become today, and what our interaction with it can be.

After the diversity of urban issues expressed by cinematic Florence, contemporary photography's obsession with tourism, which will be analyzed here, can look like a betrayal of the Alinari photographs' proliferation of meanings that the present work has uncovered. Indeed, it may seem that the contrast between the "touristed" past and the industrialized present, which is at the core of the Alinari photographs, is excessively simplified by contemporary photography's focus on tourism. However, it is important to remember that the emergence of photography is inextricably linked to the development of

travel and tourism (cfr. Chapter One, pag. 32). Thus, building Florence's photographic

portrait on a tourist conceptual framework can be read as a meta-photographic attitude

aimed at exploring the medium's capacity to read contemporary urban environment.

Furthermore, the focus on touristic, monumental Florence at the expenses of more

peripheral and industrial areas can be considered as an exploration of the outcomes of

modernity from another angle rather than a neglect of them. Indeed, the persistent

reference to tourism in contemporary art photography of Florence can be analyzed within

the theoretical context that places the practice of tourism itself at the very core of

Western civilization. I will now briefly sketch such a context.

Tourism can be conceived of as the contemporary, bourgeois version of the

practice of the Grand Tour. Spanning from the sixteenth to the beginning of the

nineteenth century, the Grand Tour was a "circuit of western Europe undertaken by the

wealthy in society for culture, education, health and pleasure" (Towner 96). More

specifically, it was a months- or even years-long trip to France, Germany, and especially

Italy through which upper-class wealthy young European men had the opportunity to get

a first-hand encounter with the art and culture of classical antiquity and its Renaissance

reinterpretation. This encounter was meant as a rite of passage toward a higher

knowledge and understanding of the world, and therefore adulthood. The Grand Tour

also served a political purpose, as young noblemen sought to "improve the governance of

[their] countries, for which purpose the Italian city-states were regarded by many as

idealized models of *ratio gubernatoris*" (Parson 138)[71]. The Gran Tour highlights

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[71] Such political attitude shifted over time, as Italian city-states progressively became negative examples of political decadence and corruption, which the Grand Tourist could happily compare to his home country. See page 172 in this chapter.

continuity with the ancient world, as it was also a practice for wealthy Romans to travel to Greece in search of the roots of their culture (Towner 96). At the same time, the Grand Tour is the result of significant cultural changes that took place from the sixteenth century onwards, when philosophical, geographical, and scientific developments made travel ever more appealing, and questioned the traditional view of a static universe (Towner 97).

Urry and Larsen date the birth of modern tourism in the west to around 1840, when what they define as the "tourist gaze" rose due to a combination of the desire for travel, the emergence of the means to do it, and the possibility of technological reproduction offered by photography (10). Indeed, as part of the "complex of travel, global distribution of imagery and circulation of money" (Osborne 11) that developed throughout the nineteenth century and dramatically expanded humans' potential reach on the world, tourism has been variously employed as a key concept that connects and sheds light on such notions as modernity, capitalism, and photography[72]. Modern tourism is defined as the practice of travelling for pleasure, and it has become one of the main activities to be performed during leisure time. In fact, tourism can only be conceptualized within an oppositional frame between leisure and work. In other words, tourism exists insofar as it occupies a position of difference with respect to modern organized work as it is structured in capitalist societies. As Urry and Larsen maintain, "the [tourist] gaze ... presupposes a system of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist

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[72] Some of the factors that contributed to the development of "geographical imagination" in the nineteenth century are "industrialization and urbanization, advances in science and technology, improvements in transportation and comunication, overseas exploration and imperial expansion, the rise of the middle class and the emergence of the modern nation-state" (Schwarz and Ryan 2).

practices, not in terms of some intrinsic characteristics, but through the contrasts implied

with non-tourist social practices, particularly those based within home and paid work"

(3). As everyday life revolves around the repetitive and anonymous rhythms of work and

rest, tourism seems to offer a way out, and is arranged around the search for something

unique and unexpected. As tourism theorist Dean MacCannell puts it, "sightseers, mainly

middle-class ... are ... deployed throughout the entire world in search of experience" [73]

(1).

Tourism embraces the entire human experience in a regime of market society and

commodity (neo)capitalism, in which "elements dislodged from their original natural,

historical, and cultural contexts fit together with other such displaced or modernized

things and people" (MacCannell 13). As such, tourism responds to a feeling of "loss of

authentic relations with Nature and the world of objects that is the corollary of modernity

and progress" (Goss 58), and is meant to provide precisely that experience of

authenticity, immanence, and belonging that is denied to individuals throughout their

day-to-day lives. In other words, tourism is meant to provide a temporary and unbinding

answer to a condition felt as pervasive and immutable. Thus, being a tourist is

constitutive of modern bourgeois subjectivity, and taking up the tourist identity from time

to time is a prerogative of the modern human subject. Indeed, as Urry contends, "the

tourist gaze is increasingly bound up with and is partly indistinguishable from all sort of

other social and cultural practices … [with] the effect …of universalizing the tourist gaze

– people are much of the time 'tourists' whether they like it or not" (82). Accordingly,

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[73] Interestingly enough, MacCannell analyzes how postmodern society turns work and work places into a tourist attraction.

MacCannell contends that "entire cities and regions, decades and cultures have become aware of themselves as tourist attractions" (16).

2.Of Attractions, Souvenirs, and Cigarettes

The analysis of *Modena*, a 1978 photograph by Luigi Ghirri from the series *Still Life*, will allow a further exploration of the role of tourism in contemporary life (Fig. 1)[74]. Moreover, it will introduce some of the ways in which contemporary art photography confronts pre-existing photographic representations of monuments and artworks in Florence (in particular those produced by the Alinari Brothers), providing the framework through which the representations of Florence's urban space will be investigated in the rest of the chapter. *Modena* shows a banal souvenir, an ashtray with a reproduction of Michelangelo's *David*: from the statue's background it is clear that this is the original artwork, held at the Accademia Gallery, and not one of the two copies, respectively located in front of Palazzo Vecchio and at the center of Piazzale Michelangelo. Not surprisingly, the photograph of Michelangelo's *David* is part of the Alinari catalogues since the first one published in April 1856, where it appears as the 16th entry[75]. Unlike the statue's white marble, the Museum's wall behind the statue appears in Ghirri's photograph with a sepia tone. The left side of the ashtray is vertically crossed by a bright line, a reflection of the light coming from the opposite side. A much more faded and intermittent line appears on the other side of the ashtray. The ashtray is covered with

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[74] The series *Still Life* (1975-79) focuses on "objects that [Ghirri] found in second-hand markets, such as old photographs, paintings and postcards, marked by signs of decay or abandonment" (Spunta 9).
[75] In 1856 the original *David* was still located in front of Palazzo Vecchio, but as the statue's conditions worsened it was moved to the Accademia Gallery in 1873.

Fig. 1. Luigi Ghirri. *Modena*, 1978

ashes, three matches, and four cigarette butts. A fifth cigarette looks half smoked. Almost

intact if lit, with part of it protruding from the ashtray, this cigarette is the only element

that breaks the ashtray's perimeter.

It is apparent from this description that we are dealing here with a multi-level

image. On a first level there is the actual statue, the tourist attraction, already complicated

by the presence of the two above mentioned copies located within the same urban

landscape. On a second level there is the souvenir, the ashtray, in turn complicated by the

presence of the cigarettes. And in between them lies Ghirri's photograph, intermittently

alluding to the one or the other and negotiating their relationship by arepresenting at once

the attraction and its representation. Thus, this image brings to the highest intensity what

Quentin Bajac sees as one of the main characteristics of Ghirri's work, "contrassegnato

dalla tensione tra la cosa e la sua rappresentazione, e non c'è nulla che egli ami di più di

quelle situazioni in cui i confini diventano permeabili" (marked by the tension between

the thing and its representation, and nothing he loves more than those situations where

boundaries becomes permeable, 23).

Let us for now stay with the first level, that of the "thing". We are dealing here

with arguably the most famous sculpture of the Renaissance, a statue that Michelangelo

carved in Florence between 1501 and 1504 for the Cathedral but was then moved to a

more secular position in front of Palazzo Vecchio, where it represented the short-lived

Florentine republic as a symbol of cleverness, courage, and righteousness[76]. Thanks to

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[76] The Republic lasted from 1494 to 1512, when the Medici family returned to Florence.

the correspondence between physical beauty and ethical virtue, Michelangelo's *David* has come to symbolize an ideal man ever since.

According to Jon Goss, tourist attractions can pertain to the realms of the historical, the natural, and the exotic, or "the Past and the … Other" (58). Furthermore, they are socially regulated, since it takes a collective effort to turn a place or a portion of the past into an attraction. As MacCannell argues, tourists go around looking precisely for and at those places, objects, and people that modernity has separated and decontextualized, as a "way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience" (13). Consequently, tourist attractions are invested with an aura of wholeness and authenticity that, perceived as impossible to achieve in the spatiotemporal present, is then relegated to a sort of mythical or religious anterior and/or external place. In the case of Michelangelo's *David*, the coexistence of physical and ethical (in a religious as well as political way) beauty, can speak of a time when different fields of human activity where not as alienated from each other as they are today.

Such a place, inhabited by the encounter with the attraction, is regulated by "a nostalgic myth of contact and presence" (Stewart 133). However, as many a tourism theorist has underlined, an irreducible contradiction lies at the heart of such a process, as a geographical or historical place must give up its authenticity in order to become a tourist attraction – the very presence of tourists being the element that makes the authenticity impossible. Thus, tourist attractions take on an ambiguous character, since they bear witness at once to the "felt intensity of the spatial and temporal displacement

that motivates it, and certainly [to] the social and material investment in the narrative of
restoration" (Goss 59-60).

Such an ambiguity finds its perfect embodiment in the souvenir – and here we
arrive at *Modena*'s ashtray. In Jon Goss' fascinating and sharp analysis, the souvenir is
the modern commodity *par excellence* (57). Goss' analysis goes back to Marx's remarks
about the fetishism inherent in the commodity through the very process of its production.
Queer, mystical, metaphysical, and transcendent are some of the terms Marx uses to
describe the commodity's character, which goes way beyond its mere utility as an object
of use. In fact, a commodity is produced not because its use-value is needed by its
producers, but exclusively "for the purpose of being exchanged" (44). As the
commodity's exchange value is based on the amount of labor-power that is needed for its
production, regardless of the type of labor involved, the human aspect related to the
commodity's production is made abstract and concealed in the commodity or, more
accurately, in its exchange (that is, monetary) value. As such, social relations between
individuals are displaced as exchange relations between commodities, while products are
converted into "social hieroglyphics" (*ibid.*).

The traces of human action, temporal origin, and spatial presence displaced in the
commodity are present at the highest degree in the souvenir, which at once embodies "the
hospitality of the host, memory of the past, and spirit of place" (Goss 57). The acquisition
of the souvenir is an effort to appropriate the qualities that it possesses thanks to its
metonymically replicating the tourist attraction. It is precisely its nature as a commodity –
its fetishistic character that goes beyond its mere existence as an object – that makes it
possible for the souvenir to take on the qualities of the attraction. As Benjamin contends,

the souvenir takes the form of an allegory. Indeed, an allegory is a figurative way to look beyond the mere existence of things in search for hidden meaning, freezing the spatiotemporal essence of the tourist attraction in an object. As this object is meant to be purchased and therefore possessed, the characteristics hidden in it are transferred from the attraction to the tourist/consumer.

Therefore, a souvenir is always incomplete, as it retains part of the experience of the encounter with the attraction, but never enough to allow the recoup of that experience. Only through its partiality is the souvenir able to excite the feeling of nostalgia for the lost origin, the lost experience that the attraction is meant to trigger (Stewart 136). Furthermore, Susan Stewart contends, by miniaturizing the monumental size of the sight and turning its history into private time, the souvenir makes it personal, extracts it from the collective discourse of tourism and inserts it into an individual story[77]. This happens through the narrative. The souvenir, while signifying the lack of the origin of the attraction/experience, becomes the actual point of origin of a personal narrative – the story of how the tourist encounters the attraction and takes possession of the souvenir – that links the souvenir itself to the subject and reinvents the experience.

Ghirri's brilliant move is that of conflating together attraction and souvenir, putting them on the same level as they are both represented within the photograph. In fact, as a photograph of a miniaturized photographic version of the sight (the one reproduced on the ashtray), which turns the sight itself into the "normal," familiar size of a photograph, *Modena* contains the sight in the form of the monumental made miniature

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[77] According to Stewart, all souvenirs talk about the possessor's childhood, as the ultimate locus of the unattainable past and other.

for the beholder. It also contains the souvenir version, in turn made monumental by the elevation of the ashtray to the subject of the photograph, the former (almost) occupying the entire space of the latter[78]. Consequently, the photograph is able to contain sight (both as monumental and miniature) and marker (both as miniature and monumental) in the same image. Peter Osborne describes photography as the medium that puts the subject at the center of the world: "by centering the visualization of space in the human eye the world is re-staged as though it was founded in the human, as if the human was the ground of all being" (5). Indeed, the human eye is that which, in this photograph, is able to appreciate the two elements inhabiting *Modena*, at once recognizing the existence of both and connecting each other. The fictive relationship of souvenir and attraction is made apparent in *Modena*: with the two elements appearing within the same photograph, their mutual dependence for the economy of nostalgia is exposed, as neither of them can get visual predominance over the other.

As *Modena* lives on the coexistence between sight and souvenir, the experience of observing it can be compared to the process that produces an attraction as MacCannell describes it. Indeed, a souvenir is one of the many forms of what MacCannell defines a *marker*. A marker is one of the three elements that constitute an attraction, together with the tourist and the sight. Following Peirce's semiology, MacCannell describes the three-fold structure of the attraction as represents / something / to someone: marker / sight /

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[78] Nicoletta Leonardi reminds us that Ghirri is here (an in many other photographs) using the technique of the *chatourné*, which entails the cropping of the image to make it adhere to the represented object. In Leonardi's words "questa modalità trasforma l'immagine in oggetto e, rompendo il principio del velo albertiano, mette lo spazio della rapresentaizone in dialogo diretto con le cose, con il risultato di aumentarne l'effetto di realtà e al tempo stesso di sottolinerane il carattere ingannevole e illusorio" (this technique turns the image into an object and, by breaking the principle of Alberti's veil, puts the space of representation in direct contact with the objects. As a result, both the image's reality effect and its deceptibe and illusory nature are heightened, 124).

tourist. MacCannell explains a marker as piece of information about a sight, which can be a guidebook, a postcard, an informational tablet, etc. In Jonathan Culler's words, a marker is "any kind of information or representation that constitutes a sight as a sight: by ... making it recognizable" (5). That is, a tourist attraction is a sign. Culler describes tourist as an army of semiotics "in search of signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behavior, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs" (2). Tourists, Culler contends, are only interested in things as signs of themselves.

The marker is the element responsible for proliferating visual and verbal information about the sight around the world, and it is the first encounter with the attraction the tourist has. In other words, the marker is that which turns the sight into an attraction for those who are able to decode the message, that is, tourists. Using De Saussure's twofold structure, MacCannell also describes the attraction as a sign: the marker is the signifier of the signified sight. As a signifier, the marker's relationship to the sight is arbitrary, socially constructed (as it requires consensus), and therefore unstable. As the first encounter between the tourist and the attraction happens through the marker, the experience of perceiving an attraction can actually be described as one of recognition, which works as a marker > sight replacement (MacCannell 121). This proves that the tourist's encounter with the sight is always mediated. Furthermore, since tourist attractions are signs, where the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, the relationship between marker and sight is subject to change. Indeed, MacCannell describes the processes of Identification, which happens when a tourist identifies him/herself with a sight by sacralizing one of its markers, and Obliteration,

which happens when a marker acquires the status of sight (124-127)[79]. This comes to show that nothing originates as a sight or a marker, but everything can become a sight or a marker in different contexts and through different processes. As Culler points out, only the proliferation of reproductions – the markers – proclaims the existence of a sight as an original, authentic, real sight. Without the markers, a sight is an undifferentiated, banal, and unimportant place that fails to produce any unique experience in the tourist's eyes. Again, we are forced to face the paradox that constitutes tourism's system of sign: "to be experienced as authentic [the sight] must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself, and hence lacks the authenticity of what is truly unspoiled, untouched by mediating cultural codes" (Culler 8).

Most markers imply some sort of photographic reproduction. Thanks to its indexicality, which enables the photograph to retain a trace of the photographed object, photography is the perfect tool for representing the sight. Indeed, from its very beginning photography has been associated with modern tourist culture, whose emergence took place in the same era that saw the invention of the photographic image. As Osborne contends, "travel and the making of visual images have always cohabited at the core of the general process of modernity" (3). As a trace of the photographed object, the photograph both promises mechanical objectivity and the possibility of "reverie, fantasy, and idealization" (Osborne 9). Accordingly, Osborne ascribes the photograph to the realms of realism, distance, and movement. While it represents the object in a specific spatial and temporal conjunction, that of when/where the photograph was taken, it then

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[79] An example of that is the Statue of Liberty: while it was at first a marker for the city of New York for those arriving by water, it then became an attraction in its own right (Culler 9).

separates the viewer from such a conjunction, rather merging itself in the time and space

of the beholder: "like starlight photographs are transmitted through time and space from

sources often long extinguished" (Osborne 10). As such, the photograph perfectly fits

with the opposition between displacement and restoration, distance and origin, at work in

the attraction and consequently in the souvenir. As Stewart argues, the silence of the

photograph is precisely what creates the conditions for the narration to erupt (138).

Going back to *Modena*, it is possible to argue that whoever looks at Ghirri's

photograph is a tourist, for the photograph establishes its beholder as s/he who

experiences the passage from marker to sight and back from sight to marker. The

photograph replicates the process over and over again, since the marker does not preexist

the sight, as it happens in lived tourist experience, but overlaps it. Furthermore, in

Modena the experience of seeing the sight as marker > sight replacement, described by

MacCannell, is not conceptual but actual, as the marker is not only present to the tourist's

consciousness through the previous exposure to the marker, but is rather contained within

the image itself. The photograph palpitates as the statue/ashtray keeps turning from sight

to marker and back again from marker to sight. As such, *Modena* at once exposes the

mediated nature of the relationship between marker and sight and performs the touristic

attitude as an inherent component of modern subjectivity.

However, what is striking about *Modena* is that it does not exhaust itself in the

semiological play between sight and marker. There is an additional layer, which is

represented by the complex of ashes, matches, and cigarettes that covers the ashtray's and

statue's surface. The cigarettes could be interpreted as a remainder of the use-value of the

souvenir, something to which the presence of the sight is, in the end, totally irrelevant

after the moment of its acquisition. The ashtray clearly doesn't need the sight to be an effective ashtray. Rather, the result of the ashtray's activity is something that at least partially obscures the sight's apparition. This effect is enhanced by the bright white of the cigarette bodies, which covers the shadier tone of the statue in the background. It is possible to argue that the presence of cigarettes, matches, and ashes both confirms and exceeds the play between sight and marker that produces the gaze and is produced for the gaze. It is a human element that speak to the everyday life that goes on far from the attraction – though not necessarily far from the thought of it. In this respect, it is significant that the title of the photograph makes no reference to the sight or the place where the sight is located and the souvenir was acquired. The title only talks about the location where the ashtray is used, detached from its place of origin. This can certainly be connected to the distance from the sight, which is necessary for the souvenir to produce nostalgia and consequently narrative – and the presence of several cigarettes may be related to the time spent in telling the story about how the attraction was recognized and therefore experienced and the ashtray acquired, which can only happen *somewhere else*.

Accordingly, the presence of the cigarettes might also signify the life that goes on day after day, in the repetitive succession of work and rest, time spent on the workplace and at home, where some distraction and escape can be provided by the mere act of smoking a cigarette. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, tourism does not exist in a bubble, but is rather triggered by the rhythms of modern life, produced by the need to contrast an experience perceived as authentic to the monotonous and prosaic sequence of work and rest, workdays and weekends. All these layers overlap in *Modena*, as the cigarettes at once make reference to the narrative aroused by the souvenir's distance from

the sight, and allude to the triviality of human life lost in the modern work/rest rhythm, which establishes the tourist experience as its counterpart.

The element that further complicates this image is the cigarette that protrudes from the ashtray, as if being still smoked at the time of the shutter click. By visually escaping the regularity of the ashtray's shape, breaking the continuity of its perimeter, and pointing at a space outside of the ashtray (and the photograph, too), the smoked cigarette speaks to a place that is beyond the circle of object/representation and everyday dullness/ tourist experience. It refers to an immediacy that is both visual and conceptual, thus breaking the alternating presence of sight and marker and the repetition of the same gestures in everyday life. What goes beyond is not an extraordinary experience that, like the tourist one, lives on the ambiguity between modern fragmentation and utopian restoration. Rather, it is a presence of the here and now, an irreducible vitality that acquires its power not from exceeding ordinary life, but from its being just a visual datum. The words of Mario Mussini can help explain this point: "In *Still Life* le interazioni tra vero e finto, che si instaurano casualmente nella realtà, vengono trasformate invece in una possibile nuova realtà, puramente visiva, attraverso il taglio fotografico che mette in evidenza riflessi, sovrapposizioni di oggetti e ombre proiettate (In *Still Life* the interactions between real and fake, that in reality happens randomly, here turns into a potential, purely visual new reality, through the photographs' cuts that put an emphasis on reflections, the overlapping of objects, and projected shadows, 25). After exploring the inescapable mechanism and pervasive relevance of tourism in contemporary life, *Modena* seems to suggest a space outside of it, which at the same time can create a connection between tourism and lived experience. It is of the greatest

important for the present discussion that such a statement is carried out through the replica – however displaced – of what we have defined the normative representation of monumental Florence offered by the Alinari Brothers' photographs.

