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Medieval Christian Religion and Art

Edited by
María Elvira Mocholí Martínez

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Medieval Christian Religion and Art

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Editor

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Contents

About the Editor . . . . **vii**

María Elvira Mocholí Martínez
Medieval Christian Religion and Art
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2024**, *15*, 298, doi:10.3390/rel15030298 . . . . **1**

María Ángeles Martí Bonafé
Visual Traditions in the Formation of the Iconographic Types of the Investiture and Triumph of Patriarch Joseph
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2024**, *15*, 86, doi:10.3390/rel15010086 . . . . **3**

Sergi Doménech García
The Woman and the Dragon—The Formation of the Image of the *Mulier Amicta Sole* in the Revelation of St. John in Western Medieval Art
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2023**, *14*, 18, doi:10.3390/rel14010018 . . . . **18**

María Montesinos Castañeda
Chastity in Temperance's Images
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2023**, *14*, 1409, doi:10.3390/rel14111409 . . . . **47**

Elena Monzón Pertejo and Victoria Bernad López
The Demons of Judas and Mary Magdalene in Medieval Art
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2022**, *13*, 1048, doi:10.3390/rel13111048 . . . . **61**

José María Salvador-González
The Iconographic Type of the Coronation of the Virgin in the Renaissance Italian Painting in the Light of the Medieval Theology
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2022**, *13*, 1145, doi:10.3390/rel13121145 . . . . **89**

Denise Fallena
Between Scriptura et Pictura: Meditation on the Domus Dei and the Devotion of the Holy House of Mary
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2024**, *15*, 183, doi:10.3390/rel15020183 . . . . **117**

Óscar Calvé Mascarell
Vincent Ferrer's Vision: Oral Traditions, Texts and Imagery
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2022**, *13*, 940, doi:10.3390/rel13100940 . . . . **137**

Lluis Ramón i Ferrer
The Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret Altarpiece from the Cathedral of València
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2023**, *14*, 77, doi:10.3390/rel14010077 . . . . **164**

Montiel Seguí
Virgin Mary as the "Gate of Heaven" with Angelic Musicians in the Doorway of the Apostles at the Cathedral of Valencia
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2022**, *13*, 1098, doi:10.3390/rel13111098 . . . . **179**

Cecilia Mazzocchio
Civic Pride and Political Devotion: The Relics of Thomas Becket in Siena
Reprinted from: *Religions* **2022**, *13*, 1010, doi:10.3390/rel13111010 . . . . **202**

About the Editor

María Elvira Mocholí Martínez

The editor is a Professor of Art History at the University of València and earned a PhD in Art History, with international mention (Universitat de València, 2017). She is a secretary of the journal *Imago Revista de Emblemática y Cultura Visual*, published by the Spanish Emblematic Society, of which she is a member. Her research has focused on the study of medieval images and all of their aspects, paying special attention to the sculptural Marian imagery of the ancient kingdom of Valencia. At present, she is the main researcher on a project about the conceptual iconography of Mary.

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Editorial

Medieval Christian Religion and Art

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The Middle Ages was the period in which most of the iconographic types of the Christian tradition were formed and solidified. Although it is not the only contribution of this issue, some of its ten articles have studied the genesis as well as the continuity and variation of various iconographic types, both Old and New Testament, and, in some cases, extrabiblical types. The first case is represented in the article by María Ángeles Martí Bonafé, who studies the creation of two iconographic types: Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot, according to the iconic criteria for the representation of political power, contemporary to the configuration of both iconographic types. Just as Joseph—Jacob's beloved son—was considered a prefiguration of Christ, the Woman of the Apocalypse will end up being a prefiguration of the Church and of Mary, according to what is known as typological symbolism in the interpretation of biblical images. This relationship closes the article by Sergi Doménech García, the main purpose of which is the study of the visual tradition of the Woman Clothed with the Sun from chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. The author fills a void in the iconographic study of the Woman of the Apocalypse, better known from the Modern Age for its relationship with other iconographic types of Mary.

Despite their abundance, images of the virtues have also received little attention from art historians, and their systematization was very scarce until it was addressed by María Montesinos Castañeda, one of the main specialists in the iconographic typology of the cardinal virtues. Specifically, in this issue, the author studies in detail the allegorical representation of theoretical matters related to the virtue of Temperance. The research of Elena Monzón Pertejo and Victoria Bernad López regarding the demonic possession of Judas and Mary Magdalene is also innovative. To the few studies of each of them, the authors provide a comparative analysis of both cases from a cultural perspective, comparing images with texts. José María Salvador-González does the same when studying the comments of some Church Fathers and medieval theologians and hymnographers to deepen the interpretation of the iconographic type of the Coronation of Mary in Italy during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modernity.

To study the continuity and variation of those iconographic types, the authors have carried out interdisciplinary research, treating medieval images of the Christian tradition as cultural history. This research has taken shape in a genuine inter-relationship between disciplines for the study of the image, such as the connection of art with theology or philosophy—and even sermons, as in the article by Oscar Calvé Mascarell. Thus, authors such as Montesinos, Monzón and Bernad, Salvador-González, Denise Fallena, Lluís Ramón i Ferrer and Montiel Seguí propose an approach that addresses both the meaning of an image and its cultural function in different contexts. The importance of context has determined the relevance of the miniature, as an object of study, in the articles by Fallena, Martí, Doménech and Monzón and Bernad, due to the librarian context (biblical, liturgical or devotional) in which they are inserted. The miniature, which is often relegated in academic circles, such as the so-called applied arts, has emerged as fundamental for the historical study of numerous iconographic types of the Christian tradition. In this issue, the miniature recovers its cultural importance among pictorial manifestations. In the same way, other artistic disciplines have acquired prominence in research, such as the goldsmith in the articles by Cecilia Mazzocchio—more specifically, the reliquaries—and Fallena, overcoming the traditional hierarchy of the arts, or music in the article by Seguí.

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The late medieval periodization of many of the articles in this Special Issue involves the considerable prominence of images of Mary, which have been studied from various points of view: Fallena and Seguí have studied them in relation to two Marian symbols, *Domus Dei* and *Porta Coeli*, respectively; Salvador-González addresses the imagery of the *Regina Coeli*, while Doménech ends his study with the exegesis of the *Mulier amicta sole* as mother of God. Finally, Ramon interprets, in a Marian sense, an altarpiece dedicated to the saints Dionysius and Margaret. Also, Calvé and Mazzocchio have dedicated suggestive studies to the imagery and devotion of two saints in the Italian context: Saint Vincent Ferrer and Saint Thomas Becket.

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Article

Visual Traditions in the Formation of the Iconographic Types of the Investiture and Triumph of Patriarch Joseph

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Abstract: The story of the patriarch Joseph is a very recurring theme in medieval visual artistic Christian tradition. Joseph, Jacob's beloved son, is a prefiguration of Christ. The story in Genesis 41, 37–44 fosters the creation of two iconographic types: Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot. The narrative places patriarch Joseph in the court of the Pharaoh of Egypt. However, Christian visuality was created according to the iconic criteria for the representation of political power, contemporary to the configuration of both iconographic types. The aim of this paper is to study the visual mechanisms used in the iconic configuration of the iconographic types of Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot, when the monarch bestows upon Joseph the privilege of his trust. The iconographic analysis of some early and medieval examples of the artistic visuality of Joseph's story, in Eastern and Western traditions, confirms that they refer back to late ancient and medieval Byzantine tradition. Likewise, it was detected that the resources used in the visual configuration of both iconographic types are linked to the conventionalised mechanisms of the symbolic construction of power.

Keywords: the patriarch Joseph; Christian iconography; middle ages; investiture; triumph; visual configuration

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1. Introduction

The Book of Genesis' biblical account devotes twelve chapters to the patriarch Joseph's story. The narrative starts the moment his father, patriarch Jacob, settles in the land of Canaan with all his family. The significance of Joseph's story, apparent in the Old Testament, is maintained in the exegesis of the Church Fathers with many interpretations that link him typologically with Christ. This importance is conveyed in both Eastern and Western visual traditions by means of illustrated manuscripts, embroidered textiles, ivory boxes, and the iconic programs of basilicas and churches, represented in stained glass windows and mosaics and sculptural and pictorial manifestations. In many instances, the visuality is constructed as a cycle of images involving several iconographic types, the selection of which is conditioned by the visual tradition and content of the iconic account in its specific context[1].

Joseph is the beloved son of the patriarch Jacob in his old age and his wife Rachel. The biblical account suggests, from the outset, that Joseph does not enjoy the love and affection of his older siblings, the children of Bilha and Zilpa, who were Lia and Rachel's slaves[2]. Joseph's hurdles and conflicts with his siblings lead him to suffer a conspiracy against his life. As a result, he will be thrown into a waterless well, sold first to a slave-masters' caravan and later to Potiphar, a high magistrate of the Egyptian Pharaoh's court. Although Joseph's master trusted him, he would eventually be imprisoned after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife. In prison, he meets the Pharaoh's baker and cupbearer, both incarcerated for having offended the Pharaoh. As fellow inmates, they will share their oneiric visions with Joseph. His ability to interpret the cupbearer's and baker's dreams will lead to him being summoned by the monarch to listen to the account of the visions the Pharaoh had during the night. Joseph, protected by God, explains to the monarch that his visions are part

of a single dream: Egypt will experience seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. Faced with such an omen, the monarch asks Joseph for advice on how to face this circumstance. Patriarch Joseph replies that he must name a righteous person who should be able to face the nation's challenges. The Pharaoh understood that God had favoured Joseph and decided to proclaim him governor of Egypt (Gn 41, 37–44). This designation marks the start of the investiture ceremony, which includes the granting of the elements that identify royal power: the ring, the golden chain, and linen robes. The monarch also yields his second chariot to Joseph. This is a significant act that marks the beginning of the public expression of Joseph's power as he traverses all of the country's barns.

This research focuses on the study of the two iconographic types[3]. The iconographic analysis delves into the study of examples originating from the first depictions that echo the late-antique representations of power and triumphal entrances, paying special attention to the cultural context of medieval European courts.[4]

The study of the iconographic types of Joseph's story allowed us to confirm that the presence of visual elements linked to ancient Egyptian culture did not appear on illustrated bibles until the beginning of the 19th century[5]. *Bibel in bildern* (1852–1860) by romantic artist Julius Schnorr von Carosfeld and *La Sainte Bible illustrée par Gustave Doré* (1868) are clear examples of the presence, in visuality, of architectonic, pictorial, and sculptural elements as well as hieroglyphic writing linked with Ancient Egypt.

The illustration by G. Doré (Figure 1) shows the interpretation of the Pharaoh's dreams in the great hypostyle hall of the royal palace. The visuality offers elements that bear resemblance to drawings of Egyptian architecture, created between 1798 and 1801, during the French expedition, as featured in the edition of *Description de l'Égypte* written under Napoleon Bonaparte's lead[6]. The orientalised attire of the depicted characters conveys a certain exotism to the audience celebrated in the Pharaoh's court.

Figure 1. Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dreams. *La Sainte Bible illustrée par Gustave Doré* (Tours, Alfred Mame et fils, 1868, tome I, lám. 38).

2. Text and Image: The Biblical Account and Its Visual Configuration

The account in Genesis 41, 37–44 features the moment the Pharaoh bestows upon Joseph the privilege of his trust by awarding him certain elements linked to political power, that is, earthly power[7]. The Pharaoh, in whom such power is concentrated, explicitly acknowledges before the council of wise men that Joseph benefits from divine grace and is, therefore, the suitable person to become Egypt's governor.

> "Pharaoh and all his ministers approved of what he had said. Then Pharaoh asked his ministers, 'Can we find anyone else endowed with the spirit of God, like him?'. So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Since God has given you knowledge of all this, there can be no one as intelligent and wise as you. You shall be my chancellor, and all my people shall respect your orders; only this throne shall set me above you.' Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I hereby make you governor of the whole of Egypt.' Pharaoh took the ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain round his neck. He made him ride in the best chariot he had after his own, and they shouted 'Abrek!' ahead of him. Thus he became governor of the whole of Egypt. Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Although I am Pharaoh, no one is to move hand or foot without your permission throughout Egypt'". (Gn 41, 37–44)[8]

Saint John Chrysostom highlighted Joseph's gifts of patience and hope, virtues that would provide him the highest distinction of the Pharaoh. One of his texts explains, "Behold how all of a sudden the prisoner becomes king of the whole of Egypt" (Merino Rodríguez 2005, pp. 365–66)[9]. Implicit in his interpretation is the idea of the fulfilment of divine will in order to feed his father's kingdom and the whole country of Egypt, after successfully dealing with generalised famine.

Based on this narrative, Christian visual tradition creates two iconographic types that represent the act of investiture itself, involving the handover of power's elements, and the moment the Pharaoh gifts Joseph with his second chariot, which is depicted as a triumph in a classical manner. The depiction of both subjects as iconic cycles should be interpreted as a whole. In the visual configuration of the first iconographic type, it is important to note the use of an iconic scheme[10] that opposes the representation of the Pharaoh as a monarch and patriarch Joseph as a young teenager receiving the ring, the golden chain, and symbolic significant clothing, alluding to royal power.

3. Visual Artistic Tradition of the Iconographic Types of Joseph's Investiture and Triumph

The first instances of Joseph's investiture known to us to belong to Byzantine visual tradition. The iconographic type appears in the illustrations of the margins of the manuscript of *Sacra Parallela* by Saint John of Damascus, the *Homilies by Gregory of Nazianzus*, and some Greek *Psalteries* (9th to 14th centuries), where they accompany Psalm 105, 21: "he put him in charge of his household, the ruler of all he possessed"[11]. This visual tradition also includes the Byzantine Octateuchs dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries. The two iconographic types that we have considered appear simultaneously in *Smyrna Octateuch* and *Vatican Octateuch II* (Figure 2) in an iconic cycle. The investiture is depicted through a simple scheme, with the seated Pharaoh who adopts the appearance of a *basileus*, and in front of him, the young patriarch Joseph. The attributes that identify the representation of the monarch are the crown, embellished with gems; the tunic; the purple cloak; and the red shoes (*tzangia*). The Pharaoh sits on a curule seat and rests his feet on a cushioned footstool[12]. His presence in the context of a public audience requires the protection of a guard armed with a spear.

As mentioned in the biblical account, the monarch bestows his ring upon Joseph, while the latter extends his right hand, where the ring will be inserted. The young patriarch wears a golden chain around his neck and white linen robes with gold embroidered trims. Remarkably, the visuality captures him wearing the same red boots as the Pharaoh. The

iconographic type anticipates Joseph's marriage with the Egyptian woman Asenath, who witnesses the public recognition of Joseph's dignity.

Figure 2. Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot. *Vatican Octateuch II* (12th century, Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.gr.746.pt.1, fol.125r).

The visuality of the Pharaoh and patriarch Joseph, used in the configuration of the iconographic type, refers to a symbolic construction of power through the use of the iconic scheme and clothing. Concerning the formal organisation, the main character sits in a unique chair, and his feet rest on a footstool. The chair and the cushion on the footstool hierarchise the importance of said character, who appears flanked by the protection provided by the soldier's weapons; the character who will receive privileges stands before him. The attire includes the crown, the purple tunic and cloak, and the shoes (*tzangia*), derived from Byzantine emperors, which are symbols and identifiers of the monarch's power. The imperial *stemma* (diadem or crown) was a round headdress formed by jewelled panels and used up until the 12th century, and it is believed to be of ancient origin[13] (Ball 2005, p. 13). Jennifer L. Ball's work highlights that the main silken garment for the imperial attire was *divetesion*, dyed in rich colours such as imperial purple, referred to as such since its usage was reserved to the imperial couple (2205, p. 15). Gold thread was used in the manufacturing of the brocade of the tunic. Purple and gold refer to a Roman custom that originally symbolised wealth and later became a mark of imperial status. The *tzangia* (red shoes), embellished with jewels, portrayed as high slippers, join the significative elements that are considered imperial emblems[14] (Ball 2005, p. 13).

After the investiture ceremony, Joseph rides the Pharaoh's chariot and wears the elements that mark the privileged bestowed upon him. In this case, he also wears a short cloak probably related to the *chlamys*, which is a cloak derived from military attire during the Hellenistic period and adapted as a short cloak used exclusively by soldiers, hunters, and horsemen during the late Roman period (Ball 2005, p. 30; Croom 2002). The chariot adopts the appearance of a biga, a two-horse-drawn carriage associated with Roman antiquity.

The illustration in *The Vatican Octateuch II* is a clear example of the connection between the visual configuration of the iconographic type of Joseph's investiture and triumph and the late-antique Roman and Byzantine tradition. The notion of power conveyed by the representation of imperial themes easily transitions into Christianity (Grabar 1994, p. 53). We understand that the iconic scheme and the visual resources employed as imperial power attributes were conventional at the time and they did not need any other visual mechanisms to further explain the symbolic nature of the power bestowed upon the Pharaoh and handed over to the patriarch. The act itself implies the recognition of Joseph's virtue, making him a participant in divine protection, as highlighted by John Chrysostom in his exegesis.

The illustrated manuscript of the *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* includes both iconographic types in the folio's lower register (Figure 3). The elements denoting power, yielded by the Pharaoh, are already mentioned in the account. In the iconographic type of the triumph, Joseph appears dressed in purple and gold, crowned with a jewelled diadem while riding a quadriga and holding a globe in one hand and a *labarum* in his right hand. Once again, the expressive qualities refer back to Roman and Byzantine antiquity, given that the labaro was a banner characteristic of Roman militias. The narrative nature of the work explains why the illustration depicts the population kneeling as the chariot passes by, as mentioned in the text.

Figure 3. Joseph's investiture and Joseph in Pharaoh's chariot. *Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* (879–883, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Grec 510, fol. 69v).

The role of clothing as an attribute that identifies royal power can be confirmed in other iconographic types where Joseph exercises the authority received. In the absence of the Pharaoh, Joseph takes on the characteristic elements of royalty. The adoption of such attributes contributes to the communicative function of the iconographic type, which visually asserts who holds royal dignity. On the lid of an ivory box (Figure 4), Joseph commands that his siblings' sacks are filled with cereal. His appearance is that of a *basileus*, and it refers back to the elements of imperial attire that have been previously detailed: *stemma*, tunic and cloak, and *tzangia*. In this case, the patriarch's headdress includes the Byzantine diadem from which other precious stones hang together with some pearls, named *pendulia*, that reach his cheeks. His right hand pointing towards the sacks is a gesture that contributes to the completion of the image of authority.

Figure 4. Joseph provides for his brothers. *Box* (900–1099, Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, 569)[15].

One of the ivory panels on the Throne of Archbishop Maximianus of Ravenna captures the moment Joseph and Jacob meet in Goshen and seal the encounter with a hug (Figure 5). Joseph appears wearing a *kalathos*, a sort of straight hat similar to those used by some caryatid (Fatás and Borrás 1980, p. 44). It is interesting to highlight, in this iconographic type, how the guards behind Joseph and the sons behind Jacob contribute to the correct identification of the human groups. The iconic scheme places the embrace between father and son in the centre and the individuals behind each of them reinforce their character, origin, and functions. Once again, the formal organisation of the visuality contributes to the correct identification of the iconographic type and the conveyance of its meaning.

Some changes emerged in the medieval Western visual tradition compared to the Eastern visuality. Generally, the two iconographic types considered in this study do not share the same spatial context. A notable variation can be observed in the iconic scheme of the investiture. There is a shift towards a frontal depiction of the Pharaoh, who appears in a central position.

Figure 5. Meeting between Joseph and Jacob in Goshen. *Throne of Archbishop Maximianus* (545–553, Ravenna, Museo Arcivescovile di Ravenna) [16].

In *Biblia* de Ripoll (Figure 6), the Pharaoh adopts the appearance of a European monarch. He appears seated on his throne, wearing the power-identifying elements: a crown, fleur-de-lis sceptre, and royal attire. His hieratical countenance unchanged, he entrusts Joseph with a baton in which the ring, mentioned in the biblical account, is inserted.

Figure 6. Joseph's investiture. *Biblia de Ripoll* (11th century, Roma, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat.5729, fol. 6v).

Traditions that use symbolic gestures in legal rituals to transfer goods are documented in early medieval Catalonia, for instance, the *traditio baculi* and the *traditio anuli* (Rodríguez Escalona 2021). The monarch's donation gesture can be linked back to the symbolic gestures in the context of European Medieval courts. Once again, the armed guards are related to the presence of the Pharaoh in a public audience. The visuality does not correspond

to the biblical account, although the iconographic type fulfils the purpose for which it was created.

This cultural tradition continues in an illustration included in the *Bible historiée toute figurée* (Figure 7). The investiture ceremony takes place in a public audience. The moment the monarch bestows the royal ring upon an adolescent Joseph is highlighted. The young patriarch is already wearing the golden crown and a long golden braided chain. The Pharaoh, depicted as a European monarch, is the only one that appears seated, denoting his authority. He is clearly identifiable thanks to the fleur-de-lis sceptre, the golden crown, and his hierarchical size[17].

Figure 7. Joseph's investiture. *Bible historiée toute figurée* (1250, Manchester, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, French MS 5, fol. 32v).

The iconographic type where Joseph reveals his identity to his siblings proves the importance of the attire that identifies the character holding authority. The written source of this depiction is in chapter 45 of Genesis (Figure 8). In *Psautier dit de Saint Louis*, the patriarch lifts his arms and drops his cloak to the floor. With this action, he takes off the mantle as symbol of his authority. Just that instant, his identity as the Governor of Egypt is relinquished, so he can make himself known to his brothers and utter the following words: "I am Joseph" (Gn 45, 3). The exegesis of John Chrysostom reminds us that the concealment of Joseph's identity through his way of talking and his appearance is part of the divine plan (Merino Rodríguez 2005, p. 373)[18].

Figure 8. Joseph reveals his identity. *Psautier dit de saint* Louis (1270–1274, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 10525, fol. 25v).

In the context of the European medieval illustrated manuscripts, the iconographic variations noted in the continuity and variation of the investiture's iconographic type concern the symbolic objects that convey the idea of the transmission of power. Although Genesis 41, 37–44 mentions the bestowal of the ring, chain, and linen robes, none of the depictions include them. In *Bible moralisée* (Figure 9), the monarch yields the fleur-de-lis

sceptre to Joseph, while a court's magistrate rests a rich mantle upon his shoulders. The depiction of these elements marks a change compared to the biblical account[19]. The study of iconographic programs in French art from the 13th century has highlighted the connection between the appearance of the fleur-de-lis sceptre in the visuality of the investiture, and the attributes adopted by Capetian sovereigns (Gauthier-Walter 2003, p. 317). Equally, the visuality of the Pharaoh turns the monarch into one of the kings of the Capetian dynasty, who publicly appears wearing a crown and holding the fleur-de-lis sceptre.

Figure 9. Joseph's investiture. *Bible moralisée* (1226–1275, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. 270b, fol. 27v).

In Western Christian visual tradition, the iconographic type of Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot is constructed in accordance with the visual criteria of antiquity's triumphal entrances. It retains symbolic elements derived from ancient monarchies with some variations related to the contemporisation of the illustration.

In a Northern European *Psalter* (Figure 10), the string and wind instruments announce the arrival of the chariot, which, in this manuscript, steers away from the appearance

of a biga, or Roman quadriga, and adopts the typology of a two-horse-drawn chariot, driven by a herald sounding an oliphant. However, the iconographic type is constructed as a triumphal entrance, like the entrance of Marcus Aurelius through *Porta Triumphalis*, announced by a trumpeter (Pray Bober and Rubinstein 1986, pp. 199–200, lám. 167). The use of gold is a formal resource that highlights the significant elements in the illustration: the chariot, the depiction of a haloed Joseph adorned with a crown, wearing luxurious garments trimmed in gold and holding a globe on his veiled hand. The diadem of the headdress is clasped at the back of the head with a thin strip of white fabric trimmed in gold, which refers to the *insignias* characteristic of Hellenistic royalty[20]. The text above the illustration completes the meaning of the visuality: *"Hic Joseph ascendit super currum regium clamante praecone ut omnes coram eo genua flecteret et praepositum ese scirent uniuersae terrae egypti"*[21]. The iconographic type offers a fusion of attributes from the late-antique tradition and the contemporisation of other elements from Western medieval cultural tradition.

Figure 10. Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot. *Psalter* (1140–1160, Berlín, Kupferstichkabinett, 78.A.6, fol. 6r.).

The most ancient illustrated manuscripts remaining from *Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César*, possibly linked to the *scriptorium* of Saint Jean d'Acre in the Latin realm of Jerusalem, alters the iconographic type of Joseph's triumph in accordance with the conventions and symbolic elements of political and military power. In this instance, Joseph's story is included in a historical book within the general development of a universal History. The nature of the illustration stresses Joseph's role as a model of good governance in the history of the patriarchs from the kingdom of Israel. In the copy kept in Dijon (Figure 11), Joseph wears a crown and rides a white horse that is, in turn, standing on a chariot drawn by

two other horses. In front of him, we can see a group of knights carrying red banners with the lion rampant and an infantry group on foot, armed with shields and spears[22]. In this instance, the iconographic type of Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot is merged with the equestrian statues from Roman antiquity (Greenhalgh 1987, p. 49; Pray Bober and Rubinstein 1986, pp. 206–8). Patriarch Joseph is singled out as a monarch, adorned with a crown, dressed a tunic and cloak and wearing the golden chain. Moreover, he rides a white horse, and he sits on a privileged seat on the chariot. The troops formed by the knights with banners and the infantry with shields and spears enhance the symbolic representation of power. This peculiar visuality could be related to the *scriptorium* responsible for the illustration.

Figure 11. Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot. *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à* César (1260–1270. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, M 0562, fol. 51r).

4. The Expression of Power in the Visuality of the Patriarch Joseph

The iconographic types of Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot are part of the episode "Promotion and marriage of Joseph", where we can find the iconographic types of the marriage and paternity of Joseph (Martí Bonafé 2023, pp. 400–3). The Pharaoh suggests an Egyptian name for the patriarch and offers him an Egyptian woman to marry: "Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-Paneah, and gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera,

priest of On, to be his wife" (Gn 41, 45)[23]. The woman, Asenath, scarcely appears in the artistic visuality of Joseph's story; we can only see her in the iconographic types of marriage and sons of Joseph, and she hardly goes beyond some illustrated manuscripts. In the Vatican *Octateuch* (Figure 2), she attentively witnesses the investiture act. Her presence ensures the lineage of the patriarchal system that the house of Israel is based on, with women being, thus, essential to guarantee its perpetuation[24]. For this reason, marriage as a legal act can be considered an expression of power, fundamental for the continuation of the family lineage, both in the history of patriarchs and in the history of European monarchies.

The development of the Christian medieval artistic visuality of the story of Joseph, and more precisely, of the iconographic types of Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot, will spectacularly peak all throughout the 13th century in the European context. This interest in Joseph is related to the advancement of royal power and the processes of power centralisation in the context of French and English monarchies (Menant et al. 1999, pp. 368–69; Schmitt 1990, p. 229). Joseph is the prefiguration of Christ, not just by one circumstance, but rather in his whole integrity. He was slandered, abandoned, sold, betrayed, tempted, and imprisoned, amongst other hardships, just like Christ. Moreover, in the exegesis of Philo, Joseph exemplifies the political ideal to which he attributes the qualities of refinement, authority, and goodness (Gauthier-Walter 2003, pp. 10–11). This matter is fundamental to understanding Joseph as a character of the artistic visuality in medieval Europe, praised by ancient authors for his qualities as a good governor and administrator[25], qualities that transfer onto the 13th century, in the context of the building of the Estates and their administration (Gauthier-Walter 2003, p. 140).

The Christian medieval artistic visuality of the iconographic types of Joseph's investiture and Joseph on the Pharaoh's chariot was created according to the iconic criteria for the representation of political power. The iconographic analysis confirms that the images refer to late ancient tradition and to medieval Byzantine tradition.

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Notes

1. This study is part of the results of the project "The iconographic types of the Christian tradition", directed by Dr. Rafael García Mahíques.
2. Patriarch Jacob's lineage originates from a polygynic marriage, because men take several wives and not women who take several husbands (Justel 2014, p. 45). According to Thomas Hieke (2010, p. 203), women have been essential for the functioning of patriarchy. The house of Israel is built with Lia, Rachel, and their slaves. The mothers define the patriarchal lineage and determine their children's and grandchildren's statuses.
3. An iconographic type is a specific depiction in which a subject becomes perceptible in the artistic field (García Mahíques 2009, p. 39). E. Panofsky considered the history of types as the directing principle of the iconographic analysis and interpretation (Panofsky 1996, p. 22). According to García Mahíques, the concept of the iconographic type can coincide with the English term *subject* (2009, p. 41).
4. The depictions corresponding to visual rhetoric, created from the 16th century onwards, as a variant of the iconographic type, are disregarded. In this case, the iconographic type adopts the appearance of an entourage similar to Petrarca's *trionfi*.
5. The author is responsible for the study of the chapter that includes both iconographic types in volume 8 of *Los Tipos Iconográficos de la Tradición Cristiana*, Antigua Alianza II. El Pueblo de Israel (Martí Bonafé 2023, pp. 388–410).
6. *Description de l'Égypte* (2001) ou recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Egypte pendant l'expédition de l'Armée française publié sous les ordres de Napoleón Bonaparte, préface Sydney H.Aufrère, Bibliothèque de l'Image, 2001. A synthesis on the origin of the science of Egyptology can be found in E. Hornung (2000, pp. 21–32).

[7] The biblical account does not question that divine power is bestowed by God.

[8] https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/es/new-jerusalem-bible/genesis/41/ (accessed on 9 November 2023)

[9] Refers to J. Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen*. 63, 4; PG 54, 545.

[10] The iconic scheme refers to the formal organisation of a figuration (García Mahíques 2009, p. 341).

[11] https://www.bibliacatolica.com.br/en/new-jerusalem-bible/psalms/105/ (accessed on 13 October 2023).

[12] The generic typology of the seat is that of an x-shaped chair, used in antiquity both in secular and holy spheres. In the Roman context, the *sella curulis* was employed by magistrates administering justice (Fatás and Borrás 1980, pp. 191–92).

[13] Jennifer L Ball notes that emperor Constantine used to wear the Hellenistic diadem, a simple headband clasped at the rear of the head, dating back to Alexander the Great, who wore it as an exclusive symbol of his succession in the empire (Ball 2005, p. 13).

[14] According to Jennifer Ball, the *stemma*, the *loros*, and the *tzangia* constitute the truly imperial outfit (2005, p. 35). Among these three elements, the *loros* is considered to be the most emblematic of all, seen as a jewel of the crown and used in Easter liturgy (2005, pp. 16–17). It is important to highlight that in the Egyptian monarch's visuality, there is no depiction of this Byzantine imperial clothing element.

[15] https://id.smb.museum/object/1441516/seitenteil-eines-kastens-mit-szenen-aus-der-josephsgeschichte (accessed on 13 October 2023).

[16] https://christianantiquitiesmuseumarchives.wordpress.com/2013/05/01/chair-and-archbishop-maximianus-of-ravenna-chair/#jp-carousel-84 (accessed on 13 October 2023).

[17] At the top and bottom of the page, the text explains the meaning of the illustration: *Quant Ioseph out esponz le songe au rei pharaon il li baille son anel e fist metre torches d'or entor son col por ennorer lei e il li bailla tote la saingnorie de sa terre por le grant senz que il uit en lui.*

[18] *Serm. Gen*., 64, 1; PG 54, pp. 548–49.

[19] The *Bibles moralisées*, as moralising texts, establish a typological link between Patriarch Joseph and Christ. The iconographic type of the investiture, which includes wearing a unique cloak, is linked with the incarnation of Christ, interpreted as the beautiful flesh of the Virgin, depicted in the lower tondo (Figure 9).

[20] See note 13.

[21] IMA (Index Medieval Art) 214604.

[22] Text in the red rubric, at the footer of the illustration: *Coment li roi fist aler Ioseph sur son riche char par tote sa cite*.

[23] See note 8.

[24] See note 2.

[25] The preparation for famine (Gn 41, 46–49) and the management during the years of scarcity (Gn 41, 53–57) are evidence of this (Martí Bonafé 2023, pp. 402–7).

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Article

The Woman and the Dragon—The Formation of the Image of the *Mulier Amicta Sole* in the Revelation of St. John in Western Medieval Art

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Abstract: This article aims to study the visual tradition of the Woman Clothed with the Sun from chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation in medieval times, in particular the formation, continuity and variations of the various iconographic types. For this purpose, we firstly approach the main sources, both the Book of Revelation and the exegesis or interpretation of the Church Fathers. Secondly, we analyse the first preserved representations (ninth to twelfth centuries) that correspond to examples of the Italian and French tradition and the *Beatus* from the Iberian tradition, works that, most likely, followed original models from the first centuries of Christianity that have now disappeared. This section is followed by the study of representations from between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries and the importance of the Anglo-Norman Apocalypses. The article closes with an iconological section in which the importance of the *mulier* as an ecclesiological symbol and, subsequently, its Marian interpretation is pointed out.

Keywords: *Beatus*; Christian iconography; medieval miniatures; St. John in Patmos

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1. Introduction

In the figurative tradition of medieval Christianity in the West, the representations of the Apocalypse were given considerable prominence, from illustrations in illuminated manuscripts to tympanums, capitals or visual programs in fresco paintings. This was especially due to St. Jerome, to his commentaries, as well as his prologue to the Vulgate which established the Book of Revelation as one of the most popular texts for artists (Snyder 1964, p. 146). From the set of themes and iconographic types that define John's apocalyptic account, in this paper we focus exclusively on the representation of the Woman Clothed with the Sun who is the main figure of chapter 12.[1] It is one of the most reproduced visions of those told by the author of the Book of Revelation, representations of which can be found in medieval times in both the narrative cycles of the Apocalypse and in isolated images.

Chapter 12 of the biblical source describes the scene in which a Woman Clothed with the Sun [*mulier amicta sole*] appears and the failed attacks that a seven-headed red dragon carries out on her and her son.[2] The entirety of this account is extensive. The chapter begins with the vision of the Woman who appears with the astrological symbols of the sun, the moon and twelve stars and who, being pregnant, must protect herself from the threat of the dragon who seeks to snatch her son away. After the birth, her son will be taken to the throne of God to "rule all nations", while the woman waits and is fed in the desert for a time. After this, Michael and his angels fight against the followers of the dragon who, once defeated, chases the woman. However, she is given the two wings of the great eagle to flee to the desert. The dragon continues to rebuke her and pours out a river of water that is swallowed by the earth. The Church Fathers interpreted the various aspects that form the story in detail. In general, the *mulier* was interpreted as a symbol of the Church persecuted by the devil. In its historical interpretation, the seven-headed dragon was seen as the Roman empire, as the embodiment of idolatry, which persecutes the Church of Christ.

The Woman gives birth to Christ, the Church, as the mystical mother of the mystical body of Christ and the son taken from his mother is a symbol of final victory and redemption.

The nature of this image—of a narrative character—originally linked to the illustrations of the Book of Revelation and quickly to its commentaries and biblical glosses, means that we find a cyclical theme that was initially codified by means of various iconographic types. Thus, the first expressions were images that accompanied the printed text of Revelation and that expressed total dependence on it. These medieval illuminated illustrations, from between the ninth and fifteenth centuries, representing the more or less complete cycle of the Apocalypse, are divided into three groups or families: the French and Italian group, the *Beatus* group and the Anglo-Norman group. (Mâle 1958, pp. 364–365) (Van Der Meer 1978, p. 40) and form the basis for the iconic codification of image of the Woman Clothed with the Sun. This article focuses on the formation, continuity and variation of the various iconographic types that illustrate chapter 12 of the Revelation to St. John and that feature the Woman with the astrological symbols. This representation of the mulier is analysed providing a unitary and panoramic vision that includes medieval miniatures as well as mural painting or tapestries.

2. The Revelation to St. John and Patristic Exegesis

The Apocalypse, which means *Revelation* describes how, through the “angel of the Lord”, God told “his servant John” (Rev 1, p. 1) about different truths about the Church, its most immediate present and its near future[3] through various visions told in the first person. The author of the Book of Revelation is introduced as John, who is identified by the Church as the evangelist, although this is actually a disputed attribution. In fact, in the text of Revelation itself, the author does not introduce himself as an apostle, but as a prophet.[4] The tradition of this attribution was already present and widely spread from St. Justin to St. Irenaeus, as well as in Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. Philological criticism has called into question the attribution of authorship to St. John the Evangelist and proposes the name of John the Presbyter, settled in Ephesus and possible disciple of the Evangelist, as his possible author.[5] In this way, the obvious differences in the writing of Revelation and the Gospel of John have been emphasized, although it is probable that the author was part of the group of communities in which this Gospel and the letters of John were written, which would explain the similarities found between these texts and Revelation.

The writing of the Book of Revelation took place around 81–96 A.D., in the time of Domitian, although it is possible that some parts were written in the 70s, in the time of Nero. Last of the books of the Bible, it was included in the canonical books in the fourth century. The Churches of Syria and Palestine did not recognize this book as canonical until the fifth century. It was written in an epistolary manner in the same way as the letters of Paul with the exception that in this case it is not addressed to a single community but to *all the churches of Asia*, giving its content a universal nature. The governments of Domitian and Nero place us in two times in which the Church was persecuted by the Roman Empire and in which the faithful needed a God who would give them hope and promise them a victory in the near future and final refuge in the kingdom of heaven. It would thus be related to the Hebrew apocalyptic tradition where these revelations occurred in times of persecution, as in the case of the book of Daniel.[6] The usual narrative is that of the coming of the great day of Yahweh on which his people will be freed, cared for and comforted. According to this, the Revelation to St. John was written at a key time in the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. From this context, all the readings of the mysteries described in the book and the interpretation of figures such as the dragon or the Woman Clothed with the Sun (Rev 12) arise. However, although Revelation has an identifiable historical reading, it is necessary to recognize the value that this book reached within Christianity, the ability to extrapolate it to other historical times and the validity of the ordered symbols which ended up giving meaning to fundamental aspects of Christian doctrine.

Chapter 12 of Revelation is where we find the account of the vision of the *mulier amicta sole* who will be pursued by the dragon and whose development of the iconographic types

is our topic of interest in this paper. The vision of the *mulier,* within Revelation, combines a variety of narrative times: it summarizes what has been narrated until then, placing the vision in the present and introducing the future time, the prediction of final victory (Boto Varela 2002–2003, p. 54). For a better understanding of the present study, it is advisable to consider the entirety of what is stated in chapter 12 of *Revelation*:

> "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who "will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260 days.
>
> Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.
>
> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
>
> "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. 11 They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."
>
> When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus."

The entire theme of the *mulier amicta sole* is narrated in this chapter. Over the course of the years, new texts appeared whose intention was both to comment on what was narrated in Revelation and to shed light on interpretations of the theme of the Woman herself, first as a patristic symbol of the Church and, subsequently, as a figure *(typos)* of the Virgin Mary. In the following pages we will focus on the study of the formation, continuity and variation of these iconographic types in a diachronic sense, pointing out the relationships with commentaries and interpretations.

3. The Formation of the Iconographic Type of the *Mulier Amicta Sole*—The Earliest Families of Italian and French of Illuminated Manuscripts of Revelation and the *Beatus* (Ninth to Twelfth Centuries)

Here we find one of the few themes in Christian iconography whose original typology owes little to Byzantine art. The use of images inspired by Revelation and linked to

triumphant visions of theophany began in Rome from the "Little Peace" of the Church at the beginning of the fourth century. However, only depictions of symbols such as alpha and omega are used. It is probable that the first illustrations of the book in which the different narrative cycles appear were produced towards the middle of the fourth or in the early fifth century and their composition owes much to the ancient past. The image of the Woman Clothed with the Sun appears at this time, although the first examples preserved to this day of the representation of this theme date back to the ninth century. In these early preserved medieval representations of the *mulier*, two modalities or families are found. On the one hand, the miniatures of the Italian and French tradition and, on the other hand, the illustrations of the *Beatus*.

The illustrations of the first illuminated books of Revelation have not survived, but we can state that their composition must have formally responded to the ancient way of illustrating codices, inserting the vignettes or panels with images in the text framed in red boxes, coinciding exactly with where the content represented is mentioned. They were works that presented a narrative sense and that therefore still lacked development with the intention of highlighting the symbolic aspects. Although we do not have direct evidence, we find echoes of these in works of the Italian and French tradition that emerged as copies of the first models. It is this prototype that is followed by manuscripts such as the *Apocalypse of Valenciennes* (Figure 1), from the first third of the ninth century, or the manuscript of Trier, a Carolingian copy from the early ninth century of a model from the late fourth century or early fifth century (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Woman Clothed with the Sun and the dragon [detail] (Rev 12, pp. 1–6). *Apocalypse of Valenciennes*, first third of the ninth century, Valenciennes, Municipal Library, ms. 9.

Figure 2. Woman who has already been given the "two wings of the great eagle" and the dragon pursues her by pouring out a river of water that is swallowed by the earth (Rev 12, pp. 13–17). *Apocalypse of Valenciennes*, Municipal Library, ms. 9.

As for the formation of the various iconographic types that make up the theme of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, it is noted that together they formed a cyclical theme. There is a common feature in these early medieval images of the Woman of the Apocalypse that would be continued in later works, even those that accompanied Beatus of Liebana's commentary. It is the division of chapter 12 of Revelation into three episodes that correspond to three initial iconographic types. On the one hand, we have the *mulier amicta sole* with the astrological symbols and the dragon that pursues her (Rev 12, pp. 1–6). This episode followed by the struggle between Michael and the dragon (Rev 12, pp. 7–12). Finally, the Woman who has already been given the "two wings of the great eagle" [*duale alae aquilae magnae*] is shown, and the dragon pursues her by pouring out a river of water that is swallowed by the earth (Rev 12, pp. 13–17). Each of the scenes is represented separately, which differentiates this first variation of the composition from the second that began with the illustrations of the *Beatus*.

The compositional scheme, as well as certain formal aspects, show that these early works still include features that come from the ancient world. It is very likely that this visual configuration was originally borrowed from the scheme of representations from the classical tradition, such as those of Leto being pursued by the serpent, Python (Figures 3 and 4).[7] The Woman on the moon and crowned with twelve stars of *Valenciennes* is an example of this. A personification of the moon, with clear ancient references, identifies this celestial body at the feet of the Woman and the robe that clothes her evokes the pagan world. The way she is represented, standing and facing forwards with her arms symmetrically raised and the palms of her hands facing the sky, originates in the early Christian model of the orant. In early Christian art, this figure is related to the ancient gesture of prayer, there being the tradition of portraits of orants in funerary contexts, which have their root in the *pietas* orant of pagan origin (Grabar 1998, pp. 77–79). *Trier's* manuscript continues to show the same primitive origin in its compositional scheme, but adds new forms that show his Italian influence (Figure 5); the Woman has the astrological symbols, but now at her feet, together with the personification of the moon, we see that of the sun. She is clothed from head to toe with a *maphorion* and the position of her hands is still that of an orant. However,

through her garments, she gives the appearance of a Byzantine princess. In *Trier*, John the Evangelist is already represented in the scene, and in addition, for the first time, we also see the stars that the dragon sweeps down from heaven with his tail.

Figure 3. Leto with the infants Apollo and Artemis in her arms. Lithography of a greek red-figured amphora. publiseh in Lenormant and de Witte (1857).

Figure 4. Votive Relief with Leto, Apollo, Artemis and Python, 5th Century BCE. Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta.

Figure 5. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *Trier's Apocalypse*. Trier, Municipal Library, ms. 31, f. 37r.

For the depiction of the moment when the Woman is given the pair of wings and shown to be fleeing from the dragon towards the desert, we see same solution taken from

the early Christian orant, without the astrological symbols that characterized the Woman of the first subtype. Next to her the seven-headed dragon with ten horns appears, whose shape is taken from the ancient representations of the aforementioned serpent, Python, or the Hydra, an ancient sea monster with a serpentine body and seven heads. In several cases, it includes the personification of the earth that swallows the water that the dragon pours out (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Woman with the two wings. *Trier's Apocalypse*. Trier, Municipal Library, ms. 31, f. 39r.

It is not only these example of *Valenciennes* and *Trier* that owe much to the early Christian originals, but there are also other works that follow the same compositional scheme and variation in the depiction of the characters. For example, we have the *Bamberg Apocalypse* (c. 1000) (Figure 7).[8] The scheme is the same: on the one hand, the Woman that holds the Son in her hands with the dragon that lies in wait. In another miniature, the Woman flees with the help of the wings of the great eagle while the dragon pours out the river of water (Figure 8). A kind of mountain range stops the water from reaching the Woman. It is a compositional solution that summarizes the cyclic type in three distinct parts which we will find in later works such as the *Liber floridus* of Lambert de Saint-Omer, from the twelfth century (Figure 9).

Figure 7. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *Bamberg Apocalypse*, c. 1000. Bamberg, State Library, f. 29v.

Figure 8. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *Bamberg Apocalypse*, c. 1000. Bamberg, State Library, f. 31v.

Figure 9. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *Liber floridus of Lambert of Saint-Omer*, s. XII. Wolfenbühel, Ducal library, cod. Guelf. Gud. Lat. 2, f. 14v.

To the prototypes from the end of the fourth century, which we have seen reflected in the French and Italian world, we must also add the possibility that a prototype of North African origin existed at this time. Mâle has stated that this copy would have influenced the first miniatures of the *Beatus*, whose first original is believed to be from the eighth century, but of which, as in the previous case, we have no copy. In the eighth century, the so-called [St.] Beatus of Liébana (c. 730–798), a Cantabrian monk of the monastery of St. Martinof Turieno, wrote his work *Commentary on the Apocalypse [Commentarium in Apocalypsin]*, a

commentary of twelve books on the revelations to John. It had a remarkable impact in the Early Middle Ages due to the circulation of the illuminated manuscripts in its copies, traditionally known as *Beatus*, produced in medieval *scriptoria* and in which the Apocalypse was depicted along with the commentaries of Beatus of Liébana. These *Beatus* constitute the second group of early preserved works that illustrate Book of Revelation.

The oldest surviving illustrated *Beatus*, according to Klein's *stemma* of the pictorial tradition of the *Beatus* (Yarza 1998, p. 45), is a fragment from the ninth century conserved in the Library of the Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos. Around the eleventh century, we have other examples such as the *Gerona Beatus* (c. 975) and that of *Fernando I and Doña Sancha* (c. 1047) (Figure 10). The latter actually follow a second illuminated version that was produced towards the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries. In contrast, the *Beatus of Burgo of Osma* (c. 1086) belongs to the branch followed by the older eighth-century version (Figure 11).

Figure 10. *Beatus Fernando I and Doña Sancha*, 1047. Madrid, National Library, Vitr. 14-2, ff. 186v–187r.

Figure 11. *Beatus of Burgo of Osma*, c. 1086, Burgo de Osma, Cathedral Archive, cod. 1, f. 117v.

Unlike what happens in the Italian and French examples studied previously, in the *Beatus*, two compositional models can be identified regarding the position of the vignettes in relation to the text. In the first and oldest model, like those of Valenciennes or Trier, the vignettes are inserted into the border of the text box itself and their position coincides with the part where they are mentioned. On the other hand, a second compositional model appears in the *Beatus*, in which a space reserved for the figuration is set apart from the text, on a full or even double page. In this way, the first model reveals a relationship between the icon and text that is more attached to the narrative sense while the full-page images, although also positioned in accordance with where they are mentioned in the text, are more practical in their independence due to the depiction of summarized cycles or even iconographic types with greater symbolic scope.

From the set of themes represented, the episode of Woman Clothed with the Sun is without doubt the one that is given special treatment and has the greatest impact among all the illustrations of the *Beatus*. As for the iconic composition, all the examples coincide in summarizing the entire theme of the *mulier amicta sole* in a single image, incorporating the different actions around the dragon which, in contrast, is only represented once.[9] This iconic scheme corresponds to the method of simultaneous representation defined by Weitzmann ([1947] 1990, pp. 19–43), which was the oldest formula for organizing the visual narrative originating in the Greek world and was characterized by not maintaining the relationship between space and time.[10]

If there had been a North African prototype that could have influenced the first figuration of the *Beatus*, it must have offered a greater development of the treatment of types and had an iconic wealth that was superior to European prototypes (Yarza 1998, pp. 37–38).[11] However, in any case, it would have followed the first compositional model according to the tradition of the ancient world. The example of *Burgo de Osma* shows what this first compositional model would have looked like. The scene, outlined by a frame-shaped box, adjusts to the space in the text. It illustrates the account of the Woman and the dragon and, according to the method of simultaneous representation, summarizes the entire sequence in a single space in which the Woman is represented several times, carrying out the various actions of chapter 12. However, despite the clear narrative character of the miniatures of the *Beatus*, and unlike what we have seen before, there is already a symbolic intentionality and a strong theological discourse, that of Beatus of Liébana's commentary on the Apocalypse itself. The Woman appears first with the Child and the dragon lying in wait. The presence of the stars is very schematic and they are placed above and below the figure. This representation groups together the actions of the persecution, both the initial persecution in which the dragon chases her and her Son and later when, already defeated, he pours out the water that is swallowed by the earth. At the top, the Woman, who has already been given the pair of wings, offers the Son to God, who is surrounded by a *mandorla*. This compositional scheme is closer to medieval compositions and moves away from the ancient world (although it should be kept in mind that, although it follows the model of the family of the first illustrated *Beatus*, we are talking about an example from the late eleventh century).

In the copies showing the second compositional model, such as the *Beatus of Fernando I and Doña Sancha* (Figure 10), the miniatures are no longer inserted in the text and two entire pages of the codex are set aside for the representation of this type. It accentuates the importance of the dragon, whose body is formed by the seven heads of snakes that intertwine and dominate the entire miniature. The various internal passages of the chapter unfold around them and their heads take on a different action for each of them, corresponding to a number of variations in the representation of the Woman. The author of the illustration plays with the seven heads of the dragon so that, while one of them lies in wait for the Woman, another fights against Michael and his angels or pours out the river of water. The remarkable way in which the beast is treated is due to the millenarian character Beatus of Liébana's commentary itself. This vision of the fight against evil is reinforced by including the scene of the devil chained for a thousand years on the lower left-hand side (Rev 20,

pp. 1–3), which does not belong to this passage and is repeated in a number of copies from both the first and the second family.

This second way of depicting the subject makes it possible to introduce a greater number of variations in the representation of the Woman of the Apocalypse in which, as in the previous one, her compositional scheme is taken from the early Christian orant. Next, we will establish a synthesis of the different variations or types: (a) The woman as an orant; the disc of the sun at the height of her belly, the moon at her feet and the stars arranged above her head; (b) A variation of the previous one; the Woman maintains the astrological symbols, but now holds the Son on her lap protecting him from the dragon that lies in wait for Him. At the same time, the sun may appear above the Woman or in the center and the Son may appear inside the disc of the sun; (c) The Woman who has been given the wings and is sitting in prayerful attitude on a hill in the desert while the dragon, who is fought by the angels, pours out the river of water; (d) The winged Woman who offers her Son to the Father. This type is provided not only by the passage in Revelation but also by the text of Beatus' commentary itself with appraisals shared by patristic exegesis. In general, the illustrations of chapter 12 of *Revelation* literally follow what is stated in it. The image was codified in such a way that the artists used these types as models that had already been made. In the *Beatus*, this relationship is freer. We can see how alterations are introduced in the narrative or the inclusion of other scenes and symbols that rely on the abbot of Liébana's commentary itself (Thérel 1984, p. 159).[12]

In what has been said so far, we can see the way in which, in both the Italian and French examples that follow a possible original model from the fourth century, as well as in the illustrations from Beatus of Liébana's commentary, some aspects coincide, such as strong sense of narrative, but also certain profiles such as the astrological symbols or the representation of the winged *mulier*. This is justified by the relationship that biblical exegesis and Beatus of Liébana's own interpretation had in the conventionalized cultural tradition defined in the continuity of the iconographic types. At this point, it is appropriate to analyze these interpretations by indicating how they are reflected in the images.

The general reading of the exegetes interpreted the *mulier amicta sole* as the People of God. This reading as an image of the Church is unanimous among the early commentators and Church Fathers, such as St. Gregory the Great.[13] The differences are found when interpreting details such as the astrological symbols that accompany the Woman, which reveal various readings.[14] The dragon that chases her is Satan, the ancient serpent that plagues the Church. In the struggle against St. Michael, he loses and is thrown to the ground until his final defeat. Angered, the dragon chases the Woman, but decides to spew river of water at her to drown her. However, the Church is given eagle's wings and flees to the desert. What marks the continuity of this iconographic type is a conscious process which highlights the role of the Woman as the mother of the Son. In this way, this image is related with iconographic formulas associated with motherhood. From the ninth to the thirteenth century this leads to iconic variations of the Woman that we will now analyze, but which can be summarized as two main types. On the one hand, the Woman as the *mulier amicta sole*, which are those in which she has the astrological symbols, but has not yet been given the wings. On the other hand, the Woman with wings who flees from the dragon or delivers the Son. This double arrangement continues beyond these centuries, although it is not a watertight path of continuity and variation but rather allows for various apologies in certain cases.

St. Gregory the Great interprets the sun as the splendor of the Divine Truth that protects the church: " . . . *In sole enim illustratio veritatis, (. . .) Sancta autem ecclesia, quia supernis luminis splendores protegitur* . . . ".[15] This is the same for Ambrose Autpert.[16] An author hypothetically identified as St. Augustine, found the presence of the solar star to be a symbol of Christian hope in the Resurrection.[17] To justify this, he links the apocalyptic verse with an evangelical quotation that alludes to the moment in which Christ explains what the kingdom of God will be like: "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the

kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13, p. 43). Rupert of Deutz, for his part, understood it to mean Christ as the Sun of Justice.[18]

The moon under her feet also offers different readings that revolve around understanding it to be earthly and mutable, as inclined towards evil, inspired by the mutability of the moon itself as a celestial body. At the foot of the Church, it can be seen as the worldly and material things on which it stands. Another unidentified author even suggests that it is a symbol of the sacred scriptures that, like the moon, illuminate the darkness of the world: "*Sed quia luna noctem illuminat, melius mihi videtur, ut per lunam Scripturam sacram intelligamus, sine cujus lumine in nocte hujus saeculi per vias rectitudinis incedere non valemus. De hoc lumine Psamista dicit: Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, et lumen semitis meis* (Psal. 118, p. 105)".[19] As far as the interpretation of the twelve stars is concerned, they are unanimously seen as a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel and as the twelve apostles. For their part, the wings of the Woman of the Apocalypse are a symbol of the two Testaments (Boto Varela 2002–2003, p. 55).

For Beatus of Liébana, the Woman giving birth in pain is a figure of the ancient Church, of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles who suffered. The Son is the fruit of that same ancient Church, the very Christ who had been promised to them in other times. Thus the sun is the hope of the resurrection in Christ. The moon is also part of the image of the Church. It is a two-part vision in which the church at her feet represents the evil congregation that, along with the devil and the false prophets, sweep down a third of the stars.[20]

These interpretations justify the continuity of the *mulier* starting from the figure of the orant. Along with the other astrological symbols that accompany her, there are cases in which the sun is in the centre, at the height of her belly, as in the aforementioned *Beatus of Ferdinand I*. This alludes to the maternal action of the Woman as the mother of the child with which she is pregnant. These representations are also reminiscent of the image of the Platytera Virgin—an eastern variant of the Virgin orant—where the sun-Christ is described as a solar disk on the chest of Mary. The sun that clothes her is often taken as an analogous reference to the Son that she is expecting. In another like the *Beatus Gabinet 14-1*, which is also preserved in the National Library, we can see how, in this way, the Son (Figure 12) is represented inside the disc of the sun and in the *New Testament Manuscript of Verona* we even see the sun directly transformed into the face of Christ. Following this idea of the Woman-orant, we can also find the Son in her arms, depicted as a child-adult. It is a design that does not differ, in what we have presented, from the previous examples. We find this in the *Beatus of Burgo of Osma* and we can also see the Woman holding the Son with her hands while the dragon seeks to snatch him in the *Bamberg Apocalypse* (Figure 7). This iconographic typology must be compared with the Eastern image of Mary as the Mother of God, in which we see the Virgin carrying the Child in her arms.

Early Christian art took a composition from the ancient world that showed the Woman lying down, simulating her labor. It was an scheme that was used and understood as a framing theme[21] to refer to the Nativity and, in the art of Eastern Christianity, and later in the West, was used to represent both the birth of Christ and that of his mother, the Virgin. This scheme is used again here. In the *New Testament Manuscript of Verona* the Woman is lying down and delivers her Son. In the mural paintings of San Pietro al Monte in Civate[22] (c. 1100) the Woman appears in an identical position and an angel takes the Son to the throne of the *maiestas domini* (Figure 13). It is a formula that is echoed in later works such as the *Dutch Apocalypse* (c. 1400) (Figure 14), or Giotto's frescoes in the Peruzzi Chapel of the Basilica di Santa Croce in Florence.

Figure 12. *Beatus Gabinet 14-1*, s. IX. Madrid, National Library, Vitr. 14-1, f. 109v.

Figure 13. Woman Clothed with the Sun and the battle of St. Michael and his angels against the dragon. San Pietro al Monte en Civate, c. 1100.

Figure 14. Cycle of the Woman of the Apocalypse. *Dutch Apocalypse*, c. 1400, París, National Library.

The Woman appears seated and carrying the Son on her lap in the *Liber floridus* from the twelfth century (Figure 9). We see a similar composition in a mural painting in a vault of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, near Vienna, from the beginning of the same twelfth century. Both are related to the dragon lying in wait (Figure 15). This besieging exists beside the various options used to highlight the role of the Woman as a mother and her intention to protect her Son, whether she is carrying him in her arms, on her lap or shown lying down. The dragon, who sweeps down a third of the stars of heaven and casts them down to the earth, stands before the pregnant Woman waiting for her Son in order to devour him. This is followed by the Son of the Woman being taken away and led to God and his throne (Rev 12, pp. 4–5). The Son is taken from the arms of the Woman, by angels or the hand of God, as in the *Toulouse Apocalypse* (Figure 16). She even hands Him over. In the *Beatus* belonging to the first family, such as that of *Burgo de Osma* (Figure 11) or the *Beatus Gabinet 14-1* (Figure 12), the Woman is already show with wings and, using them, she takes the Son to God. In the *Beatus* of the second family, the Son is directly represented as being in the presence of the Divine throne.[23]

Figure 15. Woman Clothed with the Sun whith St. John and the Dragon. Saint-Savin sur-Gartempe, c. 1100, Vienne.

Figure 16. *Toulouse Apocalypse*. Paris, National Library, f. 25v.

In the *Liber floridus* (Figure 9) and in the frescoes of *Saint-Savins-sur-Gartempe* (Figure 15) the place where they take the Son, or where the hand that takes him comes from, is the Heavenly Temple with the Ark of the Covenant. Its presence is related to the last action that occurs after the seventh angel sounds the trumpet: "Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple" (Rev 11, p. 19). In the Book of Revelation, this happens in the last verse of chapter 11, just before the evangelist sees the sign in heaven, which is the Woman. It has been incorporated into the works of the Italian tradition, such as that of *Bamberg*, and they show the Temple with open doors. Subsequently, in the continuity of the iconographic type, the temple continues to appear with open doors and with the Ark, or only this, as we will see later in the *Dutch Apocalypse* (Figure 14).

Angered by not having managed to devour the Son, the dragon pursues the Woman and pours out a river of water that the earth swallows to protect her. In the *Beatus*, we see the river as a kind of black tongue that one of the heads of the dragon spews at the Woman. The same happens in the *Bamberg Apocalypse* and in many other examples where the earth protects the Woman from the water. In the *Liber floridus* we again see that the earth that has taken human form. To flee the dragon's persecution, the Woman is given the wings of the great eagle. In the *Beatus*, the action of receiving the wings is not represented. This is because, despite its narrative vividness, the strong symbolic character of the work comes before it. In the works of the Italian tradition, we do see this action being carried out, at times, by God in Christomorphic form.

The two modes analyzed—the Italian and French examples and the *Beatus*—define the iconic convention of the theme of the Woman of the Apocalypse and they have been presented in an attempt to diachronically identify the iconographic types in which she has been shown. Thus it has been pointed out that in the beginning, the visual tradition codified the theme in the three basic iconographic types that we have seen: the Pregnant Woman with the astrological symbols pursued by the seven-headed dragon-serpent (Rev 12, pp. 1–6), Saint Michael and his angels fighting the dragon (Rev 12, pp. 7–12), and the Woman receiving the pair of wings and fleeing to the desert (Rev 12, pp. 13–17). Although these were the three initial types, the continuity of the theme took two simultaneous paths. On the one hand, during the medieval period, the narrative character of some representations increased, enriching the internal components of each of these three parts. However, with the passage of time, it tended to summarize the entire theme in a single

iconographic type that encompassed what was expressed in each chapter of Revelation. In the same way, the symbolic character of the apocalyptic Woman increased, which meant the appearance of a conceptual image of her as a sign-image would establish a point of connection for the appearance of later and new iconographic types at the end of the Middle Ages and, especially, in modern times.[24]

4. Continuity and Variation of Iconographic Types (Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries)

From the thirteenth to fifteenth century there is still evidence of a varied iconographic depiction of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, which coincides with the appearance of new artistic sensibilities. As with the books of hours, the illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth-century books of Revelation were works of private devotion. Formally and ichnographically, a third family of the Apocalypse appeared that corresponded to the usual models of the Anglo-Norman context whose circulation had a high impact on the appearance of Western art from the thirteenth century. The production of cycles of the Apocalypse, before the middle of the thirteenth century, was not usual, but rather sporadic and originated in very different locations. The Book of Revelation was considered to be an extract from the life of St. John as it was attributed to him and because it was written in the first person (Henkel 1973, p. 26). In this way a cycle of images on the life of St. John the Evangelist took place, which began with his preaching and conversion of the faithful and ended with his death. The chapters from Revelation are the middle of the narrative, as episodes of his own experience. Cycles of manuscripts on the Apocalypse proliferated from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. This custom of making separate volumes of Revelation originated in the Anglo-Norman tradition of the *scriptoria*. They proliferated in England and northern France in the thirteenth century, while they in Germany they became more common during the fourteenth century, spreading among other countries in the fifteenth century (Henkel 1973, p. 24).

This narrative cycle describes the way in which John, as a result of his evangelism, was banished to Patmos where the revelation would be shown to him. It begins with the episode in which he was taken to the prefect who sent him to Rome, a voyage he made by boat, where he had been summoned by the emperor Domitian. When he refused to make sacrifices to the Roman gods, they shaved his head and he was condemned to be immersed in boiling oil, from which he emerged without the slightest burn and[25] even appeared rejuvenated. From Rome, he was banished to Patmos, where we see that he was again taken by boat (Figure 17). The narrative continues with the angel who revealed content of the revelation (Rev 1, p. 1) and connects his arrival at Ephesus and the final scenes of his life.[26]

Figure 17. Arrival of Saint John on Patmos. *Toulouse Apocalypse*. Paris, National Library, f. 1v.

As for the iconographic configuration of chapter 12 of Revelation, the miniatures of the thirteenth century began to depart from the iconic schemes of the first models analyzed above and the number of scenes and iconographic types into which the chapter is divided increased. A clear example of this change is the one known as the *Illuminated Apocalypse of St. Victor* (thirteenth century, National Library of France) (Figure 18). In this example the following divisions are represented in iconographic types: (A) the Woman Clothed with the Sun, who appears in a reclined position while the dragon lies in wait for her, at the same time as the Son is taken to the throne (Rev 12, pp. 1–5); (B) the Woman waits in the desert where she is "sustained" with the Gospel she carries in her hand (Rev 12, p. 6); (C) the fight of St. Michael and his angels against the dragon (Rev 12, pp. 7–12); (D) the *mulier* receives the pair of wings (Rev 12, pp. 13–14); (E) the dragon pours out a river of water that the earth swallows and the woman manages to flee (Rev 12, pp. 15–17). The same is true of the *Apocalypse glosée* also identified as *the Paris Apocalypse* (National Library, Paris, c. 1240–1250) (Figures 19–21), attributed to the Sarum Master, who took the Apocalypse of the Morgan Library as a model. This set shows the new narrative development in which the scenes depicted are expanded, while at the same time emphasize significant aspects that again result from the intersection of the image and patristic exegesis.

Figure 18. Cycle of the Woman of the Apocalypse. *Illuminated Apocalypse of St. Victor*. Paris, National Library.

Figure 19. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *The Paris Apocalypse*, c. 1240–1250. Paris, National Library, f. 19v.

Figure 20. Woman who has already been given the two wings. *The Paris Apocalypse*, c. 1240–1250. Paris, National Library, f. 21r.

Figure 21. The dragon pursues her by pouring out a river of water that is swallowed by the earth. *The Paris Apocalypse*, c. 1240–1250. Paris, National Library, f. 21v.

One of the most prominent examples is that known as *The Trinity Apocalypse* (Figures 22 and 23). In this example, the episode of the Woman of the Apocalypse is represented with vignettes on two pages. The reading begins at the top where we see again the reclined *mulier* who gives the Son to an angel. The cycle continues with the lower scene and continues on the next page, but is read from bottom to top (Van Der Meer 1978, p. 152). The vision of the Woman and the dragon lying in wait, with the archangel Michael waging a battle to defend her, is turned into a chivalrous scene. The Woman of the Apocalypse is now the lady, the maiden to whom the knight owes himself and for whom he fights. Her pose and dress acquire a royal style and she often appears crowned. Michael will be her personal guard along with the celestial cohort, as in *The Trinity Apocalypse* where they appear dressed in the style of medieval armies. The *Dutch Apocalypse*, now preserved in the National Library of Paris, illustrated around the year 1400, is also a good example of this analogy of the chivalrous ideal (Figure 14). Michael perfectly embodies this ideal and appears dressed in armor, with a shield and wielding the sword with which he strikes well-aimed blows to the dragon. Unlike the previous two, this last example dedicates a full page to the miniature that illustrates chapter 12.

