# Signs of Belonging: Identifying Female Foundlings and Orphans in Early Modern Europe

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In the mid-1560s, the painter Il Poppi (Francesco Morandini) painted a large altarpiece, the *Madonna and Child with* Nocentine *in Adoration* (fig. 1), for the women's church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, a foundling hospital in Catholic Florence.[1] Two decades later, a more modestly sized portrait of the orphanage matron Hilleke de Roy and four of her charges (fig. 2) was installed on the walls of an orphanage in Calvinist Gorinchem (Gorcum).[2] At first glance, these two images have little more in common than their shared oil-on-wood medium. Yet, despite differences in genre and function, as well as confessional and institutional context, both of these paintings present a carefully constructed image of female charitable wards. As such, they offer up a rare opportunity to explore, using visual evidence, an aspect of institutional life often left undocumented and thus understudied.

Using these paintings as a point both of departure and of reference, in this chapter I elucidate how visual strategies—including images, dress, and other forms of visual display—shaped the public identities of female foundlings and orphans, both as deserving recipients of charity and as members of affective communities. To do so, I will look comparatively at two regions, central Italy and the northern Netherlands, and two basic institutional types, the foundling hospital and the orphanage. Foundlings and orphans were, to different degrees, proverbial blank slates—parentless children lacking clearly defined and stable social identities. For female wards of foundling hospitals and orphanages in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, this malleability constituted both an opportunity and a threat: on the one hand, they could be newly constructed through visual representation as virtuous, pious, and industrious future brides, nuns, and laborers, regardless of the circumstances of their births; on the other, these found identities were always already unstable, a circumstance that placed exceptional pressure on the charitable institutions that succored them.

As they left few records, the lived experience of these liminal girls has

proved elusive to historians; when they do appear in the archives, their stories are typically told by their institutional caregivers or the notaries who witnessed their weddings and labor contracts. Images, with their rich multivalence and broad communicative power, offer a different approach to better understanding these forgotten girls and their lives as charitable wards—one that centers on the public identities constructed for these girls. Examined in conversation with visual evidence, records of dress and ritual add further richness to this picture, helping us to better understand how the bodies of female foundlings and orphans were made visible in the spaces of the early modern city. Through a comparative study of surviving visual and archival evidence from foundling hospitals and orphanages in early modern Italy and the northern Netherlands, the two European regions with the greatest density of these institutions, I consider here how visual strategies could work both to stabilize volatile social identities and to construct dynamic and convivial affective communities. Despite the marked differences between the two cultures—one Catholic, one Calvinist—and the diverse patronage structures of the charitable institutions in question, a comparative approach reveals many common visual strategies in the presentation of female foundlings and orphans—as well as significant variations.

## Institutional Developments

The Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, where Il Poppi's altarpiece (fig. 1) was displayed, was established in 1419 as an institution dedicated exclusively to the care of foundlings—defined as children abandoned anonymously, most often as infants.[3] In Italy, particularly in the cities and towns of central Italy, the fifteenth century was a time of key developments in the arena of institutional support toward foundlings. New hospitals, like the Innocenti, and new wards within existing hospitals were established to care for newborns who were either illegitimate or presumed to be so.[4] As I have argued elsewhere, institutions commissioned elaborate visual programs to promote this form of charity, presenting their work as responding to the purported social problem of infanticide.[5] However, by the sixteenth century, when Il Poppi's altarpiece was installed, the focus in Italy had shifted toward older children, particularly orphans.[6] In contrast to a foundling, an orphan can be defined as a parentless child, one who is typically legitimate, older, and of known or identifiable family. The new institutions for children established in Italy in the sixteenth century tended to be male and female orphanages (the latter known as conservatories).[7] At the same time, the patrons and administrators of Italian foundling

Fig. 1. Francesco Morandini ("Il Poppi"), *Madonna Enthroned with the Christ Child and Angels, with* Nocentine *in Adoration*, 1565–1566, oil on wood, 177 × 117 cm. Florence, Museo degli Innocenti

hospitals began to place more discursive emphasis on their care of older children, especially the protection of girls and the education of boys.[8] Orphanages were more exclusive than foundling hospitals, typically restricting entry to specific groups, often by age and also by proof of local parentage and legitimate birth.[9] As such, the social problem these institutions responded to was not infanticide for reasons of shame but instead the concern that the death of one or both parents could derail the life of a respectable child.

This concern also preoccupied the citizens of Netherlandish towns such as Gorinchem, which established its orphanage in 1558, twenty-eight years before the portrait of Hilleke de Roy was executed.[10] The Gorinchem orphanage, which became a Reformed institution in 1572, occupied the former house of Matthijs Aelberts and his wife Marijke Kolff Jorisdr., who had bequeathed it in their will.[11] In contrast to Italy, there had been no move to develop foundling hospitals in the fifteenth-century Low Countries; instead, abandoned and parentless children were most often either sheltered in poorhouses or cared for through informal fostering systems.[12] Beginning in the sixteenth century, however, it became a point of civic pride for larger cities and towns in the northern Netherlands to establish an orphanage.[13] Often known as burgher orphanages, these institutions admitted children on the basis of age, family citizenship status, and, following the Union of Utrecht (1579), religion.[14] These restrictions excluded many children, leading, especially in major cities, to the foundation of additional orphanages designated specifically for children barred from the burgher orphanages. While in Italy the pattern was to divide male and female orphans into separate institutions, Dutch orphanages were, for the most part, coeducational.[15]

Admission requirements at Italian female orphanages were typically stringent and shared many common characteristics, even if institutional records indicate significant diversity among those actually admitted.[16] Some orphanages used strict admission requirements in an attempt to limit entrants to legitimate girls of respectable families, striving to enforce policies of background checks, interviews, and other forms of examination, including physical tests for virginity.[17] These charitable foundations sought to replicate the authorizing power of the family network on the institutional level, replacing the stewardship of the family with that of the orphanage. The aim was to reintegrate the girls back into society at or near the socioeconomic level from which they came, through marriage to members of the respectable urban poor. The operating regulations for these institutions evince a keen interest in distinguishing orphans from foundlings, the latter being by definition without pedigree.[18]

Fig. 2. Unidentified artist, *Hilleke de Roy and Four of Her Orphans*, 1586, oil on wood, 90.5 × 72.5 cm. Gorinchem, Gorcums Museum

Unsurprisingly, these attempts to create and enforce clear distinctions between female foundlings and orphans often broke down in practice—for example, legitimately born children were frequently abandoned to foundling hospitals.[19]

Life for institutionalized girls in both foundling hospitals, such as the Innocenti, and Italian and Dutch orphanages had many shared features. The daily routines in these institutions would have included meals, prayer, instruction, and some form of labor, most often textile work such as spinning silk, making lace, or needlework. On Sundays and feast days, the female foundlings and orphans would join their male counterparts in procession to church or through the streets of the city. In both Italy and the Low Countries, institutionalized girls would have been subject to a much higher level of monitoring than boys.[20] While there was much in common between the institutional practices in the two regions, there were some important variations. Confession was the most obvious source of difference, as the ideology of charity in the Catholic and Reformed (post-1579) churches was markedly different.[21] This divergence was manifest in terms of identifying those deserving of charity, as well as in conceptualizing the value and meaning of eleemosynary acts. While charitable dowering—funding it, administering it, advertising it—remained central to the mission of Italian institutions throughout the early modern period, Netherlandish orphanages concentrated instead on skills training for future employment as servants or textile workers.[22] Quality of life and future prospects also varied considerably across institutional types. In the Low Countries, for example, children in the better-funded and more exclusive burgher orphanages could anticipate a rosier future than their peers in institutions serving the lower social classes. Similarly, children in Italian orphanages, particularly the wealthier ones, were much better off than foundlings in overcrowded and underfunded hospitals such as the Ospedale degli Innocenti.