3.Shocks of recognition

Keeping the framework produced by *Modena* in mind, it is now time to turn to contemporary photography of Florence. I will start my analysis with Gianni Berengo Gardin's *Viaggio in Toscana* (1967). Berengo Gardin's lengthy career, spanning from the 1950s to today, can be described within the context of documentary photography, as the photographer himself described his work in a 1988 interview (Karsenty, republished in Turzio, 33)[80]. His photographs, which have been published in several magazines as well as in over 200 photobooks, deal with a vast range of social, political, and environmental issues such as life conditions in mental hospitals, work at the Olivetti factory in Turin, life of Romani people in camps at the outskirt of Italian cities, the effects of the 2009 L'Aquila earthquake, and the impact of cruise boats on Venetian landscape. In Denis Curt's words, "his pictures offer a cross-section of the political, economic and cultural life of Italy from the years of the boom to the present day, both in its happier aspects and in its dramatic and sometimes tragic turns" (9). Berengo Gardin's photographs are unanimously praised for their humanistic character, the emotional participation they both show and trigger, and the ability to represent the daily relationship between landscape and human beings (Papone 9-10, Fagone 6). Interestingly enough, from 1962 to 1983 Berengo Gardin worked for the Italian Touring Club (from now TCI), taking photographs

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[80] In *Vera Fotografia* Berengo Gardin describes himself as a journalist rather than an artist (61).

of Italian and European cities and regions for several publications (more on TCI on pages

213-14 in this chapter).

It is precisely thanks to Berengo Gardin's involvement with TCI that *Viaggio in*

Toscana was published, as this work gathers photographs of Tuscany that were not

selected for the 1966 two volumes on Tuscany published by TCI as too subjective and

therefore not perfectly in line with the organization's standards (Turzio 59)[81]. *Viaggio in*

Toscana opens with an introductory text by Giorgio Soavi addressing Tuscan landscape,

Tuscan people's character, and the writer's personal memories of living in Florence, and

then presents Berengo Gardin's black and white photographs of Tuscany. Florence is just

one of the subjects of the book, occupying 14 of the 119 total photographs (more

specifically, photographs 74 to 87). Other subjects include, just to mention a few, Tuscan

cities such as Siena, Arezzo, Lucca, Pisa, and Pistoia, the hills around Siena, the

countryside in Maremma, rural works, small towns like Pitigliano, Sorano, and Volterra,

and marble caves in Versilia[82].

Unlike other photographers' work that will be examined in the rest of the chapter,

the introductory text barely addresses the existence of previous photographic

representations of Florence and Tuscany at large, which is even more noteworthy as the

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[81] The two volumes, part of the series *Attraverso l'Italia*, together with Berengo Gardin's include
photographs by J. Ciganovich, E. Quiresi, and Alinari (mostly for reproductions of paintings and
sculptures). It is important to note that these two volumes do not include Florence, which is the subject of a
1962 volume from the same series with photographs by Quiresi and Alinari (again, mostly for artworks and
sculptures: the only Alinari photographs of architecture show Giotto's Bell Tower, the Signoria Square
unusually taken form the Loggia dei Lanzi, the Strozzi, Ginori, and Pandolfini Palaces, the Via dei
Tornabuoni, the Medici Palace's yard, the Donati Medieval House-Tower, and the Medici Villas of Careggi
and Artimino).

[82] Berengo Gardin's involvement with Tuscany is not limited to his 1966 and 1967 works: his photographs
appear in *Il Grande Libro della Toscana* (The Great Book of Tuscany), Mondadori 1986, and *Gianni
Berengo Gardin: Toscana, Gente e Territorio* (Tuscany, People and Landscape), Fondazione Ragghianti
2004.

book itself is born out of yet another photographic expedition on the Tuscan soil. Soavi's

text rather alludes to a more elitist appreciation of Tuscan landscape, one that is related to

the above discussed practice of the Grand Tour (as the presence of the word "viaggio" in

the title suggests) and resulted in paintings and drawings that Grand Tourists produced or

commissioned. Indeed, the text opens precisely with a reference to drawing and painting,

whose excessive use in representing Tuscan landscape should have reduced it to a flat

piece of land: "Con tutti quegli occhi che l'hanno guardata cosi a lungo, frugandola, per

amarla, dopo averla ritratta con matite e pennelli, oggi la Toscana dovrebbe essere ridotta

a un pezzo di terra piatto, bruciato e disseccato, appunto, per troppo amore" (with all the

eyes that have looked at it for such a long time, searching it in order to love it, and

reproducing it with pencils and strokes, Tuscany should today be reduced to a flat piece

of land, burnt and dry, due precisely to an excess of love, 5). That is, the destruction of

Tuscan landscape, which was actually beginning at the end of the 1960s as a result of the

economic boom, is here a merely potential event related to an excess of loving

representations. Moreover, while later in the text a brief reference to photography

describes how "tutto il mondo passava e ripassava senza sosta e disperatamente

fotografando i nostri vecchi muri (the entire world endlessly passes by over and over

again, desperately taking photographs of our old walls, 12), this doesn't result in an

address to the aspect of repetition that is necessarily attached to the operation of

photographing monuments in Florence and Tuscany[83].

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[83] Such a reference is present in Turzio's monography on Berengo Gardin, where she maintains that the photographer "si sofferma su aspetti lontani di luoghi comuni, trovando una Toscana più vicina agli sfondi paesaggistici della pittura rinascimentale che alle immagini divulgative degli album Alinari o alle fotografie dei beni architettonici e monumentali; una Toscana antica e immutata, a misura d'uomo" (lingers on aspects far from stereotypes, depicting Tuscany as closer to the landscape backgrounds of Reinassance painting than to the didactic images by the Alinari or the photographs of architecture and monuments; his

What the text underlines of Tuscan land is its unchangeable and traditional character, while the reference to tourism (especially British) is described mainly as an elitist and sophisticated, rather than global and mass-related, activity[84]. As Soavi contends, "le fotografie raccontano la storia del senso 'fermo' della vita. Se c'e un paese 'immobile' come bellezza, ma lavorato dalla vita, questo è la Toscana" (these photographs tell the story of the 'still' sense of life. If there is a place that has an 'immobile' beauty but is worked by life, this place is certainly Tuscany, 5). On a similar note, Soavi describes Berengo Gardin's Tuscany as a "regione di immobile e contadina bellezza" (a territory of immobile and rural beauty, *ibid.*). Again, this is an apparently paradoxical move for a text introducing a set of photographs that had been initially produced for a tourist publication. However, such a move can make more sense if one relates it to the long-lasting *topos* of Italy's economic delay, backwardness, and immobility discussed in the introduction. Such a *topos*, which we have repeatedly encountered, is one of the reasons that brought travelers to Italy starting from the time of the Grand Tour, which Van Den Abbeele describes as providing a knowledge that was at once "exotic and familiar"(xxix). Indeed, post-Renaissance Italy was not only the place where one's ethical and aesthetic education could be perfected, but also "the continent's internal other, a place where Northerners could come to gawk at the evidences of Roman decline, and thus feel smug in the superiority of their nationalities, and could acquire the cultural sensibility to assume positions of power at home" (Van Den Abbeele xxx).

Tuscany is ancient and unaltered, people oriented, 60). Clearly, Turzio replicates Soavi's remark that connects the photographs to painting and drawing rather than to other photographs.

[84] Soavi mentions the presence in Florence of a number of writers and poets such as Stephen Spender, Arthur Koestler, and Dylan Thomas at the end of WWII.

Accordingly, Berengo Gardin's photographs put an emphasis on the countryside, rural areas, and small towns. References to contemporary life are totally overlooked in the photographs that, as the text describes them, tend to represent Tuscany as an area where natural world, traditions, work, and landscape collide. Again, it is important to note that these are the final years of Italy's economic boom, during which both Italian landscape and Italians' lifestyle underwent a set of unprecedented changes such as urbanization and the emergence of mass consumerism, of which these photographs bear no trace[85]. In this perspective, it is possible to consider these photographs as an attempt to (re)produce Tuscany as an attraction by linking it to the realms of the historical, the natural, and the exotic, so as to insert the photographs into an economy of wholeness and authenticity. As discussed above, wholeness and authenticity are essential part of an attraction, as they detach it from what is perceived as the fragmentary and contrived condition of modern life. It comes as no surprise, then, that this operation should appear precisely when this condition was becoming predominant – a condition that Berengo Gardin had described and was describing in other works.

However, the photographs show a certain discrepancy between the representation of city and countryside, which reveals Berengo Gardin's awareness of the unavoidable confrontation with pre-existing representations of famous monuments. In fact, while rural areas are represented in spacious compositions including wide portions of landscape, the photographs of monuments tend to represent them as fragments, denying an all-encompassing view that could replicate already existing photographs: paradoxically

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[85] Just two years after this book as published, Berengo Gardin's photographs appear in *Morire di Classe: La Condizione Manicomiale* (Dying of class: mental hospitals' conditions, Einaudi) and *Olivetti Pozzuoli* (Olivetti).

Fig. 2. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.
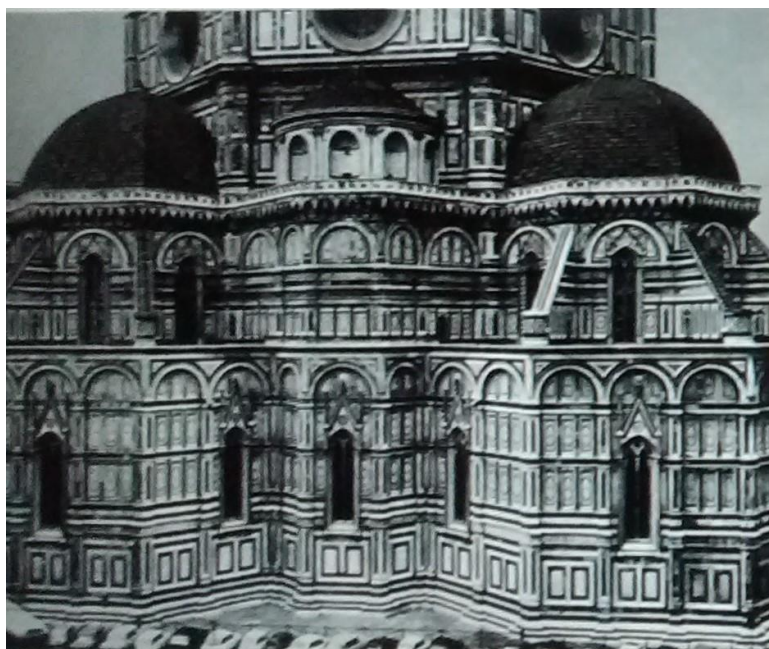
Fig. 3. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.

enough, the effort to represent Florence's landscape as the site of wholeness and authenticity results in tearing apart the views. In what follows, I discuss how Berengo Gardin's photographs of Florence enact different strategies in order to offer an alternative representation of famous sights. By showing only portions of the monuments, by denying their three-dimensionality, and by using them as a casual background to everyday events, the photographs of monuments show an undeniable if elusive need to go beyond what has already been seen and represented.

Not surprisingly, the photograph that opens the Florence section is a panorama taken from the hills that shows the Cathedral's side on the left and Palazzo Vecchio on the right (Fig. 2). Opening the section devoted to Florence with a panorama can seem a tribute to the Alinari portrait of Florence that, in the first catalogues, started precisely with a panorama of the city (cfr. Chapter One, pag. 52-53). However, the repetition of one of the most common views of Florence is at once enabled and denied through the use of light, as the two main monuments are as close to each other as they are separated by the darkness that permeates Palazzo Vecchio, almost reducing it to a silhouette. As a result, the two monuments appear disconnected, each merged in its own spatial and temporal dimension, and the view cannot unfold in its well-known entirety. In another photograph, the Cathedral appears as just a two-dimensional, two-colored wall that separates houses and roofs on both its sides. Otherwise, only two of the small domes appear in the frame, while the main one remains out of it (Fig. 3). A process of fragmentation of the monuments is at work here, preventing the view from replicating previous representations.

Fig. 4. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.

Fig. 5. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.

Fig. 6. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.

Fig. 7. Gianni Berengo Gardin. *Firenze*, 1967.

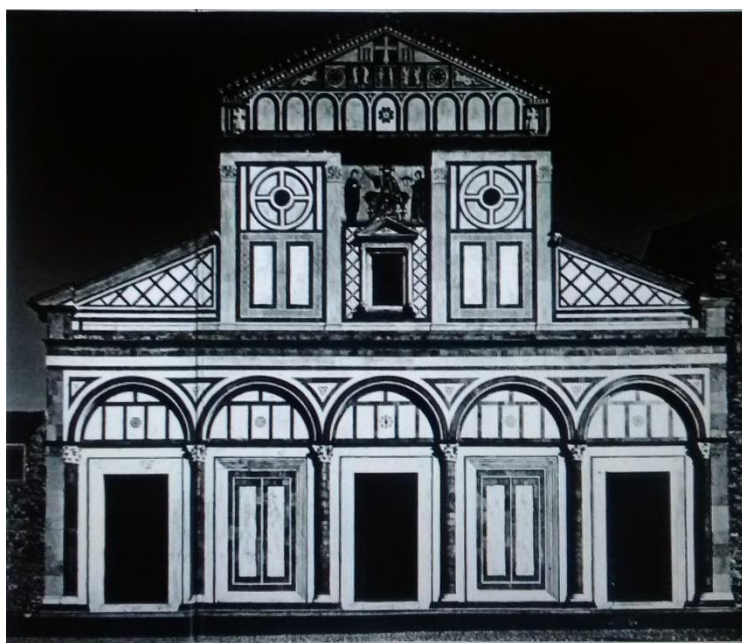In two other photographs, Santa Maria Novella's and San Miniato al Monte's facades occupy the entire image (Fig. 4 and 5). Consequently, they appear as living in a vacuum, independent from the surrounding environment, the atmospheric quality of the air, and the rest of the buildings themselves, as just two-dimensional silhouettes against a dark flat background[86]. And finally, a photograph shows three arches of the San Miniato al Monte's facade, the first one of them providing the background for a monk's walk (Fig. 6), while in another image the view from Piazzale Michelangelo frames the appearance of a communicant girl wearing a white dress on the panoramic terrace, where also a group of drivers appears (Fig. 7). The renowned view from the Piazzale appears as if by accident on the background of a scene that looks like it could exist without it. Indeed, the view itself is partially covered by the square's balustrade, and both drivers and bride appear uninterested in the panorama. To be sure, the presence of the drivers and the bride can be seen as a reference to mass tourism, although a very tenuous and indirect one, as nothing in the image suggests that the view is what brought people there[87].

Berengo Gardin's photographs reveal a subtle effort to marginalize and recontextualize the established views by acting on the ways they appear. The act of engaging with previous photographic representations appears here as one of oblivious and tacit repression, not yet conceptualized and explicit as in subsequent works by other

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[86] In a text specifically addressing the relationship of Berengo Gardin's photographs to Tuscany, Vittorio Fagone explains the tendency to take monuments from a close angle, showing only parts of them, as a close-range exploration meant to expose the correspondence between decorative motives and internal order. In this reading, details emerge as crucial tool for understanding the monuments' structure at large (7).

[87] It is interesting to compare this photographs with a similar one taken from Forte Belvedere that appears in *Il Grande Libro della Toscana*. In the latter, residents and tourists hanging out in the Forte Belvedere garden appear in the foreground. Behind them, beside some of the famous monuments, the central train station is visible with its tracks dividing the city in two, while on the left there are industrial silos from the peripheral Rifredi neighborhood.

photographers – of which Ghirri's *Modena* is a great example. The photographs of

Viaggio in Toscana aim to represent Florence's historical landscape by eliding both

memories of existing photographic representations and allusions to the city'

contemporary look (including mass tourism), as if both could prevent the monuments

from keeping the significance and authenticity they are meant to have and show. The will

to efface signs of contemporary life as well as of previous photographic images

establishes a connection between the two terms, both felt as problematic and menacing

for the preservation of cultural and aesthetic values necessary to a touristic appreciation

of the urban landscape. Indeed, the reference to a history of photographic representation,

rather than enhancing the image's prestige, seems to be an element of disturbance,

bringing to mind photography's power to show hidden and uneasy elements explored in

Chapter One. The mediated nature of the relationship with historic monuments, which

subsequent photographic projects will explore at length (and that has been discussed in

Modena), is here deliberately erased from the images in order to maintain the attractions'

status.

Such an unwillingness to address previous photographic iconography is not bound

to last in subsequent photographic depiction of Florence (and Italy at large). As Elisabetta

Pappone maintains while discussing post-WWII Italian photography,

> [u]na lettura del drammatico rapporto tra uomo e territorio caratterizzerà
> gli anni settanta, durante i quali la ricerca fotografica, segnata dalle
> tensioni sociali e culturali di quegli anni, si dimostrerà particolarmente
> sensibile all'individuazione dei segni lasciati dall'opera dell'uomo, dalle
> ferite o dagli abbandoni subiti dalla natura. Nel decennio seguente
> giungerà a maturazione una nuova e intensa attenzione verso il paesaggio:
> prenderanno forma progetti collettivi di analisi sistematica del territorio,
> tesi a indagare il paesaggio verso una civiltà post industriale, a
> documentare i luoghi dell'esclusione e della marginalità, a consegnare

'l'idea di un paesaggio inquietante, caoticamente antropizzato'[88], affrontando nel contempo una riflessione critica sull'identità della fotografia. (10-11)

the 1970s will concentrate on interpreting the dramatic relationship between individuals and landscape as photographic practices, affected by social and cultural tensions, explore the signs left by human beings' activity, by the wounds and neglects suffered by nature. The following decade will see a new and intense focus on the landscape as collective photographic projects appear with the purpose of investigating the shift to a post-industrial society, documenting social segregation and marginality, and carrying on 'the notion of an unsettling and chaotically built up environment', while also engaging with a critical analysis of photography's identity.

As this quote points out, in post-1970 photography a critical observation of contemporary urban as well as rural landscape goes hand in hand with a thorough investigation on the medium itself. In this perspective, the appreciation of contemporary Italian landscape as the result of humans' activity also include the history of landscape photography, perceived as one of the main factors of women's and men's interaction with the places they inhabit. Therefore, the comparison with the representation of Italian landscape carried out by the Alinari Brothers, which Berengo Gardin seems determined to avoid, becomes a crucial element of contemporary Italian landscape, as part of that history that has contributed to shape it. Such pensive, self-reflexive attitude towards the landscape as well as the photographic medium detaches itself from the practice of reportage and photojournalism, which is now perceived as too dependent on specific issues to be able to comprehend the world in its entirety and complexity.

Luigi Ghirri, whom we have already encountered as the author of *Modena*, can be considered as one of the protagonists of this renewed attitude towards Italian landscape.

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[88] Quoted from A. Sacconi, Annuario.

In a 2000 essay, Mario Mussini divides Ghirri's career (spanning from 1970 to 1992) in two sections, locating the shift between first and second period roughly around the end of the 1970s. According to Mussini, the first part of Ghirri's career is grounded on a notion of photography as a critical and analytical interpretation of human environment. As such, photography is capable of investigating the ambiguity between reality and mass media's representation, the mixture of modernity and history that is to be found in Italian cities, and the contrast between picturesque landscape and the apparent banality of suburbs, "those nondescript, seemingly antiauratic places that speak to no one and yet through photographic intervention invite identification from any viewer" (Spunta, "A Magical Balance 289). In this view, photography is a crucial if complex tool for understanding reality, in that it "non consente di tradurre il geroglifico del mondo anche se ne fornisce la chiave interpretativa" (cannot translate the world's scribble but is able to provide its clue, Mussini 26). Some works from this first period are 'Colazione sull'Erba' (1975), focused on the small part that a tamed nature is bound to play in urban environment, and 'Atlante', a collection of photographs of images from an atlas, enlarged to such an extent that they lose their ability to signify. The above discussed *Modena* is also a perfect example of Ghirri's first phase. The second phase is less concerned with critically assessing the landscape than with its capacity to inspire emotion, memory, and imagination. 'Il Profilo delle Nuvole' (1880-89) can exemplify the photographer's second phase, as it presents a dreamy and mysterious portrait of the Po River valley. Following Mussini, Marina Spunta articulates Ghirri's career around the shift from "an early effort

to deconstruct the assemblage of images that compose reality to an attempt to re-create an aura of places that are felt to be on the brink of disappearing" ("A Magical Balance" 1).[89]

Ghirri's contribution is not limited to his photographic work, but also includes the promotion of some of the collective projects mentioned by Pappone, one of which is the 1984 exhibit and subsequent photobook *Viaggio in Italia* (Journey to Italy). A seminal venture bringing together a number of Italian and foreign photographers, *Viaggio in Italia* constitutes one of the first and most compelling steps in the process to update the representation of Italian landscape[90]. As Ghirri and the other photographers and critics of *Viaggio in Italia* aim to renew the representation of Italian landscape, the persistence of the Alinari Brothers' gaze is a constant term to confront. In a 1984 interview with Marco Belpoliti, while describing the goals of *Viaggio in Italia* Ghirri explains that "[l]'immaginario visivo del Novecento è, nel nostro paese, composto immagini che derivano dalle fotografie degli Alinari, dai sussidiari, dalle cartoline illustrate, dai libri del Touring Club e da mille altri luoghi ... (20th-century Italian visual imaginary is formed by images from Alinari photographs, textbooks, postcards, Italian Touring Club books, and many other places, qtd in Sergio, 96). In the catalogue of the 2013 Ghirri's exhibit at the MAXXI in Rome, the Alinari Brothers still figure as the visual starting point that Ghirri's images strive to overcome in order to achieve a fresh perspective on

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[89] Spunta observes that "this aesthetic shift coincided with the completion of most of [Ghirri's] 1970s projects in 1979 and, in the same year, with his first major retrospective organized by Arturo Carlo Quintavalle in Parma, which gave [him] the opportunity to take stock at all of his output until then. It also corresponded with his moving from a small (24×36) to a medium-format camera (6×7), which led him to using more landscape formats in his 1980s production, as opposed to the vertical formats that are more common in his earlier work" (2).