Figure 22. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *The Trinity Apocalypse*, c. 1242–1250. Cambridge, Trinity College, f.13r.

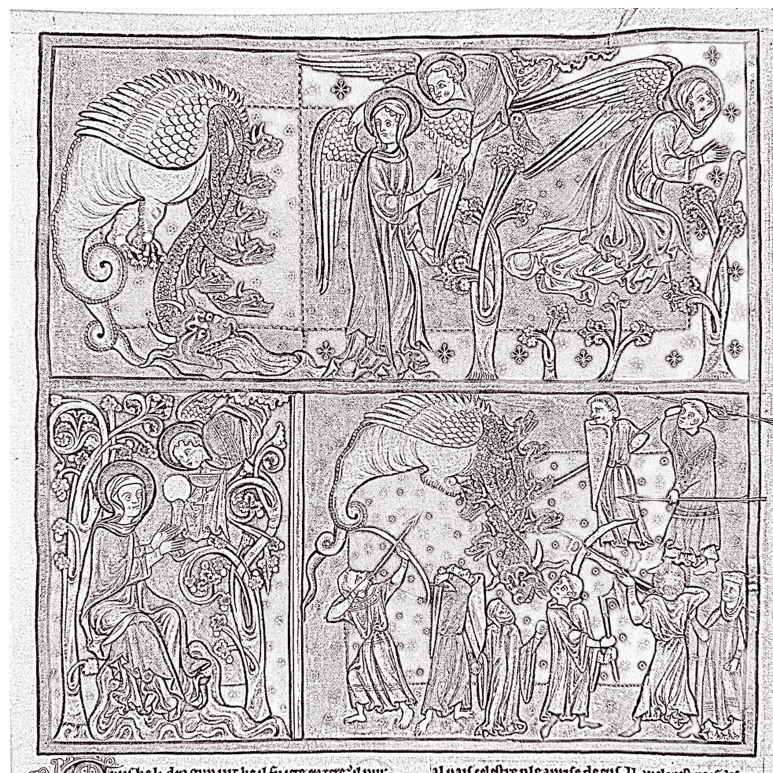

Figure 23. Woman with the two wings. *The Trinity Apocalypse*, c. 1242–1250. Cambridge, Trinity College, f.14r.

Both *The Trinity Apocalypse* and the *Dutch Apocalypse* represent the complete cycle of the narration of the Apocalypse and maintain details such as the presence of the Heavenly Temple with its open doors, from which the angel leaves to deliver the two wings, a detail that we also saw in the *Illuminated Apocalypse of St. Victor*. On the other hand, an action that is renowned for its representation is the waiting of the Woman in the wilderness. The first time that this waiting is shown schematically is in the *Beatus*. Mountainous rocks and trees simulate a barren or arid land that justifies Beatus of Liébana's symbolic reading in his commentary.[27] In the *Dutch Apocalypse*, the Woman also crouches among the vegetation seeking a similar effect. In *The Trinity Apocalypse* the Woman's distant refuge is also simulated by the vegetation. The solution found on the following page is significant (Figure 23). The biblical source indicates that the Woman flees to the wilderness "where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1260 days." (Rev 12, p. 6). If in the *Illuminated Apocalypse of St. Victor*, the *mulier* was sustained by the words of the Gospel while she waited, in *The Trinity Apocalypse* an angel with veiled hands gives her a host. According to this solution, it is the Eucharist that must sustain the woman as she waits in the wilderness. This reference to the Eucharist is also found in a tapestry of Louis I, the Duke of Anjou when an altar with the chalice in shown inside the Heavenly Temple (Figure 24A).

Figure 24. Cycle of the Woman of the Apocalypse. *Apocalypse Tapestry,* Nicolas Bataille and Jean Bondol, c. 1373–1382. Angers, Musée de la Tapisserie, Château d'Angers.

This last example belongs to the *Apocalypse Tapestry* [also identified as *Beau tapis de Monsieur d'Anjou*], a cycle of 37 pieces that Louis I of Anjou commissioned from Nicolas Bataille, who carried out the work from cartoons by Jean Bondol between 1373–1382 (Figure 24). Its production shows how, in addition to miniature codices, the episode of the *mulier* continues to be represented in various media and as part of broader visual programs dedicated to the Apocalypse. Of the set of this series of tapestries, four of them are dedicated to representing the iconographic types that make up the cycle of the *mulier amicta sole* and the dragon: (A) the Woman giving over the Son, (B) the battle of St. Michael against the seven-headed dragon, (C) the giving of the pair of wings to the *mulier* and (D) the flight of the Woman at the same time as the dragon pours out the river of water. We

also find the presence of the *mulier* in mural sets such as, for example, in the apse of the Padua Baptistery where two scenes are dedicated to this theme as part of a mural set that includes more than forty episodes from the Revelation to St. John. The two actions depicted correspond to the Woman Clothed with the Sun, who appears in a reclined position, being watched by the dragon and the Woman's flight with the pair of wings as the dragon vomits the river of water.[28]

In the formation, continuity and variation of the iconographic type of the Woman of the Apocalypse and the dragon the narrative sense of the scene and the symbolic readings exist together. It also opens a tendency towards a summary of the cycle, as well as giving the image a greater conceptual nature. In this way, although the basis is found in previous works, the codification of the image of the *mulier* formed from the schematization of its basic iconographic profiles is produced. Thereupon, a conceptual image of the *mulier* appears in different visual contexts, not linked to a descriptive-narrative function of the Apocalypse, announcing the appearance of an image-sign, or conceptual diagram, without the narrative environment. This variation of the iconic tradition is best seen in works with a symbolic profile, especially in typological iconography.

The conceptual image of the Woman of the Apocalypse is defined by generally showing her standing with her hands in a prayerful position, the crescent moon at her feet, the crown of twelve stars and the sun that clothes her like rays coming from her back. The wings are a characteristic attribute that accompany her in a large number of representations and give her uniqueness, although they are not always included. She is found in this way in illustrated Bibles and in works such as the *Speculum humanae Salvationis*, which contributed greatly to her dissemination and popularization. In the miniature of the *Codex cremifanensis 243*, from the Benedictine monastery of Kremsmünster, the Woman is shown in a triumphal way (Figure 25). In her left hand she carries a cross and a banner of victory and in her right hand she holds the chalice. In the center of her chest is the star of the sun, the moon is at her feet, the twelve stars crown her and she has the pair of wings. The vegetation surrounding her alludes to waiting in the desert.

Figure 25. Conceptual image of the Woman of the Apocalypse. *Speculum humanae Salvationis,* Codex cremifanensis 243 Benedictine monastery of Kremsmünster, s. XV, f. 42r.

5. A Transversal Matter—The Representation of the "Seer of Patmos"

A constant theme in the representations of the Apocalypse from the first examples analyzed is the appearance of St. John as the seer of Patmos who bears witness to the revelations. The establishment of this tradition and even of the continuity of the iconographic type of St. John having and leaving in writing the experiences narrated in the Book of Revelation was due not only to what was expressed in the revelation, but to the existence of the legend regarding the figure of John himself. Sources on his life, in addition to the Bible, include many other books such as the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine, as well as apocryphal texts. One of them is the *Acts of John*, a Gnostic text supposedly written by

a disciple of John named Leucius in the second half of the second century. Catholicism considers it to be heretical. Later, there are the *Acts of John*, which are also apocryphal, attributed to Pseudo-Prochorus which would become the Catholic version of the former, known as *Acts of Pseudo-Prochorus*, written around the fifth and sixth centuries.[29] They relate how St. John was banished to the island of Patmos by Domitian. His life would come to be represented in cycles in which included the revelations experienced in Patmos. Much of this tradition is found in the *Golden Legend* and it helped shape the myth of a character of outstanding importance in Christianity and due to his artistic appearance. Through the Gospels, the above-mentioned apocryphal texts and the passages of the work of Jacobus de Voragine, the conceptual image of Saint John was defined.[30]

In the tradition of these illustrated Apocalyspes, the different actions take place under the discreet presence of the John the Evangelist in examples such as the *Bamberg Apocalypse*. However, it is not so in the episodes of chapter 12 (for example, he appears along with the angel who shows him the heavenly Jerusalem). It is necessary to focus our attention on the way in which John has been presented when the *mulier amicta sole* appears. The presence of the Evangelist is noted in copies such as *Trier's* (Figures 5 and 6) as well as in the *Liber floridus,* in which the name written at the top identifies him as "John the Evangelist" (Figure 9). In the frescoes of *Saint-Savin sur-Gartempe* (Figure 15), from the early twelfth century, St. John accompanies the *mulier amicta sole* while she is watched by the dragon. His role is to bear witness to the act. In a German Apocalypse from the fourteenth century, John appears standing pointing at the *mulier* who already has the pair of wings while the dragon pours out the river of water that the earth swallows (Rev 12, pp. 14–16). These cases signify the different variations of a concept, that of John experiencing and bearing witness to the revelations attributed to him.

From the codification of the image of St. John in Patmos, all of these options and variations are standardized. The geographical space of Patmos began to be defined as a place of where the message revealed appears, transfigured into a land of exile, in the way of the ancient Old Testament prophets. Its depiction becomes a significant aspect of the different types. In the first miniature Apocalypses, the action takes place in a neutral space where details that identify the space are eluded. Only in *Liber floridus* do we see John the Evangelist standing on a kind of ground like shells or clouds. Beginning in the thirteenth century, with the visual narration of John's journey and arrival in Patmos, his exile and revelations were given geographical reality.

In an English miniature of the Book of Revelation, from the thirteenth century, St. John is shown to be asleep and with his head resting on his hand. A boat appears next to him, alluding to the way in which he arrived in Patmos, and he surrounded by what must be other islands of the Aegean Sea. The "angel of the Lord" comes to awaken him to begin the revelations (Rev 1, p. 1). The presence of the boat as a figure that signifies the arrival of St. John to Patmos is reinforced in another miniature, the *Toulouse Apocalypse* (Figure 17). There the image of St. John is duplicated in the interior part of the island, shown by a river-like sea that surrounds the scene.

6. The Image of the *Mulier Amicta Sole* as a Symbol of the Church

The attention to the construction of the various iconographic types allows us to carry a general iconological interpretation on the figure of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, especially in her exegetical interpretation as a figure *(typos)* of the Church. The consequence of this ecclesiological interpretation in the visual tradition is the accentuation of the maternal nature of the *mulier amicta sole*. This interpretation is most evident in baptismal contexts, such as in the drum of the dome of the Baptistery of Novara, Piedmont, from the beginning of the eleventh century. There the Woman-Church is represented as an orant surrounded by a halo with the astrological symbols, while the Son ascends in a manger. Here, the delivery of the Son by the Woman symbolizes the spiritual birth of the baptized, who through this sacrament, have seen their sins removed. Thus the Church is identified as the redeeming mother who gives birth and life to a new Christian soul. Gerardo Boto

Varela (2002–2003, pp. 56–57) identifies it in this way and gives ecclesiological meaning to the representation of the Heavenly Temple and the Ark of the Covenant (Rev 11, p. 19). However, the representation of these symbols was intimately linked to the figuration of this scene and we will see its meaning a few lines below. Dante also used the symbolic character of the *mulier amicta sole* in the *Divine Comedy* (Beal 1985).[31]

We have commented on other works that show the *mulier* delivering the Son, as is the case of the fresco in the Italian abbey of San Pietro al Monte in Civate (c. 1100) (Figure 13).[32] There the *mulier* has given birth to a child who is taken to the throne. It is a triumphant vision of Christ himself. In the same space the battle of St. Michael and his angels against the dragon is depicted, accompanied by an epigraph with the verse from the Book of Revelation (Rev 20, pp. 9–10) referring to the triumph of the Church in the millennium. It appears in the same way in the *Illuminated Apocalypse of St. Victor* where the Son is carried by an angel (Figure 18a). The messianic significance of the Son places the image of the Woman as a mother first in a tropological (Church) rather than in a carnal (Mary) way.

The Church symbolized by the Woman is the persecuted People of God who are forced to remain in the wilderness, a place with a clear Old Testament reference. The desert alludes to the people of Israel's times on waiting in their messianic hope. The character of the Woman-Church is best reflected is in the works that show the Woman sitting and being watched by the dragon, such as in the fresco of the portico of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe where we see the Woman represented as a *Maestà*, enthroned and sitting on a globe while she is besieged by the dragon (Figure 15). Such representations reveal the image of the pilgrim Church that is forced to remain in captivity for a time (Christe 1985, pp. 221–37). We have seen the same sedentary position in the *Liber floridus* by Lambert of Saint-Omer (Figure 9). The link between the besieged seated Woman and the time of waiting time in the desert is accentuated in the Anglo-Norman miniatures, as seen in the originals kept at Trinity College in Cambridge (Figure 22). In this work, the birth of the Son has been separated from the waiting in the desert, simulated by the vegetation that surrounds the Woman. A curious detail in *Paris Apocalypse* miniature from the same artistic setting cannot be overlooked. In it, we see the Woman set inside a great circle, which is the sun that clothes her, while she hands over the Son (Figure 19). At the bottom, we see a rabbit inside its burrow. Logically, we dismiss its inclusion as a decorative detail and we use the formal aspects to realize that the vegetation in that corner, when compared with the previous work, reminds us that which simulates the wilderness. That is why, in the absence of a literary source that confirms it, we must interpret the rabbit in its burrow as a symbol of the waiting and protection of the *mulier*, of the People of God. One last example, within the extensive production of English Apocalypses, is a fourteenth-century example where we see the Woman reclined and being watched by the dragon at the bottom. At the top, the *mulier* waits in the desert, depicted with her hands in a praying position.

Likewise, the presence of the Heavenly Temple and the Ark is a symbol of the people's trust in their God while they wait in the desert. They appear in the miniatures of the *Bamberg Apocalypse* (Figure 7), in Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, in the *Liber floridus of* Lamberg, as well as in other works such as the German Apocalypse series from the fifteenth century. In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant represented the commitment established between God and men. But the prophets proclaimed that with their idolatrous worship and social injustice the people of Israel had broken their covenant with God. Thus, the a new and definitive Covenant was heralded, when God would write his law on the hearts of men (Jer. 31, pp. 31–34). The New Covenant with the people of God is Christ Himself. The presence of the Ark (Rev 11, p. 19) linked to the Woman of the Apocalypse refers to God's intention to maintain his commitment to his people even in times of persecution, which is the general message communicated through the Apocalypse. In the *Rothschild Canticles*, and illuminated manuscript from the thirteenth century, the Virgin on the crescent moon appears with the characteristic gesture of the orante while the rays of the sun come out from her belly (Figure 26). This image is accompanied by a text in which, in addition to emphasising the figure of the *mulier,* refers to the tabernacle: "*Vidi mulierem amicta sole./In*

honore huius virginis/Sanctificavit Dominus tabernaculum/Benedictus es in templo sancto glorie tua/ Qui adheret deo unus spiritus erit cu millo-In omnibus requiem quesiui" (Henkel 1973, p. 18).

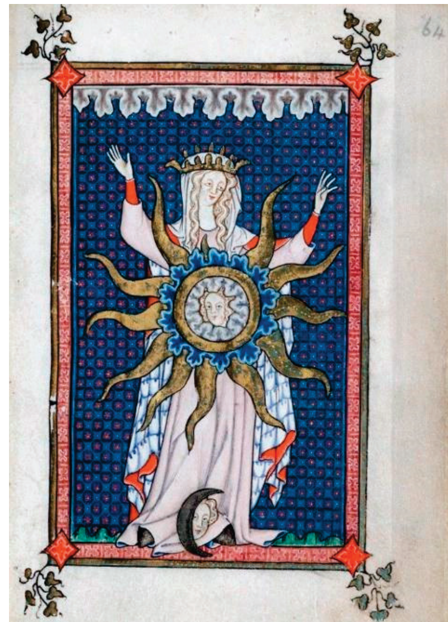

Figure 26. Woman Clothed with the Sun. *Rothschild Canticles*, 13th Century. Yale, University Library.

Judaism believed that the disappeared Ark would reappear at the end of time. For its part, Christianity awaits the second coming of Christ at that same time. While waiting, the Church celebrates the Eucharist which is a symbol of the new covenant with God (1 Cor 11, p. 25; Mar 14, p. 24). This justifies the presence of the chalice on the altar of the Heavenly Temple depicted in the *Beau tapis de Monsieur d'Anjou* (Figure 24A). The Book of Revelation says that the Woman flees to the desert "where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1260 days" (Rev 12, p. 6) and that is what we saw represented in another miniature of the *Trinity Apocalypse* where an angel, with veiled hands, brings a host to the Woman (Figure 23). The Eucharist is the nourishment of the Woman-Church and its type is the manna that fed the people of Israel in the desert, of which, Moses' command, a little was kept inside the Ark (Ex 16, pp. 32–34; Heb. 9, p. 4). But the Ark is also the type of Mary. Thus, there is a double reading that again deals with the Church-Mary pairing.

Many studies confused the images of the Virgin with the mulier amicta sole, as pointed out by Yves Christe (1996b) who explained the need to "return" to patristics so as not to misinterpret them. The first to clearly identify Mary with the Woman Clothed with the Sun was Oecumenius in the sixth century, in his commentary on the Apocalypse (García Paredes 2001, p. 167),[33] an opinion that prevailed among early medieval writers such as Quodvultdeus, Andrew of Caesarea and, later, Autpert Ambrose and Haimo of Rémy (García Mahíques 1995, pp. 185–189; Boto Varela 2002–2003, p. 58). In the ninth century, Bishop Alcuin, in his commentary on the *Apocalypse*, identified the *mulier amicta sole* with the Virgin.[34] However, it was from the twelfth century on, and especially in the following century, that the first clear expressions linking the *mulier amicta sole* with the Virgin Mary began to appear. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux developed this identification and presented the Woman of the vision in Patmos not only as an image of the Church, but rather as a mediator between it and Christ.[35] The key is this: just as Mary became the image of the Church, so too must the Woman of the Apocalypse. This comparison between Mary and the Church is rooted in the Christian tradition where the Virgin is the image of the Church. The same happens with the wife of the *Song of Songs*, also a symbol of the Church, who became linked with Mary. In this way, the sign-image of the Woman of the Apocalypse was transferred to various Marian types who made her attributes their own (Warner 1991,

pp. 332–50) (García Mahíques 1995, pp. 187–97).[36] In this context, coinciding with the birth of a new way of seeing Christianity, biblical exegesis began to focus its efforts around the figure of Mary. In the world of Eastern Christianity, the focal attention given to Mary had already been developed from her status as the Mother of God. The cult of the Virgin began to be established from the acceptance of the Incarnation of the Son of God, by the work of the Holy Spirit, in a virgin woman.

In the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* a good example is found of the use of the image of Mary in medieval exegesis with references to the Woman of the Apocalypse. Here the Woman of the Apocalypse is related to the Coronation of the Virgin.[37] The medieval illustrations of the *amicta sole* depicted her crowned, as a queen on earth, as we can see in this case and also in the *Dutch Apocalypse* (Figure 14). This must be related to the birth of a new Christianity arising from its proximity to chivalrous love, where the Virgin becomes the lady to whom the warriors pay homage. The Virgin is Our Lady, an expression originated in Syria, in the fifth century, and that became popular in the West with the crusades (Reau 1998, p. 59). Also, for Stefania Paone (2017) a gender reading early connects these representations of the *mulier* with the Virgin Mary and with the figure of medieval queens around the 14th century.[38]

The way in which the Woman of the Apocalypse has been depicted in the *Speculum* of the *Codex cremifanensis* symbolizes a triumphant image of the *mulier* holding the chalice, cross and banner of victory (Figure 25). We find her depicted with an identical composition together with St. John in a work of the fourteenth century. His attitude is prayerful, as we had already seen in the *Beatus* and in other representations of the same period. We identify the meaning of its symbols due to the reading that we have previously made of the *Mulier* as the Virgin-Church. She is the symbol by which the coming of the Messiah has taken place. However, this does not necessarily mean that this is an image of millenarianism. The presence of the Woman of the Apocalypse is a symbol that, as a hieroglyph, is used by the faithful to remind them that the kingdom of God is still present in the world, that the devil has been temporarily overcome and that, although he continues to attack men on earth, the day of his defeat and definitive extinction will come. It is a comforting and victorious vision for God's people. In this sense, the account of the *mulier* does not take place in the near future but in an extended present in which this victory is revealed (Boto Varela 2002–2003, pp. 67–68).

The Woman Clothed with the Sun came to be used as a talisman image by virtue of its reading as a symbol of the triumphant Church and of messianic hope. This is not a presumption but a fact established in the *Beatus*. It is not something that is revealed to us by the skill of the anonymous maker of the miniatures but the fearful hand of its contemporary readers, the clergy of the Early Middle Ages, who left evidence of their superstitions and magical practices in the various codices (Freeman 1995, p. 307). Crossing-out, mutilation and erasing on the images of the devil that show the desire of the one who made to weaken him. However, there were also pious practices in which symbols with positive values were added to the miniatures. This is the case of the *Mulier amicta sole* and the most paradigmatic is that of the Beatus *Cabinet 14-1*, preserved in the National Library of Madrid. At first glance it might seem to have been attacked by some irreverent person. Professor Joaquín Yarza has revealed that these *graffiti* were not intended to spoil the painting, but are a sign of a special devotion to the image and the prayers poured out by his reader (Yarza 1998, p. 78). Among the signs, we can recognize the letters X and P both separately and together forming the Chi Rho symbol, a well-known anagram of Jesus Christ of Constantinian origin. In addition, there is the letter Y, Jesus' initial, although written by an unskilled hand. The triumphal vision of the Woman has a messianic sense because the symbols allude to her role as the mystical mother of Christ and therefore we can see that the graphic additions have been made on the figure of her as an orant and with the Son in her womb surrounded by the disc of the sun and not on the image above.

7. Conclusions

The development of the theme of the Woman of the Apocalypse in its iconographic types goes beyond being as a visual aid for one of the key chapters of the Book of Revelation. It consists of various types ranging from the illustration of the passage in which the appearance of the *mulier amicta sole* is narrated to the construction of a rich symbolic landscape full of exegetical readings. The present study has allowed us to test various starting hypotheses. First, that the earliest depictions of the Book of Revelation chapter 12, which must have been made at the time of early Christianity at around the fourth century, were indebted to the compositional schemes of the ancient world. The influence of these prototypes is evident in the illustrations produced from the ninth century onwards, which have survived to this day. In these early surviving models, chapter 12 was divided into three iconographic types: the Woman Clothed by the Sun being chased by the dragon, Michael fighting the dragon and the woman with the pair of wings and the dragon pouring out the river of water that is swallowed by the earth. This three-part division, with two themes dedicated to the *mulier*, was enough to form a closed cycle. It was from the thirteenth century when the scenes depicted multiplied, moving from the three initial iconographic types to the appearance of other iconographic types that expanded the visual details of the account, such as her waiting in the desert, all due to the impact of the interpretations made by the Church Fathers. The symbolic scope of the *mulier* and, above all, due to her interpretation as a figure of the Church, led to the representation of a triumphant conceptual image.

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Notes

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2 This account is indebted to myths belonging to religions of the ancient world. Thus, its similarity to the battle between the warrior god Marduk and the mother goddess Tiamat in the Babylonian poem Enuma Elish has been pointed out, as well as to the Greco-Roman tradition with the myth of the birth of Apollo—god of the sun—by his mother Leto, who while pregnant with him and his twin Artemis, was persecuted by the dragon, Python, sent by Hera (O’Hear and O’Hear 2015, p. 111).

3 The purpose of the message revealed is to continue what Christ expressed and announce the Parousia, his second coming, and the coming, therefore, of his final triumph. The visions that are related show how this book is indebted to the Jewish Revelations collected in the Old Testament (Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah).

4 Based on the wording of the Book of Revelation itself, it is difficult to differentiate between the apocalyptic and prophetic genres. In a way, the second is an extension of the first. The difference lies in the fact that the prophet received divine revelations and transmitted them orally, while in the Book of Revelation they are communicated by means of visions that are collected later.

5 From now on I refer to the author as always being St. John, since my interest does not lie in carrying out a philological study of the Book of Revelation but in the analysis of different iconographic types that emerge from this text. In the visual tradition John the Evangelist was typified as the author of the same.

6 Most of this apocalyptic literature is apocryphal. In the Bible, only the books of Daniel and Revelation have been recognized as canonical. Fragments of this type of literature are preserved in books such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah, as well as in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (the synoptic Gospels) and in some of Paul’s letters.

7 A red-figured amphora type shows Leto with the infants Apollo and Artemis in her arms, as she flees the Python, that shows amongst the rocks on the left. The amphora belonged to the the Hamilton Collection. The Ashmolean Museum (Oxford University) have a lithography of this ancien greek image in his Western Art Print Room that belonged to the Ruskin’s Educational Collection. This lithography was publisehd first at Lenormant and de Witte (1857).

8 Illuminated manuscript of the Apocalypse made around the year 1000 for Emperor Henry II containing fifty images made by various artists (O’Hear and O’Hear 2015, p. 116).

9 The study of the representation of the dragon in the *Beatus* has received relevant attention in Caiozzo (2013).

10 It is the most primitive formula of visual narration. In the fifth century BC it was replaced by the *monoscenic*, a method of representation that focused on a single scene. (Cfr. García Mahíques 2009, pp. 81–83).

11 In addition to the works of Joaquín Yarza, for the study of the Beatus, the studies of Williams (1994, 2017) should be reviewed.

12 The same author has another interesting study on the iconography of the Apocalypse (Thérel 1976, pp. 373–94).

13 GREGORIUS MAGNUS, *Moralia in Iob*. Cl. 1708, SL 143b, lib. 34, par. 14, line 9–14.

14 Although here we refer to the main interpretations of the astrological symbols that accompany the Woman of the Apocalypse, we find a broader study in García Mahíques (1995).

15 GREGORIUS MAGNUS, *loc. cit.*

16 AMBROSIUS AUTPERTUS, *Expositio in Apocalipsin*. CM 27, lib. 9, ch. (s.s.) 19, versus 17, line 15 and following; Adriano Peroni (2007) has studied the importance of Autpertus in medieval iconographic programs such as in San Pietro al Monte Civate. See also Yves Christe (1996a).

17 AUCTOR INCERTUS (AGUSTINUS HIPONENSIS?), *Expositio in Apocalypsim Joanis*, P.L. XXXV, 2434.

18 RUPERTUS TUITIENSIS, *De sancta trinitate et operibus eius*, CM 24, LIB. 39 Quoted by García Mahíques (1995, p. 188).

19 AUCTOR INCERTUS, *Expositio in Apocalypsin*, cap. XII, in P.L. XVII, 875B.

20 (Beatus of Liebana 1995): book VI, 2, lines 29–50.

21 Bialostocki ([1966] 1972, pp. 111–24) introduces the term *framing theme* to refer to the fact that with the transmission of compositional schemes in the creation of a new iconographic type -or in the variation thereof- analogies are also brought regarding the function or theme of the original type.

22 For Klein (1979) the fresco of San Pietro al Monte Civate coincides, although with some differences, with the *Beatus* which was used as a model.

23 The influence of the Beatus in Hispanic Romanesque art and, specifically, the representation of the mulier and the dragon have been studied by Maaría Luísa Melero Moneo (1994); two relief sculptures representing the *mulier* with the Son and God the Father have been proposed as a composition for the tympanum of the Cathedral of León (c. 1200) (Boto Varela 1999).

24 I am referring here to Marian iconographic types that were formed by taking the profiles of the *mulier amicta sole*. García Mahíques (1995) has dealt with this topic. See also García Mahíques (1996–1997).

25 The legend places the events in front of the Latin Gate. Although he comes out unscathed, this episode is usually referred to as the martyrdom of Saint John. See Reau (1998, pp. 193–194).

26 It is "the resurrection of Drusiana at Ephesus", "the destruction of the temple of Diana", "the test of the poisoned cup", "last mass" and "death of St. John". In these cycles, the final theme of the Ascension of St. John to heaven is not observed. This was a controversial issue at the time that was finally condemned, but came to be translated into images. On the latter case see Hamburger (2002).

27 "what is the desert, but that which is forsaken, where no labourer has access? (. . .) To this desert it is said that the woman flees, that is, among wicked men, where the way that is Christ is not found. (. . .) In this land, the woman, that is, the Church, dwells and there she is nourished by the heavenly doctrine, until the one thousand two hundred and ninety days are over, that is, from the first coming of the Lord until the second coming, until she is freed from the wicked." Beatus of Liebana (1995).

28 Its production is an example of female patronage since it took place as part of the reform carried out at the request of Fina Buzzacarini, consort of the lord of Francesco I of Carrara, lord of Padua, around 1370, who transformed the space into a family mausoleum. The paintings were commissioned from the Florentine painter Giusto de Menabuoi (Derbes 2016). Likewise, from gender studies, the female Apocalypse owner have been studied by Laura Whatley (2018) who has pointed out the relationship of their families of origin with the crusades.

29 There are differences in the presentation of the figure of St. John. In the Gnostic text, the apostle is presented as an ascetic and chastity is shown to be his main value. However, in the second he is presented as a married presbyter. The name Prochorus appears in the canonical book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, identified as one of the first deacons (Acts 6, p. 5). On the figure of John, the books of Culpepper (1994) and Hamburger (2002) should be consulted.

30 There are two different typologies in Eastern and Western Christianity: in the first, he is represented as an old man with a white beard, whose textual basis would be some words of Christ collected in the Gospel (John 21, p. 22). In the West, type that depicted him as the young and beardless triumphed because he was the youngest of the apostles (Reau 1998, pp. 189–90). His image is completed by carrying the symbol of an eagle, the animal that corresponds to him from the four of the tetramorph according to Ezekiel's vision.

31 The characters of the *Divine Comedy* visit paradise, an ethereal place where the poet and Beatríz go inside the sphere of the sun where Dante notices the presence of three concentric circles. For Beal, the first circle is formed by the twelve theologians "as such are integral to a spectacle presenting Beatrice as the Woman in the Sun from the twelfth chapter 12" (Beal 1996, 209). Thus, for this author, Song X would be based precisely on this biblical episode, which makes it evident that the description of Beatriz made is based on the iconographic representations of the mulier and her astral symbols (Beal 1985, 58).

32 For more information see Peroni (2007).

33 The full text was found at the end of the nineteenth century and published in Hoskier (1928).

34 MIGNE, *Patrologiae latina*, 100: p. 1152.

[35] BERNARDUS CLARAEVALLENSIS, *Doménica Infra octavam* Assumptionis, para. 5, vol. 5, p. 265.

[36] A classic study of the incorporation of the profiles of the mulier amicta sole in the iconographic type of the Virgin of humility is the work of Meiss (1936).

[37] In this case the archetype is the Coronation of the Virgin and her types are the recovery of the Ark by King David (2 Sam 6: pp. 1–15), The Woman of the Apocalypse and King Solomon yielding the right side of his throne to his mother.

[38] Paone has specifically studied the case of fresco cycles in the nuns' choir of in the Church of Santa Maria Donnaregina in Naples (14th century), patrocinated by Mary of Hungary, wife of Charles II of Anjou (Paone 2017).

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Chastity in Temperance's Images

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Abstract: Ancient thinking conceived Temperance as the enemy of pleasures and excesses, mainly bodily pleasures. This idea was the source of Temperance's depictions in the Middle Ages. Attributes such as the torch and jug, castle, tower, bit, salamander, ermine, or the presence of Cupid accompany Temperance's personification as controlling elements of bodily pleasures. The combinations of attributes relative to chastity give rise to two different iconographic types. These iconographic types translate theoretical considerations about this virtue visually.

Keywords: temperance; chastity; lust; allegory; iconography; cardinal virtues

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1. Introduction

Although there were no visual references in Antiquity, representations of Temperance appeared in the Middle Ages. Its first depictions are from the 9th century, and how it is represented led to several iconographic types.[1] León Coloma (1998) approached some of these iconographic types. However, scholars paid more attention to Temperance's "new visuality"[2] iconographic type (Whitehead 1960; White 1969, 1973; North 1979) because of technological innovation of its attributes. Other research about Temperance's visualization usually focuses on a concrete work of art, such as Camelliti's (2013) essay. Art historians usually try to explain allegories using Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1593; Ripa 1765), but in this case, we do not find medieval Temperance depictions in this treatise or similar treatises. Broad research about Temperance's image is necessary, so this essay focuses on visual depictions of chastity in Temperance's depictions. As a result, several attributes and iconographic types emphasize the quality of chastity in temperance as a virtue. This essay exposes the origin of these attributes by drawing attention to their meaning. This research merges art history and written sources with an iconographical approach[3] by relating images to written sources. With this purpose, this essay's structure has three parts. The first section briefly explains a theoretical framework from classical and medieval written sources as an introduction to the topic. The second part exposes the origin, continuity, and variation of "Chaste Temperance" iconographic types in which chastity makes sense for their characteristic attributes. The third section explains other Temperance attributes related to chastity, such as a bit, bridles, salamander, and ermine.

2. Chastity as a Virtue Associated with Temperance

Soprhosyne referred to Temperance in the classic Antiquity, which meant self-control and chastity, among other meanings (see North 1979; Rademaker 2004). Some literary and philosophical sources define this term. Plato defined temperance as "an order and control of pleasures and lust" (Plato 1949, p. 81; *R.* 8, 430e).[4] Aristotle explained that "To sobriety of mind it belongs not to value highly bodily pleasures and enjoyments, not to be covetous of every enjoyable pleasure" (Aristotle, p. 60; *VV* 2, 1250a 5). According to Aristotle, Virtue is at the midpoint between two extremes, which are two vices (Arist. *EE*, II, 3, 5, 10), placing temperance between lust and chastity: "Temperance is a midpoint between licentiousness and lack of sensitivity about pleasures" (Aristotle 1973, pp. 1330–31; MM 21, 1191a).[5]

Temperance's opposition to lust prevailed because Apuleius mentioned Moderation—one of Temperance's qualities—when Venus was outraged by her son. She threatened to appeal to Temperance to extinguish Cupid's fire in lovers' hearts:

> "Dare I ask for helps from my enemy Moderation, whom my son's very excesses so often offend? Yet shudder at the thought of tackling that squalid old peasant woman. Still, whatever its source, the solace of revenge is not to be spurned. I must certainly use her, her alone, to impose the harshest punishment on that good-for-nothing, shatter his quiver and blunt his arrows, unstring his bow, and quench his torch" (Apuleius 1996, p. 170; *Met*. V,30,5)[6].

Also, in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (X, 143–153) fire represents lust: "Now there is gentler work for the lyre, and I sing of boys loved by the gods, and girls stricken with forbidden fires, deserving punishment for their lust".[7] Fire symbolizes the passion in most of Sappho's poetry and means triumphant love (North 1979, p. 180). So, *sophrosyne* personifies Cupid's enemy, whose soul it tries to extinguish. The enmity between bodily pleasure and Temperance remained, as demonstrated when Macrobius explains that Temperance is "to abstain from everything that the habits of the body seek".[8]

Although Aristotle opposed Temperance to lust and chastity, the last one became one of Temperance's virtues. Thinkers have considered that Cardinal Virtues were composed of other virtues. Macrobius explains: "Temperance is accompanied by modesty, humility, self-restraint, chastity, integrity, moderation, frugality, sobriety, and purity".[9] This idea remained in medieval thought, in which chastity and purity are Temperance's virtues, as Alain de Lille in *De Virtutibus et de Vitiis et de Donis Spiritus Sancti* (11th century)[10] and Bono Giamponi in *Il libro de' vizî e delle virtudi e Il trattato di virtú e di vizî* (ca. 1264)[11] explain. Hugh of St. Victor gave seven leaves to Temperance's branch in his tree of Virtues, and "*afflictio carnis*"[12] was one of them. Aquinas considered chastity and virginity as Temperance's virtues (S.Th. [45040] II^{a}-IIae, q. 152) and opposed Temperance to lust.[13] For these reasons, Bono Giamboni's *Il libro de' vizî e delle virtudi e Il trattato di virtú e di vizî*[14] and William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (1370–1386, passus XIX)[15] explained Temperance's function to control passions and wishes. So, ancient thinking continued in the Middle Ages, as many thinkers explain.[16] These theoretical considerations were translated visually in Temperance images, and some emphasized chastity as one of its qualities.

3. "Chaste Temperance" Iconographic Types

Temperance's images came up during the Middle Ages, when two different iconographic types of "Chaste Temperance" appeared. We can distinguish between the two iconographic types because Temperance holds distinct attributes, but both have the same purpose: highlighting chastity in Temperance images.

3.1. Chaste Temperance 1: Fire and Water

"Chaste Temperance 1" appeared in the 9th century and was codified from classical sources and Aurelius Prudentius's work. The main attributes of this iconographic type are the torch and the pitcher or container, which refer to how Chastity defeats Lust. In *Cambrai Gospels* (9th century, Cambrai, Municipal Library, ms. 327, fol. 16v) and *Marmoutier* or *Autun Sacramentary* (ca. 845–850, Autun, Municipal Library, S 019, fol. 173v) (Figure 1), Temperance holds a torch and pours water with a pitcher. These attributes remind us of patristic sources. Julianus Pomerius explains that the main activity of Temperance is extinguishing the passion's fire: "*Ignem libidinosae voluptatis extinguit*" (POMER. *De vita contemplativa*, 3, 19; PL LIX, 502). So, these attributes refer to extinguishing concupiscence fire, as in Antiquity was Venus and Cupid's enemy.

Figure 1. Temperance, *Marmoutier* or *Autun Sacramentary*, ca. 845–850, Autun, Municipal Library, S 019, fol. 173v.

However, Temperance's literary image[17] appeared in Antiquity. Prudentius' *Psychomachia* (4th century) developed Tertullian's idea of a battle between the Christian Virtues and the Vices. This epic poem is crowded with combats similar to *Illiad* (Lackey 2005, p. 563) or *Aeneid* (O'Reilly 1988, p. 13). Concretely, a "psychomachia" is the constant soul's *(Psyche)* combat, an interior fight between spirit and flesh. Prudentius' poem consists of seven battles between personified Vices and Virtues and concludes with a successful battle to build the Wisdom temple to celebrate the soul's triumph. One of these *Psychomachia*'s fights is between *Libido* (Lust) and *Pudicitia* (Chastity):

> "Next to step forth ready to engage on the grassy field is the maiden Chastity, shining in beauteous armour. On her falls Lust the Sodomite, girt with the firebrands of her country, and thrusts into her face a torch of pinewood blazing murkily with pitch and burning sulphur, attacking her modest eyes with the flames and seeking to cover them with the foul smoke" (Prudentius 1949, p. 283; PL LX, 19, 40–45).

The depictions of this fight show Chastity as a soldier holding some spears and Lust holding three torches on fire, as in *Psychomachia* (ca. 900–1049, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms. 10066-77, fol. 116r) (Figure 2a). So, extinguishing Lust's fire was depicted in Temperance's image. The torch is an emblem of Lust—Temperance's enemy vice—and Temperance tries to put out with its pitcher. Erwin Panofsky explains:

> "To mediaeval mind, thoroughly familiar with such authors as Seneca and Horace, the torch appeared as a symbol of unholy ardor even more telling than the bow and he arrows—so that the illustrators of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, where only bow and arrows are mentioned as the attributes of Cupid, were prone to supplement them by the torch which in the text belongs to his mistress, Libido" (Panofsky 1965, p. 94).

In classical Antiquity, Temperance had to extinguish the passionate fire, and Prudentius' *Psychomachia* Chastity defeats Lust,[18] who falls with its torches (ca. 900–920, Stadtbibliothek Bern, ms. 264, fol. 36v) (Figure 2b). Then, "So spake Chastity, and rejoicing in the death of Lust, whom she had slain, washed her stained sword in the waters of Jordan; for a red dew of gore had clung to it and befouled the bright steel from the wound" (Prudentius 1949, p. 289; PL LX, 19, 98–104). *Psychomachia*'s manuscripts (10th century, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms. 9987-91, fol. 102r) (Figure 3) show this image, which depicts when Chastity washes its sword in the Jordan River. Water to purify Lust's fire is also depicted in Temperance's image. Prudentius's *Psychomachia* was the

main source of inspiration for depictions of virtues during the Middle Ages. For images of Temperance, *Psychomachia* was essential for its first depictions because there were no direct visual precedents from classical sources,[19] only written sources. In addition, until Aquinas organized Virtues between Cardinals and Theological in the 13th century, it was common to represent Cardinal Virtues by one of the virtues that compose them. In this case, chastity is one of the characteristic virtues of Temperance, so it is comprehensible that Chastity's depiction in *Psychomachia*'s manuscripts was the artists' inspiration to depict Temperance.

(**a**)

(**b**)

Figure 2. (**a**) Chastity vs. Lust, *Psychomachia*, ca. 900–1049, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms. 10066-77, fol. 116r. (**b**) Lust defeated by Chastity, *Psychomachia*, ca. 900–920, Stadtbibliothek Bern, ms. 264, fol. 36v.

Figure 3. Chastity washes its sword in the Jordan River, *Psychomachia*, 10th century, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, ms. 9987-91, fol. 102r.

Beyond manuscripts, in Canterbury Cathedral (12th century) (Figure 4a), Temperance also holds a torch and a container to extinguish the fire. Although scholars locate the torch and pitcher as Temperance's attributes during the 9th and 11th centuries, there are later artworks with them, like in a 14th-century manuscript (1308, London, British Library, ms. 83 II) (Figure 4b). Therefore, the iconographic type of "Chaste Temperance 1" appeared in the 9th century and was codified from classical sources and Prudentius's work. The main attributes of this iconographic type are the torch and the pitcher or container, which refer to how Chastity defeats Lust. This image remained until the 14th century, when a new one appeared.

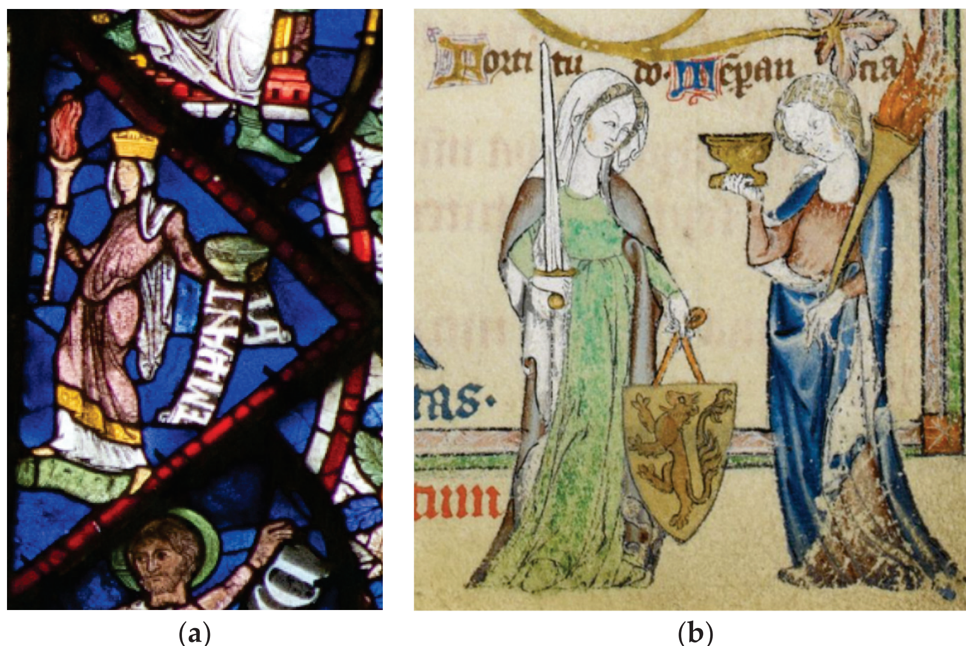


Figure 4. (**a**) Temperance, 12th century, Canterbury Cathedral. (**b**) Fortitude and Temperance, *Psalter of Robert de Lisle*, 1308, London, British Library, ms. 83 II.

However, this idea remained in Temperance's depictions through other attributes. Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* explains Temperance's allegory as a woman who carries "*Nella destra mano terrà una tenaglia con un ferro infocato, en ella sinistra un vaso di acqua, nel quale tempra quel ferro ardente*" (Ripa 1765, 5, p. 268). So, fire is the emblem of love, which Cupid spread around the world. For this reason, Ripa thought "*Forza di Amore*" as Cupid—winged, holding a bow and arrows—who is under raining fire, referring to his power to burn down the world (Ripa 1765, 3, p. 119). Also, Boissard's emblem "*Ardenter et caste*" shows an urn surrounded by flames, which refers to Chastity, which cannot be burnt by Lust's fire (Boissard 1588, p. 72).

3.2. Chaste Temperance 2: Castle and Keys

Temperance's chastity was emphasized again with a new depiction in the 14th century: "Chaste Temperance 2". In this case, Temperance holds a castle and one or more keys. *La Canzone delle Virtu e delle Scienze* by Bartolomeo di Bartoli (ca. 1349, Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 599, fol. 3) (Figure 5) shows Temperance locking a tower with a key. Some leaves with inscriptions of Temperance's virtues arose from this tower. A text (vv. 106–126) completes the depiction:

> *"La terza donna che'l nostro apetito/ch'ha'l soperchio dexio, domma e refrena,/sempre è d'onestà piena/e volser al suo chastel discreta chiave:/abre e serra soave,/cum vol razone a la cupiditate,/et in sobrietate/s'aviva, con fa'l corpo in nui per l'alma/e de vertù gran palma/produce e fructo bon suo dolce lito:/e poi chi vol nel sito/esser d'amore amante, chostei'l mena/a la sua real cena,/ma d'ogne vanitate e parlar brave/prima ch'i' va, se vale./Ch'ivi è pur zente de benignitate,/sì ch'onne dignitate/a lor s'avean, però pun giù la salma/d'ogni viltà che scalma/in l'inferno Epichuro, che non volse/viver modesto e mo' sotto lei dolse"* (di Bartoli 1904, p. 29).

Figure 5. Temperance, *La Canzone delle Virtu e delle Scienze*, Bartolomeo di Bartoli, ca. 1349, Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 599, fol. 3.

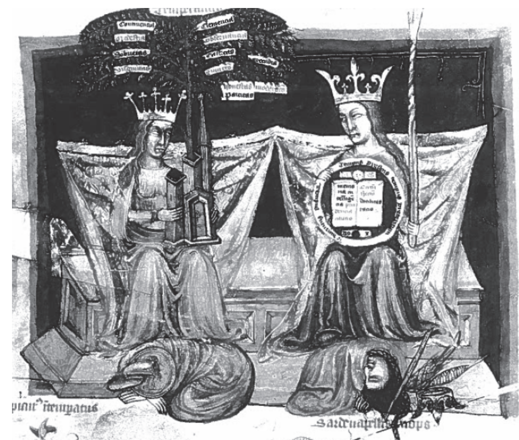
This image is related to the *Song of Songs*: "If she is a wall, we will build towers of silver on her. If she is a door, we will enclose her with panels of cedar. (She) I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers" (8: 9–10). So, this castle or tower represents the woman's body, which has to be closed to protect her chastity and purity. There is a similar image in *Virtues and Arts* by Nicolò da Bologna (14th century, *Novella super libros Decratalium*, Giovanni da Andrea, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. B. 42 inf., fol. 1) (Figure 6). In this case, Temperance has a small fortress on its knees and is going to open or close it with a key. Also, in the *Salone delle Allegorie delle Virtù e dei Vizi* from the Casa Minerbi-Del Sale in Ferrara (1360–1370), Stefano da Ferrara depicted Temperance opening or closing a castle with a key[20] (Figure 7a). During the Middle Ages, the castle and key were an emblem of a man's honor and the safekeeping of women's chastity (Timoneda 1992, pp. 29–31). For this reason, Temperance's image reinforces the idea of fighting lust, as *Flor de Virtudes* (14th century) explains: "*La segunda es forçar la voluntad natural que viene por algún movimiento sensual, como aquellos que naturalmente son inclinados a luxuria, o gula o sobervia o ira o otros vicios a los quales se mueven por inclinación natural o por mal costumbre; e esta se llama sufrimiento. E esta es mayor virtud que la temperancia*" (Hurus 2013, p. 111). *The Aquinas' Triumph* by Andrea Bonaiuti (1366–1367, Florencia, Santa María Novella, Capilla de los Españoles) and a 14th-century manuscript (ca. 1340, Viena, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. ser. nov. 2639 fol. 1v) (Figure 7b) show similar images. Although the castle and keys were the most frequent attributes of this iconographic type, sometimes there is a variation: Temperance stands on defeated Epicure (figs. 5, 6 y 7b).[21] Epicure is an *exemplum* of Lust, the enemy vice of Temperance, which it defeats in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*.

These ideas and images remained in the 15th century because, as Francisco de Imperial's El decir a las siete virtudes (ca. 1407) explains about Temperance, "e la setena dos llaves doradas, para çerrar e abrir muy aparejadas, tenía en mano, en la otra un castillo" (Imperial 1977, p. 107). Imperial describes the other Virtues with traditional attributes, but Temperance's attributes are less common: "La de senblante nin alegre nin triste,/que abre e çierra tan mansamente/el su castillo, segunt ver podiste,/es la Tenplança verdaderamente; su fija es Continençia propiamente,/e Castidat, Linpieza e Sobriedat,/Verguença, Templamiento e Onestat,/e Humildat, que el mundo non syente" (Imperial 1977, p. 112). Imperial's work is only an example of this verbal image in the literature, but there are many more examples. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán wrote "*ella lo conserve so secreta llave:/porque poco vale ganar si guardar*" (quoted in Cacho 1999, p. 197). This quote emphasizes the importance of keeping chastity well protected because its corruption would cause it to lose its value. On the other hand, Pedro Manuel de Urrea combined the image of closing with a key and the necessity to turn off fire with water, comparing the human body to a boiling pot: "*Razón es que yo le alabe/que encerrome y no paresco/y quando allí me amortesco/viene abrirme con su*

llave/Echame agua muy suave/que siempre brolla/madre herviendo esta mi olla" (quoted in Lacarra 1999, p. 167).

Figure 6. Virtues and Arts, *Novella super libros Decratalium*, Giovanni da Andrea, 14th century, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. B. 42 inf., fol. 1.

(**a**)



(**b**)

Figure 7. (**a**) Temperance, *Salone delle Allegorie delle Virtù e dei Vizi*, 1360–1370, Ferrara, Casa Minerbi-del Sale. (**b**) Temperance and Prudence, ca. 1340, Viena, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. ser. nov. 2639 fol. 1v.

So, Temperance's virtues are the meaning of the new attributes. Beyond literature, Antonio de la Sale's work (1461, La Haya, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 9287–9288, fol. 113) (Figure 8) is proof of the continuity of this iconographic type during the 15th century. In the next century, there is some reference to the key, as La Perriére explains: "*Que femme honneste aller ne doibt pas loing/le doigt levé, qu'à parler ne s'avance./La clef en main, denote qu'avoir*

soing/doibt sur les biens du mary, par prudence" (de la Perrière 1545, emb. 18). Therefore, the key is the main object of Temperance's chastity safekeeping.

Figure 8. Cardinal Virtues, *La Sale*, Antonio de la Sale, 1461, La Haya, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 9287–9288, fol. 113.

4. Attributes of Temperance Related to Chastity

Beyond "Chaste Temperance" iconographic types, there are some Temperance emblems related to chastity: a bit and/or bridles, the salamander, and the ermine.

4.1. Bit and Bridles

The bit has been an attribute of Temperance since the 9th century, as Theodulf of Orléans described Moderation carrying a *frena* and *flagella* (bit and whip) (North 1979, p. 217). However, bridles were already related to Temperance in Antiquity. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Modesty produces the use of reins: "whom he beholds in company with modesty like an image upon a holy pedestal. He sees her, but he is afraid and falls backwards in adoration, and by his fall is compelled to pull back the reins with such violence as to bring both the steeds on their haunches".[22]

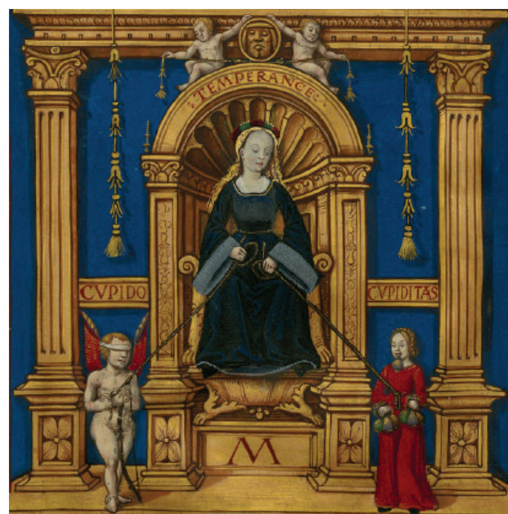
Since the 14th century, the bit and bridles became one of the most common attributes in images of Temperance. These frequent attributes referred to some qualities of Temperance: abstinence, sobriety, and continence. However, since the 15th century, bit and bridles acquired a new meaning related to confrontation to pleasures, as biblical sources mention: "Do not follow your lusts, restrain your desires" (Si 18,30). For this reason, Fray Íñigo de Mendoza described Temperance as holding a bridle or bit, referring to touch's contention facing pleasure:

> "*Labraran mas vna brida/desabrida/contra el carnal mouimiento,/por que no con desatiento/en vn momento/nos manzilla fama y vida;/sy la carne no es regida y sometida/al freno déla razón, / las espuelas de afición/en tal son le dan tal arremetida,/que es muy cierta su cayda./Sera de blanca color/por honor,/que es enemiga de amores,/y serán de sus lauores/bordadores/esquiuidad y temor;/y terna mas el amargor/que el dulçor/por guardar el freno sano,/y desdeñado lo vfano,/a punto llano/labraran esta lauor,/que es mas segura y mejor*" (Mendoza 1912, p. 76).

Therefore, bit and bridle are visual depictions of pleasures' continence, specifically taste and touch. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán related this continence to the necessary fortitude that Temperance needs to face bodily temptations: "*El mas sabio i esforçado/es el que los naturales/apetitos i carnales/ha vencido i sobrado;/este es el principal grado/de saber i fortaleza*" (Pérez de Guzmán 1912, p. 615).

A century later, Cesare Ripa also described Temperance carrying a bit and bridles to explain Temperance's goal to face bodily pleasures: "*Dipingesi col freno in una mano, e col tempo nell'altra, per dimostrare l'offizio della Temperanza, che è raffrenare, e moderare gli appetite dell'animo*" (Ripa 1765, vol. 5, p. 266). Ripa explains more about the kind of pleasures Temperance should avoid: "*il freno dichiara, che deve essere la Temperanza principalmente adoperata nel gusto, e nel tattoo; l'uno de' quali solo si partecipa per la bocca, e l'altro è steso per tutto il corpo*" (Ripa 1765, vol. 5, p. 267).

When artists wanted to emphasize chastity in a Temperance image, they depicted bits and bridles. In *Traité des vertus, de leur excellence, et comment on les peut acquérir* (ca. 1510, París, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 12247, fol. 12r) (Figure 9a), Temperance constrains Cupid and Cupidinitas with strings to control them. Beyond Temperance's enmity to them since Antiquity, Faroult explains that the depiction of Temperance was inspired by the images of vestal virgins because they were the perfect example of *refrenatio cupiditatis* (see Faroult 2006). Achille Bocchi in *Symbolicarum quaestionum, de universo genere, quas serio ludebat, libri quinque* (1574) (Figure 9b) depicted Temperance holding bridles to control Cupid.[23] Cupid wears a bit because he spreads the love that leads people to bodily pleasures and Lust, the vice opposite of Temperance. Also, in the *Viconti-Sforza Tarot* (ca. 1432–1450), Bonifacio Bembo depicted Temperance and Fortitude accompanying the Lovers' carriage, which Cupid attacks (Moakley 1966, p. 74). But in Bocchi's emblem, Temperance holds another Cupid, who carries a torch. The *Amoris divini et humani antipathia* (1629) explains that Cupid spreads the flame of love: "*presto se buelue a encender/si es recién muerta la llama/en el pecho, de quien ama*" (Amoris 1629, p. 67) and "*si se enciende bien amor/llueua el cielo, y moxe el mar/que nole podra matar*" (Amoris 1629, p. 143).



(**a**)

(**b**)

Figure 9. (**a**) Temperance, Cupid, and Cupidinitas, *Traité des vertus, de leur excellence, et comment on les peut acquérir*, ca. 1510, París, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, fr. 12247, fol. 12r. (**b**) "Non est amicus hic, qui amare desinit", *Symbolicarum quaestionum, de universo genere, quas serio ludebat, libri quinque*, 1574, London, Warburg Institute, II, simb. XLVI.

4.2. Salamander and Ermine

Although "Chaste Temperance 1" tried to extinguish Cupid's fire, this virtue agrees with spiritual love. North explains that the salamander refers to resistance to passion because it can live uninjured among flames (North 1979, p. 182). The medieval *Bestario Toscano* explained about this concept:

> "*De la salamandra, que vive de fuego, podemos conocer dos clases de hombres: una, son todos aquellos que están inflamados por el amor del Espíritu Santo, así como Nuestro Señor inflamó a los Apóstoles del Espíritu Santo, en forma de lenguas de fuego, el día de*

Pentecostés; (. . .) La otra clase, son todos aquellos que son lujuriosos y ardientes del amor carnal" (Sebastián 1984, p. 26).

So, salamanders are able to live while surrounded by fire. Temperance is soaked in God's fire, but it does not allow burning by bodily love's fire because chastity and virginity are its qualities. Pliny the Elder in *Natural History* (10, 67) explains that a salamander is so cold that it can even extinguish a fire, like Temperance extinguishes it by pouring water. Camillo Camilli's emblem "*Intvs ad omnem*" explains: "*salamandra non è animale di quei, che nascono nel fuoco, quali sono i Pirigoni: ma è bene tanto ardita, che gli và incontro, & affrontando la sua fiamma, come suo certo nimico, si sforza in tal modo si spegnerla*" (Camilli 1586, vol. I, p. 131). Joachim Camerius's emblem "*Candide et syncere*"[24] and Silvestro Pietrasanta's emblem "*Dvrabo*" (Pietrasanta 1634, p. 262) explain similar qualities of the salamander. So, the salamander defeats fire as Temperance defeats bodily pleasures. Paolo Giovio[25] and Cesare Capaccio[26] explained that a salamander could extinguish the fire in the emblem "*Nvtrisco et extingvo*". In addition, Horapolo explains that "to write 'purity', they depict fire and water because these elements are necessary to carry out a purification" (Horapolo 1991, p. 125). Purity is a quality of Temperance, as well as Chastity and Virginity. Although a salamander is not a very common attribute, Heinrich Aldegrever (1552) (Figure 10a) depicted Temperance near an emblem of this animal.

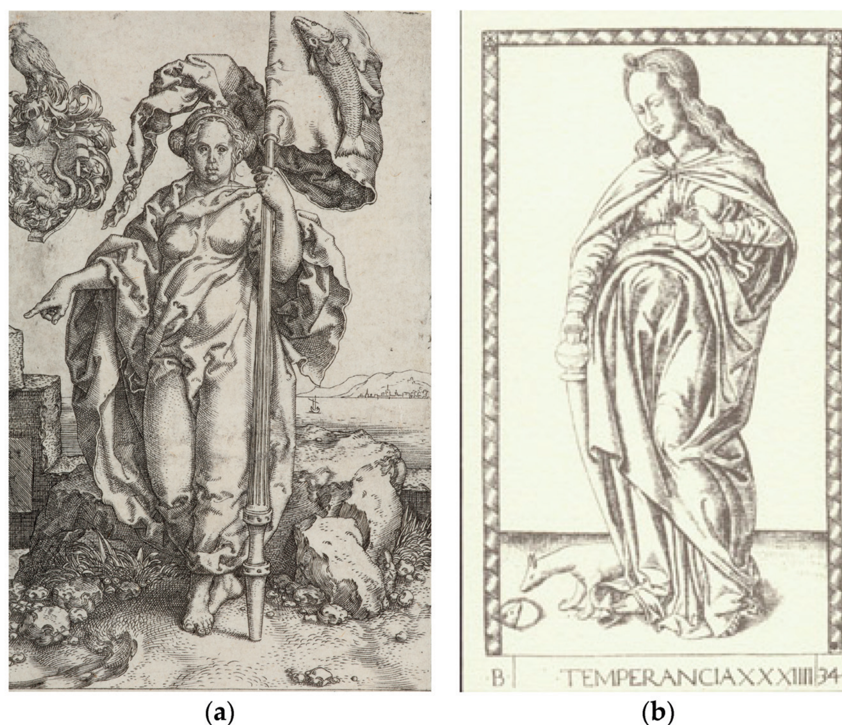


Figure 10. (**a**) Temperance, *The Virtues*, Heinrich Aldegrever, 1552; (**b**) Temperance, *Mantegna's Tarot*, 15th century.

More frequent is the ermine as Temperance's attribute, as in *Mantegna's Tarot* (15th century) (Figure 10b). This animal refers to purity and chastity, which are Temperance's qualities. The ermine was already considered a tempered animal in the 14th century, as *Flor de Virtudes* explained: "*Enxemplo. Esta virtud se puede comparar al erminyo, que es un animal tan cortés, tan comedido e gentil como sea en el mundo, de manera que por la su grande temperancia e natural gentileza, no come jamás sino una vez al día, e no comería ratones o cosa alguna que fuesse suzia*" (Hurus 2013, p. 138). León Coloma (1998, p. 222) refers to the ermine as an emblem of purity because it loves the whiteness of its coat. Cervantes in *El Quijote* (I, 33) compared the ermine with a chaste woman, and Giovio's emblem "*Malo mori qvam foedari*"[27] explains a similar idea. A portrait of *Elizabeth Queen of England* (1773, Glasgow, Hunterian Museum)

shows the queen near a column which has an ermine on top of it, an emblem of the chastity and temperance that characterized her. In addition, in *The Seven Virtues*, Jacopo Strada (1572, Milán, Gabinetto delle Stampe) depicted Temperance holding bridles, and there is an ermine at its feet.

5. Conclusions

The enmity between Temperance and lust comes from Antiquity written sources. This idea remained during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era and influenced its depictions. This enmity was depicted in two iconographic types. In "Chaste Temperance 1", this virtue pours water on a fire's torch, and in "Chaste Temperance 2", it tries to open/close a castle with one or two keys. These iconographic types reinforce Temperance's qualities of chastity and virginity. In addition, bits and bridles are Temperance's attributes that reinforce its enmity to lust. Moreover, the salamander and ermine are emblems of Temperance because they emphasize their uncorrupted purity. So, when someone wanted to emphasize Temperance's qualities, these attributes were depicted in its allegory or emblem. These attributes emphasize chastity in Temperance depictions because the ideal of body pureness was a constant for Christianism during the Middle Ages (Montesinos 2019, p. 133). However, images had to be analyzed from an iconological perspective to interpret their purposes in any determined context. This essay only focused on iconographical aspects, which explain the origins and meaning of these depictions of written sources. This research provides readers with the basis to explain these images beyond the *Iconologia* (1593; Ripa 1765) by Cesare Ripa. Usually, art historians try to explain all kinds of allegories by reading these sources, but allegorical treatises do not include all ways to depict every concept, as in Temperance's case. Therefore, to understand depictions of Temperance, it is necessary to relate them to written sources. Knowing that chastity, purity, and virginity are Temperance's qualities is essential for better comprehending the images' origin and meaning. After an iconographical analysis, it will be easier to engage in future research about these artworks from an iconological approach by studying them in the specific context in which they were created.

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Notes

1 An iconographic type is the visual concretion of a topic. (García Mahíques 2009, p. 348). See (Montesinos Castañeda 2020).

2 From the 15th century, Virtues' depictions were different in French art, which spread to Flemish and Spanish lands (Montesinos Castañeda 2022).

3 "Iconography"refers to an analytic description and classification of images. It is important not confusing this term with "iconology", which refers to an analytical process to interpret visual artworks from the context in which they were created (García Mahíques 2009, p. 343).

4 Author translation.

5 See note 4 above.

6 Translation from: https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/TheGoldenAssV.php#anchor_Toc348436733 (accessed on 27 August 2023).

7 Translation from: https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Latin/Metamorph10.php#anchor_Toc64105567 (accessed on 21 October 2023).

8 "*temperantiae omnia relinquere, in quantum natura patitur, quae corporis usus requirit*" (Macrobius 1952, 121; somn. 1,8,4).

9 "*temperantia sequuntur modestia, verecundia, abstinentia, castitas, honestas, moderatio, parcitas, sobrietas, pudicitia*" (Macrobius 1952, 121; somn. 1,8,7).

10 According to Alain de Lille Temperance's virtues or qualities are: Continence, Chastity, Purity, Sobriety, Parsimony, Moderation, Honestity, Abstinence, Shame and Modesty (Delhaye 1963, p. 16).

11 "*Ed udasi questa virtú per molte vie, ed ha catuna il suo nome per meglio averle a memoria. E quelle sono le virtú che nascono di Temperanza, e sono cosí appellate: Castità, Pudicizia, Astinenzia, Larghezza, Parcità, Umilità, Onestà, Vergogna*" (Giamboni 1968, p. 9).

12 "*discretio, morigeratio, taciturnitas, jejunium, sobrietas, afflictio carnis, contemptus saeculi*" (Hugh of de St Víctor, *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, 15; PL CLXXVI, 1003).

13 "*Est autem temperantia circa delectationes tactus, quae dividuntur in duo genera. Nam quaedam ordinantur ad nutrimentum. Et in his, quantum ad cibum, est abstinentia; quantum autem ad potum, proprie sobrietas. Quaedam vero ordinantur ad vim generativam. Et in his, quantum ad delectationem principalem ipsius coitus, est castitas; quantum autem ad delectationes circumstantes, puta quae sunt in osculis, tactibus et amplexibus, attenditur pudicitia*" [Other pleasures are directed to the power of procreation, and in these as regards the principal pleasure of the act itself of procreation, there is "chastity", and as to the pleasures incidental to the act, resulting, for instance, from kissing, touching, or fondling, we have "purity"] (Aquinas 2017; S.Th. [44719] IIª-IIae, q. 143 co.). Translation from: https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3143.htm (accessed on 27 August 2023).