## Imaging Community

A closer look at the visual evidence bears out these commonalities and differences. Both the Il Poppi altarpiece (fig. 1) and the Gorinchem painting (fig. 2) present female charitable wards as members of a supportive institutional community using a locally resonant visual vocabulary. To wit, the compositional format of the Innocenti painting is based on the widely diffused iconography of the Madonna della Misericordia, or Madonna of Mercy—a visual formulation with which viewers both inside and outside the hospital would have been very familiar.[23] Much like the Virgin in the Il Poppi altarpiece, the Madonna of Mercy typically spreads out her mantle to cover people assembled

Fig. 3. Unidentified artist, *Madonna degli Innocenti*, late fifteenth century or early sixteenth century, tempera on canvas, 148 × 90 cm. Florence, Museo degli Innocenti

beneath: individuals, groups, or even entire urban populations. This gesture connoted divine protection, demonstrating visually that those individuals pictured under the Virgin's mantle enjoyed her particular favor. In the Italian context, the conventional format of the Madonna of Mercy could be easily customized to accommodate different institutional missions—in other words, it serves as a visual strategy for picturing community. For example, in a late-fifteenth- or early-sixteenth-century painting from the Ospedale degli Innocenti (fig. 3), which may have served as a processional standard, the Virgin stands in front of the hospital's identifiable loggia and shields young male and female foundlings with her cloak.[24] In the case of the later Il Poppi altarpiece, the community protected by the Virgin's mantle is instead that of the older girls of the Innocenti—the *nocentine*.

The portrait of Hilleke de Roy (fig. 2), executed two decades after the Il Poppi altarpiece, also constructed an idealized image of institutional community in a way that would have resonated powerfully with a local audience. Hilleke de Roy was the first matron (*binnenmoeder*) of the Gorinchem orphanage and had already been in the post for nearly thirty years when this portrait was painted.[25] A *cartellino* added to the top left in 1601 notes that she continued to serve the institution until her death that year at the age of ninety.[26] The painting takes as its compositional template the northern European genre of the elite family portrait; Frans Francken the Elder's *Portrait of a Family* (fig. 4), dated 1577, is a representative example of this type. Hilleke de Roy takes the place of the parent in the family portrait, assuming a seated form in the center of the compositional space. In part because Hilleke's attention is diverted away from the viewer, it is the female orphan below her who emerges as the star of the show. She engages the viewer's attention directly, drawing the focus away from the male orphans to the viewer's left.[27] This visual strategy has the effect of disrupting the equal gender balance typical of Dutch images of orphans, in favor of the female wards of the Gorinchem *weeshuis* (orphanage).

Omitting any reference to the male foundlings of the Innocenti, the Il Poppi altarpiece (fig. 1) presents the female foundlings of the hospital as a cohesive institutional community that enjoyed the favor of the Virgin and Child. Viewers of the painting, principally the girls of the Innocenti themselves, would have been familiar with the Madonna of Mercy iconography and would readily identify the pictured *nocentine*, previously abandoned and stripped of legible identity, as members of a pious and protected sorority. In related (though distinct) fashion, the Gorinchem painting situates the female orphans as securely located within a recognizable family structure. Hilleke de Roy, stand-in for the

Fig. 4. Frans Francken the Elder (attr.), *Portrait of a Family*, 1577, oil on panel, 43 × 59 cm. Le Puy-en-Velay, Musée Crozatier

father and mother typically found in contemporary family portraits, embodies the role of the orphanage as replacement parental presence, with both male and female orphans assembled within her protective orbit.[28]

Both the Il Poppi altarpiece and the Gorinchem painting construct the children of their respective institutions as worthy recipients of charity through various strategies of idealization. Importantly, both the girls of the Innocenti and the Gorinchem orphans are depicted as physically idealized, with no visual sign of defect or disability. Foundling hospitals like the Innocenti were a common destination for disabled children, who were more likely to be abandoned than their more able-bodied counterparts. The nicknames given to the foundlings of the Ospedale della Scala in Siena, for example, "Caterina piccola zopparella" (little hobbled Caterina), reflect this reality.[29] The Il Poppi altarpiece, which presents the girls and women of the hospital as healthy and

attractive, instead idealizes the community and advocates for their ability to be successfully reintroduced into society.

In contrast to foundling hospitals like the Innocenti, both Italian and Dutch orphanages imposed (or tried to impose) entrance requirements on wards, aiming to restrict admission to those who could be most easily reintegrated. For example, in his treatise on Roman charitable institutions of 1601, Camillo Fanucci stated that the desired age of girls admitted to the female orphanage of Santa Caterina dei Funari was between nine and twelve years—old enough to be at risk but young enough to be still "uncorrupted."[30] The 1582 statutes of the institution also specified that successful applicants should be "comely, and healthy, not lame, nor squinty-eyed, or with another sort of bad indisposition."[31] Beautiful girls were seen as not only more likely to marry but also more vulnerable to being corrupted.[32] These prescriptions are echoed in the admission requirements of Dutch orphanages; the burgher orphanage in Utrecht, for example, excluded "deformed" children on the grounds that they could not be reintegrated into society.[33] Despite their differing charitable missions and admissions policies, foundling hospitals and orphanages alike sought to present their young wards in images like the Il Poppi altarpiece and the Gorinchem painting as healthy, attractive, and ready to be reassimilated.

## Dressing the Part

While the goal of these institutions was to reintegrate foundlings and orphans back into society, it was also important that the children be clearly identifiable to the public as charitable wards. The inmates of the Gorinchem orphanage, both male and female, were marked in the painting as orphans by their dress, another visual strategy used to fix the public image of parentless children.[34] This is most clearly identifiable in the case of the central girl, who is dressed in a uniform of red split with dark brown. While girls and boys would both wear split colors, the girls in the Gorinchem painting also sport black aprons, another common feature of the dress of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century female foundlings and orphans.