[90] Photographers taking part in the project are, among others, Olivo Barbieri, Gabriele Basilico, Vincenzo Castella, Giovanni Chiaramonte, Mario Cresci, Vittore Fossati, Carlo Garzia, Guido Guidi, Shelley Hill, Mimmo Jodice, Gianni Leone, Claude Nori, Cuchi Whithe.

the world. Specifically addressing the photograph *Modena* and the series *Still Life*,

Giuliano Sergio maintains that "l'ultima immagine – quella famosa del posacenere *David*

– lascia presagire come tutta l'iconografia del Belpaese di marca Alinari negli anni a

venire sarebbe stata rivista e capovolta" (the last image, the famous one representing the

David ashtray, makes it clear that the entire Alinari-branded iconography of the Italian

landscape was going to be reconsidered and turned upside down in the following years,

95).

Such a turn, discussed with the photograph *Modena* earlier in this chapter, can be

found at work in other photographs by Ghirri engaging with Florentine monumental

landscape. In particular, one image from the series *In Scala* (To Scale, 1977), again deals

not with Florence's monuments directly, but with yet another representation. The entire

series focuses on the theme park *Italia in Miniatura* (Miniaturized Italy), located in the

Rimini area, which opened in 1970 and has since then dramatically expanded, being now

four times bigger than the original version. *Italia in Miniatura* is one of the attractions

meant to lure visitors to the Rimini area, which is widely known for its popular beaches

and night clubs. The park presents three-dimensional miniatures of a selection of 273

Italian monuments and rural landscapes on a small Italy-shaped piece of land, replicating

their actual positions on the peninsula. As for Florence, *Italia in Miniatura* replicates the

Cathedral and Palazzo Vecchio. According to Stephanie Malia Hom, the park addresses

the discomfort associated with the lack of cohesion of the Italian nation by presenting the

peninsula as "a simulacrum of Italy as [tourist] destination" (195). However, Hom

Fig. 8. Luigi Ghirri. *Rimini*, 1977

continues, the narratives of cohesion and belongings engendered by the park are explicitly produced as fictional[91].

The fictional nature of the miniatures and their photographic representation – clearly referencing traditional representations – is also at the core of Ghirri's photograph of metonymically miniaturized Florence.[92] The image that Ghirri devotes to *Italia in Miniatura*'s Florence shows only part of Palazzo Vecchio's facade, with the statue of *David* close to the entrance door and, more to the left, Donatello's sculpture *Giuditta and Oloferne* (1457-64), while the palace's windows and a balcony are visible in the image's upper part[93] (Fig. 8). Just as *Modena*, the image plays with the photograph's leveling power: no matter the size of the object photographed, the photograph reduces everything to the same scale, so much so that a photograph of the miniature and one of the actual monument would present them as having the same size. However, while in *Modena* the focus keeps switching from sight (Michelangelo's statue) to marker (the ashtray), here sight and marker already coexist before Ghirri's photograph. Reality and representation indeed coexist in the miniaturized version of Palazzo Vecchio: as the monument's miniature works as a marker of the actual sight, it is also an attraction in its own right, with its markers on sale at the park store. Ghirri's photograph once again plays with this ambiguity, replicating the traditional take on Palazzo Vecchio but at the same time focusing on only part of the façade. In a photograph of the actual palace, the focus on details would put more emphasis on the palace's and its decorations' fine craftsmanship,

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[91] For example, the audio-guide describes the attractions through the narrations and voices of foreign celebrities and fictional characters (Hom 200).

[92] Hom argues that the park metonymically represents each city by its most famous monuments. This process is the same that MacCannell describes for markers.

[93] It is interesting to note that the in the first Alinari catalog (April 1852) photograph n. 11 represents a detail of Palazzo Vecchio.

worth a close-range observation. Here, however, this selective process results in a highlight of the rough appearance of the monument's reproduction: rather than stone and marble, the miniature is made of plastic, and the process of its manufacturing was not as accurate as the palace's, as Ghirri's photograph doesn't fail to reveal.

This has two consequences. On one hand, the replication of Alinari-branded representational schemes, although applied to a much less refined object, puts in sharp relief their automatic, fictional nature, as a self-replicating mechanism that does not really take into account its objects. On the other hand, the attention granted to the rough appearance of the miniature puts it in a completely different context, one that turns the palace's unapproachable splendor into a more familiar, everyday dimension. Just like *Modena* allowed for a coexistence of the sight/marker exchange and the cigarette's reference to a daily routine, *In Scala*'s Florence establishes a connection between the sight/marker and what Mussini calls a "paesaggio minimale ridotto ai suoi particolari antropizzati" (minimal landscape reduced to its domesticated/humanized details, 21). While Mussini's quote refers to Ghirri's exploration of periphery, conflated between mass media images and suburban anonymity, his words can also apply to this DIY version of the monument.

Keeping up his oblique take, Ghirri engages with the Florentine landscape again in a 1985 photograph titled *Firenze, Stazione Ferroviaria di Santa Maria Novella di Giovanni Michelucci* (Florence, Santa mara Novella Railway Station by Giovanni Michelucci, Fig. 9)[94]. The title explicitly mentions architect Michelucci, whose train

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[94] Another photograph with the same title, also from 1985, represents the train station's restaurants, with floor cabinets and, behind them, a modern fresco.

Fig. 9. Luigi Ghirri. *Firenze, Stazione Ferroviaria di Santa Maria Novella di   Giovanni Michelucci*, 1985

station has become one of the architectural attractions of Florence, and one of the few produced during the twentieth century. However, while the title of this image could suggest a representation of the outside of the train station, Ghirri's photograph focuses on a much more private space, the waiting room, where a young woman is captured in a moment of relaxation. We see the waiting room's marble floor, its wooden walls, a heater, part of a door on the right side, and the young woman sitting on one of the chairs with a purse and a suitcase, reading a newspaper or a book. In front of the heater is a backpack on top of a bag, not necessarily the woman's property. On the wall above the woman, and apart from her sight, a decorative strip of six black and white photographs representing Italian monuments unfolds. It is possible to recognize Venice, Florence, Pisa, the interior of a church, a mountain landscape. The focus is here on the *temps mort* of tourism, those moments where the excitement for the encounter with the attractions leads way to a mixture of boredom, fatigue, and detachment from the surrounding environment. Accordingly, the presence of photographic markers is completely overlook by the woman, absorbed as she is in a more daily activity as is reading a newspaper. As such, this image can be seen as an effort to reinsert the alleged unique tourism experience into a more ordinary framework, something similar to *Modena*'s coexistence of the sight/marker articulation together with the everyday act of smoking a cigarette.

However, Ghirri's images always live on different levels, and *Firenze, Stazione Ferroviaria* is no exception. In fact, the presence of the photographs behind the woman sets in motion a circular process of references and displacements, which I will now explore. The photographs in the waiting room are part of a bigger set of photographic decorations that appear in different areas of the train station. The main part of such

decorative program is the series of black and white photographs, also representing Italian

urban and rural landscapes that unfolds in the upper part of the wall in the train station's

main atrium, in front of the trains' tracks. While the atrium's photographs have been

attributed to the Alinari archive, in the more modest setting of the waiting area the images

have been attributed to one of the architects that cooperated with Michelucci in planning

the train station, Giuseppe Baroni, also an amateur photographer[95].

The presence of the photographs work at different levels within the image. On a

general level, the presence of images within the image, as a photographic *mise en abyme*,

is a recurrent theme in Ghirri's work, meant to make the viewer aware of the complexity

of both photography and reality. As Quintavalle puts it, in Ghirri's work "ogni immagine

… nasconde un altro sistema di figure" (every image conceals a different figurative

system, 12). Usually defined as *photomontages* for their focus on putting together

heterogeneous elements, Ghirri himself has described his photographs as 'fotosmontaggi'

(photo-deconstructions), precisely because they produce new juxtapositions as much as

they put an emphasis on already existing ones, like this exploring reality's multi-layered

nature.

More specific to the present discussion is the fact that the photographs in the

waiting room represent rural and architectural Italian views. On a first level, the

photographs allude to the function of the train station itself. The train station as the site of

mobility, denied by the focus on a liminal area such as the waiting area and the immobile

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[95] As Beatrice Cuniberti and Paola Lucchesi explain, when the train station was built in the 1930s
photography was still considered a minor art, so that not much information has been transmitted on the train
station's photographic decor. Beside the photographs in the main atrium and the 'first class waiting room',
there are also the photographs in the 'third class kitchen', on which no information is available (60).

woman, is subtly reasserted by the incorporation of photographs of tourist sites within the image: after all, one only has to jump on a train to reach all the destinations that the photographs show and advertise. And again, we are reminded here of the deep link between photography and mobility that was established throughout the 19th century[96]. Secondly, the images in the waiting area also offer a displaced version of the tourist images of Florence, as the site where it is also possible to find urban and architectural views, many of which within steps from the train station (in itself a monument, as discussed above). And finally, these photographs cannot but evoke the more monumental series of Alinari photographs in the main atrium, of which the photographs in the waiting room offer a cozier and more accessible version. The relationship of *Firenze, Stazione Ferroviaria* with traditional Florence's iconography, while not as explicit as in *Modena* and *In Scala*, presents the same analytical attitude aimed at uncovering its persistent power of shaping the (tourist) experience of urban space, together with the above discussed effort to reintroduce it into the circuit of lived experience.

After Ghirri's conceptual displacement of the Alinari gaze on Florence, Olivo Barbieri's 2009 photographs of Florence, included in *site specific_FIRENZE 09*, carry out a spatial displacement by altering the angle through which the photographs are taken – with a conceptual outcome as well. The alteration of common perceptive conditions to be found in *site specific_FIRENZE 09* is a hallmark of Barbieri's work at large. According to Serena Zannier, Reversing and Revealing are the two extremes that contain Barbieri's work from the beginning in the late 1970s to today: more specifically

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[96] It is important to note that Florence's main train station was built within the city center (right behind the Medieval church of Santa Maria Novella) as an incentive to tourists' use of train.

"Reversing (of the point of view, of the normal way of looking at and approaching the truth) and … Revealing (of new ways of facing the world)" (23). By altering the way people perceive their living, in particular urban, environment, Barbieri's photography pursues what we can call an unreality effect meant to critically assess "how much reality exists within our life structures or, further, how deeply our perception is capable of understanding what surrounds us" (*ibid.*).

The first episode of this project encompassing humans' experience is 'Flippers' (1977-78), focused on old electric pinball machines. In Barbieri's words, this subject provides the opportunity to "retrace the history of the past century … [of] the modern imagery, from cow-boys to science fiction, from dinosaurs to the Beatles, from the pin-ups to the clowns, from the desert to the sprawling cities" (qtd in Panaro, pages not numbered). From this exploration of pop culture, perceived as the background of contemporary life, different projects unfold. *Notte* (Night, 1986), later included in the geographically broader project *Illuminazioni Artificiali* (Artificial Illuminations, 1995), is a series of Italian and European cityscapes merged in artificial light, still indebted to Ghirri's influence in the search for suspended urban atmospheres (Barbieri contributed to *Viaggio in Italia* with a photograph of a columned portico in Florence). *Virtual Truths* (1996-2002) shows the increasing use of digital manipulation, which will become one of the distinctive traits of Barbieri's production, in the depiction of stadiums, tribunals, malls, and urban scenes both in Italy and Asia.

Digital manipulation, together with the use of aerial perspective and the focus on an urban environment that is by now completely globalized, characterize the project *site specific*, of which *site specific_FIRENZE 09* is one episode. Started in 2003, *site specific*

is an ongoing project aimed at depicting modern cities around the world through a usually unprecedented aerial perspective, the use of "a special tilt-lift lens that enable [Barbieri] to drastically alter perspective and scale", and, starting from 2007, "digital postproduction techniques to modify the color balance, tonal relations, and even pixel structure of [the] images" (Phillips 6). *Site specific* now includes about 40 cities and potentially covers the entire globe by focusing on places as diverse as Montreal, Las Vegas, Mexico City, London, Modena, Beijing, Manaus, and Tel Aviv, just to mention a few. As this brief list shows, *site specific* projects Florence on a global stage among cities that, unlike it, have undergone dramatic changes in the last decades.

Within such context, very far seems to be the traditional landscape that Berengo Gardin constructs through his photographs, deliberately forgetful of both modernization and previous photographic representations such as the Alinari's. Far, also, appears the effort to critically assess the mixture of mass media images, remnants of history as well as tradition (including the Alinari images), and dull suburban life of Ghirri's images. And yet, it is hard to look at some of the photographs from *site specific_FIRENZE 09* without the Alinari precedent coming to mind. As opposed to other cities in *site specific*, whose photographs live on the contradictions of rapidly changing environments heightened by digital manipulation, photographs of Florence seem to produce a contrast that is more related to the difference between visual imaginary and actual images, to the ambiguity between what one is used to see, and what s/he actually sees. As some of Barbieri's photographs of Florence replicate Alinari angles, only taken from a higher point, these images give the impression that the Alinari photographs have been overturned, forcing

them to slide on a vertical axis: providing like this a commentary on the city as they presented it[97].

Aerial photography emerged as early as 1858, when Nadar took pictures of the French village Petit-Becetre from a hot-air balloon. As Paul Virilio recounts in *War and Cinema* (1984), aerial vision developed during WWI before it became available to the large public thanks to commercial flights starting from 1919 (19). Aerial view shows the world from an unnatural perspective, one that is denied to human beings in their everyday lives – something that seems to be in line with the notions of Reversing and Revealing that zannier sees at the core of Barbieri's work. Indeed, as Noa Steimatsky contends, aerial photography, "in departing from ordinary perceptual notions of resemblance and the identification of figures that rely on upright and thereby anthropomorphic parameters, the sense of scale, depth, concave and convex, and figure and ground relations is also radically disrupted"[98] (15). In aerial photography, a paradoxical mixture of aestheticization and power collide, as "the superior possession of vision and knowledge that aerial reconnaissance affords" goes hand on hand with "the encompassing, inspiring,

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[97] In 1996 Barbieri writes "Diversamente da alcuni fotografi miei contemporanei, non ho mai provato timore nel fotografare monumenti importanti, quelli da cartolina. Mi ha sempre divertito invece tentare di rileggerli. Solitamente la fotografia di architettura come immagine turistica è vita come un errore, ma oggi c'é davvero uno stacco logicamente definibile tra i due generi? Fino a pochi anni fa uno dei modelli che non bisognava asolutamente adottare per fotografare la città erano gli Alinari, sembrava la cosa peggiore che si potesse fare. Rivedendo però i loro lavori mi rendo conto che sono interessanti in quanto riescono a mettere in relazione un'architettura importante o un fenomeno naturale … con la città. Possibilità che i fotografi contemporanei hanno spesso trascurato." (Unlike some of my peer photographers, I have never been scared of photographing famous monuments, the postcard ones. I have always enjoyed trying to reinterpret them. Architecture photography as tourist image is usually perceived as a mistake, but is there a real contrast between them? Up to a few years ago you were supposed to avoid at all cost using the Alinari photographs as a model to represent urban space. It seemed the worst thing you could do. However, I looked back at their work and realized how interesting it is that they managed to connect an important architecture or landscape to the city. This is an opportunity that contemporary photographers have usually overlooked, Barbieri 1996 35).

[98] For its capacity to renew vision, aerial imagery was employed by such artists as Alexander Rodchenko, El Lissittzky, Kazimir Malevich, Sonia Delaunay, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, just to mention a few.

abstract beauty of the aerial view" (Steimatsky 16). In other words, as Davide Deriu points out, spectacle (as the abstract or at least anti-illusionistic feature) and surveillance (as the power and knowledge acquired on the territory) overlap in aerial photography. I will now analyze how these two elements are elaborated in Olivo Barbieri's work on Florence.

Site specific_FIRENZE 09 includes 22 images, all of them taken from a helicopter. Most of the images are b/w with strong contrasts, while a few are in color. The image that opens the series shows (again as in the Alinari's first catalogues) a panorama of the monumental city including Palazzo Vecchio and Santa Croce, merged in almost total darkness. While this effect, produced by mixing the black and white print with the negative, is used in other photographs, only the first one shows such a dramatic absence of lit areas. Most photographs show famous areas and monuments in Florence: the Cathedral with Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistery, Ponte Vecchio, Palazzo Vecchio and Signoria Square, Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, San Miniato al Monte, parts of the Boboli Garden[99]. As a result of the aerial angle, we don't see the buildings emerge from the soil and stand against the sky. Rather, the images revolve around the transition from sunlight to shadows on the ground, the shift between streets and buildings (and, in some images, water), and the turn from facades into roofs. However, in such oppositions neither of the two terms gains visual relevance at the expense of the other.

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[99] The subjects of the photographs focusing on non-monumental parts of the city are the stadium, squares in the Poggi avenues area, peripheral parks, housing complexes, and the train station's tracks.

Monuments and their facades fail to dominate the images, as hierarchies between full and empty spaces are rearranged according to different values[100].

Buildings, streets, roofs, and in some cases the Arno River occupy the image and saturate the horizon. Indeed, due to the angle from which the photographs are taken, the sky is cut off, producing a mosaic of diverse elements that combine themselves in unprecedented ways. The photograph of Santa Maria Novella shows this process at work, as the only photograph of an over-represented monument in color (Fig. 10). The geometric façade fails to be the visual focus of the photograph, as one's gaze is attracted by the chromatic alternation between the grass aisles in the square, the church and other buildings' red roofs, the white appearance of the square, and the dark areas where buildings cover the sunlight. Unlike the Alinari photograph representing the same square, where the bell tower and one of the obelisks in the square contain the façade (Fig. 11), no element gains such a visual relevance in Barbieri's photograph, as the bell tower is not included in the image and the obelisks are hardly noticeable – in fact one acknowledges their presence only thanks to their shadows on the square.

While in the photograph of Santa Maria Novella color is what organizes the image, other b/w photographs show a more subtle balance between different elements. Such is, for example, the photograph representing the Catherdal, Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistery (Fig. 12). Again, the sky remains out of the frame as the image is occupied by the monumental complex and the buildings and streets around it. And again, the

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[100] While Nori's introductory text doesn't make explicit reference to the Alinari Brothers' photographs, it states how Barbieri "does not fear its subject, he does not fear this this city which in the course of the centuries has been hyper-represented" (15).

Fig. 10. Olivo Barbieri. *site specific FIRENZE_09*, 2009

Fig. 11. Alinari Brothers. *Santa Maria Novella.* 1855

Fig. 12. Olivo Barbieri. *site specific_FIRENZE 09*, 2009

vertical feature of the Alinari photograph representing the same monuments (cfr. Chapter One, Fig. 3) is rearranged and displaced, as the different angle reconfigures the relevance – and the look – of objects. A clear example of that is Giotto's Bell Tower: while able to retain its vertical appearance thanks to its peculiar elongated shape, it appears parallel to the streets that run at its feet and the row of buildings beneath it. At the same time, the bell tower also appears to be parallel to the Cathedral. The tense collapse of buildings and shapes of the Alinari photograph gives way to a much less conflicting ensemble of objects, as even the contrast between sunlight and shadows contributes to smoothing the contrast between the Cathedral and the Baptistery, the latter somewhat incorporated in the former through to the Cathedral's shadow.

Barbieri's photograph of Palazzo Vecchio is taken from an angle that is quite similar to the one that the Alinari Brothers used, only a little more oblique and a little more elevated than theirs (Fig. 13). Both photographs include, together with the Palazzo Vecchio with its tower, the square where the palace rises up, part of the Loggia dei Lanzi, the Neptune Fountain on the right side of the palace, and the two statues in front of its entrance. However, here again the different angle dramatically alters the image. In fact the palace, rather than imposing itself against the sky, rests on the expanses of roofs behind it, and its appearance matches the roofs instead of producing a visual contrast. As in the Cathedral's photograph, even the shadow in front of Palazzo Vecchio makes the shift between palace and square smoother, while also connecting the palace to the fountain beside it – something very different from the troubling presence of the shadow in front of the palace discussed in Chapter One (cfr. pagg. 70-72).

Fig. 13. Olivo Barbieri. *site specific_FIRENZE 09*, 2009

As all these examples show, aerial perspective allows for a new appreciation of the urban landscape – something that, as discussed above, aerial photography has often been summoned to do. In fact, as the built environment occupies the entire visual field, the different elements that it consists of – buildings, streets, bridges, squares, and green areas – find unprecedented ways to interact, focused more on their interconnectedness than on their autonomy. As a result, these photographs seem to offer the possibility of a reconfiguration of such elements. Paola Tognon sees this as a

> synchronism between [Barbieri's] vision and one side of the current architectural debate, that which imagines spatial modifications as being close to organic metamorphoses and that which broadens the research to conceptions and materials that embody the sense of precariousness in their very essence, a liberating precariousness with regard to new functions and [against] a firmly anchored past. (10)

It is possible to argue that the past Tognon speaks about is not only the past of previous architectural elements, but also that of their representations.

Such 'liberating precariousness' attached to famous monuments, to which notions of fixity and immutability are usually ascribed, brings us back to the idea of Barbieri's work as producing an unreality effect. As Franziska Nori points out Barbieri, by keeping himself at a vertical distance from the represented places (and playing with the images' focus and depth of field), alters his images "to the point of making them unreal" (3). However, as both Nori and Phillips argue, the unreality that characterizes Barbieri's images is one of a specific kind. It is not the unreality of imagination: rather, it is that of potentiality, of things that haven't come to existence yet. Indeed, Barbieri's images of Florence (and other cities, for that matter) "look like reduced-scale architecture models," so much so that the photographer seems to take on the role of the architect or city planner

(Phillips 9). On a same note, Franziska Nori argues that "these places regress into a quasi-planning state, that of the architecture model in scale or of a drawing, in which everything can still potentially be changed" (13).

It can be argued that the focus on aerial perspective enables these photographs of overrepresented areas and monuments to show them as impermanent, undetermined, and permeable to movement and change as the different elements seem to merge with each other rather than live on irreconcilable contrasts. This seems to work at once for the actual city and its representation, which are both perceived as fixed: as the aerial perspective reveals a city that resembles its architecture model, offering the gaze the potential for change, it also breaks the apparent inevitable repetition of established views by dramatically altering the point of view. This way, the photographs seems to bring back the city to a condition similar to the one the Alinari Brothers fixed in their images, when Florence's structure was being for the first time modified and signs of modernization could not be left out of the frame. As such, Barbieri's take on Florence seems to offer a fascinating synthesis between the Alinari photographs' coexistence of touristic attitude (what the photographs show) and modernizing anxieties (what the photographs cannot not show). Indeed, the photographs from *site specific_FIRENZE 09*, rather than overlooking (Berengo Gardin) or replicating them (Ghirri), incorporate their memory in a higher perspective that recover them precisely as it switches their angle.