14 "*Temperanza è la quarta virtú principale che nasce all'uomo e alla femina della buona volontà, per la quale si concia e ordina l'animo dell'uomo a rifrenare i desiderî della carne, laonde l'uomo è assalito e tentato*" (Giamboni 1968, p. 9).

15 "*The name of the second seed was 'the Spirit of Temperance'. Whoever fed off this seed acquired a temperament of such a kind that he never ended up swollen, wether from over-eating or from stress. No mockery or insult could disturb his self-control; nor could an increase in his fortune, brought about by his success in trade. He would never allow himself to be upset by words thrown out in idle thoughtlessness. Nor would he ever let a suit of clothes artfully tailored and cut be seen on his back, nor spicy food from the hand of a master-chef diffuse its choice flavors on his palate*" (Quoted by Tucker 2015, p. 164).

16 "*Tempaerantia quippe quarta species virtutis est rationabilis in libidinem, atque in alios non rectos animi firma et moderata dominatio*" (Rabano Mauro, *De ecclesiastica disciplina*, 3; PL CXII, 1255). "*Temperantia est totius vitae modus, ne quid nimis homo vel amet, vel odio habeat, sed omnis vitae hujus varietates considerata temperet diligentia*" (Halitgarius, *De poenitentia* 2,10; PL CV, 676). "*Temperantia est dominium rationis in libidinem et in alios motus importunos*" (Hildebert de Lavardin, *Moralis philosophia*, 36; PL CLXXI, 1034).

17 A literary image is which is composed by linguistic tools, such as a description, a metaphore or a poem (García Mahíques 2009, p. 344).

18 For more information about classical sources and Prudentius' Psychomachia see: (Filosini 2022, pp. 9–37).

19 Other Cardinal Virtues have direct visual precedents, such as Athena/Minerva to Prudence, Heracles to Fortitude, Nemesis, Astrea, Maat or Shamash—among others—to Justice.

20 Camelliti's paper is about Temperance's depiction in Palazzo Minerbi-dal Sale in Ferrara (See Camelliti 2013).

21 Serafino Serafini's *Augustine of Hippo's Triumph* (ca. 1378, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara) and many 14th-century manuscripts show similar depictions. For instance: *Lectura super Digesto novo* de Bartoli de Sassoferrano, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, ms. 197, fol. 3r; *Regia Carmina*, Florencia, Bibliloteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 38, fol. 31v; *Libro di Giusto,* Roma, Galleria Nazionale, Gabinetto delle Stampe, inv. 2818–2833, fol. 4r.

22 Translation from: https://classics.mit.edu/Plato/phaedrus.html (accessed on 23 October 2023).

23 "*Nescio cuius id est verbum sapientis iniquum,/tanquàm osurus ama. Quin ego amare velim/ut nunquam osurus. Nam quae vera, aut bona tándem/In vita reliqua est, dic mihi, amicitia?/Si quisque, olim ita amicum amet, ut fieri ipsum inimicum/posse putet? Virtusne ista rogo, an vitium est?/Quin ego non tanquàm: sed nunquam, osurus amabo./Vera sibi constat Semper amicitia*" (Bocchi 1574, pp. 100–1; II, symb. XLVI).

24 "*Eam non tantum non consumi igne, sed flamman etiam extinguere rigore suo*" (Camerarius 1677, p. 138; IV, emb. 69).

25 "*la Salamandra, che stando nelle fiamme, non si consuma, col motto Italiano, che diceva: NVTRISCO ESTIGVO, essendo propia qualità di quello animale, spargere dal corpo suo freddo humore sopra le bragie, onde avviene, ch'egli non teme la forza del fuoco, ma più tosto lo tempera e spegne*" (Giovio 1559, p. 23).

26 "*Della Salamandra (. . .) NVTRISCO ET ESTINGVO. Altri dicono c'havea scritto, Nutrisco il buono & estinguo il reo, c'havrebbe havuto altro significato*" (Capaccio 1592, I, fol. 60r).

27 "*E per dichiarare questo suo generoso pensiero di clemenza, figurò vn'Armellino circondato da vn riparo di letame, con vn motto di sopra, MALO MORI, QVAM FOEDARI, essendo la propia natura dell'Armellino di patir prima la norte per fame e per sete, che imbrattarsi, cercando di fuggire, di non pasar per lo brutt, per non macchiare il candore e la pulitezza della sua pretiosa pelle*" (Giovio 1559, p. 31).

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The Demons of Judas and Mary Magdalene in Medieval Art

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Abstract: There are few specific studies on the demonic possession of Judas and Mary Magdalene, especially as regards the representation of these demons in medieval art. This article analyses the matter in order to subsequently carry out a comparative analysis of the two characters and thus respond to both the general and specific objectives put forward: the reason for the difference in quantity in the representations of Judas with his demons compared to Magdalena; the type of demons represented; their possible meanings; and some considerations related to gender issues. The analysis has been carried out with a cultural perspective, comparing images with texts, as well as putting these materials into context. Taking all of this into account, it is shown that the main cause behind the quantitative difference in the images of the two characters lies in their subsequent fates: Magdalene, exorcised, becomes an example of repentance, confession, and penance for the faithful, whereas Judas is condemned and never abandoned by the devil. The reason for the choice of Judas and Mary Magdalene is that they are two of the most important characters in the New Testament to have suffered from demonic possession, though there are also depictions of different exorcisms performed by Jesus. Furthermore, the antagonism of these characters forms a key feature in both art and religion in the medieval West, as demonstrated at the end of this article.

Keywords: Judas; Mary Magdalene; Christian art; Middle Ages; demons; exorcism; sins; sacraments

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1. Introduction

Judas and Mary Magdalene are two of the most controversial characters in Christianity. In the New Testament and in different apocryphal texts and legends, both appear as possessed or accompanied by the devil. They were chosen due to their importance in the key events of the New Testament and also due to the consequences of their possession both in terms of visuality and medieval religiosity. They are two contemporary characters with a strong connection with Jesus during his public life. They both had contact with the devil yet chose two completely opposing paths when faced with their temptation: Magdalene went from a sinner to a saint, whereas Judas went from an apostle close to Jesus to eternal damnation. These matters are explained at the end of the text. Thus, both characters are chosen in order to analyse their demonic possession and the representation of their demons. Although the monastic sources do not mention them, they are paradigmatic figures to study these issues. Furthermore, the characters mentioned in the medieval sources are anonymous. However, the features of their possessions and demons are integrated in the artistic representations of Judas and Mary Magdalene in medieval art. This research analyses some of the images in which these characters' demons appear. In doing so, it is essential to point out that there is a greater number of artworks in which the devil appears together with Judas, unlike the case of Magdalena, for whom it is difficult to find images showing her with demons or at the time of her exorcism. Specifically with regard to the Magdalene, eight works are studied here—out of the nine gathered—that respond to the criteria governing this research: the visual representation of demons, not only allusion to them. As for Judas, a total of thirteen works has been selected from the multitude of existing images—out of the sixty gathered—in different media, representing various moments of his life related to the devil.

The general aim is to analyse the demons of Judas and Mary Magdalene in medieval art, taking into account the sources to analyse them, as well as their cultural tradition. In addition, specific objectives have been set for each of the characters. In the case of Judas, the idea is to explain the abundance of representations with the devil intimately linked to him and represented via a variety of morphologies. As for Mary Magdalene, the intention is to answer the reason for her scarce appearance in art together with the demons that possessed her, as well as the role they play when represented, their anatomy, expulsion, and the consequences of their exorcism. Finally, there is the aim of explaining the relevance of these matters both in the art of the medieval West and in the society of the time.

Following this introduction, a brief clarification is provided regarding issues related to the representation of demons in medieval art. In the subsequent sections, the two figures are dealt with separately to then perform a comparative analysis and provide a cultural explanation of everything analysed, relating the images to their context, then rounding off with the resulting conclusions. Throughout all of this, it is important to underline the substantial size of the existing bibliography regarding demons in the Middle Ages, in both their theological and artistic aspects. Furthermore, in this bibliography a part is always dedicated to studying Judas and his relationship with the demon (Russell [1984] 1995; Aragonés Estella 1996; Barral Rivadulla 2003; Murray 1998; García Arranz 2019). However, in the case of Magdalene, as with the images of her, it is difficult to find studies concentrating on this aspect. Bennet (2002, p. 20) points out the lack of knowledge on the subject: "the portrayal of the demonic Magdalen is not well known in medieval art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries".[1] Other studies in the few published in this regard are the texts by Begel (2012), Apostolos-Cappadona (2002), and Haskins (1994).

2. Demons in the Art of the Medieval West

The lack of written sources in the early centuries of Christianity detailing the morphology of demons made it impossible for artists to find models for their images. The information provided by the Church on the physical qualities of demons was scarce. The Fathers of the Church had been interested in clarifying the essence of the Devil and his power to act, rather than specifying his appearance. Faced with this lack of references, medieval artists resorted to Greco-Latin sources which, together with the few details provided by theology, made it possible to create an image of the evil one. This is one of the reasons why representations of the devil vary greatly, from great black anthropomorphic demons to small imps or goblins, red birds, or pale, livid demons related to death (García Arranz 2019, p. 14). Before the ninth and tenth centuries, the only difference between an angel and a demon—or fallen angel—was the dark colour, reflecting their rebelliousness (Yarza Luaces 1979, p. 300). This is seen in a mosaic from San Apollinare Nuovo (Ravenna, 520), where Jesus is accompanied by an angel and, to his left, a "blue-violet angel standing above the goats" (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 143).

The devil, profusely represented as of the ninth century, acquired a great presence in the mid-centuries of the Middle Ages. Until then, only the Council of Toledo (447) had provided information on his appearance: a large, black monstrous apparition with horns, hooves, donkey ears, fierce eyes, gnashing teeth, a large phallus, and a smell of sulphur. Additionally, demons were usually represented naked or with loincloths, thus relating them to animals, the wild, and sexuality. They were usually represented as black and dark in keeping with a universal Christian tradition: blackness, in contrast to the immaculate whiteness of the angels, represents evil and impurity, filth and moral contamination (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 75; García Arranz 2019, p. 313). Hence, colour became another element to emphasise the malevolent nature of demons, either because of the colour black or the red tones associated with fire and blood, as well as colours associated with death and disease, such as grey or brown. In addition, they also appear in blue or violet tones (Barral Rivadulla 2003, p. 222; Russell [1984] 1995, p. 147).

Russell ([1984] 1995, p. 75) points out that the colour black would have originated in the Egyptian and Nubian deities: the god Anubis could be either a black jackal with a bushy tail or a black man with a jackal's head. On the other hand, the demon's dark skin was also due to the pharaoh's confrontation with an Ethiopian enemy, thus passing this association of black, Ethiopian, and demonic on to Christian tradition. In the New Testament, darkness and blackness are associated with evil and sin, but there is no reference in any passage to the blackness of the devil's skin, nor is there any reference to the dark tone of skin in the Old Testament or among the writings of the Fathers of the Church in the early centuries. It was in extra-canonical texts and medieval legends where the devil adopted the appearance of an Ethiopian (Blanc 2004, p. 43; García Arranz 2019, pp. 314–16). This is shown in *The Golden Legend* on explaining the confrontation between Saint Bartholomew and an evil creature, the latter being described as "an Ethiopian blacker than soot, with a sharp face, a thick beard, hair reaching down to his feet, blazing eyes that flashed sparks like a fire-reddened iron, shooting sulphurous flames from his mouth and sparks like a reddened iron, shooting sulphurous flames from his mouth and eyes. His hands were clamped in red-hot gyves behind his back" (Voragine 2012, p. 498).

With the growing dread of the year one thousand and the perceived impending apocalypse, it was about providing answers for the plagues, famines, poverty, and wars by connecting it with the increasing terror of Satan. Preachers and artists helped heighten the fear of demons and the devil, who had to be challenged by compliance with the sacraments and, ultimately, avoiding sin. The popularity of homilies and hagiographies in which demons played a prominent role also played a fundamental part in the rise of images of demons. Although interest in demons waned in medieval theology, the homiletic literature and hagiographies continued to mix theological dogmas with legendary themes to attract the attention of the faithful. This literature was mostly based on the stories of saints tempted by demons in the desert, who chose good over sin (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 239–41 and p. 316; García Arranz 2019, pp. 29, 317).

As a result of the devil's fame in this literature, the monstrous, the bestial, and the extravagant proliferated in art, where the powers of Evil could arbitrarily adopt animal and/or human appearances, but which were always devoid of harmony and beauty. The absurdity and distortion of the forms and attitudes of these beings were the main resources that artists could use to reflect Evil, intimidating the faithful with the threat of the torments of hell (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 144–236; García Arranz 2019, pp. 30–35). Among the most common characteristics of the demons are the goatee beard, claws and wings, bristling hair, or else in the form of a flame of fire that reminded one of hell (Barral Rivadulla 2003, pp. 221–22). In the 14th–15th centuries, the devil was represented either in hell or as a caricatured, mocking character linked to satire. In those centuries, as had happened in the years prior to the year 1000, monstrous apparitions and the grotesque again proliferated.

This study's cultural focus also includes matters of gender that are important when dealing with these characters themselves as well as with the matter of demonic possession. As for being possessed, women were considered to appeal more to demons owing to the gender's vulnerability and weakness in both physical and spiritual terms, as opposed to men. The consideration of women as more sexual but less rational or morally sound played a great part in this, since they were therefore more dubitative and susceptible to desire and carnality (Caciola 2006). Although what has just been said provides the general tone of the medieval mentality, the proposed comparative analysis will demonstrate how the cases of Judas and Mary Magdalene provide an exception to the outcome of possession, subverting the usual gender roles.

3. Judas

Judas Iscariot appears mainly in the canonical Gospels of the New Testament and is presented from the outset as a traitor, miser, and thief. The first time he appears, he does so as a follower of Christ, one of the chosen Twelve. In Matthew (3:13–19), before committing the betrayal, he is already identified as the one "who betrayed Jesus". In the anointing in Bethany narrated by John (12:5–7), Judas opposes the waste of perfume, considering that the money could have been spent on the poor. However, he does not say so for that reason but "because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it". In addition to these sins, there is suicide, with Matthew (27:3–8) indicating that "Then, he went and hanged himself". The passage of the meeting between Judas and the high priests is narrated in all of the Synoptics, with Matthew (26:14–16) indicating that, faced with the reward claimed by Judas for betraying Jesus, the priests "paid him thirty pieces of silver". Hence, not only is he accused of being a traitor, but he is also linked to greed for seeking a reward in exchange for treason. However, it is in the Gospel of Luke (22:1–6), narrating the same passage, where Judas appears for the first time linked to the devil: "Then, Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot".

As for the Fathers of the Church, some are also of the opinion that the betrayal did not originate with Judas or the Jews, but with the devil. Origen of Alexandria points out that "the author of this sacrilege and the father of this crime is, without a doubt, the devil" (Homilies on the Exodus 8, 6). Likewise, Cyril of Alexandria explains that "in the traitor there was a place for Satan [...] his gateway was the passion of greed" (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 140). As regards the non-canonical gospels, specifically the Arabic Gospel of Infancy (chapter XXV, 1–2) (fourth–fifth centuries) narrates that Judas, as a child, was already possessed by evil and that Christ exorcised him with his weeping, the demon coming out of him in the form of a rabid dog. The aim of this story is to trace Judas' wickedness back to his childhood and stress the relationship with Satan from the beginning of his life (De Santos Otero 1956, p. 323). However, no representations have been found in this vein.

Given the large prevalence of literary references presenting Judas with the devil, this analysis has selected images belonging to Judas' meeting with the Sanhedrin, the moment that the betrayal is announced during the Last Supper, and the death of Judas, given that they are the only ones to visually show the demon. The images studied have been divided into these three groups. All of these images date from the period from the beginning of the 11th century to the 15th century, appearing in a great variety of media.

3.1. Judas with the Sanhedrin

One of the first representations of Judas meeting the Sanhedrin with the devil present appears in the Eadwine Psalter (eleventh century) (Figure 1). Judas appears three times, since it is a panoramic cycle where several iconographic types appear in the same image. The demon accompanying him on his back is pale and livid, with curly hair like the flames of hellfire and a pointed nose (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 236; Barral Rivadulla 2003, p. 122). This morphology was soon to be abandoned in favour of the humanoid black demon or monstrous little devils. In the Italian sphere, Judas is also shown with the devil on his back in the frescoes of Giotto (Figure 2), but this time it is a human-sized, black one with a pointed chin and nose. This type of humanoid demon was to prevail as of the 14th century (Russell [1984] 1995, pp. 144–46; García Arranz 2019, pp. 30–31).

Figure 1. *Eadwine Psalter*, Ms. M 521, f. 10v, ca. 1055, Morgan Library, New York.

Figure 2. Giotto, *Pact of Judas,* ca. 1302–1305, Scrovegni's chapel, Padua.

Private patronage within churches was a booming phenomenon during the 14th century. The new bourgeoisie and its wealth from the market led such families to acquire spaces for private worship, as well as for burials within ecclesiastical buildings themselves. Furthermore, some of these families also built their own religious buildings. Such is the case of the Scrovegni family and the construction of the so-called Arena Chapel in Padua, dedicated to Santa Maria della Carità (the Madonna of Charity), whose visual arrangement for the frescoes was entrusted to Giotto (Lavin 1990, p. 43). These frescoes contain a cycle dedicated to the life of Jesus and another to the life of the Virgin. In the first one, several scenes are depicted in which Judas plays the leading part. In the pact he makes with the high priests, Judas is seen possessed by the devil and avarice, accepting the bag of coins in exchange for the betrayal. This scene is located near the altar where Enrico Scrovegni is buried, who in his life as a merchant had committed sins related to usury, envy, and avarice. Hence, the chapel acted as a means of redemption. Opposite the scene of Judas' pact there is the Visitation, generating tension and contrast: as opposed to the greed and disloyalty of Judas that will only lead to death, the Virgin and Elizabeth are depicted announcing joy and life (Bishop 2020, p. 43).

In this same chapel, vices and virtues are represented in grisaille. Although Giotto did not include avarice, he did depict envy and, as opposed to it, charity, a virtue to which the chapel itself is dedicated. Hence, a pair of opposites is formed: while charity is crushing a bag of coins with her feet, envy is being burned by the flames of hell. Among other vices, *desesperatio* is notable where, instead of depicting Judas hanged as was usual in the 14th century, a woman was chosen to be depicted hanged with a demon taking her soul. Both in the origin of the betrayal in Judas' pact with the Sanhedrin and in the vice of *desesperatio*, Giotto shows the devil's intervention linked to these sins. Although Giotto's contemporary Duccio also represents a cycle of the life of Christ in the Maestà altarpiece (1308–1311) and another of the Virgin, at no time does he show the demons, nor in Judas' meeting with the Sanhedrin, nor at the Last Supper, nor at the arrest. Neither does he depict the condemnation of the hanged man with intervention from demons, typical of the avaricious, as can be seen in the Scrovegni chapel.

3.2. The Last Supper

During the Last Supper, the moment of the announcement of the betrayal takes place. In the Synoptics, Judas is exposed as the one who will betray Christ in a very similar way (Mk 14:17–21; Mt 26:17–25; Lk 22:21–23). The most relevant difference is to be found in John (13,27), where Judas is again linked to the devil: "As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him". This is also the case with the Fathers of the Church, such as John Chysostom when he pointed out that, "once the offering [the wet bread] was accepted, the devil entered Judas" (Sermon on the betrayal of Judas, 1, 6). Likewise, both Cyril of Alexandria (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 140) and Augustine of Hippo (Treatises on the Gospel of John 62, 2) consider the devil to be the main cause behind the betrayal.

In the Bruchsal Codex (13th century) (Figure 3), Judas appears taking the wet bread accompanied by the demon in the form of a black bird. In the 14th century, in a Speculum Humanae Salvationis, the devil enters Judas in the form of an imp or black vermin (Figure 4). For its part, the panel by the Master of Sigena (Figure 5), from a 14th century altarpiece, presents the iconographic type of the Establishment of the Eucharist and the announcement of the betrayal, wherein Judas appears with a black devil with horns and hooves within him, making the same gesture and therefore blending in with him.

Figure 3. *Bruchsal Codex* 1, "Last Supper", f. 28r, ca. 1220, Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Figure 4. "Last Supper", *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, XIVth century.

Figure 5. Master of Sigena, *Last Supper*, ca. 1363, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), Barcelona.

3.3. The Death of Judas

The death of Judas is narrated differently in the Gospel of Matthew from the Acts of the Apostles. After Judas has betrayed Jesus, Matthew (27:3–5) says that "he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests, and the elders 'have sinned', he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood' [. . .] So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself". In the Acts of the Apostles (1:18), on the other hand, there is no repentance or suicide; Judas dies after a fall and his subsequent evisceration: "With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out". The Fathers of the Church interpreted the suicide of Judas as an unforgivable act, another negative quality to add to the man who was already a traitor, miser, and thief. Jerome (Commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew 4, 27, 5) affirms that "To the first crime, he added that of his own suicide". John Chysoston (Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew 85, 2) points to the evil one as responsible for the suicide without Judas having the opportunity to rehabilitate himself with penance.

Some representations of the death of Judas with the devil are found in different capitals on French churches. In the bas-relief of San Lázaro de Autun (12th century) (Figure 6), there are two demons, one on either side of the traitor, pulling at the ropes around his neck. Similarly, one of the capitals on the Basilica of Saint Andoche de Saulieu (12th century) (Figure 7) shows a human-sized, emaciated demon pulling on the rope. The demons, in addition to being responsible for the betrayal, are now the executors of Judas' suicide, actively participating in pulling the ropes of the noose and removing any possibility for repentance. In Italy, one of the copper plates on the doors of the Cathedral of Benevento (12th century) (Figure 8) shows Judas hanged, suspended in mid-air, while a winged demon resembling an angel hovers next to him, exerting weight on the rope to choke him.

Figure 6. *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Cathedral of Saint Lazarus, Autun.

Figure 7. *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Saint Andoche Basilica, Saulieu.

Figure 8. *Judas' Death*, 12th century, Benevento Cathedral, Benevento.

The Vulgate by Jerome (fourth century) combined the different versions of Judas' death, replacing the fall with the hanging while retaining the evisceration (Murray 1998, pp. 337–38; Lafran 2019, pp. 239–55). This was the version chosen by some exegetes such as Bede the Venerable (Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles 1, 18b) and the most common one in medieval legends such as *The Golden Legend* (Voragine 2012, pp. 168–69), in their translations at the time (Flos Sanctorum, Vines of Sants Rosselloneses) as well as in art. One example of this can be seen in the tympanum of Freiburg Cathedral (13th century) (Figure 9), with Judas eviscerated and hanged from a tree in whose branches there are two pale demons who are not only pulling on the hanged man's rope but also taking his soul—in the form of a child—straight to hell. As of the 14th century, the soul coming out as a child was to generally be a constant image. The holy and righteous souls used to be represented easily leaving the body of the deceased through the mouth, quickly detaching themselves from the body. However, the souls of sinners such as Judas were shown in contact with the dead body, having difficulty leaving it since it continued to be intimately linked to the body's destiny. Evil souls came out in the form of a large naked child through the wide-open mouth (similar to the mouth of hell in Leviathan (Job, 40)), or else through the thigh, through the severed neck and sometimes, as in the case of Judas, through the entrails since his mouth had kissed Christ and should not be sullied (Baschet 2016, pp. 126–28).

In the Holkham Bible (14th century) (Figure 10), the demon taking the soul of Judas from his entrails has an animalistic appearance similar to a bat. The demon accompanying Judas in the mural painting by Canavesio (14th century) (Figure 11) is similar, with horns, claws, wings, and a snake's tail. This artist painted the soul of Judas as male, highlighting the carnal nature of the betrayer, with a dishevelled beard and a prominent nose similar to that of Iscariot himself, in addition to the Judaic characteristics due to the prevailing anti-Judaism in Europe in the mid-centuries of the Middle Ages (Baschet 2016, p. 65). Two winged demons with claws and a tail as in Canavesio's painting are ripping Judas soul from his body in the Varia Codex (15th century) (Figure 12). In the case of the wall painting by Nicholas Toruń (15th century) (Figure 13), the demon is small, black, and has claws, similar to the ones that entered Judas during the Last Supper according to the Gospel of John.

Figure 9. *Judas' Death*, 13th century, Freiburg Minster, Freiburg.

Figure 10. *Bible of Holkham*, Add Ms. 47682, f. 30r, ca. 1327–1335, British Library, London.

Figure 11. Giovanni Canavesio, *Judas' Death*, ca. 1492–1530, Notre Dame des Fontaines, La Brigue.

Figure 12. Crisostomo de Predis, *Codex Varia* 124, ca. 1476, Biblioteca Reale Di Torino, Turin.

As we have seen, Judas is linked to the devil at different moments of his life: in his childhood, at the beginning of the betrayal in the meeting with the Sanhedrin, during the Last Supper and at the moment of his death. There are numerous textual sources that establish this relationship, as well as the artistic representations linking them. It was to be during the Middle Ages when the appearance of the devil next to the traitor became a constant in Western Europe, especially in France, Italy, and Spain. As for the morphology of demons, as has been shown, there is no standard type. Judas' demons appear pale and livid, humanoid and black, as black birds, small devils or grotesque, animalistic beings with claws, tails, bat wings, and horns. The abundance of images of Judas with the devil is the result of a desire to show that the traitor was linked to various sins such as betrayal, envy, greed, theft, suicide, and more.[2] Sometimes, both the representation of his soul and the demons' physique are similar to the features of Judas, acquiring a hooked nose and a prominent chin, just as the betrayer was represented in medieval centuries. These facial

features are due to the relationship established between Judas and the Jews, considered to be allies of the devil and guilty of the death of Jesus.

Figure 13. Nicholas Toruń, *Judas' Death*, ca. 1480–1490, Saints Peter and Paul Church, Kraków.

Judas contained all the sins within himself. Moreover, the numerous representations were intended to be seen by the faithful, since they are mostly presented in the public sphere such as in church doorways, capitals, and gates, but also in manuscripts for personal use. This gives rise to the demon linked to the sins of Judas appearing in a multitude of media, so that it could be seen by as many people as possible. It was usually women that were linked to being possessed by demons, as the gender was considered weak-willed and easily tricked by the devil. In this sense, although Judas was a male character, he is considered by the Fathers of the Church to be fragile and corruptible like a woman (Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of John 32, 19, 20–24; John Chysoston, Homilies to the Gospel of Matthew 81, 1; Series of commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew 83), so that he was the one chosen by the devil from among the apostles to perpetrate the betrayal.

4. Mary Magdalene

Unlike Judas, the number of images showing Mary Magdalene with demons is far lower and something similar occurs with the literary sources. The New Testament mentions the possession of the Magdalene in two passages: Luke (8:2) explains that Jesus was accompanied by the Twelve and a group of women "who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out". In the context of the resurrection in the longer ending of Mark (16:9), it is narrated that Jesus "appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils".

Based on the verse of Luke, the Latin Fathers of the Church created an entire exegesis that resulted in the consideration of Mary Magdalene as a sexual sinner. This construct by the Fathers of the Church, in which multiple confusions converge with other characters from the New Testament—Luke's sinful woman (7:36–50); the woman who performs the anointing in the narratives by Mark (14:3–9) and Matthew (26:6–13); Mary of Bethany (Jn 12:1–9); the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:7–10) and the adulterous woman (Jn 8:3–7)—was a fundamental character in order to create normative profiles for women in Western Christianity. The exegesis on the seven demons plays a key role in this consideration, as it is one of the most transcendental elements obscuring the importance of Magdalene as a follower of Jesus, recipient of his teachings, witness of his death and resurrection, as well as an apostle of the apostles. In fact, in the first known image of Mary Magdalene (Baptismal Hall, Dura Europos, second–third centuries) (Grabar 1967, p. 70), she appears as the myrrhophore witness to the resurrection, far removed from later patristic contaminations.

Although her visual journey begins by placing importance on this role, her representation was to be oriented towards her life of sin as a consequence of the officialisation of patristic interpretations and the spread of medieval legends. Thus, the favourite episodes of her in art were to be her years of penance as a model of behaviour for the faithful, the moment of her conversion and her presence at the crucifixion.

In the construction of the Magdalene through her fusion with other women, the sinful woman from the text by Luke stands out—due to its sexual connotations—and is introduced just before the presentation of Magdalene (Lk 8:1–3). Due to this proximity in the text, together with the interests of the Latin Fathers of the Church and their discriminatory and sexual interpretations of the seven demons, the result was a patristic construct that would populate imagination in the Western world:

> "The one that Luke calls a sinner, and that John names Mary, we believe that she is that Mary of whom, according to Mark, the Lord has cast out seven demons. And what are these seven demons, if not the universality of all vices? Since seven days suffice to embrace the whole of time, the number seven rightly represents universality. Mary had seven demons in her, for she was full of all vices. But now, having seen the stains that dishonored her, she ran to wash herself at the source of mercy, without blushing in the presence of the guests. So great was her shame inside that she could not see anything outside to blush". (Gregory the Great, Homilia XXXIII, Lectio S. Evang. Sec. Luc. VII, 36–50)

The words of Gregory the Great, pronounced in the year 591, consolidated all of that prior tradition of interpretations while making the myth of the Magdalene official. This figure was expanded on by the different medieval legends which, in addition to mentioning the life of sin, narrated her penance in the desert—Vita eremitica, Vita apostolica, Legenda aurea—thereby broadening her legendary biography. The possession and the confusion with Luke's sinful woman are the two main elements that end up establishing a sexually sinful Magdalene, specifically a prostitute most of the time.[3] Gregory the Great's identification of the seven demons with the seven deadly sins was the interpretation that endured in art, highlighting lust due to the traditional Judeo-Christian association of female sin with sex. Lust was considered to be a particularly feminine vice, widely represented in medieval art. Similarly, in numerous sermons Mary Magdalene also appeared as an example of lust, as in the Summa Praedicantium, a series of sermons compiled by the English Dominican John Bromyard in the 14th century (Haskins 1994, p. 149).

The images analysed here have been divided into three typologies: first, the exorcism during the anointing at the Pharisee's house; secondly, the representation of Jesus and Magdalene isolated at the moment of the exorcism; and finally, the possession represented allegorically. All of the images analysed date from the period from the 13th century to the beginning of the 16th, and with the exception of an Italian one and a German one, they are all of French origin. Nevertheless, thanks to the study by Bennet (2002, p. 20), it is known that there was at least one previous image belonging to the Hortus deliciarium by Herrad of Hohenbourg (c. 1175–1195), destroyed in the Strasbourg Library fire in 1870.

4.1. The Exorcism in the House of Simon the Pharisee

These images are the ones with the greatest link to the sources, since they allude directly to the fusion of the Magdalene portrayed by Luke (8:2) as "healed of seven demons" with the anonymous sinful woman from the same Gospel (7:36–50), a fusion made official through Gregory the Great's homily. Even so, although the presence of demons in the three images analysed follow the same typology, they have differences that are partly related to their origin and use. The first image (Figure 14) is a German stained-glass window from the first half of the 13th century, created in the Franciscan sphere. It is therefore an image intended for a public audience. Here, the diners appear together with Jesus while in the lower half, Magdalene is prostrated and surrounded not by seven but four small demonic beings of different colours.

Figure 14. Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Jesus and Being Freed from her Evil Spirits, ca. 1230–1240, Discalced's Church, Erfurt.

By the 14th century in Italy, the seven demons appeared in the mural paintings of the Guidalotti–Rinuccini Chapel (Figure 15). Again, the woman is represented kneeling before Jesus while at the top there are the demons that have already been expelled from her body. Hence, preference was given to the moment of anointing and conversion, leaving the exorcism scene to be evoked only by the demons in the upper strip. In this way, it can be understood that the exorcism is the result of repentance, confession, and forgiveness. In fact, the inscription itself states: HIC HRISTUS CONUERTE BEATAM MAGDALENAM ET EICIT SEPTEM DEMONIA A DORSO EIUS. [Here Christ converts the blessed Magdalen and expels the seven devils from her back]. So, in this fresco created for a Franciscan church, the demons are introduced taking flight. They are winged demons combining anthropomorphic forms with bat wings, dragon tails, and antlers.

Figure 15. Giovanni da Milano, *Mary Magdalene at the Feet of Jesus*, ca. 1363–1365, Guidalotti–Rinuccini Chapel, Santa Croce Basilica, Florence.

Begel (2012, pp. 347–48) points out in this regard that "the artist's inclusion of seven demons being cast from the saint is unique in the iconography of the Magdalene". The author affirms that the demons are not just another attribute of the Magdalene, but rather the image is an authentic exorcism scene. However, unlike typical compositions of exorcised women, this one "eschews many traditional elements of exorcism imagery, while at the same time subtly alluding to central aspects of the theme". Bennet (2002, p. 24) also confirms this scene to be an exorcism, describing the demons that possessed Magdalene as follows: "Six bestial horned devils in a parade follow the leader, armed with mace and shield, the latter a mongrel of half demon and half human with blonde hair, suggesting the Magdalen's appearance in her former state". Thus, she detects how the leading demon acquires some of Magdalene's physical characteristics, an aspect that does not appear in the other images analysed.

The importance Giovanni da Milano's depiction of demons is even more relevant and innovative if one takes into account the relationship between this chapel and the artist with other chapels in the surrounding area. In the last third of the 14th century, with the generalisation of the aforementioned private chapels, the compositions of frescoes mostly followed the formats of the previous century, albeit with innovations. Such is the case of the Rinuccini Chapel, initiated by the Guidalotti family and whose frescoes were begun by Giovanni da Milano (Lavin 1990, pp. 90–91). The painter from Lombardy, who hailed from the workshop of Giotto's disciple Taddeo Gaddi, was hired to create the paintings for the chapel precisely in the same church where Gaddi was painting the south wall of the sacristy. Milano's work was interrupted by a lack of funds to continue with the project, having made only two of the paintings for the cycle. In 1370, work was resumed under the patronage of the chapel's new owner, Francesco Rinuccini, a Florentine diplomat and merchant, who hired Matteo di Pacino to finish the cycle (Erhardt 2011, p. 314). Despite the change in the chapel's ownership and also the change of artist, the Baroncelli Chapel

continued to be taken as an example, accurately painted thirty years earlier by Taddeo Gaddi. In the case that concerns us here, the Rinuccini Chapel is made up of two cycles that appear on each of the walls. One is dedicated to the Virgin and the other to the Magdalene, whose visual schemes begin with the moment before the beginning of their life of sanctity: in the case of the Virgin prior to the birth of Jesus; in the case of the Magdalene during her conversion. Hence, “both chapters technically are times of preparation. Beyond this thematic statement, the Rinuccini Chapel demonstrates two separate realms of patterning, that of order of interpretation, and that of compositional thrust, showing how they can operate separately or together” (Lavin 1990, pp. 90–92).

Thus, the frescoes show the life of the two most important women in medieval religiosity, and specifically in the Franciscan order, both considered perfect examples of meditation, particularly as regards the Passion. Another cycle on the life of Magdalene within the Franciscan sphere can be found in the Magdalene Chapel in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (c. 1320) (Erhardt 2011, pp. 317–22). The frescoes in this chapel were created by Giotto, the maestro of Taddeo Gaddi. Although the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee also appears in the visual scheme in Assisi, with the Magdalene at the feet of Jesus in a compositional layout very similar to that of Giovanni da Milano, the demons are not depicted in this one or in any of the scenes that constitute the cycle. Thus, although both chapels show a narrative cycle of the sinner converted into a penitent saint, the depiction of the demons only occurs in the Florentine chapel, further raising the exceptional nature of Giovanni da Milano’s work.

In the French manuscript *La vie de la belle et clere Magdalene* (1516–1530) (Figure 16), Magdalene no longer appears in an attitude of proskynesis but kneeling, identified with a phylactery. Six of the demons are emerging from her back and immediately in front of her chest appears the seventh. The morphology of these demons is more similar to the ones in the first image than to the Italian winged demons. The text surrounding the image refers to the strength of Jesus and his ability to work miracles.

Figure 16. Godefroy Le Batave, “Christ exorcisant s. Marie-Madeleine”, *La vie de la belle et clere Magdalene*, f. 13, ca. 1516–1530, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

4.2. Healer and Healed

All of the images of this typology come from French manuscripts, except for a stained-glass window. The first to appear (and the first in this article), which codifies the typology, belongs to a 13th century Bible moralisée (Figure 17): only Jesus, Magdalene, and the seven demons appear. Jesus is raising his hand to expel the demons that possessed the woman from Magdala, who is half-kneeling with the seven demonic beings emerging from her back. Their shape is anthropomorphic with antlers and they are all the same colour. The image falls within a typological context, so the accompanying text connects with the psalms: "Hic psalmus setptimus est de psalmis penitentialibus qui sunt vii quia peccata nostras delentur septenari numero et isti psalmi sunt contra vii mortalia peccata" [This psalm is the seventh of the penitential psalms, which are seven because our sins are erased by the number seven, and these psalms are against seven deadly sins.] There is a very similar image to this one in a Bible moralisée of the time, archived in the Treasury of Toledo Cathedral. In this case, the text explicitly adds that "Christus eicit septem demonia de Magdalena" [Christ cast out seven demons from Magdalene.] (Bennet 2002, p. 27).

Figure 17. "Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits", *Bible Moralisée*, Ms. lat. 11560, f. 37v., 13th century, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

The same scene is repeated in the stained-glass windows of the Cathedral of St. Etienne de Bourges (Figure 18), with the difference that the demons are no longer being expelled from the woman's back, but from her chest. They are shown in various colours (red, green, and yellow) and in forms that are more animal than human. In fact, among them one can see a yellow dog, a red devil and, closer to Jesus than to the exorcised woman, a creature similar to a red pig. The presence of the pig in medieval demonology often refers to female sexuality (Russell [1984] 1995, p. 73). Hence, sexual sin is again seen as predominant in the Magdalene before the exorcism.

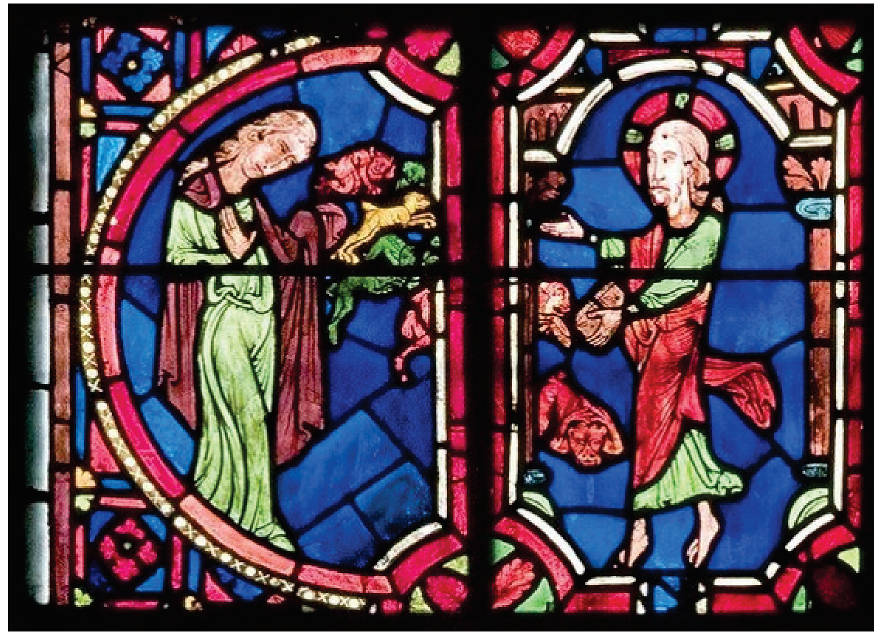

Figure 18. *Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits*, 13th century, St. Etienne Cathedral, Bourges.

The third image (Figure 19) returns to the sphere of illuminated books, accompanied by a text in Latin. The layout is practically the same as in the first image in this group, with Jesus raising his hand before a semi-kneeling Magdalene, from whose back seven anthropomorphic demons with animal-like features are emerging. The text accompanying the image focuses on the dangers of the flesh and the seven deadly sins, as well as the importance of penance to free oneself of them.

Figure 19. "Mary Magdalene Being Freed from her Evil Spirits", *Oxford-Paris-London Bible Moralisée*, Ms. Bodl-270b_00239, fol. 118r, ca. 1230–1240, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Lastly, in a book of hours (Figure 20), the exorcism is portrayed with a background, an aspect that had not appeared until then. Jesus and Magdalene are meeting in the gardens of a castle. This scenery could represent what is described in *The Golden Legend*, where it

is said that Magdalene, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, came from a rich family. In her luxurious palace, the woman "gave herself totally to the pleasures of the flesh". Hence, Magdalene is portrayed as "very rich, and sensuous pleasure keeps company with great wealth. Renowned as she was for her beauty and her riches, she was no less known for the way she gave her body to pleasure—so much so that her proper name was forgotten and she was commonly called 'the sinner'" (Voragine 2012, p. 375). After that, there is a brief mention that Jesus expelled seven demons from Magdalene. This exorcism occurs as follows: Jesus, dressed in his traditional attire, raises his arm towards a standing Magdalene, dressed as a lady of the time to clearly connect with the recipients of the books of hours and thus serve as an exemplum to the women who owned them. Another significant difference is that the demons, represented as small black vermin, are expelled through Magdalene's bodily orifices: through her mouth and under her clothing, alluding once again to Magdalene's sexual activities as a prostitute. As with the exorcism in the Santa Croce paintings, specialists also point to this image as a rarity (Apostolos-Cappadona 2002, p. 12).

Figure 20. "Mary Magdalene Healed by Christ", *Book of Hours*, Ms. M. 54 f.18., ca. 1460–1470, Morgan Library, New York.

4.3. The Possession in Allegorical Terms

The image created in allegorical terms (Figures 21 and 22) comes from the French manuscript Mariage de Dieu et de l'âme pécheresse (1491–1492), Jean de Eecoute's main work. In the form of an allegorical novel, the text explains moral and mystical theology, studying the marriage of God and the soul in both its pure and imperfect state. The image corresponds to chapter XIII, with Magdalene chained by a demon with the appearance

of an ape with antlers, dragon wings, and a woman's breasts. This demonic morphology, in which both feminine and masculine physical attributes are combined, was also linked to the punishment of lust in hell. This type of hybrid being was to appear more in art in the 15th and 16th centuries, a time of great imagination and creativity regarding the demonic image (García Arranz 2019, pp. 322–41). In front of Magdalene is an allegory of death with a skull, a sword, and burning embers. Above, an angel is carrying a sword and a phylactery with which he is warning Magdalene of God's curse for being linked to the Devil: "Dieu te mauldit plaine de pechie, le dyable est avecq toy". As in the previous book of hours, the scene has an architectural background. In this case, it is not an exorcism being shown, but in keeping with the theme of the book, the soul's struggle between purity and corruptibility. The former is clearly connected to the presence of the angel, an element that had not appeared until this time. In the Middle Ages, demonic possession became a battle between good and evil, exemplified by angels and demons, respectively. One such angel was St. Michael, considered to be the enemy of the Devil based on the Book of the Apocalypse. In this struggle, the angels carried swords to fight against evil and free possessed souls (Young 2018, p. 67).

Figure 21. Jean de Eecoute, *Mariage de Dieu et de l'âme pécheresse*, f. 004, ca. 1491–1492, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 0243 (233).

Figure 22. Jean de Eecoute, *Mariage de Dieu et de l'âme pécheresse*, (detail), f. 004, ca. 1491–1492, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 0243 (233).

Following all of this, it can be affirmed that the images of Magdalene with demons are shown in media were intended for both private and public use, the former being more predominant in number. In this way, in addition to the characteristics acquired by some of these images in representing the possession and exorcism in books (Figures 20 and 21), it can be concluded that they had a clear educational purpose, using Magdalene as an example of repentance and confession as a means to free herself from the possession. The image corresponding to the public sphere—the stained-glass windows—comes from the Franciscan world and the importance it provided to exorcisms. As for the morphology of demons, they vary, including multiple shapes and colours. Similarly, the place where they are expelled also varies, with the back and chest being the predominant body parts but not the only ones, as has been seen. Likewise, although Magdalene as a patristic construct possessed all of the sins, the representation of the demons demonstrates an insistence on the sexual kind, as has been shown by some of these images.

5. Judas and Magdalene in the Middle Ages: Cultural Analysis with a Comparative Perspective

After dealing with the two characters individually, a comparative analysis is now made of their demons' characteristics. Those accompanying Judas could be pale, black, and anthropomorphic, bestial, small devils, or grotesque figures with the body parts of various animals. Sometimes, as in the work of Giovanni Canavesio (Figure 11), the demon snatching his soul physically resembles him, with a pointed beard and a prominent nose. Both Judas and his demon share facial features with the Jews, stereotyped by the anti-Judaic sentiment that arose in the Middle Ages (Rodríguez Barral 2009). Similarly, one of the demons expelled from Mary Magdalene's body in the work by Giovanni da Milano (Figure 15) resembles the Magdalene by sharing her characteristic blonde hair. As for the connection between each figure and its demons, it is noteworthy that the demons expelled from the woman's body appear detached from her and far from her body, taking flight, and emerging from her back, chest, and bodily orifices. On the other hand, the demons accompanying Judas are linked to him, even inside him as in the panel of Master of Sigena. (Figure 4). Furthermore, Iscariot's sinful soul is snatched from his stomach since the betrayal had gestated in his innards. Neither the demons expelled from Magdalene nor those accompanying Judas respond to a homogeneous morphology. There is no pattern when it comes to portraying them; rather, they come in different shapes, sizes, and colours.

The demons in these representations fit the descriptions included in the Apocalypse (12:3–9), where they are described as looking similar to a dragon, while at the same time indicating that the dragon is called the Devil and Satan. In this regard, there is a noteworthy contrast between the importance of demons in medieval centuries and the difficulty of finding images of them before the 11th century, when they began to have that "monstrosity and animality, thereby manifesting an increasingly insistent hostile power" (Baschet 2003, p. 212). Such monstrosity is made visible through a corporality which, though often anthropomorphic, "has been perverted to the point of appearing monstrous due to the conjunction of deformity and the introduction of various animal characteristics (snout, fangs, horns, pointed ears . . . , bat wings as of the 13th century, tail, hairy body, claws or talons . . .)" (Baschet 2003, p. 214). In this vein, the representation of some of these demons with the tail of a dragon or snake alludes directly to the image of the original sin, where the snake, the Devil incarnate, appears tempting Eve with a body that mixes the tail of these creatures with a torso of feminine morphology, as occurs in The Original Sin by Hugo van der Goes (ca. 1467, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

The heterogeneity of the demons also coincides with what the sources of the time describe. In the 12th century, Peter the Venerable described demons as terrifying beasts, sometimes resembling pigs with huge tusks, emphasising that they could adopt many different forms: "They could be ugly and fearful", with "long hooked noses", linking directly with some of the images analysed (Figures 11 and 18). In addition, the Benedictine insists that the Devil seeks to possess souls by inciting vices or sins. In the Cistercian sphere of the 11th century, Herbert of Clairvaux also writes about demons, their origins, their strengths, and appearance. He deals mainly with the demons' physical aspect in relation to the dragon, due to its presence in the Book of Revelation. His ones also appear in other animal forms, such as snakes—due to Genesis—or apes, as happens in the last image of Mary Magdalene analysed (Figure 22), and others. Clairvaux also explains that the demons move in groups, in multitudes, and through the air (Ruys 2019, pp. 35–40), as happens in some of the Magdalene's exorcisms. This has its theological basis in various medieval texts, such as the writings of Peter Lombard (d. 1160) in which, taking Augustine as a point of reference, he explains that demons are animals of the air (Elliott 2010, pp. 128–30). This insistence on demons and the air confirms that this medium was a "frighteningly unknown place for medieval people" and that in demonology it was considered to be "the abode of fallen angels and so an inherently dangerous place" (Ruys 2019, pp. 35–36).

In the fourth century, John Cassian had already established some key elements of demons, an aspect that was to remain over time. In the 13th century, the Cistercian

Caesarius of Heisterbach described different exorcisms, pointing out the places through which demonic creatures could be expelled: the mouth, the feet or the knees, as well as through bodily fluids such as urine, semen, or gastric juices. In the images analysed, it has been seen that there are a variety of places for demons to depart, portraying Magdalene expelling the demons through her mouth (Figure 20) or the demons ripping Judas' soul out of his intestines (Figures 9–13). Similar to other monks of the time, Caesarius mentioned the great morphological heterogeneity of demons: dragons, pigs, dogs, and monkeys and predominantly black, a characteristic of the relationship between darkness and the Devil in medieval centuries (Ruys 2019, pp. 18–53). All of these physical traits have been seen in the images of both Judas and Magdalene.

In addition to the morphological diversity of evil, the association of demonic possession with sins is common to all of these sources. This demon–sin tandem appears in representations of both Judas and Magdalene. Both characters have been shown to share a life of sins and demons. The idea of vices or bad thoughts originated before the Christian era, in Greece. However, it was Christian thinking that developed and spread the idea in a general way. Sin, in early Christianity, was also rooted in Judaism with the Ten Commandments as the main point of reference. Within the Christian literature, the temptations of Christ in the desert (Mt 4:1–11; Lk 4:1–12) were the main texts upon which to develop the foundations of sin. Within this tradition, it is in the First Letter of John (5:16–17) where the distinction appears between mortal sins and those that are not, with Tertullian as the initiator of the distinction between sins that are committed in everyday life (lies or anger) and those entailing extreme gravity: murder, idolatry, blasphemy, or fornication. For his part, Augustine of Hippo stated that the three main temptations were gluttony, greed, and pride, singling out the latter as the origin of all other sins (Tilby 2013, pp. 21–47).

Nevertheless, it was Evagrius the Solitary (345–399) who systematised the eight deadly sins, albeit referring to them as evil thoughts instigated by the Devil: gluttony, lust, avarice, sadness, acedia (sloth), vainglory, and pride. By the sixth century with Gregory the Great and his intense belief in hell, they became established at seven. Gregory the Great indicated that the human being lives in continuous tension between doing the good dictated by God and distancing oneself from one's own desires and temptations, encouraged by the Devil. In *Moralia sive Expositio in Job*, he describes the seven deadly sins, all of which stem from pride, described as the leader of the Devil's army. Therefore, it was with Gregory the Great that the seven deadly sins were established that the medieval Church would maintain (Aragonés Estella 1996, pp. 135–38; Tilby 2013, pp. 21–47; Carrasco Manchado 2011, pp. 51–80).

Most especially, it was at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) when the seven deadly sins were finally laid down. In that council, other issues stemming from earlier times that had not been made official until then were also set out: confession, penance, and communion. A century earlier, the attempt to specify the number of sacraments began, as well as the very notion of the term. The number seven, due to its specific symbolism, was considered to be the one that should govern the number of sacraments, thus establishing the septenary. However, it was not until the aforementioned council when the sacraments were established in document form based on the 71 canons arising from said conclave. Specifically, Canon 21 introduced the obligation of confession and annual communion for all the faithful, instituting penance as a central sacrament in the life of the faithful (Soto Rábanos 2006, pp. 413–17). As a consequence, the capital sins ceased to be confined to the monastic and ecclesiastical sphere to form part of daily life for all of the faithful. To do so, it was necessary to instruct the members of the clergy so that, aware of the capital sins, they could organise the sermons, confessions, and penances bestowed. In order to help in this task, the mnemonic rule SALIGIA was created, formed by the initials of each of the seven sins.

In this culture of sin, it was repentance, confession, and penance that played essential parts in pastoral writings, with sin taking the leading role. Within this literature, we can find the confession manuals, clearly linked to the sacrament of forgiveness instituted in the Fourth Lateran Council. It was precisely from the 13th century onwards that the

figure of Mary Magdalene began to opt for the side of penance, as a consequence of the Church's great concern for sin and repentance. Mary Magdalene was set out as one of the most important penitent saints of the time, as well as being the patron saint of all sinners. She is represented thus in books of hours and psalters (Figure 23), where she appears victorious over the seven deadly sins that had possessed her in the form of demons. She thus became the utmost exemplum for the faithful, on being the sinner who was exorcised after repenting, confessing, and obtaining forgiveness, becoming a disciple of Jesus and, after his death, dedicating herself first to preaching and then to penance.

Figure 23. "SALIGIA", *Liège Psalter-Hours,* Ms. M.182, f.9v., ca. 1280, Morgan Library, New York.

As an exemplum of repentance, confession, penance, and communion, she was used in numerous sermons of the era. In the Iberian Peninsula, she was used "to explain the requirements that this sacrament [of confession] must have in order to be valid: overcoming shame on declaring sins, contrition and penance" (Español and Fité 2008, pp. 20–21). This is also the case in the rest of the medieval West, such as in the Italian peninsula, on which Jansen (2001, pp. 199–208) carried out a detailed study based on the preachings of the mendicant orders. For his part, Judas also acted as an example to be avoided, being, like Magdalena, a compendium of all sins but choosing, unlike her, the path of condemnation. The traitor, miser, thief, and suicide portrayed in public art numerous times was intended to influence the conscience of the faithful as the exemplum in preachers' sermons (Weber 2002, pp. 165–88). The Devil, the main culprit behind the betrayal and suicide, does not allow Judas to repent, do penance, or redeem himself, but instead leads his soul to eternal damnation, reserving for him the worst place in hell.

Regarding gender issues, it has been mentioned that women were generally more vulnerable to demonic possession due to their irrationality, carnality, and weakness. Nevertheless, although Magdalene was possessed by the totality of sins according to the Fathers of the Church, thanks to her repentance, confession, and exorcism, she is triumphant over the sins. On the other hand, Judas was considered by the Fathers of the Church to be similar to a woman, which is why he was chosen by the Devil for the betrayal. Therefore, in the case of these two characters, the generalisations regarding gender and being possessed were outweighed by the importance of Magdalene not only as an educational instrument but also as a miracle of Jesus, having managed to heal the woman of the seven demons. In this way, the Nazarene's ability to work miracles and his willingness to forgive are stressed through the exorcism of the woman from Magdala.

6. Conclusions

After everything that has been said above, it can be affirmed that the quantitative difference between the representations of Judas and Magdalene with the demons largely responds to the fact that, whereas Judas never freed himself from the demons, Magdalene was exorcised. The importance of her exorcism does not stem so much from the possession itself but rather the protagonism shifted to the healing capacity of Jesus, his mercy, and the woman's conversion. Judas, on the other hand, despite being encouraged to confess on several occasions, kept on the path of sin and therefore his link with the Devil is perpetuated even on his death. To sum up, although both characters share the fact that they are sinners and possessed by the devil, there is a huge difference in their destinies: whereas Mary Magdalene is to end up as a saint, Judas is to be condemned.

Both characters were set out in medieval sources in such a way that they would be able to respond to the Church's need to provide the faithful with examples to follow or avoid. Mary Magdalene was constructed as a redeemed sinner, becoming the second most important woman after the Virgin, an exemplum in the sermons and preachings of the time; whereas, Judas groups together all the sins, adding one more sin at each step of his life, making it impossible to empathise with him and undoubtedly predicting an end of damnation for him. In short, both characters function as perfect examples due to their similarities and their different destinies, for the interests of the Church and for the faithful to understand.

Regarding the representation of demons, it has been verified that, in accordance with the sources of the time, they adopted greatly varied forms, from small, winged devils to monstrous hybrids with animal and human features. The ones accompanying Magdalene in some of her exorcisms and Judas at the Lord's Supper are usually small and similar to bats, birds, or pigs. Judas' demons in the passage of the meeting with the Sanhedrin and also in the episode of his death are bigger demons that dominate and persuade the traitor. The heterogeneity in the morphology of all of these demons and the arbitrariness in portraying them, as well as the different links with the characters studied, means they have only just begun to be studied, and that the matter is open to future research.

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Notes

1. Bennet's study focuses on the *Bibles moralisées* from the 13th century onwards, analysing the presence of the demon-possessed Magdalene in typological relation to Old Testament passages.
2. For the conception of suicide in the Middle Ages as a sin for the Church and a betrayal of society, with its religious and legal consequences, see: (Murray 1998, 2000).
3. Through feminist theology (Ricci 1994; Schaberg 2004), great emphasis has been placed both on clarifying whether this confusion was irremediable as well as on the meaning of the demonic possession and exorcism—or healing—in the context of the first century.

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Article

The Iconographic Type of the Coronation of the Virgin in the Renaissance Italian Painting in the Light of the Medieval Theology

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Abstract: This article highlights the artistic and conceptual relevance of the iconographic type of the Coronation of Mary in Italy during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modernity. We have analyzed 14 Italian Renaissance paintings, aiming to discover the possible doctrinal sources that inspire them. From a conceptual perspective, we have specified that the iconography of The Coronation of the Virgin in Italy is directly inspired by the comments of some Church Fathers and medieval theologians and hymnographers. From the formal perspective, we discover that three different iconographyc types complement each other as progressively more complex variants of a similar basic structure.

Keywords: Renaissance Art; Marian iconography; Coronation of the Virgin; theological sources; patristics; liturgical hymns

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1. Introduction

In the context of Christianity, the designation of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven began to appear as early as the 4th century in some patristic texts, which became more abundant in subsequent centuries with the increasingly explicit and enthusiastic contributions of numerous Church Fathers, and medieval theologians and hymnographers. Only much later, from the 10th century, the artistic (sculptural, and pictorial) representations of the Virgin as Queen become general. Initially, she appeared wearing a crown on her head, almost always in a seated position with the Child Jesus in her arms, as reflected in the iconographic type of *Sedes Sapientiae*. Finally, from the middle of the 12th century, the specific iconographic type of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary began to spread—first in sculpture, then in painting—, a topic that we will deal with in this article.

As we will see shortly, the Church justified granting Mary the title of Queen of Heaven—and, correlatively, the image of her Coronation in the heavenly Paradise—based on the dogma of her virginal divine motherhood. In fact, for the teachers of Christian doctrine, it was evident that Mary, being the mother of God the Son, King of Heaven, should also have royal status, and, therefore, deserve the dignity of being crowned as Queen of Heaven by who had the legitimate title of Emperor of Heavenly Glory.

Now, to approach rigorously the topic that we have focused on in this article, we will first analyze a wide series of texts by the Church Fathers and medieval theologians and liturgical hymnographers that concordantly outline the doctrine of celestial Queenship of the Virgin Mary, by designating her with some titles, such as Queen, Lady, or Sovereign. Secondly, we will analyze a large set of pictorial images of the Coronation of the Virgin produced by prestigious Italian Renaissance artists, based on this unanimous doctrinal corpus that we will expose in the first part of the article, through which we will justify our iconographic interpretation of the paintings. This comparative analysis of texts and images will ultimately allow us to draw some reasonable conclusions.

2. The Queenship of Mary According to Some Church Fathers and Medieval Theologians

The references by Church Fathers and medieval theologians and hymnographers designating the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven are numerous and especially meaningful throughout the centuries. For this reason, one can explain that from these explicit doctrinal pronouncements the correlative iconographic type of the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven has subsequently emerged.

From the very first centuries of the Christian era, some Eastern and Western Church Fathers acknowledged to some extent the Queenship of Mary. Thus, towards the middle of the 4th century, St. Ephrem of Syria (306–373) designated the Virgin Mary with the significant titles of "Lady" and "Queen", titles that were later used by several other Church Fathers and Doctors. Similar treatments would be used half a century later by St. Jerome of Stridon (340–420). For the rest, the Council of Ephesus, held in June and July 431, established as a dogma that Mary is the true Mother of God (*theotókos*), which, as we suggested before, established the doctrinal bases that support the title of Mary as the Queen of Heaven: since she is the mother of the King of Heaven, Mary also rightfully deserves the title of Queen of Heaven.

That is why, as an expression derived from the dogma of the divine motherhood of Mary, proclaimed by the Council of Ephesus, the denomination of Queen in reference to Mary began to become frequent among Christian thinkers from the 6th century. In the centuries that followed, many Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers generalized—as we will see later—several endearing appellations such as Queen of Heaven, Queen of angels, Queen of saints, and other similar expressions to designate the Virgin. In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, many Christian thinkers highlighted, with more or less strength, the absolute supremacy of Mary over the angels and saints, to the point that they did not hesitate to affirm that all angelic hierarchies, saints, and all the blessed pay constant tribute of honor to the Virgin as their Sovereign in Heaven.

In this sense, the influential Eastern Church Father St. John of Damascus (c. 676–749), in a passage from his *Homily on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, establishes an essential link between the category of Mary as Queen of Heaven and her virginal divine motherhood. Therefore, he enthusiastically proclaims:

> Hail, the only Queen among queens, you who are certainly a daughter of Kings, but also the Mother of the King of universe and strength of religious kings and emperors! Hail, the only Queen among queens, covered with a gold dress and with variety, such as David, the singer of the Psalms, exclaimed![1]

As if this were not enough, St. John Damascene in his *First homily on the feast of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary* insists on the idea that she went to the royal throne of his Son Jesus,

> staying next to him with great, inexplicable freedom, you [Mary], who are the happiness higher than any word for the Angels and all the Powers dominating the world, the everlasting delectation for the Patriarchs, the ineffable joy to the righteous and the perennial joy for the prophets.[2]

Three and a half centuries later in Europe, the conspicuous Benedictine master St. Anselm of Aosta (1033–1109), Archbishop of Canterbury and Church Doctor, decisively defends the doctrine of the Queenship of the Virgin. Thus, in a sermon on the Assumption, he states that Mary was praised as Queen of Heaven, and that precisely because of her condition as Heavenly Queen, she could more effectively exercise her role as intercessor before God in favor of those who invoke her. In such a sense, St. Anselm states convinced:

> You have been exalted over the choirs of angels, eternally happy and glorious Queen of Heaven, where you aid all those who glorify you as Lady and often invoke your holy name with humble prayer.[3]

In another paragraph of this homily, St. Anselm addresses the Virgin with this invocation:

> on the merits of your most salutary Nativity, Annunciation and virginal Birth, and on your most chaste Purification and your most glorious Assumption, may I be presented with a clean heart and pure body in the sublime palace of heaven, where you exult and reign as the glorious Queen of angels and men, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.[4]

Similarly, in a sermon on Christ and all the saints, St. Anselm acknowledges daring to pray to the Virgin Mary, whom, after noting that she gave birth to Jesus, salvation, life, and remedy for the lost world, he designates her as "Lady of the world and Queen of Heaven". Then he asks her to offer to his beloved Son Jesus the prayer that he (Anselm) is entrusting to her holiest and more maternal piety.[5] In his 45th homily in honor of the Virgin, the Archbishop of Canterbury exalts the mother of God in these confident supplications

> You are the honor of the world. You the nobility of the Christian people, oh, Queen and Lady of the world. Stairway to heaven, throne of God, gate of paradise, hear the prayers of the poor, do not despise the groans of the miserable.[6]

Finally, in another sermon in honor of Mary, St. Anselm insists on similar praises to the mother of God, begging for her protection with these warm praises: "Honor of the virgins, Lady of human beings, Queen of angels, source of the gardens, ablution of sinners, holy and perpetual Virgin, help the miserable, help the lost."[7]

Approximately half a century later the prestigious Cistercian master St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux (1090–1153), in his first sermon for the feast of the Assumption, highlights the huge happiness of the angels and the other saints in receiving Mary as their heavenly Queen. Bernard expresses it in these terms:

> Our Queen preceded us, preceded us, and was assumed [to heaven] in such a glorious way that her little servants follow her lady confidently asking: Lift us after you; we will run towards the smell of your perfumes (Cant, 1, 3). Our pilgrimage previously sent our advocate, who, as mother of the Judge and mother of mercy, will humbly and effectively deal with the matters of our [eternal] salvation.[8]

In another later passage of that sermon, the abbot of Clairvaux is amazed to see with what glory the Queen of the world, Mary, ascends to Heaven, and with what devotion a multitude of angels come out to meet her, leading her to the throne of glory with songs. And he is also amazed to see with what serene and placid face and with what divine hugs she is received by her Son and exalted above all creatures, with the honor corresponding to such a worthy mother and so convenient to her Son.[9]

Finally, in another sermon St. Bernard insists on exalting the royalty of Mary by expressing:

> That is why all generations proclaim you blessed (Luke I, 48), Mother of God, Lady of the world, Queen of heaven. All generations, I say. For there are generations of heaven and earth. [. . .] Therefore, then, all generations proclaim you blessed, you who gave birth to life and glory for all generations. Because in you the angels find joy, the just find grace, the sinners find eternal forgiveness.[10]

A little over a century later, the conspicuous Franciscan master St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1218–1274), who for his mysticism was called the "Seraphic Doctor" (*Doctor Seraphicus*), defends the Queenship of Mary in several passages. In this regard, in the fourth sermon on the Annunciation he states:

> By her nuptial union, the Virgin Mary is the Mother of God; by her royal throne, the Queen of Heaven; by her priestly ornament, the advocate of the human race. And for all these things the Virgin Mary was fit, being of the human species, of the lineage of kings and of the priestly caste. Say then the most holy Virgin Mary: *He who created me rested in my tabernacle*.[11]

In another subsequent passage of that homily, he insists on maintaining that the Blessed Virgin Mary has been made Queen of all, for which all must praise her, and all heavenly, terrestrial and infernal beings must honor her by kneeling before her.[12]

As if that were not enough, the Seraphic Doctor highlights in his second homily on the Assumption the Queenship of Mary by holding:

> [Mary] was, finally, ennobled over all saints regarding her excellence of dignity or condition; since, being the Mother of the Highest Emperor, she is by her dignity and conditions the worthiest of all creatures; and that is why not without reason she was elevated above them and placed to the right of her Son in a very sublime throne.[13]

Finally, in his sixth sermon on the Assumption, St. Bonaventure reaffirms the thesis of the royal status of Mary, addressing her with these words:

> Hurry, therefore, you will be crowned with a glorious crown, by which you will be made according to *the majesty of the eternal Father*, according to the saying of Isaiah 62: *You will be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord and a diadem of the kingdom in the hand of your God*. For she, the highest in glory above all others, shows herself as *in the hand of God* as an example of union and ignition of desire. For which she as Queen of heaven sits at the right of the eternal King, according to the saying of the Psalm: *The queen is present at your right in a dress of gold*, and is crowned with a crown similar to the crown of the eternal King.[14]

3. Mary the Queen of Heaven in Medieval Latin Liturgical Hymns

The official doctrine of the Church on the Queenship of the Virgin Mary, expressed by many Church Fathers and theologians—of which we have seen only a small sample in the preceding section—, was later eloquently illustrated in countless medieval liturgical hymns that, with various poetic tropes, exalt the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven.