As was the case with the Gorinchem orphans, the colors of Dutch orphanage uniforms were often split vertically along the body; we find this also at the burgher orphanages in Amsterdam (fig. 5) and Utrecht, as well as the Holy Ghost Orphanage in Leiden, among others.[35] The origins of this two-color costume have been identified in the *mi-parti* (particolored or motley) dress of medieval servants in noble households, who would often wear the split heraldic colors of their lord.[36] Much as the *mi-parti* costume conveyed feudal allegiance,

Fig. 5. Joost Jansz. Bilhamer, *Relief with Orphans Surrounding the Dove of the Holy Spirit*, 1581, stone and polychrome, 116.5 × 170.5 cm. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum

the bicolor uniform marked the children explicitly as orphans. This need to make orphan status visually legible is underscored in the 1644 Dutch version of Cesare Ripa's emblem book, *Iconologia*, which prescribes that the emblem of "Obligation" should be a figure dressed in a cloth of two colors, because "orphans are identified in this way in the Netherlands so that, on seeing their clothing, one is aware that they must live by the kindness of others."[37] This rhetoric of obligation is characteristic of Calvinist ideas about charity; no such discourse—visual or otherwise—is found in Italy.

In Dutch cities, orphanage uniforms would often explicitly evoke the city colors; this visual strategy presented the orphans as symbols of good governance and ideal charitable administration.[38] In Leiden, for example, the children in the Holy Ghost Orphanage wore the red and white colors of the city arms.[39] A 1560 ordinance from Nijmegen prescribed that the orphans cared for by the Burgerweeshuis must be dressed in the (black and red) colors of the

city.[40] In the 1643 relief on the facade of the Almoners' Orphanage in Gouda (fig. 6), boy and girl orphans wear green uniforms with orange reinforced armholes, or *bragoens*; this color combination echoed the coat of arms of the city, which appears between the two children.[41]

Orphanage uniforms could also serve to distinguish one type of institutional inmate from another. For example, the most exclusive orphanage in Groningen derived its name, the Red Orphanage (Rode Weeshuis), from the color of the uniforms its orphans wore. In light of the entrance regulations of the Rode Weeshuis, the red color marked the children as the offspring of registered citizens (*poorters*).[42] The less selective orphanages in Groningen were similarly associated with a color: the Green Orphanage (Groene Weeshuis), which was for children excluded from the Red Orphanage, and the Blue Orphanage (Blauwe Weeshuis), established by the deaconry.[43] After 1673, when the Blue and Green Orphanages merged, the orphans of the new institution wore a uniform that combined both colors.[44] Thus, the orphans of Groningen would have been identifiable as such first by the fact that they wore uniforms and then by the different colors which would have generated additional divisions by social status.

Costume was also used to construct identities for foundlings and orphans in Italy, although there is no Italian equivalent of the split-color uniform and its connotations of obligation.[45] Much like their Dutch counterparts, Italian orphanages dressed their female wards in different colors so that their institutional affiliation could be readily apparent when the girls processed through city streets or participated in organized alms gathering.[46] The girls of Santa Maria del Baraccano in Bologna, for example, wore sky-blue dresses.[47] Uniforms may have served to eliminate potential fights between girls over clothes, but they also worked to suppress any outward appearance of individuality and to define the children publicly as charitable wards.[48]

The surviving visual evidence from Italy suggests that the uniforms of foundlings were less colorful than those of orphanages, typically black, gray, or brown. Foundling hospitals made the status of their charges visible instead through the institutional badge, or *segno*, which was typically attached to the chest or arm of the otherwise nondescript uniform. For an example of this use of the *segno*, we can take the painting of the *Madonna degli Innocenti* from the Innocenti hospital (fig. 3): the older children are dressed in black uniforms with the institutional symbol, a swaddled infant, affixed to their chests. The statutes of the Ospedale della Scala in Siena stipulated that foundlings had to wear the insignia of the hospital sewn onto their garments during public functions and whenever they found themselves outside the institution.[49] Similar

Fig. 6. Unidentified artist, *Relief with Orphans and the Gouda Coat of Arms*, 1643, stone and polychrome. Gouda, Almoners Orphanage

types of corporate identifiers graced the garments of early modern hospital workers and confraternity members, among others.[50] While the Innocenti swaddled-infant *segno* made reference to the charitable mission of the hospital, other hospitals instead used symbols that referred to the name of the institution—for example, the ladder (*scala*) of the Ospedale della Scala or the double cross of the Holy Spirit for the Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Rome.[51]

We find similar semiotic strategies at work in the Netherlands. For example, the blue and white uniform of the orphanage in Kampen featured the letters WK for *Weeskynd*, or orphan.[52] Similarly, the children in the poor orphanage in Breda wore an orange N on their sleeves as a symbol of their tie to the house of Nassau.[53] The uniforms of the orphans of the Elisabethweeshuis in Culemborg sported an E (for the Elisabethweeshuis and its founder, Elisabeth van Culemborg), as can be seen in an altarpiece of around 1573 by Jan Deys, now in the Museum Elisabethweeshuis.[54] This insignia echoes the one found on the uniform of the Domus Pietatis foundling hospital in Verona, which featured a P *segno* on the chest.[55]

In addition to wearing the *segno* of the hospital on their clothing, Italian foundlings were also marked more permanently as inmates of the institution: evidence indicates that from the late sixteenth century onward, the bodies of infant foundlings were routinely tattooed with the hospital insignia.[56] For example, the record of the apostolic visit of 1585 to the hospital of Santo Spirito in Rome noted that children abandoned to the hospital were all "marked with the sign of the cross of Santo Spirito on the collar [ankle] of the right foot. This sign is of a blue color that cannot be removed without causing them harm."[57] A later document, dated by Claudio Schiavoni to 1656, describes how Santo Spirito foundlings, before being sent out of the institution to wet-nurse in the countryside, were tattooed on the foot with the cross of the Holy Spirit using a lancet (*lancetta*) and carbon black.[58] The intent of the tattooing was to prevent a wet nurse from fraudulently swapping a dead hospital infant for a living impostor. Similar practices were in place elsewhere, including at the Ospedale della Scala in Siena and the Pietà in Venice.[59] Beyond making institutional affiliation visible in the streets of the city and other public venues, this strategy had the effect of making the body of the foundling identifiable as such for life.

## Making Virginity Visible

A sartorial strategy common to both foundling hospitals and orphanages in Italy was the frequent choice to dress girls in white, the color of chastity; in the Il Poppi painting (fig. 1), for example, the older girls of the Innocenti are all dressed in white. The white dresses of the *nocentine* constructed the bodies beneath as chaste and the institution, in turn, as honorable; this visual emphasis on sexual purity is not found in the presentation of female orphans in the Low Countries. The association between the *nocentine* and chastity was reinforced elsewhere in the women's church (*chiesa delle donne*) of the Innocenti,

Fig. 7. Unidentified artist, *Nuns and* Orfane *of Santi Quattro Coronati Adoring the Four Crowned Martyrs*, ca. 1580, fresco. Rome, Santi Quattro Coronati

where an inventory of 1628 notes the presence of a terra-cotta sculpture of Purity holding a unicorn in her hands.[60] In addition to the white dress, the girls and women in the Il Poppi painting are constructed as obedient and chaste through their body positioning and gestures. While the older girls offer guidance to their younger counterparts, they are themselves able to look to the older matrons for a model of ideal nunlike comportment. Their piety is underscored through their gestures of humility and through their devotion to the Virgin and the Christ Child.