Accordingly, the tourist character of the monuments is not denied as much as it is absorbed in a broader context: that of the impermanence of the built environment. As mentioned before, such impermanence can be read as an effort to bring the city back to a

Fig. 14. Olivo Barbieri. *site specific_FIRENZE 09*, 2009

moment when its structure was being mobilized. Barbieri's photographs of Florence seem to look for a negotiation between the touristic nature of the represented places and their capacity to change over time, as the pervasiveness of tourist discourse is somewhat incorporated in an all-encompassing perspective. In this respect, the unusual angle absorbs the presence of tourists as a natural part of the environment: note, for example, the arabesque produced by the presence of people (of which one can imagine many are tourists) in the photograph of Piazza Santa Croce (Fig. 14). By altering the camera's angle to modify traditional views of monumental Florence, Barbieri produces a renewed image where the presence of tourism is no obstacle to the city's potential for change.

The pervasiveness of the established representation of monumental Florence, which has in the Alinari Brotheres' work its most lasting and widespread example, triggers a wide range of responses from contemporary Italian photographers of Florence, as this chapter demonstrates. In Berengo Gradin's ork from the 1960s, such presence is never made explicit and comparisons are avoided through the focus on monuments that are fragmented, made two-dimensional, and at times inhabited by characters walking by their glazed appearance. The contrast between the presence of people living before the backdrop of famous monuments and the ghostly appearance of the monuments themselves reveals the difficulty of engaging with Florence's urban iconography. The absence of references to tourist discourse allows for images that seem to hover in a timeless atmosphere: precisely that of tourist attractions. In Ghirri's photographs, the confrontation with the Alinari archive is no longer denied but deliberately embraced. Ghirri's reference to the Alinari photographs is constant if ambiguous, insistent if deferred, as the threshold that must be addressed in order to approach a space that is not

as much the actual city as the conceptual and visual space produced by the encounter between the world and the photograph, everyday life and (tourist) reproduction, real and fake, sight and marker, what lies inside and outside of the frame. Finally, Olivo Barbieri presents a different version of displacement, one that literally distorts the canonic angle of monumental Florence's representations in order to show a sky-less world where elements seem to merge, projecting the urban space in a state where tourism and potential change go hand in hand. As such, Barbieri's photographs recall the established representations and their touristic exploitation while never making them available, and conform to them by presenting a city on the verge of change, just as Alinari's Florence was a century and a half earlier.

5.Small Worlds

If contemporary photography of Florence is scarce in Italy, it is even more so outside the national boundaries. Not surprisingly, contemporary non-Italian photography seems to take notice of Florence only in a commentary on global mass tourism: which is what English photographer Martin Parr does in *Small World*, first published in 1996 and then in an expanded version in 2007. Recently on the forefront thanks to his photographic work on Oxford, Parr, one of the most prominent English photographers, is said to have put class at the core of its work (Morgan timeshighereducation.com)[101]. After observing "the quirky and eccentric British past" (Williams 158), Parr has turned his focus to consumerist society, its rituals, and habits from the early 1980s on, first in UK and then on a global level. At the same time, Parr's photography has shifted from black and white

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[101] Of his work on Oxford Parr says that it is part of a bigger project "about the Establishment in Britain" (Morgan timeshighereducation.com).

to bright colors. To this context belong works such as *The Last Resort* (1986), focusing on day-trippers to the seaside resort of New Brighton, and *The Cost of Living* (1989), "a penetrating portrait of Britain after ten years of Thatcherism - a picture of what [Parr] terms 'the comfortable classes', or new middle classes: affluent and aspirational" (magnumphotos.com). In Val Williams' words, Parr "has made a comedy about the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the places we go; scrutinized the very way we live our lives" (cover). For this, Parr has been accused of exploiting lower and middle classes' alleged lack of taste by exposing what ordinary people look like when they "try to make [their] lives *less* ordinary" (Williams 272).

As tourism is one of the main ways for people to escape the banality of everyday life, it is no surprise that one of Parr's works of the 1990s would focus on global mass tourism. In *Small World* Martin Parr presents his work on middle-class women and men at tourist sites all over the world, doing the same things that tourists all over the world do: listen to tour guides, take and pose for photographs, read maps, and obviously look at monuments. The photographs from *Small World* show such places as Paris, Greece, Bali, Egypt, India, Hawaii, Gambia, and Italian cities such as Venice, Pisa, Rome, Milan and Florence. Even more than Barbieri's *site specific* project, devoting one book to each city, *Small World* projects Florence on a global context. More specifically, this works includes two photographs shot in Florence: one in Piazza della Signoria and one showing the panorama from Piazzale Michelangelo. Also, one of the photographs taken in Rome has

in the foreground a cart selling souvenirs with reproductions of the *David* (both full figure and just the head) next to other famous statues in Rome[102].

The analysis of these three photographs will unfold Parr's specific discourse on the view. Before that, however, it is necessary to stress the difference between the Italian photographers previously examined and Parr's work. Indeed, the work of Berengo Gardin and to a higher extent Ghirri and Barbieri aims at scrutinize the human environment in order to explore the conditions of people's interaction with and within it. In the case of Florence, the focus on monumental areas is meant to dissect the experience of an over-represented and touristically exploited urban space. On the other hand, Parr's purpose is to analyze a social practice that extends globally rather than observing the changes that globalization has produced on a specific landscape. However, while it is unquestionable that Parr's focus is on people as much as Berengo Gardin's, Ghirri's and Barbieri's is on the environment, landscape and human beings are inextricably linked in the work of all these four photographers.

As previously observed, *Small World* focuses on the specific type of landscape that is the monumental and touristic environment: a landscape that, as has been observed at the beginning of this chapter, has a pervasive relevance for Western subjectivity. The close relationship between people and monumental landscape in *Small World* can be exemplified by a photograph representing the Parthenon at the center of the image and two different groups of tourists around it: one listening to a tour guide and the other posing for a photograph. Peter Osborne describes the presence of the Parthenon in this

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[102] Among others, souvenirs of Michelangelo's *Mose*, Michelangelo's *Pietá* in St. Peter's Basilica, Roman statue of Augustus, Greek statue of Venus de Milo (actually at the Louvre).

photograph as a catalyst that "generate[s] a force field organizing the tourists into orderly architectural formations that echo its own" (70)[103]. Other photographs, however, present a type of interaction between people and monuments that seems to be at odds with the one just observed. Indeed, in the Florentine images tourists and attraction appear to be in a relation of mutual oppositions as the attraction is barely visible, obscured by the tourists' disturbing presence. In the photograph taken from Piazzale Michelangelo – the place offering the panoramic view *par excellence* in Florence, repeatedly fixed by the Alinari Brothers – only part of the Cathedral's dome is visible, while the rest of the monumental complex is covered by the veiled head of a woman (Fig. 15). In the photograph showing Piazza della Signoria, two tourists stand in front of the section of Palazzo Vecchio's façade, leaving only a small portion of it to be appreciated (Fig. 16). As for the nearby Neptune Fountain, its lower part is covered by different group of tourists. It could be argued that the presence of tourists interferes with the presence of the attractions, reducing it to some sort of background noise that loses its appeal to the colorful appearance of tourists. In fact, one of the tourists covering Palazzo Vecchio's façade flaunts a typical Hawaiian shirt decorated with palm trees against a yellow and orange background, while the woman's head obscuring the view from Piazzale Michelangelo is covered with a veil, an image that in the discourse of tourism may be associated with specific countries[104].

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[103] Osborne also adds that the different groups of tourists, while in a harmonious relationship with the attraction, are isolated from each other: "principles of harmony, of unity and universal human reason given form in the Parthenon are here unsettled by the thought that these groups might be united only in a shared misunderstanding; that, against expectations, tourism serve to confirm the disunity of mankind" (70-71).

[104] Veiled women are sometimes used as exotic signs in guidebooks' covers – this happens, for example, in Lonely Planet's guidebooks of Goa and Mumbai, India, and Bali and Lombok. In general, and for reasons that unfortunately one doesn't need to explain, human beings rather than landscapes tend to be used as markers of non-Western countries in guidebooks' covers.

Fig. 15. Martin Parr. *Piazza Signoria, Florence, Italy*, 1995

Fig. 16. Martin Parr, *Florence, Italy*, 1995

According to Osborne, the photographs of *Small World* make constant reference to the pervasive and interchangeable nature of the tourist image-commodity: as every attraction becomes equivalent to any other on a global scale, "[e]ach sight is interrupted by the signifiers of other sights. Each sight signifies all other sights in the system of sights" (72). In other words, there is no distinction between the attraction (Palazzo Vecchio and the view from Piazzale Michelangelo) and the markers of other attractions, as all of them are part of a global system of attractions and markers that have lost contact with the specific place that engendered them. The close link between attraction and its markers, which was at the base of Ghirri's *Modena*, seems to be lost here. The link seems also to be lost between contemporary and traditional photography of monuments, as the subjects of the latter seems to be here nonchalantly ignored.

However, the photographs of Florence seems to suggest a more complex story, as they reveal an unchanged hierarchy between the sights and markers of other sights. Indeed, as signs of other attractions cover or interrupt the appearance of the attraction the photograph is supposed to show, the attraction in the background acquires new relevance precisely by being obscured, but still clearly recognizable and localizable. Far from diminishing their magnetism, the presence of the markers enhances the monuments' power, as that which keeps existing behind the reference to other tourists' sites. Rather than dispersing the sight's power in an undifferentiated sea of attractions, these photographs seem to show that the view is still there, together with the photographic reproduction that first established them in the 19th century. This process is also expressed through visual means, as the round woman's head seems to mimic the dome's shape that

Fig. 17. Martin Parr, *Colosseum, Rome, Italy*, 1995

it partially covers and her veil's blue, green, and red dots evoke the colors of the sky, the trees, and the traditional roofs in the view.

Another photograph from *Small World* brings this mechanism to a further point. It is the fore-mentioned photograph taken in the Colosseum area in Rome, showing a group of tourists facing the observer and probably the monument, which however rests outside of the frame (Fig. 17). In front of the tourists, in the photograph's foreground, a group of reproductions of famous statues in Rome and Florence appears, probably from a souvenir cart that, again, doesn't appear in the image. The ordered if entranced mass of standing tourists seems to echo the group of reproductions of famous statues. Even more, they seem to replicate their postures, as many of the little statues represent the *David* with its erect and attentive attitude, once more called upon to bring its contribution to the representation of contemporary global tourism (and tourists). While this time tourists and markers juxtapose rather than overlapping, their similar attitudes show the same deference for the attractions, so pervasive that they don't need to appear in the photograph[105]. Accordingly, one could argue that the attraction is not shown as there is no need to replicate a photographic view that has already powerfully shaped people's consciousness: that image is already there.

Parr's photographs at the end of this trajectory reveal the extent to which the view in its traditional image is internalized. As a commentary on global tourism that has been interpreted both as mocking middle-class tourists and providing a social take on it, *Small*

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[105] While one could notice that only the title suggests the presence of the Colosseum, it could also be added that the presence of the attraction *par excellence* is implied by the high-reaching gazes of the tourists and the ancient-looking wall and buildings behind them. As Tzanelli argues, "the Colosseum rests at the heart of collective European memory as a site associated with the greatness of Roman antiquity" (1).

World seems to conform the normative power of the sight's representation, as that which by now exists even beyond representation itself – a big step further Ghirri's alluding and displacing what we have called the normative view. From Berengo Gardin's walk by the Piazzale Michelangelo's balustrade, beyond which an almost random and partially covered view goes unnoticed, to Martin Parr's woman replacing the view, a trajectory of progressive effacement of the view takes place, to be sure an increasingly explicit and deliberate one. As a wound at the center of the image, dispersed in the signs of tourism scattered throughout the image, the view grows more and more unrepresentable as its appearance becomes increasingly pervasive, a distorted Barthesian *punctum* that bites the viewer's eyes precisely because it doesn't appear where it is supposed to appear, where everyone knows it must be.

5.All About Florence

This last section investigates the ways in which tourist discourse confronts the Alinari gaze on Florence by analyzing photographic discourses in Italian and American guidebooks from the 1980s on. The guidebook as we know it today is a complex mix of written texts, drawings, photographs, maps, tabs, and lists, which Stephanie Malia Hom describes as "more montage than narrative" (31). Accordingly, as Alice Giannitrapani reminds us, the guidebook has many functions, as it is at once expected to describe places, propose itineraries, lead the gaze, provide information on the destination's services, and facilitate the encounter between the tourist's and the host's cultures (27). As opposed to such a manifold task, Giannitrapani laments the scarcity of critical work on the object guidebook due to its alleged banal, superficial, and standardized rendering of the target place (17). The best known example of such harsh judgement is Roland

Barthes' notion of the guidebook (more accurately, of Hachette's guidebook to Spain) as

"agent of blindness" that, by focusing merely on monuments, "suppresses at one stroke

the reality of the land and that of its people, it accounts for nothing of the present, that is,

nothing historical, and as a consequence, the monuments themselves become

undecipherable, therefore senseless" (76). Barthes deplores the concealment of everyday

life as well as the lack of reference to fields such as geography, economics, and sociology

perpetrated by the guidebook, which reduces the described place to an "uninhabited

world of monuments" (*ibid.*).

Although Barthes' take on the guidebook dates back to 1957, his words can be in

part applied to many later guidebooks, as this section will show. For now, however, it is

important to remember that the guidebook genre has evolved a great deal throughout its

centuries-long (one could even say millennia-long) history, serving different functions

and speaking to different audiences as "the travelers of one age are officials, of another

devotees, of another, scholars, of another men and women of fashion" (De Beer qtd in

Parson, 3). This quote addresses antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, and

stops at the age of the above discussed Grand Tour. What happens after the Grand Tour is

of chief interest for the purposes of the present discussion, as the closest precedent of

today's guidebook developed throughout the 19th century, when an educated middle-class

eager for self-improvement emerged as the new protagonist of travelling practices. For

this class, a new type of guidebook developed, which Thomas Parson describes as a

"combination of inventory and description, narrative and reference, but also ultimately of

fact and (supposedly objective) opinion" (185). The most important of these 19th-century

guidebook is the German Baedeker, whose first guidebooks to the Rhine, Holland, and

Belgium were published in 1839, while the first guidebooks to Northern, Central, and

Southern Italy appeared in 1867-68 and were then republished in many subsequent

editions[106]. Thanks to a "methodology that can be applied globally, a brand name that

guarantees solid reliability and detachment" (Parson 199), the Baedeker guidebooks, still

existing today, were market leaders from the 1870s to WWI and were published in three

languages (German, English, and French).

The Baedeker format was the model for the most important Italian guidebook of

the first half of the 20th century, published in Italy (and in Italian) by TCI[107]. This 16-

volume guidebook came out between 1913 and 1929, replacing the Baedeker in the

Italian market and creating its own monopoly until at least the 1950s through subsequent

editions[108]. These guidebooks' structure is similar to the Baedekers': after a general

survey of the target area there are practical information on accommodation, food,

transportation, and the like, followed by the list of itineraries with historical, urban, and

artistic notations. Following the Baedeker's example, TCI guidebooks didn't include

images and focused on all aspects of the target region or city, carrying out a capillary

account of landscape and artistic attractions as well as describing modern and

technological achievements: as Daniele Bardelli recounts, in TCI guidebooks "capannoni,

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[106] The Baedeker guidebooks were inspired by their predecessor, the Murray's *Handbooks*. The first *Handbook for Travelers on the Continent* appeared in 1836; the first Italian guidebooks, the *Handbook for Travelers in Northern Italy, Central Italy*, and *Sothern Italy* were first published respectively in 1842, 1843 and 1853. The two guidebooks were apparently very similar and Baedeker even took some of its distinctive features (such as the numbered itineraries and the star system) from Murray. However, the Baedeker is known for having a more impersonal and concise style than Murray.
[107] The TCI was born in 1894 as TCCI (Italian Cycling Touring Club).
[108] The widespread diffusion of TCI guidebooks is due to the fact that they were freely distributed to all members. Other Italian guidebooks to Italy were published since the first half of the 19th century by Artaria, Vallardi, Treves, but they lack the systematic and exhaustive character of the Baedeker and then the TCI guidebooks. They don't belong to the genre, as Di Mauro defines it, of the "guida-inventario-catalogo" (guidebook-inventory-catalogue, 426).

idrovore nelle bonifiche, macchine agricole, strade moderne e antenne radio si

accompagnavano … alle vestigia del passato (warehouses, water pumps for landscape

recovery, agricultural machineries, new streets and radio antennas went hand in hand

with remnants of the past, 199)[109].

Staring form the 1950s, however, TCI guidebooks have increasingly lost contact

with the real territory: "l'Italia descritta è quella che era, quella che si vorrebbe fosse,

raramente quella che è" (the Italy described within the guidebook is the old one, the

desired one, rarely the real one, Di Mauro 413). The new editions of the TCI guidebook

were completely silent on the dramatic changes that post-WWII Italy was undergoing: the

above-mentioned economic boom, the mass migration from the country to cities as well

as from the South to the North, and the landscape degradation. In describing this process

of 'progressive reduction', still ongoing today, Di Mauro mentions Barthes' definition of

the guidebook as an agent of blindness, with which we started this discussion (414)[110].

The analysis of *Tutto Firenze,* a hard-cover big-sized guidebook published in

1985 (one year after *Viaggio in Italia*) by Rizzoli, with texts provided by TCI, will

provide the opportunity to detect whether such process of reduction takes place in tourist

representation of Florence. This guidebook is particularly useful to our discussion as its

structure is such that the city is constructed mainly through visual means. Indeed, all the

photographs are collected in the central part of the guidebook, with only brief texts

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[109] When the TCI guidebooks first appeared, they were animated by the strong patriotic effort to expose all Italian citizens to the entire country, unified only about 50 years before and still presenting an irreducible variety of regional cultures, dialects, and traditions.

[110] This brief account of the TCI activity cannot end without a mention to the series of monographs *Attraverso l'Italia* (Throughout Italy), which was published in three editions (1930-1955, 1956-1972 and 1984-1991). The specificity of this series, which keeps the division by regions and main cities, is the focus on photography: the third series saw the presence of prominent photographers such as Gianni Berengo Gardin (whose photographs appear in the above mentioned 1966 volumes on Tuscany), Luigi Ghirri, Mario Cresci, Mimmo Jodice, and Francesco Radino.

accompanying them; all other texts are either before or after it[111]. In this respect, it is possible to consider *Tutto Firenze*'s photographic section as a book within the book. This photobook occupies about one hundred pages (33 to 128) of the 144 total, and is organized in 29 thematic sections focusing on particular Florentine areas, monuments, or themes, from *Piazza della Signoria* to *I dintorni di Firenze* (Florence's surrounding areas)[112]. The sections' organization loosely follows the seven itineraries recommended at the end of the guidebook (for example, the Cathedral and the Baptistery are not shown in sequence with the Signoria square and the Palazzo Vecchio as they belong to the religious itinerary, rather than to the one on places of power)[113]. Each section occupies two to six pages, and every other page a caption explains the photographic content.

Confirming Di Mauro's and Barthes' remarks, no section is devoted to contemporary Florence. It wouldn't be accurate, however, to read the photographic section of *Tutto Firenze* as Barthes' 'inhabited world of monuments'. Indeed, people do appear here: both as tourists (whose function will be analyzed later) and as residents, whose activities are significantly if variously related to tourism. Indeed, throughout the pages of *Tutto Firenze*'s photographic section one encounters street vendors, painters offering to draw tourist's portrait (or caricature), storekeepers, and locals sitting at

[111] After a four-page introduction to the city, *Tutto Firenze* has its practical info section (pages 9-32: how to get there, how to get around, accommodations, food, shopping, banks, museums, libraries and archives, churches, palaces, villas and monuments, surroundings, nightlife).

[112] The Signoria Square, A Museum *en plein air*, The Palazzo Vecchio, The Uffizi Gallery, Lesser-Known Florence, The Ponte Vecchio, The Lungarni, A silver-looking river, The Pitti Palace, The Boboli Garden, The Medieval City, The Belvedere Fort, Streets and Doors, The Piazzale Michelangelo, San Miniato, Knockers and Doorbells, Santa Croce, The Medici Palace, Florence's Social Gatherings, The Cathedral, The Baptistery, Polychrome Marbles, Florence from on high, Markets and flea markets, The big churches, Street furniture, Urban atmosphere, Romantic Florence, Florence's surroundings.

[113] The seven itineraries occupy the last pages of the guidebook (pages 129 to 144) and focus on Florence and power, long gazes on Florence, popular Florence, the religious center, the Medici 's Florence, the big churches, the surrounding areas.

outside cafes, whose presence is both an invitation for tourists and a reference to the notion of Italy as the land of *il dolce far niente* (the sweet art of idleness), "a land of vacation where Italians exist as figurative tourists in their own lives" (Hom 52). Accordingly, the non-monumental places represented here are markets and flea markets, where tourists can indulge in the core of 'the most artisan city in Italy' analyzed in the introduction as well as Chapter Four.

As this description shows, *Tutto Firenze*'s photographs represent Florence as a city of and for tourists. The presence and function of tourists in these photographs can be further explored within the context of the guidebook 'montage' discussed above. As we are dealing with a photographic book within the book, the montage here is mainly visual, as meanings are produced by different types of photographs interacting on the pages. Within this context, the presence of images reminiscent of the Alinari photographs acquires a new relevance, as one of the elements cooperating in constructing a city that not only is for and of tourists, but is also produced by them (more accurately, by their gazes) as an attraction. As this discussion will show, this interaction goes beyond the strategies through which photography constructs a place as a desirable tourist destination[114]. Indeed, the interaction of photographs of *Tutto Firenze* embodies a process through which the city comes to life as the result of tourists' sightseeing.

