THE AURA OF THE NUMINOUS AND ITS REPRODUCTION: MEDIEVAL PAINTINGS OF THE SAVIOR IN ROME AND LATIUM

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Several panel paintings made from ca. 1100 to the fourteenth century in the central Italian region of Latium show the enthroned Christ as Savior. They are all based on a sixth-century prototype in Rome, the image of Christ in the Sancta Sanctorum Chapel in the Lateran Palace, the so-called Roman *acheropita*. They are considered throughout this article as copies or replicas (figs. 1, 2).[1] I use this terminology based on an understanding of the concept of the copy in medieval art that did not require or intend an accurate likeness, as associated with the term today. In regard to painting in general, Herbert Kessler defined a medieval replica as being faithful to compositional elements, gesture, and attributes and hence transporting basic or generic aspects of a prototype or model into a copy. This classification allows for a degree of variation that is characteristic for medieval paintings drawing on models or prototypes.[2] In this article I investigate the various forms of appropriation of a "miraculously made" Byzantine icon type that were developed in the course of its making, its ritual function, and its medieval reception. The first Byzantine prototypes of the Roman Savior already should be seen as the products of such a process, through which preexisting conceptual elements of images of pagan deities had been adopted in the context of the rising Christianity.[3] The conception and reproduction of these panels relied increasingly on liturgical acts

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[1] These panels were first recognized as a group by Wilpert 1916, 1113–1120, who focused on only three replicas in Tivoli, Trevignano, and Viterbo. The first and more comprehensive study on these paintings was undertaken by Volbach 1940–1941, followed by shorter essays by Garrison 1949 and 1955–1956; Hager 1962; and recently Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 46–50. They received only minor attention in Hermanin 1945; Paeseler 1938; 1941; Toesca 1927; Matthiae 1987, 149–158, 306–308. Translations, if not indicated otherwise, are mine.

[2] Joseph Wilpert, in 1916, already used the terminology "Nachbildungen," "Repliken," and "Kopien" of the Lateran Savior for the triptychs in Tivoli, Trevignano, and Viterbo; see Wilpert 1916, 1107–1120. Some decades later, Richard Krautheimer (1942) introduced this understanding of "copy" in connection with medieval architecture on a more general level. More recently, Herbert Kessler elaborated this idea in the context of the fine arts in his important 1994 article and in his work on the medieval copies of monumental early Christian painting. At about the same time, Gerhard Wolf (1990) applied this terminology to icons and panel paintings. Most recently, Christopher Wood (2008, 38–40) connected the theoretical model of reference to copies of *acheiropoietic* icons.

[3] I use the term "appropriation" etymologically as in the Latin *appropriare* = "to make one's own," which, as Robert Nelson has shown, connects with Roland Barthes's semiotic theory of the "myth." Like "myth," appropriation is described as a process during which the appropriated object maintains certain specific connotations and at the same time shifts them to create something new. For the theoretical aspects of the term and its implication for art history, see Nelson 2003, esp. 161–164.

Fig. 1. Icon of the Savior (achiropita*). Rome, Sancta Sanctorum (photo Vatican Museums, Photographic Archives).*

Fig. 2. Savior icon. Sutri, Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

of veiling (*velatio*) and revealing (*revelatio*) the image, and thus visually enhanced the aura of the numinous that all these paintings shared. Although this paper focuses on a series of panel paintings that are closely linked in iconography and geographical region, their contextualization offers insights on a more general level about different strategies of authentication and representation for medieval images. Not being related to authorship, medieval concepts of authenticity applied to images centered on the idea of truth, which relied heavily on the hierarchical authority given by God to the representatives of his legacy, or upon supernatural events, such as miracles, visions, and dreams. The authenticity of medieval icons, as I will show, was established by a wide range of very

different means, which were developed and changed through time. While in the early Middle Ages authenticity of images was constructed through textual narratives of their *acheiropoietic* creation and miraculous self-reproduction, through belief in their effective apotropaic power, and by means of their engagement in civic rituals, these strategies changed to juridical strategies, such as eyewitness testimony of artist saints and the notarized integration of relics in the panels of icons themselves in the high and later Middle Ages.