Much like the foundlings in the Il Poppi altarpiece, the girls of the female orphanage of Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome were depicted wearing white dresses in a fresco placed above the entrance door to the church (fig. 7).[61] The fresco is undocumented but can be dated to around 1580 on stylistic grounds, making it roughly contemporary with both the Il Poppi and Gorinchem paintings (figs. 1 and 2).[62] At the left of the fresco kneel the Augustinian nuns of the Quattro Coronati, identifiable by their black wimples and white robes. Two of the women clasp rust-colored rosary beads, and all pray reverently to the saints seated above. At the right are the female orphans, wearing simple white dresses and also holding rosary beads. The fresco constructs an image of the girls and the nuns as parallel groups, imbuing the former with the piety and chastity of the latter. Operating in tandem with the white dresses, the rosaries serve as visual demonstration of the devotion of the girls in the orphanage, communicating their purity of both body and soul.[63]

Another visual strategy for aligning female foundlings and orphans with chaste and well-educated nuns was to depict them reading. At the right of a fresco of 1610 (figs. 8 and 9), painted by Bernardino Poccetti in the girls' refectory of the Ospedale degli Innocenti, Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici appears surrounded by a group of female Innocenti foundlings.[64] They are dressed in gray dresses with aprons and wear apotropaic red coral necklaces. One holds her hands together in prayer, a sign of her piety. Two others are engaged in reading what we can assume are devotional texts, visual evidence of their literacy and devoutness; their proximity to the grand duke, along with the prior of the hospital, Roberto Antinori, provides visual assurance of their patriarchal protection and, by extension, their chastity.[65]

The girls of the orphanage of Santa Barbara in Ferrara were also presented as devout and chaste readers in an altarpiece, dated 1588, formerly in the oratory

Fig. 8. Bernardino Poccetti, *Istoria degli Innocenti*, 1610, fresco. Florence, former girls' refectory, Ospedale degli Innocenti

of the institution (fig. 10).[66] Much like the Il Poppi altarpiece, this painting constructs the Virgin and Child, along with the virgin martyr saints Barbara and Ursula, as divine custodians of the girls of the institution. In this case, the chastity of the girls is made visible not through the color white but instead through their visual presentation as nunlike figures, several with wimples. In addition, the girls of Santa Barbara are shown reading from prayer books, much like their counterparts in the Innocenti. Further visual assurance of the piety and chastity of the girls of Santa Barbara is provided by the hulking mass of Saint Barbara's attribute—the fortress-like tower, a metaphor for her inviolate body. Much like orphanage walls, which were becoming in the later decades of the sixteenth century increasingly cloistered and convent-like, Barbara's tower offers impermeable protection to the *orfane* of Ferrara.

## Marked Bodies in Motion

In both Italy and the Netherlands, religious processions and organized alms-giving provided the primary opportunities for female foundlings and orphans to spend time outside the institution.[67] As such, processions constituted key moments for bodily adornment to do its semiotic work. In the portrait of Hilleke de Roy (fig. 2), for example, the girls of the orphanage are visible in the vignette in the top right, processing in front of the old Gorinchem town hall. The girl orphans wear black aprons over their bicolor uniforms, making it easy to distinguish them from their male counterparts. Aprons were also described as appropriate procession dress for female foundlings in sixteenth-century Italy. An inventory of the Ospedale di Santo Spirito in Rome, conducted in September 1582, describes the garments used by the Santo Spirito girls and includes 168 aprons ("zinali") and thirty-four shoulder veils ("veli da spalle"). Both types of clothing were noted to be for the older girls to wear "for going in procession" ("per andare in processione").[68]

Processions played an important role in the marriages of foundlings and orphans, a preoccupation of Italian custodial institutions throughout the early modern period. In 1519, for example, the Venetian diarist Marin Sanudo witnessed a procession of the newly wed foundling girls of the hospital of Santo Spirito in Rome.[69] Sanudo's description deserves some sustained attention here, as it reveals the power of dress to shape the malleable public identity of female foundlings. The ritual that he witnessed on the Feast of Pentecost was an annual public parade of female wards of Santo Spirito from their old residence in the hospital to their new nuptial homes.[70] The procession moved from the hospital in the Vatican Borgo to the Porta del Popolo, from which the

Fig. 9. Bernardino Poccetti, *Istoria degli Innocenti* (detail of right side), 1610, fresco. Florence, former girls' refectory, Ospedale degli Innocenti

Fig. 10. Giuseppe Mazzuoli ("Il Bastarolo"), *Madonna and Child with Saints and Orphans*, 1588, oil on canvas, 304 × 200 cm. Ferrara, Musei Civici d'Arte Antica

brides would depart to their new homes in the countryside. Over the course of the procession, the foundling brides adopted three distinct identities that were articulated through clothing and other bodily adornments.

Inside the hospital of Santo Spirito, before the procession began, the girls were presumably dressed in the humble, nunlike black gowns of the institution.[71] Next, for the ceremonial walk from the hospital through the Piazza Navona area toward the Porta del Popolo, the new brides were draped in jewels and finery. Sanudo writes:

> [The girls, numbering around thirty, were] clothed in silk and gold, as with gems and pearls, on the honorary steeds of the pope and other mounts among the most honored in Rome, covered in silk, with two footmen for each [maiden], and a maidservant on a mount that went behind them; before the aforementioned brides went fifteen mules with two chests for each, full of their things, covered with very honorable blankets, with the arms of the hospital.[72]

At the culmination of the upper-class cycle of marriage rituals, the bride traditionally traveled to her new husband's home on horseback, dressed in silk decorated with pearls and gems, joined by a cortege of musicians, attendants, and relatives.[73] This patrician event was replicated en masse for the girls of Santo Spirito, despite their status as charitable wards destined for marriage to poor *mezzadri* (sharecroppers) from the *contado* (countryside).

The young girls of Santo Spirito, without parents and the products of a humble institutional upbringing, were transformed by the procession into showpieces for the display of papal magnificence. In the ideological rhetoric of the foundling institution, the brides sumptuously dressed in "silk and gold" became *figlie del papa*, "daughters" of the pope, and members of the "family" of the papal court.[74] Sanudo notes that the girls were transported on the honorary steeds of the pope, while the mules that preceded them bore trousseau chests covered with "very honorable blankets with the arms of the hospital." The placement of the Santo Spirito badge on the blankets covering the trousseau chests served to remind the viewer that the goods these girls took with them came from the hospital of Santo Spirito, an institution eager for alms and bequests.[75] Once these chests were set down in the new home of the newlyweds, the insignia of the hospital that they bore designated a visual link with the charitable foundation and its sphere of influence—as well as offering an institutional guarantee of the girl's *onestà* (chastity).