The numerous fragments of hymns that we will present below are sufficiently clear and explicit in their formulations referring to the Queenship of the Virgin Mary as to not need further explanations: they are self-explanatory by their own words. Nevertheless, at the end of this Section 3, we shall try to make a brief summary of the main ideas and metaphors expressed by those hymns.

We will now present a selection of such hymns, beginning with the three most popular and widespread Marian antiphons, which are sung at the Divine Office throughout the year, namely *Regina caeli, laetare*, *Salve Regina*, and *Ave, Regina Coelorum*.

The 10th-century *Regina Coeli, laetare* antiphon—attributed to Pope Saint Gregory the Great, and sung in the Roman liturgy at Easter time—praises Mary thus:

Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia.
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.
Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

The Son you merited to bear, alleluia,
Has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray to God for us, alleluia
Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

In turn, *Salve Regina*—the best known of the Marian antiphons, written around the 11th or 12th century, traditionally attributed to the German monk Hermann de Reichenau, although many consider it anonymous—extols the Virgin with these emotional pleas:

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes

in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy,
Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope.
To thee do we cry,
Poor banished children of Eve;
To thee do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
Thine eyes of mercy toward us;
And after this our exile,
Show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

The *Ave Regina Coelorum* antiphon—inspired by St. Ephrem of Syria and St. Jerome, probably dating from the 12th century, and attributed to Saint Bernard or Herman of Reichenau—proclaims the Queenship of Mary in these stanzas:

Ave, Regina Coelorum
Ave, Domina angelorum,
Salve, radix, salve, porta
Ex qua mundo lux est orta.

Hail, O Queen of Heaven.
Hail, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world a light has arisen:

In addition to these three traditional antiphons incorporated into the Divine Office, numerous other Latin liturgical hymns also spread in the Middle Ages. Many of them have come down to us thanks to the tireless rescue work undertaken in the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th in the monastic and cathedral archives by the prestigious experts Franz Josef Mone, Guido Maria Dreves and Clemens Blume, who published the monumental collections that we quote below.

Mone collected many hymns from 1853 to 1855 in three volumes: the first, dedicated to God (Mone 1853); the second, to the Virgin Mary (Mone 1854); the third, to the saints (Mone 1855). Guido Maria Dreves edited between 1886 and 1898 the first 28 volumes of the impressive *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* collection (55 volumes in total), of which he published from 1898 to 1907 alone or co-authored with Clemens Blume the following 22 volumes; Blume then continued this collection until 1922 with his last five volumes (Dreves et al. 1898–1922).

Now, as we have found a huge number of fragments of Latin liturgical hymns that allude to the Queenship of Mary, we have restricted to quoting only a selection extracted from the second volume of Mone (1854), to prevent this article from extending in too much. Thus, we will now transcribe some fragments of hymns from Mone's volume 2, with the numbering and title that he gives them in his book. We will quote the hymns in chronological sequence, to better appreciate the possible evolution in the way in which the Christian medieval liturgy expressed the devotion to the Queen of Heaven.

The Hymnus 352. Sancta Maria (from the 7th century, attributed to Venantius Fortunatus) thus addresses the maternal heavenly Sovereign:

Nunc tibi, virgo virginum,
laudes ferimus carminum
teque, caelorum regina,
resultet haec plebecula. (Hymnus 352)

Now, Virgin of virgins,
We bring you poetic praises,
And to you, Queen of Heaven,
This little mob may resonate with you.

Two verses later that anthem goes on to say:
Lacta regina parvulum,
aeterni regis filium,
lacta sacrato ubere,
qui te concessit vivere.

Tu clara stirpe regia
jureque mundi domina
desideratum omnibus
tu protulisti gentibus. (Hymnus 352)

Queen of children,
breastfeed the Son of the eternal King,
suckle with your sacred breast,
to whom he gave you life.

You are of clear royal lineage
And Lady of the world by right,
You spawned the Desired
of all peoples.

The Hymnus 340. De sancta Maria (nativitas) (from the 10th century) proclaims the royal greatness of the Virgin that way:

O sancta mundi domina,
regina coeli inclita,
o stella maris Maria,
virgo mater deifica! (Hymnus 340)

Oh holy Lady of the world,
illustrious Queen of Heaven,
oh Mary, star of the sea,
Virgin Mother of God!

The Hymnus 356. De sancta Maria (troparium) (from the 12th century) praises the Virgin with these stanzas:

Fecunda verbo
Tu virginum virgo,
Maria, dei
Mater inclyta, omni
Laude tu sola digna,

Dignare nos indignos
famulos te laudare,
regina coeli. (Hymnus 356)

You, Mary, Virgin of virgins
You were fruitful by the Word [Verb]
Immaculate Mother of God,
You are the only one
Worthy of all praise.

Let us, unworthy servants,
praise you,
Queen of Heaven.

The Hymnus 533. Ad beatam Virginem Mariam (from the 12th century) greets the Mother of God with these praises:

Ave stella matutina, CONFIRM
peccatorum medicina,
mundi princeps et regina,
esto nobis disciplina. (Hymnus 533)

Hail, morning star,
medicine of sinners,
Princess and Queen of the world,
be a discipline for us.

The Hymnus 504. Psalterium Mariae (from the 12th century) glorifies the Virgin with these verses:

Ave regina celebris,
de qua lumen in tenebris
exortum parit gaudium
in domibus fidelium. (Hymnus 504)

Hail, famous Queen,
from which the light was born
in the darkness gave birth to joy
in the houses of the faithful.

The Hymnus 360. De sancta Maria (from the 13th century) requests the protection of the Virgin with these prayers:

Placa mare maris stella,
ne involvat nos procella
et tempestas valida,

Sed ad coeli palatium
nostrum tu solatium
subleves, o pia
coeli regina. (Hymnus 360)

Calm the sea, star of the sea,
So that the storm and the strong storm
does not engulf us,

But lift up our consolation
to the sky palace
oh pious
Queen of Heaven.

The Hymnus 402. Prosa de beata Virgine (troparium) (from the 13th century) exalts Mary with these lyrical expressions:

Tu floris et roris,
panis et pastoris
virginum regina,
rosa sine spina
genitrix es facta. (Hymnus 402)

You, Queen of virgins
Of the flower and the dew,
Of the bread and the shepherd,
You have been made a mother,
thornless Rose,

The Hymnus 322. De beata virgine Maria (from the 14th century) salutes the heavenly Sovereign with these praises:

Salve mundi domina
et coeli regina,
mater dei integra,
rosa sine spina. (Hymnus 322)

Hail, Lady of the world
and Queen of Heaven,
Immaculate Mother of God,
rose without thorns.

The Hymnus 477. Item ad sanctam Mariam (from the 14th century) exalts the Virgin in these terms:

Gaude super sidera
sedens ut regina,
cujus fert imperia
omnis creatura. (Hymnus 477)

Rejoice, you who are sitting
Over the stars like a Queen,
from which every creature
take her orders.

The Hymnus 558. Oratio ad gloriosam Virginem Mariam (from the 14th century) addresses the Mother of God thus begging for her protection:

O domina dominarum,
regina reginarum,
propter tuam pietatem
pelle meam paupertatem. (Hymnus 558)

Oh, Lady of ladies,
Queen of queens,
for your mercy
throw away my poverty.

The Hymnus 591. Laudes Mariae Virginis (from the 14th century) greets the Mother of God with this sequence of compliments:

Ave virgo regia,
mater clementiae,
ave plena gratia,
regina gloriae,

genitrix egregia
prolis eximiae,
quae sedes in gloria
coelestis patriae,
regis veri regia
mater et filia. (Hymnus 591)

Hail, Royal Virgin,
clemency mother,
hail, full of grace,
Queen of glory,
egregious mother
of an eminent progeny,
sitting in glory
of the heavenly homeland,
royal mother and daughter
of the true King.

The Hymnus 392. Ave Maria in rhythmis (from the 15th century) glorifies the Virgin with these warm praises:

Ave regina beata,
quae es virgo consecrata,
Dei mater ordinata
ante mundi principium.

Maria coeli ducissa
virginum et principissa,
martyrum corona ipsa
et sanctis speculum. (Hymnus 392)

Hail, blessed Queen,
who are a consecrated Virgin,
ordained Mother of God
before the beginning of the world.

Mary, guide, and princess
of the virgins of heaven,
actual crown of the martyrs
mirror of the saints.

Some stanzas later this hymn goes on to say:

Tu regina imperatrix,
dei et nostrum mediatrix
ac moestorum consolatrix,
electa ab exordio. (Hymnus 392)

You are the Queen Empress,
mediator between God and us
and comforter of the sad,
chosen from the start.

The Hymnus 396. Super Ave Maria (from the 15th century) exalts the Virgin with these verses:

Benedicta domina,
regina coelorum,
tibi laudes agmina
cantant angelorum. (Hymnus 396)

Blessed Lady,
Queen of Heaven,
the armies of angels
sing your praises.

The Hymnus 418. Super cantico Magnificat. (from the 15th century) extols the Mother of God, while begging for her saving protection, with this stanza:

Nunc exulta, o regina,
flos rosarum sine spina,
fulgens stella matutina,
nos conserva a ruina,
mater Dei Maria! (Hymnus 418)

Now rejoice, oh Queen,
thornless rose flower,
bright morning star,
save us from ruin,
Mother of God, Mary!

The Hymnus 447. Assumptionis beatae Mariae Virginis (from the 15th century) celebrates the Assunta like this:

Regina mundi hodie
thronum conscendit gloriae,
illum enixa filium,
qui est ante luciferum. (Hymnus 447)

The Queen of the world today
ascended to the throne of glory,
making that Son shine
that exists before the morning star.

The Hymnus 481. De beata Maria Virgine (from the 15th century) greets the Mother of God that way:

Gaude regina beata,
super coelos exaltata,
mater juncta filio. (Hymnus 481)

Rejoice, blessed Queen,
exalted above the heavens,
Mother next to her Son.

The Hymnus 489. Super Salve regina (from the 15th century) addresses the Virgin, between praises and supplications, with these eloquent verses:

Salve nobilis regina,
fons misericordiae,
aegris vitae medicina,
lapsis vena veniae;
sitibundis nunc propina
nectar indulgentiae,
et quos culpae pungit spina,
medicamen gratiae. (Hymnus 489)

Hail, noble Queen,
source of mercy,

life medicine for the sick,
vein of forgiveness for the fallen
now the cup of drink offered to the thirsty
nectar of indulgence,
and medicine of grace for those
who were pricked by the thorn of guilt.

The Hymnus 490. De beata Virgine solemnis antiphona (from the 15th century) extols Mary with these praises:

Salve mundi domina,
regina coelorum,
sanctorum laetitia,
vita beatorum. (Hymnus 490)

Hail, Lady of the world,
Queen of Heaven.
The joy of the saints,
The life of the blessed.

The Hymnus 510. Ad beatam Mariam Virginem (from the 15th century) celebrates the maternal protection of the mother of God with these emotional verses:

O regina angelorum
atque mundi domina,
imperatrix infernorum,
hera sublimissima,
vera mater orphanorum,
piarum piissima,
vera salus infirmorum
sana mea vitia. (Hymnus 510)

Oh Queen of angels
And Lady of the world,
Empress of hell,
sublime Lady,
the true mother of the orphans,
the most pious of the pious,
the true health of the sick,
heal my vices.

The Hymnus 522. De beata Maria (from ca. the 15th century) glorifies the Virgin with this poetic stanza:

Salve mater speciosa,
super cunctis tu formosa,
sanctarum sanctissima:
salve stella matutina,
tu coelorum es regina,
virgo nobilissima. (Hymnus 522)

Hail, beautiful mother,
you are beautiful above all,
the holiest of saints:
hail morning star,
you are the Queen of Heaven,
the noblest Virgin.

As you can see, most of the liturgical hymns express numerous concepts and metaphors alluding to Mary's Queenship, with expressions such as Queen of heaven, of royal lineage, mother of the King of kings, Lady of the world, Queen of the world, Queen of virgins, Queen of queens, Lady of ladies, mother of the true King, Empress, Princess, blessed Queen exalted above Heaven, and so on

In this sense, the poetic formulations of these hymns fully reflect the most intellectually elevated ideas and doctrinal arguments of the Church Fathers and medieval theologians on Mary's Queenship. After all, the strict rational theses of the masters of Christian doctrine became materialized during those centuries in the emotional invocations and joyful exaltations of liturgical hymns and devotional prayers.

4. The Renaissance Iconographic Type of the Coronation of the Virgin

The Coronation of the Virgin—whose iconographic type some authors (Verdier 1980, pp. 17–18; Le Pichon 1982; Thérel 1984) have studied deeply—, although it lacks objective reality, it is an imaginary "event" full of doctrinal meaning. In fact, according to Christian belief, it is a symbolic episode that culminates the prodigious events of the Death or Dormition of the Virgin Mary[15] and her bodily Assumption to heaven.[16] In addition, the idea and the iconographic type of the Coronation of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven, and, therefore, as Queen of the angels, saints, virgins, patriarchs, prophets, and all the blessed from Paradise, is founded—according to the Church Fathers, theologians, and medieval hymnographers—on the argument that being Mother of God the Son, King of Heaven, Mary must necessarily have that same royal status, and therefore be crowned Queen of Heaven after her Assumption.[17]

As some authors point out (Sauerländer 1972; Verdier 1980, p. 9; Thérel 1984; Williamson 1997, p. 58), the iconographic theme of the Coronation of the Virgin began to be represented sculpturally as early as the middle of the 12th century on the tympanums of the portals from the churches of Quenington, in Gloucestershire, England (c. 1140) and in the cathedral of Senlis in France around 1170. From the 13th century onwards, this theme was widely disseminated in the portal tympanums of numerous cathedrals and churches in France and other regions of Europe (Sauerländer 1972; Verdier 1980; Thérel 1984; Williamson 1997, pp. 94–97, 353–451). On the other hand, the pictorial representation of the Marian Coronation will occur much later, with some rare examples in the 13th century, before it became more frequent from the 14th century onwards. Now, the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin, although it spread throughout all European countries, became especially abundant and prolific in Italy, in the context of the profound devotion to Mary that arose in that country, many of whose main cities they adopted the Virgin Mary as their local patron saint.[18]

This article seeks to interpret fourteen Marian Coronations produced by Italian Renaissance painters, to discover the eventual doctrinal meanings underlying such pictorial images. In that order of ideas, we will support our iconographic interpretations on the doctrinal texts of Church Fathers, and medieval theologians and hymnographers referring to Mary as Queen of Heaven that we have analyzed in the two preceding sections.

It is quite clear that this iconographic type of Mary's Coronation also occurs in other European countries. But we have decided to limit our research to Italy in the 14th and 15th centuries for two reasons: first, because Italy during those two centuries is a fairly homogeneous socio-cultural context, so our study could reach some coherent results; second, because of the impossibility of dealing with other countries at the same time, without extending too much our brief article (which is not a book).

In addition, we have chosen these fourteen paintings of Mary's Coronation in Italian Renaissance, because they seemed to us to be exemplary representative of the iconographic subject under analysis, and also because they stand out as outstanding products by some of the most important Italian painters of the period. In this regard, we can distinguish, in the context of Renaissance Italian painting, three iconographic types of the Coronation of Mary, which, although different, are fully complementary since they constitute a progressive mutual enrichment. These three iconographic types are: (1) the Coronation with

angels (almost always, musician angels); (2) the Coronation with angels and saints; (3) the Coronation with angels, saints, and scenes of Mary. We will now present some paintings, each one illustrative of one or another of these three typologies.

4.1. *The Coronation of the Virgin with Angels*

We have selected three works to illustrate this iconographic typology.

The Master of the Washington Coronation structures his *Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1333–1362, from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (formerly attributed to Paolo Veneziano) (Figure 1), with a relatively simple composition. The scene is reduced to a narrow, vertical strip on which the painter superimposes the figures of the two protagonists, Christ and Mary, seated on a wide throne. Behind them, forming a semi-mandorla, are lined up eight tiny angels who, opening a red canopy, serve as a guard of honor for the Kings of Heaven. The enthroned Christ presides over the scene, girded with his crown of King of Heaven, in the act of putting with his right hand the crown of heavenly Queen to his mother, who accepts this honor by extending her open hands forward, in a priestly gesture. It is interesting to highlight in this painting the enormous difference between the imposing figure of the Virgin with respect to the small and almost obliterated figures of the angels, of whom only part of their bodies can be seen. The author of this painting has undoubtedly wanted to make visible in this way the incomprehensible superiority of the Virgin as heavenly Queen over the angels and the other creatures of Heaven and earth, as it was highlighted by many Fathers, medieval theologians, and hymnographers. That is why it is surprising that, when commenting on this work, Michelangelo Muraro (1969, pp. 157–58) says nothing about its theological meanings.

Figure 1. The Master of the Washington Coronation, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1333–1362. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

Instead, Niccolò di Buonaccorso (active 1355–1388), in *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1380, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York (Figure 2), prefers to combine, expanding them, the two compositional schemes used by the two artists just mentioned. Buonaccorso takes from the Master of the Washington Coronation the formula of a multitude of angels surrounding the throne of the Kings of Heaven from behind as a mandorla, although here Buonaccorso considerably multiplies the number of angels, and adds cherubs and seraphim with bristling wings. Bonaccorso also takes over from Giotto the formula of placing four angels kneeling at the foot of the throne, although enhancing it conceptually. In fact, only two of those angels gaze with enchantment at the royal couple, since the other two

are musical angels who, with their musical instruments, complete the choir of several other musical angels that surround the throne. All the musical angels make their string and wind instruments resonate here to accompany the songs that the innumerable angels, seraphim, cherubim, and other angelic creatures that surround the heavenly Sovereigns sing with their mouths open. By depicting all the angelic hierarchies acting as instrumentalists and singers, the intellectual author of this painting wants to make visible the testimony of the countless medieval Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers who brought to light the immense joy and enthusiasm with which the angelic hierarchies accompany Mary in her Assumption, and at her Coronation as Heavenly Queen.

Figure 2. Niccolò di Buuonaccorso, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1380. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

4.2. The Coronation of the Virgin with Saints and Angels

This typology is, by far, the most abundant and complex of all those used in the Italian Renaissance to represent the Coronation of the Virgin. To illustrate this second category, we present here the following twelve paintings:

Giotto di Bondone (c. 1267–1337) establishes the most complete and richest prototype of Marian Queenship in *The Coronation of Mary with angels and saints*, c. 1326–1334[19] (Figure 3), better known as the *Baroncelli Polyptych* for presiding over the altar of the Baroncelli Chapel in the church of Santa Croce in Florence.[20] In fact, this work by Giotto will serve as an essential model for many other Italian Renaissance painters who will tackle this Marian theme. The imitation of the giottesco model by other artists can be seen especially in the arrangement with which Giotto places both protagonists seated on a common throne, with Christ crowning with both hands her mother, who stands with the hands crossed over her belly. As assistants to the solemn royal ceremony, Giotto places a multitude of saints standing and a choir of kneeling musician angels on the four side panels, while also placing four other angels on the central panel (two of them offering the Virgin vases of possible aromas), who, on their knees, gaze in ecstasy at the two Kings of Heaven. Giotto organizes the altarpiece according to a total symmetry, with all the characters on the side panels in a perfect correlation of similarity in position and volume, as is also the case with the six characters on the central panel. With this numerous cohort of characters, the intellectual author of this *Baroncelli Polyptych* wants to show that the Virgin Mary, when crowned as Queen of Heaven, becomes Queen of the angels, the saints, the prophets, the virgins, and all the inhabitants of celestial Paradise, as expressed by the Fathers, the theologians, and hymnographers.

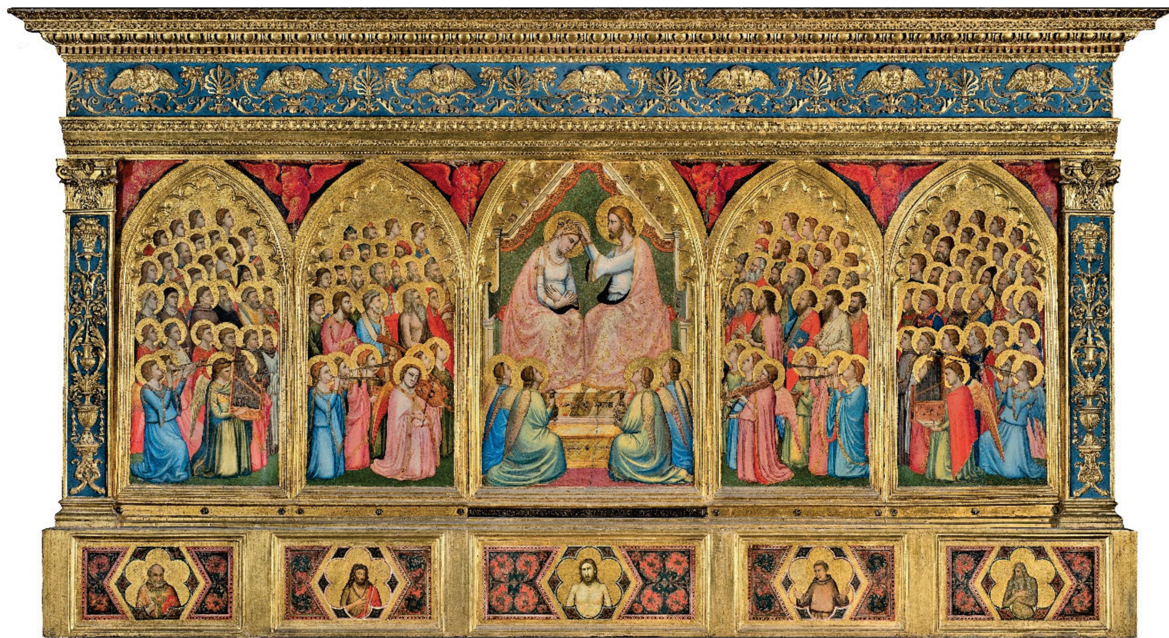


Figure 3. Giotto di Bondone, *The Coronation of the Virgin with angels and saints* (*Baroncelli Polyptych*), c. 1325–1334. Baroncelli Chapel, church of Santa Croce, Florence.

All the commentators we know of this *Baroncelli Polyptych* completely avoided justifying in primary sources the doctrinal meanings of this *Coronation*. You can see such silence, for example, in Roberto Salvini (1962, pp. 86–87, tav. 247), Giovanni Previtali (1967, p. 288, tav. CXIV, and p. 329, Figure 367), Francesca Flores D'Arcais (1995, pp. 337–43, s.n. figs 338–339 and 344), Miklos Boskovits (2000, pp. 187–91, Figure 2, p. 188, and fig, 5, p. 190) and Alessandro Tomei (2009a, 2009b).

The Coronation of the Virgin. Polyptych of Valle Ramita, c. 1400, painted by Gentile da Fabriano (c. 1370–1427) as an altarpiece for a convent (Figure 4), reveals the influence of the Franciscan spirituality on the iconographic subject being studied. In this order of ideas, the artist places on the side panels of the altarpiece, as privileged witnesses of the Coronation of Mary, several saints directly or indirectly linked to the Franciscan Order: on the panels to the left of the main register he places St. Jerome, and St. Francis of Assisi, while on the right of this register, he places St. Dominic de Guzmán and St. Mary Magdalene. In addition, on the panels of the upper register, he describes these four scenes of saints: St. John the Baptist praying in the desert, the martyrdom of St. Peter Martyr, St. Francis of Assisi meditating, and St. Francis receiving the stigmata. In the central panel, Gentile da Fabriano depicts the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin by Christ, both in a seated position on an invisible throne. In turn, God the Father, figured at the top of the panel with a large crown at his temples and surrounded by eleven red seraphim forming a semicircular mandorla, embraces both royal protagonists. As if that were not enough, the dove of the Holy Spirit appears flying between the bodies of Jesus and Mary, to remind us that God the Father promised the Virgin at the Annunciation that, so that she could be the mother of God the Son while preserving her virginity, "the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Highest will overshadow you." (Luc, 1.35). Thus, Gentile represents in this Coronation the entire Trinity, each divine Person with a specific role in the royal ceremony. In the lower part of the central panel, eight musical angels celebrate with their instruments the glory of their heavenly Sovereign on the great event of her consecration as Queen of Heaven.

Figure 4. Gentile da Fabriano, *The Coronation of the Virgin. Polyptych of Valle Ramita*, c. 1400. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

As far as we know, most commentators on this work by Gentile da Fabriano avoid documenting in primary sources the doctrinal meanings of that *Coronation of the Virgin*. You can remark such omission in Emma Micheletti (1976, pp. 5–11, Tav. III-XII, s.p.), Bruno Molajoli (2006), Keith Christiansen (2006, p. 20, Figure 3, p. 21), and Andrea De Marchi (2006, pp. 123–27). On the contrary, you can appreciate a commendable exception in this regard in Matteo Ceriana and Emanuela Daffra (Ceriana and Daffra 2006, pp. 132–33), OK who partially justify the meaning of this *Coronation* by Gentile da Fabriano, citing some textual references to several expressions alluding to Mary's Queenship in the *Song of Songs*, in the liturgy of the Vigil of the Assumption, and in the *Officium Beatae Virginis Mariae* of the *Breviarium Sancti Francisci*.

Lorenzo Monaco, whose real name was Piero di Giovanni (c. 1370-c. 1425) and who was a Camaldolese monk as well as a painter, depicts his *Triptych of the Coronation of the Virgin*, from the National Gallery of London (Figure 5), according to the spirituality of his monastic order. For this reason, he introduces, as privileged witnesses of the Marian ephemerides, sixteen great saints, in a direct or indirect relationship with the Camaldolese order. Thus, in the first row of the left panel, St. Benedict opens the book of the Benedictine

rule, together with St. John the Baptist and St. Mathew, opening his Gospel; in the first row of the right panel, St. John the Evangelist opens his Gospel, next to St. Peter carrying the keys of heaven, and, at the bottom, St. Romuald, the founder of the Camaldolese order. As many Italian Renaissance painters tend to do, Lorenzo Monaco also places in the central panel a cohort of kneeling angels surrounding the double throne on which Mary sits near Christ, who crowns her mother with both hands. The painter thus makes visible the celestial Queenship of the Virgin as the Lady of the angels, the saints, and those who inhabit the heavenly Paradise.

Figure 5. Lorenzo Monaco, Triptych of The Coronation of the Virgin with angels and saints, 1407–09. National Gallery, London.

In their respective comments on this work by Lorenzo Monaco, Angelo Tartuferi (Tartuferi and Parenti 2006, pp. 167–70, Figure cat. 23-c), Anneke De Vries and Victor M. Schmidt (De Vries and Schmidt 2006, pp. 39–42), and Giorgio Bonsanti (2009, p. 26, Fig, 3, p. 27) leave the doctrinal meanings of this Coronation of the Virgin unexplained and documented.

The Dominican monk and painter Fra Angelico (c. 1395–1455) brings in *The Coronation of the Virgin*, c. 1432, from the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Figure 6), a first interpretation of the subject under study according to the second category of Coronation with angels and saints. The painter represents the heavenly Paradise as a set of small clouds that serve as a pavement for the common throne on which the Virgin and Christ are seated. He crowns with his right hand his mother as Queen of Heaven, both surrounded on the right and left by two choirs of musical angels that with their instruments proclaim the glory of the Majesty of Mary. The Angelico also places two large groups of male and female saints surrounding both celestial monarchs, jointly extolling the glorious Lady of Heaven.

Figure 6. Fra Angelico, The Coronation of the Virgin, c. 1432. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

The commentators we know of this Coronation of the Virgin by Fra Angelico at the Galleria degl Uffizi, including Mario Salmi (1958, p. 100, tav. 16a, 17 and 18, s.p.), tend to forget to document its doctrinal symbolism. To our knowledge, Serena Nocentini (2009, pp. 178–79, Figure s.n., p. 179) is the only one that justifies the doctrinal bases of this iconographic theme in primary sources, providing the revelations of Saint Brigida of Sweden as sources of inspiration for this iconographic type.

Fra Angelico captures *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1434–1435, originally painted for the convent church of St. Dominic in Fiesole and today in the Musée du Louvre (Figure 7), with an extraordinarily complex compositional and conceptual structure that enriches much this iconographic theme, even surpassing Giotto's prototype in the Baroncelli Polyptych. Firstly, the Angelico imagines Heaven as a lavish palace, only suggested by its splendid throne, covered with a Gothic canopy, on which Christ sits as King of Heaven, as indicated by the golden crown that encircles his temples. The luxurious marbles that cover the stairway/platform on which the throne stands, as well as the rich polychrome marble tiling, also reveal the luxury of the palace of the Kings of Heaven. In addition, Fra Angelico goes beyond Giotto's compositional-narrative model by multiplying the poses, attitudes, and clothing of the musician angels and, especially, those of the numerous saints. Among them, one can see St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padova and St. Dominic de Guzmán, St. Mary Magdalene (with a vial of ointment), St. Catherine of Alexandria (with a spiked breaking wheel), St. Agnes (with a lamb in her arms), St. Nicholas of Bari (with an episcopal tiara and a sumptuous cope). Ultimately, the most marked difference between Angelico and Giotto derives from the poses and attitudes with which he represents, respectively, Christ and the Virgin: instead of putting both sitting on the common throne, as it was usual since Giotto, the Angelico places Mary kneeling, on the last step, with folded hands before her

Son, who, sitting on his royal throne high above the Virgin, places her the crown with both hands. By emphasizing such a difference in situation and attitude by both protagonists, the cultured Dominican painter Fra Angelico wants to visualize the idea that the original King of Heaven since eternity is Christ, God the Son, who decided in time to extol Mary as Queen of Heaven, as a reward for her decision to accept being his virginal Mother on earth. In his comments to Fra Angelico's *Coronation* in the Louvre, Mario Salmi (1958, p. 35, tav 57b., S.p.) says nothing about its theological implications.

Figure 7. Fra Angelico, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1434–1435. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The Carmelite monk Fra Filippo Lippi (1406–1469) offers a grandiose design of the theme analyzed in his *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1441–1447, originally painted for the female convent of Sant'Ambrogio in Florence and today in the Galleria degli Uffizi (Figure 8). The painter sets the scene in a grandiose heavenly palace, on whose marble throne God the Father encircles the crown of Queen of Heaven to the Virgin, kneeling before him with folded hands. It is symptomatic that the cultured painter Lippi has preferred to put God the Father, instead of God the Son, as the one who bestows the crown on Mary, thus seeking to shed light on the idea that the Most High was the one who decided to choose Mary as Mother of the Redeemer, and therefore who raised her as Queen of Heaven. Apart from the imposing presence of the two protagonists, framed by the monumental throne at the top of the central panel, one of the most impressive aspects of this altarpiece is the numerous multitudes of angels and saints, many of them standing, others kneeling, who, in very diverse attitudes, gestures and attire, attend the royal ceremony as a cohort of honor. With this feature, Fra Filippo Lippi clearly underlines the category of Mary as Queen of

the angels, the saints, and all the inhabitants of Heaven, as proclaimed by the Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers that we analyzed in the two previous sections.

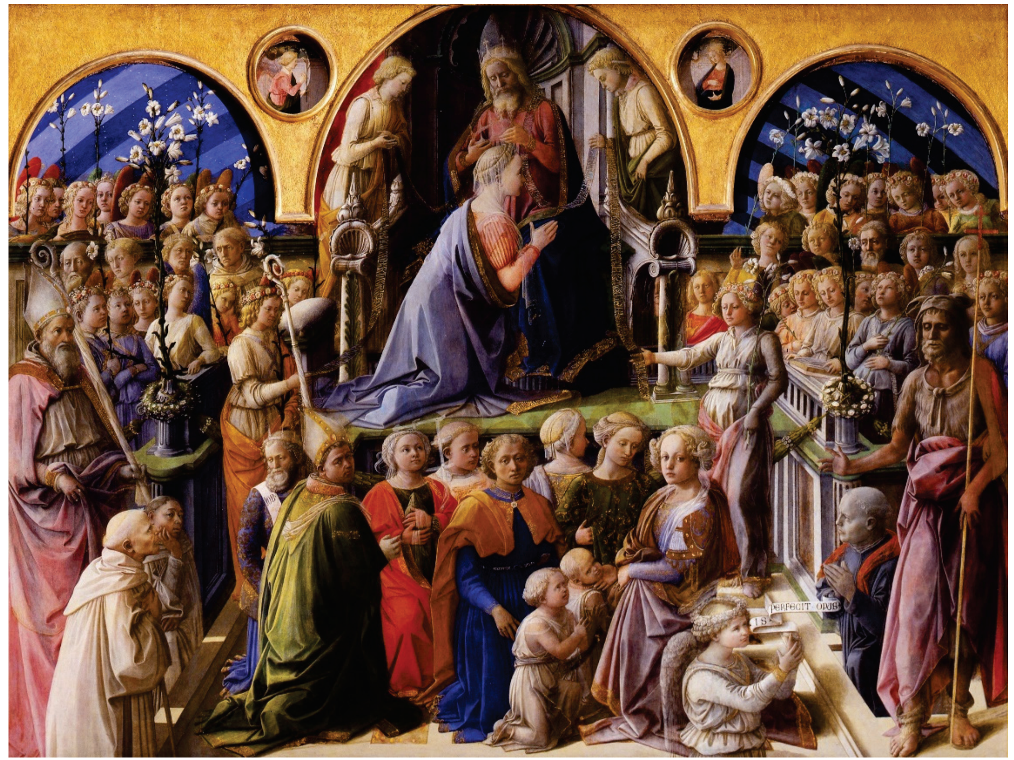


Figure 8. Filippo Lippi, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1441–1447. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510) interprets in an inventive format the theme in his *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1490–1492, originally painted as an altarpiece for the church of the Dominican monastery of San Marco in Florence, and today in the Galleria degli Uffizi (Figure 9). The scene of the Marian coronation happens in Heaven, represented as a splendid golden environment at the top of the lunette, while in the lower parallelogram, which represents the earth, modulated by a magnificent landscape, four saints attend the ceremony of Marian exaltation. As Fra Filippo Lippi did in the just analyzed painting in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Botticelli also puts God the Father, girded with the triple papal crown, placing the crown of the heavenly Queen on the head of Mary, seated in a submissive attitude before the Most High, with her hands crossed on her chest. While a group of seraphim and cherubim cover both protagonists shaping a semicircular mandola, other angels dance joyfully in a circle around the celestial Sovereigns, while other angels offer them flowers. Standing on the plane of the earth St. John the Evangelist, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and St. Eligius attend the great Marian triumph. When referring to this work by Botticelli, Piero Bargellini (1990, pp. 102–4, fig, s.n. s.p.) completely silences its possible doctrinal meanings.

Figure 9. Sandro Botticelli, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1490–1492. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Pietro Perugino (c. 1448–1623) designs *The Coronation of the Virgin*, on the back of the *Pala di Monteripido*, 1504, from the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia (Figure 10), with the conventional compositional structure at the time. In the upper part of the painting, which represents Heaven, Christ imposes with both hands the crown on the head of his mother as the heavenly Queen, both seated on a throne of clouds. In the lower parallelogram, which figures the Earth, two symmetrical groups of male and female saints, among whom St. Peter can be seen with an enormous key in his right hand, contemplate in ecstasy the glorification of the mother of God. Four angels dance in the sky around the heavenly kings, spreading a garland of flowers. In their respective comments on this work by Perugino, Ettore Camesasca (1959, pp. 106–7, tav. 91B; 1969, p. 99, tav. 167) and Pietro Scarpellini (1984, p. 107, Cat. 128, Figure 213, p. 251, tav. 35c, p. 310) avoid documenting its doctrinal implications.

Figure 10. Pietro Perugino, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, reverse of the *Pala di Monteripido*, 1504. Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

4.3. The Coronation of the Virgin with the Scenes of the Life of Mary

To illustrate this third iconographic typology of the Coronation of the Virgin, we have selected the following four paintings:

Commissioned by Pope Nicholas IV, Jacopo Torriti (active between 1270–1300) executed in mosaic the monumental *Coronation of the Virgin* in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore's basilica in Rome (Figure 11). Signed and dated in 1296 by Torriti, this enormous mosaic mural program has as its central iconographic motif in the oven vault the ceremony of the royal exaltation of Mary, attended by two groups of angels and six saints. In the lower strip of the vault, five Marian scenes complete the main episode like a predella: *The Annunciation*, *The Nativity of Jesus*, *The Dormition of Mary*, *The Adoration of the Magi*, and *The Presentation of Jesus to the temple*. Torriti deliberately places *The Dormition* in the center of the lower strip, just under *The Coronation*, to highlight the crowning of Mary immediately after her Dormition/Resurrection/Assumption. In the center of the vault, Jesus and Mary are sitting on a double throne of gold and gems. Displaying in his left hand an open book with the inscription *Veni Electa mea et ponam in te Thronum meum*, Christ places with his right hand the crown on the head of Mary, who opens her arms upwards in a priestly pose. At the edge of the throne, two cohorts of angels pay homage to the enthroned couple, while at both ends of the vault six saints celebrate the triumph of their Sovereign: on the left, St. Francis, St. Paul, and St. Peter, with the kneeling Pope Nicholas IV in front of them; on the right, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Anthony of Padova. The base displays two inscriptions in capital letters. The first proclaims: MARIA VIRGO ASSVMPTA EST AD ETHEREVM THALAMVM IN QVO REX REGVM STELLATO SEDET SOLIO. The second states: EXALTATA EST SANCTA DEI GENITRIX SVPER CHOROS ANGELORVM AD CELESTIA REGNA. These inscriptions corroborate once more that the iconography of the Coronation of Mary is based on the pronouncements that the Fathers, theologians and hymnographers made about the celestial Queenship of Mary, some of which we analyzed in the two preceding sections.

Figure 11. Jacopo Torriti, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1296. Apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.

By extensively studying this Coronation of the Virgin and its complementary Marian scenes, Alessandro Tomei (1990, pp. 99–125, table XVIII-XXX, pp. 194–201), explains in great depth and with abundant documentary evidence including the theological meanings and even the pedagogical-propaganda intentions of this monumental iconographic program in

the apse of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. In this case, Alessandro Tomei stands out as a true example of a rigorous researcher.

Filippo Lippi's fresco painting of *The Coronation of the Virgin with scenes of The Annunciation, The Dormition of Mary, and The Nativity*, 1467–1469, in the apse of Spoleto Cathedral (Figure 12), offers a monumental new example of this third iconography of the Marian event we are analyzing. In the center of the semi-dome, the painter represents the huge figures of God the Father, crowned as King of Heaven, over a vast sky, blessing Mary with his right hand and placing on her the crown of Heavenly Queen with his left hand, while she remains kneeling with devout prayerful attitude before Him. Both are in the center of a polychrome circular border full of undulating rays. On both sides of the royal protagonists, a multitude of standing angels and kneeling saints attend the glorification of the Virgin.

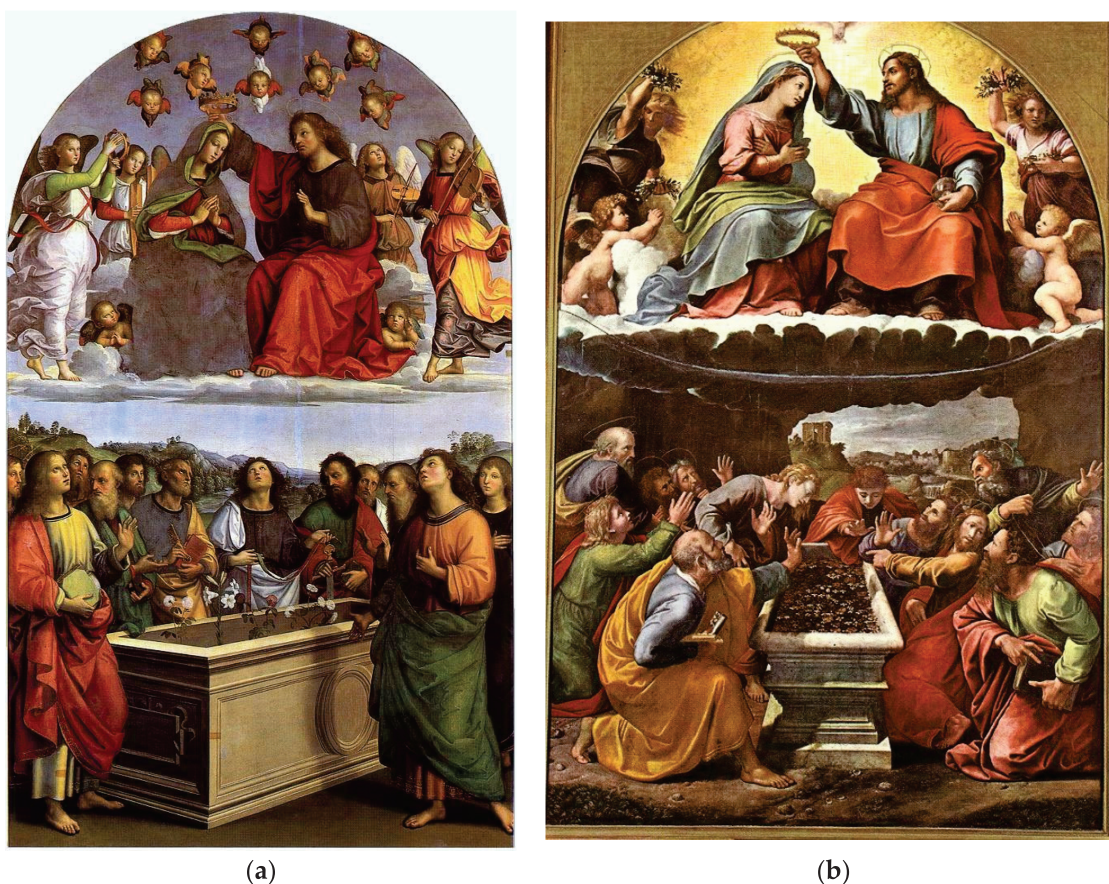
Figure 12. Filippo Lippi, The Coronation of the Virgin, with scenes of The Annunciation, The Dormition of Mary and The Nativity,1467–1469, apse of Spoleto Cathedral.

At the base of the apse, Fra Filippo Lippi depicts three major episodes from the life of the Virgin: on the left, *The Annunciation*; in the center, *The Dormition*; on the right, *The Nativity of Jesus*. As Jacopo Torriti did in the set of mosaics in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, Lippi here places *The Dormition of the Virgin* in the center of the base, in perfect visual and conceptual continuity with the scene of her *Coronation*, to highlight

that the exaltation of Mary as Queen of Heaven occurs immediately after her Dormition/Resurrection/Assumption in body and soul to the heavenly Paradise.

When commenting extensively on this work by Fra Filippo Lippi in Spoletto Cathedral, Luigi Fausti (1970, pp. 3–26) does not provide any doctrinal justifications to interpret its possible doctrinal meanings.

Raffaello Sanzio and Giulio Romano also offer interpretations of the Coronation of Mary in direct juxtaposition/continuity with the Dormition scene. Raffaello (1483–1520) structures The Coronation of the Virgin. Pala Oddi, 1502–1504, from the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Figure 13a), in a parallelogram divided into two equivalent sections: in the lunette in the upper section, set in Heaven, he represents the glorification of the Virgin, with Jesus Christ placing the crown with the right hand, both being seated on a throne of clouds. Around them, some musical angels sing their instruments, while little seraphim and cherubim fly above the royal couple. In the lower section of the painting, set on earth, the twelve apostles surround Mary's empty sarcophagus filled with red and white flowers, while looking up to signify that they are witnessing the suggested Assumption of Mary into heaven. This last episode is also evidenced by the girdle of the Virgin that the incredulous apostle Thomas exhibits in his hands, in reference to the apocryphal writing according to which Thomas picked up that girdle that Mary threw at him while she was being assumed into heaven so that he could show it to the apostles as proof of her Assumption. Commenting on Raffaello's work, Ettore Camesasca (1956, p. 35, tav. 16–19) and Pierluigi De Vecchi (1966, p. 124, cat. 156) say nothing about its possible theological meanings.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 13. (**a**) Raffaello, *The Coronation of the Virgin. Pala Oddi*, 1502–1504. Pinacoteca Vaticana, Musei Viticani; (**b**) Giulio Romano, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1525. Pinacoteca Vaticana, Musei Vaticani.

Giulio Romano (1499–1546) in The Coronation of the Virgin, 1525, from the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Figure 13b), poses a composition relatively similar to that of Raffaello just analyzed. Giulio Romano also divides the painting into two almost equivalent sections: in the

upper lunette, Christ crowns his mother with his right hand, the two seated on a common throne, although here the angelic cohort consists of only four angels, two of whom offer garlands of flowers to their heavenly Queen. In the lower section, somewhat larger than the one above, the twelve apostles appear in Mary's cave/tomb, surrounding her empty sepulcher covered in flowers.

Thus, in accordance with what we have already explained, both Raffaello and Giulio Romano underline the doctrinal continuity between the Dormition/Resurrection/Assumption of Mary and her immediate Coronation as Queen of Heaven.

5. Conclusions

As a result of this double analysis of texts and images, we can synthetically infer some conclusions:

From the 4th century, a growing number of Church Fathers and theologians began to consider the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven, basing this on Mary's exclusive privilege of being the Mother of God: In fact, the divine motherhood of the Virgin had been established as a dogma by the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431). The argument was that if Mary is the mother of God the Son, King of kings, and Lord of Heaven, she also rightfully deserves to be the Queen of Heaven.

Based on the impressive and unanimous doctrinal tradition of Fathers and theologians, many medieval hymnographers wrote countless liturgical hymns in which they poetically designated Mary as Queen of Heaven and, therefore, as Queen of the angels, the saints and the other blessed of the Heavenly Paradise.

Inspired by the thesis of the Queenship of Mary, unanimously defended for so many centuries by numerous Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers, the iconographic type of the Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven began in the middle of the 12th century to appear sculpturally in some portals in England and France. Then it was expressed in numerous paintings from the following century, especially in Italy.

The analysis of fourteen pictorial images of the Coronation of Mary produced by Italian Renaissance artists shows that their authors placed special emphasis on presenting Mary receiving the legitimizing crown of Queen of Heaven from the hands of her divine Son Jesus (or, sometimes, of God the Father himself) amid a multitude of angels and saints, who attend the ceremony as privileged witnesses and as a cohort of honor.

Undoubtedly considering the teachings of the Church Fathers, theologians, and hymnographers in this regard, the authors of these Italian Renaissance paintings very effectively illustrated the idea of Mary as Queen of Heaven, and, therefore, as the legitimate Queen of the angels, the saints, and all the heavenly blessed.

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Notes

1. "Salvesis, sola inter reginas regina, quae regum quidem filia es, universorum autem Regis Mater, ac religiosorum regum et imperatorum robur. Salvesis, sola inter reginas regina, vestitu deaurato circumdata, ac varietate, veluti psalmorum cantor David exclamavit." (Joannes Damascenus, *Homilia in Annuntiationem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 654–655).
2. "et cum magna et inexplicabili libertate astans, angelis, et mundo sublimioribus Virtutibus universis, omni sermone major laetitia es, patriarchis sempiterna oblectatio, justis gaudium ineffabile, perennis prophetis exsultatio." (Joannes Damascenus, *Homilia I in Dormitionem B.V. Mariae*. PG 96, 718).
3. "Exaltata super choros angelorum gaudens et gloriosa in perpetuum regina coelorum, ubi adjuvas omnes qui te dominam glorificant, et sanctum nomen tuum humili prece frequentant". (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 40. Ad sanctam Virginem Mariam. In Assumptione ejus*. PL 158, 963).

[4] "Nulla de caetero macula peccati anima mea inquinetur; sed mundo corde et casto corpora per merita tuae saluberrimae nativitatis, annuntiationis, et sanctissimi virginei partus tui, et castissimae purificationis, et gloriossisimae asssumptionis in excelso cœlorum palatio possim praesentari, in quo gloriosa exsultas et regnas regina angelorum et hominum, Mater Domini nostri Jesu Christi." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 40. Ad sanctam Virginem Mariam. In Assumptione ejus*. PL 158, 966).

[5] "In primis audio te supppliciter orare, quae vicinior existis salutis nostrae, quae vitam nostram peperisti, mundo perdito remedium attulisti, benedicta super mulieres Virgo mater ipsius misericordiae, sancta María, Domina mundi, regina coeli, tuae sanctissimae pietati meam orationem qualemcumque committo, ut eam offeras dilectissimo Filio tuo Domino nostro." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 39. Ad Christum et omnes sanctos*. PL 158, 932).

[6] "Tu decus mundi. Tu nobilitas populi christiani, O regina et domina mundi, scala coeli, thronus Dei, janua paradisi, audi preces pauperum, ne despicias gemitus miserorum." (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 45. Ad eamdem sanctam Virginem Mariam*. PL 158, 962).

[7] "Decus virginum, domina gentium, regina angelorum, fons hortorum, ablutio peccatorum, sancta et perpetua Virgo Maria, succurre misero, subveni perdito". (Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Oratio 49. Ad eamdem Dei Matrem*. PL 158, 947).

[8] "Praecessit nos regina nostra, praecessit, et tam gloriosa suscepta est, ut fiducialiter sequantur Dominam servuli clamantes. *Trahe nos post te; in odorem unguentorum tuorum curremos (Cant*, 1, 3). Advocatam praemissit peregrinatio nostra, quae tanquam Judicis mater, et mater misericordiae, suppliciter et efficaciter salutis nostrae negotia pertractabit."(Bernardus Claraevallensis, *In Assumptione B.V. Mariae. Sermo I*, 1. PL 183, 415).

[9] "Sed et illud quis vel cogitare sufficiat, quam gloriosa hodie mundi regina processerit, et quanto devotionis affecta tota in ejus occursum coelestium legionum prodierit multitudo: quibus ad thronum gloriae canticis sit deducta; quam placido vultu, quam serena facie, quam laetis [*alias*: divinis] amplexibus suscepta a Filio, et super omnem exaltata creaturam, cum eo honore, quo tanta mater digna fuit, cum ea gloria, quae tantum decuit Filium?" (Bernardus Claraevallensis, *In Assumptione B.V. Mariae. Sermo I*, 4. PL 183, 415).

[10] "Eo beatam te dicent omnes generationes (Luc. I, 48), Genitrix Dei, domina mundi, regina coeli, Omnes, inquam, generationes. Sunt enim generationes coeli et terrae. [. . .] Ex hoc ergo beatam te dicent omnes generationes, quae omnibus generationibus vitam et gloriam genuisti. In te enim angeli laetitiam, justi gratiam, peccatores veniam inveniunt in aeternum." (Bernardus Claraevallensis, *Sermo II. De operibus Trinitatis super nos, et de triplici gratia Spiritus sancti*. PL 183, 328).

[11] "Propter nuptiale connubium Virgo Maria est *Mater Dei*; propter regale solium, *regina caeli*; propter sacerdotale ornamentum, *advocata* generis humani. Et ad haec omnia idonea erat Virgo Maria, cum esset de genere hominum, de genere regum et de genere sacerdotum. Dicat ergo amantissima Virgo Maria: *Qui creavit me requievit in tabernaculo meo*." (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Annunciatione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo IV*, 1: Q IX, 672a).

[12] "Et ideo beata Virgo omnium regina facta est.—Omnes ergo eam laudent, in eius honorem *omne genu flectatur, caelestium, terrestrium. et infernorum*; quia beneficia eius in omnes redundant." (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Annunciatione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo IV*, 1: Q IX, 673a).

[13] "Super omnes Sanctos nihilominus facta est nobilis quantum ad *dignitatis* sive generis *excellentiam*; ipsa enim genere et dignitate, cum sit Mater Imperatoris altissimi, est omnium creaturarum nobilissima; et idcirco super omnem creaturam et ad dexteram Filii sui fuit non immerito exaltata et in solio sublimissimo collocata". (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Assumptione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo III*, 2: Q IX, 692a).

[14] "Festina namque, quia coronaberis corona gloriosa, per quam efficieris conformis *maiestati Patris* aeterni, secundum illud Isaiae sexagesimo secundo: *Eris corona gloriae in manu Domini et diadema regni in manu Dei tui.* Ipsa namque, in gloria prae ceteris excelsior, quasi *in manu Dei* ostenditur ad exemplum unionis et accensionis desiderii. Unde ipsa tanquam regina caeli sedet ad dexteram Regis aeterni, secundum illud Psalmi': *Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato*, et coronata est corona consimili coronae Regis aeterni". (Bonaventura de Balneoregio, *De Assumptione B. Virginis Mariae. Sermo VI*, 2: Q IX, 699b-700a).

[15] We have analyzed the subject of the Dormition of the Virgin in Salvador-González (2011a).

[16] We have analyzed the subject of the several studies, among them, Salvador-González (2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2019) and Salvador-González and Perpiñá García (2014).

[17] On the Assumption of Mary, see (Bover 1947).

[18] See, for example, the book of Diana Norman (1999), that studies the influence of the devotion to the Virgin Mary on the political and social life of Sienna during the final centuries of the Middle Ages.

[19] The dating of this *Baroncelli Polyptych* is very discussed. Corrado Gizzi (2001, p. 206) dates it between 1326 and 1328. Klaus Krüger (2002, p. 58) dates its finalisation in 1330. Mueller von der Haegen (2000, p. 125) dates it in 1334.

[20] This outstanding altarpiece by Giotto has been accurately studied by Massimiliano G. Rosito (2001, pp. 109–15).

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Article

Between Scriptura et Pictura: Meditation on the Domus Dei and the Devotion of the Holy House of Mary

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Abstract: This article examines the representation and significance of the Holy House of Mary as a metaphor for the domus Dei in the initial letters of a 13th-century Book of Hours (Brailes Hours BL MS Add. 49999) using hermeneutics, visual studies, and anthropology of art methodologies. The manuscript delves into the theological implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation and the virginal divine motherhood of Mary depicted in these images. Additionally, it explores the connection between these representations and the devotion to the Holy House of Nazareth and its replica in the sanctuary of Our Lady of Walsingham, recognized as a sacred pilgrimage site. To conduct this analysis, the article considers the figures of the Holy House depicted on pilgrim badges and religious jewels. Specifically, it focuses on the Hylle jewel, whose effectiveness, attributed to its form and materiality, symbolized the aurea palatium Dei.

Keywords: book of hours; Virgin Mary; holy house; Annunciation; Walsingham sanctuary; domus Dei; illuminated manuscript

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1. Introduction

Art Historian Jeffrey F. Hamburger in his book *Script as Image* has pointed out that "The transformation of letters into representational forms of infinite variety—in and of themselves an expression of cosmic order, complication and creativity—not only articulated the process of reading, it also drew the reader deep into the body of the text" (Hamburger 2014, p. 9). Taking this premise into account, this study proposes to understand the function and uses of the initial letters that at the same time behave like images, painted in a book of hours from the 13th century. The methodological approach used in this study encompasses visual studies within the anthropology of art and the semiotics of religious images.[1]

As we know, in late medieval illumination art, the shape of letters was creatively utilized through an associative visual game to evoke architectural structures, serving to frame scenes or characters, particularly those from sacred history in this instance. Although it was a recurring ornamental formula in religious books, it is essential to delve into its symbolic significance in Marian theology and the devotional implications concerning its function and use in the practices of meditation within the liturgy of the hours.

The initial letter places the images in the page layout (mise-en-page) and allows them to integrate seamlessly with the text. Therefore, the letter, altered in its form, straddles the line between sign and image; it is a hybrid form or device, combining writing and painting (scriptura et pictura). This favors a wide range of readings and polysemes (coexistence of many possible meanings) in associative chains of concepts and figures, within Christian exegesis.

The Book of Hours, known as the Brailes Hours (Add. BL MS 49999) from the 13th century,[2] features two historiated initial letters that depict an architectural structure, a holy abode. The interior of these letters represents the encounter between Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. The scene of the Annunciation initiates the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin (Hours of the Virgin), a fundamental practice in the Books of Hours,

particularly within lay circles. With the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel, the story of redemption begins, and the role of Mary as Theotokos is thus established. The meditation that commemorates this joyful moment was practiced during Matins according to the liturgy of the hours, meaning it was the first morning prayer because this passage marks the beginning of the story of salvation in the New Testament.

We know that this prayer codex belonged to a laywoman, possibly named Susanna, who is depicted as a devotee in four miniatures. It is considered to be directly associated with the Dominicans (Donovan 1991, p. 24). Therefore, it is plausible to assume that the iconographic programs respond to the doctrinal and devotional values disseminated by this mendicant order.

Given these peculiarities, in addition to their ornamental function, image–letters had other uses in reading and meditation practices. Mary Carruthers (1998) and Michael Camille (1985) have suggested that were effective mnemonic devices and powerful visual labyrinths in the exercise of ruminatio. The ambiguous nature between sign and image allowed these visual objects painted on parchment to serve as liminal motifs that bridged the earthly with the celestial realm (Kessler 2004, p. 20). In other words, they functioned as a sort of threshold that made the spiritual reality visible (Gertsman and Stevenson 2012).

Building upon these ideas, I propose that the historiated letters portraying the Holy House of the Annunciation guided the devotee through profound theological reflections on the doctrines of the Incarnation and the plan of salvation during the meditative exercise. Rather than merely depicting a "physical" structure, these letters served as a visual metaphor for the theological concept of domus Dei. It is noteworthy, as pointed out by José María Salvador-González, that the trope of domus Dei, along with similar metaphors in Marian iconography, has received limited scholarly attention (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, p. 112).

Secondly, these architectural letters were crafted to delineate and evoke a locus sanctus within the book's pages, thereby encouraging the devotee's imagination to mentally "transport" themselves to the Holy Places, where the most important events of Christ's life took place (Rudy 2011, pp. 19–38). The dating of the Brailes Hours coincides with the spread of devotion to the Holy House of Mary in the 13th century. It is worth noting that, in addition to the significance of various sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin in some European locations, the Holy House of Our Lady of Walsingham gained special importance (Warner 1983, p. 295), as it replicated the house of Mary in Nazareth. Souvenirs representing the Holy House, such as pilgrim badges and ampullae, medals, and pieces of religious jewelry, are still preserved. Therefore, these initial letters present in various media and artifacts were part of the visuality and materiality of Christian piety, as Caroline Walker Bynum has termed it "holy matter" (Walker Bynum 2015, p. 25).

Thirdly, the uses and effectiveness of religious images in different media depend on the artifacts that bear them, their form and materiality. Additionally, they acted as evocative indices of their origin or what they represented. The way they functioned was constrained by certain practices, and they were socially operative objects. Thus, their agency and activation were determined by ritualized performative actions. Considering the above, the study of "image–objects" (Baschet 2011, pp. 30–31), in this case, the Annunciation represented within the initial letter in the Brailes Hours requires an understanding that does not seek to separate its integrity in terms of its existence as an image from the cultural artifact that contains it. These differences become more revealing when a comparison is made with the Hylle jewel. Furthermore, it is necessary to conceive the relation to other objects within a complex system of beliefs and chains of symbolic associations according to the "sacred gaze" of that time (Morgan 2005, p. 5).[3]

2. The Initial Letter as Domus Dei in the Annunciation

In the Brailes Hours, Matins begins in folio 11r with the Annunciation enacted within the letter T, which starts the first verse of the "Ambrosian Hymn" to give thanks and praise to the Lord: "Te deum laudamus: te dominum confitemur. Te aeternum Patrem, omnis

terra veneratur" (We praise you, O God; we acknowledge you, Lord. You, the eternal Father, all the earth worships) (Figure 1).[4]

Figure 1. Announcement of the Incarnation by the angel Gabriel to Mary, 1230–1240, Oxford, British Library, MS Add. 49999, fol. 11r.

This historiated letter acted as a mnemonic tool to make it easy for the book's owner to remember Ambrose's praise by associating the initial T with the conception of Christ. And endowing of the written word with an "iconic charge" makes the celestial realm visible to stimulate the exercise of contemplation this was an invitation to vision (Hamburger 2014, p. 11).[5] As Virginia Reinburg has argued, for the laity the image was an important vehicle for stimulating the imagination during the exercise devotional viewing: "They [images] a material presences to the persons addressed in prayer and the liturgy, aroused feelings of devotion among the faithful, and marked particular places as sacred" (Reinburg 2012, p. 113).

Above all, this letter–image is a visual device that encourages a deeper exploration of the mystery of the Incarnation through an exegetical reading. Although in this image there is an economy of elements, exegetical interpretations of the Fathers of the Church can be found, especially from Saint Ambrose. In this way, the page layout establishes an associative relationship between the text of Ambrose's hymn and its visual conceptualization in the letter–image.

This initial letter T assumes the form of an architectural "threshold" consisting of a pointed arch separated by a central column that represents an abstraction of the Holy House of Nazareth. It recalls the portal with a mullion in Romanesque or Gothic churches. From their gestures and hand postures, it is evident that there is a dialogue between Mary and Gabriel, corresponding to the account in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:26–38). The Virgin holds a small book of The Scriptures (psalterium or the prophecy of Isaiah) in her right hand, almost hidden by her mantle, which identifies her as Sedes Sapientiae. It was precisely St. Ambrose (ca. 340–397), bishop of Milan, in the 4th century who identified Mary as an eager reader of Sacred Scriptures: "Necessity before inclination caused her to sleep, and yet when her body was sleeping, her soul was awake, and often in sleep either went again through what had been read" (Ambrose, Concerning Virgins, Book II, II; Schaff 2004a, pp. 558–59).

The background of the letter is in gold, and it shows divine light illuminating the entire scene, signifying the timeless sacred space. Part of the archangel's wing extends beyond the space defined by the letter, probably indicating the liminal nature of angels as messengers of God, entities that exist between the heavenly and earthly realms. Mary is depicted alone, secluded inside the building, as pointed out by St. Ambrose:

> She, when the angel entered, was found at home in privacy, without a companion, that no one might interrupt her attention or disturb her; and she did not desire any women as companions, who had the companionship of good thoughts. Moreover, she seemed to herself to be less alone when she was alone. For how should she be alone, who had with her so many books, so many archangels, so many prophets? (Ambrose, Concerning Virgins, Book II, II, 10; Schaff 2004a, p. 559)

The base of the column takes the form of an animal's head with an open mouth, it reminds the beasts of the ars profana, a characteristic ornament of late medieval architecture. From whose mouth three vine stems sprout and end in scrolls. The hybrid nature of this element, composed of zoomorphic and phytomorphic motifs, is particularly suggestive. Upon closer inspection, the animal resembles a lion, symbolizing Jesse, the founding patriarch of the tribe of Judah, who prophesies the royal lineage from which the Messiah will come:

> You are a lion's cub, Judah;
>
> you return from the prey, my son.
>
> Like a lion he crouches and lies down,
>
> like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?
>
> The scepter will not depart from Judah,
>
> nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
>
> until he to whom it belongs shall come
>
> and the obedience of the nations shall be his (Gn. 49:9–10).

The trefoil shape of the vine represents the Holy Trinity and, at the same time, resembles the lily or fleur-de-lis, a fundamental symbolic motif in the iconographic program of the Annunciation after the 12th century. The lily's staff was in the Late Middle Ages a symbol based on a solid theological tradition from patristic times. The iconographic meaning of this fragrant flower is both a Mariological and Christological sign mentioned by the Fathers of the Church and several medieval theologians. It derives from the exegetical interpretation of the passage of the rod of Jesse in the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 11:1) in the Old Testament and the mention of Jesus's lineage in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:23–38) (Salvador-González 2013, p. 186).

St. Ambrose considered the lily as a nuptial and virginal plant from which Christ originated: "The root of Jesse the patriarch is the family of the Jews, Mary is the rod, Christ the flower of Mary, Who, about to spread the good odor of faith throughout the whole world, budded forth from a virgin womb, as He Himself said: 'I am the flower of the plain, a lily of the valley'" (Ambrose, On the Holy Spirit, Book II, V, 38; Schaff 2004b, p. 197). The bishop of Milan asserts that "He [The Messiah] who will germinate in the Virgin Mary's womb as a fruit of the earth, and, issued by the splendor of a new light, will emerge as a fragrant flower to redeem the world, in perfect agreement with Isaiah's prophecy, announcing the outbreak of a stem in Jesse's root, from which a flower would emerge" (Salvador-González 2013, p. 209).[6]

The way this vegetal ornament is depicted, under a complex polysemic composition, shows the idea of a garden and visually marks the symbolic sacred place where the house of Nazareth is rooted.[7] The deacon, Ephrem the Syrian (306–373), in the 4th century wrote in his hymns dedicated to the Virgin that Eden was a prefiguration of Mary, a garden in which the rain of the Father descended to bless it, and there the tree of life blossomed (Maria hortus est in quem imber benedictionum a Patre Descendit) (Ephrem, *Hymni de beata Maria Virgine*, XVIII, 16; Ephraem 1886, p. 610).