1. The Prototype

The Roman *acheropita* and Its Byzantine Counterparts

The icon of the Savior in the chapel dedicated to San Lorenzo in the Papal Palace in Rome, the Sancta Sanctorum, which is first documented in the mid-eighth century, is regarded as the oldest panel painting of Christ in Rome.[4] It is mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis* with the Greek term *acheiropoietos* (not made by human hands), suggesting Byzantine roots of the icon.[5] Today almost nothing remains of the painted surface of the panel, but according to Joseph Wilpert, who was able to examine the icon thoroughly on 21 January 1907, it showed Christ in a frontal position sitting on a golden throne lavishly decorated with pearls, gems, a red pillow, and a footstool. The figure was clothed in a purple tunic, highlighted with gold reflections and a golden *clavus*, and wore a *pallium* and sandals. His right hand was raised to the height of his chest in a speaking gesture, while his left hand rested on a scroll.[6] Remains of paint appear on both sides of the face and are part of a one-line inscription in golden *capitalis*, distinctively set apart from the blue background of the panel. In contrast to the Greek naming in the later *Liber Pontificalis*, the fragmented inscription on the panel itself makes an Eastern origin unlikely.[7] The Latin letters *N(u)EL* form the last part of the word *Emmanuel*, for Christ, as the title of the icon. The panel's material, chestnut, also points to a local Roman provenance as well as to a date in the mid-sixth century.[8] In this period, a series of miraculously made images emerged in Byzantium, such as the *Mandylion* from Edessa (from the Arab word *mandil*, "napkin"), the image from Memphis with the impression of Christ's face, and the image from *Kamuliana,* which assumed the most prominent place in a group of icons that originated in Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt during the reign of Justinian (527–565) (fig. 3).[9] While the images from Edessa and Memphis were considered impressions of Christ's face, the *Kamuliana*—according to its oldest legend—was instead a picture that had been found in a well. It thus related to pre-Christian cult images of pagan deities (*Diipetes*) believed to have fallen from the heavens and constitutes a Christian appropriation of a specific type of pagan images.[10] All these Christian *acheiropoietic* images were mobile; the *Kamuliana*, for example,

[4] Millino 1666; Marangoni 1747; von Dobschütz 1899, 64–68; Wilpert 1907; 1916, 1101–1113; Grisar 1907a, 49–67; 1907b; dell'Addolorata 1919; Kollwitz 1953; *Volto di Cristo*, including articles by Serena Romano, Maria Andaloro, Walter Angelelli, Enrico Parlato, with catalogue entries pp. 53–63; Romano 2002, 301–319; 2001/2002 [2004]; Noreen 2006; Nees 2009. I am grateful to Larry Nees, who generously shared the manuscript of this article with me before its publication.

[5] Life of Stephen II, in Duchesne 1955–1957, 1:443. For the English translation, see Davis 1992, 57.

[6] For the reconstruction of the painting, see Wilpert 1907, 163, who was able to examine the icon in detail.

[7] Wilpert 1907, 163–165, figs. 1 and 2.

[8] For the material and the date, see Wilpert 1907, 164–165.

[9] Von Dobschütz 1899, chaps. 2–5, 7; on the *Mandylion*, see esp. chap. 5, 102–196; on the *Mandylion*, Kessler, *Volto di Cristo*; Runciman 1929; Grabar 1931; Bertelli 1968; Belting 1990; Wolf 1990; Kessler, *Holy Face*; Wolf, *Holy Face,* 157–166; *Mandylion*.

[10] Von Dobschütz 1899, 40–45; 125*–127*; Wolf 2002, 20–21.