At the gate of the Popolo, a portal that marked a point of transition between

the city and the countryside, the *zitelle* (nubile girls) of Santo Spirito underwent yet another sartorial transformation. According to Sanudo:

> This pomp goes from the hospital then to the gate of the Popolo a mile away, and there their husbands, who are countryfolk, having returned the gems, pearls, and precious garments and all the other ornaments to the [functionaries] of the hospital, each takes his own bride, with her chest, and she being dressed in the clothes of the countryfolk, he places her on the back of his mare.[76]

The girls, stripped of their costly clothing and jewels, were thus marked as *contadine*. In the liminal space between city and countryside, ownership of and responsibility for the young women was transferred from the pope and the hospital to the new husbands. This shift in status was manifest in the clothing and performed in the urban spaces of the city. While a patrician bride followed her ritual procession to the house of her new husband with an equally elaborate wedding banquet, the pomp ended for the girls of Santo Spirito with the termination of the procession at the city gate.[77] Even Sanudo seems to have responded to this change in the status of the young women from virgin "daughters" of the pope to peasant wives. He salaciously opines that "afterward that evening (according to what some affirm), before arriving home, in the first available, closest, and most secret shadows that they [the couple] find along the way, they consummate marriage."[78] Sanudo's comment suggests that beyond the institutional oversight of the hospital and the papacy and within a radically different extra-urban environment, the *onestà* of the young girls was no longer guaranteed or at issue, except as a passing fantasy about rustic sensuality. The condition of the girls as foundlings enabled this elasticity of clothing as sign; more than other children, foundlings and orphans were defined by their dress—and that definition was not fixed.

## Working Girls

While Italian foundling hospitals and orphanages used visual strategies to highlight the chastity of their female wards, constructing them as virginal brides and pious nuns, Dutch orphanages instead focused on their capacity for domestic work—specifically, caring for children and serving food.[79] Returning to the Gorinchem painting (fig. 2) and the focus on the female orphans of the hospital, we can see that Hilleke de Roy is engaged in combing the hair of the girl. The artist has placed great pictorial emphasis on the comb, which occupies the center of the compositional space. Hilleke is in the process of braiding

Fig. 11. Jan Victors, *Clothing the Orphans*, 1659–1660, oil on canvas, 146 × 221 cm. Amsterdam, Diaconal Orphanage

the girl's hair, as one section has already been woven into a long, slender plait. Hilleke, through her action of hair braiding and her role as substitute mother, makes visually explicit the ideal tutelage offered by her orphanage. In light of the juxtaposition of the foreground scene with the background procession vignette, we can also understand Hilleke's actions as helping the girl to complete her procession uniform by preparing her hair for the bonnet—in other words, she facilitates the process through which the girl *becomes*, in a visual and semiotic sense, an "orphan."

Hair combing was an established visual strategy for depicting maternal care in Dutch genre painting, particularly in the seventeenth century.[80] In addition to connoting maternal care, hair combing was also aligned with purification, an allusion made more explicit in related images of mothers delousing their children's hair.[81] Gerard Ter Borch's *Motherly Cares* (1652–1653), for example, shows an idealized mother combing the hair of her child with a lice comb.[82] In the case of the Gorinchem painting, Hilleke's action is part and parcel of

her role as *binnenmoeder* of the orphans. On the model of the ideal mothers depicted in later genre paintings, Hilleke embodies the solicitous care offered by the Gorinchem institution.

As a visual shorthand for ideal mothering, hair combing could also be used to identify female orphans as suitable future mothers and caregivers.[83] In a painting by Jan Victors from the room of the deaconesses in the Diaconal Orphanage in Amsterdam (fig. 11), for example, we see the children of the institution being dressed by members of the staff assisted by older female orphans.[84] At the right, an older girl combs out the hair of her younger charge. Despite the efforts of the mischievous child behind her, the girl maintains a steely-eyed focus on her task of purifying and preparing the hair of her younger companion. Just behind and to the left of the hair-combing girl, we can identify three other older girls, each engaged in wrangling and dressing a small child. On the left-hand side of the composition, additional young women of the institution help dress the younger children under the guidance of an older woman, likely the matron, who directs the events from a seated position.[85] The clothing of the orphanage, including bright red dresses for public processing, is neatly stacked in a nearby cupboard. This genre painting constructs an idealized view of the inner workings of the orphanage, one that highlights the capacity of the older girls to care for young children. Much like Hilleke de Roy, these girls are also engaged in the identity formation of their younger counterparts, forging their public image as orphans through the act of dressing.

In another painting from the Amsterdam Diaconal Orphanage (fig. 12), also by Victors, several young women are shown performing the related task of serving food.[86] Again under the watchful eyes of a matron, older girls in the foreground of the composition fill and serve pitchers and ladle stew. Younger girls are seated in neat rows along two tables that retreat back into the depths of the compositional space. While Dutch orphanages relied on the labor of both hired external servants and female orphans, the dress and hairstyles of the working girls so closely resemble those of their dining peers that any distinction between the groups is elided.[87] In the background, an older woman reads from a pious text, underscoring the orphanage's commitment to spiritual as well as corporeal sustenance. Much like the idealized representation of hair combing, the visual presentation of the girls serving food highlights their preparation to be future wives, servants, or other caregivers. As was the case with the portrait of Hilleke de Roy, Victors includes girls who look straight out of the compositional space, a visual strategy that forges a direct and powerful connection with the viewer.

Fig. 12. Jan Victors, *Feeding the Orphans*, 1659–1660, oil on canvas, 146 × 221 cm. Amsterdam, Diaconal Orphanage

While the Victors painting (fig. 12) constructs the orphans of the Diaconal Orphanage as hardworking and pious, as well as healthy and attractive, it also presents the inmates of the institution as members of a genial and supportive community—in other words, a social network. The girls have been interrupted at their meal by the presence of the viewer, but the implication is that they will soon return to their chatting and eating. In addition to shaping the bodies and minds of the orphans, the Diaconal Orphanage is thus presented as an entity capable of forging socially capable, and therefore eminently reintegratable, future productive members of Dutch society.

## Picturing Affective Community

Much like the girls of the Diaconal Orphanage in Amsterdam in the Victors paintings, the women and girls of the Innocenti are depicted by Il Poppi (fig. 1) as a mutually supportive and convivial consorority. As the altarpiece was located in the women's church, the audience for the visual performance of identity enacted here was made up of the female wards of the institution. At

left, an older girl dressed in white with blond braided hair kneels to the left of a young girl; the older girl has her right hand placed firmly on the waist of the young girl, and her pose positions her in the role of caretaker to the child. On the right side of the throne, a veiled adult nun instructs another young girl to turn her attention toward the Virgin and Child. Farther to the right, a nubile *nocentina* kneels with her body twisted to face the viewer. Although her body is turned outward, she does not engage the viewer but instead tilts her head up, with her eyes fixed on the Christ Child. She assumes a slightly awkward pose with her arms crossed over her chest. This gesture, as elucidated by Michael Baxandall in his study of Annunciate Virgins, connotes humble prayer.[88] Thus, this girl models ideal pious behavior for her younger counterparts.