Like Ambrose, Bede the Venerable (672–735), in his commentaries on the Song of Songs, interpreted that the garden represented the Church and the chosen souls. Referring to the verse "I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys", the Anglo-Saxon monk warned that it alluded to the modesty of the Lord and His dual nature, being God before all time,

becoming flesh from the chaste body of Mary full of virtues, and choosing as parents the humblest and poorest descendants of Jesse's lineage: "For he [Jesus] appear as a flower not of the garden or the farm but of the field, since he took flesh form the Virgin Mother's chaste flesh, which knew no sin and was very full of virtues" (Bede, *On the Son of Songs*, Book I; Holder 2011, pp. 64–65).

Therefore, at the bottom of the letter T (the figure composed of the feline and the trefoil vine) is a symbol that condenses the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah born of a virgin from the royal lineage of Judah. In the middle part, the promise fulfilled is shown, according to the Gospels, with the virginal conception of Jesus at the moment of the Annunciation. Finally, in the upper part of the letter T, pointed out by Gabriel's index finger, one can observe the arms of the cross, the tree of life, that "embrace" Mary and the archangel, indicating the culmination of the plan of salvation with the sacrifice of the Lamb. It is revealing that the cross is mirrored by the triple lily staff, thus revealing the Trinitarian mystery of God from the Old Testament. Therefore, in the complex configuration of this initial letter, a dialectical relationship is established between the two Testaments, where the beginning and end of Christ's life are announced, and his dual nature, human and divine, is made clear.[8]

The visual composition is not limited to the Annunciation scene within the letter, but a visual and conceptual harmony is found throughout the page's composition. In line nine, where the paragraph ends, as a filler bar, a griffin is observed, outlined in filigree in blue and red, threatening to engulf the letters. This monster is a visual and anagogic metaphor for the continual threat of the devil, who seeks to destroy the virtue of God's word and the good Christian. Therefore, the devout must always remain vigilant through prayer and virtue, as Saint Ambrose warned: "I am the Flower of the field, and the Lily of the valleys, as a lily among thorns", which is a plain declaration that virtues are surrounded by the thorns of spiritual wickedness, so that no one can gather the fruit who does not approach with caution. (Ambrose, Concerning Virgins, Book I, VIII, 43; Schaff 2004a, p. 551) (Figure 1).

It is evident that the initial letter 'T', shaped as the holy house, plays a fundamental role because it serves as the spatial and architectural container where the mystery of the Incarnation took place. The ambiguity between sign and image alludes to the exegetical meanings hidden in the Sacred Scriptures. This visual motif is employed to defend two fundamental dogmas that originated within the controversies in Christianity against the different heresies that arose in the 3rd and 4th centuries, and which reemerged during the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229), confronted mainly by the Dominicans.

The first dogma concerns the duality of Christ's natures—divine and human—hyposta tically united in a single and indissoluble person. The second, closely correlated with the first, addresses the virginal divine motherhood of Mary, defined as *Theotókos* (Mother of God). Consequently, metaphors of the "abode of God" throughout Christianity hold Mariological and Christological exegetical meanings: in the Christological variant, representing the body or human nature in which God the Son incarnated; in the Mariological variant, symbolizing Mary and especially her virginal womb. This metaphor also has an interpretative ecclesiological variant in the Fathers' texts, based on the consideration of Mary as a symbol, model, or paradigm of the Church (*Eikón Imago*, Salvador-González 2021c, p. 392).

Several symbolic terms that evoke holy or royal buildings, seen as holy receptacles, are used to represent both dogmas. Theologians and Church Fathers in the East and West referred to terms such as domus Sapientiae, palatium Dei, aula regalis, domicilium Trinitatis, throneus deitatis, and other similar metaphors. These signify the virginal womb of Mary, in which God the Son was supernaturally incarnated as a man. They symbolize the same body or human nature that the Son of God assumed from the virginal womb of Mary (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, p. 112).

St. Ambrose adopts the double Mariological and Christological interpretation of the domus Dei or the aula regia, the simultaneous symbol of Mary (her virginal womb) and

Christ (his human body). In his 30th Epistle, he asserts that Jesus Christ wanted to find a temple in which to live for redeeming humankind and chose the womb of the Virgin Mary to make it the royal palace (aula regia) and the human body became the temple of God (*Eikón Imago*, Salvador-González 2021c, pp. 392–93). In the Brailes Hours this statement is reinforced in the verses of the Ambrosian hymn: Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum (Thou, having taken it upon Thyself to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb).

The double-arched letter constitutes the virginal closed bridal chamber, the first sacred place where the Messiah is introduced into human life. In this sense, St. John Damascene (675–749), in his first sermon on the birth of Mary, praises her because her womb is the home of the Son of God who does not fit anywhere, and because she is entirely the bridal chamber of the Holy Spirit (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, p. 117).[9]

Mary is the throne of wisdom and the New Ark of the Covenant because it contains the incarnate Word within her womb. Likewise, within a complex chain of symbolism, the holy house of the Annunciation evokes the ark of the Covenant. Joseph the Hymnographer (816–886) states that the faithful recognize the Virgin Mary as "the urn and manna of divinity", as "the ark [of the Covenant] and the altar", as "the candelabra and the throne of God", as «the palace and the bridge that leads to divine life" (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, p. 119).[10]

The veneration of Mary as the living Ark was not only in the spheres of theological intellect but also in the realms of lay piety. A 13th-century English lyrical composition contains a complete stanza that praises Mary's virginal womb, paradise and golden palace that hosted Christ:

Uteri

Womb, in you Christ was conceived, the dwelling place of all purity,

Womb, in you is found paradise full of all sweetness,

Womb, of you was the palace of princes, the most glorious,

For the birth of that womb, help, Mary, in distress. (Saupe 1997, p. 58)

3. The Second Annunciation within the Letter M

On folio 59r of the Brailes Hours, for Lauds, the scene of the Second Annunciation or the announcement of the death of Mary is depicted. It takes place within the letter M, which begins the praise that Mary directed to God at the moment of the Annunciation, contained in the Gospel of Luke: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked with favor on the lowliness of His servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46–55). In this way, a conceptual and spatial parallelism is established in the moments of the two Annunciations where the architectural letter links both passages in the life of Mary (Figure 2).

Here also, the letter M represents an architectural structure of two arches or vaults enclosing a space where the figures of Gabriel and the Annunciated are positioned, separated by the central column. Although the scene is very similar to the previous one described, the main difference is that the archangel carries the palm of victory—palma mortis—in his hand to reward Mary's triumph for her humility and obedience, and points out the proximity of her death. Another distinction is the absence of the stem of lilies. Therefore, the message focuses on Mary's accomplished mission in the plan of salvation.

Gabriel extends his right arm and crosses the central column dividing the two chambers, and his index finger points to the prayer book that Mary holds in her left hand. Through this "self-reflective" device of the "book within a book", the relationship between the prophecies of the Old Testament in Mary's small book and the words of the Magnificat from the Gospel of Luke, written in the text box on the page, is established. In this manner, the Old Testament prophecy is linked to the fulfilled promise narrated in the Gospel, emphasizing Mary's humility to allow the redemption of humanity.

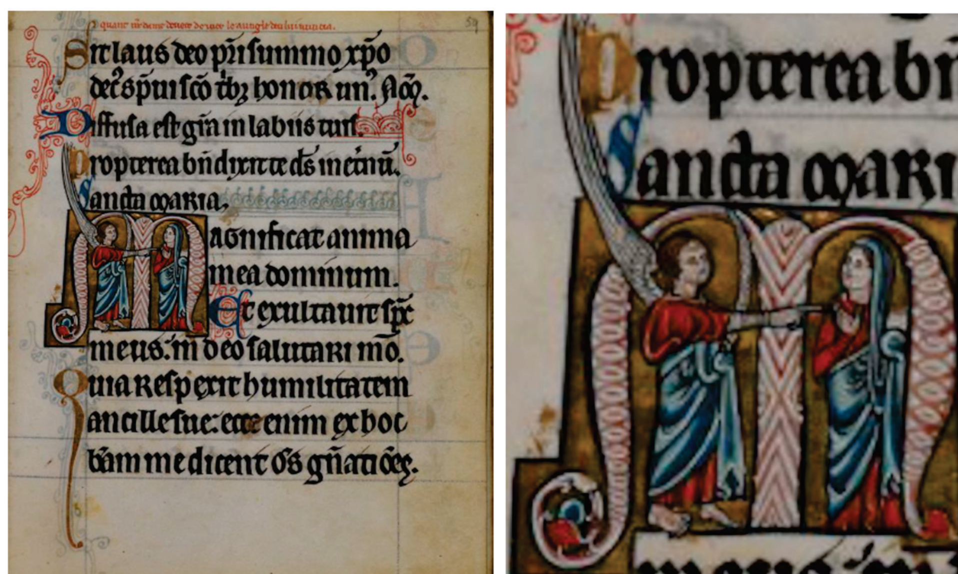


Figure 2. Announcement of Death to the Virgin, 1230–1240, Oxford, British Library, MS Add. 49999, fol. 59r.

In this case, visual elements are also used to integrate the images within the text. The form of the descending hook of the letter Q, painted in gold, echoes the palm held by the angel, thus reinforcing the Virgin's triumph. The economy of elements in this composition suggests an intention for the reader to focus their attention on Mary's words, as indicated unequivocally by Gabriel's hand gesture.

According to the accounts in the work Obsequia B. Virginis, written in Syriac in the 5th century, Mary was in continuous prayer in her house in Bethlehem when the angel Gabriel appeared to announce the end of her earthly life. In other versions, it is said that the Second Annunciation took place in Ephesus, where Mary lived in the company of Saint John the Evangelist (Warner 1983, pp. 83–85). In any case, it is the mirror reflection of the First Annunciation at the end of Mary's life.

St. Ildefonsus of Toledo states that "in her Assumption, Mary joyfully enters heaven as the mother of God, having been at another time (when conceiving Jesus) the temple of the Creator, the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling place of God, as all the treasures of Wisdom and Science (God) are hidden in her womb, in which the divine Word became incarnate, and all the fullness of deity dwells" (Teología y Vida, Salvador-González 2021b, p. 532). Corresponding with these ideas, the temple letter here serves as a metaphor for her incorrupt body, free from the corruption of death, because her virginal womb once was the Sancta Sanctorum for God: "Such integrity is deservedly incorruptible, and no resolution of decay follows. That most sacred body, then, from which Christ assumed flesh and united the divine with human nature" (Aurelius Augustinus, *De assumptione B. Mariae Virginis*, VI).[11]

These two initial letters in both Annunciations work as "holes" or "windows" that separate the visible world from the divine, through which the devout person "looks" into the space of sacred history (Warner 1983, p. 292). Also, the images within the letters remind us of the persuasive power exerted by the Dominicans through preaching in their sermons and other visual and performative resources. For example, the "mysteries" were theatrical representations of sacred history staged in conventual spaces or churches with the purpose of arousing religious interest among people who acted as "witnesses" of biblical events (Essex 1921, p. 172).

4. Devotion and Pilgrimage to the Holy House of Nazareth and Its Replica in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Walsingham

The veneration of the Holy House of Nazareth was widespread in Christianity from the 4th century. In fact, Nazareth was the starting point for pilgrimages to the Holy Land because it was the first place Jesus entered in human history. The Holy House of Nazareth was situated above a grotto where there was a water spring (Halbwachs 1941, p. 128). According to the Protoevangelium of James, the Annunciation took place in a location near a well where Mary had gone to fetch water with her jar (PE Sant. XI). It is known that sometime later, a Byzantine church was constructed on this site. However, it was during the Crusades that Tancred of Hauteville (1072–1112) ordered the replacement of the original church with a Gothic French-style building to mark the holy place, and it became a heavily visited pilgrimage center. It is even known that King Louis IX the Saint (1214–1270) attended Mass at the Grotto in 1251 (Runciman 1955, p. 103).

The Holy House in Nazareth was the first pilgrimage site of Jesus in the world, the closed nuptial chamber where he had been supernaturally conceived. Therefore, in the Middle Ages, the Holy House was considered the first place of veneration for Christ and Mary, a glorious site marked and individualized by the mystery of the Incarnation, as mentioned in another stanza of the 13th-century English lyric composition:

Hail, glorious lady and heavenly queen,

Crowned and reigning in your blissful dwelling,

Help us pilgrims in earthly darkness,

In honor of all your pilgrimage.

Your holy conception was your first pilgrimage. (Saupe 1997, p. 58)

The image of the Annunciation inside the Holy House can also be found in other religious objects such as pilgrim badges (signa peregrinatoris) or jewelry that was attached to clothing or the body. A similar composition is seen in a 13th-century pilgrim badge currently housed in the State Museum of Berlin. While in this image, the architectural space is clearly not a letter, similarities can be observed in the form of the double arches to the letter T or M in the Brailes Hours. Note that a lily (fleur-de-lis) is also depicted at the bottom of the column—which at the same time is the stem of the flower.

It is noteworthy that the sacred space of the scene is delimited by the dotted frame and the words of the Ave Maria. Thus, as with the Book of Hours, the power of prayer works to sanctify the sacred space represented in the object (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Annunciation pilgrim badge (Paris type), after 1240, Aachen, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Inv. No. 2307.

It has been speculated that this pilgrim badge comes from the Aachen Cathedral, where the holy relics of the Virgin Mary were treasured (Asperen 2013, p. 220), but the image evokes the Holy House of Nazareth and was dated after 1240. Be that as it may, its existence indicates that by the 13th century, the image of the Annunciation delimited by an architectural structure with a pair of arches and a central column to represent the sacred place of the Incarnation was a common motif in Europe, and considered an important site of veneration for pilgrims.

It is important to note that, due to their portability, both the letters in the Brailes Hours and the badge, the locus sanctus of the House of Nazareth are present in any location where the devotee could be found. These objects can be considered as devices that disseminate and disperse the sanctity of pilgrimage destinations. They functioned as an "extension" of the Holy Sites closest to the life of the devotee, not only visually but also in the haptic sense (Baschet 2011, p. 48).

Given the great importance of the veneration of the Holy House, as a pilgrimage site, it is worth asking if its representation in the Hours of Brailes worked to evoke these places of Marian veneration in Nazareth and particularly in the Kingdom of England, the place where this prayer book was made and where its owner, Sussana, lived.

In the Brailes Hours, on folio 26r, the prayer addressed to Mary begins with the letter C: "Concede nos famulos tuos, quaesumus, Domine Deus, perpetua mentis et corporis salute gaudere: et gloriosa beatae Mariae semper Virginis intercessione, a praesenti liberari tristitia, et aeterna perfrui laetitia" (Grant to us, your servants, we beseech, O Lord God, to enjoy perpetual health of mind and body, and, by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to be delivered from present sorrow and to delight in eternal joy). As we know, frequently in Books of Hours, the initial letters with the image of the Virgin are used to begin prayers to Mary as an intermediary between heaven and earth (Reinburg 2012, pp. 209–12) (Figure 4).

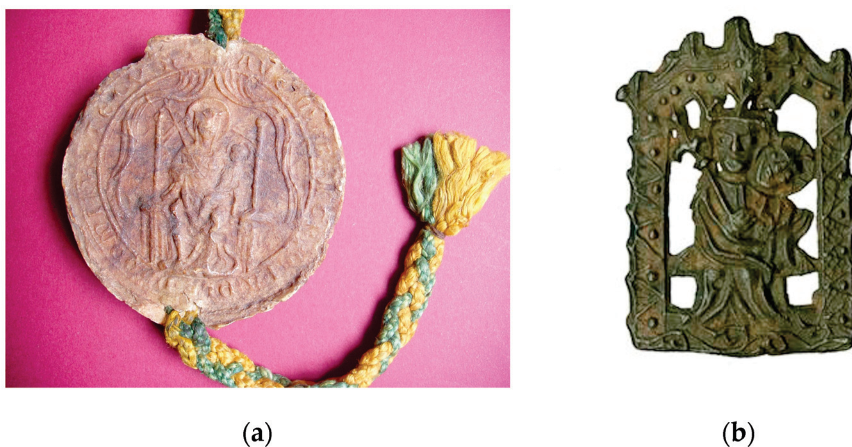
Figure 4. Virgin and Child in Majesty, 1230–1240, Oxford, British Library, MS Add. 49999, fol. 26r.

In this case, the form of the letter C functions to frame the image of the Virgin enthroned and crowned as the Queen of Heaven. In her lap, Child Jesus holds the Holy Scriptures in His left hand and blesses His holy mother with His right hand. This image serves as a variant of the Virgin as Sedes Sapientiae, in which the Child Jesus, carrying the Holy Scriptures and blessing (or cursing, as the case may be), adopts the pose of the future Universal Judge Pantocrator. In a sort of ambiguity, the Virgin and the Child appear to be imbued with life and transcend the space of the letter. The letter that surrounds the Virgin with the Child could suggest the delineation of the space of a chapel or sanctuary. While it is not possible to determine if this image represents devotion to a specific sanctuary image, it is recognized that it coincides with an iconographic type common to twelfth-century images of the Maiestas Marie. However, it is known that one of the most venerated images of the Virgin in England in the 13th century was Our Lady of Walsingham.

Before the religious reform in the kingdom of England, the Virgin Mary was venerated as the patron figure and main protector of the kingdom and its inhabitants. Among the

Marian centers with significant devotion and pilgrimage in the 13th century, the sanctuary of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk stands out. However, during the violent events of the Anglican Reformation in the 16th century under the reign of Henry VIII (1491–1547), Marian shrines were destroyed, and the majority of the images were thrown into fire. Unfortunately, the effigy of Our Lady of Walsingham disappeared during the attack on the sanctuary in 1538 (Dickinson 1956, pp. 65–66).

However, the figure of the Virgin is still preserved on the seals of the Augustinian priory of Walsingham from the 13th century, and on pilgrim badges, providing an idea of the characteristics of the sanctuary's effigy, which corresponds to the typology of the image in the Brailes Hours. Above all, the Child Jesus blessing and holding the Holy Scriptures is similar, as can be clearly seen in the seal (Dickinson 1956, p. 111) (Figure 5a).[12] Unlike the effigy of the Virgin Mary depicted in the Brailes Hours, Our Lady of Walsingham holds a lily in her right hand, as shown also in a 14th-century pilgrim badge recovered from the Thames River (Figure 5b).[13]



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 5. (**a**) The Prior of Walsingham's seal front, King's College Cambridge, Norfolk Collection, 13th century, Ref. WLM/1. (**b**) Pilgrim badge of Our Lady of Walsingham, 14th century, Walsingham, British Museum, Inv. No. 1856,0701.2060, Image No. (1613112110).

According to the legend narrated in *The Pynson Ballad* printed at the end of the 15th century, Mary appeared to be a pious woman from a noble family named Richelde (Richeldis) de Fervaques (Fervaches). In a mystical vision, the Virgin showed her the little house of Nazareth where the Holy Family lived and where the Annunciation took place. The Virgin instructed her to build a small replica of the Nazarene house at the location of two springs. The woman had the house erected as Mary had instructed and placed an image of the Virgin with the Child there. This replica of the House of Nazareth became known as the Holy House of Walsingham. Based on historical and archaeological studies, it has been proposed that the chapel, later recognized as the Holy House, was constructed between 1130 and 1131 when Richelde was widowed. It is possible that *The Pynson Ballad* was also composed around the same time and was orally transmitted over the following centuries (Dickinson 1956, pp. 5–6).

Adjacent to the chapel in 1153, the Augustinian priory was constructed and founded by Geoffrey de Fervaques II. While the chapel was initially for private worship, after a couple of decades, it became a public center for pilgrimage. The fame of the location was largely due to the replica of the Holy House of Nazareth, especially during the time when Saint Bernard was kindling popular devotion to the Holy Land with his preaching during the Second Crusade. The miraculous springs, which were believed to have healing waters, added to the resemblance to the Grotto of Nazareth (Dickinson 1956, pp. 7–13).

It is worth remembering that shortly after the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land became challenging. Nevertheless, Muslims held negotiations with Latin Christendom to allow for continued pilgrimages. Treaties were

established between 1204 and 1229, aiming to facilitate the access of pilgrims to Jerusalem and other cities. However, it was not until 1251 that the Augustinians returned to Nazareth, and by the mid-13th century, it was the most significant religious site under Latin control. In 1263, the church was destroyed by Muslim forces, but despite the dangers and prohibitions by Muhammad's followers, pilgrims continued to visit the site (Pringle 1998, p. 67). With the loss of Acre in 1291 and the increasing difficulty of visiting the Middle East, replicas of the Holy Sites, known as "maquettes", began to appear in Europe. This includes the Holy House of Loreto in Italy. In this sense, it can be said that the Holy House of Walsingham served as a "substitute place" that gained great importance in response to the political conflicts in the Holy Land in the 13th century.

The devotion to the Holy House of Walsingham spread through pilgrim badges and other sanctuary religious objects. It is from 1290 onwards that pilgrim badges appear with the Annunciation. Some pierced badges contain a simplified Annunciation scene within a square, circular, or hexagonal frame that acts as the Holy House and delineates the sacred space. These objects display clear symbolic abstraction, with a minimal number of elements that allow the characters to be recognizable. Only the silhouettes of the angel, the Virgin, and the lily flower (that acts as a dividing column) within the enclosed perimeter that marks the Holy House can be distinguished. In these examples, the image has been condensed to its minimum expression, functioning more as a sort of pictogram or logogram, and through this scene, the locus sanctus of Walsingham and Nazareth are unified (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Annunciation pilgrim badge, 14th–15th century, Walsingham, King's Museum of Lynn, Norfolk, Inv. 44174727.

Brian Spencer states, "It was appropriate that a deliberate imitation of the original Holy House should have contained at least one representation of the Annunciation. Of all surviving Walsingham badges, those commemorating this scene are by far the most numerous" (Spencer 1981, p. 12). This indicates that these types of image–signs or logograms, which bear a strong resemblance to the miniatures in the illuminated initials of the previously described Books of Hours, were part of the religious visuality or "sacred gaze" of the time (Morgan 2005, pp. 51–52). There was a system of images and symbolic associations circulating through different media and artifacts.

While it is not possible to be certain that the historiated initials in the Brailes Hours specifically represent the Holy House of Walsingham, there is an interest in emphasizing the importance of the Holy House as a locus sanctus for veneration. In addition, the manuscript's production date aligns with the support given to the sanctuary by King Henry III (1207–1272). It is known that the monarch was a fervent devotee of Our Lady of Walsingham and visited the sanctuary in 1229, returning in 1232. He made several substantial donations of wax and candles, and in 1246, he gifted twenty marks for the golden crown of the holy image of the Virgin. His affection for the sanctuary continued through his son, Edward, who further benefitted from it (Dickinson 1956, pp. 17–19).

Additionally, it is known that the Dominicans, like other mendicant orders, promoted pilgrimages to Marian sanctuaries to obtain indulgences for the faithful and to spread devotion to the Virgin.[14] It is possible that their spiritual advisors encouraged Susanna, the owner of the Brailes Hours, to undertake a journey to the Holy Land. However, due to the political conflicts in the Middle East, pilgrimages, especially by women, to replicas of

the Holy Sites in the West became more favorable (Rudy 2011, p. 19). Therefore, Susanna may have opted to pilgrimage to East Anglia to avoid the perils of the journey to Asia Minor, taking the main route to Walsingham via London, and perhaps visiting the priory of Bromholm, where the relic of the Holy Cross was held, or the sanctuary of St. Edmund in Bury.[15]

East Anglia was a densely populated region of significance due to its fairs and sanctuaries. The Dominican priory in Norfolk was established in 1256, large enough to accommodate forty friars. The presence of the Black Friars in this region may have been linked to the rise of pilgrimage centers in the sacred geography of the Kingdom of England and their interactions with other congregations, such as the Augustinians in charge of the Walsingham sanctuary.

It is worth noting that according to the legendary discursive construction, the Holy House in Norfolk, a replica of the Nazarene house, was the "celestial materialization" revealed in Richelde's mystical visions. In this narrative with Neoplatonic influences, it is understood that the Holy House does not have a specific location because it exists in the celestial realm. Therefore, it can manifest itself anywhere on Earth according to the Virgin's will and for the benefit of the believers. More than a physical space, it represents a place of commemoration for Christianity. Under the logic of the "dispersion of the divine", the celestial house also "becomes present" in a wide array of religious objects whose materiality defined their uses and apotropaic properties, with the jewel of Hylle being a particularly revealing case.

Due to divine presence, it is known that the letters and the images associated with The Scriptures were considered talismans (Skemer 2006, p. 50). Pilgrim badges and jewelry with these figures were believed to heal or keep away material and spiritual dangers (Wenzel 2000, p. 15). Several examples of badges in the shape of the letter M, souvenirs of Marian devotion referring to the words *Maria*, *Mater*, and *Magnificat*, mainly came from sanctuaries dedicated to Our Lady in different localities.

This leads us to consider that there was a close relationship between pilgrimage figurines and the initial letters in the manuscripts because they were part of the religious visuality within the phenomenon of intermediality. This variety of artifacts and media with similar images allowed for a chain of symbolic associations and different uses. In this sense, it can be said that the letter–images of the pilgrim badges are tactile objects independent of the book, made from metal alloys.

In contrast, the materiality of the initial letters painted in the Book of Hours is essentially composed of the same parchment support and pigments; they are part of the book. However, due to their resemblance to pilgrim badges, one could say that they, to some extent, emulate them, and thus, the book also functions as a kind of reliquary or container that "treasures" them (Keane 2016, pp. 116–17). Under this analogy, it is worth asking whether these initial letters in the Brailes Hours were also attributed to talismanic qualities that enhanced the power of the book.

5. The Hylle Jewel: The Letter M as the Re-Presentation of the Aurea Palatium Dei

The Hylle Jewel, also known as the Founder's Jewel, was crafted in France around 1350. It has been part of the collection at New College, University of Oxford, since 1455. It is known to have been donated by the Hylle family and is associated with the dedication of New College under the patronage of the Virgin Mary (Coss 2008, p. 137). This is a gilded silver brooch adorned with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls.

This brooch takes the shape of a crowned Lombardic M, and within it, you can observe the scene of the Annunciation, similar to the illuminated initial letter in the Brailes Hours on folio 59r that was previously analyzed. This letter–jewel forms two arches adorned with trilobed tracery elements reminiscent of Gothic architecture. In one compartment, you can see archangel Gabriel, and in the other, Mary, both separated by a mullion, column, or lattice upon which is a large vase with three lilies.

Upon close examination, this figure can be interpreted in several ways: The gemstones at the top of the M and the mullion form a cross, with its arms suggested by a pair of rubies alluding to the bloodshed from the Savior's wounds. In the center of the cross, three pearls form the body of Christ and also allude to the Holy Trinity. At the top, a table-cut diamond suggests the holy face of the crucified. This cross can also be understood as the tree of life formed by the branch of lilies sprouting from the blood of Christ, represented by the ruby that shapes the vase. The crown is adorned with three flowers (one currently missing), alternating between emeralds, rubies, and pearls (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Hylle Jewel, ca. 1350, France, New College, University of Oxford.

Unlike the initial letters in the Brailes Hours that are painted on the pages of the codex and their use depends rather on the artifact that contains them, the Hylle jewel is an artifact in itself and its materiality plays a key role in its functioning and efficacy. While the rich materials make this piece an object of power and prestige, in the Middle Ages, such jewelry served various functions. Undoubtedly, these jewels were indicators of the high rank and nobility of their owner and were considered commemorative objects. It is important to note that silver, gold, and precious stones were subject to strict regulations, and only the upper classes were allowed to wear them. The first legislation regarding the use of luxury items, known as Sumptuary Laws, in France dates back to 1282 during the reign of Philip III the Bold (1245–1285), and a new law was enacted in 1294 by Philip IV the Fair (1291–1322) (Heller 2004, p. 124).

This brooch can be seen as three times more powerful. Firstly, it takes the form of the initial letter of the holy name of Mary, which also alludes to Mater Dei and Magnificat. Secondly, it signifies and commemorates the sacred space of the Incarnation of the Word. In addition to all this, this jewel was believed to possess a special power due to its noble materials and colors, designed to be in contact with the body.

5.1. Gold and Light

Noble metals and precious stones in medieval art held profound symbolic significance. In this regard, Herbert Kessler makes the following point: "Valued for their cost, purity, and luminousness in pagan Roman culture and Scripture, gold and gems were used in Christian art to figure heaven as a place of spiritual reward" (Kessler 2004, p. 20). Indeed, according to the description in Ezekiel, it was said that Eden, as the garden of God, was adorned with all kinds of gemstones (Ez. 28:13).

Similar to the illuminated initials in the manuscript painted by William Brailes, the letter that forms this brooch is a miniature version of the Holy House of Nazareth. Due to the brilliance of the gold and precious stones, this piece of metalwork materializes the celestial Holy House, which has no specific location in earthly geography. It is the palatium Dei, ornamented in gold, a symbolic allusion to the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple of

Solomon, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, whose walls of gold were adorned with various precious stones, as observed in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 21:18–19). St. Ambrose, in his exegetical interpretation of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, emphasized the splendor of gold as an attribute of her holiness: "The Ark, indeed, was radiant within and without with the glitter of gold, but holy Mary shone within and without with the splendor of virginity. The one was adorned with earthly gold, the other with heavenly" (Ambrose, *Serm. xlii. 6*, Int. Opp; Livius 1893, p. 77).

In the Middle Ages, gold was considered both matter and light. It was esteemed as a unique color, both artistically and symbolically, as the whitest of whites. Additionally, gold was thought to possess warmth, weight, and density. In various artifacts and artistic expressions, it was combined with precious stones to create a play of colors and lights that acted as mediations between the earthly and celestial worlds. Due to its luminous qualities, as pointed out by Michel Pastoureau, gold makes color shine and controls it, stabilizing it through the use of golden backgrounds or borders that confine it. Therefore, it served a fundamental artistic and aesthetic function, especially in the liturgical and political spheres (Pastoureau 2006, pp. 159–60).

Gold was believed to be the "materialization of light". In the Late Middle Ages, the nature of light was a widely discussed and explored topic in scholastic thought as a phenomenon of the natural world. Light and color were fundamental qualities of beauty, defined by the triad of Thomas Aquinas: harmony (proportion), radiance (color), and clarity (light). On the other hand, in Neoplatonism, it represented the theological concept of divine nature: "In the theology of the Middle Ages, light is the only part of the sensible world that is both visible and immaterial. It is the visibility of the ineffable and, as such, an emanation of God" (Pastoureau 2006, p. 147).

The Franciscan bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253), in his work *De Luce Seu de Inchoatione Formarum*, combined Neoplatonism's theories of emanation with aspects of Aristotle's cosmology. He proposed that light (lux), at an atemporal instant, was the first corporeal form, emanating as pure diffusion of creative power, thus giving rise to matter, radiating in all directions, creating the sensible world comprised thirteen spheres, nine of them immutable and the other four subject to change:

> "But light is more exalted and of a nobler and more excellent essence than all corporeal things. It has, moreover, greater similarity than all bodies to the forms that exist apart from matter, namely, the intelligences. Light, therefore, is the first corporeal form." (Grosseteste, *De Luce*, 1–3; Grosseteste 2003, pp. 61–22)

He further specified that the divine light, which he referred to with the Latin term "lux", is an entity in itself, pure diffusion of creative force, and the source of all movement. The light he called "lumen" is the light emitted by luminous bodies such as stars and the sun, which is carried by transparent mediums. The closer something was to the source of divine light (lux), the more perfect it was, and as it moved away, it became more rarified. These two dimensions of light were complemented by the radiance or color produced by the interaction of the two lights, the divine light (lumen) that permeates all of creation, incorporated into all matter, and the light (lumen) reflected by opaque bodies. In accordance with the metaphysics of St. Bonaventure, Grosseteste claimed that light is maxime delectabilis, meaning the greatest delight of the senses and the spirit (Grosseteste, *De Luce*, 10–11; Grosseteste 2003, pp. 65–66).

Under this framework, the church, the golden temple, reflected the aurea palatium Dei, that is, the abode of divine light. Therefore, gold and precious stones, similar to the stars, by retaining and reflecting the two types of light (*lux* and *lumen*), like mirrors, were believed to possess miraculous qualities, effective in improving health, warding off demons, preventing sudden death, or serving as an antidote to poison.

5.2. Red, Green, and White

Upon the body of the letter M, rubies and emeralds are alternated in cabochons, creating a sequence of the colors red and green. During the Middle Ages, it was believed that

there were six basic colors in a specific order: white, yellow, red, green, blue, and black. Hugo of St. Victor stated that the color green occupied the middle position among all colors, with red being its closest companion. Therefore, green was considered a soothing color that invited peace and tranquility. In his major work *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, William Durandus (c. 1230–1296) recommended that the Lord's temple should be adorned with the colors of virtues: white symbolizing purity of life, red representing charity, green denoting contemplation, black signifying the mortification of the flesh, and gray representing tribulation. The combination of the colors white, green, and red represented the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. (Durandus, Book 1, III; Thibodeau 2010, p. 44).[16]

5.3. The Power of Gemstones

Within Marian devotion, gemstones symbolize the virtues of Mary. Conrad of Hamburg in his poem "Anulus", written around 1350, recounted the tale of a magnificent ring, a gift to the Virgin, set with twelve precious gemstones, the same ones that adorned the walls of the celestial Jerusalem: the sapphire representing the Virgin's hope, the hyacinth her active charity, the emerald her purity, the carbuncle eternal glory, the topaz profound contemplation, the diamond strength in the face of suffering, the chalcedony charity, the sardonyx Mary's suffering at the cross, the chrysolite wisdom, the jasper faith, the chrysoprase Mary's love for God, and the amethyst God's love for humanity that they profess to Mary (Lecouteux 2011, p. 35).

To fully grasp the function of the Hylle brooch, in addition to its theological significance, one must delve into the virtues attributed to gemstones during the Middle Ages as detailed in lapidaries. The power ascribed to gemstones dates back to Antiquity. In his "Natural History", Pliny the Elder (1st century) dedicates an entire book to the description of various types of gemstones and their qualities, concepts that continued throughout the Middle Ages. Marbodius (1040–1123), the Bishop of Rennes, among his works, emphasized the Liber de lapidibus, which was widely used during the 14th century and translated into various vernacular languages.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), the abbess, explained in her 12th-century work Physica that gemstones originated in regions where the sun's heat was most intense, coincidentally where the Garden of Eden was believed to be located. In these regions, rivers boiled due to extreme heat, and upon contact with iron-rich mountains, the water transformed into foam that adhered to rocks and solidified over the course of three or four days. For this reason, gemstones were thought to be formed by fire and moisture. (Hildegard; Book IV, Throop 1998, p. 135).

Furthermore, Hildegard explained the reason behind the powers of gemstones by relating them to the creation of Lucifer:

> "God had decorated the first angel as if with precious stones. Lucifer, upon seeing them shine in the mirror of Divinity, took knowledge from them and recognized that God wished to do many wondrous things. His mind was exalted with pride since the beauty of the stones that covered him shone in God. He thought that he could do deeds equal to and greater than God's. And so, his splendor was extinguished." (Hildegard; Book IV, Throop 1998, p. 138)

Despite Lucifer's pride and Adam's sin, God blessed gemstones on Earth for use as medicine by humankind. It is important to note in this explanation that Abbess Hildegard attributed the power of gemstones specifically to their containing the "fire" or divine light (lux). She also established a tension between their beauty and the healing power bestowed by the Creator, and the envy they generate, which even led to the fall of the angel of light, condemned to eternal darkness (Hildegard; Book IV, Throop 1998, p. 139).

Within this framework, there was ambiguity in the Middle Ages regarding gemstones: on one hand, they were considered gifts of divine mercy and used for healing or protection against physical and spiritual ailments. On the other hand, magicians, soothsayers, and sorcerers, advised by the Devil, harnessed the powers of gemstones to gain access to God's wisdom, perform all sorts of spells, and thus control the laws of nature.[17]

In Christianity, it was believed that gemstones were sanctified when Jacob rested his head on one of them, and through this contact, he experienced a vision of God during his sleep (Gen. 28:11–12). Therefore, the Church recognized the beneficial use of gemstones and conducted specific ceremonies to bless them. The stone to be blessed was wrapped in a linen cloth and placed on the altar during three masses. The priest officiating the final mass recited the following blessing, mentioning the rational (a type of ornament) adorned with twelve gemstones and the gems of the celestial Jerusalem in the apocalyptic revelation:

> "You have granted their kind in this same consecration, and that experience of the wise has proven they come from Your gifts; that whosoever shall bear one in his person shall thereby feel the presence of Your power in him with the gifts of Your grace, and that we are deserving of receiving these virtues." (Lecouteux 2011, p. 70)

The Hylle jewel contained the four most powerful gemstones: ruby, emerald, pearl, and diamond, all of which are mentioned in the description of the celestial Jerusalem. In the Hylle jewel, the diamond occupies a privileged location, positioned at the upper center of the brooch, and represents the Holy Face of the Redeemer. It also forms the three lily flowers, alluding to the mystery of the Trinity. The Greek name for this precious stone, adamas, means "unconquerable" because diamonds triumph over fire, never heating up, and were attributed special protective and healing qualities. They were said to be formed from the dew of the empyrean light and, if gazed upon intently, were believed to help heal cataracts. Due to their eternal durability, they symbolically represented fidelity in love and allegiance (Lecouteux 2011, pp. 34–38).

The ruby, also known as carbuncle, was called "the lord of stones". Since ancient times, Herodotus claimed that storks placed rubies in their nests to ensure that snakes did not eat their eggs. In the Bible, it is one of the twelve stones adorning the breastplate of the priest Aaron (Ex. 28:15–30). It was believed to have healing properties if placed in water and used as an antidote to poison. It was also used to protect lands, stimulate piety, calm anger, and combat seduction. In traditions originating from antiquity, it was believed that the asp had a carbuncle on its forehead, which they called "guivre", used to enchant its victims. Therefore, if used with malice, they could bewitch and exacerbate lust and anger (Lecouteux 2011, pp. 87–89).

Emeralds, like rubies, were believed to be submerged in the depths of the Pishon River, which flowed from the source of paradise, and griffins hoarded them in their nests. During the Middle Ages, these deeply green gemstones were used to ward off storms. They were believed to ward off evil spirits, enhance prestige and eloquence, increase wealth, and provide joy while healing melancholy. Combining them with gold was recommended to improve understanding and memory. It was said that when the Archangel Michael expelled Lucifer, an emerald fell from his bow to the earth. Later, the Queen of Sheba gave it to King Solomon, who set it in a chalice. Nicodemus inherited it, and it was used by Christ during the Last Supper as the Holy Grail (Lecouteux 2011, pp. 296–99).

The pearl, also considered a precious stone in the Middle Ages, was called "the first of white gems" (prima candidarum gemmarum) by Isidore of Seville. According to some lapidaries, white pearls originate when oysters capture the morning dew, and dark-colored ones come from the evening dew. Pearls softened anger and melancholy, brought joy, peace, and harmony, comforted the heart, and soothed the gaze, fostering good memory. Pearls were used to reduce inflammation in the blood and other bodily fluids and were considered a remedy for leprosy and stomach problems (Lecouteux 2011, pp. 220–21).

6. Conclusions

Considering the above, it can be concluded that these initial letters were effective objects for meditation. Through the visual metaphor of the domus Dei, the devotee was induced to reflect—and "ruminate"—on the supernatural conception of God the Son as man and Mary's virginal divine motherhood, the two main dogmas revealed in the passage of the Annunciation.

It is also noted that these letters and their associated images had a dual nature in the Late Middle Ages, serving as signs and signifiers parallel to the mystery of the Incarnation. They demonstrate the two natures of Christ, God the Son: human and divine. The sign contains a tangible part in its form as a visual sign and an intangible part in its sound and meaning: writing (flesh)—caro—and voice (breath, spirit)—pneuma. Letters, in their visual dimension as graphemes, point to the sounds they represent, forming words. Simultaneously, in their pictorial character, the potential of writing to generate images through the imagination is manifested, as famously formulated by Horace: "As is painting, so is poetry". Recall the well-known analogy between image and writing in the Latin world: "poetry is a speaking picture and painting is mute poetry". In this way, the image–letters from the Holy Scriptures veil and reveal the mysteries of God.

Like other religious image–objects, they evoked the sacred space of the Holy House of Nazareth and its replicas in other places, as important pilgrimage sites.

> Therefore, they functioned to link the earthly plane with the celestial, and the sacred place became omnipresent through these objects, beyond a precise location on the earthly plane. They acted as windows or thresholds to the spiritual world for the devotee in meditative and devotional practices. They could have been used for "imagined" or spiritual pilgrimage or so that the owner of the book of hours could remember his experiences during pilgrimage journeys to the Holy Land or to East Anglia (Rudy 2011, p. 119). It is known that the main use of books of hours was for private religious practice in the domestic sphere. (Reinburg 2012, p. 109)

On the other hand, in medieval art, the efficacy and power of an artifact or image–object were determined holistically by its form, colors, and materials within a complex belief system encompassing theology, popular piety, worldviews, and legendary constructions. To understand its function and uses, it is necessary to consider them within constellations of associations and meanings. The materiality of certain objects was not conceived as inert but rather as having active properties that were enhanced by their forms, whether they were letters, images, or a combination of both.

According to medieval beliefs, it was emphasized that gemstones increased their power through the virtues of their owner and lost their qualities due to their sins. Even if they were used for magic through evil spells, in the long run, they were believed to attract diseases, discord, and destruction. Under the concept of anima mundi mentioned by William of Conches (1080–c. 1154) in his treatise, *Philosophia Mundi*, microcosm and macrocosm were interconnected. Thus, it was believed to be true that everything that constituted the universe, both in the celestial and earthly realms, was in a dynamic of interaction, and there was a continuous influence between all elements of creation, as stated in this stanza in *The Pynson Ballad*:

> All this, a medewe wete with dropes celestyall/
>
> And with sylver dewe sent from hye adowne/
>
> Excepte tho tweyne places chosen above all/
>
> Where neyther moyster ne dewe myght be fowne.
>
> This was the fyrste pronostycacyowne/
>
> Howe this our newe Nazareth here shold stande,
>
> Bylded lyke the fyrste in the Holy Lande. (*The Pynson Ballad*, 15th Century)

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Notes

1. In light of the impact of semiotics, this essay, were it focused on images, could easily have been called “Image as Script”, although in recent years, the urge to “read” images increasingly has given way to anthropological approaches that emphasize their “power” at the expense of the written word, or at least the realization the seeing while reading is at least as important reading what one sees. The inclusion within the study of visual culture of images well beyond those traditionally categorized as “Fine Art” has led to a reinvigorated investigation of the ways in which what James Elkins, borrowing a term from linguistics, calls “allographs” and other ways of picturing script participate, more broadly, in the tendency of the self-styled “iconic turn” to look to the Middle Ages for effects of pictorial presence (Hamburger 2014, p. 2). Theoretical approaches proposed by Michael Camille, Jean-Claude Schmitt, Jérôme Baschet and David Morgan. Also, the proposals of Elina Gerstman, Horst Wenzel, Herbert Kessler, and Caroline Walker Bynum were taken into account.
2. This manuscript was illuminated by William Brailes between 1230 and 1240 in Oxford.
3. According to David Morgan: “the word *gaze* encompasses the image, the viewer, and the act of viewing, establishing a broader framework for the understanding of how images operate” (Morgan 2005, p. 5).
4. Legendarily it was said that this hymn had been composed by St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan, when he baptized St. Augustine of Hippo (Parra Sánchez 2003, p. 163).
5. “The Holy Scriptures had to take on some static quality of a picture. The “white water” rapids of the great age of Christian eloquence had to give way to stiller waters. The patient repetitive discipline of the *lectio divina*—notably, but no exclusively, practiced in monastic circles—invested the Holy Scriptures with an “iconic” charge” (Brown 1997, p. 28).
6. “*Spiritus flos radicis est: ille, inquam, flos de quo bene est prophetatum: ‘Exiet virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet (Is, 1, 11)’*.” (Ambrose, De Spiritu Sancto 2. PL 16, 750 C, o B.783 A; Álvarez Campos 1974, vol. III, p. 102). Cited in (Salvador-González 2013, p. 209).
7. Curiously this vegetal ornament, in an ambiguous and polysemous construction, looks like water flowing from a spring. It is possible that this represents the spring in the grotto of the Holy House of Nazareth.
8. Leontius of Byzantium (ca. 485–ca. 543) not only subtly adopts the double interpretation, Mariological and Christological, of the biblical metaphors referring to the metaphor of *Domus Sapientiae* as dwelling or receptacle of divinity, but also accepts with total conviction the already consolidated dogma of the double nature of Christ, the divine and the human (duophysitism), both substantially united in a single Person (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, pp. 115–16).
9. St. Ildefonsus of Toledo (607–667) states that Mary is the one that the Psalm 18 designates as “the nuptial room of God” because, from her womb, the God incarnate comes out as the husband leaves his nuptial room, preserving intact the honor of her perpetual virginity.” In another book of this author, he mentions that the Almighty God is the architect of this building (Mary’s womb), for he enters it as God without a dress (without human body) and gets out of it dressed in the flesh (*Teología y Vida*, Salvador-González 2021b, p. 531).
10. *“Te urnam, divinitatis manna continentem agnovimus, o Puella: te arcam et mensam, te lucernam ac thronum Dei, te palatium et pontem ad divinam vitam transducentem eos qui concinunt: Benedicat omnis creatura Domino, et superexaltet eum in omnia saecula”* (Josephus Hymnographus, *Mariale. Theotocia seu Deiparae Strophae*; PG 105: 1.258). Cited in (*Imago Revista de Emblemática*, Salvador-González 2021a, p. 119).
11. As evidence of her incorruptibility, it was said that Mary’s tomb in Jerusalem remained empty because she deserved to be transported, body and soul, to the heavenly realm to be reunited with her divine son. In the Middle Ages, the empty tomb was also an important pilgrimage center (Donovan 1991, p. 102).
12. Dickinson finds the figure of Our Lady of Walsingham very similar to the Virgin of Rocamadour in France. There was probably a relationship between both devotions, or at least, between both effigies.
13. “The present piece was almost certainly an altar figure, which together with the figures forming part of a rood (Christ crucified, the Virgin and St John the Evangelist), was the most common form of devotional image in wood in the Middle Ages. Probably just such a statuette is described in the Liberate Rolls relating to the refurbishment of the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London in December 1240.” https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O96300/virgin-and-child-statuette-unknown/, accessed on 21 November 2023.
14. On August 15, the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, in the year 1221, the first Dominican priory was founded in a Jewry of Oxford, which promoted scholastic studies at the university and significantly elevated its prestige throughout Europe. Twelve brothers arrived from the continent under the guidance of Friar Gilbert of Fresnay, who was sent to the English territories by the order’s founder, Saint Dominic de Guzmán, after the second General Chapter, with the sponsorship of Peter of Roche, Bishop of Winchester. Study and preaching were the pillars of the order to successfully carry out the apostolic mission. During the next decade, the order had spread to a large part of English territories. The Dominicans strongly promoted devotion to Mary in ecclesiastical circles as well as among the laity throughout the island (Jarret 1921, pp. 1–3).

[15] The main route to Walsingham passed through London, Waltham Abbey, Newmarket, Brandon, Swaffham, the Priory of Castle Acre, and East Barsham. The pilgrimage to East Anglia included several sites of veneration: Bromholm Priory, the anchorite Mother Juliana in Norwich, the shrine of St. William at Norwich Cathedral, the shrine of St. Edmund in Bury, and the shrine of St. Etheldreda at Ely Cathedral.

[16] This triple chromatic combination can be seen in the painting of the Virgin in Majesty at the Museum of Sacred Art in Massa Marittima, created by the artist from the Sienese school, Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1290–1348), around 1335, the Virgin and Child are depicted on a golden throne resting on a three-tiered podium. The first level is white with golden Roman letters reading *"Fides"* (Faith), the second tier is green with the inscription *"Speranza"* (Hope), and the third is red with the word *"Charitas"* (Charity). Two angels offer her bouquets of red roses and white lilies, reminiscent of pearls and rubies. https://www.museidimaremma.it/en/museo.asp?keymuseo=8, accessed on 21 November 2023.

[17] The work *Ortus Sanitatis* (Garden of Health), written by the German physician Johann Wonnecke von Caub in the 15th century, compiles medieval knowledge about the natural world in an encyclopedic format. It includes an extensive lapidary with 144 chapters. In the University of Cambridge Library, there is a copy of *Ortus Sanitatis* (Inc.3.A.1.8) published on 23 June 1491, in Mainz by the printer Jacob Meydenbach. This copy contains the lapidary with various illustrations. You can view it at, https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-INC-00003-A-00001-00008-00037/1, accessed on 21 November 2023.

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Article

Vincent Ferrer's Vision: Oral Traditions, Texts and Imagery

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Abstract: All stories vary depending on the channel through which they are presented. In the Late Middle Ages, the transmission of a single fact or event differed significantly according to the means of communication. Since at least 1408, Dominican preacher Saint Vincent Ferrer (c. 1350–1419) used to talk, in some sermons, about the vision experienced by a nameless friar who, being healed in extremis by Christ, preached the arrival of Antichrist afterward. In 1412, Ferrer wrote a letter addressed to pope Benedict XIII including the story of this ecstasy, though with some changes. In 1429, in the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta (frazione Stella, Macello, Piedmont) the earliest depiction of this legendary episode was made. Ferrer was explicitly identified for the first time as the unknown friar mentioned in his sermons from 1408. Extraordinarily, a picture of the friar's figure appeared beside a literal copy of some passages from Ferrer's letter to Benedict XIII, incorporated in the same frescoes. This rich documentation reveals the importance of interactions between sermons, texts and images in shaping the narrative of Vincent Ferrer's vision and its later memory.

Keywords: Vincent Ferrer; vision; sermons; literature; iconography

1. Introduction

The communicative framework in the medieval period had three essential methods: orality, writings and images. Telling a story out loud, writing it down for later reading or painting it to the object of its contemplation implies, voluntarily or not, the creation of agreements and discrepancies among the resulting versions of the same event in each medium. The particularity of these three methods, with the *hic et nunc* offered by the preacher (D'Haenens 1983, pp. 227–28), the traditional unimpeachable value of the written text (*scripta manent, verba volant*) or the power of images (Freedberg 1989), participated in the evolution and transformation of the contents of the same story. For example, the preachers literally reproduced a biblical passage in their sermons, showing, in this specific case, the concordance between orality and literature. However, they could also reproach the artists of the time for the licenses they took when picturing that biblical passage. In this way, through the sermons, the divergence between the writings and the images had been made public. These concordances and divergences between the three aforementioned channels of expression are key to understanding the birth and diffusion of some late medieval stories, and even more so when several sources are preserved from the three methods of communication.[1] This is the case in point of Vincent Ferrer's vision, in which we can compare and contrast orality (sermons delivered by the Dominican friar) writing (Ferrer's letter to Benedict XIII) and images (wall paintings in Macello).

The Dominican Vincent Ferrer was the most famous preacher of his time, although he only devoted himself to this activity in the last twenty years of his life. Born in Valencia around 1350, after the beginning of the Schism in 1378, he defended Avignon obedience, an attitude that cost him his position as prior of the convent of Santo Domingo in his hometown. From then until 1416, he was a trusted man of Cardinal Pedro de Luna, Pope Benedict XIII, from 1394 on. In Avignon in 1398, being a papal confessor, he suffered an ecstasy that caused his complete dedication to preaching from 1399 until his death. This ecstasy or vision, the pillar of this study, involved the transformation of the character.

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The case relating to the episode of the friar's life that granted him a new role within Christianity is an ideal example: when viewed together, the preserved sources from each of the three methods of communication are a real treasure trove. It is important to note that the Avignon vision was the most significant moment in Vincent Ferrer's biography (Daileader 2016, p. 1). It was the final push towards a sort of fame that would transcend the earthly realm. That ecstasy made Ferrer legatus a latere Christi: a legate of Christ. It also turned him into a prophet, the etymology of which, in the friar's words, comes from "procul fans:" speaking far, of times that cannot be known by human understanding. (Saint Vincent Ferrer 1973, p. 103). From the vision emerged a being who, having been touched by God in body and in spirit, had seen humanity's destiny, as did the Old-Testament prophets to which he likened himself (Saint Vincent Ferrer [1934] 1971, pp. 38–39). Without the legendary episode, Ferrer would have been a great man of the Church, perhaps a key figure in international political issues or even a holy man, but all justifications of his hypothetical saintliness would lack a cornerstone. To delve into the vision is to penetrate the very origin of his sainthood and the last twenty years of his life. In addition, it should not be forgotten that this mystical episode meant, in its original context, a political and religious message of great importance: the support of divine illumination to the Avignonese obedience.[2]

Though the world's unfortunate destiny was first revealed to him during that epiphany, Ferrer possessed other evidence of the upcoming apocalypse. Some of it was popular, other parts were less so, but all of it shaped the sermons awaited most eagerly by the Christian community, especially between 1411 and 1414:

> Everyone wishes to know when it will come, and I do not think I should give a sermon on it, as I have already written a treatise on it to the Pope, so turn to it and you will know, as many in this city already have it. There you will see the facts. (Saint Vincent Ferrer 1988, p. 230)

On that day, between November 1412 and December 1414 (Perarnau i Espelt 1989), Ferrer chose another theme for his sermon, much to the disappointment of the congregation, who knew they were listening to one of God's chosen few who knew of the Last Judgement's imminence. Ferrer had already expounded the proximity of the end of days at great length, as requested by Benedict XIII.[3] The medium he used was a letter to the pontiff, written in Alcañiz on 27 July 1412—to which the friar referred in the above quote as a 'treatise'—which summarized the apocalyptic prophecies he had included in his preaching since 1399.

A key part of the epistle was the account of a sickly friar's vision, representing his supposed ecstasy (1398?), which was the ultimate cause of his newfound determination to preach in order to convert and correct all men, as commanded by the Son of God, before the Antichrist's arrival. The friar had already told of the vision on prior occasions and in various places, along with the other evidence he would write about to the Pope, who demanded an explanation in writing from his old friend which detailed the reasons why he believed the universal disruption was coming. The most personal, and therefore most reliable, reason was his implied vision; his use of the pronoun 'he' instead of 'I' when recounting it did not prevent many of his contemporaries from allocating him the first-person status that made him the protagonist of the story. The legendary episode would also be represented in a painting barely a decade after Ferrer's death, when he had been beatified by the people but not yet canonized (this would ultimately be delayed until 1455). Around 1429, a small Piedmontese chapel incorporated the most substantial part of the treatise which *mestre Vicent* sent to the pontiff into this figuration of the vision, and into the adjacent representation of his preaching. This was substantial, at least, in terms of the genesis of Vincentian iconography.

2. Mestre Vincent's Vision

In July 1398, Vincent Ferrer left the papal palace in Avignon, where he resided as the papal confessor, and made his way to the city's Dominican convent. This departure may have been the result of a disagreement with Benedict XIII, his mentor, over the measures taken in the face of the French siege of the pontifical stronghold (De Garganta and Forcada

1956, p. 36). Ferrer became seriously ill in the Dominican residence. On 3 October 1398, the episode that would transform his existence took place in his monastic cell.[4] According to the accounts he gave on various occasions in the third person—though certain information he provided led congregations and most subsequent historiography to single him out as the protagonist—Ferrer saw Christ, accompanied by Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, approach his sickbed.[5] He was then cured by the Son of God, and urged to preach for the rest of his life. Christ then indicated that the end times would come when his mission was complete. The following speech made by Ferrer in Toledo in 1411 is considered paradigmatic of how he recounted the miracle in his preaching:

> The second is another revelation made to a holy man who is alive, I think. And he was ill, with a serious illness, and that holy man had great devotion to Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. And he prayed to them to pray to God to bring him health, and the holy man was taken in spirit towards heaven, and he saw Jesus Christ, who was on a throne, and Saint Dominic and Saint Francis were below him, and they were praying. And they were saying, 'Lord, not so soon; Lord, not so soon!' And, in his heart, the friar said, 'Oh, how Christ was resisting!' And then Jesus Christ and Saint Dominic and Saint Francis descended to that sickly friar. And Jesus Christ said to him, 'My child, I will wait for your preaching'. And he was healed. And I know him and I have spoken to him and he told me this many times. And now, good people, Jesus Christ is waiting for this friar's preaching. (Cátedra García 1994, p. 571)[6]

This sermon, which bears great similarity to the wording of the letter Ferrer would send to the pontiff a year later, was not the first or the only homiletic reference he made to his vision. When he spoke in Toledo, thirteen years had already passed—or even fifteen—since that miracle, which he described on other occasions. The story had, therefore, probably been subject to modification, like any other oral account. The first question is clear: did the story change?

Ferrer did not begin his holy assignment to preach with the aforementioned divine powers until 22 November, 1399. This is what his main biographers deduced from the following quote:

> In the Holy Church, today we celebrate the blessed virgin martyr, Saint Cecilia, and I want to preach about her, not for any general reason, just because she is a virgin and martyr, but for a special reason, as on this day I started to preach around the world and announced my *legatus a latere Christi*, and because she has bestowed many graces upon me, which is why I wish to continue to preach about her. (Chabás 1903, p. 111)[7]

3. Through Sermons

A considerable amount of time elapsed between the vision and the beginning of Ferrer's apostolic campaign. Another five years must be added to this period before these references to the Avignon epiphany in his preaching begin to be recorded in documents.[8] Aware that only a meager percentage of his speeches have been preserved—as demonstrated by that empty stretch of almost five years—I have prepared a review of the references to the vision in his collection of sermons. First of all, it is important to emphasize how difficult it is to date some of the sermons mentioned; the opinions of experts on the matter must take precedence. The oldest preserved reportatio of his sermons dates back to 1404. It was drafted by Franciscan brother of German origins Friedrich von Amberg, and is preserved in the Convent of the Cordeliers in Fribourg. The document concerns Ferrer's Lent preachings in the city and other nearby population centres (Morerod 2006; Hodel 1993). Though the *reportator* recorded the sermons in the aforementioned year, the corrected, written-up version was ready from 1406 (Perarnau i Espelt 1999b). Ferrer discussed the proximity of the end of days extensively in the most important city, Fribourg.[9] There was no mention of his vision. In his preaching on signs of the apocalypse, he did incorporate

the delaying of the Last Judgement due to intervention from the Virgin Mary, when Saint Francis and Saint Dominic appear before Christ. This is the famous episode where Christ brandishes three lances, ready to destroy the world.[10] This occurrence would be used on later occasions by Ferrer as an introduction to his account of the Avignon vision, though seemingly not in this campaign, according to the preserved data. However, three blank pages in the codex make any certainty impossible in this regard (Perarnau i Espelt 1999b, p. 65). In any case, this silence seems odd, given that this was the soonest known preaching campaign after the friar's epiphany.

The collection of sermons from Perugia covers the Valencian friar's preaching activity as taken from an antigraph made in or after 1407, perhaps by Ferrer himself (Gimeno Blay 2019, p. 140), though it contains added elements from a later date.[11] It outlines many of the main reasons he would detail in his letter to Benedict XIII to explain the imminent end of the world. The renowned schematic nature of this volume, arranged in a schedulae or schemata sermonum style, does not shed much light on the details. Nevertheless, it constitutes a concise crib sheet that Ferrer himself would use and develop in his own unique way in some of his preaching. Sermon 407 includes the reminder "ad hoc etiam nota revelationem factam religioso infirmo sunt circiter 20 anni" ("for this, see also the revelation made to the sick holy man, around 20 years ago").[12] This manuscript, conserved in the Convent of Saint Dominic in Perugia, made use of the same antigraph, mentioned above (Gimeno Blay 2019, p. 140), as the two manuscripts in the Vatican Apostolic Library, namely shelfmark numbers Vat. lat. 4375 and Vat. lat. 7730 (Perarnau i Espelt 1999a, p. 157). The first contains practically the same note, "ad hoc etiam nota revellationem factam religioso infimo, sunt circiter viginti anni" (Perarnau i Espelt 1999a, p. 160), but the second does not.

Up to now, only brief entries on the vision, characteristic of the concise tone required in an outline, have been cited. The details of this and other stories were omitted in these summaries, and Ferrer would later adapt them to his audiences. This is another gap that calls for caution.

A significant turning point took place in late 1408. Vincent Ferrer gave the sermon "Reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis" in Montpellier.[13] In it, he provided an abundance of information and arguments regarding the imminence of the end time: minutiae that he would repeat years later, with certain modifications, in the Castilian campaign (1411), and which he would write up in an organized fashion in his epistle to Benedict XIII on the Antichrist and the end of days (1412). This rationale would reach peak eloquence in Ferrer's preaching during Lent of 1413 in Valencia. Let us examine this excerpt from the sermon given in Montpellier on 5 December 1408:

> Second, it can be proven by the authority of the Holy Scripture, in Revelation chapter eighteen, which says 'And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people: Saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord, and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come'. Let us look at who this angel is. I tell you that a good preacher is he who evangelises, meaning he who preaches the word of God to all, saying with a loud voice: fear the Lord, and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come, etc. So, let us see that nothing has been corrected by the preaching of Dominicans and Franciscans. As in the time of Saint Dominic, no usury prevailed, except among the Jews. Today, we find it among Christians. And let us see that clergymen do not respect their own religion, and the same can be said of all other mortals. In this moratorium in which we find ourselves, few direct their prayers to the Virgin Mary, and for this reason it will arrive quickly, very quickly, and soon. This can be proven thanks to some revelations. The first is that a certain Franciscan, whom I consider to be virtuous, upright, and devout, was ill, around twenty years ago. And on the eve of Saint Francis, he prayed to the saint to intercede before God to recover his health. When his pleas ended, he fell into a deep sleep, and the Lord appeared with Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, who

> prayed to God to delay the arrival of the end of the world. And Saint Francis also prayed to God for the ill man. But Our Lord Jesus Christ seemed cold, like marble. He approached the sick man, gently touched his face, and told him, 'Go and preach around the world, and when your preaching is over, I will send the Antichrist'. The friar stood up and found himself completely cured, and since then, he has not ceased to go around the world preaching every day so that people may convert to God. Therefore, see the homily of Saint Gregory in the Gospel: 'And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars'. Brethren, we have seen many signs in the sun and the moon, we have also seen earthquakes, so that many signs of the judgement of God have passed and few remain. That is why the end of the world will come soon. Seven hundred years have passed since Saint Gregory said those words, and if he spoke like this, with much more force we can say: remember that I told you. (Morenzoni 2004, p. 265)

There is something very striking in the above text. When he narrates what would eventually be identified as his own vision in Avignon, Ferrer puts a Franciscan friar at the centre of the story (Daileader 2016, pp. 151–52; Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 366–67). It is true that, from then on, he would always use the third person when referring to his vision, alluding to an unspecified holy man from one of the orders created by Dominic de Guzmán and Giovanni di Pietro Bernardone, respectively. This does not make for any less of a surprise; the protagonist of what is thought to be the first extended account of the Avignon vision is a Franciscan. How was it possible to deduce that Ferrer, when he described the friar as a "frater minor," was talking about himself?

In theory, this is the first complete reference to the vision. The transcriber may have misunderstood the occasional piece of information—details such as "non sunt elapsi XXti anni" [twenty years had not passed] and "Apocalypsis XVIII° capitulo" [Revelation chapter 18] are surprising[14]—but changing the protagonist's religious order is a more substantial issue. Ferrer never referred to himself as the active subject in a story that, in this first version, seemed to happen to a Franciscan friar. The fact that the vision was said to have taken place on the day before Saint Francis's feast day may or may not be a coincidence. Later historiography incorporated this detail—which I believe to have been taken from this sermon, as it does not appear in Ferrer's famous epistle—but did not take into account that the friar in the vision was unlikely to be identified as Ferrer.

The sermon, dated by Morenzoni, is not simply another piece of a complex, perhaps unsolvable puzzle. The Université de Genève professor has already offered other hypotheses situating the stay in Montpellier as the beginning of Ferrer's apocalyptic preaching (Morenzoni 2004, p. 234). The theory around the Franciscan protagonist may seem bold, but if this testimony of the sermon is considered valid, it constitutes a turning point in the transformation of the message regarding the Avignon vision. A no less respectable conclusion is that the friar slipped up, the copyist made an error, some information was lost, or the dating is wrong. This excerpt of the sermon in Montpellier also includes Ferrer's first use of the complete sequence from Revelation 14:6–7: a biblical passage that had barely been used by the friar up to that point and that would become a leitmotif in later Vincentian iconography, due to the creation of the official image for his canonization (Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 349–432).

Two and a half years later, the Toledo sermon, alluded to above, took place. The multiple sources available relating to the speech (Cátedra García 1984) provide an overall reading of the vision as presented through the homiletic act. From the preacher—Vincent Ferrer—the preparation and development of the message has been recorded. There is also evidence of its impression on the congregation.

The Sermonario de San Vicente Ferrer del Real Colegio-Seminario del Corpus Christi de Valencia consolidates the information available on Ferrer's preaching activity during his Castilian campaign (1411–1412). The development of the sermon presented in the tome is less detailed than it is in the codex studied by Cátedra. This explains why it only contains the introduction of the sermon on the theme of "Reminiscamini quia ego dixi

vobis," which is where another allusion to the episode in question is to be expected (San Vicente Ferrer 2002, p. 37). Despite this hole, the volume contains more brief references to the vision, which were likely developed when the sermon was given. For example, when talking about the arrival of the Antichrist: "Et ita aparec hec conclusio vera, et fortificatur alia racione per visionem cuiusdam religiosy, qui habet magis quam LX años" ("And this conclusion proves to be true and is strengthened for another reason through the vision of a holy man aged over sixty years") (San Vicente Ferrer 2002, p. 224). In the same volume, another entry relating to the vision is especially thought-provoking, as it links two different episodes that would be incorporated into the design of a famous Valencian float from 1414 (to be discussed later): "Tercium argumentum est de religioso cui fuit revelatum quod iret predicare per totum mundum avisando gentes, nam Christus expectaret eum antequam miteret tres lanceas" ("The third argument is about the holy man to whom it was revealed that he would preach all over the world, warning nations, because Christ would wait for him before sending the three lances") (San Vicente Ferrer 2002, p. 521).

