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**CAA – ATSAH AFFILIATED SOCIETY – CONFERENCE**  
**Chicago– February 14-17, 2024**

**Title:** Aspects of Visual and Aural Communication in Italian Devotion

Organizer: **Katherine Powers**, California State University, Fullerton

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**Society:** Association for Textual Scholarship in Art History

**Chair:** Liana De Girolami Cheney, President of ATSAH

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- 1. Presentation:** Dominican Thought and Liturgy as Narrative Design in the Cathedral of Orvieto

Presenter: **Sarah Edith James**

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**Abstract Text:**

Scholars have long acknowledged the cohesiveness of each fresco program in the three chapels in the Orvieto Cathedral. However, the programs also complement each other in previously unnoticed ways. Together, without significant overlap, not only do they acknowledge the feasts and doctrinal concerns of greatest importance to Orvietans, but also, they honor all of the major feasts of the entire liturgical year. Moreover, the iconography affirms that in art, history subjects offer more than narrative; they also present a visual form of knowledge. Like a theological metaphor or a multi-layered medieval sermon, each directs its message toward a broad audience, yet at the same time is site-specific and erudite. Such unified iconography likely was inspired by the little-recognized overall, comprehensive plan that Pope Nicholas IV initiated for the cathedral even before he even laid the cornerstone. Successors in Orvieto, probably guided by local theological scholars, primarily Dominicans, appear to have understood his intention, and over the course of a century and a half, carried it forward through a shared institutional memory.

**Bio:** Sara James is an independent scholar and professor emerita of art history at Mary Baldwin University who considers Orvieto her second home. She holds a PhD. from the University of Virginia and is art history faculty at Beverley Street Studio School. She is the author of *Signorelli and Fra Angelico at Orvieto* (2003), *Art in England from the Saxons through the Tudors* (2016), several articles on the frescoes of the life of the Virgin at Orvieto, and currently has a manuscript

underway for a book entitled *Representing the Life of The Virgin at the Orvieto Cathedral: Art, Liturgy, and Religious Thought in the Late Middle Ages*.

**2. Presentation:** Sensory Meaning in Devotions within Cinquecento Dominican circles  
Presenter: **Katherine Powers**, California State University, Fullerton  
[kpowers@fullerton.edu](mailto:kpowers@fullerton.edu)

**Abstract Text:**

Late Medieval and early modern religious practices were sensory experiences. Promoted by the church, the bodily senses were integral to liturgical services and community and private worship, including devotions intended for ascending to the ecstatic, mystical state of visio Dei. The senses both governed and were governed by the devotional episode, and the worshipper's effort in the devotional process was vital for the sensory development. This paper will explore Dominican attitudes on senses in devotions. Sources include writings on theology, philosophy, and the arts by late cinquecento Dominican Fra Serafino Razzi and his influences—Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, among others.

Bio: Katherine Powers, PhD, Professor of Musicology at California State University, Fullerton, earned her Ph.D. in musicology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, supported by fellowships from the Fulbright Commission, the Kriebel Delmas Foundation for Venetian Studies, the Royal Swedish Academy, and the University of California Doctoral Humanities Fellowship. Powers' research areas include music iconography, the Florentine lauda and the function of music within devotional practice, and women's history, for which she has completed two books (including AR Edition), and numerous articles (including for the Galpin Society Journal, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, *International Journal for Music and Art* (for which she was also associate editor from 2004-2007) and for several essay collections. From 2009 to 2018, she served as CSU Fullerton's Director of the university-wide Office of Graduate Studies; from 2018 to 2020 she was the Director of the CSU Fullerton School of Music.

**3. Presentation:** Andrea Mantegna and Devotional Meditation: Interpreting the Man of Sorrows with Two Angels (Copenhagen)  
Presenter: **Brian D. Steele**, Texas Tech University - College of Visual and Performing Arts  
[brian.steele@ttu.edu](mailto:brian.steele@ttu.edu)

**Abstract Text:**

Although Andrea Mantegna's *Man of Sorrows with Two Angels* (c. 1490-1500) has been characterized as an 'Iconoclastic Andachtsbild,' I concentrate on its potential reception within devotional meditations of its intended patron, most likely a member of the prominent Valenti family in Mantua. Mantegna exploited implications of the *Cristo passo* type, in which the dead Christ either might be supported by mourners or might stand or sit alone, inexplicably erect as though in a state of suspended animation: his Christ, seated as though enthroned on the edge of a sarcophagus that implies an altar and extending his wounded hands toward a viewer, thus can be seen to exist in a state between death and the uncompleted process of Resurrection. In combination with myriad references to stony imagery, Mantegna's Christ evokes the notion of the scriptural *lapis angularis* interpreted in well-known exegeses by Augustine, Bede, and others as an architectural corner-stone, key-stone, or coping-stone. As such, it intimated Christ both as Resurrected Redeemer and as Living Stone and head of the spiritual Church, in contrast to the vignette in the painting's background of stonecutters laboring at production of physical material intended simply for a terrestrial monument.

**Bio:** Brian D. Steele, PhD University of Iowa, with specialization in Venetian Painting of the Renaissance, is emeritus professor at the School of Art at Texas Tech University. His research focuses on sixteenth-century Venice: recent investigation of works by Giovanni Bellini, Titian, and Paolo Veronese engages issues of iconography, site, function, and viewer reception. He has presented papers at meetings of the Renaissance Society of America, the Sixteenth Century Studies and Conference, and the South-Central Renaissance Conference, and he has authored essays in such venues as *Studies in Iconography*, the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, and *Source: Notes in the History of Art*. Recent publications include 'Clarissa Strozzi: Titian's Portrait of the Bride as Young Girl', in *The Early Modern Child in Art and History* (2015); 'The Politics of Representation: Paolo Veronese, Benedetto da Mantova, the Wedding at Cana for S. Giorgio Maggiore', *Iconocrazia* 10 (2016); and 'Force Constrained: Hercules in 2 Sixteenth Century Venice', *Iconocrazia* 13 (2018). A project forthcoming in *Iconocrazia* is 'Open Secrets: Allah's Presence in Mantegna's S. Zeno Altarpiece.'