A first group of photographs can be identified through their replicating Alinari images. This happens for Santa Maria Novella, the Cathedral's side, and the series of bridges taken from a vantage point. Sometimes the Alinari view is replicated in such a way that the gaze needs to overcome an obstacle in order to access it. Significantly, this

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[114] Some of these strategies, analyzed by scholars such as Tom Selwyn, Olivia H. Jenkins, and John Urry Urry (just to mention a few) are framing and isolating of the subject from its surrounding,

Fig. 18. *Tutto Firenze*. The opening page of the photographic section

happens in the photograph opening *Tutto Firenze*'s photographic section, which shows

the view of the Cathedral's side through a dark arch (Fig. 18). The obstacle, far from

reducing the power of the view, makes it even more appealing, and its visual occupation

even more gratifying. Indeed, as Mike Robinson and David Picard argue, professional

tourism photography's tendency to framing is related to the fact that "destinations are

constituted as … closed system", and framing contributes to detach the view from the

context (10). Therefore, the appropriation of the view by overcoming of a visual obstacle,

besides being a reward for the gaze, can also be read as a reification of the very process

that turns a place into a tourist destination. The parcellization of the Alinari gaze right at

the beginning of the photo-section alludes to something that the rest of it will make

explicit, that is, the presence of the tourist gaze as both the receptor and the generator of

the represented space.

Accordingly, a second set of photographs explicitly addresses both the gaze and

the physical presence of tourists at tourist sites. While the opening photograph produces

the city as a place to be visually occupied by a still unspecified gaze, other sections of

Tutto Firenze make it clear that the gaze that is being addressed is none but the tourist's.

For example, right after the above discussed first image, the *Piazza della Signoria* section

opens with a photograph of two tourists heading to the palace (Fig. 19). As the

photograph is taken from a low angle (arguably from the ground), it forces the viewer to

identify with the tourists. This happens because the low angle at once intensifies the

visual relationship between tourist and palace, and mobilizes the image by suggesting the

trajectory towards the monument as the main path to follow. On a general level, the

presence of tourists in tourist photography is meant to trigger a process of projection and identification: as Urry describes it, "these [images] guide the reader's fantasies and make them seem realisable: this could be me!" (16 vision and photography). Furthermore, as Giannitrapani explains, the presence of tourists in professional tourist photography performs the task of prescribing a practice of observation[115] (201). And yet, a more complex mechanism seems to be at work in the photographic montage of *Tutto Firenze*, one that both addresses the tourist gaze and construct it as the enabler of the sites. The analysis of different pages from the guidebook will explore this mechanism more in detail.

At the bottom of the third page of the *Piazza della Signoria* section, a photograph shows two tourists heading up to observe Benvenuto Cellini's bronze statue of *Perseus* in the Loggia dei Lanzi, next to the Palazzo Vecchio. However, as the photograph only shows the statue's base together with the tourists, the reader of *Tutto Firenze* needs to turn up to another photograph in the same page in order to observe the entire statue, just like the two tourists are doing (Fig. 20). However, as opposed to the first photograph, the photograph of the statue is not taken from a frontal angle. Indeed, as it is taken from below, it replicates the tourists' gaze that was the subject of the first photograph. This happens on a literal level as well, since the tourists' gaze in the first photograph intersects the statue in the second one, as if they were watching the statue's photographic reproduction that appears in the same page. By using different framings and angles, the two photographs cooperate in replicating the experience of the two tourists looking at *Perseus*. As the photographs' arrangement on the page establishes the tourists' gaze as

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[115] These two different approaches are related to the two functions of professional tourist photography and the guidebook: inviting to travel and suggesting how to behave at tourist sites.
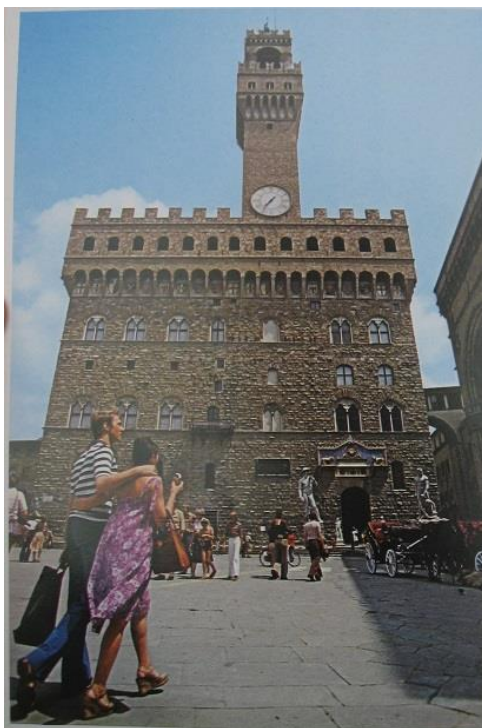
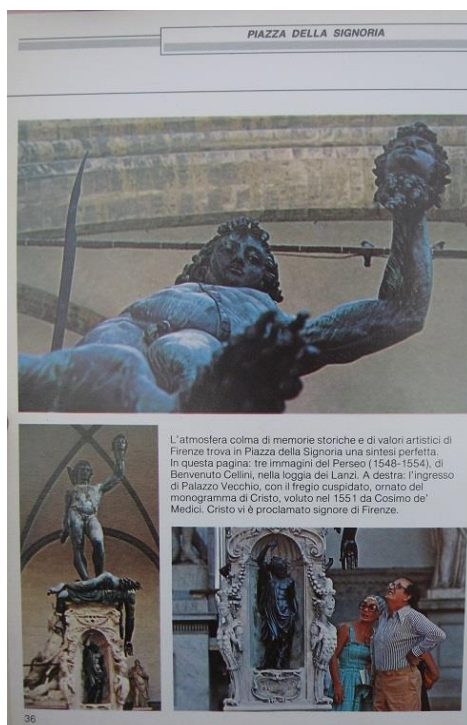**Fig. 19**. *Tutto Firenze*, 1985. An image from Piazza della Signoria section

Fig. 20. *Tutto Firenze*, 1985. One page from *Piazza della Signoria* section

both the object and the subject of the images, the presence of tourists emerges as the element that not only gives access but even produces the statue's image: which is generated as a view by the tourists' gaze. As such, the tourists' act of looking becomes that which legitimizes the presence – and the status – of the attraction. The attraction, indeed, appears in its entirety at the conjunction of the two discussed photographs, as the completion of the process of its production that takes place in the rest of the page.

If *Piazza della Signoria* section embodies the tourist gaze as a gaze from below, other sections of *Tutto Firenze* are constructed around the gaze from a vantage point. As discussed in Chapter One, the activity of looking at the city from a vantage point can be related to the development of the 19th century desire to appropriate and dominate the world as an image, which found in the photographic medium the perfect tool for producing a lasting and easily reproducible record of the view. In Florence, such desire resulted in architect Giuseppe Poggi's plan for the Piazzale Michelangelo (inaugurated in 1869), through which, for the first time in Florence's history, "la città diventò … spettacolo di se stessa" (the city became its own spectacle, Borsi, *La Capitale* 11). From that moment on, the Piazzale Michelangelo has become an essential part of any tour of Florence (cfr. Chapter One, pagg. 52-53). *Tutto Firenze*'s section devoted to Piazzale Michelangelo reveals an attitude similar to the one observed for the first image of *Piazza della Signoria*: the panoramic terrace is taken from above, so as to include tourists in the image. As observed above, this photograph amplifies the tourist gaze on the city from on up and establishes the view from above as the proper way to appreciate the city's panorama.

Fig. 21. *Tutto Firenze*, 1985. One page from *Firenze dall'Alto* section

The section *Firenze dall'alto* (Florence form on high) once again establishes the tourist gaze as the visual and conceptual producer of the view. A photograph on the left top side of the page shows two tourists on top of the Cathedral's dome, one of them pointing at something out of frame (Fig. 21). As in the section devoted to Cellini's *Perseus*, the photograph of tourists is taken from a frontal angle. The rest of the page is occupied by another photograph, called to fill the lack produced by the tourist's hand, showing the right side of the Cathedral's façade taken from above. Again, a photograph of tourists in the act of looking is juxtaposed to the photograph of what they are looking at, taken from what seems their actual point of view. Significantly, the photographs are organized in such a way as to suggest a trajectory that goes from the tourist's hand to the image of the tourists' view. As such, the tourist gaze is established as the producer of the view, which exists only to be appreciated as a tourist attraction. As we are called to follow and identify with this empowered gaze, looking at these photographs results in taking on the tourist identity –something that, as Urry argues, has become an everyday attitude, no longer limited to when one actually travels for tourism.

The analysis of two pocket-size guidebooks published for the American market in the 2000s – Frommer's *Florence and Tuscany day by day* (2006) and Fodor's *Florence, Tuscany and Umbria* (2007) – reveals a less sophisticated use of photographs, though one that has some common traits with *Tutto Firenze*. In both guidebooks' photographs (color in Frommer, black and white in Fodor) are mostly scattered throughout the pages to offer a quick visual reference to what is being described by written texts or tabs[116]. As this brief description shows, the effect is very different form the one produced by *Tutto*

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[116] Fodor's guidebook actually has a brief photographic section (8 pages), but only the first image is devoted to Florence.

Firenze's photographic section, where a montage of photographs was responsible for producing a discourse on the city. However, it is still possible to detect an emphasis on the presence of tourists and their gazes, which works on an iconography that in some cases still looks indebted to the 19th-century one.

An example of this is the photograph showing the Uffizi Gallery from the side of the bridge, with the two arms pointing at Palazzo Vecchio. It is interesting to note that both guidebooks use the same image, cut differently to meet different needs. Indeed, while in Fodor the image is horizontal as it is used to introduce the section on Florence, Frommer cuts the lateral sections to obtain a vertical image that accompanies the description of some of the museum's room. This photograph closely resembles one of the Alinari photographs examined in Chapter One (cfr. pagg. 65-68), where the two arms of the Uffizi Gallery pointing at Palazzo Vecchio couldn't but enclose a blank, empty space at the core of the image. The Alinari tight geometrical composition, framing a void right at its center, is filled with the emotional encounter between the two protagonists in James Ivory's *A Room with a View*, as discussed in Chapter Two. In Fodor's and Frommer's guidebooks the image is taken from a lower angle, so much so that the street in between the Uffizi Gallery' arms appears as if going upward (Fig. 22 and 23). Thus, the emphasis switches from the void at the center to the image to the path that the tourist need to follow in order to get to Palazzo Vecchio. As observed in *Tutto Firenze*, the photographs both replicate the visual relationship between tourist and attraction, and suggest the trajectory towards it as the main path to follow. Significantly, this photographs opens the Florentine section in one of the guidebooks, establishing the city as a place to be physically conquered and visually occupied.
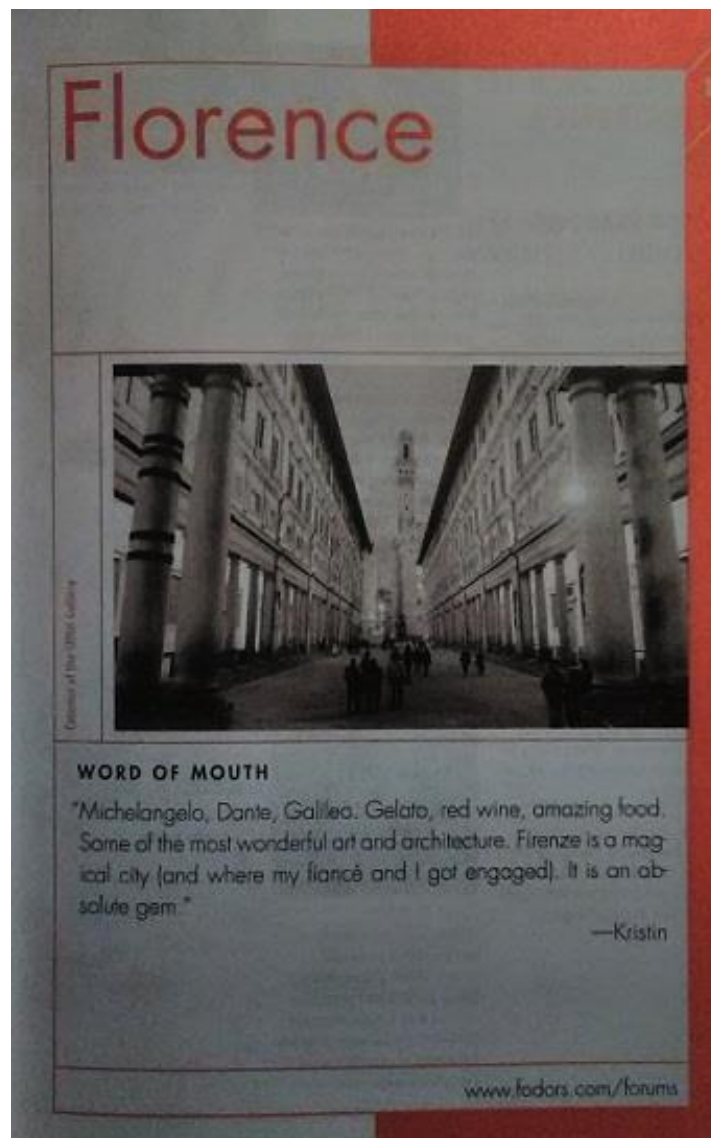
Fig. 22. Fodor's Florence: the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio, 2007

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The Best of the Uffizi

Once the Medici business offices, the Galerie degli Uffizi ★★★ is now the world's best introduction to Renaissance painting. If you don't reserve tickets, you can wait for 6 hours in summer, when security guards have to close certain galleries at times for crowd control. Visitors from North America can book tickets before they go from **Select Italy** (☎ 847/853-1661, 800/877-1755; www.selectitaly.com). **Firenze Musei** also takes reservations (☎ 055-294883; www.firenzemusei.it). START: **Take the A, B, 23, or 71 bus to Piazzale degli Uffizi 6 (at Via Lambertesca). Trip length: 3 hr. minimum.**

❶ **Room 2:** This salon showcases the works of Giovanni Cimabue (1240–1302), often called the father of modern painting, and his pupil, Giotto (1276–1337)—both rebels from Byzantium. Still linked to Byzantine art, Cimabue's *Santa Trinita Maestà* (1280) approaches realistic painting. Three decades later, Giotto painted the greatest Maestà of them all, the *Orgissanti Maestà*.

❷ **Room 3:** This is a showcase of 14th-century Sienese master paintings—none finer than Simone Martini's *Annunciation* (1313), showing a horrified Mary learning of her imminent immaculate conception. The Lorenzo brothers, Pietro and Ambrogio, also created masterpieces displayed in this room, before the Black Death of 1348 claimed their lives; the chief work is Ambrogio's *Presentation at the Temple* (1342).

The Medici's former offices, the Uffizi has the world's best Renaissance art collection.

❸ **Room 7:** Renaissance innovations in painting were possible in part because of Masaccio (1401–28) and Paolo Uccello (1397–1475) and their revolutionary use of perspective. Look at Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (1456), depicting a Florentine victory over the Sienese army. A rare piece by Masaccio (he

Caravaggio's Medusa.

was dead at 27) is *Madonna and Child with St. Anne* (1424).

❹ **Room 8:** Numerous paintings by Fra Filippo Lippi (1406–1469) are showcased in this early Renaissance salon. One of our favorites is *Madonna and Child with Two Young Angels*—a portrait of the randy monk's mistress.

Fig. 23. Frommer's Florence: the Uffizi Gallery and Palazzo Vecchio, 2006

Other photographs show attractions from tourists' point of view, as it happened in *Tutto Firenze*: in Frommer, a low-angle photograph of Michelangelo's *David* is placed side by side with a text that, as the 7th of the '16 favorite moments' in Tuscany, describes the experience of "[s]tanding in awe at the foot of Michelangelo's *David*" (4). In this case the presence of tourist, while not acknowledged in the photograph (it is, however, implied by the low angle), is stated by the text. In Fodor, a photograph of tourists on top of the Cathedral's dome is followed on the next page by a drawing where Filippo Brunelleschi's and Lorenzo Ghiberti's gazes are pointed at the dome itself[117]. While the illustration is meant to expose the rivalry between the two architects, it also works so as to turn the characters in yet two more tourists whose gazes are directed to the attraction. Again, as Urry argues, there seems to be no escape from tourism.

As this chapter has shown, contemporary art photography of Florence looks at the established 19th-century iconography as a complex mechanism that needs to be disassembled in order to understand how it works, and how it can be incorporated in a renewed relationship with urban space. Contemporary photographers distort, displace, and deny 19th-century Florence's iconography in the effort to attempt a connection to the city and reintroduce the tourist (or "touristed") landscape into the circuit of lived experience. That is, only by negotiating the relationship between the actual city and its existing representation is contemporary photography able to address Florence's urban space, perceived less as space than as a photograph. In doing so, I contend, the photographers examined here re-assert the significance of 19th century photography of

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[117] Brunelleschi and Ghiberti competed for major commissions such as the one for the bronze doors of the Baptistery in 1401 (won by the latter) and that for the dome's cupola in 1418, when Brunelleschi had his revenge.

Florence as the limit that must be crossed but cannot be denied. On the contrary, tourism photography employs 19th-century iconography of Florence as the starting point of a process that addresses the tourist gaze and establishes it as not only the recipient, but also the producer of the view.

Chapter 4

Florence Reloaded

1.The Production of Urban Space, or How Florence Planned Capitalism

The questions raised by the Alinari photographs of Florence on issues such as

industrialization, land exploitation, social segregation and control, center/periphery

relations, and the conflicting needs of preserving (and commercializing) the past and

preparing for the future are still relevant to the city's contemporary environment. As this

chapter shows, Florence is still fighting to find solutions to problems that first presented

themselves in the second half of the nineteenth century, as its development is still

somehow indebted to the guidelines designed by the architect Poggi in the 1864 plan for

Florence. In other words, it is possible to argue that the issues raised by 19th-century

modernization are still at work in 20th- and 21st-centuries Florence.

Accordingly, this chapter explores the conceptual relationship between the city

portrait provided by the Alinari photographs as outlined in Chapter One and Florence's

contemporary horizon, while also establishing connections between today's city and its

contemporary representation in cinema and photography (Chapters Two and Three). To

this end, this chapter first retraces the city's urban development from where we left off in

Chapter One (the turn of the 20th century), and then explores three 21st-century

developments that have impacted and changed contemporary Florence in different ways:

1) the launch of the first tramway line connecting the city center to the peripheral district

of Scandicci (2010); 2) the construction of the new Palace of Justice in the ex-industrial

Novoli neighborhood (2010); 3) and the repurposing of the old prison Le Murate into a

complex of public housing and cultural and recreational activities (2007).

These case studies provide the opportunity to further investigate the many layers of the Alinari photographs and incorporate them into the broader framework of contemporary urban development. In doing so, the notion of social space developed by Henry Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1971) will guide the chapter's reflections. Relevant for the present discussion is Lefebvre's argument against the conceptualization of space as a transparent and empty void where events take place and objects and human beings find place as time unfolds. On the contrary, Lefebvre maintains that space is the dense and complex product of a specific society, a web of relations that link people to other people and objects, and the result of a long-term process through which a society "can achieve a form by means of self-presentation and self-representation" (34). Thus, Lefebvre contends, every mode of production produces its own social space, although previous social spaces don't disappear as much as they are incorporated in new ones.

Lefebvre describes social space as the combination of three different aspects – perceived, conceived, and lived space – that he respectively defines as spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Contemporary *spatial practice* under neocapitalism can be described, "to take an extreme but significant case – by the daily life of a tenant in a government-subsidized high-rise housing project", *representations of space* are theories, ideas, and discourses on space produced by scientists, urbanists, architects, and artists, and *representational spaces* are images and symbols through which people (but some artists as well) live and experience spaces (38)[118].

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[118] Interestingly enough, Lefebvre makes a distinction between those artists whose work has a scientific bent to it, and those whose main goal is mere description.

Lefebvre's analysis of space as the product of a specific society is not alien from considerations on the role power plays in the production of space. Indeed, Lefebvre argues that, starting from the early Middle Ages, the main factors propelling the production of space have been the growth of markets and the productive forces and relations. Accordingly, since that time a political power has existed, "controlling and exploiting the resources of the market or the growth of the productive forces in order to maintain and further its rule" (112). Most relevant to the present discussion is that, besides and more frequently than explicit violence, such control is exercised through the above discussed representations of space (defined as a mix of knowledge and ideology) and in particular those produced by architects and urban planners.

In what follows I discuss Lefebvre's account of the growth of European society from the Middle Ages on, of which Florence is used as the most representative example, and how this growth prepared the emergence of abstract space between the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century as the product of industrial capitalism. The purpose of this discussion is twofold: first, it provides a theoretical perspective for the analysis of 20th century Florence's urban development, and secondly, it introduces issues that will ground the discussion of the three case studies in the second part of the chapter. These issues are: the notion of abstract space as a network of functions and system, one of which is mobility; the role played by monuments in abstract space; and architecture's disciplinary and prescriptive feature.

Lefebvre locates the beginning of the process that eventually brought to industrial capitalism in the early Middle Ages, and more precisely in the twelfth century, when a surplus of production put a big set of social, political, economic, and cultural changes in

motion. In describing this process, Lefebvre keeps coming back to the experience of

Florence during the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance as the place where capitalist

"accumulation (of riches, knowledge, techniques)" first took place, also producing the

banking system (218). Such an accumulation resulted from a surplus of production that

from the countryside reverberated on the city, where the surplus raw materials were

turned into goods and then exchanged and consumed. This unprecedented wealth had a

deep impact on the city structure as well, as "in 1172 the commune of Florence

reorganized its urban space in response to the growth of the town, its traffic and its

jurisdiction. This was an undertaking of global intent… it included a town square,

wharves, bridges and roads"[119] (119). Lefebvre contends that the result of "the[se]

upheavals which were simultaneously transforming the *contado* or Tuscan countryside

and its relation to its center, namely Florence, … [was] a new representation of space ….

namely perspective" (ibid.). In other words the invention of linear perspective, far from

being merely related to visual art or mathematics, was the result of a process that at once,

and forever, changed urban space, rural space, and the relation between the two.