Except in the first case, with its explicit reference to an old man whose age seems to coincide with Ferrer's, these vague allusions do not enrich the evolution of the story. This does occur, however, in the reportatio of the sermon given on 8 July 1411, preserved in the Real Academia Española codex, edited by Cátedra. It repeats the theme from the sermon of 5 December 1408 in Montpellier, "Reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis:"

> The second is another revelation made to a holy man who is alive, I think. And he was ill, with a serious illness, and that holy man had great devotion to Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. And he prayed to them to pray to God to bring him health, and the holy man was taken in spirit towards heaven, and he saw Jesus Christ, who was on a throne, and Saint Dominic and Saint Francis were below him, and they were praying. And they were saying, 'Lord, not so soon; Lord, not so soon!' And, in his heart, the friar said, 'Oh, how Christ was resisting!' And then Jesus Christ and Saint Dominic and Saint Francis descended to that sickly friar. And Jesus Christ said to him, 'My child, I will wait for your preaching'. And he was healed. And I know him and I have spoken to him and he told me this many times. And now, good people, Jesus Christ is waiting for this friar's preaching. But be aware that he is old, over sixty years, and he has little life left. Know that, from the beginning of the world until the end, when our Lord God wants to do something again, first He sends a messenger to warn the people, which is what He did in Noah's flood, which was a great destruction of people, as only eight people remained. And a messenger came beforehand to tell them. And they did not believe him and they scorned him; and then they were caught off guard. Furthermore, before the renovation of the Jews, did He not send a prophet, Jeremiah, and they did not believe him? And now, good people, this is the renovation. And that is why God revealed that we had a messenger. (Cátedra García 1994, pp. 571–72)

In comparison with the development of the Montpellier sermon, it is worth noting the omission of the day on which the vision occurred (the eve of the feast of Saint Francis), the transformation of the Franciscan friar into a generic "holy man who is alive." In addition, the way the prayer to save that friar was also omitted, which was started by Saint Francis in the 1408 account, and is now begun by Saints Francis and Dominic jointly. In this healing, the Montpellier account includes the divine touch ("et tetigit eum dulciter in facie"), which is absent in the Castilian capital.[15] In Toledo, Ferrer indicates that, in addition to knowing the holy man, he has spoken to him many times, also referring to his advanced age (noted in the outline in the Real Colegio-Seminario del Corpus Christi de Valencia text), though all details were omitted in Montpellier. This is not a comfortable, harmonious contrast. It is worth wondering whether or not the congregation in Montpellier could identify Vincent Ferrer as the visionary who had thrown himself into preaching about the end of days by divine command. Cautiously, I would argue that they could not. By contrast, the answer is affirmative in terms of the congregation's perception in Toledo. One witness in particular

made the connection. What is more, according to their testimony, everyone present was in agreement.

The anonymous author of "*Relación a Don Fernando de Antequera de la predicación toledana de San Vicente Ferrer*" [Report of Saint Vincent Ferrer's preaching in Toledo to Ferdinand of Antequera] (Cátedra García 1984, pp. 297–304) informed the future king of the Crown of Aragon of what the friar was preaching in Castile, with a special focus on apocalyptic themes. He did so upon request from Ferdinand of Antequera. In the dutiful spy's report, the identification is clear. As he narrates the proof of the apocalypse put forward by Ferrer in that sermon of 8 July 1411, he explains:

> The second revelation was made to a holy man who was sick and could not recover, to whom God told him to come and preach about the Antichrist, and for however long his preaching lasted, so too the world would last. And he said that he was a man aged sixty years; and that he could not say who he was. And the day before, he had said that he was sent to preach about the Antichrist, and that he was sent by Pope Jesus. By which he implied that he was this holy man, and that is what he implied every day, and we all understood that he was referring to himself. (Cátedra García 1984, p. 304)

The informant's syllogism requires little dissection. From at least the summer of 1411 onwards, a majority of the people ("we all") would assume that Ferrer was the protagonist of the vision: a conclusion that was, at the very least, debatable three years before in Montpellier, and perhaps out of reach for those who listened to him years prior to that, in Switzerland.

On another note, the informer grasped the link between the miracle and the explanation of the new mission, similarly to observers in Montpellier, though this time, instead of mentioning the apocalyptic angel (Rev 14:6–7), Ferrer referred to the Old Testament prophets. Except in this omission of the Revelation passage, Ferrer's subsequent preaching on the vision bore considerable analogies to what was seen in Toledo, where, perhaps due to the spontaneity of oral expression, he neglected to mention Christ's divine touch on the friar's face.

From 1411 onwards, congregations seemed to have no difficulties in identifying the Dominican friar as the new man chosen by Christ to warn of the imminent end of days.[16] Reference to the episode was essential for Ferrer to highlight the divine task that, according to him, earned him some disdain:

> Before the destruction of the flood, God sent the great man Noah to warn the people, preaching how the world was to be destroyed, and that they should do penance. For fifteen years now, another Noah has been preaching the destruction of the world around the world, and some mock and ridicule him. (Chabás 1903, pp. 111–12)

On the subject of denouncing sceptics, in another sermon, he declared:

> Good people! Be well warned of this day that will soon come to be. Some say, '*mestre Vicent* is only saying it to frighten us'; but telling falsehoods when preaching is a mortal sin, and I would not tell you such a thing. (Toldrà i Vilardell 2006, pp. 3, 239)

The mockery was minimal compared to the admiration generated by his eschatological preachings, in which he took on even more prominence, if possible, given that many now believed that the imminent apocalypse was revealed to him in his trance. Ferrer did not hesitate to describe his activity as a messenger of the apocalypse, in the third person and now, metaphorically, as the third angel, in line with the first part of the excerpt from the Montpellier sermon reproduced here, and with a section of the letter sent to the Pope in 1412, which will be analyzed later:

> And you see, then, that God wishes to destroy all of this world with fire, and that he sends a messenger, which Saint John says in Revelation (chapter eighteen): 'Et vidi alterum angelum euntem per medium celum, [habentem Evangelium

> eternum, ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram, et super omnem gentem, et tribum, et linguam, et populum, dicens magna voce: Timete Deum et date illi honorem] quia venit hora iudicii eius'. There are many mysteries. 'Alterum angelum euntem per medium celum'; he does not say 'vidi angelum'. Why does he say 'alterum'? I will tell you. It is like a friar of Saint Dominic or of Saint Francis who observes the rules correctly, like Saint Francis, saying now: 'Oh, see here another Francis', and he is not Saint Francis, but another, like the one Saint John speaks of: 'Vidi alterum angelum', because he must have the life of an angel. And how? Because the angel wants nothing but to honour God: he does not want clothes, or gold, or silver, or friendship of people or friends; he is solitary, as an angel only desires to honour God and for souls to be saved. Then, the angel is hidden, no one sees him; like him. Then, 'volantem per medium celum': this is what Saint Gregory says, that 'celum' is understood as Christianity, as in heaven there are twelve signs, by which we have influences with which we live; thus, Christianity has twelve articles of faith, by which we know God and what is needed for salvation. Then, in heaven there are seven planets, by which we have many oppressions; and you see that Christianity has seven sacraments of the Church, by which the Church and Christianity are governed. Then, in heaven there are many small stars; and here you see the infinite graces we have from God. And then, 'habentem evangelium eternum', that is, the Bible, the Old Testament, and the New Testament is represented in the Old. And then, 'ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram', that is, to the secular lords, kings, dukes, 'dicentem eis peccata sua clare', and to the prelates, too, and to all the others. Then, 'super tribum': they are the Jews, who go from tribe to tribe, and that preacher, in the lands where they are, he must make them come to the sermon to declare the truth to them, and hear the truths of their law. Then, 'et linguam'; they are the Muslims, and he must also make them come to the sermon to hear the falsehoods and truths of their law. And that messenger did not have to go for Granada, or for Tartary, but for Christianity. Then, 'super omnem gentem': these are the Christians, rich and poor, as he must preach to them all and tell them their sins, and reprimand them so that they correct their errors before God soon. Then, 'et populum': they are the priests and holy men, as he must appear to all of them. Then, 'dicens magna voce: Timete Deum', that is, through penance, because he must cause them to do penance for their sins: 'et date illi honorem', that is, show them how they must pray: kneeling down, thinking about God devoutly. And why? 'Quia venit hora iuducii eius'. (Saint Vincent Ferrer [1934] 1971, pp. 38–39)

None other than the friar summarizes his mission here, referring to the biblical passage Revelation 14:7. As a moral absolutist, he applied the doctrine of terror—depending on his willingness and whether or not the moment was opportune—in order to edify the faithful.[17] Though other references to his mission as the messenger of the apocalypse are recorded (Chabás 1903, p. 116), it seems that explicit mention of his vision faded away over the years. There is no trace of it in Lent of 1417 (Perarnau i Espelt 2003).

Even so, for a time, the Dominican friar's special link to the end of the world was common knowledge. The suspicion Ferrer raised among certain circles of the ecclesiastical elites has been noted (Cátedra García 1994, p. 229). Another source of mistrust, though only for a certain period and with questionable evidence, was his apocalyptic preaching (Daileader 2016, p. 501). For the duration of his "post-vision" career, especially poorly received was the eschatological evidence he provided that was not based on the Holy Scripture, perhaps because some scholars and other observers deemed it no more than a strategy to bolster his discourse. All of this encourages reflection around the historical status granted to the Avignon vision by historiography. As mentioned above, some of the friar's contemporaries were more receptive to what they saw as the preacher's tall stories, including men of faith (Rusconi 1978, p. 94). This was not the case for the majority, who devoutly believed Ferrer, much like Ferdinand of Antequera's informer or the poet

Ferrando Manuel de Lando. Though in the latter's extraordinary *dezir* to Vincent Ferrer he does not explicitly mention the vision, he does state that the Dominican friar is 'enviado de Dios glorioso' [sent by glorious God] and that he 'biue alunbrado de graçia djuina' [is illuminated by divine grace]. Perhaps, and only perhaps, these may have been implicit references to the vision.[18]

4. The Letter to Benedict XIII

The instability of the sermon is diametrically opposed to the categorical nature of the written text. The reason for this is the immutability of the latter. While caution must reign when it comes to drawing conclusions from Ferrer's homiletic allusions to his Avignon vision, the reliability of the text written by the friar (though no document handwritten and signed by him has been preserved) is hard to refute.

Nonetheless, in terms of written culture, among the Vincentian treatises and epistles, the eschatological theme only abounded in the letter from the friar to Benedict XIII. Very little is written about the apocalypse in "Tractatus de suppositionibus," "Questio de unitate universalis," and "Tractatus de moderno ecclesie scismate." Only the latter (c. 1380) vaguely mentions the arrival of the Antichrist and the end of days, though it seems to be a collateral element used to justify the solution to the Schism (Daileader 2016, pp. 25–26; De Garganta and Forcada 1956, p. 530). The vision had not yet taken place. The experience is not referenced in "De vita spirituali" either (Gorce 1923, p. 4; Robles Sierra 1996, p. 296), a text whose dating and attribution are less than watertight and which features paradoxical reflections on visionaries (Esponera Cerdán 2005, pp. 544, 554). In the missive Ferrer sent to the Master of the Order of Preachers, Juan de Puinoix, on 17 December 1403 (Hodel 2006), no reference is made to the apocalypse or to his vision. For some reason or another (Gaffuri 2006, pp. 108–9; Daileader 2016, p. 49), the concerns communicated by Ferrer to his superior are exclusively earthly, relating to Christian errors which he was trying to correct. He did not write a word about his illness, his miraculous recovery or his new role as a herald of the apocalypse. This coincides at least partly with the document drafted by Friedrich von Amberg months later. When Nicolas of Clémanges, rector of the University of Paris, wrote to Reginaldo Fontanini in 1405 about the impression made by listening to Ferrer in person (Fagês 1903, pp. 166–68), the issue was not mentioned.[19] Among the rest of the known letters written by the friar, except for the one sent to Benedict XIII, a passing allusion to the end of days is made only in his response to Ferdinand I, sent from Tamarit on 16 May 1414, about the strange event he had witnessed—the apparition of a cross in the sky over Guadalajara (Martínez Ferrando 1955, pp. 70–71). In summary, apart from the homiletic references put to parchment, the friar's written allusions to his vision—written in the exculpatory third person—are limited to the epistle of 1412, in which he justified his dedication to apocalyptic preaching.

The letter is a fundamental document (Hodel 2005, 2007). In it, Ferrer explains the grounds for his belief in the existence of the Antichrist and the imminence of the apocalypse to Pope Luna, as Benedict XIII was known. The pontiff demanded to know how and why the friar had dedicated himself to the issue to such a degree. Ferrer produced a justification in the form of an instrument, in which everything he wrote was to be measured and polished, with no space for hesitation.

The tremendous dissemination of the epistle is a subject that requires examination. One of the reasons why it spread so widely was its delivery to the Order of Preachers General Chapter, held in Fribourg in 1419 (Hodel 2005, p. 78), through which it was passed on to other Dominican houses. It may have even transcended that sphere. On top of around twenty recorded copies of it in Latin from the fifteenth century, many are the signs that the opuscule travelled far and wide. Around the same time as reproductions were made in the original Latin, it was translated into Catalan (Cátedra García 1984, pp. 270–71; Betí Bonfill 1922, p. 134) and Castilian (Rubio Leal 2016). It is fair to assume that the text frequently escaped convent walls. One reference to the letter, already mentioned in this article, is particularly interesting because it is made by *mestre Vicent* himself:

> Everyone wishes to know when it will come, and I do not think I should give a sermon on it, as I have already written a treatise on it to the Pope, so turn to it and you will know, as many in this city already have it. There you will see the facts. And you see why I do not preach about it, because the justification is there. (Saint Vincent Ferrer 1988, p. 230)

Daileader (2016, p. 131) points out a significant change in Ferrer's preaching of the apocalypse after he sent the epistle to Benedict XIII. Though difficult to verify, it is compatible with another argument, namely the astonishing way that the letter spread. With important nuances to be discussed, could the epistle sent to Pedro de Luna have become a sort of polished sermon available to anyone who wanted (and was educated enough) to find out more about the arrival of the Antichrist and, therefore, about the Avignon vision?

A few years before, the jurats, or jurors, of Valencia commissioned copies of the first, second, third and twelfth books of *Lo Crestià* by Eiximenis, and even left some in the Casa de la Ciutat's Sala del Consell, "so that they could be read and studied by some as doctrine and education" (Ivars 1925, p. 326). Various works by the Franciscan were copied and translated, by both institutions and individuals (Massó Torrents 1910, pp. 3–9; Madurell i Marimon 1968, p. 305). Could something similar have happened with the Vincentian opuscule? Some process must have occurred for the letter to be within reach of the people of Valencia or Zaragoza (Perarnau i Espelt 1989) so soon after it was written.[20] Another indication of the dissemination of the letter not mentioned by Hodel, which may have brought it into new spheres, is related to the third medium of medieval communication—images. Before taking a closer look, let us examine how Ferrer described his vision to Benedict XIII in his letter:

> In the second place the same conclusion is drawn from a certain other revelation (a most certain one to my mind), made just over fifteen years ago to a religious of the Dominican Order. This religious was very ill indeed and was praying lovingly to God for his recovery so, that he might again preach the word of God as he had been wont to do with great fervour and ardour. At last, while he was at prayer, these two saints appeared to him as in a dream, at the feet of Christ making great supplication. At length, after they had prayed thus for a long while, Christ rose and, with one on either side, came down to this same religious lying on his bed. Then Christ, touching him caressingly with the finger of His most holy hand, gave him a most definite interior comprehension that, in imitation of these saints, he must go through the world preaching as the Apostles had done, and that He, Christ, would mercifully await this preaching for the conversion and correction of mankind, before the coming of Antichrist. At once, at the touch of Christ's fingers, the aforesaid religious rose up entirely cured of his sickness. As he diligently followed the apostolic mission divinely committed to him, Providence, in testimony of the truth, gave this religious, not only numerous signs as he had given Moses, but also the authority of the divine Scriptures as he had given John the Baptist since, because of the difficulty of this mission and the slight weight of his own unaided testimony, he was greatly in need of help. Hence, of the three divine messengers sent to men by divine Providence under the name of angels, many persons believe him to be the first, of whom John has written: 'And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven having the eternal gospel to preach to them that sit upon the earth and over every nation and tongue and tribe and people, saying with a loud voice: "Fear the Lord and give Him honor, because the hour of His judgement is come"'. Let him who is able understand. (San Vicente Ferrer 2006, pp. 559–60)

The text does not specify whether the visionary is a Franciscan or a Dominican friar, representing a return to the trend seen in Ferrer's sermons from just before he wrote the letter. At that time, as reported months prior by the "spy" to Ferdinand of Antequera, the people believed that the preacher was referring to himself. With this in mind, how could the Pope—still his friend at the time—be unaware of this? In any case, the context in

which the letter was written was very different from the circumstances around his assumed first sermon on the subject, in Montpellier in 1408. There are some other divergences, but they are less relevant. While in Montpellier, the sermon "Reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis" drifts towards another theme favoured by the friar—namely "Erunt signa in sole" (under the authority of the Gospel and of beatus Gregorius)—in the epistle, Ferrer refers to Divine Providence and the Holy Scripture to justify his new role after his recovery. One of Ferrer's most striking uses of Holy Scripture is his reference to the passage that, decades later, Callixtus III, Pietro Ranzano and Martial Auribelli would choose to accompany the image of the new saint (Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 408–29), documented for the first time in the Montpellier sermon. While on this first occasion, he quoted Revelation 14:6–7 as an introduction to a Franciscan friar's vision, in the letter (where there is little room for error), the story of the miraculously cured friar is linked to the well-known biblical reference in order to bolster his argument. For some, the preacher in the vision is the first messenger to warn of the end of the world and one of the angels of the apocalypse, sent to command the people to fear the Lord. Out of the cases discussed here, only the Toledo sermon omits this biblical passage.[21]

When the Avignon vision, as narrated in the French city in 1408, and the version described in the letter are compared, a fundamental concordance emerges, namely the divine legitimation: Christ's caress of the friar's face (Montpellier sermon), jaw (epistle in Latin), or cheek (Catalan version of the letter). As mentioned, this is omitted in the Toledo sermon. In fact, in the latter translation, fragments of which have been published (Betí Bonfill 1922, pp. 134–36), other slight variations of the original text appear. These could, perhaps, be attributed to the work of the medieval translator.

Tying together all of the above, could there have been a Catalan version of the letter available for 'public' consultation of some sort during Ferrer's lifetime? He seemed to imply this when he refused to preach about the end of days. It is clear that the letter brought the account of the vision to a new level of transcendence. The sermons, many of which were aimed at a heterogeneous audience, were subject to modifications in terms of execution and interpretation, but the epistle—written to the Pope and, extraordinarily, available to many others—was nothing short of lapidary. For a time, this was the official version of the vision. Nonetheless, the letter does not resolve the core issue; the dilemma surrounding Ferrer's use of the third person still remains. Who was the protagonist of the vision? To whom did readers think the document referred? The last reliable, literal, explicit evidence of this identification of Ferrer as the sickly preacher cured by Christ would come some years later, through painting and writing. The frescoes in Macello, Piedmont, were painted more than two decades before the major transformation Ranzano would undertake in the context of the friar's canonization (1455), by stating for future Christians that it was Ferrer who had the vision. The place where he chose to do so was none other than the official vita of the new saint (Ranzano 1866, pp. 489–90).[22] By then, Vincent Ferrer's vision would have lost its original meaning in relation to the Schism. Vincent Ferrer implicitly invoked for the Avignon obedience the imagery of divine illumination, much used by Catherine of Siena in the Roman obedience. The fact that Vincent Ferrer placed himself alongside Saint Dominic and Saint Francis might suggest a desire to transcend the traditional loyalties of one order against another.

5. Duce's Painting and the Transformation of Narrative as a Paradigm of the Three Media of Medieval Communication

Though little known for a host of reasons, various figurative representations of Vincent Ferrer's vision were made in the fifteenth century. The oldest was produced in Valencia, when Ferrer was still alive. In late 1414 and early 1415, a float known as "*L'entramès de mestre Vicent*" was seen in up to three processions (Calvé Mascarell 2019) (Figure 1).[23]

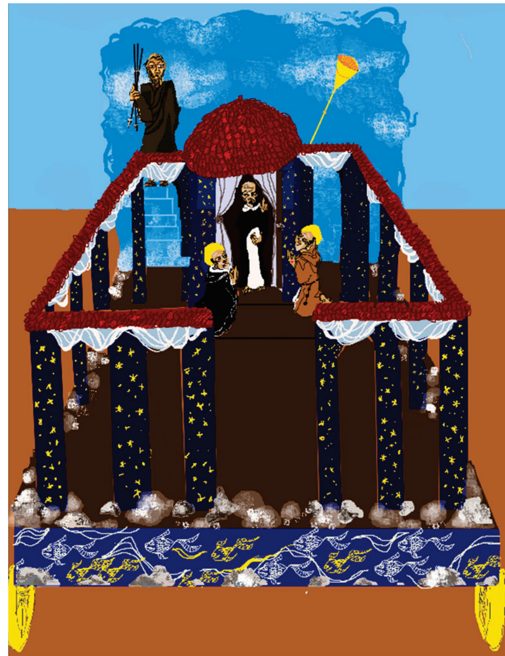

Figure 1. Author's idealized reconstruction of "*L'entramès de mestre Vicent*."

The props known to be used indicate that this particular *tableau vivant* showed a synthesis of apocalyptic scenes and evocations, including the friar's vision itself, which was staged in a space specially created for the artefact and referred to by way of clarification in documentation as "la setla de mestre Vicent" (Father Vincent's cell). This object, which has now disappeared, was the physical materialization of the identification of the friar as the protagonist of the vision while he was still alive. It was designed based on Ferrer's letter and his preaching in Valencia during Lent of 1413. After the canonization, in a contract dated 1459, Ramón Gonsalbo was commissioned to paint an altarpiece (not preserved) for the Dominican church in Urgell (Madurell i Marimon 1945, p. 280), which was to include, among the various images of the saint: "the fourth at the moment of death, when Jesus Christ, Saint Dominic, and Saint Francis appear to him, dies vade predicta verbum Dei, quare aduch spectabo te." The last four words of this excerpt form the contract point to the hypothesis that the patron took Ranzano's vita (which includes a similar phrase, namely "vade, adhuc te spectabo") and not the original letter as a reference for the vision. Still preserved today is the representation of the episode—or a similar event—in a piece created around 1470–1480, which is also linked to the matter of the omission of Saints Francis and Dominic mentioned briefly above, as it draws from the side panel of Colantonio's polyptych (now kept in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples). The panel depicting the apparition of Christ to Saint Vincent Ferrer, today housed at Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, belonged to the dismantled Saint Vincent Ferrer altarpiece attributed to the Erri workshop.

From 1414 onwards, figurative production undoubtedly consolidated Vincent Ferrer's vision. Linked to the friar's preaching tour, this conceptual consolidation through images would spread across borders in no time, even before his canonization. The Macello frescoes, painted between the production of the float in Valencia and the far-reaching iconographic repercussions of his canonization, are proof of this.

Compared to the other two channels of communication—and beyond the commissioners' ability, or lack thereof, to make use of these representations for proselytizing purposes—the figurative element could be singled out as the most significant for the masses. In this regard, along with the Valencian float, the Vincentian cycle preserved in Macello is key for understanding the impact of the friar's vision on what would be defined, though with many nuances, as the collective imaginary (Brizio 1942, p. 6; Kovalevsky 2002), as neither of the two products was aimed exclusively at the elites. Though it is true that

Ferrer's sermons also stirred the masses, the hic et nunc aspect meant that the impact of his preaching in the medium term was uncertain (Narbona Vizcaíno 2018), as the friar himself explained rather biasedly (Chabás 1902, p. 136). By contrast, for centuries, the image in Macello provided—and still provides, to some extent—the opportunity to revive what it represents: his vision and his preaching. In terms of the former, the frescoes immortalize something that jars somewhat when a comparison is made to the bulk of the sermons and to the letter.

Ferrer preached in Macello and the surrounding area on at least two occasions, including in Vigone, barely four kilometers from the chapel that houses the frescoes, in November 1402 and July 1407. These two visits played a fundamental part in assimilating his memory in the area.[24] As suggested previously, his narration of the vision did not seem to feature during those campaigns. Furthermore, the letter's ultimate influence as a source to inspire the Macello paintings is clear, as they include transcriptions of excerpts of the epistle.

In the case of the Valencian *entremès*, some years prior, sermons and literature had worked together in unison. As for Macello, it is possible that the commissioning party had access to a collection of the friar's sermons that included his account of the vision. They may also have heard it straight from Ferrer's own mouth during a campaign, but the literal reproduction of part of the letter on the wall makes the epistle the primary source.

There is no sign of any explanation as to how the letter reached the town. Certain circles or individuals may have brought it within reach of the Solaro family, who were lords of Macello and commissioned the frescoes. One of the most noteworthy of these possible intermediaries was the Carthusian monk Johannes Placentis. During the process of canonizing Vincent Ferrer (1453–1454), he declared that, around 1403, he had heard the friar preach in the Carthusian monastery of Pierre-Châtel, in Savoyard lands. In 1413, he led an embassy for Count Amadeus VIII of Savoy to consult Boniface and Vincent Ferrer regarding their stance on the Schism. Placentis stayed in the Valencian charterhouse of Portacoeli for six weeks before departing with Peter and Boniface Ferrer, Vincent's brothers. Funded by Benedict XIII, he went to Mallorca in search of *mestre Vicent*. Upon arrival, he accompanied the friar "for 12 days, he thinks" (Fuster Perelló 2007, p. 426).[25] Placentis later represented Amadeus VIII at the Council of Basel (Lundell 1996), during which the first vita of Ferrer was written by Nider, containing information very similar to what the Carthusian monk would later disclose about Ferrer in the canonization inquiries (Chène 2006, pp. 147–48). There are more connections pertaining to the relationship between Ferrer and Placentis (Ammann and Morenzoni 2019, pp. 44–47) within the complex situation Amadeus VIII faced in Piedmont due to his new dukedom and later papacy (Gaffuri 2020, 2021). In summary, Placentis spent time with the future saint: a privileged position from which he could acquire a copy of the letter and become closer to Amadeus of Savoy. Continuing with this speculative tone, one final point is left to tackle. Amadeus VIII was the Duke of Savoy from 1416 to 1440, and an admirer of Ferrer, but he was not a Solaro.[26] Another loyal advisor to the duke was, however: Giovanni Caterino Solaro, uncle (Bertolotto et al. 2011, p. 26) or brother (Treccani 2019) of Bonifacio II Solaro, the first Count of Macello invested by Amadeus VIII in 1419 and husband to the commissioner of the paintings. Though this proposed route for the circulation of the tractat may be speculative, the iconographic quality of the paintings is unquestionable.

The apse of the Santa Maria Assunta chapel is home to a complex fresco cycle from the Late Middle Ages (Griseri 1965, p. 134; Monetti 1978a, 1978b; Di Macco 1979; Kaftal 1985; Baiocco et al. 2003, pp. 117–19; Kovalevsky 2002; Bertolotto et al. 2011; Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 323–35; 2020) (Figure 2).

Restored in various campaigns since 1966,[27] the most noteworthy scenes are those that depict Vincent Ferrer, then a lay brother. Citing formal values, experts coincide in concluding that all of the Vincentian frescoes were produced under the same creative driving force, before his canonization, around a specific date: 1429. The fact that the friar never appears with a halo and that he is accompanied by the word "beatus" indicates that they were painted before 1455. The work is attributed to Aymo Duce, commissioned by

the Countess of Macello, Benvenuta Solaro.[28] The representation of the Virgin and Child on the central part of the upper register on the left-hand wall includes a rather specific inscription: "M CCCC XX VIIII Bena de Solario ad laudem Dei et Virginis marie feciet pingi hanc figuram" (Figure 3).[29]

Figure 2. Set of frescoes in the apse of Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce and others, fifteenth century (photograph courtesy of Leonardo Guazzo).

Figure 3. Virgin and Child underneath the dedication to the patron. Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce and collaborators, circa 1429 (photograph courtesy of Fabrizio Basagni-chieseromaniche.it).

Of the three scenes where Ferrer appears, I will examine the two that reproduce excerpts of the letter in most detail here, with a special focus on the vision. The third scene (the least significant for this study's purposes) will be presented first. On the middle wall of the chancel is a reference to the future saint healing a child (Figure 4), which proves how, many years before he was canonized, popular knowledge of his miracle-working capabilities had already spread far and wide.[30]

Figure 4. Vincent Ferrer saving a child. Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce and collaborators, circa 1429 (photograph courtesy of Leonardo Guazzo).

At the Dominican friar's feet was a scroll with the following text referring to a healing in extremis, now faded and illegible: "Hoc est sicut Virgo Maria precibus beati Vincencii quendam puerum qui quaxi mortuus erat liberavit [. . .] a [. . .]" (Monetti 1978b, p. 389).

The lunette on the right-hand wall is where the two scenes with Vincent Ferrer as the protagonist appear, accompanied by the aforementioned fragments of text. Each of them is framed and adjacent to the other, but the bottom part where the connection was made between them suffered irreparable losses (Figure 5).

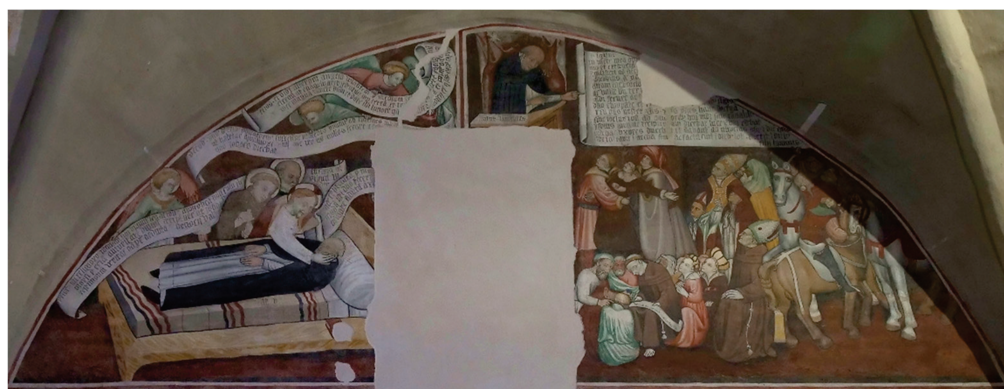

Figure 5. Vincent Ferrer's vision and preaching. Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce, circa 1429 (photograph courtesy of Leonardo Guazzo).

The part closest to the wall behind the altar features an extraordinary figuration of Vincent Ferrer's vision (Figure 6).

In the painting, there is no room for interpretation. It is the future saint who experiences the vision, not another representative of the Dominican order, and certainly not a Franciscan friar. While the previous image, as mentioned, includes a now-illegible scroll identifying beatus Vincentius as the healer of the child, in this scene, restorers have replaced part of a specific reference to the protagonist of this mystic experience.[31]

Excluding the identification of the protagonist (a matter that is far from insignificant), the image is remarkably faithful to what was included in the letter to Benedict XIII. It also reproduces the content of the sermons, always with the exception of that troublesome Franciscan friar of unknown age, the mention of whom, in Montpellier, encouraged prayer to Saint Francis. In the painting, Jesus Christ, Saint Francis and Saint Dominic approach

the bed where a dying friar lies, and now there is no question: it is Vincent Ferrer. As recounted in the letter and in some of the sermons explored here, Christ touches the friar's face gently, thus curing him.[32] This is a direct reproduction of how the epistle describes the vision, though the words that refer to it barely fit in the painting.

Figure 6. Vincent Ferrer's vision. Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce, circa 1429 (photograph courtesy of Leonardo Guazzo).

Surprisingly, a trio of angels presents most of the text on four banderoles located in the upper part of the image. Though a stretch, they could represent the three angels of the apocalypse mentioned in the letter, but only one of them bears the correct text for this interpretation. Paradoxically, the image of the angels is a better match for the account given in 1455 in Ferrer's vita (Ranzano 1866, p. 489), which tells of Christ and the two saints descending, accompanied by angels. What is striking is that this detail does not appear in the analyzed sermons or in the letter, which raises new questions about the dissemination of the story, as the Ranzano text had not yet been written. A simple narrative solution must not be ruled out.

Each of the three upper banderoles is held by the corresponding angel,[33] while the first, the bottom one, could have been accompanied by another angel. Given the relevance of the text, this angel may have emerged from the figure of Christ. The fragments of text reproduced in the vision represent little more than 1% of the opuscule: around 100 words. It would be frivolous to suggest that such a careful selection—essentially, two brief passages from the letter—was made at random. What is more, these are the two stories narrated consistently from Montpellier onwards.[34] As we will see, the concatenation of these two passages constitutes a new link in the chain encircling the genesis of Vincent Ferrer's image.

The comparison of the texts reproduced in Macello with the letter to Benedict XIII had already been made (Monetti 1978b), based on an old edition (Teoli 1738, pp. 520–28). I repeated the exercise (Calvé Mascarell 2020) using a more current edition (San Vicente Ferrer 2006, pp. 552–62). Using this edition, the text on the vision preserved in the frescoes, in the left column, will be compared to the copy of the letter in the right-hand column. The arrangement of the text reproduced in the left-hand column corresponds to the distribution of lines of text in the Macello frescoes, with the same alignment as the original. The order in which the four registers are to be read is upside down; the banderole assigned as the first is the at the bottom, the second is immediately above, and so on. This way, the reading order that corresponds to the original source, the tractat, is obtained.

In the same vein as other works attributed to Duce and his circle, the frescoes adopt formulas for combining text and images used notably by Dominicans, offering an end product with an incalculable impact. This is visible in every one of the banderoles. From the

second to the fourth, the order in which they are to be read is provided (primus, secundus and tercius); the absence of any indication for the first highlights its particular importance (Table 1).

Table 1. Textual comparison, banderole 1 in the vision of beatus Vincentius.

Text from the Frescoes in Macello	Text from the Epistle to Benedict XIII *
(V)ade et p(re)dica per mo(ndum) a	religioso infirmo, quod ipse iret per mundum apostolice predicando
(quemad)modum isti duo fecerunt (ut)	quemadmodum praedicti sancti fecerant et
(convertes) eum ante adventum antichristi	sic eius predicationem ante adventum Antichristi ad conversionem

* Text from the epistle to Benedict XIII: "(His most holy hand) gave him a most definite interior comprehension that, in imitation of these saints, he must go through the world preaching as the Apostles had done, and that He, Christ, would mercifully await this preaching for the conversion and correction of mankind, before the coming of Antichrist.".

In fact, the crux of the matter lies in this banderole closest to Christ and Ferrer, as it reproduces the divine exhortation that brings the healing to completion, the reason behind the miracle. Ferrer must preach around the world, just as Saint Francis and Saint Dominic did. The poor state of conservation makes it impossible to verify, but the content and the lack of information on the reading order support the hypothesis of a banderole associated with the figure of Christ, thus consolidating the comic-like appearance.

Though the image depicts the whole vision, the text nearest to the protagonists specifically evokes the consequence: the friar's new mission to preach the arrival of the Antichrist. It is no coincidence that the adjacent image is of Ferrer preaching, nor is it by chance that the part of the letter about the Antichrist is chosen for the preaching scene, especially as this selection requires a significant jump in the text.

The second banderole is carried by an angel at the foot of the bed (Table 2). It reproduces the justification for the apostolic legatus conferred upon the protagonist of the vision by Divine Providence, which authorized him to perform signs, and by the Holy Scripture.

Table 2. Textual comparison, banderole 2 in the vision of beatus Vincentius.

Text from the Frescoes in Macello	Text from the Epistle to Benedict XIII *
Primus: Uti religioxo (commisam) sibi divinitus (legationem) apostolicam non solum si(gna pl)urima ut	Cui religioso comissam sibi divinitus legationem apostolicam diligenter exempti divina providentia, non solum signa plurima ut
Moysy sed eciam auctoritatem divin(ae Script)ure ut Johannis tribuit in	Moysy, sed etiam auctoritatem divine Scripture ut Iohanni Babtiste, tribuit in
testimonium veritatis nam propter arduit(atem) negocii datum (f)uit	testimonium veritatis, nam, propter arduitatem negotii et propter parvitatem sui testimoniis, plurium indigebat.

* Text from the epistle to Benedict XIII: "As he diligently followed the apostolic mission divinely committed to him, Providence, in testimony of the truth, gave this religious, not only numerous signs as he had given Moses, but also the authority of the divine Scriptures as he had given John the Baptist since, because of the difficulty of this mission and the slight weight of his own unaided testimony, he was greatly in need of help."

The third banderole continues the familiar story (Table 3) from both the letter and the sermons (except in Toledo), in line with many people's perception of the cured friar: he was the first preacher who, prefigured in the form of the first angel described by John of Patmos, came to warn of the end of days.[35] Observers of the sermon in Toledo did not hear this parallel being drawn, but they were told that the friar's role was the same as that of the preachers in the Old Testament who foresaw disasters.

Table 3. Textual comparison, banderole 3 in the vision of beatus Vincentius.

Text from the Frescoes in Macello	Text from the Epistle to Benedict XIII *
Secundus: unde de tribus predicatoribus successive mittendis divinitus ad homines sub n(ominibus Angelo)rum	Unde de 3^{bus} predicatoribus succesive mittendis divinitus ad homines ante diem iuditii sub nominibus angelorum,
ut habetur apoca(lipsys) (c^{o}.) XIIII hic per nonnullos sicure cre(ditur ese ille primus de) quo Ioannes dicebat	ut habetur Apoc 14, [6,7], ipse per nonnullos secure creditur esse ille primus de quo Iohannes dicebat:

* Text from the epistle to Benedict XIII: "Hence, of the three divine messengers sent to men by divine Providence under the name of angels, many persons believe him to be the first, of whom John said."

The fourth banderole is a transliteration of the passage from Revelation (Table 4), with the final sentence that would become Ferrer's trademark, "Timete Deum, et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iudicii eius," and a warning to anyone with sense.

Table 4. Textual comparison, banderole 4 in the vision of beatus Vincentius.

Text from the Frescoes in Macello	Text from the Epistle to Benedict XIII *
Tercius: et vidi alterum Angelum volantem per medium ce(li ha)bentem evang(e)lium	"Et vidi alterum angelum volantem per medium celi, habentem Evangelium
eternum ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram et tri(bum et lingu)a et populum dice(n)s	eternum, ut evangelizaret sedentibus super terram, et super omnem gentem, et tribum, et linguam, et populum: dicens
voce magna timete dominum et date illi honorem quia (venit h)ora (i)udicii eius qui potest capere capia(t)	magna voce: Timete Dominum, et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iuditii eius" etc. Qui potest capere capiat.

* Text from the epistle to Benedict XIII: "And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people: Saying with a loud voice: 'Fear the Lord, and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come,' etc. Let him who is able understand."

The overall scene provides an extraordinary summary of the paranormal event, offering a series of representations and links that cannot be expressed in text alone. The healing of the friar and the textual allusion to him as the first of the three preachers of the apocalypse and an angel sent to announce the Last Judgement are expressed in one image. This was to be expected, given the constant convergences of these elements in the sermons and in the letter. However, they are rendered even more indivisible in the painting, where both elements share the same space, in a coming together of the earthly and the heavenly. What witnesses to Ferrer's sermon heard from his own mouth and what readers learnt via the scribes who copied the friar's letter was now being expressed by other protagonists: the angels (who were not mentioned in the sermons nor in the letter to Benedict) and, seemingly, Jesus Christ himself. This becomes all the more relevant with a glance at the adjacent image; in the preaching scene, Ferrer is depicted as the disseminator of another part of his own epistle.

Ferrer, the orator and writer who always tells the story of the vision in the third person, turns into the protagonist of the episode in the painting, while his own words (written, but expressed in a similar way) are delivered by third parties, all in a celestial scene. This is a complex transformation that made the intangible visible and introduced new particularities, as well as telling a story that would surely be staggering, if not disconcerting, for someone who had heard Ferrer's sermon in Montpellier.

Located adjacently on the western side of the same wall is the scene with the Valencian friar preaching, in the presence of the highest echelons of the Church, educated men, and the masses (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Vincent Ferrer preaching. Santa Maria Assunta Parish Church (Macello, Piedmont). Aymo Duce, circa 1429 (photograph courtesy of Leonardo Guazzo).

The image has been defined as *La prédication de Vincent Ferrier devant Benoît XIII* (Kovalevsky 2002, p. 204), despite the absence of the usual representation of a monarch post-canonization, mentioned in another clause of the contract with Ramón Gonsalbo (Madurell i Marimon 1945, p. 280).[36] Among those listening is a Franciscan reportator. This is unsurprising, given what has been noted regarding Friedrich von Amberg. Ferrer, referred to as Clarus Vincentius on the sign on the pulpit from which he is preaching, receives divine grace from a dove. The symbol only appears sporadically in subsequent images of Saint Vincent Ferrer.[37] In this case, it seems to signify the Holy Spirit inspiring his words, approving the Son's divine touch in the adjacent image and confirming Lando's description of Ferrer as *alunbrado de graçia djuina*.

The vision alone consists of an accumulation of supernatural circumstances, but the preaching scene includes another miracle: among those gathered, an individual held by his back is presented to the Dominican friar, who frees the possessed man with his words. There is no explicit reference to this power in Lando's representation, though some sort of loose allusion to it was made by one of Ferrer's contemporaries around 1408–1409 (D'Arenys 1975, p. 43). This type of exorcism or healing ritual, frequently depicted in the saint's iconography later on, was the friar's only recognized miracle—besides his divine inspiration—in both Martín Alpartil's references to Ferrer between 1430 and 1440 and the biographical outline of his life written by Nider around 1437, neither of whom mention the vision (De Alpartil 1994, p. 151; Chène 2006). Without being able to assess John V's vanished compilation of miracles or the incalculable weight of popular devotion, perhaps the key to interpreting this image ultimately lies in the opuscule Ferrer sent to Benedict XIII. As usual, Ferrer used the third person in his narration, this time referring to a fellow Dominican friar:

> In many parts of the world, I have seen many persons possessed by the devil, who were brought to one of the priests of our company for exorcism. When the priest began to exorcise them they spoke openly of the time of Antichrist, in accordance with what has already been said, crying out loudly and terribly so that all the bystanders could hear them, and declaring that they were forced by Christ and against their own will and malice, to reveal to men the truth as given above, so that they might save themselves by true penance. (San Vicente Ferrer 2006, p. 561)

The process is identical. From an original account in which Ferrer is not the protagonist, the subject is modified to place him at the centre, in a transformation not highlighted in other studies (Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 331–32). It is not the text cited above that is displayed on the enormous scroll signaled by the friar to those listening to his sermon, in a gesture that tells anyone viewing the fresco that those words come from his mouth (though they actually came from his quill), and that partly evokes a scene experienced twice by the area's inhabitants. This other selected section of the letter is less than 160 words long, and is reproduced in the frescoes in the same order as in the epistle (Table 5). It is the declaration of Ferrer's conviction, non scientia certa, that the Antichrist was coming, and therefore the end of the world was imminent. This is an excerpt located in the conclusion to the opuscule, and therefore does not continue on directly from the text quoted from the original letter in the adjacent image of the vision.

Table 5. Textual comparison, scroll in the scene depicting beatus Vincentius preaching.

Text from the Frescoes in Macello	Text from the Epistle to Benedict XIII *
(Unde co)lligitur	Unde ex omnibus supradictis colligere
(in m)ente mea opi	in mente mea oppi-
(nio) et credencia (veri)	nio et credentia veri
(si)milis (licet) non sce(n)c (ia certa et)	similis, licet non scientia certa, et
(pre)dicabilis de na(tivitate antichristi)	praedicabilis de nativitate Antichristi iam transacta per 9 annos.
Attamen (dictam?) conclu(sionem quae dicit quod cito)	Attamen, predictam conclusionem que dicit quod cito et bene cito,
ac valde breviter e(runt tempus antichristi et finis Mundi)	ac valde breviter, erunt tempus Antichristi et finis Mundi certitudinaliter
vidi secure ac s(ecure praedico u)bique	ac secure predico ubique.
domino chuoperante et (sermonem confirmante se)quentibus signis.	Domino cooperante et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis:
Verum dominus noster yhs x(st)us presciens hanc doctrinam	Verum, Dominus noster Iesus Christus, presciens hanc doctrinam
sive concluxionem ab amatoribus huius mundi sive carnalibus	seu conclusionem ab amatoribus huius mundi et carnalibus
(per)sonis minime recipendiam, dicebat luce XVII edebant	personis minime recipiendam, dicebat, Lc capitulo 17, [26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32]: "Sicut factum est in diebus Noe, ita erit in diebus Filii hominis. Edebant
(et b)ibebant uxores duceb(an)t et dabantur ad nupcias unque in diem qua	et bibebant: uxores ducebant et dabantur ad nuptias, usque in diem, qua
Noe (in)travit in archam (s)imi(li)ter sicut factum fuit in diebus Lot, (ita) erit in diebus	intravit Noe in archam: et venit diluvium, et perdidit omnes. Similiter sicut factum est in diebus Loth: Edebant et bibebant, emebant et vendebant, plantabant, et edificabant:
filii hominis	qua die autem exivit Loth a Sodomis, pluit ignem, et sulfur de celo, et omnes perdidit: secundum hec erit qua die Filius hominis revelabitur.

* Text from the epistle to Benedict XIII: "From all that has been said above, I hold the opinion, which I think to be well founded, though not sufficiently proven for me to preach it, that nine years have already elapsed since the birth of Antichrist. But this I do preach with certitude and security, the Lord confirming my word by many signs, that in an exceedingly short time will come the reign of Antichrist and the end of the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ, foreknowing that this doctrine will be unacceptable to carnal persons and the lovers of this world, said in the Gospel of Saint Luke (17:26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32): 'And it came to pass in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat and drink and they married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all'. The same thing happened in the days of Lot; they ate and drank, they bought and sold, they planted and built. On the day that Lot left Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and all were destroyed. This will happen on the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed."

The aforementioned discontinuity in the texts taken from the epistle for the images in Macello, as well as the unique visual adaptation which was carried out, represent a vindication of the power of images. In the vision scene, the words spoken by Christ take centre stage ("Vade et predica per mondum a quemadmodum isti duo fecerunt ut convertes eum ante adventum antichristi"), while the preaching scene depicts the fulfilment of the divine command. Ferrer preaches his belief that the time of the Antichrist is imminent, obeying Christ's instructions. It is worth emphasizing that, in the letter, there is a considerable amount of text between the two selected fragments (including up to three conclusions with their corresponding explanations), which, to some extent, makes it more difficult to distinguish the friar as the messenger of the apocalypse, ordered by Christ to warn of the arrival of His nemesis. One of the conclusions omitted is precisely the reference to exorcisms, as there was no room for the text, but it was painted instead. Duce's frescoes offer an intuitive, incontrovertible result. Ferrer is the only protagonist of all the events, even in the thaumaturgical phenomena, which are harmoniously incorporated into the frescoes in an original manner. There is a world between what is expressed in the Montpellier sermon and what is reflected in Santa Maria Assunta. This world was built first from sermons that, unbeknownst to Ferrer when he gave them, would be shaped into an epistle in 1412. That letter would, in part, be manipulated and transformed into a visual representation by the intellectual promoters of the Macello cycle. Unequivocally and for posterity, Duce's frescoes attested that Christ had chosen Vincent Ferrer.

6. Conclusions

In the Late Middle Ages, the vision, as a cultural construct, is the result of a set of overlapping elements that can rarely be studied together. The case of Vincent Ferrer's vision in Avignon is an extraordinary example of this. With all due precautions taken, I have analyzed and linked together sources from each medium of medieval expression. From 1408 at the latest, Ferrer preached about a friar on his death bed miraculously cured by Christ, who would command him to warn of the arrival of the Antichrist in order to change the ways of Christians. The evolution of his sermons suggests that those who were present to hear them were left with different perceptions regarding the real protagonist of the theophany, which seemed not to be addressed as thoroughly in the initial campaigns.[38] For the congregation at his sermon in Montpellier, the visionary was a Franciscan friar: the account of the miraculous recovery of a "frater minor" (of an unspecified age) prayed for by Saint Francis, on the very eve of his feast day, ruled Ferrer out as the protagonist. In subsequent campaigns, the friar at the centre of the vision may have been of the Franciscan or the Dominican order; nonetheless, many who heard Ferrer's sermons between 1411 and 1414 deduced that the preacher was referring to himself, partly thanks to the nuances he provided on some occasions. This coincides with the report sent to Ferdinand of Antequera. The fantastical nature of the friar's preaching also generated resistance.

There is no question of Ferrer's insistence on highlighting the mission assigned to the friar in question by Christ. In every one of his homiletic interventions, the visionary's miraculous recovery and his apocalyptic preaching go hand in hand. In this regard, any improvisation characteristic of oral communication is negligible. Crucially, in all cases examined here, except in Toledo, the unifying thread for the accounts of the medieval preacher's vision is Rev 14:6–7: a biblical reference Ferrer used almost exclusively to discuss the ecstasy episode, thus binding the biblical quotes to what was assumed to be his experience (at least in the eyes of many believers between 1411 and 1414). This way, he prepared the breeding ground for his own image, though it was recovered and given new meaning decades later by others in light of newly emerged interests. One of the most intriguing issues surrounding Vincentian iconography is whether or not Ferrer would have approved of the official, post-canonization image of an apocalyptic preacher. The answer would likely be affirmative if the question were posed between 1411 and 1414.

Ferrer prepared and drafted the letter in the period during which he was viewed as the friar in the vision. Perhaps this is why Benedict XIII demanded an explanation from

him. This justification, expanded upon with signs, biblical references and other religious texts, does not resolve the key issue: the use of the third person. In the epistle, he once again states that a sickly, religious man experienced the theophany and was commanded to prepare humanity for the end of days. He does not clarify whether or not it is him, though at the end of the letter, he concludes that, for all the reasons he has detailed, he has been preaching about the imminent apocalypse for years. In other words, he takes on the mission received by the friar in the vision.

A direct product of that letter written in Alcañiz (1412) and Ferrer's preachings during Lent in 1413 in Valencia is *L'entramès de mestre Vicent* (1414), which certainly referenced the Dominican friar's ecstasy in his cell in Avignon. All of this took place under the watchful eye of Benedict XIII, Ferdinand I of Aragon (who received reports on the subject from 1411 onwards), and his son Alfonso the Magnanimous, as well as other important figures within the Church and the monarchy. The Macello frescoes, meanwhile, must be associated with the letter exclusively, based on their literal reproduction of it and on the time that had passed since the preacher's last campaign in the area. The dissemination of the epistle on the end of the world and the Antichrist written to Benedict XIII was exceptional, as implied by Ferrer himself in his sermons, resulting in an extraordinary scenario in which an astonishingly successful opuscule somehow reached the intellectual patrons of Santa Maria Assunta in Macello. As a conduit for the letter, I have speculatively proposed the trio of Johannes Placentis, Amadeus VIII, and Giovanni Caterino Solaro.

More decisive for the purposes of this article is the analysis of the Carthusian monk's testimony during the canonization process. In his declaration, he alludes to exorcisms, healing miracles and an alleged mediation to prevent a ship from sinking, Astonishingly, he replaces the Avignon vision with something rather more simple and human: the friar's anger towards Benedict XIII.[39] According to Placentis, this was the real reason for Ferrer's new life as an evangelical—rather than apocalyptic—preacher. Like Nider, the Carthusian monk either knew nothing about the vision or neglected to mention it. Given that Placentis was at Ferrer's side during the time when his apocalyptic discourse—or at least popular reception of the message—was at its zenith, a possible explanation is a self-interested silence: the polar opposite of the representations in the Santa Maria Assunta frescoes.

Unlike the Valencian float, whose disappearance makes hypothesizing the only way forward, these surviving paintings are a demonstration of the power of the visual. The miraculous healing of an unknown Franciscan friar narrated in Montpellier is unambiguously transformed, like in the case of the 1414 *entramès*, into Vincent Ferrer's vision. This was intended by the commissioner of the frescoes, a representative of civil authority who, perhaps, aimed to put across a legitimizing message through the paintings, featuring images of a familiar future saint alongside the patrons' heraldry.

The concatenation of the scenes of the vision and of the preaching produced by Duce evokes an association similar to that seen in the sermons, which were more spontaneous than the epistle, as the latter featured supporting holy texts more heavily. Ultimately, this succession is the product of a clever choice of texts, as it required significant jumps in the letter. The result confirms the information received by Ferdinand of Antequera from his informant: Ferrer was the old man healed by Christ who went on to preach the imminence of the apocalypse.

The sermons and the letter are subject to interpretation by third parties. The Santa Maria Assunta paintings in Macello, meanwhile, offer irrefutable, unprecedented certainty for anyone who contemplates them: Ferrer's actual name, both on the sick bed of the Dominican friar experiencing the vision and on the pulpit from which he gives a sermon on the arrival of the Antichrist, obeying the divine command received in the previous image. These frescoes profoundly transformed the original account told in Montpellier and its subsequent versions, narrated both in the other documented sermons and in the letter, into a new story that would go on to become a permanent part of the history and legend of the Dominican friar[40]: Vincent Ferrer's vision.

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Notes

1 Some sources resist classification. Given that the line separating homiletics from Vincentian literature is barely visible (Hauf 1983, p. 255), the complexity of textual transmission (Gimeno Blay 2019) calls for caution in any conclusions made. Within a broader framework, these three methods of communication have been marked from other disciplines (Zumthor 1989, pp. 152–53).

2 An aspect that could also explain a different diffusion of the story in the territories of contending obediences.

3 Pedro Martínez de Luna, a cardinal since 1375, ascended to the papal throne of Avignon in 1394, taking the papal name Benedict XIII. He never renounced what he considered to be his legitimate role despite resolutions issued against him at various councils. This makes him an antipope. Part of historiography has always referred to him as a Pope. In line with the most recent studies, the complexity of the events justifies calling him a Pope in this article.

4 The traditional starting point of the account for historiography is the Epístola Fratris Vincentii de tempore Antichristi et fine mundo (Fagès 1905, pp. 213–24). There is also a monograph on the vision (Montagnes 1988). The episode has also been situated in the papal palace (Teixidor 1999, pp. 230–31). There is some disagreement over the year it took place: it has been calculated based on the friar's references to the episode years later, in his sermons and in his letter to Benedict XIII in 1412. The indication at the beginning of the letter in which he narrates the vision, 'iam sunt elapsi plus quam 15 anni', suggests the episode took place on 3 October 1396, though it is still widely thought to have happened in 1398.

5 The third person is a stylistic device that has been employed for millennia, notably by Julius Caesar and in the Gospel of John. In this specific case, Ferrer might have used it as a sign of modesty. Furthermore, it would reinforce the Thomist rationality with which he probably approached the issue, especially in interaction with Benedict XIII.

6 The sermon, on the theme 'Reminiscamini quia ego dixi vobis' (John 16:4, DRBO), has been published (Carbonero y Sol 1873; Cátedra García 1994, pp. 566–74). Its structure is highly analogous to that of the epistle Ferrer would write the following year, though the latter has a more scholastic format.

7 Ferrer's new modus vivendi is reflected in the signing of his correspondence: Vincent Ferrer the sinner from prior to 1399 makes way for Vincent Ferrer the preacher.

8 There are earlier records of the friar's itinerary after the vision, but they do not mention the content of the sermons (Ehrle 1900, pp. 362–63). In addition, this mention of the five-year period is consistent with the historiographical trend of situating the episode in 1398.

9 In his thirteen-day campaign, he gave sixteen sermons. Only four were on the theme of 'De extremo iudicio', all of which took place in Fribourg. He dealt with the subject partially in other locations.

10 This was mentioned in the sermon given in Payerne on Monday 17 March, 1404, on the theme 'Adhuc modicum tempus vobiscum sum: et vado ad eum qui me misit' (John 7:33) (San Vicente Ferrer 2009, pp. 105–6).

11 In fact, at some point after July 1412, the epistle to Benedict XIII was added.

12 Its heading is 'Note on the end of the world: 3 conclusions' (San Vicente Ferrer 2006, p. 518), a subject that was not included in the codex's schedarium thematicum. There is a chronological paradox relating to the period indicated by the entry (Calvé Mascarell 2016, p. 366).

13 (John 16:4). This thema was included in the chronicle 'Thalamus parvus. Le petit Thalamus de Montpellier' (Société Archéologique de Montpellier 1840, p. 446). So affected was the chronicler by the sermon that he added a special note on its content.

14 The chronological framework indicated here raises questions. On another note, the central panel of the dismantled Saint Vincent Ferrer altarpiece, made around 1475 for the Duomo di Modena and attributed to Bartolomeo degli Erri, incorporates the Timete Deum and bears the inscription 'Apoc 18′ [(Rev 18)]. This seems to be mere coincidence, as it is a common type of inaccuracy.

15 Something as seemingly trivial as the divine touch can point to the source used in figurations.

16 Without detriment to the well-known differences of opinion regarding when Vincentian discourse was at its most intense in terms of the apocalypse (Rusconi 1978; Daileader 2016).

17 Different yet compatible theories have been put forward on this subject (Rusconi 1999; Losada 2019).

18 The *dezir*, a type of poem, was written by Ferrando Manuel de Lando around 1411 and offers an original profile of Ferrer, with a perfect representation of the aforementioned duality generated by the Dominican friar (De Baena 1851, pp. 163–65).

[19] The rector does note that the observers believed they were listening to an angel sent by God, due to Ferrer's oratorical skill, but there is no trace of any mention of the miracle. The expression used seems to be ascribable to the rhetoric of the time.

[20] Excerpts of sermons given by Ferrer in Zaragoza indicate that he also used Catalan in the city (Chabás 1903, p. 111).

[21] Though expressed in other terms and for a different purpose, this divergence between the letter and the Toledo sermon has already been signalled (García Mahiques 2011, pp. 220–21).

[22] Before this, in May 1454 in Toulouse, during the process of canonizing Ferrer, Andrea de Fulcovisu declared that Christ had appeared to Ferrer in Perpignan. This was used as a source for one of the side panels of the Saint Vincent Ferrer polyptych from San Domenico Maggiore, Naples, attributed to Colantonio and now housed in the same city's Museo di Capodimonte. It portrays an epiphany that is different to the Avignon vision, in that Saint Francis and Saint Dominic are not present (Calvé Mascarell 2016, pp. 483–84).

[23] It seems appropriate to include the image of this idealized reconstruction of the float to observe how two different narratives transmitted through the three late medieval communication channels intermingled: the three spears of Christ ready to end the world and Vincent Ferrer's own vision. Both stories were part of the preaching of the Dominican and the letter he sent to the pope.

[24] Near Macello is the town of Scarnafigi. There, in the Cappella della Santissima Trinità, a fresco depicting Ferrer's preaching is still preserved today. It was commissioned before 1455 by the friar Antonio de Vigone.

[25] It must be noted that, between late 1412 and 1414, Ferrer declared that the tractat was within the reach of many.

[26] In terms of the Schism, his ultimate reference point was Ferrer. The influence of Vincentian thought in the Statuto Sabaudo has been signalled (Iaria 2007, p. 333).

[27] The most recent restoration was limited to the Vincentian cycle. It was carried out between late 2020 and early 2021 (Città metropolitana di Torino 2021).

[28] With certain nuances regarding the collaborators (Bertolotto et al. 2011), specialists agree on the attribution of the painting. Bena Solaro del Borgo, daughter of Vasino Malabaila, was the first wife of Bonifacio II Solaro. They had at least four children, two of which, Marchetto and Francesco, had links to Macello (Angius 1841, p. 939).

[29] The kneeling child may represent Marchetto, the son of Bonifacio II and Bena Solaro (Di Macco 1979, p. 400).

[30] One sign of this was the compilation put together by Henri Le Médec for John V, Duke of Brittany. The latter sent it to Pope Martin V before 1422 to boost the canonization process (Le Grand 1901, p. 418; De Garganta and Forcada 1956, p. 266; Cassard 2006, p. 91). Perhaps this was the same collection of miracles that the Duke of Brittany later passed on to Henry of Trastámara, brother of Alfonso the Magnanimous.

[31] On the bed, an inscription read "Beatus Vincentius" (Monetti 1978b).

[32] Authors later pointed out that the cheek touched by Jesus Christ shone in a supernatural fashion in the sermons (Antist 1575, pp. 37–38; Vidal y Micó 1735, p. 286): a detail that had little impact on Vincentian iconography overall.

[33] The angel holding the uppermost banderole was recovered in the most recent restoration.

[34] The considerable similarity between the sermons given around 1411–1414 and the letter requires clarification: the textual development in both images coincides with the letter, and the slight transformations made to adapt the words to the space available and the potential small errors are insignificant. Therefore, only the translation of the letter will be provided here.

[35] The second announces that Babylon has fallen and the third challenges those who worship he beast and its image (Rev 14:8–11).

[36] For another of the panels, the "sermon given for the Pope, the emperor, and the king, counts and princes, and an infinite crowd of other people" was requested.

[37] Such as in the aforementioned Vincent Ferrer panel made by Erri, the dove was used by Fra Angelico to portray Blessed Ambrose of Siena's holy inspiration. On the same panel from the dismantled altarpiece from the Convent of Saint Dominic in Fiesole (1423), he depicted Beatus Vincentius with a flame in his hand.

[38] Leaving any debates around dating aside, the comparison of the sermons reveals divergences in content that transcend the formal sphere, regardless of the specific production date.

[39] As indicated, Placentis found out from Ferrer that he supported Pope Luna many years after this alleged falling out.

[40] Another Vincentian vision during the canonization process, the alteration of the story in Ranzano's *vita*, and the transformation of the story in the Legenda Aurea (including the omission of Saints Dominic and Francis) are all examples where the figure of Ferrer is the protagonist of the vision. The vita set the trend for subsequent historiography.

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Article

The Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret Altarpiece from the Cathedral of València

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Abstract: This work studies the iconography of Vicent Macip's altarpiece dedicated to Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret, which is found in the Cathedral of València. The main subject of the altarpiece is the presence of the Virgin Mary in salvation history. Iconographic categories have been described according to their possible relationship to the descriptions that appear in Francesc Eiximenis's *Vida de Jesucrist* [*Life of Jesus Christ*, in Catalan] (Hereafter, this text will be referred to as VCE). or Isabel de Villena's *Vita Christi* [*Life of Christ*, in Latin] (Hereafter, this text will be referred to as VCV), which are important works of 15th-century Valencian literature in the Catalan language that were read during the time the altarpiece was finished.

Keywords: iconography; iconology; altarpiece of Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret; Francesc Eiximenis; Isabel de Villena

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The main objective of this work is the analysis and iconographic interpretation of Vicent Macip's Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret altarpiece which is found in the Cathedral of València, in an effort to approximate its unitary meaning. For this purpose, fragments from two medieval Lives of Christ and the panels of the altarpiece will be related, noting different hierarchical levels.

1. Location and Origin of the Altarpiece

The Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret altarpiece is placed in the homonymous chapel in the ambulatory of the Cathedral of València. Different researchers have speculated about the identity of the artist[1], but finally Benito (1993) named Vicent Macip[2] as the painter. Nevertheless, this altarpiece clearly exhibits the influence of Paolo da San Leocadio who, under the Borja's patronage, was one of those credited with introducing the Renaissance in València. This altarpiece was painted in tempera and oil painting on a wooden board and was commissioned by Josep de Sanfeliu whose shield appears on both sides of the canopy. The altarpiece comes from the Church of Sant Joan de l'Hospital. Afterward, it was placed in the Church of Sant Joan and Sant Vicent for a short time and in 1923 it was taken to the Diocesan Museum of València. See Llorca (1930, pp. 84–85).

2. Description of the Altarpiece

The altarpiece (5.10 × 3.50 m) is made up of three main sections, together with the canopy and predella. In the central board, the two martyrs appear: St. Dionysius of Paris and St. Margaret of Antioch. On the right side next to the central board, which pertains to the Gospel, the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension of Jesus can be seen. On the left side next to the central board, which pertains to the Epistle, the Pentecost and the Assumption of the Mother of God are depicted. Above this board, the first apparition of the resurrected Christ, together with the inhabitants of Limbo, are painted.

At the top of the altarpiece, there is an image of the crucified Christ. On the canopy, several saints appear: St. Sebastian, St. Peter of Verona, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Christopher, St. Cosmas and St. Damian, the archangel St. Michael, and the Guardian Angel. On the top of the canopy and of the altarpiece as a whole there is Christ as an image

of the Father[3] and the Holy Spirit. The predella is composed of five iconographical scenes of the Passion of Jesus Christ: Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane, the Flagellation, Jesus on the way to Calvary, Jesus's Descent from the Cross, and, just in the center, Christ as *imago pietatis* (image of pity), is set on the sepulcher.

3. Central Board

In the central board, St. Dionysius and St. Margaret, on a golden damask background, each display a phylactery beneath their feet with their names in Catalan: *sanct Dionís*, *sancta Margalida*.[4] (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret.

St. Dionysius, a bishop and a martyr, appears with the garments of a bishop: he holds a staff and wears a mitre, episcopal gloves, a ring, and an embroidered alb with brocade cuffs. He wears a cope with some embroidered images of Christ, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Apollonia, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Lucy. He holds a book in his hands where the antiphony of St. Dionysius's festivity can be read[5]. On the halo, the following sentence can be read in Latin: *Sancte Dionis ora pro nobis ut digni eficiamur promissionibus Christi* [St. Dionysius, pray for us, so that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ].

St. Margaret, a virgin and martyr, is accompanied by the dragon, which is the form that the devil took in order to torment her. She carries the cross with which she defeated him. On the halo we find the following sentence in Latin: *Sancta Margarita ora pro nobis ut digni eficiamur promissionibus Christi* [St. Margaret, pray for us, so that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ].