Importantly, the Innocenti girls are not represented in schematic rows or undifferentiated groups—a visual strategy that highlights the institutional community at the expense of individual articulation. Instead, the women are particularized and represented as actively engaged in the production of an affective community. This, I would argue, is enabled by the Vasarian *maniera* style of Il Poppi, which privileged variety.[89] Behind the groups at the left and right of the Virgin's throne stand at least ten more women, only a handful of whom are clearly visible in the shadowy recesses of the background. On the right side, just behind the nun, a group of three *nocentine* are absorbed in an intimate conversation, completely unconnected to the rest of the assembled group and seemingly oblivious to the Virgin and Child. Just behind them, hidden in the shadows, is a figure that looks out of the compositional space, directly engaging the viewer. At the left, we find more intriguing and variegated gestures. An older nun, perhaps the prioress, gestures toward herself. Another nubile girl reaches up to caress the infant Christ's right thigh. Additional figures loom in the shadows behind, their attention fixed on the holy figures. Among them is another girl who looks out to the viewer, welcoming the viewer in.

The girls and women of the Innocenti assembled for worship in front of the altarpiece would have seen a version of themselves in the painting: praying, teaching, learning, and even chatting or gossiping. This representation of institutionalized women places primary emphasis on the visualization of affective relationships—the devotional affection manifested between the girls and the Virgin and Child and the gestures of care and intimacy between the various *nocentine* depicted. The young girls, teenagers, nuns, and older women are represented as a cohesive, mutually supportive, and convivial community. Like the depicted girls and women, the actual *nocentine* would have been assembled in prayer before an image of the Virgin and Child. The altar positioned beneath

the celestial group in the painting would have found its echo in the physical altar sited below the altarpiece. Invited by the shadowy faces and the gestures of the girls who reach for the Christ Child, viewers could have unobtrusively joined their painted counterparts in worship and socializing. The painting presented its audience with a convent-like community of women, united in their veneration of the Virgin and Child and their shared participation in the multigenerational sorority of the *spedale delle donne*.

## Conclusion

What I have hoped to show with this brief survey of examples from central Italy and the northern Netherlands is that despite the myriad differences between the two regions, they shared a commitment to institutional charity toward children and an understanding of the semiotic power of clothing and other visual strategies. Children raised by their parents and extended families, regardless of class, had a social status that was defined and maintained by a complex network of signifiers: family name and reputation, religion, residence, and level of education, among others. For foundlings and orphans, however, clothing and other visual signifiers, working in tandem with institutional reputation, did much of this semiotic work. Foundlings could be anyone and from anywhere. Orphans were more narrowly defined, but the burden was still on the orphanage—and its public image—to communicate and sustain that status.

In the Italian context, these pressures were particularly acute in the case of female foundlings and orphans, due to the powerful link between honor and female chastity. More than civic allegiance or orphan status, it is purity that dominates in Italian strategies for presenting female charitable wards. In the Netherlands, in contrast, female orphans were constructed as hardworking future servants, workers, and housewives, able to contribute economically to society and thus to repay the "obligation" with which all Dutch orphans were burdened. Through the power of clothing and other visual strategies to enable recognition and identification, the unsettled social identities of female foundlings and orphans could be created, nuanced, and reinforced.

## Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's.

**1.** In 1977, Luciano Bellosi (*Il museo*, 240) was the first to identify the painting as the "Incoronazione di Maria" of Il Poppi described in 1584 by Raffaello Borghini in his *Il riposo* as being "nello spedale degli Innocenti, dove stanno le donne" (Borghini, *Il riposo,* 641). In her monograph on Il Poppi, Alessandra Giovannetti connected the painting to records of payments to the painter for a painting "della chiesa delle nostre donne" (Giovannetti, *Francesco Morandini*, 75). On the painting, see also Cavazzini, "Dipinti e sculture," 128.

**2.** Little has been written about this painting; the artist has not been identified. See Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 104, 159–161; Bedaux, "Cat. 9"; Langmuir, *Imagining Childhood*, 54–55.

**3.** The literature on the Ospedale degli Innocenti, which accepted its first foundling in 1445, is vast. See, among others, Gavitt, *Charity and Children*; Takahashi, *Il rinascimento*.

**4.** On the development of the "dedicated" foundling hospital as a specific institutional type, see Pullan, *Orphans and Foundlings*; Hunecke, "L'invenzione."

**5.** See Presciutti, *Visual Cultures*.

**6.** On the development of orphanages in sixteenth-century Italy, see Terpstra, *Abandoned Children*.

**7.** To avoid confusion, I will use the term "female orphanage" rather than "conservatory" in this chapter.

**8.** On these shifts, see Fubini Leuzzi, "Dell'allogare"; Gavitt, *Gender, Honor, and Charity*.

**9.** Terpstra, *Abandoned Children*, 86.

**10.** Bedaux, "Cat. 9," 104.

**11.** Ibid.

**12.** On fostering systems, see Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 47–49.

**13.** For an overview of these developments, see Dankers, "Van weeshuis"; Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 37–38, 58–85, 120–133; McCants, *Civic Charity*, 10–21; Van der Vlis and Rinsema, *Weeshuizen*.

**14.** During the fifteenth and most of the sixteenth century, the "northern Netherlands" refers to the region that became, after 1581, the Dutch Republic. Many orphanages were established in the Low Countries before the Dutch Revolt (1568–1585), but the primary focus here is the period after the region declared independence.

**15.** Orphan boys and girls would occupy separate wings of the same institution: McCants, *Civic Charity*, 84; Bosman, "Openbaar en particulier," 144; Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1006.

**16.** See, for example, the Florentine institutions discussed in Terpstra, "Mothers, Sisters, and Daughters."

**17.** Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," 54; Terpstra, *Abandoned Children*, 82; Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity*, 66.

**18.** Terpstra, *Cultures of Charity*, 65–66.

**19.** See Gavitt, *Gender, Honor, and Charity*, 117.

**20.** In the Netherlands, girls would only leave the orphanage to attend church; boys, in contrast, worked regularly outside the institution (McCants, *Civic Charity*, 87). Much the same was true for Italy, with restrictions on girls becoming even more stringent in the post-Tridentine period.

**21.** On Italy, see Pullan, "Support and Redeem"; for the Netherlands, see Boele, *Leden van één lichaam*.

**22.** McCants, *Civic Charity*, 82–84. At the Burgerweeshuis in Amsterdam, there was no involvement of the regents in the marriage arrangements of female orphans (McCants, *Civic Charity*, 83). On the importance of dowering in Italy, see Fubini Leuzzi, "*Condurre a onore*." For dowering practices at the female orphanage of Santa Maria del Baraccano in Bologna, see Ciammitti, "Quanto costa."

**23.** On the iconography of the Virgin of Mercy, see, most recently, Brown, *Mary of Mercy*. On the deployment of the type in foundling hospitals, see Presciutti, *Visual Cultures,* 23–32.