More in detail, Lefebvre explains how Florence's urban bourgeoisie established in

the countryside the *metayage* system in order to sustain the city's inhabitants, develop

agriculture, and profit on the relation between country and city as the former provided

grain, wool, and leather to an expanding market[120]. The adoption of the *metayage* system

resulted in the division of land in specifically and precisely organized sections, divided

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[119] Between 1173 and 1175 a new circle of fortified walls was built, for the first time incorporating areas on the other side of the river, where villages had appeared around the churches of San Felice, San Jacopo Soprarno and Santa Felicita. Accordingly, the new Carraia Bridge was built.
[120] The metayage system is a kind of sharecropping, where peasants work land for the landowner and receive a portion of the produce.

by lines of cypresses. In Lefebvre's words, "[The trees'] arrangement was evocative of the laws of perspective, whose fullest realization was simultaneously appearing in the shape of the urban piazza in its architectural setting. Town and country – and the relationship between them – had given birth to a space which it would fall to the painters, and first among them in Italy to the Siena school, to identify, formulate and develop" (78). The town-country system of Florence produced a new mode of production, a new space, and consequently a new representation of space, perspective, that was employed by architects even before artists: it was "knowledge emerg[ing] from a practice" (79).

This can be considered a sort of middle point in Western societies' trajectory from antiquity's absolute space to industrial capitalist and neocapitalist abstract space, which is the one of 19th- and 20th-centuries cities. I will turn to the discussion of absolute and abstract space shortly; for now, it is of the greatest importance to highlight two reflections related to Lefebvre's notion of linear perspective as deeply and inherently connected to early modern society and space in a way that won't apply to later social, economic, and political organizations. This brings us back to the initial remarks about the 19th-century "rupture with Renaissance, or *classical*, models of vision and of the observer" articulated by Jonathan Crary, of which photography is an essential component (3). As discussed in the introduction, Crary argues for a deep fracture between the early modern period and 19th- and 20th-centuries modernity, when the emergence of industrial capitalism triggered a reorganization of the discourses, practices, and possibilities of vision – and, in Lefebvre's account, produced abstract space[121]. Furthermore, the strict

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[121] As discussed before, different representations of space as well as representational spaces tend to overlap rather than excluding one another. As an example of this process, Lefebvre mentions the medieval idea of the city as the image of the city of God, which continued to be of some relevance during the early modern period.

link between the emergence of linear perspective and Florence's social an economical

order brings us back to the circularity between artistic forms and political and economic

expansion, on which late18th- and 19th-centuries appreciation of Florence's history was

grounded. This shows a continuity in the perception of Florence and its history, that

Chapter Two detected in the representation on Florence in post-WWII cinema, and in

Rossellini's *Paisan* in particular (cfr. pagg. 93-97).

As mentioned before, Lefebvre considers medieval to early modern European

society as standing halfway between antiquity's absolute space and modern abstract

space. Lefebvre defines absolute space as the space of religious and political power,

made of sacred places such as temples, palaces, and funerary monuments and

theoretically comprehending every aspect of human life and "made up of fragments of

nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountaintop,

spring, river)" (48). Absolute space is still present in contemporary cities, as the "bedrock

of historical space and the basis of representational spaces (religious, magical and

political symbolism)" (ibid.). As industrial capitalism emerges, a new space is also

produced.

Capitalism and neocapitalism have produced a new space where exchange value

becomes generalized, and social and productive relationships are hidden in the

commodity: this is what Lefebvre calls abstract space, which includes "the world of

commodities, its logic and its worldwide strategies" (53). Abstract space "is founded on

the vast network of banks, business centers and major productive entities, as also on

motorways, airports, and information lattices" (ibid.). It is a space of grids, functions,

schedules, systems, repetitive gestures, artificially produced divisions between work and

biological function on one side and work and leisure on the other. In "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias", Michel Foucault describes contemporary space in a way that relates to this aspect of Lefebvre's notion of abstract space. Indeed, Foucault conceptualizes contemporary space as "defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these relations as series, trees, or grids" (2). What is important is not the discrete element *per se* as much as the way all elements are organized, distributed, and arranged together; the way they circulate from one point to the next; the patterns according to which they are collected and stored.

Abstract space is economic but also political and institutional, in that it is instituted and administered by a state "naturally act[ing] in accordance with the aims of capital" (375)[122]. As mentioned before, the work of architects and urban planners is paramount in producing representations of space as well as actual architectural and urban projects that both disseminate and preserve the power of state and capital. Indeed, Lefebvre describes abstract space as geometric, visual (as it relies on signs and spectacularization), and phallic, "symboliz[ing] force, male fertility, masculine violence" (287)[123]. Apparently homogeneous, abstract space seeks to erase all differences and reduce them to the same; apparently inclusive, abstract space is repressive, strictly

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[122] Relevant to the emergence of capitalism in the nineteenth century is the progressive eclipse of the city by the state, a process that Lefebvre locates in the sixteenth century. The world market starts to emerge in the sixteenth century as nation-states expand the economic space that used to be limited to the city and its territory. National political power controls the forces of production and fights for its permanence and expansion (through war, colonialism, and imperialism).

[123] In the case of Florence, the emergence of abstract, geometric space dates back to the new neighborhoods created in the 1840s and 1850s such as the Barbiano "che, col suo rettangolo perfetto, parigino di Piazza Indipendenza, sembra il segnale di un mutamento geometrico degli spazi" (that, with the perfect, Parisian rectangular shape of Piazza Indipendenza seems to signal a geometric transformation of space, Cusmano 217).

regulated, prescriptive, and manipulating, so that it 'naturally' prohibits what is not in line with it and excludes those who are different from it.

Abstract space abolishes natural space and replaces it with an endlessly mobilized, fragmented, interchangeable, and reproducible space, in which the exchange value absorbs the use value, as it happens with land exploitation. Space becomes lots, volumes, and cells to be sold and rented: space is the ultimate commodity. Abstract space is at once produced and consumed – both productively consumed, as happens in factories, and passively consumed, as happens in vacation spots.

One of the main forms of production of abstract space is urbanization, as urban space easily lends itself to the needs of capitalism. The city is the place where space is divided in both work and housing and work and leisure, where different functions (such as school, transportation system, tertiary sector, the work world, etc.) overlap without meeting, where signs and images dominate the visual field, where land exploitation reaches its highest, where a pseudo-nature in the form of trees or images of them is reduced to a sign of itself, where flows and networks of exchange of different entities are intertwined. Accordingly, "towns and metropolitan areas are no longer just works and products but also means of production, supplying housing, maintaining the labor force, etc." (349). Within urban space, production and consumption coexist.

Within this context, monuments perform an essential function. Usually part of the phallic discourse of abstract space, "a monument exercises attraction only to the degree that it creates distance" (386). Monuments represent (or, more accurately, are built to represent) the values of the hegemonic classes and offer each and everyone a way to feel part of a specific society by accepting an ideology disguised as "a generally accepted

Power and a generally accepted Wisdom" (220). Lefebvre describes monuments as

paradoxical objects in that they are at once repressive and celebrative ("the repressive

element was metamorphosed into exaltation", ibid.), transcending death but also built on

death anxiety ("a monument transmutes the fear of the passage of time, and anxiety about

death, into splendor", 221). As Lefebvre considers architecture as architexture, every

single building is only part of a web or network, of which the monuments represent the

nexus. Accordingly, monuments cannot be considered in a vacuum, so much so that they

have "a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meaning, shifting hierarchy in which now

one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore" (222). By way of

displacement and condensation, monuments come to signify different values and

practices of the society (the space) that produced them[124].

2. History of Late Florence

In Chapter One we left Florence at the end of the 19th century, as the city witnessed the

destruction of its oldest core, the Old Market area, and the subsequent construction of the

orthogonal Piazza della Repubblica: a development that, for its appearance and function,

can be now read through Lefebvre's notion of abstract space. First of all, Piazza della

Repubblica replaced the Old Market area's irregular and entangled knot of alleys and

yards with a geometric space that has been described as "fuori misura, e, insieme, cosí

violento nella sua geometrica perentorietá" (out of size and so violent in its geometric

rigidity, Cusmano 220). Accordingly, the Alinari photograph showing the newly

constructed Piazza della Repubblica represents it as an artificial space fragmented into

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[124] Monuments embody not only the values of the society that produced them, but also those of later
societies that appropriate them.

clear-cut geometric sections, unable to produce a coherent whole (cfr. Chapter One pag. 73-75).

Furthermore, the wide square's apparent openness and accessibility concealed the ruling classes' will to remove the presence of lower classes from the city center, producing a space of bourgeois visibility and decorum that rejects what is not in line with these values: which also makes the Piazza della Repubblica coherent with Lefebvre's notion of abstract space. However, as discussed in Chapter One, the Piazza della Repubblica was unable to replace and update the variety of economic, social, and architectural functions carried out by the Old Market area, like this bearing witness to Florence's failure to embrace all the contradictions and challenges of urban modernization.

The same conflicted attitude towards modernization can be detected in Florence's development throughout the 20th century. In particular, the city's relationship with industrialization reveals how Florence treated its factories as something to be pushed away from sight, as far as possible from the city center and its Renaissance heritage. Such an attitude is already at work in the 1855 Alinari photograph showing the two bridges of Santa Trinita and Carraia, analyzed in Chapter One, where the undeniable but uncomfortable presence of the Pignone iron foundry is relegated beyond the barrier produced by the two bridges, and the smoke coming out of the smokestack gives the factory a ghostly appearance, as if it were on the verge of disappearance (cfr. pagg. 68-71).

What the Alinari photograph only alluded to became reality at the beginning of the 20th century, when an industrial district was established in the peripheral and not yet

urbanized areas of Novoli and Rifredi, to host factories that were becoming incompatible with the expanding residential and commercial urban fabric. This move was made possible by the presence of a train station in Rifredi, on the Florence-Pistoia line, which inaugurated in 1889. When in 1908 the Officine Galileo was transferred to Novoli[125], Rifredi was already home to the slaughterhouse (located in the Porta San Frediano area until 1869), the meat market, built between 1872 and 1878, and various metallurgical, chemical, and wood products manufacturing plants[126]. In 1921 the pharmaceutical laboratory Manetti & Roberts moved to Rifredi, followed in 1928 by the Pignone iron foundry, which was then renamed Nuovo Pignone (still active today as part of the General Electric group). Then the area hosted Superpila, (electric batteries), Muzzi and Co, (engines), Cipriani & Baccani (wood products), just to mention the main ones. Between 1921 and 1930 Rifredi hosted the Studi Cinematografici di Rifredi, the film studios where several silent movies where produced, among which was *Dante nella Vita dei Tempi Suoi* (Dante in his own times, 1922) by Domenico Gaido[127]. Starting from 1939, Novoli was home to a Fiat factory, which in the first years of its activity was employed for military production. In line with the presence of these factories, the area saw a fast urban growth as residential buildings filled the area, where until the end of the 19th century only villas of renowned Florentine families had been. Most of these factories were active until the 1960s, when they either closed or moved to areas outside of Florence.

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[125] From this year, scientist Gugliemo Marconi was one of the Officine Galileo's CEOs.
[126] More in detail, Roberto Melchionda retraces the presence of factories such as Ducco (chemicals), Chierichetti, Regondi and Co. (stearin candles), Molteni (distillery), Polenghi (fertilizers) in 1889. Some other factories appeared and closed after a few years, such as Ponsard and Gigli (manganese steel), active between 1885 and 1887 (162).
[127] In 1924 the studio was rented to the American Inspiration Pictures, which produced many films among which King Vidor's *Romola*.

The paradox lying at the core of the industrial presence in Florence needs to be underscored here. Indeed, the need to relegate the factories to an area that was not yet urbanized and far enough from the city center resulted in a stronger and more stable industrial presence in Florence, which in fact didn't fail to attract more companies in the following decades – although never reaching the level of industrialization of cities such as Turin, Genoa, or Milan. At the same time, this dislocation made it possible for the city to live up to its international status as 'the most artisan city' in Italy, as the presence of factories was either simply ignored or considered an episode detached from the city's real core. Such a discrepancy has more than once been explained through the will to overlook Florence's industrial potential in favor of a global image of beauty: a gap in its history that is revealing of a collective unconscious (Borsi, *La Cultura* 10-11)[128]. This is also the result of the desire of Florence's ruling classes, worried about the social tensions and contrasts related to the emergence of an industrial environment that was exploding in other Italian cities.

Indeed, notwithstanding the presence of the industrial district, Florence strengthened its status as city of tourism, culture, manufacture, services, and financial institutions throughout the first half of the 20th century. The emphasis on small enterprises rather than big industrial complexes resulted in the city's progressive disappearance from the national industrial landscape: a process that, according to historian Andrea Giuntini, was already completed before WWII (13). This has strongly

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[128] See also Giuseppina Carla Romby in "Immagine Urbana, Presenze Industriali, Divenire della Città" (Urban Image, Industrial Presence, City's Development), where she discusses "l'occultamento e l'allontanamento dell'immagine industriale di Firenze, la fabbrica come tabù" (the concealment and removal of Florence's industrial image, the factory as a taboo) in 19th-century Florence's views, maps, and guidebooks (17).

affected the history of Florence ever since in that it made the city too weak to economically dominate its surrounding territory, breaking a balance that had lasted for centuries (Baldeschi 193). Furthermore, as minor cities and towns around Florence such as Prato and Pistoia have undergone a completely different economic development, more industrial in nature, an ever increasing tension has obtained between the opposing interests of Florence and its territory that, to this day, has made it impossible for the different city administrations to reach an agreement on key sectors such as public transportation and infrastructure development[129] (*ibid*. 196).

The link between Florence and its medieval and Renaissance past reached an unprecedented intensity during Fascism. While, as discussed above, this link was established long before Fascism seized power in Italy in 1922, the regime turned it "from a predominantly foreign, private, and elite preoccupation to one that was domestic, public, and democratic" (Lasansky xxxvii). Urban planning and design were crucial features employed by the regime to produce and convey symbols and myths such as *romanità* and *italianità*. If *romanità* was clearly grounded in Rome, where excavations and demolitions were meant to reveal the continuity from the Roman Empire to Fascism, Florence and Tuscany at large became the center from which *italianità* would radiate.[130] The notion of *italianità*, the specific Italian character based on the diversity of its manifestations, was grounded in the celebration of the medieval and Renaissance past – a

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[129] The city of Prato has become an independent province in 1992.

[130] The 1931 Master Plan for Rome "aimed to unite functionality and grandeur by revealing the classical glory of ancient Rome while opening up the city to modern traffic" (Baxa 56). Thus, the Via dell'Impero (today Via dei Fori) was produced by demolishing all the accretions around and throughout the ruins of the ancient imperial fora and opening a massive archeological zone crossed by traffic arteries. Other urban works that came to fruition under Fascism are the Via del Mare, connecting Rome to the sea; the excavation of the Mausoleum of Augustus and the creation of a surrounding piazza; and the clearing of the Capitoline Hill from buildings that had supposedly altered its ancient appearance.

past that, to be sure, was not historically recovered as much as rhetorically politicized and mobilized.

Thus, starting from 1930 the Renaissance game of *calcio storico* (historic soccer) was reintroduced – and heavily revamped – as part of an urban festival that entailed costume parades and buildings' decorations. The tradition of the *calcio storico*, at first performed in the Piazza della Signoria, is still celebrated in the Piazza Santa Croce. Several exhibitions were held in Florence throughout the 1930s, which celebrated different aspects of the city's heritage such as Brunelleschi's architecture (1936) and Giotto's painting (1937). Following architect Gustavo Giovannoni's notion of *diradamento* ('thinning out' of urban fabric), monuments such as the church of San Lorenzo where freed of the accretions that had grown throughout the centuries. The climax was reached when, in May 1939, Hitler visited Florence and the entire city center became the stage for a celebration of the Renaissance[131].

Accordingly, Fascism increasingly branded Florence as the Italian capital of culture and craftsmanship thanks to initiatives such as the establishment of the classical music festival Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the handicraft fair Fiera Nazionale dell'Artigianato (both inaugurated in 1931 and still active), as well as the construction of the National Library (1911-36), destined to become the largest library in Italy, and the Palazzo delle Esposizioni (1922). In 1935 Florence also acquired a new train station replacing the previous one built in the 1830s. Planned by the Gruppo Toscano, among whose components was prominent

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[131] As Lasansky maintains, Hitler "was treated as the ultimate tourist. … For the occasion, the Renaissance character of the city was enhanced. Buildings were restored and decorated. Banners, swags, and standards were used to unify and highlight the city's period architecture in order to make it appear as a harmonious stage set" (2004, 85). The itinerary unfolded through the canonical tourist sites: the Cathedral, the Piazza della Repubblica, the Santa Trinita Bridge, the Pitti Palace, the Palazzo Vecchio, the church of Santa Croce, and the Piazzale Michelangelo.

architect Giovanni Michelucci, Florence's train station is considered one of the highest

achievements of Italian modern architecture, closer to international rationalism than to

standard Fascist architecture (Fig. 1). Despite its renowned architectural value, however,

the new train station testified to the enduring will to accommodate the needs of tourists

rather than those of residents. Indeed, as the location remained within the city center (right

behind the church of Santa Maria Novella), the train staion provided an easy access to the

city center but divided the city in two and therefore hampered the circulation of traffic, an

issue that would become more problematic as cars became the main mode of urban

transportation. This happened in opposition to the plan, brought forth at different stages of

Florence's urban development, to move the train station to a more peripheral area[132].

Following the 1915-24 city plan, Florence kept expanding around the historic

center, beyond the first suburban belt produced by the Poggi Plan. Such an

undifferentiated model of development, which was later defined in a derogatory fashion

"a macchia d'olio" (fig. 'like wildfire'), went on for decades, until a new city plan was

created in 1962. Once again similarly to what had happened in the second half of the 19th

century – and sadly a recurring theme in Florence's (or Italy's?) history of urban

development – the creation of new neighborhoods was accompanied by a huge amount of

real estate speculation, a convenient replacement of profits made through industrial

production. As Silvano Fei, Grazia Gobbi Sica and Paolo Sica argue, Florence was a

"city of services and residences, which found the economic justification for its growth in

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[132] The idea of moving the main train station to a peripheral area appeared as early as 1864 as part of the Poggi Plan. Recently, a plan for the construction of an underground high-speed train station in the Viale Belfiore area, designed by Norman Foster, was first approved and then dismissed after works had already begun. The plan is now to repurpose the semi-built area as a transportation hub for interregional buses.

Fig 1. Florence main train station

the mechanisms of real estate revenue" (165). Such new neighborhoods (such as Romito,

Cure, and Campo di Marte) were for the most part left to private initiative and are

characterized by anonymous residence buildings and lack infrastructure, green areas, and

public services. Two exceptions are the public-housing neighborhoods of Isolotto and

Sorgane, built during the 1950s, which however "did not constitute a relevant alternative

to the private selling of houses" (Fei, Sica, and Sica 174)[133].

The end of WWII and the reconstruction era reveal another issue that would

become crucial in contemporary Florence's urban development – that is to say, the

relevance bestowed on the notion of preservation in relation to the historic center. As

Rossellini's *Paisan* documented at the end of the war, all the bridges (except Ponte

Vecchio) and the area around Ponte Vecchio had been destroyed by the Nazis. As the city

needed new bridges, the debate as to whether bridges and buildings should be

reconstructed exactly as they were, or new architectural solutions should be planned,

became heated. A similar debate, to be sure, arose in the Western world at large, with

results that ranged from facsimile reproduction to modern replacement[134]. Not

surprisingly, the first option was the prevailing one in Florence, although in different

forms: something that may make us think back of the 'ideal form' pursued by Viollet-le-

Duc's theory of restoration. The most striking example of this trend is the Renaissance

bridge of Santa Trinita, which was rebuilt "com'era, dov'era" (how it was, where it was)

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[133] The Isolotto neighborhood was built as part of the post-WWII INA-casa state plan for worker's housing. This same plan funded the construction of several neighborhoods throughout Italy and especially in Rome (of which the Tiburtino is arguably the most famous example), whose living conditions where harshly criticized by Pier Paolo Pasolini in a number of articles, as well as represented in his 1962 film *Mamma Roma*. For an extensive treatment of the relationship between housing development and Pasolini's work, see John David Rhodes, *Stupendous, Miserable City: Pasolini's Rome* (2007).
[134] For example, Miles Glendinning compares the cases of "the facsimile reconstruction of Warsaw … [and] the explicitly Modernist rebuilding of central Rotterdam" (273).

by recovering as many fragments as possible from the river, and even reopening the stone

cave that had been used for the original construction in the years 1567-1570[135] (Fig. 2). In

a move reminiscent of the 19th-century bind between photography and restoration,

architect Rodolfo Gizdulich, who was in charge of the project together with engineer

Luigi Brizzi, gathered all the photographs of the bridge he could find in order to retrace

the most accurate image of the bridge's structure.

The reconstruction of the Ponte Vecchio area was inspired by a similar principle,

but with different results. In fact, projects by prominent architects such as Giuseppe

Michelucci, Edorado Detti, Nello Baroni, and Leonardo Savioli (just to mention a few),

all aimed to update and modernize the city center, where refused in name of a closer

adherence to what the area had looked like before the war. The new buildings that finally

appeared followed the layouts of the previous ones with respect to the original

organization of spaces, but enjoyed increased volumes for a better exploitation of the

area's prestige, thus confirming Lefebvre's notion that in capitalism space is the ultimate

commodity (Fig. 3). Accordingly, the new buildings' design also entailed a superficial

notion of 'Florentine-ness', based on vernacular and formal elements such as the use of

traditional materials and fake Florentine-style eaves as well as corbels[136], producing what

has been defined "un pastiche neotradizionalista" (a neotraditional pastiche, De Vita 20).

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[135] Carlo Melograni underscores the difference between the Santa Trinita Bridge and the bell tower of San Marco in Venice, destroyed during WWI, whose apparent identity to the original version hides a concrete structure.
[136] I use the term fake to indicate that both eaves and corbels don't have a functional or structural purpose but are only employed as decorative reminders of Florentine traditional architecture.