4. The Lateral Boards

4.1. Adoration of the Magi

The upper part of the right side next to the central board shows the Adoration of the Magi. There is some contradiction between the traditional iconographic matter and its biblical source (Mt 2:1–12), which does not quote the presence of St. Joseph in this part of the Gospel. It shows a close-up of the Virgin Mary, who sits with the Infant Jesus in her arms. One of the Magi kneels down and places his crown on the floor. Secondly, St. Joseph and one of the Magi can be seen. They have a reasonable attitude regarding the third Magus, who points to Jesus Christ. In the third plane, four young people with unfocused glances and a star are depicted (Figure 2).

The adoration of the Magi appears in the second chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 2:1–12). While the first chapter is dedicated to explaining the origin of Jesus, the second chapter explains his mission as Messiah. A natural phenomenon announces to the Magi that the birth will take place in the city of David and that the kings of the earth will come to prostrate themselves before the true God. This act of submission indicates the beginning of a new people of God in which, through salvation in Jesus Christ, all the nations of the earth will be united. The Magi represent the first fruits of the Gentiles[6].

Eiximenis gives a lengthy explanation of this chapter on the Adoration of the Magi[7]. Firstly, he tells us that they were interested in astronomy: *qui lavors observaven lo cors e moviment celestial e parlaven de la dita estela cerquant e demanant quant vendría.* [who then saw the movement of the stars in Heaven and were searching for this star and discussing when it would come] (VCE 4,41 p. 124b), but the identification of the star with Christ came about because of the Holy Spirit: *per la qual saberen que la dita estela significava lo Salvador del món era lavors nat, lo qual era Rey e verdader Déu. E açò volien dar a entendre quant ells dehien que ells venien per adorar lo Rey del jueus qui lavors era nat.* [Because of him they knew that this star meant that the Savior of the world had already been born, who was the King and the true God. And this is what they meant when they said that they came in order to worship the King of the Jews, who was then born] (VCE 4,42 p. 124v,b).

Eiximenis uses etymology in order to explain the word Magi: *sent Matheu appella en latí Magos, ço és hòmens scients e savis e specialment en art de astrología (. . .) Aquests eren appellats Gaspar, Melchior e Baltasar.* [St Matthew calls them Magos in Latin, which means wise men, especially in the art of astrology (. . .) They were called Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar] (VCE 4,45 p. 126,b) (. . .); *Deus, donques açí saber que los dits reys informats en Jerusalem que lo Salvador devia néxer en Betlem anaren al dit loch e axí com foren exits de Jerusalem la estela los apparech (. . .) Lo primer que venints aquests reys en Betlem, la Gloriosa no estava en lo diversori on parí (. . .) quant los dits reys vinguere ell [Josep] estech fora la dita casa, ne los dits reys no lo·y trobaren ni a ell ni a altre hom sinó lo Salvador ab sa mare.* [So you have to know that these kings were informed in Jerusalem that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem and they went to that place and just when they were out of Jerusalem the star appeared (. . .) First of all when these kings came to Bethlehem, the Virgin Mary was not in the place where her son was born (. . .) when the kings came he (St. Joseph) was out of that house,

and the aforementioned kings did not find him or any other man, but the Savior with his Holy Mother] (VCE 4,48 p. 128v,b) (. . .); *Com lo tretzén jorn aprés la Nativitat del Salvador ells arribasen en Betlem hora de vespres, e en aquell mateix dia veessen e adorasen Jesucrist, e lo dissapte per lo matí tro aprés dinar fossen aquí e encara altra vegada visitasen lo Salvador, lavors diu que ells ab gran reverència offeriren-li aur e encens e mirra. (. . .) E diu que axí era lur cor inflamat de veure e contemplar lo Salvador e de rahonar-se ab sa mare que per res no·s podien partir d'aquí. (. . .) Lo sant àngel (. . .) los revelà (. . .) que no tornassen a Erodes, mas per altre camí anassen a lurs regions.* [They arrived thirteen days after the Savior's Nativity in Bethlehem in the evening, and on that same day they saw and worshiped Jesus Christ, and they remained there on Saturday in the afternoon, when they visited the Savior again and then in great reverence they offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh. (. . .) And their hearts and their spirits were so high as they saw the Savior and they talked to his Holy Mother that they did not want to depart. (. . .) The holy angel (. . .) revealed to them (. . .) that they should not come back through Herod's territory, but they should instead take another way] (VCE 4,51 p. 130a).

Figure 2. Adoration of the Magi.

4.2. The Ascension of Jesus

The lower part on the right side next to the central board represents the iconographical matter of the Ascension of Jesus, the source of which can be found in the *Acts of the Apostles* (Acts 1:9–11). This part of the altarpiece shows both an aerial and an earthy level. At the aerial level, Jesus is contemplated ascending towards Heaven and two angels with phylacteries in one of which *Viri galilei quid statis aspicientes in caelum?* [Men of Galilee, why are you standing looking up at the sky?] can be read, and on the other: *Hic Iesus, qui assumptus est a vobis in caelum* [This is Jesus, who was taken up by you into Heaven]; at the earthy level, in the center, the Virgin is flanked by six apostles on each side. All indicate serenity in the face of the departure of the Son of God, both by their faces and by the position of their hands with palms together (Figure 3). The Ascension of Jesus is explained in Francesc Eiximenis's *Vida de Jesucrist* (VCE) in this way:

Figure 3. The Ascension of Jesus.

> *E de continent los sants apòstols partiren del cenacle qui és en lo mont de Sion e anarense'n en Betània axí com lo senyor los avia manat. E anà-y axí mateix la Gloriosa ab alcuns feels creents.* [And suddenly the holy Apostles left the cenacle, which is on Mount Zion, and went to Bethany, as the Lord had told them to do. And the Virgin Mary also went with them, with some believers]. (VCE 10,18 p. 351v,a)

> *Lavors lo gloriós Senyor primerament se posà sobre una bella pedra plana qui encara es aquí segons diu Sulspicius e diu que les sues santes petgades hi són impresses (. . .). Segonament diu aquest tantost la sua gloriosa cara rajà e ensenyà les dots de glòria. (. . .) Ell se levà pujant dret en alt envers lo cel e pujant levà les mans en alt faent gràcies al seu Pare e en senyal de gran amor baxà la cara envers ells e benehí-los altra vegada (. . .) estant en alt digueren-los axí: Barons de Galilea! Guardats alt al cel sapiats que Jesus, Fill de Déu, qui ara se'n puja ab tanta virtut e potestat davant vosaltres, axí vendrà poderosament e gran al juhí final a la fi del món. E los dits àngels dients aquestes paraules una nuu resplandent se entreposà entre lo Salvador pujant e los apòstols e aquells que aquí eren e ja no·l veeren pus pujant* [Then the Lord stood on a beautiful flat stone which is still there according to Sulpicius, and it is said that his footprints are still marked upon it (. . .). Secondly it is said that his glorious face exploded in light and it showed the features of glory. (. . .) He arose towards Heaven and also raised his hands as a sign of gratitude to his Father, and as a sign of great love, lowered his face towards them and he blessed them once more. (. . .) and as he was rising to Heaven the angels said: Men of Galilee! Look at Heaven and be aware that Jesus, the Son of God, who in this moment is rising to Heaven with so much virtue and power in front of you, will come again with great power at the Last Judgement and at the end of the world. And as soon as the angels finished these words, a dazzling cloud appeared between the Lord and the Apostles and the rest of the people who were there at that moment, and they could not see the Lord anymore]. (VCE 10,19 p. 352,a)

4.3. Pentecost

The upper board on the left side next to the central board represents the iconographic matter of Pentecost, the source of which can be found in the *Acts of the Apostles* (Acts 2:1–25). This iconographic matter follows the pictorial tradition on Pentecost: The Virgin, the Apostles, the tongues of fire, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and, at the bottom, the cenacle decorated with classical architectural elements. The Virgin is placed in the center and surrounded by the apostles arranged symmetrically, perhaps in order to illustrate that Mary is the figure that unites the incipient Church: "They all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with certain women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers" (Acts 1:14). The Virgin appears with folded hands and on her knees, she holds a book where the first verses of the *Te Deum laudamus* can be read: *Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur. Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur. Tibi omnes Angeli; tibi caeli et universae Potestates; Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim* [We praise you God, we acclaim you as Lord. May all the Earth worship you, Eternal Father. To you all the angels; to you the heavens and all the Powers; to you the Cherubim and Seraphim] (Figure 4). Eiximenis explains the coming of the Holy Spirit as follows:

> *Pujat, donchs, lo Salvador, en lo cel imperi, alt sobre tots los altres cels, e pus bell e pus virtuós, los sants apòstols romangueren en lo cenacle de Jesucrist en lo mont de Sion, en Jerusalem. E aquí, per deu jorns orants e dejunants, e apparellant-se a reebre lo Sant Sperit lo jorn de cinquagèsima qui era lo cinquanté dia aprés la Resurreció, segons que posa sent Luch Actuum, primo. E com la gloriosa Mare de Déu, ab altres, fos en lo dit cenacle, e fossen entre tots cent e vint, lo Sant Sperit vench sobre ells e la manera posada per lo dit sent Luch e glosada per los sants doctors estech aquesta. Primerament, lo dit jorn de cinquagesima a hora de tèrcia estech fet gran tro en l'ayre e soptosament aparegueren cent e vint formes de lengües en semblances de foch e posaren-se sobre les dites cent e vint persones, cascuna sobre lo seu. E tantost foren tots plens del sant Sperit.* [The Savior arrived at the upper Heaven, which is the most beautiful and virtuous one, high above all others, and at the same time the Apostles remained in Jesus Christ's cenacle, on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. And they prayed and fasted for ten days, and were ready to receive the Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection, according to the word of St. Luke Actuum, primo. And as the Holy

Mother of Christ was in that cenacle and there were one hundred and twenty people among them, the Holy Spirit came to them in the manner that St. Luke explains and that has been glossed by the holy Doctors of the Church. So that day at the terce hour a great thunder in the air was heard, and suddenly one hundred and twenty tongues with the form of fire appeared, and they were set over these one hundred and twenty people. And thus they were full of the Holy Spirit]. (VCE 10,54 p. 354,a)

Figure 4. Pentecost.

4.4. The Assumption of the Mother of God

The lower board of the left side next to the central board represents the Assumption of the Mother of God.[8] The apostles appear to form a group around the bed where the Virgin lies covered with a golden damask cloth. In reality, the panel represents the moment in which the Virgin dies and her soul is collected by Christ himself. St. Peter, dressed in a pluvial cloak, seems to be praying a response. At the foot of the bed, another apostle appears with a raised cross, hyssop, and acetre, while St. John holds a lighted candle and a palm branch. Another apostle fans the fire of the cauldron. In all the faces, the pain of the loss of the Virgin can be noticed. *E ells, emperò, ploraren molt lo seu partiment. A qui acorrerien d'aquí avant puis lo Salvador e ella, qui tenia son loch, los serien absents?* [Nevertheless, they cried a lot over the loss of the Virgin. Whom would they resort to, since the Savior and She, who held his place, would from now on be absent?] (VCE 10,37 p. 360v,b). Francesc

Eiximenis, in his explanation of the Assumption of the Mother of God in his *Vida de Jesucrist*, sheds light on some iconographic elements that can be seen in the board:

> *Lo segon punt en aquesta materia lo qual posa Teofilus si és que lo fill beneyt li tramés lo àngel que la saludà molt delitablement e li presentà aprés la salutació un ram de palma luent dient-li que lo seu preciós Fill lo li trametia en senyal que ella havia triumfat e ahuda victòria de totes les sues temptacions. E per tal volia que lo dit ram fos portat davant lo lit on ella seria posada quant seria portada a soterrar.* [The second point regarding this matter according to Teophilus is that the blessed son of the Virgin sent her an angel who greeted her very kindly and afterwards gave her a bright palm branch and told her that sending her the palm branch was a sign that she had overcome all her temptations. And therefore, he wanted this palm branch to be carried to the bed where she would be placed when she was taken to be buried]. (VCE 10,35 p. 359v,a)

> *E nota ací aquest doctor que com lo dit àngel li apparech denunciant-li que aprés tres dies finaria ses dies, que en senyal de la victòria de la carn e dels altres enemichs que avia vençuts en sa vida que lo seu gloriós Fill li trametria del cel un bell ram de palma luent lo qual no era fet en terra mas solament era creat en lo cel per la virtut de Déu tot poderós lo qual ram de palma lo gloriós fill seu manava que li fos portat davant lo lit com seria portada a la sepultura.* [And this doctor remarks that when this aforementioned angel appeared and announced to her that she would die within three days, as a sign of victory over the flesh and other enemies that she had defeated during her life, her glorious son would carry her a bright palm branch that had not been made on Earth, but had been created in Heaven by the virtue of God Almighty. And her glorious son ordered this palm branch to be taken to the bed on which she would be carried for the burial]. (VCE 10,38 p. 360v,a)

> *Lavors los sants apòstols tots agenollats li besaren los peus ab gran reverència e prengueren lo lit e portaren lo molt reverent e sagrat cors a la vaill de Josafat on li faeren fer lo sepulcre. E sent Pere portà al cap del lit e cantant intonà lo psalm qui comença In exitu Israel de Egipto e sent Johan per manament de sant Pere portà-li davant lo ram de la palma damunt dit, axí com lo Senyor avia manat fins al dit loch.* [And then the holy Apostles knelt down and kissed her feet with great reverence and took the bed where the very holy and reverent body of the Virgin lay to the Josaphat valley, where the sepulcher was made. And St. Peter sang the psalm that begins In exitu Israel de Egipto (When the people of Israel left Egypt) as he was carrying the bed. And St. John followed the command of St. Peter and brought the aforementioned palm branch to the burial place, as the Lord had ordered]. (VCE 10,43 p. 362v,a)

> *Los sants apòstols continuant son cant vingueren al sepulcre e ahí ab gran reverència posaren lo preciós cors de la verge gloriosa.* [The Holy Apostles sang until they arrived at the sepulcher and they placed the precious body of the glorious Virgin there with great reverence]. (VCE 10,43 p. 362v,b)

4.5. The First Apparition of the Resurrected Christ to His Mother

Over the central board, there is The Resurrected Christ standing in a white cloth and in his left hand he is holding the labarum of the Resurrection. The five wounds, open but exsanguinated, cast luminous rays that indicate the glorious body of Christ who, with his hand, points to Adam and Eve who stand out from the multitude of the righteous coming from Sheol. In this group, the good thief can be identified. The Virgin, who looks at the righteous, is kneeling with her back to an oratory covered by a canopy. In it, one can observe the altar table dressed in damask and above it a book and two candlesticks. The crown of thorns, framed by a white cloth, acquires the value of an altarpiece. It occupies a principal place because, according to the contemporary literary works of *Vitae Christi* (Lives of Jesus Christ), with the resurrection of Christ he had to recover all the blood lost during

the Passion and, therefore, the bloody stains of the instrument that tortured the head of the Redeemer had to disappear. Isabel de Villena says in her *Vita Christi* (VCV):

> *E, acostant se ja a la posada hon la dita Senyora staua, sanct Gabriel, qui era hu dels ordenadors de la professo, cuyta, ab la verga dor en la ma, per portar la bona noua a sa senyoria, de la qual era special seruidor e priuat; e, entrant dins lo retret de sa altesa, troba sa excellencia algun poch alegra, car havia vist partir de la corona del Senyor qui dauant tenia, e del seu propri mantell, la sanch quey era escampada, e creya que lo seu Fill era resuscitat; ab tot nos podia del tot alegrar, puix vist nol hauia.* [And St. Gabriel came to the place where the Virgin was, with his golden cane in order to bring the good news to her, to whom he was a special servant. He also had a good acquaintance with her. And when he arrived where she was, he found her with a little joy, since she had seen that the blood had been removed from the crown of thorns and from the cape that her son wore when he was taken to be crucified. And she thought that her son had resurrected, but she could not be totally happy, since she had not seen it personally]. (VCV 3, 165)

Adam appears in the foreground of the painting because he was overjoyed at the Resurrection, since he and Eve bore all the blame for the condemnation of the human race. It appears in Isabel de Villena's book:

> *E, hoint açò Adam ab goig no recomptable, cuytà de anar. E, venint dauant la Senyora, fon recomplit de tanta alegria e consolació que li paregué hauer augmentat en gran grau la benauenturança sua, e prostrà·s als peus de sa altesa volent besar aquells ab sobirana reuerència; e la Senyora no·u permès, reuerint-lo com a pare, e, leuant-se de peus, manà-li que·s dreçàs.* [And as Adam heard that with immense joy, he went towards the Virgin. And as he came to the Virgin, he was so full of joy and relief that his blessedness seemed to have grown; and he prostrated himself at the feet of the Virgin, and he wanted to kiss them with great reverence; but the Virgin did not allow it, since she revered him as a father, and she stood up, and ordered him also to stand up]. (VCV 3, 174)

The visit of the righteous to the Virgin also appears in religious literature. The aforementioned *Vita Christi* explains it as follows:

> *E, la Senyora vehent dauant si Adam e·ls fills seus ab tanta glòria e jocunditat, fon lo goig de sa senyoria infinit, car veja complit de tot son desig que del instant de la sua incarnació hauia supplicat lo eternal Pare per la reparació e glorificació de natura humana, la qual obtengué perdent la vida de aquell excel·lent Fill qui, sens comparació, molt més que la pròpria vida amaua; e per ço sa clemència estimaua molt e·s alegr[au]e de aquella redemptió com a cosa que molt li costaua.* [And when the Virgin saw Adam and his sons in front of her, she was full of infinite glory and joy, since her wish was accomplished. Since the moment of the Incarnation she had requested the eternal Father to repair and glorify human nature, and it was done through the death of that excellent Son, whom she loved more than herself without comparison. And because of her leniency she praised and rejoiced over that Redemption, even though it was something that cost him dearly]. (VCV 3, 176)

Regarding the light of the stigmata, Isabel de Villena says the following:

> *E dit açò, aquell gloriosíssim cors fon reunit ab la ànima guarit de totes les nafres, exceptat de les principals cinch, que per gran excel·lència hauia reservades, les quals embellien tant aquell glorificat cors e lançauen de si tanta claror e resplandor que, admirats tots los àngels e sancts qui aquí eren, e recomplits de irrecomptable goig e alegria, prostrats en terra, adorant sa Magestat, digueren: "Dignus es Domine Iesu Christe accipere laudem e benedictionem et gloria et honorem."* [And afterwards, that extremely glorious body joined with his soul, and it was healed from his wounds, except for five, which had been reserved by His Excellency. And these wounds embellished so much that glorified body and threw so much light and gleam that the angels and saints that were there prostrated themselves to the ground, and full of countless joy

and delight, they worshiped his Majesty and said: "*Dignus es Domine lesu Christe accipere laudem et benedictionem et gloria et honorem*." (You Lord Jesus Christ are worthy of praise, and benediction, and glory, and honor)]. (VCV 3, 161)

4.6. Dead Jesus Christ on the Cross

In the upper part of the altarpiece, we can see the dead Jesus Christ on the cross with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Apostle on either side. Mary Magdalene kneels at the foot of the cross. This panel shows influences of the Flemish primitives both in the style of the constructions that emerge among the abundant vegetation and in the floating perizonium that, following the scheme of the Flemish primitives, is aligned with the heads of the characters establishing a line that seems to mark the horizon, leaving the trunk and the head of Christ in the upper part of the panel, as if putting him in contact with the sky. The Virgin and St. John maintain eye contact with the Crucified while Mary Magdalene seems to collect the blood of Christ that drips down the stipes (the vertical part of the cross) with a cloth. The landscape is composed of a flowing river that separates the place of the crucifixion from a walled city that appears in the background.

5. The Predella

One cannot lose sight of the fact that, for Catholics, the Mass is the unbloody renewal of the bloody sacrifice of Calvary. Perhaps, for this reason, the predella, the closest place to the priest during the celebration of the holy sacrifice, in the altarpiece of St. Dionysius and St. Margaret, is dedicated to some scenes of the Passion: Jesus's prayer in the garden, the Flagellation, Jesus on the way to Calvary, his descent from the cross and, in the center, the representation of Christ as a man of sorrows or *imago pietatis* (image of piety).

In this altarpiece, in the prayer in the garden, the sleeping apostles, Peter, James, and John appear in the foreground while, in the background, Jesus kneels, comforted by an angel who shows him the will of God the Father: the cross. In the third plane, a crowd of soldiers with torches and weapons can be seen, led by Judas Iscariot, who points to Jesus. In the background, there is a walled city composed of towers and houses with gabled roofs.

The iconographic type of the Flagellation shows two thugs scourging Jesus who, tied to a column, occupies the center of a room. At one end of this room, Pontius Pilate can be seen sitting on his throne and, at the other end, at what appears to be the entrance door to the room, the Apostle Peter is questioned by the doorkeeper of the building (John 18:16). In the foreground, two figures are sitting around a fire.

The iconographic type of the man of sorrows or *imago pietatis*, which occupies the central part of the bench, represents the dead Christ showing his wounds. Two angels and St. John the Apostle hold the body of Jesus with a canvas while they lay him in the sarcophagus, while the Virgin and Mary Magdalene contemplate the wounds in his hands. The landscape is composed of some mountains in the background and the entrance of a cave where Jesus will be buried.

The fourth panel of the predella shows Jesus on his way to Calvary. He appears in the center of a procession that is led by a group of soldiers armed with spears. From this troop, a banner and a bugle stand out, both decorated, like the shields, with a double-headed eagle. It seems that Jesus has stopped in front of a woman who contemplates how the face of the Redeemer has been engraved in the veil with which she has just wiped the face of Christ. The Virgin, accompanied by a group of women, contemplates the passing of the procession from the proximity of a wall. In the background, some mountains can be seen.

The last panel of the predella represents the unbinding of Jesus. The iconographic type is organized around the vertical figure of Christ and the white canvas through which St. John the Apostle, Mary Magdalene, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus slide the dead body from the cross. The Virgin, attended by the holy women, appears to be fainting in pain on one side of the panel. Isabel de Villena's *Vita Christi* explains it this way:

> *E axi, aquesta Senyora, turmentada per tanta dolor, Veent dauant si aquelles persones que al seu Fill amauen tan carament, perdé lo parlar e totes les forces, e caygue esmortida;*

[And so the Virgin Mary, tormented with so much pain, seeing in front of her the people who loved her son so dearly, lost her speech and all her strength, and fainted]. (VCV 3, 84)

On the other side of the panel, two figures seem to be in communication with one another while one of them shows the nails that have shattered Jesus's limbs. The landscape is made up of vegetation and a Nordic-style walled city. This is how Isabel de Villena explains it:

> *Joseph e Nicodemus, ab tot tinguessen molta dolor e compassió del dolorós captenіment de aquella Senyora, hagueren a pendre esforç per executar lo que fer-li auien, e dreçaren les scales, fermant les en la creu, e ells abduix pujaren, cascú per sa escala; car lo que ells podien fer en seruici del Senyor no·u volien comanar a nengun altre. E, començant arrancar aquells dolorosos claus, sanct Joan los féu senyal que·ls y donassen amagadament, que la senyora Mare no ves de prop la feredat e granea de aquells claus que axí cruelment hauien turmentat lo seu amat Fill; e axí fon fet. E, desclauades les mans per aquells virtuosos homens, besauen-les ab molta dolor e làgrimes, no gosant cridar per no alterar la dolorosa Mare, qui tan prop li staua. E Joseph, qui era pus animós, per ésser caualler hauia la força de sa persona bé experimentada, dix a Nico[de]mus que lexàs lo braç del Senyor que tenia, que ell sol sostendria tot lo cors, e que deuallàs a desclauar los sagrats peus. E, Nicodemus dexant lo braç, Joseph abraçà aquell cors ab singular reuerència e amor, sentint tanta consolació dins la sua ànima que quasi ixqué de si mateix; e conegué ésser pus rich e mes abundós en tot bé tenint aquel Senyor que si posseýs tots los béns del món.* [Even though Joseph and Nicodemus suffered much pain and compassion for the Virgin, they endeavored to do what they had to do, and they set the stairs, tightened them to the cross, and each one of them got up through his stair, since they did not want to order other people to do what they could do personally for the Lord. And when they began to pull those painful nails out, St. John requested them to deliver them to him secretly, so that the Virgin could not see how big they were, and the harm that they had inflicted on her beloved Son, and thus it was done this way. And when they pulled the nails from his hands out, they kissed his hands with lots of pain and tears, but they did not dare to shout, so as not to upset his glorious mother, who was next to them. And Joseph, who was strong and could carry the weight of the whole body, told Nicodemus to let the arm of the Lord loose, which he was holding, that he would hold the whole body, and that instead he should pull the nails out from the feet. And when Nicodemus dropped the arm, Joseph embraced that body with so much love and reverence, and feeling so much consolation in his soul, he understood that in that moment he was richer and more abundant in goods than if he had possessed all the goods on the Earth]. (VCV 3, 90–91)

In these five panels, the influence of Paolo da San Leocadio on Vicent Macip is more evident than in the rest of the altarpiece, both in the arrangement of the figures and in the models that followed. The landscape presents, in addition to strong Leocadian reminiscences, a certain dependence on Flemish designs, demonstrated by the *à pignon* rooves of the houses and the presence of leafy vegetation. See (Benito and Galdón 1997a).

6. The Canopy

The iconographic matters that appear on the canopy can be divided into three groups. Firstly, there is Christ with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove; secondly, there are two angels; and thirdly, there is a group of six saints.

The top of the altarpiece is surrounded by three panels: St. Michael the Archangel and the Guardian Angel of the city, on the sides, while the upper part shows the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and Christ holding a book from which the following sentence can be read: *Ego sum via, veritas et vita. Et alfa et omega et principium et finis* [I am the way, the truth and the life. And the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end]. Christ's image quite

closely follows Francesc Eiximenis's description in his *Vida de Jesucrist*, where in order to facilitate contemplation of the Redeemer, he describes his physical appearance in this way:

> *les celles que havia altes e pontades, el nas gran e bell, e lo front ample e la faç ampla e la boca poqua, e les dentes fort belles e blanques e la barba poqueta mas bifurcada, los ulls fort bells e queucom gracets. E.ls cabels fins als muscles, declinants a color de castanya. (. . .) Avia les mans longues ab fort bells dits, los braços fort responents a la sua statura, sinó que eren fort rescarpats. Lo pit ample e les espatles belles e amples. E la altea del seu cors tenia egualtat, cor ne era dels majors ne dels menors mas decantava més a granea cor era gran covinentment. (. . .) era vestit de dues gonelles (. . .) una vestedura de filadiç morat, la qual no era cosida ab agulla ans la li féu la Gloriosa mare sua ans que·l Senyor nasqués e crexia ab ell. (. . .) e com preycava alçava la ma dreta tenint tres dits levats en alt.* [the eyebrows were high, the nose was big and beautiful, and the forehead was wide, and the face was wide but the mouth was small, and the teeth were very beautiful and white, and the beard was not very grown but split in two, the eyes were very beautiful and endearing. His hair went down to his shoulders, and was mostly brown in color. (. . .) He had long hands with very beautiful fingers and his arms were according to his height. His chest was wide and his shoulders beautiful and wide. And he was of average height, although a little taller than the rest of the people. (. . .) And he wore two shirts (. . .) made of violet cloth, which were not sewn with needles, but made by his mother the Virgin before he was born, and they grew with him. (. . .) And when he preached he raised his right hand with three fingers pointing to the sky]. (VCE 8, 1; 215v,b)

The rest of the iconographic types of the canopy consists of a group of six holy helpers or healers: St. Sebastian who, together with St. Roch, is invoked as an advocate against the plague; St. Peter of Verona who is recognized as a protector against storms and headaches; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, an advocate against long-term illnesses; St. Christopher, invoked to protect against lightning, storms, plagues, epilepsy, and even toothaches; and it is believed that St. Cosmas and St. Damian were doctors, which is why they have been considered as protectors of health since medieval times in Valencia. This devotion continued to flourish during the 16th century when their figures were common in many altarpieces and free-standing tables.

7. Comprehensive Explanation of the Altarpiece

The boards of the vertical sections reflect a Marian theme: the presence of the Virgin Mary in the mystery of Salvation. At the top of the canopy, Jesus Christ appears in the center of a mystical mandorla that expresses his dual human and divine nature[9]. He carries a book in his hand where the following words can read: *Ego sum via, veritas et vita. Et alfa et omega et principium et finis* (I am the way, the truth and the life. And the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end). This can be considered the corollary of the altarpiece: recapitulating all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). The glory of the saints is a manifestation of the glory of Christ, and the Virgin Mary is the head of all the saints. Therefore, this woman is a singular being in Salvation History. This is the case because the second person of the Blessed Trinity, being God, obviated his divinity (Phil 2:6) and took human form (Gal 4:4), through the participation of this woman.

The ultimate display of Christ's humanity can be contemplated at the top of the altarpiece, where the iconographical type of the crucifixion appears. There, the Virgin Mary and St. John the Apostle flank the cross. Taking the Gospel of St. John (John 19:17–37) as the source of this iconographic type, a double Marian significance can be noticed. First, the Virgin is given as mother to the Apostle who symbolizes all the disciples of Christ. See Thurian (1962, p. 237). Secondly, Jesus addresses his mother by calling her "woman", which signals the prophetic value of the Daughter of Zion on whom all the messianic hopes fall. See Feuillet (1966, p. 370). According to de la Potterie, this spiritual motherhood of Mary is the image and form of the motherhood of the Church (Potterie 1993, p. 268).

These two meanings are the basis of the iconographic matters that appear in the altarpiece. The upper board of the central part represents the resurrected Christ's first apparition to his mother. The meaning of this board could be contrasted with the Annunciation, where Mary accepts the message of the angel and becomes a co-redeemer. The result of co-redemption can be observed in this iconographical type, where Christ shows to his mother all the inhabitants of Sheol that have been freed by his redeemer, death, which has taken place because the Son of God was incarnated in the Virgin Mary.

The Adoration of the Magi appears in the upper part of the right side next to the central board. In this panel, the Virgin Mary appears seated with the child in her arms surrounded by three crowned figures, one of whom, kneeling on the ground, has taken off his crown. This iconographic type, the source of which is found in the second chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, points to the recognition of the kingship of Christ by all the peoples of the earth and, in doing so, the Davidic ancestry of the Jews is reaffirmed[10]. This text has a deep Marian meaning, since when the Gospel mentions the presence of the child with his mother (Matthew 2:11), it links the mother to the son's royal function.[11]

The two next boards, Ascension and Pentecost, find their source in the *Acts of the Apostles*. In this book, St. Luke explains the first steps of Christianity, and it can be noticed how the figure of the Virgin Mary was central to the primitive church of Jerusalem (Acts 1:12–13).

Finally, there is the Assumption of the Mother of God, surrounded, as in the two previous boards, by all the apostles. At the bottom, the reception of Mary's soul by the second person of the Holy Trinity is contemplated. Around Mary, the newborn Church is gathered, proceeding from the death and resurrection of Christ. This fact, which spans all history, unifies into a single people, not only the apostles and disciples of Christ but also the ancient inhabitants of Sheol, and extends to reach all the peoples of the earth, as indicated by the Adoration of the Magi.

Salvation for eternal life also has a reflection in the healing of temporary illnesses, and for this reason, all the saints who appear on the canopy, as already discussed, heal different physical illnesses, while the two angels, St. Michael and the Guardian Angel, protect from immaterial dangers.

8. Conclusions

Throughout this work, we have been able to show some theological premises that place Vicent Macip's altarpiece of Saint Dionysius and Saint Margaret within the pieces destined both for the instruction of the faithful and for their personal piety. Thus, this altarpiece visually explains some milestones in the history of the Church and the universal value of Redemption.

The predella of the altarpiece is clear evidence of the pious and esthetical impulse to contemplate Christ's humanity, and with this aim, it depicts some of the milestones of the Passion of Christ so that it can be linked to the sacrifice of the Mass, which could have been held next to these boards.

The literary sources from which Macip may have drawn his inspiration cannot be firmly established. However, no element of the painting seems to have been painted at random; on the contrary, all aspects present a good theoretical foundation that goes beyond pure aesthetic disposition, and which leads us to suppose a very precise documentation. In order to be able to approach an interpretation of the visual discourse, we have had to base this study, therefore, on what are known in the history of art as indirect sources, such as Francesc Eiximenis's *Vida de Jesucrist* and Isabel de Villena's *Vita Christi*.

In order to advance in the confirmation of this hypothesis it would be necessary to delve into the reception and cataloging of the literary works that Macip used to design the iconographic programs of the pieces painted both by himself and by the members of his workshop.

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Notes

1 *Tormo, de primer* (Arte español 1923, p. 299; Levante 1923, pp. 132–33) *el va creure de Francesco Pagano i després de Paolo da San Leocadio o d'algun deixeble seu, i el va considerar ·l'obra mestra de prerafaelisme valencià"* (Los Museos 1932, p. 125, nº 30). *El baró de San Petrillo va interpretar erròniament els seus escuts com del llinatge Cabanyes* (AEAA 1933, p. 94), *i des d'aquesta falsa premissa va suposar que el pintor Antoni Cabanes a qui connectà amb aquest llinatge, podria haver sigut l'autor d'aquest retaule que suposadament hauria lliurat com a ofrena personal al temple de Sant Joan de l'Hospital, incloent-hi el seu escut. Com que aquest argument no convencia, per fantàstic, Saralegui* (AAV 1933, pp. 33–34) *i Post* (History, VI 1935, t.II p. 396) *van preferir referir-se a l'autor de retaules com a Mestres dels Cabanyes o simplement Mestre de Cabanyes, admetent, en tot cas, la presumpta identificació dels escuts feta per San Petrillo. Això donaria peu a la invenció del Mestre de Cabanyes com a mer nom de laboratori per a designar un anònim pintor, la identitat del qual avui saben que correspon a l'etapa juvenil de Vicent Macip*. (Benito and Galdón 1997a, p. 52). *Tormo believed at first* (Arte español 1923, p. 299; Levante 1923, pp. 132–33) *that the author was Francesco Pagano and later he thought that it was Paolo da San Leocadio or one of his disciples, and considered it as the masterpiece of Valencian Prerafaelism"* (Los Museos 1932, p. 125, nº 30). *The baron of San Petrillo mistakingly understood the shields as belonging to the Cabanyes family* (AEAA 1933, p. 94), *and therefore he supposed that the author was painter Antoni Cabanes, whom he connected with this family. The altarpiece could have been created as a personal offering to the Church of Sant Joan de l'Hospital. Since this argument was not convincing, Saralegui* (AAV 1933, pp. 33–34) *and Post* (History, VI 1935, t.II p. 396) *preferred to name the author as Mestres dels Cabanyes or simply Mestre de Cabanyes. They admitted in any case the identification of the shield that San Petrillo made. It would be the starting point for the invention of the name Mestre de Cabanyes as an artificial name for an anonymous painter. Nowadays, neverthless, we know that the painter's identity corresponds to Vicent Macip in his youth*. (Benito and Galdón 1997a, p. 52).

2 Vicent Macip (*c.* 1475–1550). His life and work have generated great controversy among scholars. He was the first in a line of painters established in Valencia over three generations. His work is influenced by Paolo da San Leocadio and Rodrigo de Osona and, later, by Sebastiano del Piombo whose work will mark a change of direction in Macip's painting towards his stage of creative maturity for which he will be known as the person who introduced the First Renaissance to Spain. About Vicent Macip *vide* Martínez Aloy (Martínez Aloy 1909–1910); Sanchis Sivera (1909); Tormo (1932); Garín y Ortiz de Taranco (1955); Cerveró (1966); Albi (1979); Benito (1981, 1988, 1993); Vallés and Benito (1991); Samper (2001); Benito and Galdón (1997a, 1997b); Company and Tolosa (1997, 1999a, 1999b) and Tolosa et al. (2006).

3 O, Senyora, que aquell sagell del Pare eternal, de tan gran estima, hon es esculpida la ymatge sua, ço es, lo seu diuinal Fill, del qual es dit: ymago bonitatis illius, car es ymatge propria de la bonea e excel·lència del Pare seu, a vos, Senyora, sola, lo ha comanat la Magestat del dit Pare, no fiant de neguna altra creatura de tot lo imperi seu! (VCV 3, 172) [Oh my Lady, that seal of the Eternal Father, where his image is sculpted, that is, his divine Son, of whom it is said: ymago bonitatis illius, i.e., suitable image of goodness and excellency of your Father, to you alone, Lady, has been assigned by the Father's Majesty. And He does not rely on any other person than you, among all the ones that belong to him].

4 The golden background of the table appears in another work of Macip: *Saint Anne with the Virgin and Jesus the Infant accompanied by Mary Magdalene*. Owing to this coincidence Benito and Galdón (1997a, p. 54) suggests dating this altarpiece to the first decade of the 16th century, since the work of Saint Anne is dated from 1507.

5 *Ecce sacerdos magnus, qui in diebus suis placuit Deo, et inventus est iustus: et in tempore iracundiæ factus est reconciliatio*. [Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God, and was found righteous: and in the time of wrath was made a reconciliation] (Sirach 44:16–17).

6 Intret, intret in patriarcharum familiam gentium plenitudo, et benedictinem in semine Abrahæ, qua se fílii carnis abdicant, fílii promissionis accípiant. Adorent in tribus magis omnes populi universitatis Auctorem; et non in Iudæa tantum Deus, sed in toto orbe sit notus, ut ubique *in Israel sit magnum nomen eius* [Enter, let the fullness of the nations enter into the family of the patriarchs, and receive the blessing in the seed of Abraham, by which the children of the flesh renounce themselves, the children of the promise. All the peoples of the universe worship the Author in three ways; and let God be known not only in Judea, but in the whole world, so that his name is great everywhere in Israel]. Leo Magno, *In Epiphania Domini* 3, 3: PL 54, 240–44.

7 This book belongs to the medieval literary genre of the "Vitae Christi" (Lives of Jesus Christ), whose best example is Ludolf of Saxony's "Vita Christi". Each book that belongs to this literary genre is not just a normal biography but also a story, a comment from the Fathers of the Church, a list of moral and dogmatic considerations, instructions, meditations, and prayers. Everything is connected with the life of Jesus Christ from his birth until his Ascension. In this book, Eiximenis's complete scholasticism can also be found in some of its parts. Only in this work the influence of heterodox sources, especially the apocryphal Gospels, can be noticed. In any case, according to Albert Hauf, the most important authors that influence this book are the Pseudo-Bonaventure and the Franciscan Ubertino of Casale. Isabel de Villena's "Vita Christi" especially emphasized the women who played an important role in Christ's life (e.g., his mother Marie and Marie Magdalene). Villena's "Vita Christi" begins with the Nativity of the Virgin and ends with the Assumption of Mary. Mary's and Elizabeth's visitations are extended by Isabel. Mary also has

dialogues with allegorical representations of diligence and mercy. This dialogue already appeared in Boethius's "The Consolation of Philosophy." Female figures are as important in Isabel's book as Jesus and the corresponding male figures themselves. Isabel even defends the defamed Eve and Mary Magdalene.

[8] For an overview of Assumption Apocrypha in Spanish see de Santos Otero (2003, p. 705) and Aranda (1995, p. 324).

[9] The mystical mandorla, as an intersection of two circles, takes on a double meaning, since it represents the communication between two worlds and two different dimensions, i.e., the material and the spiritual world, the human and divine dimensions. *Vide* (Cirlot 1992, p. 295).

[10] This iconographic matter is closely related to the crucifixion. Upon his birth, the Magi ask Herod for the location of the *the king of the Jews* and at the end of his life, the reason for his execution inscribed on the cross similarly read: *This is the king of the Jews*.

[11] The matter of Mary as queen can be found in Micah 5:2. It deals with the model of *gebiráh* in the Davidic kingdom. See (de Vaux 1976, pp. 172–74).

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Article

Virgin Mary as the "Gate of Heaven" with Angelic Musicians in the Doorway of the Apostles at the Cathedral of Valencia

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Abstract: The Door of the Apostles at the Cathedral of Valencia stands as a treasure of sacred Gothic architecture and sculpture. A modification to its original structure in 1599 removed the mullion and the stone image of the Virgin that is to be found today in the tympanum. However, regardless of her location, Mary *Mater Dei* presided over everything that was happening in the doorway. She guided those who crossed the temple's threshold, placed as she was on the mullion so as to appear as a *Porta Coeli.* In addition, she was the conductor of the characters on the door such as apostles, prophets, patriarchs, virgins and angelic *sonadors* (sound-makers). The latter appeared playing various instruments from both profane and sacred medieval traditions. Their location in the tympanum, playing a role in the meaning of the message, showed the importance of music as a vehicle for conveying the revelation of the Incarnation of Christ.

Keywords: Valencia Cathedral; Doorway of the Apostles; *Porta Coeli* Mary; angelic musicians; Gothic

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1. Introduction

The object of study for this research is the visual program of the Door of the Apostles in the Gothic style of the Cathedral of Valencia. On the one hand, previous works explain the study of the architectural complex of the Cathedral and its parts. Sanchís y Sivera (1909, 1925, 1933) resorts to archival sources when reporting the historical, constructive and artistic origins of the metropolitan basilica. Oñate Ojeda (2012) presents a monograph on the historical-artistic scope of the Cathedral within its social and Christian context. On the other hand, authors such as Hani (1997) or Songel (2020) understand the construction of Christian temples as sacred symbolic architecture in the image of God. Serra (1991, 2012) considers questions about the technical knowledge of the medieval builder in Valencia, as well as how he approaches the urban environment at the time studied. It is important to highlight specific studies of Zaragozá (2000) and Bérchez and Gómez-Ferrer (2008). The latter reveals the characters of the repopulation, great master builders and the initial architectural plan of the Cathedral.

In 1599 the structure of the façade of the Apostles was formally altered and, therefore, the arrangement of the sculptures that made it up was modified. This study compiles some archival sources on the Doorway of the Apostles in order to understand what its original form was. Consequently, we provide the manuscript document that mentions the removal of the mullion from the gate of the Apostles. Furthermore, we have made a hypothetical photographic reconstruction of the façade structure before the mullion was demolished. Sources such as Lozano (2012) and the chronicler Felipe de Gauna (1926) provide important data on the Doorway of the Apostles for its physical reconstruction.

Starting from the reconstruction of the original façade, this study proposes an approximation as to the meaning of the visual program of the Doorway of the Apostles of of the Valencia Cathedral, where Mary *Mater Dei* surrounded by angelic musicians is represented as a gate of heaven. We do not find existing specific studies about angels' instruments on Valencia Cathedral. Nevertheless, in this paper we establish a close relationship between music and the visual program. The theme of musical angels has been extensively studied

by García Mahíques (2018), as well as Perpiñá (2018); these studies have been essential to establish conclusions, as have the Marian studies of Mocholí (2017).

2. Valencia Cathedral: Symbolic Sacred Architecture in the Image of God

Seldom did classical or baroque decorations fail to enter, conquer or hide in the Gothic skin of Valencia's churches. As a paradigmatic example, the Doorway of the Apostles survived for the purpose of wall covering, preserving a treasure of Christian architecture and sculpture from the Middle Ages. The Doorway has survived to the current day, albeit with some changes and damage, as a monumental doorway indebted to the Gothic aesthetic trend imported from royal French lands in the first half of the 14th century: "The movement spreading [Gothic art] in the dioceses surrounding Paris [...] would continue and spread in the 13th century [and] will affect neighbouring countries: England, the Empire and Spain" (Erlande-Brandenburg 1993, p. 133).

The documents that have been preserved providing news of the first construction work on the basilica (which could be related to the Doorway being studied here, from the mid-13th century until a century later) mention two master builders: A. Vitalis (1267) and Nicholas of Ancona (1304). The architecture of Valencia Cathedral, sited over the old mosque and begun around 1262—after the Christian colonisation of 1238—with the Dominican bishop Andreu de Albalat (1248–1276), came into contact with its first *magister*, A. Vitalis. Sanchís y Sivera (1933) states with certainty that "the first work was the *Porta del Palau* and the nave that it faces on the inside" (Sanchís y Sivera 1933, p. 8). "Construction was allowed to begin on the cathedral starting from this southern arm of the transept not only because of the outer presence of the Palau Doorway, but also because of the changes or shifts in the construction system [...]" (Bérchez and Gómez-Ferrer 2008, p. 113). According to some studies (Zaragozá 2000), rather than being reminiscent of the Gothic or Romanesque, the Cathedral's architecture was inspired by the Italian 13th century. In this vein, the construction between the initial part by Vitalis and the following could have been headed by the second architect, the Italian maestro Nicolás de Ancona—a name that Sanchís y Sivera (1925, p. 24) transcribed as "*magisterium* Nicholau de Autona", bestowing upon him origins in French Burgundy. This maestro had worked in construction since 1304 and his mentor was Raimundo Despont (1289–1312), an authority in Ancona between 1289 and 1312. Although the chronology suggests that Ancona was the architect of the Doorway of the Apostles, the Cathedral's preserved archive documents (ACV perg. 0440) only mention his obligation to carry out the relevant works on the Cathedral as a senior worker on it, as well as for stained glass windows, sculptures and paintings, as different studies have also pointed out. Hence, "he has been attributed the work [...] from the area of the presbytery towards the naves [...] with an impressive transept upon which the dome sits in the centre" ("[...] desde la zona del presbiterio hacia las naves [...] con impresionante crucero sobre el que se voltea en el centro el cimborrio") (Bérchez and Gómez-Ferrer 2008, p. 113).

> [...] the breadth and moderate height of the main nave, as well as the unusually large width of the openings that connect said nave with the lateral ones, resulting in an unprecedented spatial unity in the architecture of the Crown of Aragon, are reminiscent of contemporary Italian architecture. (Zaragozá 2000, p. 66)

The result was a church with a low central nave, two generously broad aisles, a transept and an ambulatory resolved in a Gothic way, all with ornamental austerity in the Cistercian style: "The early temple, composed of an ambulatory, an outstanding transept and three stretches of naves along its length, was completed in 1356, the main altar being consecrated a year later by Bishop Vidal Blanes [...]" (Vilaplana 1997, p. 5). To sum up, with regard to architectural spaciousness and length, the maestros who worked on the initial construction of the Valencian temple had in mind the concept of organising a unified space, not only as a space consecrated to liturgy but as an epicentre of congregation for the public audience of these acts of worship.

The progress of art in the Middle Ages did not involve expressing the maestro's individual thoughts. Rather, the manifestations that we understand today as artistic were intended as an internal unity governed by a sacred and mystical value, a celestial archetype given by God the creator and regulated by a system of mathematical proportions and geometric studies that the maestro passed on to his apprentice: "You arranged everything with measurements, numbers and weights." (Sb 11,20). The interpretation of the *Book of Wisdom* "became the key to the medieval vision of the world and served as the ideological basis for the constructions that were built as of the 12th century following the new Gothic language [...] a composition based on numbers and measurements, both symphonic and architectural" (García Mahíques 2015, p. 861). In the West, Platonic ideas had been reaffirmed by Saint Augustine. In his treatise *De Música*, he likens music and architecture, in that both are based on numbers and harmony: "The builders of the Middle Ages knew the analogy between architectural proportion and musical intervals, and sometimes inscribed this analogy in stone" (Hani 1997, p. 33). The Christian temple stands as a sign and symbol of God perpetuating the sacred message through the architectural or sculptural form. Music and architecture are to share the same foundation, and the symbology of numbers devoted to Pythagorean musical harmonies and the intervallic relationship of fractions related to them is also related to geometric order and the measure of all things. The relationships between music and architecture in medieval times were based on the fact that "both were conceived as a product of mathematical proportions" (Perpiñá 2018, p. 86). In this way, Pythagorean, Platonic and the music of spheres was applied following a theological conception. "The establishment of geometric principles in art were to have a great influence on compositional aspects and their symbolism throughout the 12th and 13th centuries" (Songel 2020, p. 34). The use of geometry implied meticulousness and precision in construction; in the visible and non-visible forms, this was and is essential in any intention of architectural design.

> The building's foundation begins with its orientation, which is already in a certain way a rite, since it establishes a relationship between the cosmic order and the terrestrial order, or even between the divine order and the human order. The traditional and, we might say, universal method, since it is found wherever there is sacred architecture, was described by Vitruvius and was practised in the West until the end of the Middle Ages: the building's foundations are oriented thanks to a gnomon that allows the two axes to be located (*cardo*, north-south; and *decumanus*, east-west). (Hani 1997, p. 28)

Out of the primary sources that exist from this period, the notebook of Villard de Honnecourt (1225–1235) gives an early mention of geometric knowledge as a construction item. This album, probably made after visits to different Gothic workshops, shows several design patterns used during the Middle Ages, that is, compositional grids that the maestros of architecture had in mind for their creations and which generated repertoires that varied according to geographical mobility. These geometric strategies were based on the shapes of the square, triangle and circle. Their symbolic geometric significance based its models on the octagram (eight-angled star polygon), like the grid traced by the dome of the Valencian Cathedral or the floor plan of the bell tower, El Miguelete, and the star of David, represented in the large rosette of the Doorway of the Apostles, known in Hebrew culture as the flower of life "whose infinitesimal extension is considered to be the representation of the universe" (Songel 2020, p. 30). In this symbolic sense of sacred architecture in the image of God, David the father of Solomon shows his son how things should be built according to God's command: "a model of the holy tabernacle that You had prepared from the beginning" (Wis 9,8).

However, there are still certain controversies in relation to the builder's education, oral transmission, techniques and knowledge, as well as constructive geometry (*geometria fabrorum*) (Serra 2012, p. 167). Professionals' artistic mobility between states, the attraction of cities' economic power and the protection afforded mostly by influential patrons is considered to be of vital importance for the exchange of knowledge and techniques. This

occurred with the traffic among the builders of the western doorways of Nôtre Dame cathedral in Amiens and their move to the capital of Paris, hired to carry out minor works, and in the case of the builders in the Cathedral of Santa María de Regla in León who moved to the cathedral of León in Spain, while others went to work in Reims. (Williamson 1997, pp. 221–26). Specifically, at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th, Valencia established relations with the territories of the Crown of Aragon, as well as with Murcia and Andalusia (Gómez-Ferrer 1997–1998, p. 92). Despite not having any document to date to certify the authorship of the doorway of the Apostles, its formal style resembles the Gothic doorways of France. Various studies, such as the work dedicated to heraldry that appears on the cover, establish starting points for its chronology (Rodrigo 2013, p. 18), but none question the predominantly classic Gothic nature from the French school.

3. The Doorway of the Apostles at the Cathedral of Valencia

An adapted uniform façade was located in the transept, on the Gospel side and in the opposite direction towards the *Portal de la Fruyta* (Doorway of the Fruit), which was one of the names for the Romanesque Palau door. It opened up towards the outside, concealing another screen-façade made *a priori*—"it replaced another previous one, surely of Romanesque tradition" (Zaragozá 2000, p. 98)—being "built over a previous creation with a pre-existing restriction in the height of the vaults, as is evident in the difficult conjunction of the lower body with the rosette" (Esteban Chapapría 1993, p. 58).

This new construction, where architecture and sculpture merged, *took a step* towards the civic and religious centre of the city of Valencia, Plaza de la Seo, now Plaza de la Virgen. Furthermore, it was a doorway facing Caballeros street (the old Roman *decumanus*). In addition, this gate traced a connecting line towards one of the city's main gates, the *Portal dels* Serrans (Serrano gate), which would between 1392 and 1398 be rebuilt as we know it today, according to the order from the *junta de Murs i Valls* (Walls and Fences Committee), by the *mestre pedrapiquer* (master stonemason) Pere Balaguer. The conception and formal inspiration for the imbrication of the Apostles' façade with the urban space depended on the architectural models of the Île-de-France, such as Sens Cathedral and the Saint-Denis abbey church: "In Gothic man's imagination, the cathedral was associated with an architectural reality based on [. . .] its floor plan and its elevation, but perhaps even more with its external perception" (Erlande-Brandenburg 1993, pp. 178–79). The opulence and size of this architecture, together with the omnipresent dome (at that time comprising a single body) must have conquered the visual space of the medieval Valencian citizen. The great commercial and demographic development that the city of Valencia experienced in the late 14th century led the Municipal *Consell* or governing board to apply an urban policy based on improvements to show off the city's wealth and power after events harmful to the city, including "a terrible situation experienced in Valencia during the black plague, especially aggressive in 1348" (Gómez-Ferrer 2012, p. 40).

> Based on contempt for the Islamic past, still alive in many aspects of the [Valencian] urban landscape, the municipal government [the *Consell*] aspired to a different city with straight, wide streets, spacious squares adorned with outstanding civil and religious monuments; a clean and populous city offering the visitor a beautiful appearance. (Serra 1991, p. 74)

The basis for these types of façades was an architectural axis together with the construction of another structural element of the temple: the ambulatory or girola with chapels extending radially. In the case of Valencia, this was an original solution "where the even number of radial chapels was rounded off on the outside by a battery of niche chapels opening onto the street, surrounding the ambulatory" (Carrero 2019, p. 187).

Although today the Doorway of the Apostles (Figure 1) has lost its polychromy and gilding, and has suffered damage along with imperfections on its carvings and figures, it still appears with all the grandeur with which it was conceived. It is named after the sculptures of the Apostles resting on the jambs located on both sides of the main entrance—along with other figures of local saints on the chamfers: Saint Sixtus, Saint Lawrence,

Saint Valerius and Saint Vincent (Sanchís y Sivera 1909, p. 54). Today, the twelve original Apostles are resting in the Cathedral's museum, having been replaced by resin replicas made by the sculptor José Esteve Edo. Following the pre-existing models by replacing the alternate rows of columns on the Romanesque façades, these characters formed the visual themes of the doorways as symbolic pillars of the Church, as in the case of the Cathedral of Amiens, whose central door shows an Old Testament scene, the Last Judgement, with Christ in the tympanum and the Apostles on the jambs. The name of the Valencian façade as we know it today appears in early archival documents. According to initial studies such as those by Sanchís y Sivera (1909), it is the *portal dels apostols* (Doorway of the Apostles) and, out of conviction, we assume it was also known thus colloquially among the people.

Figure 1. Doorway of the Apostles, Cathedral of Valencia, author's photograph.

This architecture is divided into two well-differentiated bodies. In the upper section, which forms part of the temple's construction, there is a large oculus: the great *Salomó,* in other words a rose window, a "translucent painting" in Lampérez y Romea's terminology. The light of celestial movement symbolically penetrates the coloured glass without causing destruction, running along a path that passes through the door until it irradiates the main altar with various multi-coloured beams. The colour, delimited in the sign of David and the rose of Jericho, is educational in conveying the message of harmony between the theological order and the cosmic order upon which the Christian temple is based. Hence, the rosette has the "character of a *cosmic wheel* as shown by the fact that it often has twelve spokes and that the signs of the Zodiac or the twelve Apostles are represented in the surrounding medallions [...]" (Hani 1997, p. 80). The *Salomó* on the doorway of the Apostles, perched above the door, contains the Rose of Jericho constructed with twelve spokes. This Rose is the mother of the Messiah Jesus, son of David and son of God, and their figurative representation as mother and son presides in stone below in the doorway surrounded by musical angels, while the Apostles accompany them on the jambs.

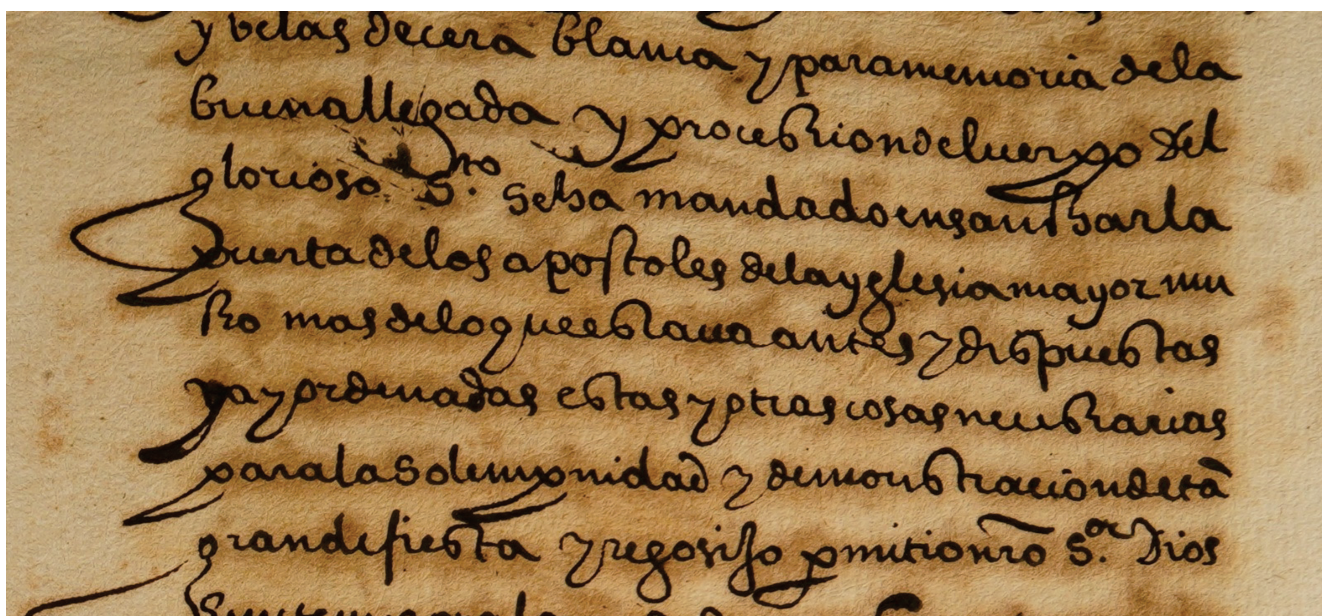
In the lower part, a large chamfered body flares outwards, where the large ogival door opens up, composed of four increasingly bigger pointed arches that generate three archivolts full of visual themes with virgins, angels and prophets, becoming part of the antechamber to the temple, with the characteristic arrangement favoured by the Franco-Burgundian maestros who introduced French Gothic ways: "If these particular images provided the greatest emotional and spiritual appeal to the medieval viewer, the doorway sculptures were the means by which instruction and moral exegesis were conveyed" (Williamson 1997, p. 24). With its large number of sculptures arranged over a specific architecture, the Doorway of the Apostles forms a sacred rhetorical-educational theme characteristic of the Middle Ages.

Today, the visual scene on the tympanum shows modifications in the layout of the sculptures compared to their original arrangement. In its genesis, the entrance door to the temple was divided by a mullion (Figure 2) following the example of previous French models. In those, it was common to place a sculpture presiding over the entrance to the temple, which in the case of Valencia was the Virgin: "from 1200 onwards, Maria went from the tympanums to the mullions" (Mocholí 2017, p. 234). In turn, the column left two openings topped off with arches that acted as a transition. The care taken and interventions made on the doorway were constant, as reported by the Cathedral's archive on the continuous cleaning and repainting of it: "[...] paint renovations [...] Alcanyis master painter [...]" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 28r, 1431). "Martí Llobet [...] cleaning the images of the Doorway of the apostles" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 25, 1431); "But at the end of the same 16th century, the transformations in its architecture began, first by fitting wooden doors, commissioned by the *Cabildo* (council) on the occasion of the wedding of Felipe III in April 1599, and a few months later the mullion was removed [...]" (Esteban Chapapría 1993, p. 58). Over the past century, restoration work was carried out in 1957, 1967 and 1992 by the architects Alejandro Ferrant, Joan Segura de Lago and Julián Esteban Chapapría.

Figure 2. Hypothesis of the mullion with the Virgin, Doorway of the Apostles, Valencia Cathedral. Technical reconstruction by the author; graphic work by the architect Raquel Durán Milla.

At the end of 1599 the mullion with the stone image of the Virgin was removed from the Gothic façade of the Cathedral by order of the Patriarch and Archbishop of Valencia, Saint Juan de Ribera. The reason was to make the entrance into the temple easier for the lavish procession on 12 December 1599, transferring the remains of the young Roman martyr Saint Maurus to the Cathedral on the east of the peninsula, arriving from the Monastery of the Blood of Christ of Capuchin friars of the order of Saint Francis in Sagunto. The martyr's remains were transferred by order of the Patriarch of Rome, exhumed from the catacomb of Pope Calixtus, through his intercessor in the Holy See, Fernando Niño de Guevara. Yet, they still could not rest in the chapel built expressly for them in the Church of Corpus Christi in Valencia, since its construction was not yet complete, so until February 1604, they were deposited in the Cathedral's reliquary.

> [. . .] in memory of the good arrival and procession of the glorious saint's body, the Door of the Apostles of the main church has been ordered to be widened much more than it was before, arranging and ordering these and other things necessary for the solemnity and demonstration of such a great festivity and rejoicing. (ACCV sing. 10113, 1599) (Figure 3)


y velas de cera blanca y para memoria dela
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y ordenadas estas y otras cosas necessarias
para la solemnidad y demonstracion de tan
grande fiesta y regozijo permitio nro S.or Dios

Figure 3. Source: manuscript of the procession of Saint Maurus, 1599. (ACCV sing. 10113, 1599).

The arrival of Saint Maurus's remains in Valencia was celebrated with a large festive procession that attracted prominent figures to the scene such as Fernando Niño de Guevara, Baltasar de Borja, Francisco Tárrega, Sebastián de Covarrubias (ACCV sing. 10113, 1599) and more. The saint was honoured with a reception at the Serranos Towers, followed by an itinerary that wound through the main streets and points of a city carefully adorned with decorum, ephemeral architecture and a festival of sound. This transitory transformation was linked to another permanent one which, as mentioned above, altered the façade on the side of the transept that gave onto the Plaza de la Seo. The main entrance to the Cathedral in the 16th century was the Door of the Apostles. Located in the *Plaza de la Seo*, the *Porta de la Seo* (Cathedral Door, as it was also called) was strategically surrounded by centres of religious power such as the house of the Holy Inquisition, the Cathedral itself and others, as well as civic buildings such as those of the City Council (*Casa de la Ciudad*), the Provincial Council and the homes of significant prelates, nobility and prominent figures from the institutions of the kingdom and the city. In 1311, Jaume II authorised the *Casa de la Ciudad* to be moved to the *Plaça de la Fruita* adjacent to the *Palau Doorway.* It was then moved to

the opposite side of the transept, at the beginning of Calle Caballeros, on the side of the Doorway of the Apostles (García Marsilla 2020).

With this reform, the future Viceroy of Valencia solved two necessary demands of the time. On the one hand, by widening the doorway he was able to achieve the desired grandeur and lavishness in the face of the danger posed by Moorish uprisings, as well as support from many nobles for the procession and for the moment the remains of the martyr would enter the Cathedral. On the other, it met the demand of the Counter-Reformation spirit that set out the guidelines for architecture noted by Carlos Borromeo: "The central entrance must be distinguishable from the others, mainly by its size and decoration, especially in a Cathedral basilica" (Borromeo 1985, p. 11). He continues by saying:

> As regards the entrances and jambs of the sacred houses [. . .] take care that they are not arched at the top; they must be different from the gates of the cities, quadrangular, as can be seen in the oldest basilicas. But they should not be lower than a humble structure, but twice as high as their latitude, as permitted by the type of architecture. (Borromeo 1985, p. 11)

With this modification to the Gothic structure, space was gained by removing the central column and the arches of the two previous entrance openings, and placing a lintel to support the tympanum. For the latter, as various researchers have discovered from the Cathedral's archive, Vicent Leonart Esteve was sent to "*lower the lintel of the doorway of the apostles*" (ACV sign. 1390, fol. 54r, 1599).

Although, as we have mentioned, the wooden doors had been modified for the wedding of Felipe III to Margaret of Austria, in April 1599, the mullion of the Door of the Apostles was still in its original location according to the chronicles of Felipe de Gauna, who describes its physiognomy:

> So by his order, they entered through the main door, known as of the Apostles, which is very well carved, though in the old way, with stone chiselled wonderfully, and at the top of it there was a choir of angels in the same stone with their musical instruments in their hands, and on the sides of said door were arranged the twelve apostles of Christ with the four evangelists and doctors of the Roman Catholic Church. In the middle of the same door . . . there was a column . . . that supported all . . . the choir of . . . beauty and . . . of Our Lady. (de Gauna 1926, p. 279)

Although there are incomplete fragments in Gauna's text, the description notes on the one hand the column and the image of the Virgin, and on the other, the musical angels at the top of the Doorway, which the chronicler describes as a choir, possibly a conventionalised name according to sacred literature (since none of them is gesticulating by opening their mouths to sing), and as instrument players, which is their main activity in the tympanum. Similarly, he refers to other characters such as the Apostles, doctors of the Church and the four evangelists. The latter do not appear in today's visual scene on the Doorway, raising doubts as to the veracity of the description, since no other documentary source has been found that mentions them, unless they were on the corbels of the arches to the two openings.