**24.** On this painting, see Pons, "Madonna degli Innocenti," 96–97; Presciutti, *Visual Cultures*, 25–28.

**25.** On the responsibilities of a *binnenmoeder*, see Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 46.

**26.** Bedaux, "Cat. 9," 104.

**27.** The object the girl holds in her hand, which appears to be a folded white cloth, may also have marked her as an orphan; an orphan girl in the relief from the Amsterdam Burgerweeshuis facade (fig. 5) holds a similar cloth. This may be a handkerchief, which had associations with both cleanliness and the textile work that produced it (Mirabella, "Embellishing Herself").

**28.** The administrative structure of Dutch orphanages was modeled on the family, with a "father"

(*binnenvader*) and "mother" (*binnenmoeder*). On this, see Wiesner, "Spinning Out Capital," 241; Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 44. Italian foundling hospitals like the Innocenti also used familial language to characterize the relationships between the staff and the residential population (Gavitt, *Charity and Children*, 143–144).

**29.** Archivio di Stato di Siena, Ospedale 183 (Ricordi e Memori), fol. 89r. The document is also cited in Martellucci, "I bambini di nessuno," 45. For similar findings in San Gimignano, see Sandri, *L'Ospedale,* 134–135.

**30.** Fanucci, *Trattato*, 166: "E vero che non si prendeno prima delli nove anni della loro età, per non parer di questa età pericolose, ne sopra i dodici anni, sospettandosi che sieno state corrotte."

**31.** Quoted in Lazar, "The First Jesuit Confraternities," 143n52: "vistose, e sane, non zoppe, no guercie, o altra sorte d'indisposizioni cattive." The female orphanage of Santa Eufemia, also in Rome, had similar restrictions (Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," 54). For Florence's Santa Caterina, see Terpstra, "In Loco Parentis," 123.

**32.** On this issue, see Ciammitti, "Quanto costa," 470; Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," 54; Terpstra, *Abandoned Children*, 77.

**33.** McCants, *Civic Charity*, 29.

**34.** Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 159. See also McCants, "A Home Fit for Children," 226.

**35.** Utrecht orphans wore blue and white split uniforms; the Leiden uniforms were also bicolor, with one red sleeve and one white one. See Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 151, 153. On the Amsterdam burgher orphanage, see Meischke, *Amsterdam Burgerweeshuis*; McCants, *Civic Charity*. The relief, now installed in the Amsterdam Museum, was originally on the front of one of the houses flanking the entrance to the alley leading to the former orphanage from Kalverstraat, where it would have been highly visible (Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1002).

**36.** Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 152.

**37.** Ripa, *Iconologia*, 524. For the English translation, see Bedaux, "Cat. 9," 104. See also Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 155. On the perpetual indebtedness of orphans, see also Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1008.

**38.** On this phenomenon, see Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 151–153; Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1004–1005, 1007. The city colors of Gorinchem were red and white, not red and brown, so the orphanage uniforms in this case did not align. However, brown may have replaced white because the latter became dirty too quickly, a situation that befell the orphanages of Groningen and Leeuwarden (Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 153).

**39.** On the Holy Ghost Orphanage in Leiden, see Ligtenberg, *De armezorg,* 157–207; Van der Vlis and Rinsema, *Weeshuizen,* 242–243; Ladan, *Gezondheidszorg in Leiden,* 93–95.

**40.** Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 151–152. A similar stipulation was made by the founding document of the Burgerweeshuis in Sneek.

**41.** The *bragoens*, another common feature of Dutch orphanage uniforms, were a Spanish import, a holdover from the time of Spanish control of the Low Countries. They marked the seam where the sleeves and the vest met and could be more or less prominent. On this, see Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 153. Gouda also had a more exclusive burgher orphanage (the Holy Ghost Orphanage); the Almoners' Orphanage, for those excluded from the Holy Ghost Orphanage, was established in 1599 right next door (Van Dolder–de Wit et al., "Arm van goed," 378–384). On the facade relief, see Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1004. The polychrome has been recently restored.

**42.** Van Asperen, "The Gates of Charity," 1003. On the charitable mission of the Rode Weeshuis, see Buursma, *Dese bekommerlijke tijden*, 146–147. On the distinction between the children of *poorters* and others, see McCants, *Civic Charity*, 22–23, 27–28.

**43.** On these developments, see Buursma, *Dese bekommerlijke tijden*, 148–154.

**44.** Ibid., 155.

**45.** On the importance of dress as a way of identifying different categories and classes of people in Renaissance Italy, see Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," especially 61–62; Welch, "New, Old, and Second-Hand Culture," 103; Hughes, "Distinguishing Signs."

**46.** Terpstra, *Abandoned Children*, 107–110.

**47.** Also in Bologna, the inmates of the female orphanage of Santa Croce had blue uniforms. In Florence,

the girls of the Pietà wore white, and after 1709, those at the Ceppo wore black. See ibid., 109–110.

**48.** Ibid., 107.

**49.** "dal dì che saranno gittati ennanzi enfine a tanto che sanno pervenuti a tempo di xiiij anni e più . . . portino e portare deggano ne' loro vestimenti da la parte dinnanzi nel petto, sì che pubricamente si vega, el segno del detto Spedale, cioè la scala gialla senza la croce" (Banchi, *Statuti volgari*, 106n3). See also Martellucci, "I bambini di nessuno," 22.

**50.** On institutional insignia, with specific reference to confraternities, see Lincoln and Rihouet, "Brands of Piety."

**51.** On the proliferation of these symbols in the hospital context, see Presciutti, *Visual Cultures*, 74–77.

**52.** Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes,* 154. On the Holy Name of Jesus Orphanage in Kampen, see Kolman, "De bouwgeschiedenis," 227–251; Van der Vlis and Rinsema, *Weeshuizen*, 239–240.

**53.** Groenveld et al., *Wezen en boefjes*, 154.

**54.** The founder of the Elisabethweeshuis, Elisabeth van Culemborg, is depicted in prayer on the interior right wing of the altarpiece predella, accompanied by a group of female orphans. The altarpiece, now in the collection of the Museum Elisabethweeshuis, was originally installed in the church of Saint Barbara in Culemborg. On the Elisabethweeshuis, see Bosman, *Het weeshuis*.

**55.** Varanini, "Per la storia," 127.

**56.** For the related practice of the pilgrim tattoo, see Dauge-Roth, *Signing the Body*, 171–215.

**57.** "Pueri expositi . . . Signantur omnes signo crucis s[anc]ti sp[irit]us super collu[m] dexteri pedis quod est cerulei coloris nec absque eorum detrim[en]to de[s]teri potest" (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, CVL 5521, fol. 39v). I have used Luc Renaut's translation here. I am very grateful to Dr. Renaut for discussing this document with me. I would also like to thank Matt Lodder for sharing his knowledge of early modern tattooing.

**58.** "Prima che si consegni la Creatura alla Balia, o doppo che sarà consegnata, si chiama uno degli offitiali dell'Ospedale, e si fà segnare nel piede con una lancetta nella forma solita . . . [Schiavoni notes the description of the incision of the cross of Santo Spirito with carbon black] . . . e detto questo si fà, acciò che se detta creatura morisse detta Balia non possa supporne un'altra in luogo di quella, e doppo haverli mutati li fasciatori la consegna alla balia sudetta assieme con detta polizza" (quoted in Schiavoni, "Il problema," 93–95, 107n122).