Fig. 2. Santa Trinita Bridge

Fig. 3. The new buildings by Ponte Vecchio

The notion of conservation that guided at least part of post-WWII reconstruction is one meant to freeze the historical city in a timeless past that doesn't take into account the needs of the present. As Florence during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance was a place of urban innovation and progress, preservation ends up betraying precisely the heritage it is supposed to preserve. As Cresti maintains, "il concetto della conservazione portava … alla interruzione di un processo storico impedendo alle nuove forme dell'architettura di aggiungersi a quelle precedenti" (the concept of preservation brought … to a halt the historical process, preventing new architectural forms from being added to the previous ones, 362). According to Baldeschi, the contrast is between two opposite notions of the urban space, "tra un'idea vitalistica di citta' pensata come 'opera aperta' – un organismo che muta continuamente mantenendo la propria identita, perche 'a misura d'uomo' e fatta dall'uomo – e un'idea se si vuole piu' riflessiva e fondata da un punto di vista storico-critico (between a vital idea of the city, conceived of as an 'open work' – an organism in constant change but still retaining its identity, as it is made for and by man – and an idea somewhat more reflective, based on a historical and critical perspective, 205)[137].

Such contrasting views were expressed in the famous debate that saw art historian and archeologist Ranuccio Bianco Bandinelli vehemently oppose Bernard Berenson: as the latter argued for a faithful reconstruction that matched the city's visual imaginary and symbolic value that both residents and foreigners shared, the former replied that

> noi italiani ci rifiutiamo di non essere altro che custodi di un museo, i guardiani di una mummia e … rivendichiamo il diritto di vivere entro città vive, entro città che seguono l'evolversi della nostra vita, le vicende della nostra storia, elevate o misere che siano, purché sincere, spoglie di ogni residuo di retorica. (115)

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[137] Baldeschi links the first notion to Medieval Florence, and the second one to the Renaissance.

we Italians refuse to be nothing else that custodians of a museums, guardians of a mummy, and … we claim the right to live within living cities, cities that follow the unfolding of our lives as well as the events of our history, be they noble or low, as long as they are sincere, spare of any residual rhetoric.

In 1962 Florence saw the emergence of a new city plan designed by architect Edoardo Detti. The 1962 plan is considered one of the most relevant and exemplary plans an Italian city has ever had, internationally acknowledged and praised, considered almost a myth – a definition that, following Cresti's ironic remark, is born out of the fact that most of its criteria were never put into practice (*Firenze Capitale* 349). However, some of the few practical outcomes of the Detti plan were the enhancement of the means of preservation and conservation of the historic center and the surrounding hills, and the limits put on the wild exploitation of the land that had been going on for decades[138]. As a consequence, developers moved to surrounding towns such as Scandicci, Sesto Fiorentino, and Campi Bisenzio, where speculation and land exploitation were still possible. Florence lost some of its citizens to such nearby areas, a process that reached its peak after the 1966 flood of the Arno River, which deeply affected the entire historic center and even some peripheral areas. Indeed, on that occasion many Florence residents lost their houses and decided to move elsewhere, and many craftsmen lost their equipment and materials and found it easier to move their workshops out of the historical center[139].

From the 1970s on, Florence enters a post-industrial era, becoming what Fei, Sica and Sica define as a "service-section metropolis" (172). More and more residents move

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[138] Among the plan's suggestions that never came to fruition are the transfer of the airport to a more peripheral area; the establishment of a directional center outside of the city center, in the north-west peripheral area of Castello; the rearranging of the railway around Florence.
[139] During the Seventies and Eighties, 200.000 Florentines moved out of the city.

out of the city center, where rents keep going up and only commercial and touristic

activities seem to occupy the buildings[140]. The intensity of this process has increased in

the last years, and it doesn't seem to be slowing down soon (proposals to limit both the

number of restaurants opening downtown and that of tourists entering the city every year

have been brought forth recently). As fewer people live in the old part of the city, more

and more areas are devoted to the presence of tourists, now able to have a meal or a drink

on the streets occupied by restaurants and bars in the biggest pedestrian area that Florence

has seen in the last decades[141]. As Lorenzo Tripodi observes, the city center "has been

quietly redesigned for a continually moving flow of transient visitors" (125).

Also starting from the late 1970s, most of the city's factories have closed one by

one. One of the most vital, if not always praiseworthy, aspects of contemporary Florence

is the repurposing of such areas. This process also sheds light on the tendency of

Florence's urban history in the last decades of the 20th century, when the effort (although

usually only a theoretical one) to control and direct the development of the city,

conceived of as a coherent whole, gives way to a more fragmented perspective, where

urban plans only aim at specific areas and projects (Zoppi 2010, 43). Not surprisingly,

such projects are carried out by private enterprises (and not rarely financial firms), which

are gradually and increasingly replacing public initiative in the management of urban

space and services.

The repurposing of the Fiat factory in the Novoli neighborhood is a telling

example of these tendencies. The ex-Fiat area is now a multi-functional hub home to a

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[140] As early as the mid-Eighties, over 50% of the available spaces are destined to services.

[141] Former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the mayor of Florence from 2008 to 2013, pedestrianized vast area of the city center such as Piazza del Duomo and via Martelli.

huge park (the only one in Novoli), a mall, the city university's departments of social

sciences, the new courthouse (discussed more in detail later in this chapter), the Cassa di

Risparmio bank main branch, and several housing complexes. Of the entire industrial

complex, only the power plant has been considered worth saving for its architectural

value (Fig. 4). When Fiat definitively closed the Novoli establishment in 1984 due to the

city's ongoing expansion, a group of investors acquired the area together with the

dismissed smaller Carapelli factory and managed the development process, which saw

several master plans approved and then dismissed until the definitive one, designed by

architect Leon Krier, was approved in 1994. Works began in 2007 and finished in 2010.

Without even taking into account the architectural quality of the resulting development,

the new area has been criticized for the inconsistency of its different elements as well as

the lack of integration with the surrounding area (Giorgieri 136-145). As for the first

point, suffice to say that the new courthouse, built in 2010, follows a design planned by

the architect Leonardo Ricci thirty years before in a completely different cultural climate

and as a part of a differently conceived area. As for the integration with the rest of the

city, it has been noted that the main entrance to the mall is located on a wide and busy

traffic circle, essentially discouraging a pedestrian access to it.

Other aspects of the repurposing of the ex-FIAT area reenact some of the issues

already encountered in Florence's contemporary development. In particular, such issues

involve the relationship between old and new areas of the city, and that between

periphery and historic center. Novoli was considered a not-yet urban space due to the

lack of public spaces such as squares, parks, and pedestrian paths, and the plans designed

for the ex-Fiat area were requested to find a solution to these problems. The definitive

Fig. 4. Novoli: the ex-Fiat power plant and the new mall

Fig. 5. Aerial view of the ex Fiat area. San Donato Park occupies the center of the areathe Palace of Justice is at the north-western side, and the university buildings and the mall (light blue) are on the eastern side. The streets' irregular pattern in the unversity area is noticeable.

plan was designed by an architect who is a supporter of historicist models, and his

strategy for producing a fully urban(ized) environment was the reference (again!) to a

traditional urban model[142]. Indeed, the directives that the Krier Plan gave on how the

buildings, streets, and public spaces should be for hosting contemporary urban life were

based on a deliberately ancient idea of the city, as if only by recuperating past dwelling

models could the new areas be perceived and used as a city (Giorgieri 143). Some of

these directions interest the web of irregular and curved streets as if in a medieval town

(also totally inconsistent with the streets' geometrical pattern in the rest of the Novoli

neighborhood); the presence of small 'traditional-sized' restaurants in the university area

rather than a single, big dining hall; the coincidence between buildings and blocks; the

four-floor limit for buildings; and the prohibition to use steel in the buildings' facades

(Krier 239-41) (Fig. 5).

Furthermore, as in the post-WWII reconstruction era, the Krier Plan suggested the

use of traditional, vernacular elements such as the *altana* (covered roof-terrace). In the

university buildings planned by architect Adolfo Natalini, the *altana* has been interpreted

in a repetitive and non-innovative way, so much so that it "ha finito per conferire

all'insediamento un'immagine certamente più rispondente al postmoderno di matrice

nordamericana che non al *genius loci*" (ended up giving the environment an appearance

more reminiscent of north-American postmodernism than of Florentine *genius loci*,

Gorgieri 144) (Fig. 6). As this episode once again reveals, Florentine architecture has not

yet resolved the tensions between the respect due to its past and the responsibility to

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[142] As Giovanna Potesta reminds us, Krier bases his theory on Camillo Sitte's *The Art of Building Cities* (1889), in which the Austrian architect ad art historian argues for the intrinsic artistic feature of traditional (antique, medieval, renaissance, baroque) cities. Modern town-planning, Sitte contends, should be inspired by such traditional urban spaces' values as enclosure, asymmetry, and differentiation.

Fig. 6. The university buildings with the *altane*

accommodate the needs of its present. The transformation of Florence' industrial district based on the idealized image of a traditional urban environment can be almost seen as the vengeance of the city's historic center on the area that had challenged its prestige by establishing the industrial power.

3. Mobility Anxieties: Connecting Center and Periphery

One big step in accommodating the needs of the present has been taken with the inauguration of the first line of the new tramway (T1) in 2010, connecting the central train station with the peripheral district of Scandicci – the only one in the Florence area that cannot be reached by train. The emergence of T1 has boosted residents' use of public transportation ever since, contributing to substantially reduce the traffic of private cars and therefore pollution[143]. And yet, as I will show in this section, ideas concerning the construction of the tramway in Florence still reflect mobility-related anxieties that manifested themselves in the second half of the 19th century, and were registered by the Alinari photographs. This shows a continuity in the instability that lies at the core of the very notion of Western mobility, perceived partly as a potential for freedom and power and partly "as a threat, a disorder in the system, as something to control" (Creswell 26). A telling example of this conflicted attitude is the response to train travels as the new means of transportation emerged in the 19th century, where the appreciation of a novel and efficient mode of transportation coexisted with the anxiety related to the disintegration of traditional social relations as well as "the threat of a literal, physical disintegration, that of the accident"[144] (Kirby 30).

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[143] According to Regione Toscana, the tramway has resulted in a reduction of vehicular traffic by 20% in 2016 (Legambiente 39).
[144] As Lynne Kirby argues in *Parallel Tracks*, cinema attracted the same contradictory response, as "cinema finds an apt metaphor in the train, in its framed, moving image, its construction of a journey as an

As discussed in Chapter Three, the 19ᵗʰ century saw the emergence of the Western modern notion of mobility as a flow of uprooted objects, goods, human beings, images, and information through an increasingly interconnected globe. Places too, as Lefebvre explains, are endlessly transformed and mobilized through the capitalist production of abstract space, which can be conceptualized as a system of transit nodes, a rationalized and functional grid meant to connect places in turn transformed into commodities. Thus, abstract space is at once a rationalized void to be crossed, and a commodity to be appropriated and colonized in various ways – one of which is tourism. Accordingly, as abstract urban space was being produced in Florence in the second half of the 19ᵗʰ century, the city was covered with a grid of bus and tramway routes. The tramway system was established in 1879 and, as soon as 1889, there were 6 lines connecting the city center with peripheral areas such as Peretola, Poggio a Caiano, Campi, and Bagno a Ripoli. The tramway network kept expanding in the following decades, reaching its highest extension of about 200 kilometers in the 1930s[145] (Micali Lolli 49). The tramway service was terminated in 1958, as all the lines had been progressively converted into trolley routes (Pettinelli 11-15).

The emergence of mobility in 19ᵗʰ-century Florence left its mark in the Alinari photographs, which reveal how the monumental landscape was increasingly involved in the web of transportation routes that was covering the city. The photograph of Palazzo Vecchio analyzed in Chapter One alludes to the growing mobility of goods through an

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optical experience, the radical juxtaposition of different places" (2). The well-known audience's reaction to the first projections of Lumieres' *L'Arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (1895) from 1896 was one of fear, terror and even panic.

[145] The tramway was first run by a Belgian society, then by the City itself, and finally by a company held mainly by FIAT. After WWII a municipal transport company was established, ATAF (Azienda Trasporti Area Fiorentina), which still exists and runs the bus system.

almost unnoticeable lone cart at the feet of the massive volume of the palace: a reminder

that the building was not only a renowned monument as the medieval center of political

power, but also used to be the customs house for goods entering the city (cfr. pagg. 72-

74). The lone cart is pointed at by the triangular shadow of the Loggia dei Lanzi: a

reminder of the palace's dark side that will remain in subsequent Alinari photographs of

the same subject. Similarly, the photograph of the church of San Miniato al Monte, also

discussed in Chapter One, inserts the presence of the monument in the economy of

modern mobility that was about to take hold of the hills where the church rests in a few

years. As the photograph produces a distinction between the geometric medieval façade

and the undifferentiated expanse of green on the underlying hill, it projects the former's

grid-like appearance on the latter, which was in fact soon to be crossed by the new

avenue connecting old and new areas of the city planned by architect Poggi (cfr. pagg.

49-51).

These examples display photography's power to expose the contradictions of

urban modernization through the representation of the apparently untouched and static

monumental landscape. Photography at large shares such a twofold nature, as it is a fixed

and still image (before cinema grants it apparent motion) that takes part in the modern

flow of objects, providing the opportunity for an endless reproduction,

commercialization, and dissemination to every corner of the world (and the Alinari

photographs filled the West, reaching France, Germany, England, and the US). In

Chapter Three we encountered the tight knot between photography and travel that lies at

the core of modernity, as part of that process that produced at once the desire and the

Fig. 7. The train station atrium with the sequence of photographs

conditions for a visual or physical (or both) appropriation of distant and exotic places. In this respect, a photograph can work both as the remnant of travelling, or as its harbinger. Such an intertwinement of travel and photography is objectified in the décor of Florence train station discussed in Chapter Three, whose main atrium shows Alinari photographs of Italian tourist destinations that can be reached by train (Fig. 7). Indeed, the presence of the photographs alludes to the fact that all the visually represented locations are conceptually contained within the space of the train station as the place that, thanks to "the annihilation of space and time" produced by the coming of the train, makes those destinations available (Schivelbusch 41). Ghirri's 1985 photograph *Firenze, Stazione Ferroviaria di Santa Maria Novella di Giovanni Michelucci*, analyzed in Chapter Three, complicates the coexistence of railroad, photography, and tourism by displacing the presence of all three elements to a minor area of the train station, where a tourist is experiencing a moment of relaxation and boredom, next to a set of pictures that replicate in smaller scale (and with less emphasis) the sequence of tourist destinations that the train station makes available.

The very presence of photographs of tourist destinations in the train station's atrium produces a discourse that privilege the touristic function of the railroad: the idea that the train also connected the city center to the industrial district of Rifredi, still active when the train station was inaugurated, is nowhere to be found[146]. This is, clearly, one more sign of the concealment of Florence's industrial presence that we have encountered many times in this and previous chapters. Furthermore, the above-discussed location of the main train station within the city center, meant to facilitate tourists' access to the

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[146] Accordinlgy, in *The Beautiful Country* (2015), Stephanie Mail Hom argues that the discourse of Italy as a unified nation has been constructed around the notion of the country as a tourist destination.

historical center, is also one of the issues that have affected the city's vehicular traffic ever since[147]. Indeed, despite the city's small size, not comparable to that of 'real' metropoles such as Rome or Milan, transportation (and public transportation) has become an issue for Florence since the mid-20th century, as the end of the tramway service left public transportation to measure itself with the growing presence of private cars.

This brings us back to the beginning of this section, as the tramway was re-introduced precisely to alleviate the traffic congestion. Proposals for the reintroduction of the tramway date back to the 1980s, while the idea of providing Florence with underground transportation, which came out in the same decade, had to be abandoned due to archeological traces abounding under the street level. As is always the case in the administration of Florence, it took many proposals, vain plans, debates, controversies as well as changes of routes and sponsors, before the ultimate plan for the tramway was produced. Beside the already existing T1, such a plan envisages two more lines that, when terminated, will connect the train station respectively to the airport and the Careggi hospital[148]. Such was the need for and the impact of this new infrastructure on the Florentine environment that the emergence of the tramway has been defined "the largest public work since the days of the ring roads designed by Giuseppe Poggi for Firenze Capitale" (Alberti 102). Indeed, the construction of T1 has entailed the building of an additional bridge crossing the Arno River from the Cascine Park (Fig. 8).

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[147] Other causes of Florence's contemporary mobility issues are the lack of coordination between railway and bus transportation; the presence of the railroad tracks themselves, which cut the city in two; the failure in decentralizing functions combined with the reliance on the same ring of avenues encompassing the city center, which was designed by the Poggi Plan; and the slowness of buses, subjected to normal traffic, therefore at once consequence and effect of the use of private cars.

[148] Lines 2 and 3 are being built as I write.

Before its actual construction, one of the main debates arose as to whether the route should include or skip the city center[149]. Beside unsurprising remarks on the visual and practical damage to monuments caused by the passing of tramway cars, another interesting issue was related to the supposed difference between a 'pure' city center and a socially degraded periphery. In fact, "widespread concern that the tramway might … bring the less respectable elements of the suburbs straight to Brunelleschi's cupola long prevailed in public debate, to the point that the City Administration eliminated the idea of having them pass through the historic city center" (Alberti 101). Such a debate cannot but bring back to mind the debates that preceded the *riordinamento del centro* of the last decades of the 19th century, when the ancient and lower-class neighborhoods of the Old Market and Jewish Ghetto were demolished to give way to the monumental Piazza della Repubblica. Back then as well, the main concern regarding the overpopulated and dense areas was a social one. Indeed, such areas were inhabited by a mix of artisans, street vendors, day workers, and beggars, no longer considered acceptable in a city center that was increasingly hosting banks, stores, offices, restaurants and an ever-growing mass of tourists.

As discussed in Chapter One, only after these old neighborhoods were evacuated before the beginning of demolition works did the Alinari Brothers take photographs of the finally empty and socially purified areas. The same mechanism of effacement – visually overlooking the emergence of industrial production in some of the Alinari photographs (such as the one representing the Santa Trinita and Carraia Bridges taken

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[149] It is worth remembering that the old tramway passed right by the Cathedral. However, it must also be stressed that the tramway emerges after the afore-mentioned pedestrianization of the Cathedral area.

Fig. 8. The new bridge built for the T1 line

form the Ponte Vecchio, cfr. Chapter One pag. 68-71) – seems to be at work with even

higher intensity in the photographs of th soon-to-disappear Old Market area. Indeed,

in these images only deserted architectural elements are visible, while their inhabitants

have disappeared, displaced in the then burgeoning suburbs, never to set foot in the city

center again (at least in the city administration's hopes and plans). The effacement of the

sites of industrial production and the visual and actual displacement of lower-class city

dwellers are actually the two sides of the same coin, if one considers that it was precisely

the will to keep Florence clean of social tensions that limited the emergence of factories

in the city.

It is noteworthy that, over a century later, the same social concerns arise over a

long-overdue and long-awaited infrastructure that is meant precisely to connect the city

center to the suburban area that is supposedly threatening it. The matter is even more

significant considering that Scandicci today is home to many former inhabitants of the

city center, who have been pushed away by rising rents and the progressive erosion of

services for residents (but not for tourists). As Lefebvre maintains, the mechanisms of the

capitalist city, while apparently neutral and inclusive, have in fact a highly selective

feature, seeking to divide those who can enjoy them from those who will be deprived of

them. The mechanism at work here is the supposed right to mobility, and reveals the

paradox between the will to provide the inhabitants of Scandicci with public and low-cost

transportation, and the idea that only selected and specific types of individuals should be

granted access to the city center, where the monuments are left to talk the hegemonic

language of the artistic nature of the city.

4. The Palace of Justice, or the Role of Monuments in Contemporary City

As analyzed at the beginning of this chapter, Lefebvre sees monuments (both the newly

built ones and the old ones, who are appropriated to the needs of the present) as

producing a discourse that is at once repressive and celebrative. This section will explore

this issue through the analysis of the new Palace of Justice, which opened in January

2012 within the repurposed ex-Fiat area in the Novoli neighborhood (cfr. pagg. 252-55 in

this chapter). Nominated the fifth uglier building in the world by the travel website

virtualtourist.com, the Palace of Justice has an imposing, layered, and angular structure

that somehow defies description. Composed of different geometric elements that clash

with each other, it offers very different views from different sides, to such an extent that

it is not possible to visually grasp it in its entirety. From the nearby San Donato Park, it

appears as the elongated encounter of triangular, trapezoidal and rectangular masses.

From the Viale Alessandro Guidoni, the Palace's shape appears vertical, as three irregular

masses conflate (Figg. 9 and 10). However hardly noticeable from the outside, the

building has an elongated shape that stretches from the south-east to north-west. As I will

discuss later, this structure is meant to symbolize the building's aim to put together as

well as rationalize a web of functions that were previously scattered in seventeen

different locations around the city center, including the tribunal, the district attorney's

office, the superior court, and the minors' tribunal.

Plans to move all such functions to one single palace in Novoli emerged between

the 1970s and the 1980s, and architect Michelucci, soon joined by architect Ricci, were

assigned the task of designing this new city structure[150]. As previously noted, the

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[150] The first idea to build a new justice complex away from the city center dates back to the Poggi Plan.

Fig. 9. The Palace of Justice from San Donato Park

Fig. 10. The Palace of Justice from Viale Guidoni

circumstances that led to the palace's construction are long and complex, starting with Michelucci's later decision to abandon the project. In fact, the old architect refused the very idea of a palace of justice, stating that the idea of having a palace of justice, rather than a city of widespread justice, was inherently wrong. Accordingly, he opposed the plan to move to a peripheral area functions that had sedimented throughout the centuries in different areas of the city center, where he thought they were supposed to stay[151]. (Michelucci 186-7).

Ricci's project, presented to the city administration in 1988 and only realized in the new century (and after the architect's death), tries to give an answer to the issues raised by Michelucci. Indeed, the new Palace of Justice both establishes a relationship with the city center, and keeps the theoretical and spatial complexity of the previous configuration of legal system. As for the first point, the building's elongated structure is located so as to point to the city center, in an effort to connect with the area that previously hosted the functions now located in the palace as well as with the Cathedral's dome, perceived as the defining feature of the city at large. The building's specific structure is better appreciated from the inside, where a path unfolds that is meant to produce a public space, an internal street that is open to the citizenry (Lambardi 19). Differently from what happens in the Novoli university building, the relationship with the city center is not formal but conceptual in that it doesn't replicate single architectural elements but aims to produce a functional as well as symbolic space connected to the city center.