The *Dietari* or journal of Joan Pere Porcar (16th century) gives precise dates about the removal of the mullion:

> *Monday 15th, 1599, of November, they finished widening the opening to the Building of the Cathedral, of the Apostles* [. . .].
>
> *Thursday, on the 18th of said 1599, they began to knock down the pillar of the doorway to [the] Cathedral. And Friday, the 19th, they took away the figure of our Lady, who was on the pillar in the middle of the door, and the tiara that was on her head.* (Lozano 2012, p. 100)

The tiara on top of the Virgin's head referred to could be, on the one hand, the canopy that probably hung over the Virgin (a conventional decorative element in the figures on

Gothic doorways), or on the other hand, the crown that Mary wore, an element that may originally have been made of carved stone and that was sometimes chiselled out to be replaced by a metal crown. In fact, "[. . .] at the end of the Middle Ages the crown was a very widespread attribute and used in numerous images of the Mother of God, regardless of the type to which they belonged" (Mocholí 2017, p. 332). In the Cathedral's archive, there is news about this: "they put on her a crown of gilded copper made by a silversmith [. . .] while Jesus also had a diadem, all of these pieces gilded with gold leaf [. . .]" (García Marsilla 2020, p. 89). If the image of Mary was relocated in the tympanum, it is unlikely that it would have fitted with a crown onto the mullion due to the two angels flanking her above. However, due to a lack of documentary sources we do not know if the Virgin preserved today in the tympanum of the Doorway of the Apostles is the same as the one that rested on the mullion with her bouquet of silver-plated copper lilies in her right hand (ACV sign. 1479, folio 35, 1431). Nevertheless, the Cathedral's archive describes the payment, on 24 November, 1599, to "Frances Torner Manya [. . .] to support the image of Our Lady of the Doorway of the Apostles" (ACV sign. 1390, fol. 58v, 1599). Thus, if Porcar's source is true in terms of dates, it could be referring to the placement of the same figure of the Virgin from the mullion into the tympanum six days after the mullion was knocked down. In any case, the sculptural style of the Virgin's face, hair, clothing, etc., matches that of the figures on the façade, so it is probably the same sculpture. This is even more feasible when one takes into account the possibility that this Virgin was considered a cult image, since in the festivities of Mary she was covered with a mantilla: "[. . .] nine shillings for a ladder that I have bought [. . .] for bidding to decorate the great jambs [. . .] and to put the mantilla on the Virgin Maria at the Door of the Apostles in the annual festivities" (ACV sign. 1489, fol. 38, 1549). It is curious to observe that many of the archival sources refer to this figure by naming the Virgin and not the Virgin with Child. For example: "[. . .] to clean the dust off the image of the Virgin Maria, which is in the said mullion of the Doorway of the Apostles" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 22v, 1431 in Oñate Ojeda 2012, p. 16); "[. . .] they took the figure of Our Lady" (Lozano 2012, p. 100); "[. . .] Such beauty and . . . of Our Lady" (de Gauna 1926, p. 279); "the image of the glorious Virgin Maria who is in the middle of the Doorway of the Apostles" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 28, 1431 in Sanchís y Sivera 1909, p. 64).

As for the aforementioned sculptural work, the clothing of the main characters on this façade is tunics with fine, wavy folds reminiscent of the sculptures of the apostles at Sainte Chapelle in Paris. These bestow a dynamism on the figures which is accentuated even further by the expressions on their faces and their gazes raised to heaven which seem, like their arrangement, disorderly. It is interesting to note how the angel on the right of the motley Virgin is the only character dressed differently, standing erect and out of sync with the others. He is wearing a kind of dalmatic, a garment not repeated on any other angel, nor on any Apostle on the central jambs, nor on the Virgin. Likewise, on both sides of the two angels who stand flanking Mary, two iron hooks can be seen that usually served to hold up the sculptures. In 1431, orders were given to hold the figures of angels with iron due to the danger of them falling off (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 31, 1431). The figures were removed from the tympanum in order to fit hooks with iron, lead and plaster: "[. . .] the painters' scaffolding where they had to lift out the images and the maestros had to be there to fix them in by putting in the iron hooks [. . .]" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 34bis, 1431). We do not know why two iron hooks have been left exposed and if they should have been covered up by sculptures which, hypothetically, would have been moved and relocated during the reform of 1599, when the lintel was ordered to be lowered, probably to hold up the image of Mary in the tympanum. In this latter modification, if we take into account that the lintel was higher, the images of the two angels kneeling at the ends must have been located more towards the centre, and in correlative order they would be followed by the continuous angels that would supposedly cover up the two iron holding hooks that we can see today in plain sight. However, there are no sources to corroborate this hypothesis.

4. The Angelic Musicians on the Doorway of the Apostles

Today, we can see the image in stone of the Virgin standing with the Child in the centre of the tympanum, the latter holding an open book in his left arm, surrounded by angels playing music (Figure 4): to their right and left there are three angelic musicians either side, while above, flanking her head, there are two more, one on each side: "The 13th century marks the beginning of the success of the iconographic type of musical angel and its presence in monumental art" (Perpiñá 2018, p. 92). But the arrangement of the scene was different until 1599, as has been explained above, when the order was given to saw off the mullion, like the one in the Palau doorway and as happened with other Gothic doorways such as the one in Murcia's Cathedral and Notre Dame, as revealed by sources from the Cathedral's archive and which Sanchís y Sivera sheds light on (1909) (ACV sign. 1390, fol. 30r, 1599). In that image, the Virgin with Child rested on the central column "that is in the middle of the Doorway of the Apostles [...]" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 28r, 1431) and above that image, as described by the documentary sources, the musical angels or "sound-producing angels who are above said Doorway of the Apostles [...]" (ACV sign. 1479, fol. 31r, 1431). In "[...] the Old Testament there is no explicit reference to the music of angels. Something similar occurs in the case of the New Testament [...] there are apocryphal, liturgical and patristic sources that show that, at least as of the fourth century (and in some cases even earlier), the concept of angelic music was already present in certain Judeo-Christian sectors and in the early Church, especially in the eastern area" (García Mahíques 2018, p. 22). But there are mentions of praising God through musical instruments, as in the Book of Psalms (Ps 149, 1–3; Ps 150, 3–6). However, we cannot find an exact correspondence in the Psalm of Praise of King David (Ps 150, 3–6) with the angelic musicians' musical instruments on the Doorway of the Apostles in the Cathedral of Valencia (Figure 5). The Psalm mentions a trumpet, a flute, a harp, a drum, a harpsichord, an organ, a zither and cymbals. Assuming that the one-armed angel on the Doorway of the Apostles, as will be explained later, is playing an instrument of medieval tradition such as a psalter, harp, rattle, triangle, etc., matching one named in the psalm, the trumpet does not appear in the Cathedral's Doorway, nor do the cymbals as such, but rather they are finger cymbals. The drum and flute that are named in the psalm as individual instruments are considered on the Cathedral's Doorway to be one instrument known as a tabor, which is being played by the same instrumentalist at the same time. The organ does match: it appears both in the literary source and in the visual theme of the angels, though the psalm makes no mention of the gittern or medieval guitar, the citole, the vielle or the shawm seen in the angelic hands of these characters.

In any case, in general the musical angels' mission was to exalt God and carry his message. There is a controversy regarding the name "choir of angels", which it is important to note: "[...] the first Fathers of the Church conceived the angelic hordes arranged in choirs [...] the arrangement in choirs refers to a circular layout whose point of reference lies in the ancient world's cosmic conceptions. Therefore, we cannot ensure that, every time there is talk of celestial choirs, it is unequivocally referring to music" (García Mahíques 2018, pp. 30–31). That is why the musical angels in sacred literary sources appear *a priori* as singers, not as instrumentalists, though in the following centuries it was to be how we commonly find them in visual scenes.

Figure 4. Tympanum over the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

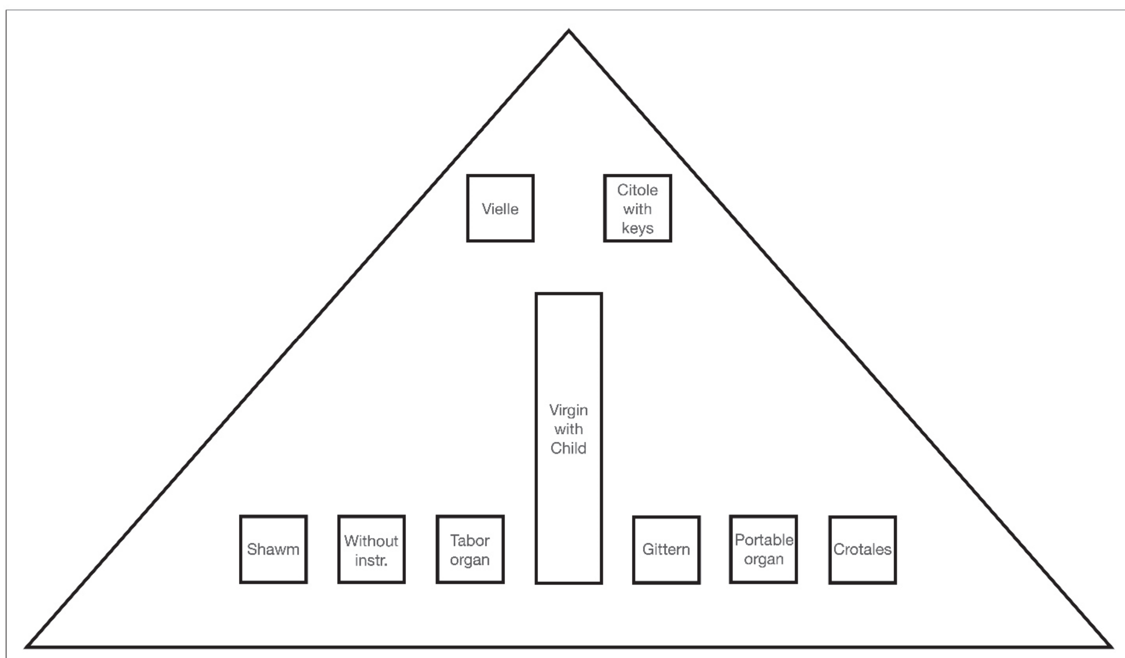

Figure 5. Diagram of the location of the instruments of the angelic musicians represented on the Door of the Apostles. By the author.

The period when the Door of the Apostles was built was the musical period straddling the *Ars Antiqua* and the *Ars Nova*, that is, when musical notation systems were developing due to the need to annotate to meet the demands of compositions. The progress in polyphony would take place mainly in the ecclesiastical institution, also fostered by the creation of nobles' private chapels as of the 14th century: "The history of Western medieval music, at least during the first millennium of our era, must necessarily be a history of Christian liturgy" (Hoppin 2000, p. 45). Sacred polyphony would need performers versed in the musical notation that had evolved. However, the equally rich instrumental repertoire would continue to be based on oral tradition to a great extent. In this sense, the minstrels were to be a fundamental professional group in medieval society, about which literary and iconographic sources reveal a great deal of information. Iconic visual arts scenes provide considerable documentation of medieval organography. The various instruments represented confirm the technical evolution of the instrumentalists, and hence the development of guilds of instrumental craftsmanship, as well as the importance of cultural exchange in developing organography and performance thanks to the mobility of the artists. The specialisation and professionalisation of musicians was increasing, partly due to this conjunction.

> The master craftsmen of musical instruments documented in the Crown of Aragon throughout the 14th century and the first half of the 15th century made string instruments above all, and in some cases keyboard instruments, especially positive organs. However, there are hardly any wind instrument craftsmen listed, except in the case of the flutes created by luthiers. (Gómez Muntané 2009, p. 265)

The eight angels on the tympanum of the Cathedral of Valencia are an instrumental ensemble in the medieval tradition, which with its variety of instruments suggests sounds with a wealth of timbres. The name we can find in the cathedral's archive to refer to the musical angels on the tympanum is "*angels sonadors*", in other words, minstrels. The Trastámara seal can be seen with the particular name that it gives to the minstrel musicians when they come to be called, depending on their specialisation, "sound makers":

> Along with the chapel singers and organists, there were performers of all kinds of instruments in the service of Ferdinand I of Aragón (1412–1416) and his son Alfonso the Magnanimous (1416–1458), who generally continued to be called minstrels. However, as of the second decade of the 15th century, next to some of their names there began to appear the name of their specialisation, in which case instead of minstrels they were called "sonadors". (Gómez Muntané 2001, p. 281)

The angels are holding a total of three aerophones, three chordophones, an idiophone, a membranophone (which is played together with one of the aerophones), and there is an angel whose instrument is no longer preserved.

Beginning on the onlooker's immediate right of the Virgin, the first angel is playing a gittern or guitar (Figure 6) that has been faithfully reconstructed by the specialist in medieval organography Jota Martínez. It is a chordophone with a neck, the sound box being a wooden box with no opening or sound hole. As Martínez (2019) points out, it has seven strings separated with three orders, two of which are triples that function as an accompanying bass, while the simple order is for the melody. The frets are delimited but have no tailpiece.

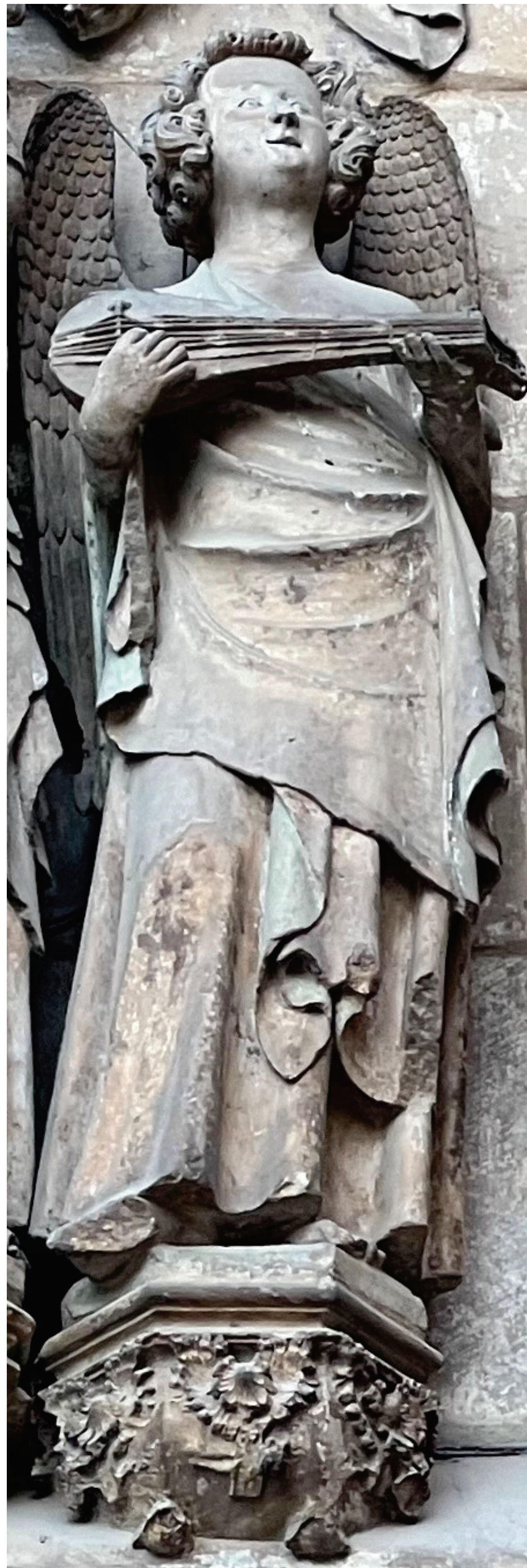

Figure 6. Angelic musician with gittern on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

The next angel further along from the Virgin is playing a handheld portable organ held by a cord around his neck, a mechanically blown aerophone and a single set of pipes not exceeding two octaves (Figure 7). It has twelve tubes and a keyboard he is playing with his right hand while with the other one he is working the bellows, pumping air into them. It is

a characteristic instrument of secular tradition that was widespread in Europe around the 12th century and highly exemplified in Spanish art as of the 13th century (Gómez Muntané 2001). The last musical angel kneeling on this side of the Virgin is playing the crotales (Figure 8), a round metal clashing idiophone struck by two symmetrical sonorous parts. The sound is created by clashing them outwards. Both discs have a triple-string grip on the back to hold each one in a hand. The Cathedral of Valencia itself preserves this very instrument in the alabaster altarpiece in the Chapel of the Holy Chalice.

Figure 7. Angelic musician with portable organ on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

Figure 8. Angelic musician with crotales on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

On the other side of the Virgin, to her immediate right, the angel is carrying a tabor, or snare drum and hand flute that were played at the same time. It is a membranophone with a free rod to rub the membrane (Figure 9). The rod that the angel must have been holding is no longer preserved. The aerophone uses a free embouchure, but the little flute has survived to the present day. It appears again on the Doorway of the Apostles in the

bas-reliefs on the right below the Apostles. It was a common instrument in medieval society, and therefore widely represented. For example, we can see it on the façade of the Hospital de los Inocentes in Xàtiva, on the ogee arch.

Figure 9. Angelic musician with tabor and flute on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

The next angel's arms have been severed, so we do not know what instrument he was playing; it could have been a psaltery (or zither), lyre, tambourine, open tambourine, etc., but not, apparently, an aerophone. The kneeling angel on this side is playing music with a shawm just as he is blowing into it (Figure 10). The instrument's state of conservation is precarious. In the Cathedral of Valencia, in one of the corbels on today's Chapel of the Holy Chalice, we can find a representation of a shawm, faithfully reconstructed by Jota Martínez. The shawm is a double-reeded aerophone made of wood with a disc at the top

near the embouchure, close to the base of the bocal, which can be seen very clearly in the cathedral's angel. Regarding the usefulness of this piece with regard to shawms, Martínez (2019) adds:

> [. . .] it serves two purposes. On the one hand, it helps one put on and take off the instrument's bocal without touching the reed, thereby avoiding the risk of damaging it. On the other hand, as the blowing power required is quite remarkable, the musician may rest their lips on it and thus exert greater pressure—and even use a continuous circular blowing technique. (Martínez 2019, p. 120)

Figure 10. Angelic musician with shawm on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

In some cases, the shawm or chirimia was played sketching out the melodic profile, together with percussion so as to accompany dances, so it is not odd to find it close to the angel playing the tabor with flute, another instrument often used for celebrations.

Flanking the Virgin overhead are two angels appearing down from two clouds with their wings now amputated. The one to the Virgin's right is an angel playing a vielle resting on his shoulder (Figure 11). This instrument is a chordophone with handle. Its four simple strings are played with a bow. Its soundboard is a flat wooden box with two

C-shaped sound holes. The waists are smooth and slightly pronounced to allow the bow to pass through. The neck, headstock and bow have not been preserved. The angel on the other side, above the infant Jesus, is playing a rare, unusual instrument in iconographic musical representations: a citole with keys (Figure 12). It is a short-necked chordophone that resonated via a wooden box tapering from the neck to the opposite end with a wedge shape, if looking at the instrument in profile. As mentioned, this instrument is peculiar in that it has five keys at the top of the neck. The citole is plucked with a plectrum or stroked with a bow. The left hand's thumb is placed over a hole in order to grip the instrument's neck and free the fingers to play. The citole achieved fame in the 13th century, appearing "in the doorways of churches and cathedrals built during the second half of the 13th century and subsequent decades. [...] more widespread in the kingdoms of Galicia, León and Castile than in the rest of the peninsula" (Rey and Navarro 1993, p. 39). The top of the neck is no longer preserved. *A priori*, its organography seems to be a hybrid between a citole (in this case with holes in its sound box) and a five-key viola, though violas usually have the keys at the bottom of the neck to be easily played while stroking with the bow. One example can be found in a musical angel in the frescoes of the Capellina di Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (Italy), painted by Taddeo di Bartolo in 1408. The keys at the top of the neck generally appear in another medieval instrument, the organistrum, played with a crank at its lower end. Future investigations will shed more light on this, since it is currently very difficult to see the complete instrument without scaffolding.

Figure 11. Angelic musician with vielle on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

Figure 12. Angelic musician playing citole with keys on the Door of the Apostles. Author's photograph.

Placing the Virgin in the tympanum altered the compositional arrangement of the work. In fact, the two Apostles who regularly stand on their respective sides of the *Regina,* Saint Peter and Saint Paul, have been gazing into the air at no fixed point since Mary disappeared from the mullion. As for the significant quality of the work, the rhetorical function of the image of Mary in the mullion welcoming the faithful at the entrance and exit to the temple as "Mary, the gate to heaven" (*Porta coeli*) was to be significantly altered—though not annulled. The symbolic passing into the temple was through Mary as the gate of light between the earthly and the heavenly, by whose intermediation she lets her son Immanuel enter.

> She opened anew the gate of paradise that had once been shut by Eve. Mary was often thought of as the woman who redeemed the sins of Eve, and she was understood to have "opened the gate of heaven" in two senses. In the first sense, she allowed God to descend to earth in the form of Christ, whom she carried in her womb—one is reminded of the *Ave regina caelorum*, which calls Mary the "gate out of whom the light of the world came forth" ("*porta ex qua mundo lux est orta*"). In the second sense, she became keeper of the gate through which mortals could ascend to paradise when she was crowned Queen of Heaven—here one thinks of the *Alma redemptoris mater*, which calls Mary the "gate of heaven" ("porta caeli"). (Rothenberg 2011, p. 36)

Maria *Mater Dei* is the temple itself (*Mater Ecclesiae*), and contains the message of the Incarnation, announced on the opposite door, the Palau Door whose iconographic theme is based on the Old Testament. The Door of the Apostles is proclaimed in analogy to the

virginity of Mary who, within closed doors, allowed the Redeemer to enter and leave, as early patristic authors such as Hesychius of Jerusalem believed: "Indeed, you made the King of locked doors enter and you also made him leave. For this reason, I call you Gate, because you were the gate of the present life for the Only Begotten of God" (Pons 1994, p. 152). Mary appears carrying in her right hand the flower that underlines her immaculate purity, her virginity. In this way, Saint Roman the Melodist, Byzantine hymnographer, says in the kontakion that upon the presentation of Jesus in the temple Simeon said to Mary: "You are the closed gate, oh Mother of God; the Lord passed through you, entering and leaving, and the gate of your chastity did not open or move" (Pons 1994, p. 202). Early Hispanic Marian liturgies include antiphons on the Virgin Mary as the gateway of heaven: for example, the *Breviarium cisterciense* from Tarragona (Twomey 2019, pp. 189–90).

Beyond this main significance of the iconographic scene on the Doorway, music plays a prominent role in it by exalting the *Regina*, proclaiming Mary to be the conductor or teacher of the orchestra, regardless of her location on the Doorway. Perhaps there is some parallelism between the Doorway of the Apostles and a literary source written in the 7th century. In his *Encomium Assumptionis sanctae Deiparae*, *Theotechnos* wrote: "So that with confidence she rejoices with Him with the choirs of angels, with a multitude of prophets, with the apostles, leading the song herself, who is a teacher, prophetess and joy of virgins" (Álvarez Campos 1979–1981, pp. 377–78). Prophets of the Old Testament, apostles, kings, patriarchs and virgin martyrs are displayed on the three archivolts, jambs and gallery, while the musical angels—or angelic choir—are placed in the heavenly tympanum, all led by Mary the conductor of the choir, together with Christ on her arm. Early patriarchs like Hippolytus (3rd century) likened the prophets to musical instruments, this time conducted by God: "It was these [the prophets], in fact, who were, all of them, endowed with prophetic spirit and were honoured with dignity by the Logos himself, in agreement among themselves like musical instruments, with the Logos always within them as a plectrum, and plucked by Him they announced what God wished" (Hipólito 2012).

Bearing in mind that the documentary sources only mention angelic musicians above the Virgin, as has been confirmed in the cathedral's archival sources, the tympanum was dedicated exclusively to the angelic-musical sculptural ensemble. The stone orchestra is playing the conventionally traditional instruments of the Middle Ages, commonly used in the festivities or celebrations of the city where civil music was interwoven with sacred music, as we know from literary sources. The fact that the musical reality in the urban environment was involved in acts of devotion, celebrations and processions meant that music played a part in religious spirituality. The rich visual scene of the musical instruments of the minstrel angels, the performers in the tympanum of the Doorway of the Apostles in the Cathedral of Valencia, reflects on the one hand the development of the appearance of musical angels together with the conceptual image of the Virgin Mary in iconographic scenes, especially as of the 13th century, and on the other, the musical tradition that defines a part of Valencian culture's identity. The Door of the Apostles presents the message of God's legacy as a festive celebration that rejoices to the sound of music, to the *tempo* that shows all that the city can offer to whoever arrives under it, and what is most important within it.

5. Conclusions

The Door of the Apostles was integrated into the urban area, giving onto the Plaza de la Seo, as an important civil and religious point in the city of Valencia. In this vein, sacred architecture and sculpture had an educational and moral purpose, where the order in construction, the cosmic-theological order and the musical order all fell into harmony so as to carry the same message: the Incarnation of Christ with the Virgin Mary in the mullion, with Mary as the gate to heaven, the guide between the earthly and the heavenly when entering the temple of God. Mary Mother of Jesus proclaimed herself as the door of light, emphasising her virginity: the light penetrates without its rays breaking up, with her letting her son enter and leave her womb. With the door's remodelling in 1599, the

rhetorical function of the image of Mary at the entrance to the church was to be altered on removing the mullion where the stone image of the Virgin rested, although this meaning is preserved even now since the figure is in the tympanum. However, regardless of her location, she was still the director of everything happening in the Doorway, guiding those who crossed the threshold. Furthermore, she was the guide of prophets, apostles, virgins and musical angels. The latter seen in the tympanum as protagonists showed the great significance of music for divine glory, habitually accompanying the conceptual image of the Virgin as of the 13th century, and represented as minstrel angels or *sonadors* (sound-makers), using the instruments of both urban and sacred tradition to reflect a civil society with a deep-rooted musical heritage that took part in religious spirituality.

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Civic Pride and Political Devotion: The Relics of Thomas Becket in Siena

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Abstract: Through a survey of archival and primary source material, this article discusses the existence of St. Thomas Becket's relics in Siena cathedral. The institution's inventories indicate that, from 1482 until ca. 1529, the relics were housed in an ostensory kept in the sacristy. Today, this object is displayed in the Sala del Tesoro, in the Museum of the Opera del Duomo in Siena. Although the ostensory has been examined in previous scholarship concerned with mapping the cathedral's heritage, its function as a vessel for the relics of Thomas Becket, and indeed the very presence of these relics in Siena, remain unexplored. Thus, seeking to understand the nature of Becket's reception in Siena, I examine the whereabouts of his relics within the cathedral, to then widen the investigation to the city at large. The evidence shows that although there were no chapels, altars or churches dedicated to Thomas Becket within the city walls, Siena still engaged with Becket's sainthood and legacy on multiple levels.

Keywords: Thomas Becket; relics; Siena; Church history

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On 29 December 1170, the controversy surrounding Church and State involving Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury (1118–1170), and Henry II King of England (1133–1189), finally culminated with the former's murder at the hand of four knights, who claimed to act at Henry II's behest.[1] In the aftermath of the event, the Roman Church immediately endorsed Becket's status as a martyr, canonizing him only three years after his death (1173). Having died defending the interests of the Roman Church over those of the king, Becket became the official symbol of the *libertas ecclesiae*—the Church's prerogative of immunity from secular jurisdiction and authority.[2] The complexity of Becket's legacy has led to extensive academic interest in the dissemination of his cult across Europe. Recent contributions, such as Marie-Pierre Gelin's and Paul Webster's edited volume on Becket, have addressed this very phenomenon, seeking to establish the impulse behind such a widespread circulation of the saint's cult within those geographies connected to the Plantagenet dynasty.[3] With a survey of historical and modern texts, Kay B. Slocum has demonstrated the continued engagement with and different approaches to Becket's persona across the centuries.[4] More recently, the celebrations for the 850th anniversary of Becket's martyrdom in 2020 stimulated a renewed vitality within Becket scholarship. Despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, causing major disruptions to customary access to libraries, archives and museums, most of these projects still came to fruition. In 2020, the British Archaeological Association released a special issue entirely dedicated to Becket, with authors examining the saint's cult in Britain and Europe.[5] A year later, the British Academy held a three-day international conference—*Thomas Becket: Life, Death and Legacy*—where I presented a modified version of this article. Comprising several papers delivered at this event, MDPI journals published a special issue titled *St Thomas Becket in Art*.[6] Finally, also in 2021, the British Museum opened the exhibition *Thomas Becket: Murder and the Making of a Saint*.[7] Although the pandemic affected the influx of visitors and capacity of the exhibition space, the public's positive response to this event reflects how the story of Becket and his legacy continues to captivate not only academia, but also the general public.[8]

With regard to the Italian peninsula, scholars have examined the dissemination of the saint's cult along the via Francigena—the main pilgrimage route that connected Canterbury to Rome—as well as those centers loyal to either the Ghibelline or Guelph factions—supporters of the Imperial party versus that of the pope.[9] Three separate chapters, in the edited volume *Dall'Italia a Canterbury*, explore the emergence of Becket's cult in Northern Italy, Florence, and Como.[10] A map appended to this volume identifies forty Italian cities in which St. Thomas of Canterbury was the object of specific worship.[11] Siena is not included in this list, nor is it ever mentioned in the wider scholarship related to Thomas Becket's following in Italy.[12] Thus, the present research contributes to this discourse by providing physical evidence for Becket's relics in Siena, a prominent center along the via Francigena. After its notorious Ghibelline allegiance during the 1260s, Siena had transitioned into a Guelph stronghold by the fourteenth century.[13] This raises questions about the site-specific meaning and reception of Becket's cult within this city, especially considering that St. Thomas was canonized by a Sienese pope, Alexander III (reigned 1159–1181). Through a survey of the duomo's inventories and other primary sources, this paper traces the vicissitudes of Becket's remains within the Sienese Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta up to the eighteenth century. This documentation shows that, from 1482 until the mid-sixteenth century, Becket's relics were kept in a Eucharistic monstrance. After examining the metalwork collection in the Museum of the Opera del Duomo in Siena, I identified this object with an ostensory now displayed in the Sala del Tesoro. While its commission, purpose, and past have been discussed in relation to the cathedral's artistic heritage, the primary focus of my paper is the unexplored relationship between this vessel and the relics housed therein.[14] The inquiry then extends to the city as a whole, seeking to understand how Becket's cult manifested in Siena, if at all. This entails an assessment of thirteenth-century liturgical texts, and leads to new considerations surrounding Spinello Aretino's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico (c. 1408), a decorative cycle commemorating the Sienese pope Alexander III.

The earliest documentary record signaling the presence of Becket's relics in the Sienese cathedral is the 1482 sacristy inventory, which describes them as contained in:

> A silver tabernacle, circular, covered with certain gold leaf, with a silver base, with nine precious stones, with the coat of arms of the cardinal of San Marcello, to cherish the body of Christ. It housed the relics of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, it weighs five pounds and ten ounces, with a small moon inside.[15]

Despite this being the first mention of the relics within the cathedral inventories, the ostensory had been recorded in the previous register from 1473, but with no reference to Becket's relics:

> A tabernacle gilded with silver, to cherish the body of Christ with certain (gold) leaf and a small cross on top, with nine real precious stones, with a small moon inside, with the arms of the cardinal of San Marcello and with the arms of the Sienese cardinal Piccolomini, it weighs five pounds and six ounces, with glass and two eyes of crystal-glass.[16]

I propose that the 1473 and 1482 inventories refer to the same object and that the *tabernacolo* in question is in fact an ostensory, a multi-lobed monstrance used to showcase both the Eucharist and relics, to convey their corporeal qualities. Thanks to these inventories' descriptions, I was able to identify the *tabernacolo* with an ostensory still preserved in the Sala del Tesoro, in the Museum of the Opera del Duomo in Siena (Figure 1).[17] The object is made of gilded silver; it measures 56 cm in height and weighs 2.4 kg.[18] The most compelling visual proof to solidify this identification is the correlation between the coats of arms in the inventories and those on the ostensory in the Sala del Tesoro.[19].

Figure 1. Ostensory, Roman workshop, ca. 1468, gilded silver, height 56 cm, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena (photo: Opera della Metropolitana di Siena).

The emblems described in the 1473 entry belong to two Sienese cardinals—Antonio Casini (ca. 1378–1439), created cardinal with the title of San Marcello, and Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (1439–1503), future Pope Pius III and nephew of Pope Pius II (reigned 1458–1464). Both of their coats of arms are engraved on the vessel in the Sala del Tesoro. On the front of the monstrance, Casini's arms are displayed on the lower base, whereas Piccolomini's can be seen on the upper base (Figure 2). This composition is inverted on the rear of the monstrance (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Detail from Figure 1. Cardinal Piccolomini's and Casini's coat of arms on the front of the Ostensory (photo: author).

Figure 3. Detail from Figure 1. Cardinal Piccolomini's and Casini's coat of arms on the rear of the Ostensory (photo: author).

The fact that Piccolomini's arms were not recorded in the 1482 register does not disprove this identification, as there could be occasional omissions and inconsistencies within succeeding inventory notes. For instance, this occurred for one of the Opera's chasubles between the 1458 and 1467 inventories. In 1458, a chasuble (pianeta) decorated with the *Agnus Dei* and gold brocade is described as bearing the coat of arms of Caterino di

Corsino, Operaio of the Duomo from 1404 to 1420.[20] In the following inventory of 1467, this object is identified by the same description, but with the omission of Caterino's arms.[21] Considering the different locations of the family emblems on the ostensory—one at the bottom and the other at the top of the base—it is easy to imagine how the scribe of the 1482 inventory recorded the first coat of arms he saw before moving onto the next object. The person composing the 1473 note was evidently more scrupulous and recorded both arms.

As for the individuals these emblems represent, Francesco Piccolomini had been made archbishop of Siena in 1460 and was the patron of several artistic enterprises in the duomo, such as the Piccolomini Altarpiece and Library.[22] Antonio Casini too had been bishop of Siena (1409–1426), as well as a munificent patron to his native city, as exemplified by his testamentary donations to the cathedral's sacristy.[23] Notably, however, Piccolomini was born in 1439, the same year as Antonio Casini's death. The joint presence of the two cardinals' coats of arms is then explained through a letter dated 23 November 1468, which identifies the object's patron.[24] The epistle was written by Francesco Piccolomini to the authorities of the Opera of the Duomo in Siena, informing them that a new and more precious ostensory was to replace a less adequate one in the cathedral's sacristy. The new object was to be made in Rome by a local goldsmith and financed through Antonio Casini's testamentary bequests to the duomo of Siena. The ostensory's visual features confirm this. Casini's emblem functions as a homage to this cardinal, whose endowment allowed for the creation of the monstrance. Nonetheless, the predominance of Piccolomini's involvement with the object is evident in the reiteration of the moon motif—from Piccolomini's coat of arms—that decorates the outer circumference of the glass eye and the two friezes at the base. Both the moon motif and galero (the red broad-brimmed cardinal hat) at the head of the coat of arms would identify the patron of this work as Francesco Piccolomini, who at the time of the 1473 record had been cardinal for thirteen years.

However, the 1468 letter makes no mention of Thomas Becket's relics. On the contrary, Piccolomini specifies how the new monstrance was to be used in procession for the celebration of the Corpus Christi.[25] Nonetheless, this shows that the ostensory in the Sala del Tesoro was not made specifically to house Becket's relics and that they were inserted subsequently, as confirmed by the 1482 inventory. The fact that the newly fabricated ostensory was chosen to house the relics of St. Thomas could be interpreted as an attempt to enhance the value of the monstrance. Concomitantly, the relocation of the relics to a new and precious vessel commissioned by Cardinal Piccolomini could also be understood as an action that reveals the elevated status conferred on the saint.

Why were these relics moved to the ostensory in the 1480s? It is at least possible to advance a hypothesis based on Siena's long-standing antagonism with Florence. The English martyr, in fact, was the object of intense devotion in Florence. As early as 1188, Thomas Becket had become the titular saint of an altar in the church of San Donato a Torri.[26] Santa Reparata, the old cathedral of Florence, possessed eight relics of the saint.[27] This church also had an altar dedicated to St. Thomas, which was the site of solemn and well-documented celebrations in honor of the martyr.[28] Santa Reparata even owned a now-lost antiphonary devoted entirely to Becket: *De sancto Thomaso di Conturbia*.[29] Another altar consecrated to the English saint stood in Santa Maria Novella, and was under the *jus patronatus* of the Minerbetti, a Florentine family that claimed to descend from a branch of the Becket family, hence the etymology of their name 'minor Becket.'[30] Thus, the presence of St. Thomas' relics in Siena might have played a political role in the civic competition between the two Tuscan cities. As a matter of fact, by the time that the relics were relocated in Piccolomini's ostensory, Siena and Florence were already competing with each other to secure the relics of St. John the Baptist, as noted by Timothy B. Smith.[31] During the fifteenth century, Florence started to actively pursue the relics of the Baptist, the most important patron saint of that city.[32] The acquisition of the Baptist's right arm and hand by the Sienese Commune in 1464 left Florence in a state of frustration, as demonstrated by the

city's attempts to then purchase the left arm of St. John in 1489.[33] It may well be that the relocation of Becket's relics to a prominent and precious monstrance during the 1480s was part of this narrative and served as a means to claim St. Thomas' divine protection for the city of Siena, and therefore divert it from Florence.

Retracing the inventories after 1482, Becket's relics are recorded within all the following registers of the sacristy until the one drawn up in ca. 1529.[34] They then disappear from the following inventory of 1547, where the ostensory is still catalogued, but without any mention of Becket's relics.[35] All these registers remain vague in their descriptions and never account for what type of relics were preserved inside the monstrance.[36] Due to the shape of the ostensory, it is at least possible to propose what the remnants could have been by point of comparison. For instance, the camoscio relic—a leather bandage used by St. Francis to protect his side wound, preserved in the Basilica of Assisi, is also displayed in a sunflower-shaped ostensory with a circular glass eye (Figure 4).[37] The vessel's double-sided glass window requires the relic exhibited within this space to have a flat surface. Comparing the objects' similar size, function and shape, it seems possible that Becket's relics in Siena might also have consisted of an assembly of fabrics, perhaps fragments of cloth stained with the saint's blood, a common type of Becket relic.[38] Supporting this proposition and offering another comparison is an inventory from Worcester cathedral dated ca. 1540, which lists amongst its possessions a monstrance containing the brains of St. Thomas.[39] The reference here to a brain relic can be understood as a brain-infused cloth.

Figure 4. Reliquary and relic of the *camoscio*, 1602, silver, height 44 cm, Relic Museum, Lower Church, Basilica of St. Francis, Assisi (photo: © Archivio fotografico del Sacro Convento di S. Francesco in Assisi, Italia).

As stated above, the relics are mentioned one last time in the sacristy inventories in the ca. 1529 registry, thereby suggesting that they were relocated elsewhere between 1529 and 1547. Considering this timeline, the removal of Becket's remains from the ostensory was perhaps engendered by the reassessment of Church policies before and during the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Because of the renewed emphasis that the council imposed on the cult of the Sacrament, it was no longer deemed appropriate for an ostensory to store anything other than the Eucharist.[40] The relics' relocation is confirmed by Francesco Bossi's apostolic visit to the Archdiocese of Siena, which constitutes our next documentary source regarding Becket's relics. On 5 July 1575, Bossi was visiting the cathedral's sacristy and reported that he was shown:

> [. . .] a silver chest made with crystals and many ornaments, and in it there were various relics of saints, wrapped in silk with inscriptions, that is to say
>
> Relics of Saint Sebastian, with the jawbone of Saint Sebastian.
>
> [a piece] Of garment of the Virgin Mary, and of the column where Christ was tied and of the stone of the sepulcher and relics of Saint John the Baptists.
>
> Relics of Saint Victor Martyr
>
> Relics of Saint Thomas of Canterbury
>
> Relics of Saint Julian, and of the martyrdom of Sebastian,
>
> Relics of Saint Fabian
>
> Of garments of the Virgin
>
> Then there were other uncertain relics and without inscription.[41]

From Bossi's transcription, we learn that in 1575 St. Thomas' relics were now kept in a silver chest, still in the sacristy. The fact that they are named is significant, as they are recorded in the company of prestigious relics such as those of St. Sebastian, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, and St. Victor—the latter being one of the city-patrons. This is supported by the sharp distinction between the attestable relics that Bossi singles out as opposed to the uncertain ones—where 'uncertain' (*incertae*) probably indicates that they were devoid of identifying labels.

The very last documentary mention we have of them is in Girolamo Gigli's *Diario Sanese*, published in 1723, where the author reports how the relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury could be admired in the Chigi chapel, in the cathedral.[42] This space, also known as Cappella del Voto or Cappella della Madonna delle Grazie, was under the patronage of Fabio Chigi, the seventeenth-century Sienese pope, Alexander VII (reigned 1655–1667). Unfortunately, I have been unable to confirm this mention within the duomo inventories relative to the years of the Chigi chapel's construction (1660–1664) up until 1723, the year of Gigli's publication.[43] It should be noted, however, that in these registers, even those concerning other chapels' entries, relics of saints are notably omitted from all such descriptions, which instead tend to focus on the textiles, metalware, sculptures, paintings, and marbles used to decorate the duomo's chapels.[44] Nonetheless, Becket's relics are also absent from Monica Butzek's transcription of documents surrounding the dense correspondence between Alexander VII, the operaio, the architect, and other eminent figures acting as intermediaries during the construction of the Chigi chapel.[45] No mention of them is made in Richard Krautheimer's and Roger B.S. Jones' transcription of Fabio Chigi's diary, although this publication does not contain the full text, preserved at the Vatican Library.[46] If we were to accept Gigli's observation, it would be tempting to interpret Fabio Chigi's incorporation of Becket's relics in his chapel as a means to link his papal identity to that of his predecessor Alexander III, the first Sienese pope, who canonized Thomas of Canterbury. In fact, Chigi had chosen Alexander as his pontifical name specifically to pay homage to his Sienese compatriot and spiritual forebear. Chigi also renovated the monument in honor of Alexander III in the Lateran in Rome, where the twelfth-century pope was believed to be buried.[47] The inscription on this cenotaph states outright that Chigi

thought of himself as "Alexander III's successor in name and office and citizen of the same city".[48] Just before this statement, the inscription recounts Alexander III's canonizations; the first to be mentioned is that of Thomas Becket.[49]

Having analyzed the vicissitudes of Becket's relics in the duomo, we now move towards the wider civic reception of St. Thomas' cult in Siena. Aside from those in the cathedral, other Becket relics were kept in the church of Santo Stefano in Siena. Again, we have Francesco Bossi to thank for this reference. In the apostolic visit to this church, on 15 July 1575, Bossi records that he was shown "relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury".[50] The fact that within the city walls two different institutions preserved the remains of the English saint would seem to indicate that Becket was the object of devotion in Siena. Furthermore, in the Sienese *contado*, the Ospedale of Santa Maria della Scala held the rights of patronage over a chapel dedicated to Becket at Casole d'Elsa.[51] A final piece of evidence concerns St. Catherine of Siena, who, in fact, owned a portable altar containing a stone, stained with the blood of the Canterbury martyr.[52] Indeed, St. Catherine's own private devotion to Thomas Becket, as well as the Ospedale's involvement with the chapel of St. Thomas in Casole, would be valuable topics to pursue in future investigations.

Within the city walls, however, there were no churches, chapels, or altars dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. In all likelihood, the relics in the duomo and Santo Stefano would have been shown and celebrated for the saint's feast day on 29 December. This is especially easy to imagine for the duomo relics kept in Piccolomini's monstrance, which would have provided an excellent display for processions. Apart from this occasion, they would have remained in the sacristy, secluded from public worship. Nevertheless, this was standard practice in the late medieval and early modern periods. If not stored in altars, most relics in the possession of a church would have been tucked away and inaccessible to the larger public of worshippers.[53] This was to ensure their conservation, prevent their theft, exposure, and loss. Such praxis can also be confirmed by Bossi's visit to the cathedral, where he records relics as prestigious as the Virgin's garments or the column where Christ was whipped as being kept in the sacristy, and therefore not exposed to public view. Furthermore, the relics of John the Baptist, St. Victor, and St. Sebastian, that Bossi mentions in the passage reported above, were also housed in the sacristy, when in fact each of these saints had his own dedicatory altar in the cathedral. Even the most prestigious relic in the possession of the Opera, the right arm and hand of the Baptist discussed above, was stored in the sacristy.[54] Therefore, the fact that the relics of St. Thomas were kept out of sight from a wider audience should not be taken as an indication of the absence of a local devotion towards this saint.

Turning to liturgy, specifically to the *Ordo Officiorum Ecclesiæ Senensis*, allows us to understand how Becket's feast day was celebrated, which in turn can offer a further insight into whether his cult had particular traction in Siena. The *Ordo Officiorum* is an illuminated manuscript from ca. 1215, invaluable for its description of the canonical hours and liturgy of the Sienese cathedral.[55] The Ordo shows that Becket's *dies natalis* (29 December) was celebrated with the reading of nine lections.[56] To put this in perspective, the feasts of the city's patrons were also commemorated with nine lections, which was the maximum number assigned to an individual recurrence. In his study of the *Ordo*, Edward B. Garrison observes that the most important feasts for the city were the ones listed in the three following chapters: *De solemnitatibus, in quibus Antiphonas duplicamus; Quibus festis Vigiliam facimus* [. . .]; *Quibus Festis ad Vesperum canitur Responsorium, & sola Major Campana Pulsator*.[57] St. Thomas of Canterbury's feast is inserted within the final chapter listed by Garrison. In this section, Becket is mentioned amongst a selected group of saints "for whom we sing until vespers and keep vigil because of their privilege and merit".[58] This special distinction, along with the fact that nine lections from Becket's life were assigned to the celebration of his *dies natalis*, is an indication of the feast's significance. It should be noted, however, that in the *Ordo*'s description of Becket's feast day, no mention of his relics is made. This is in contrast with the celebrations of other saints, in which relics are specified

and included in the description of their respective saint's festivities.[59] This might suggest that by ca. 1215 the cathedral still did not possess Becket's relics. If this were the case, then it could be advanced that the relics in question arrived in Siena after the translation of Thomas Becket's body in Canterbury in 1220, which provided the occasion to collect new relics *ex corpore*.[60] Nevertheless, I would be cautious in arguing that their absence from the *Ordo* constitutes indisputable proof of their arrival in the cathedral *post* 1215–1220.

The evidence regarding Siena's reception of Becket's saintly identity also extends to the visual arts, namely to Spinello Aretino's 1408 frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico, depicting the stories from the life of the Sienese Pope Alexander III. This narrative recounts the twelfth-century conflict between Papacy and Empire (1159–1178), culminating in the defeat of Frederick I Barbarossa (reigned 1155–1190) and the end of a twenty-year long papal schism.[61] One of these scenes, which is unfortunately very damaged, shows a cleric reading aloud to the pope and cardinals gathered in council (Figure 5). At the pope's feet lies a chest filled with bones. Stefan Weppelmann has convincingly linked this fresco to a drawing by Spinello at the Morgan Library (Figure 6).[62] Even if the latter presents some variations from the fresco in Siena—notably, the drawing is bereft of the reliquary chest—the correlation between the two is confirmed by an inscription in the top right corner of the drawing that reads: "As Pope Alexander listened to the miracles of Thomas of Canterbury, he canonized him".[63] This allowed Weppelmann to identify the drawing as a preparatory sketch for the scene in the Sala della Balìa, which in turn confirms the subject matter of the fresco in Siena as the *Reading of the Miracles of Thomas Becket for his Canonization*.[64]

Figure 5. Spinello Aretino, *Reading of the Miracles of Thomas Becket for his Canonization*, 1407–1408, frescoe, Sala della Balìa, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena (photo: Fabio Lensini, © Comune di Siena).

Figure 6. Spinello Aretino, *Pope Alexander III in Council (Canonization of Thomas Becket)*, 1407–1408, pen and brown ink, 282 × 361 mm, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York (photo: The Morgan Library & Museum, New York).

The specific choice of Becket's canonization as the subject matter of this section of the cycle is supported and contextualized through the diplomatic backdrop of Spinello's commission. During the first decade of the fifteenth century, the city of Siena was directly implicated in the efforts to resolve the Western Schism (1378–1417) and had hosted Pope Gregory XII (reigned 1406–1415) and his papal court—on two separate occasions in 1407 and 1408—during his negotiations with the antipope and rival Benedict XIII (reigned 1394–1417) residing in Avignon.[65] The literature on the subject has established that Spinello's frescoes for the Sala della Balìa draw on the historical analogies between contemporary events and the twelfth-century conflict between Church and Empire.[66] Both periods were characterized by political unrest, papal schisms, and the struggle to affirm the authority of the Church over secular powers. Becket's murder and canonization, in 1170 and 1173, respectively, turned out to be greatly beneficial to the papal cause, as the martyr quickly became the official symbol of faithfulness to the Church to the detriment of secular powers. However, while in Becket's and Alexander III's days Siena was a Ghibelline stronghold, by the first decade of the fifteenth century, the city had become officially Guelph in sympathies.[67] What is not mentioned in the scholarship surrounding this fresco is that the depiction of Becket's canonization in the Sala della Balìa reinforces such a historical parallel. The *Reading of the Miracles of Thomas Becket* makes manifest Siena's fifteenth-century allegiance to the cause of a universal Church against the threat of contemporary secular rulers, such as Ladislaus King of Naples (1377–1414), to the reunification of Christendom under one pontiff.[68] The fact that in Italy Thomas Becket continued to be an inspirational patron saint for those oppressed by secular powers even during the fifteenth and into sixteenth centuries is evidenced, for instance, with Bishop Giovanni Pietro Arrivabene's burial chapel in Urbino's cathedral. Robert G. La France has shown that, in the altarpiece for his chapel, Arrivabene (1439–1504) chose St. Thomas Becket and St. Martin as his saintly intercessors to declare his political condemnation of Cesare Borgia's attempt to subjugate Urbino and abuse of the Church's resources to create a secular state in Central Italy; notably, Cesare

Borgia (1475–1507) was the son of Pope Alexander VI (reigned 1492–1503).[69] Once again, Thomas Becket is here depicted to remind posterity of Arrivabene's loyalty to the Roman Church and his defiance of secular oppressors.[70] Therefore, considering Becket's politically charged sainthood, as well as the presence of Becket's relics in Siena—virtually uncharted until now—there is no doubt that the subject of Spinello's fresco is indeed the canonization of Thomas Becket and that this scene, along with the wider pictorial cycle in the Sala della Balìa, conveyed Siena's political stance during the first turbulent years of the fifteenth century.

To conclude, St. Thomas of Canterbury received enough recognition in Siena for his feast day to be listed amongst the important festivities celebrated in the cathedral. However, it seems that within the city his cult never took root strongly enough to allow for his dedication to an altar, chapel, or church. Still, the presence of his relics in Siena along with Spinello's frescoes in the Sala della Balìa confirm how the city engaged with St. Thomas' legacy on different levels. On the one hand, the inclusion of the *Reading of the Miracles of Thomas Becket* in Spinello's fresco cycle proclaims Siena's Guelph allegiance and participation in the effort to reunite the Western Church during the first decade of the fifteenth century. On the other, the new prominence given to Becket's relics following their relocation to the newly fabricated ostensory in the 1480s was perhaps motivated by Siena's ongoing competition with Florence. Finally, the examination of primary source material has brought to light the additional function of Piccolomini's ostensory, serving as a repository for the relics of St. Thomas of Canterbury. My identification of this monstrance amongst the vast corpus of liturgical objects in the care of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo was possible thanks to the detailed fifteenth-century inventory notes, which, even if slightly divergent, were precise enough to allow me to recognize the physical object. Once identified, the monstrance and its visual features provided further evidence that filled in the lacunae of the textual documentation, such as a parameter to understand the type of relics that could and could not be housed therein. However, many questions still remain unanswered, such as when and why Becket's relics arrived in Siena or whether Alexander VII was indeed involved in their relocation to his Chigi chapel. It is my hope that this paper can serve as a gateway for further investigations into the cult of Thomas Becket in Siena, which in turn will contribute to an ever-more comprehensive understanding of the scope and significance of the saint's legacy in Europe.

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Notes

1. For further scholarship into the life of Thomas Becket and his relationship with Henry II, see (Duggan 2004; Urry and Rowe 1999; Barlow 1986; Knowles 1971).
2. For a comprehensive account of the controversy between Thomas of Canterbury and Henry II, the martyr's cult in England and its attempted eradication with the establishment of the Church of England, see (Scully 2000).
3. (Gelin and Webster 2016).
4. (Slocum 2018).
5. (Nickson 2020).
6. (Márquez 2021).
7. (De Beer and Speakman 2021).
8. I thank Naomi Speakman at the British Museum for sharing this data with me and discussing the public's engagement with the Thomas Becket exhibition. Also, see (Frost 2021, p. 79).
9. For the association of Becket's cult to the *libertas ecclesiae*, see (Bottazzi 2011); For the cult of Thomas Becket along the via Francigena, see (Stopani 2004); on the site-specific qualities of Becket's cult, as well as his devotion in a Guelph versus Ghibelline context, see (Cipollaro and Decker 2013).
10. Giorgina Pezza, 'La memoria di San Tommaso di Canterbury nell'Italia settentrionale,' in (Stopani 2004, pp. 117–42); Renato Stopani, 'Pulsamus IIII. vicibus, sicut in summis festis. La nascita del culto per San Tommaso Becket a Firenze' in (Stopani 2004, pp. 143–48); Ambra Garancini, 'Tra antichi ospedali e antiche strade: geografia e storia del culto di Thomas Becket a Como,' in (Stopani 2004, pp. 149–58).
11. Ibid., p. 162.
12. As far as I am aware, there is virtually no secondary literature that addresses Siena as a recipient of Becket's cult, nor his relics. The only mention I have found is made in passing by George Kaftal, who in turn refers to Girolamo Gigli's recording of Becket's relics in the Chigi chapel during the eighteenth century. For the former, see (Kaftal 1952, p. 989); for Gigli, see n. 42 below.
13. (Waley 1991, pp. 114–26).
14. The ostensory is described in (Lusini 1939, II, p. 107; Carli 1979, p. 161; Alessi and Martini 1994, pp. 117, 118, cat. 36); it was also recently displayed in the exhibition *Masaccio: Madonna del Solletico: L'Eredità del Cardinal Antonio Casini, Principe Senese della Chiesa*, 19 May 2021–2 November 2021, Siena.
15. "Uno tabernaculo dargento tondo con certi fogliami dintorno dorato con basa dargento con gioie nove collarme del cardinale di santo marcello per portare il corpo di christo stavavi dentro lereliquie di sancto tomme di conturbia pesa libr. cinque on. diece co. lunecta dentrovi" (transcribed from original document, my translation), Siena, Archivio di Stato (hereafter: ASS), Opera della Metropolitana 35, fol. 1v; also published by Monica Butzek, in her transcription of the duomo's inventories, see (Butzek 2012, p. 457, [22]).
16. "Uno tabernacolo dargiento dorato daportare elcorpus domini confogliame et co. una crociectina dacapo co. nove gioie buone conuna luecta dentro colarme del Cardinale disanmarcciello et Colarme del Cardinale disiena de picolomini pesa £ Cinque et o. sei colvetro con due ochi di Vetro cristallino" (transcribed from original document, my translation), ASS, Opera della Metropolitana 34, fol. 2v; and (Butzek 2012, p. 418, [55]).
17. Between the delivery of this paper at the *Thomas Becket: Life, Death and Legacy* Conference in April 2021 and its forthcoming publication, the ostensory in the Sala del Tesoro has been identified with the object described in the 1473 inventory in an article published in May 2021, see (Tavolari 2021, p. 99, n. 11).
18. The weight of the ostensory shifted between 2.3 and 2.4 kg each time I measured it. The media and weight coincide with the inventories' descriptions, since 5 lb. 10 oz. and 5 lb. 6 oz. correspond to 2.5 and 2.4 kg, respectively.
19. The only discrepancy between the ostensory and the object described in the inventories is the number and quality of the stones reported by the sources and the object as it appears today. Both inventories recount nine precious gems, whereas the monstrance today has thirteen. Examining the ostensory reveals that the jewels and craftsmanship of their settings are of very poor quality. Furthermore, the stones are kept in place with threaded fastening, a mechanism that became common in use only with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. This suggests that the original gems were at some point swapped with the current stones. On the history and implementation of nuts and bolts, see (Graves 1984). It is significant that right after Francesco Piccolomini's death in 1503, two gems were already replaced by false ones, as attested by a marginal note on the sacristy inventory of 1506, see (Butzek 2012, p. 515, [19]).
20. "LXIII Una pianeta di cianbellotto açurro con fregio brochato a oro conn Angnusdei et raççi nel detto fregio, fodarata di sciamitello verde, con l'arme di misser Chaterino, sengnia sesancta tre, è rotta e stracciata la fodara dello sciamitello verde" (transcribed from Butzek), see (Butzek 2012, p. 313, [LXIII]); the Operaio was the master in-chief of all cathedral works and Caterino di Corsino was the first Operaio to serve a life-long mandate. For a list of the Operai from 1359–1510, see (Aronow 1985, pp. 507, 508).
21. "Una pianeta di cianbellotto açurro con fregio brocchato d'oro, con Angnusdei et raçi del detto fregio, fodarata di sciamitello, cioè panno lino rosso, sengniata XXXVIIII° 63" (transcribed from Butzek), (Butzek 2012, p. 375, [39]).

[22] On the Piccolomini Altarpiece, see (Caglioti 2005, pp. 387–481); on the Piccolomini library, see (Caciorgna 2008, pp. 148–67; Green 2005, pp. 155–71).

[23] Casini's will has been transcribed by Machtelt Israëls, who also provides a thorough study into the powerful affiliations and patronage of the cardinal. For the testament, see (Israëls 2003, pp. 205–18).

[24] The letter is transcribed in full and published in (Lusini 1939, II, p. 107, n. 1).

[25] Ibid.

[26] (Stopani 2004, pp. 143, 144).

[27] (Tacconi 2005, p. 117, Table 3.3).

[28] "Pro Sancto Thoma Martyre pulsamus IIII. vicibus, sicut in summis Festis, & preparetur & ornetur eius Altare, & Lampades apponantur, nec non & mirtus, & laurus, si haberet potest, Missamque Populi, & majiorem dicimus ad ejus Altare". Transcribed from (Moreni 1794, p. 36); also repoted in (Stopani 2004, p. 145; Cipollaro and Decker 2013, p. 135, n. 25); for the original document, see Florence, Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo, MS Ia.3.8., fol. 7r.

[29] (Tacconi 2005, p. 128).

[30] (Cipollaro and Decker 2013, pp. 128–30).

[31] (Smith 2002, pp. 124–29).

[32] (Trexler 1980, p. 2, n. 4).

[33] The attempts were unsuccessful, see (Cornelison 1998, pp. 177–79); for Siena's acquisition of the precious relics of the Baptist, see (Smith 2002, pp. 103, 104).

[34] The date for this inventory is not stated explicitly in the sources; Butzek convincingly dates it to circa 1529, see (Butzek 2012, pp. 599, 600).

[35] Ibid., p. 654, [14].

[36] For the 1473 inventory, see Ibid. p. 418, [55]; for 1482, p. 457, [22]; for 1506, p. 515, [19]; for 1520, pp. 552, 553 [17]; for ca. 1529, p. 602, [16].

[37] For the *camoscio* relic, see (Marinangeli 1916; Salvati 2005, pp. 104–36).

[38] (Luxford 2020, pp. 129, 134).

[39] I am grateful to Julian Luxford for our discussion on relics' appearance and materiality, as well as for bringing this inventory to my attention. "Item, j monstrans of selver and gylt, with the brayns of Seint Thomas of Canterbury" in (Green 1796, II, p. v).

[40] I thank Philippa Jackson for suggesting how the Council of Trent might have prompted the relocation of Becket's relics.

[41] "Item ostendit quondam capsulam argenteam cum cristallis admodum ornate factam, et in ea aderant variae sanctorum reliquiae sirico involute, cum inscriptionibus, videlicet

Reliquiae sanctis Sebastiani cum maxilla sancti Sebastiani.

De panno beatae Mariae Virginis et de columna, ubi Christus fuit ligatus, et de petra sepulcri, et de reliquiis sancti Iohannis Baptistae

Reliquiae sancti Thomae de Conturbio

Reliquiae sancti Iuliani, et Sebastiani martirium

Reliquiae sancti Fabiani

De vestimenti Virginis Mariae

Item aderant nunnullae aliae reliquiae incertae, et sine scriptis" (my translation); transcribed from (Bossi 2018, I, pp. 30, 31); for the original, see Siena, Archivio Arcivescovile, MS Sante Visite 21, fol. 24v.

[42] "S. Tommasso di Cantuaria, le cui Reliquie vedonsi nella cappella di Alessandro VII. Alla Metropolitana". (Gigli 1723, II, p. 548).

[43] The inventories examined range from 1658, just before work begun on Fabio Chigi's chapel, to 1740, after Gigli's publication. For that of 1658, see Siena, Archivio dell'Opera Metropolitana di Siena (hereafter: AOMS) 1503 (876). Folios 13r, 13v contain the list of relics in the sacristy and f. 15r, 15v the description of the "Cappella della Madonna Santissima delle Grazie". No mention of Becket's relics is made. The following entries refer to the Chigi chapel after its competition. They are: year 1676, AOMS 1505 (877) where the Chigi chapel is described on folios 85v–86v; year 1682, AOMS 1506 (879), 19v–20r; year 1686, AOMS 1508 (880), 29r–29v; year 1710, AOMS 1509 (881), 32r–33r; year 1740, AOMS 1510 (882), 81v–83v. Becket's relics are absent from all these descriptions.

[44] For instance, see that of year 1676, AOMS 1505 (877), 82v–87v.

45 (Butzek 1996). For instance, see pp. 171, 172 for two documents with a list of relics that were sent from Rome to Siena to adorn the Chigi chapel. Obviously, Beckets' relics under examination here could not have come from Rome, as were stationed in Siena. However, this evidence demonstrates the explicit interest of Fabio Chigi in acquiring relics for his chapel. Furthermore, none of these Roman relics are mentioned in the inventories of the Chigi chapel cited in n. 43. Nonetheless, the notable absence of Becket's remains from the wider correspondence transcribed by Butzek cannot corroborate Gigli's observation.

46 (Krautheimer and Jones 1975).

47 On the monument, see (Connors 2021, pp. 457–67; Antinori 2008, p. 86).

48 "ALEXANDER VII PONT MAX/NOMINIS ET MVNERIS IN ECCLESIA SVCCESSOR/PONTIFICI TANTO CIVI SVO" Connors, 'The Alexander III Monument,' p. 461 and n. 14.

49 "THOMAM CANTVARIENSEM ANTISTITEM/BERNARDVM CLAREVALLIS ABBATEM/QVOS VIVENTES AMICISSIMOS HABVIT/EDVARDVM ANGLIAE CANVTVM DANIAE REGES/SANCTORVM NVMERO/ADSCRIPSIT" Ibid.

50 "Reliquiae plurium sanctorum in carta involuta. Sancti Hieronymi, de reliquiis sancti Hieronimi presbiteri, sancti Tomae Certubiae". (Bossi 2018, p. 121).

51 "Memoria delle chiese e delle cappelle, che lo Spedale g.de di Santa Maria della Scala di Siena conferisce come compadrone di esse cio è l'ill.ma consulta del medesimo [. . .] Cappella di Sant' Tommaso di Conturbia nella Terra di Casole dall'anno 1343". ASS, MS D 113, fol. 25.2r (modern signature mark 38r); and again "Padronati di più Chiese, e Cappelle che conferisce lò Spedale". Ibid. fol. 66r (modern signature mark 83r); "Cappella di S. Tommaso mart.e di Conturbia nella Pieve di Casole, per il legato fatto da Bindoccio di Puccio da Casole [. . .]". Ibid. fol. 67r (modern signature mark 84r). This manuscript has been transcribed and published, see (Macchi 2019, pp. 90, 157, 158).

52 (Riedl and Seidel 1992, vol. 2.1.2, p. 713, [233]; p. 815, n. 127).

53 (Luxford 2020, p. 135).

54 (Butzek p. 456, [12]); before the seventeenth century, the precious relics of the Baptists were only stored in the chapel of St. John intermittently, see (Smith 2002, pp. 24–26); for a study of the relics of St. John the Baptist in Siena, see (Grassini 2020).

55 Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati [hereafter: BCI], MS G.V.8.; the *Ordo* was transcribed and published in 1766 by the abbot of the church of San Salvatore in Bologna, see (Trombelli 1766). During the beginning of the fourteenth century, the canons of the duomo drew up a second version of the *Ordo*. In this latter manuscript, the description of Becket's feast day is identical to its prior version of ca. 1215, see Siena, BCI, MS G. V. 9, fol. 12v–14r. I would assume that these liturgical rituals and celebrations remained unvaried until the Reformation.

56 "Novem lectiones de vita ejus facimus", (Trombelli 1766, p. 53).

57 (Garrison 1993, IV, p. 346).

58 "Item propter Privilegium, & meritum quorundam aliorum Sanctorum similiter consuevimus cantare ad Vesperum R. in Vigilia eorum, sicut in festo Sancti Thomae Archiepiscopi, & Martyris, Sancti Gregorii Pape, Sancti Benedicti Abbatis, Sancti Augustini Episcopi, Sancti Hieronymi, Sancti Remigii Archiepiscopi, & Sancti Ambrosii Archiepiscopi". (Trombelli 1766, p. 393).

59 For instance, the relics of St. Fabian and Sebastian, Ibid., p. 291; relics of St. Cantius, Cantianus, and Cantianilla stored in the high altar, Ibid., p. 326; the body of St. Sabinus kept in his altar, Ibid., p. 376; the head of St. Victor stored in the altar of St. Sabinus, Ibid., p. 325, and so on.

60 (Nilgen 2017, p. 160).

61 On these events, see (Rajam 1977, pp. 3–48).

62 (Weppelmann 2003, pp. 3–8).

63 "E papa alesandro udendo emiracoli di sco tomaso di contorbio/si lo canobizzo". Ibid., p. 3. For the visual discrepancies between drawing and fresco, see Ibid., pp. 5–7.

64 Ibid., p. 8.

65 For a detailed account of this period and Siena's relations with Gregory XII, see (Terzani 1960).

66 The fact that what is emphasised in this fresco is the historical parallel rather than the commemoration of an illustrious Sienese native is evident because, throughout the sixteen scenes, Siena never appears and the pope's citizenship is not referred to, see (Rajam 1977, pp. 207–10); for the historical parallel, see also (Norman 2003, p. 155; Borghini 1983, pp. 226–28).

67 On Siena's transition from Ghibelline to Guelph, see (Norman 2018, pp. 21–24).

68 For Ladislaus' political and military ambitions, see (Terzani 1960, p. 36).

69 (La France 2015).

70 Ibid., pp. 1213–216.

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