**59.** At the end of the seventeenth century at the Ospedale della Scala in Siena, the foundlings were tattooed with the "lancetta" and "nerofumo" (Balestracci and Piccinni, "L'ospedale e la città," 35). The Pietà in Venice used a "ferro focoso," a practice that continued until 1783 (Grandi, "P come pietà," 245).

**60.** "Una statua di terra della Purita con un'Alicorno in braccio" (AOIF 6250 [Filza d'Archivio 54], fol. 384r).

**61.** On the female orphanage of Santi Quattro Coronati, see, most recently, Lirosi, "Monache e assistenza."

**62.** Maria Giulia Barberini (*I Santi Quattro Coronati*, 30) dates the fresco to the very end of the sixteenth century. I think it more likely dates from ca. 1580, as there are strong visual connections between the fresco and others executed during the pontificate of Gregory XIII, for example, the frescoes in nearby Santo Stefano Rotondo.

**63.** Camillo Fanucci noted that the girls of Santa Caterina dei Funari, another female orphanage in Rome, were also given a white dress to wear, as well as whatever clothing they brought from their relatives: "una veste bianca per ciascuna" (Fanucci, *Trattato*, 167). They wore these dresses in processions (Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," 58). At the female orphanage of Santa Eufemia in Rome, older girls who remained in the house (rather than marry or take vows) wore a humble gray uniform; the color signaled their status as between the white of a virginal bride and the black of a widow (Vasaio, "Il tessuto della virtù," 55).

**64.** On this fresco, see Cavazzini, "Dipinti e sculture," 136–137; Langmuir, *Imagining Childhood*, 54; Presciutti, "*Carità e Potere*."

**65.** On the relationship between female chastity and early modern conceptions of paternal honor, with reference to charitable dowering, see Fubini Leuzzi, "*Condurre a onore*," 193–207.

**66.** On this altarpiece, see "Cat. 237" in *Arte e pietà*, 257–258.

**67.** On processions, see, most recently, Rihouet, *Art Moves*.

**68.** They were described as being stored in the nuns' common room (*tinello*). See Archivio di Stato di Roma, Ospedale di Santo Spirito 29, fol. 42r. The hospital of Santo Spirito enacted processions three times

a year: the second Sunday after Epiphany, Saint Mark's Day (April 25), and the first Sunday after Pentecost. On the processions, which were initiated by Sixtus IV in 1478, see Howe, "Appropriating Space," 248–250.

**69.** Sanudo, *I diarii,* 468–469.

**70.** It is not clear from Sanudo's description whether the route taken by the procession he witnessed (from the hospital to the Porta del Popolo) was repeated every year. I have found no other reference to a procession to the Porta del Popolo, although the Pentecost procession was designated as the annual celebration of the marriages of the *zitelle* (nubile girls).

**71.** They are represented thus attired in the ca. 1480 frescoes in the Corsia Sistina, the main ward of the hospital. See Presciutti, *Visual Cultures*, 138.

**72.** "Quest'anno el Pontefice ha voluto farsi honore; et hale mandate molto più solenemente de l'usato, vestite di seda et d'oro, come di gemme et perle, sopra le chinee dil Papa et altre cavalcature de le più honorate di Roma, che è coperte di seda, cum do stafieri per una, et una fantesca sopra una cavalcatura che li andava drieto; avanti le quale spose andavano 15 muli cum do forzieri per uno, pieni de le robe loro, coperti di honoratissime coperte, con l'arme di l'hospitale" (Sanudo, *I diarii,* 468–469).

**73.** Watson, "Virtù and Voluptas," 8. See also Klapisch-Zuber, "Zacharias," 186–187.

**74.** On the status of the girls as *figlie del papa*, see Dominici, "Un'istituzione assistenziale," 24–26.

**75.** Similarly, in 1528, a female foundling of the Bastardini in Bologna, Maria, was sent out from the hospital to her new husband with "uno paio de forceri depincti con la insigna del decto spedale" (Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Ospedale degli Esposti, Serie III, 1 [Giornale 1524–1531], fol. 70r).

**76.** "Questa pompa se ne va da l'hospedale poi a la porta dil Popolo distante per uno miglio, et ivi li mariti loro, che sono contadini, lassate le gemme, perle, veste preciose et tutti altri ornamenti a quelli de l'hospedale, pigliano le spose ciascuno la sua con el suo forzerio, et vestita di pani contadineschi, se la pone sopra la groppa de la sua cavala" (Sanudo, *I diarii*, 469).

**77.** On the patrician wedding banquet, see Watson, "Virtù and Voluptas," 8.

**78.** "et indi quella sera (per quello afermano alguni), prima che giungino a casa, ne le più vicine ombre et più riposte che trovano in via consumano matrimonio" (Sanudo, *I diarii*, 469).

**79.** On the importance of job training for female orphans, see McCants, *Civic Charity*, 82–83.

**80.** Dekker, "A Republic of Educators," 164.

**81.** Ibid.; Durantini, *The Child*, 29; Brown, *Niet ledighs*, 143–147. On delousing, see also Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 395.

**82.** The painting is now in the Mauritshuis (The Hague). See also Caspar Netscher's *Maternal Care* (1669, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).

**83.** In 1796, the female regents of the Holy Ghost Orphanage in Leiden defended their right to educate orphan girls, arguing that by "educating them well in all domestic matters [they ensured that the girls] would become useful householders and good mothers" (Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 54).

**84.** The Diaconieweeshuis was founded in 1657 and was open to orphans who were Reformed but were not children of *poorters*. On the Victors painting, see Muller, *Charity*, 89; Peacock, *Heroines, Harpies and Housewives*, 405–406. The female staff of Dutch orphanages was made up of both women hired from outside (including matrons, maids, and other servants) and orphans. See Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 46, 50–51. In Utrecht, for example, five orphan girls assisted the *binnenmoeder* with washing and cleaning (Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 50).

**85.** Orphanages would hire women past childbearing age to supervise the internal activities. See Schmidt, "Managing a Large Household," 45.

**86.** At the Burgerweeshuis in Amsterdam, girls worked from ages ten to sixteen in the textile workshops, becoming skilled in sewing and knitting, before shifting, from ages sixteen to eighteen, to "household service": preparing meals, cleaning, and taking care of younger girls (McCants, *Civic Charity*, 84). For sources on the painting, see note 84 above.

**87.** Female orphans did not work in the boys' wing of the orphanage, making it more likely that the depicted serving girls are also meant to be understood as orphans.

**88.** Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 51, 55. Baxandall cites the example of Fra Angelico's fresco of the *Annunciation* from the Convent of San Marco in Florence, in which the Virgin assumes a similar cross-armed pose.

**89.** See, for comparison, Giorgio Vasari's similar *Madonna del Rosario* (1569) from Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

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# LOST AND FOUND

## Locating Foundlings in the Early Modern World

*edited by*
Nicholas Terpstra

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