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[151] Michelucci thought that such a move was not going to benefit the neighborhood of Novoli either, as it was going to exacerbate the gap between the residential areas lacking in services and the building-container, disconnected from the urban fabric (187).

Secondly, the Palace of Justice is meant to express the complexity, interconnectedness, and diversity of its functions through its very structure. In fact, the building is the result of the interpenetration of "volumi e piani che si incastrano trasportando all'esterno la complessità del contenuto, mentre all'interno i ballatoi e i passaggi aerei rappresentano il tessuto connettivo per la disarticolazione volumetrica" (volumes and planes that interpenetrate bringing to the building's outside its inner complexity, while in the interior the walkways and aerial passages reveal the web connecting the disarticulated volumes, Lambardi 58). As such, the palace seems to keep something of Michelucci's notion of the city of justice, where all the different functions are reunited while maintaining, practically as well as visually and conceptually, their specificity. The palace assembles fragments that coexist and are distributed on different levels, which are connected without being assimilated to each other.

Another, very relevant characteristic of the building is its being open to the public, so as to testify to the openness and transparency of human justice. All citizens can enter the Palace of Justice: while on the ground floor there is the above mentioned internal street, the sixth floor includes a glass-covered trapezoidal square called the basilica, open on four sides but surrounded by the building's diverse elements. The basilica is meant to be a lived space, owned by the entire citizenry as well as facilitating its encounter with justice, and it is visible from all the building's floors and spaces through corridors and walkaways. Being the space where all the other areas and levels converge, the trapezoidal basilica is conceptualized as the building's fulcrum, its very core, where the Palace of Justice's meaning unfolds. In fact, all the categories of individuals that are in different ways involved in its daily life share this space: judges,

magistrates, the general public, and the accused, all involved in the human drama that takes place here every day. As such, the basilica is intended as a "fatto urbano" (urban fact) that reenacts the complexity of the city's interaction of various social strata and functions while offering a solution through the activity of the justice apparatus (Lambardi 74).

This is even more meaningful if one considers that the Palace of Justice is located in the outskirts of Florence, in an area that was born as an industrial neighborhood, for a long time hardly considered part of the city itself. By hosting such a loaded space, the Novoli neighborhood loses its peripheral feature to become real urban space. Furthermore, the basilica is open toward the sky, visible through a wall glass, making it a "grande spazio aperto metaforicamente verso l'alto" (a huge space metaphorically open to above, Lambardi 75). Indeed, basilica is not only the name for the space where Roman courts where held in ancient Rome: it is also the name for Christian churches. Thus, the basilica is intended as a sacred space, not in the religious notion of the world, but in a more human way, being the space "dove viene palesata la vita umana nella sua drammaticità" (where human life reveals its tragic character, Lambardi 74).

Given its significance, it comes as no surprise that the Palace of Justice emerges as the biggest Florentine monument after the Cathedral, Brunelleschi's Dome, the Pitti Palace and the Medici Chapels in the San Lorenzo complex (Di Benedetto 114). The word monument is deliberately used, as the building is purposely meant to stand out in the renowned city's panorama as one of its main point of interest. This is clearly not limited to the visual level, but it extends to the conceptual one as well, as the Palace of Justice aims to add its utterance to those that have marked the Florentine landscape for

centuries, expressing at once the rational and dramatic character of human justice, the contrast between the rightness of its motives and the (supposedly necessary) roughness of its mechanisms and results. Lefebvre's 'generally accepted Power and generally accepted Wisdom', behind which hides ruling class ideology, are apparent in the Palace of Justice's intended inclusiveness, aimed to render citizens part of a mechanism that they don't actually have the power to control. Accordingly, the palace's conflicting appearance, supposedly revealing of the internal tense but necessary coexistence of its disparate elements, can also be interpreted as an expression of its potentially menacing and disrupting feature[152]. Despite all this, the courage necessary to insert a new monumental emergence onto a horizon filled with some of the most celebrated and renowned architectural achievements of the past is all to be praised – even more so if one takes into account the usual and emblematic reluctance of Florentine residents and ruling classes to make changes to the existing urban landscape[153].

The notion of the Palace of Justice as a monument, as that which makes it a visual and conceptual emergence in the Florentine landscape, is what grounds its relationship with the Alinari photographs. Indeed, as the previous discussion has shown, the palace aims to represent, embody, and even trigger a very specific notion of justice, one that is considered to be representative of contemporary (Florentine? Italian? European? Global?) society. The palace could be the subject of an Alinari photograph[154], and it would

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[152] Given the fact that the idea to build the Palace of Justice in Novoli first came out in the 1970s, and that Ricci's plan came out in the 1980s, it is possible to argue that the idea of justice brought forth by the Palace of Justice is related to the troubled socio-political situation of the 1970s, known as 'the years of lead' for the presence of left-wing, right-wing, and secret service-related terrorism.

[153] Two examples of this tendency are the new Uffizi entrance planned by architect Arata Isozaki, which won an international completion but hasn't been (and will probably never be) built, and the high speed train station project planned by architect Norman Foster, also not existing yet, which could be turned into a transportation hub for buses.

[154] Just like some 19th century buildings entered the Alinari catalogues, cfr. Chapter One pag. 55.

definitely be included in one or more of the photographs they actually took, since the Palace of Justice is now well apparent in the panorama from the hills of San Miniato and Monte alle Croci, the latter being located right below the former. The panorama from the Monte alle Croci, which opens the 1863 Alinari catalogue and appears in the 1876 one as well, would not fail to show the Palace of Justice, which would deeply contribute to the discourse on urban space.

Indeed, as discussed in Chapter One, the Alinari photographs focus on medieval and Renaissance views and monuments in order to visually produce a city that tries – but fails – to overlook the changes that modernization is imposing on the city itself. This effort is based on the assumption that the new areas of the city cannot be considered urban space in its own right, in that they lack the strength to assert a consistent idea of the world. This assumption is somewhat proved by the Poggi Plan as well as the city's development throughout the twentieth century, which keep all the main urban functions and infrastructures in the city center, while conceiving of what surrounds Florence's downtown as merely devoted to housing and, in specific areas, industry. The Palace of Justice somehow contradicts such an assumption, forcing the city center to acknowledge the presence of the palace through its undeniable, imposing presence in the famous city landscape, the same way it forces the city center to acknowledge the presence of periphery as part of the city itself.

It goes without saying that, as the palace would be included in the Alinari photographs of Florence taken from above, it is also included in the photographs that tourists take from the hill of San Miniato or, more probably, from the Piazzale Michelangelo. As the palace forcibly occupies space in the tourists' visual field and in

their photographs, it ineluctably becomes 'worth seeing'. Once again, the Palace of Justice asserts its aim to become part of Florence's landscape, linking the modern and the historic parts of the city – or, more accurately, enabling the unity of the two. This will to expand the discourse on the city, also for those who are only visitors to it, seems to deny the supposed inevitability and predictability of Florence's landscape, which lies at the core of the city's contemporary photographic representations analyzed in Chapter Three. As previously discussed, contemporary photographers of Florence fail to take the contemporary city (and the periphery) into account, rather working on the established 19th-century representation of monumental Florence as the visual filter that must be re-elaborated, questioned, or even effaced in order to analyze the contemporary urban space at large. Such an attitude reaches its climax in Martin Parr's photographs, where the pre-existing representation is taken for granted to such an extent, that monuments are covered by tourists bearing marks of other attractions, or even left out of the frame. The appearance of a monumental development assertively imposing its peripheral presence as part of the renowned panorama of Florence, seems to suggest that a different notion of Florence's urban space is to be taken into account.

5. Surveillance and Tourism: Le Murate from Prison to Leisure

From the place where decisions about the accused are made, we move now to the place where the sentenced are secluded. The complex and fascinating history of the detention institution in Florence is bound up with notions of visibility, accessibility, and power, which make it relevant for the analysis of urban space at large. At the beginning of the 19th century, a confiscated convent became home to the new prison of Florence on the same street (Via Ghibellina in the Santa Croce neighborhood) where the old prison had

been located for centuries. The old prison, named Le Stinche after the castle of its first

inmates the Ghibelline Cavalcanti family, rose on a piece of land also confiscated from

yet another Ghibelline family, the Uberti, in 1304[155]. In accordance with both its name

and location, Le Stinche hosted political and war criminals as well as bankrupts and debt

owners (whose crimes were taken very seriously in the city that invented banks),

mentally ill individuals, and criminals as well[156].

In 1424, a convent rose in the same area, meant to host a group of cloistered nuns

that had until then (and since 1320) dwelled in one of the wooden huts built on the pillars

of the bridge Ponte a Rubaconte (rebuilt after WWII as Ponte alle Grazie). The area

where the convent was going to rise was donated to the nuns by Monna Giovanna, and

after its construction the convent kept growing as the nuns both acquired and were

donated more pieces of land by families such as the Lanzi and the Benci. Even Lorenzo il

Magnifico acted as a benefactor to this group of nuns, financing the reconstruction of the

convent after a fire damaged it in 1471. The convent was called Le Murate ('the walled-

in women') as a homage to the nuns' destiny: when a nun first entered the convent, the

door she walked through was walled after her, symbolizing the choice she had made to be

definitively detached from the world.

Starting from 1808, when Grand Duke Leopold II confiscated Le Murate in

accordance with Napoleon's edict, the convent took on many different functions. Le

Murate in turn hosted Austro-Hungarian troops temporarily located in Tuscany; became a

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[155] Castle Le Stinche was located in Lamole (Greve in Chianti) and destroyed after the Cavalcantis took refuge in it (Michelotti 27).

[156] Among those who were imprisoned at Le Stinche figure Giovanni Villani (for debts), Giovanni Cavalcanti (for not paying taxes), Cennino Cennini (for debts), and Machiavelli (for plotting against Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici) (Michelotti 29).

shelter for the poor; and was home to a fireworks' factory, craftsman workshops, and artists' ateliers. With an 1832 decree, Grand Duke Leopold II established that the ex-convent would become a male correctional facility and the architect Domenico Giraldi was charged with the task of planning the repurposing of the convent. Works ended in 1846 which dramatically changed the convent's structure, of which only the buildings' layout remained intact, while volumes and distribution of space were consistently altered (Trotta 20). The new prison started its activity in 1848[157]. In 1870 the facility acquired a new section, as Giraldi's successor Francesco Mazzei planned the construction of two additional arms built on the east wall, connected by a semi-octagonal structure to which I will turn shortly[158]. Not surprisingly given its function, the entire structure had a quite severe appearance, with high walls and small windows on the outside and, inside, internal corridors and walkways for surveillance, on which rows of thick wooden doors with locks and bolts unfolded.

In 1983, the city administration decided to transfer the prison to the more peripheral area of Sollicciano (in the Scandicci area), in a move reminiscent of the above discussed decision to relocate all the law functions to Novoli. Indeed, just as it happened for the Palace of Justice, Michelucci expressed all his doubts on such initiative: Florence, he thought, was going to become more hostile to inmates, from now on marginalized on a visual level as well as they were pushed far from the city center, where no one (and especially tourists) could see them. Furthermore, Michelucci added, the transfer to

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[157] The area were the Stinche was located was sold to private owners and later hosted craftsman laboratories, residences, and a theater (today Teatro Verdi).

[158] This area is now a parking lot.

Sollicciano was going to produce an empty space where the Murate had been, which needed to be filled again with something equally meaningful.

However, the project of the new Murate complex started taking shape as Renzo Piano was appointed to establish its guidelines. In 1985 an international competition was announced, to call for plans to repurpose the entire complex and give it back to the people. Works began in 2002 and continued until 2007, following the winning plan of architects Melosi, Pittalis, and Fantozzi. Unlike many other interventions on old buildings' repurposing in Florence, this one didn't see the involvement of private funds or financial firms, as it was a totally public intervention. Also, a considerable part of the complex has been devoted to public housing, opposing the tendency to push residents out of the city center. Besides about 70 apartments, the Murate complex now hosts two public squares, a restaurant, a literary cafe, a bookstore, and other cultural activities. Following Piano's directives, this intervention aims to "open up the block and make it permeable from all directions" (Strummer 61). For the first time in its history, Le Murate is now an accessible and lively area of the city center, while still preserving a memory of its past. In fact, some of the apartments have kept the original cells' wooden doors, and the cells' interior structure has been respected, adding protruding terraces to increase the apartments' square footage (Figg. 11-13).

The history of Florence's prisons offers a unique angle through which explore issues of architecture's accessibility, places' and individuals' visibility, and power throughout the centuries and in particular in the nineteenth century, when it overlaps with the unprecedented representation of urban space provided by photography. The different

Fig. 11. Le Murate Square, Le Murate complex

Fig. 12. Madonna della Neve Square, Le Murate complex

shapes and organizations that the city's detention structures have taken from the late Middle Ages to today are extremely relevant to the discourse on urban space, which photography also contributed to produce and enhance. First, let us examine the switch from Le Stinche prison to the repurposed ex-convent Le Murate within the theoretical frame outlined by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). In this work, Foucault describes the emergence of "a new economy and a new technology of the power to punish" between the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries (89). Such change resulted in a more structured, functional, homogenous, and rational justice, meant to express less "the vengeance of the sovereign t[han] the defense of society", whose values, supposedly shared by everyone, had been attacked by the criminal (90). Although such new economy is apparently propelled by the call for a more 'human', less bloodthirsty management of justice and penal punishment, Foucault maintains that it actually stems from the need to preserve the values produced by a new economic order; that is, industrial capitalism. New detention structures developed in the 19th century around Europe and the US responded to the need for a more capillary control of inmates, their daily lives, and their psychological development as well. Isolation, forced labor, constant observation, and disciplinary techniques that regiment the body all aim to "operat[e] transformations of individuals" in three ways: "the politico-moral schema of individual isolation and hierarchy; the economic model of force applied to compulsory work; the technico-medical model of cure and normalization" (248).

Following Lefebvre, one could argue that different societies produce different notions of prison, different experiences of prison, and different prisons as well; and the case of Florence is noteworthy for the analysis of such processes. The city's first prison,

Le Stinche, was a massive quadrilateral building with no windows, occupying an entire

block. The building's interior was segmented in different areas devoted to the custody of

the different categories of prisoners[159]. There were not individual cells (or at least very

few for the temporary isolation of undisciplined inmates), promiscuity being one of the

worst aspects of detention (Magherini 47-49). However, none of this was visible from the

outside. As Le Stinche was politically loaded both in terms of location and name, it was a

symbolically rich urban element. Its symbolic potency was embodied by the building's

appearance, insofar as it was part of the urban horizon while refusing any contact with it.

Precisely by rejecting any – visual as well as practical – interaction with the surrounding

space (besides, clearly, the passage of both prisoners and guards), Le Stinche denounced

the inevitability of its presence and therefore of its function. It was a permanent,

imposing, visually inescapable if physically inaccessible *memento* to what Foucault calls

the power of sovereignty, represented as an endless spectacle – albeit a very dark and

macabre one – within the city's limits (216).

The switch from Le Stinche to the 19th-century prison bears witness to the change

in the conception of justice discussed by Foucault. It also represents the passage from the

symbolic, absolute space to the functional, rationalized, and geometric abstract space, as

described by Lefebvre. In fact, as Le Murate occupied an already existing architectural

structure, there seems to be a lower emphasis on the direct effect that the prison is

expected to have on the outside: that is, on the city itself. Although the works needed to

adjust the existing structure to the specific needs of the new institution affected the

building's exterior as well, they had the main purpose to modify its internal appearance

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[159] Inmates were divided by both the gravity of their crime and the quality of their behavior within the
prison itself. There were also cells for women, kids, and the physically and mentally ill.

and function. As the prison became the place where individuals were normalized, disciplined, and made apt to the needs and values of capitalist economy, the penitentiary was structured in such a way as to allow inmates' constant observation and surveillance as well as hour-by-hour organization of their daily life. To this purpose, Giraldi planned the above described individual cells and walkways, respectively enabling the inmates' isolation and their observation. For the same purposes, Giraldi planned the "wheel yards", circular areas meant for the inmates' "ora d'aria", fragmented in individual sections by radial walls, just like in a bike's wheel. Furthermore, the semi-octagonal structure built by Mazzei worked as a "panopticon" (Fantozzi Micali 141). The panopticon is an architectural structure designed by Bentham and composed of a circular structure with an 'inspection house' at its center, from which the staff of the institution are able to watch the inmates. As Foucault explains, the panopticon is such that "each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault 200). As Foucault argues, in the new detention structures the spectacular visibility of sovereign power is displaced on the compulsory visibility of inmates, as visibility becomes one of the main tools for controlling the inmates[160].

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[160] It is emblematic that the convent was a cloistered one, where nuns were secluded from the rest of society just like the prison's convicts. However, such apparent analogy ceases to hold when one considers that the prison's disciplinary techniques "were different from asceticism and from 'disciplines' of a monastic type, whose function was to obtain renunciations rather than increases of utility and which, although they involved obedience to others, had as their principal aim an increase of the mastery of each individual over h[er] own body" (Foucault, *Discipline* 137).

Fig. 13. Corridor with old cells' wooden doors, Le Murate complex

Fig. 14. The 'panopticon', Le Murate complex

This notion of potentially endless visibility is what links Le Murate to the Alinari photographs of Florence. On a general level, 19[161]-century urban space is a place of enhanced visibility thanks to technological improvement such as public lighting[161] and architectural changes such as the demolition of Medieval walls and the creation of panoramic points on the hills. Photography greatly contributes to this process of increasing urban visibility, both by disseminating a potentially endless number of images of every urban element that is considered worth recording, and by providing a number of city views taken from above, thus allowing consumers/residents/viewers visual control over the urban space itself[162]. Indeed, the creation of places such as the Piazzale Michelangelo institutionalized the notion of the view from above, which in turn photography helped disseminate. Panoramas from vantage points figure in all Alinari catalogues from the very beginning, providing an all-encompassing access to the urban space that was all the more enhanced by the demolition of the medieval wall (cfr. Chapter One pag. 49).

By losing its walls Florence became metaphorically defenseless and open to penetration. As the city was rendered visually exposed and accessible, its monuments offered themselves to the gaze without impediments. If the prison is the site where the project of total control through both the power of the gaze and the gaze of power unfolded, significantly kept afar from the eyes of common people (and cameras), photography exposed and propagated this mechanism on a larger scale, borrowing its lens to everyone's fantasies of control and power. In *The Burden of Representation* (1988),

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[161] In Florence, gas public lighting was introduced in 1846.
[162] It is worth remembering that during the 19th century control over the city is not only visual, as the demolition of popular areas of the city considered as politically and socially dangerous proves (cfr. Chapter One pagg. 77-79).

John Tagg explores the disciplinary power of photography as well as its "complicity in th[e] spreading network of power" in a range of fields such as police and court practices, prisons, hospitals, factories, and schools throughout the 19th century"[163] (74). However, rather than just spreading the tension toward visual control, photography also exposed its failure. As discussed in Chapter One, the Alinari photographs revealed the cracks and uncertainties that haunted the project of visual control. One example of this is the photograph of the Cathedral's side taken from the above: as the image points at but only obliquely shows the Cathedral's unfinished façade, it also establishes it as that which escapes representation. Thus, this photograph unmasked the defeat of the will to possess a space that, in the end, escaped the grip of the camera's eye (cfr. Chapter One pagg. 58-63).

The new life of Le Murate, finally accessible from all sides and for a range of cultural, leisure, and tourist activities, brings to a new level the overlapping of visual control and the tourist gaze, which is at work not only in the Alinari photographs, but also in some of the films analyzed in Chapter Two. In Argento's *The Stendhal Syndrome*, the scene set in the Uffizi Gallery sees protagonist Anna Manni's increasing instability between an aesthetic appreciation of the artworks, and the inquisitive task that brought her to the museum in the first place – the search for the villain. Scott's *Hannibal* brings the ambiguity between tourist gaze and surveillance to the highest level, as the entire Florentine section is grounded on the overlapping of the two attitudes. Le Murate shows the continuity of such an instability in the preservation of the semi octagonal structure

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[163] In Tagg's words, these are photographs' features that contributed to the control of bodies: "The body isolated; the narrow space; the subjection to an unreturnable gaze; the scrutiny of gestures, faces and features; the clarity of illumination and sharpness of focus; the names and number boards" (85).

(the so-called panopticon), which is still visible in its original shape (Fig. 14). As the
'panopticon' is now open for tourist appreciation, it is possible to argue that the dream of
total control that had produced it is now being granted to tourists – a reminder of the
power of tourist gaze that, in guidebooks analyzed in Chapter Three, is established as the
producer of tourist sites.

Other parts of Le Murate reference the structure's old function in a lighter way:
for example, in the oblique struts that connect and support the added protruding
balconies, meant to increase the apartment's square footage, which seem to be a distorted
and playful reminder of the bars usually found in cell's windows (Fig. 12). In general, the
web of functions now to be found at Le Murate, the complex's accessibility, and the
widespread if sometimes lighthearted reference to the complex's previous function, bear
witness to the shift from the economy of total visibility within the microcosm of the
prison to the total availability of space devoted to leisure activities, which Lefebvre sees
as one of the characteristics of abstract space in neocapitalist society.

This chapter has taken into account Florence's contemporary urban development
in the 20th and 21st centuries, showing how urban issues registered by the Alinari
Brothers' photographs are still relevant in the contemporary city. In particular, the
tramway T-1 line shows the enduring ambivalence of abstract space as the place of
inclusion, as the need for mobility and the fear of social contagion keep fighting over the
city center; the Palace of Justice highlights the persisting preeminence of the monument
as the vehicle for conveying meanings and organizing practices – a preeminence that is
used in the effort to transfer to the periphery some of the prestige of the city center; and
finally, Le Murate complex exposes the increased accessibility for leisure and tourist

activities as a development of the 19th-century dream of total visual control, that both photography and the new type of detention tried to achieve in different ways.

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