Fig. 3. King Abgar and the Mandylion, *wing of a triptych, detail. Mount Sinai Monastery (photo Princeton–Michigan Expedition to Mt. Sinai).*

Fig. 4. Procession of an image of Jupiter, detail of a funeral stele. Chieti, Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo (photo © Zehavi Husser).

made it to Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, where its rising status clearly was connected to its protective powers.[11]

The image from Edessa, or *Mandylion*, is first mentioned as "made not by human hands" in the description of the Persian siege of Edessa in Evagrius's *Historia ecclesiastica* of 544.[12] This first occurrence of an *acheiropoietos* therefore takes place in a military context. According to the account, the *Mandylion*, after having been sprinkled with holy water by the patriarch, helped destroy a siege tower and foil the attack. The image was subsequently credited with the rescue of the city and achieved a new status as a *palladium*.[13] The *Mandylion* from Edessa was not the only miraculously made image employed in the event of a threatening military conflict.[14] General Philippikos, brother-in-law of the emperor Mauritios, used the *Kamuliana acheiropoietos* to motivate and inspire

[11] On Byzantine *acheiropoietic* icons, see von Dobschütz 1899, 40–196; on the *Kamuliana* icon in particular, see pp. 45–50.

[12] For the edition and discussion of the historical sources on the *Mandylion*, see von Dobschütz 1899, 102–196, 158*–249*; Drijvers, *Holy Face*, 13–31; Cameron 1981; 1983; Cameron, *Holy Face*; Kessler, *Volto di Cristo*, 67.

[13] Von Dobschütz 1899, 108–109.

[14] Bissera Pentcheva has recently examined the relation between imperial power and the protective function of Byzantine images of the Virgin. These were already being used in 626 to protect Constantinople from attacks by the Avars, Slavs, and Persians. Pentcheva distinguishes between a processional use of the icon of the *acheiropoietos* of Christ carried by the patriarch Sergios to the walls of the city and the images of Mary as Theotokos, which were placed on the wall gates for protective purposes, according to Theodore Synkellos. See Theodoros Synkellos 1975, 80; Pentcheva 2006, 41–43, 206 n. 31.

his troops to fight in the battle against the Persians (585) at Dara. Emperor Herakleios (610–641) traveled with the same icon in his campaign against the Persians.[15] Finally, during the Avar siege of Constantinople in 626, the patriarch carried the *Kamuliana* in a procession along the fortified walls of the city.[16] Such use and function of images was, as Ernst von Dobschütz already noted in 1899, a common practice throughout the ancient Mediterranean.[17] Ritual processions with images of deities were likewise a part of the religious culture in ancient Rome.[18] A first-century stele from Chieti shows a statue of Jupiter carried on a *ferculum*, a litter, in that very context (fig. 4).[19] Dionysus of Halicarnassus refers to the same custom in the early first century regarding the *Ludi Romani*.[20]

It is not surprising that the Christian image, too, would assume this function in moments of extreme political crisis or imminent military threat. The Savior icon was an image of the heavenly ruler who, *in repraesentatio*, was charged with the defense of the city. The early discussions of the *acheiropoietoi* were thus determined by their function as *palladium* during the rise of the Byzantine Empire, as it struggled against approaching enemies from the north and west. Only much later, after the outbreak of Byzantine iconoclasm, were these icons introduced into the theological debate about images.[21] The *Kamuliana*, in fact, appears for the last time at the Council of Nicaea in 787, when it is mentioned only indirectly, as an illustration in a manuscript belonging to the Patriarch of Constantinople from which this exact page had been torn out. The silence concerning the image itself suggests that it had been lost by that time or that it was no longer regarded as important or valuable.[22]

In contrast to its Byzantine counterparts, the Lateran icon of the Savior begins to appear in written sources about two hundred years after it was presumably made. Significantly, the earliest surviving source provides a precise description of the icon's function as *palladium* during a time when Rome was threatened by Lombard troops under the leadership of King Aistulf. In an effort to protect the city from attack, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Pope Stephen II (752–757) walked barefoot with an image—the Savior icon, identified in the text as *achiropsita*[23]—on his shoulders through the streets of Rome, beginning at the Lateran and ending at Santa Maria Maggiore. By arranging and staging this ritual procession, the Roman bishop drew upon the claim of protective powers that characterized the *Kamuliana* image, which had been carried along the defensive walls of Constantinople roughly a hundred years earlier.[24] A similar procession occurred about a century later during the pontificate of Leo IV (847–855), when Rome was struck by an outbreak of plague.[25]

[15] For the role of the *Kamuliana* icon in military campaigns against the Persians, see von Dobschütz 1899, 50–55, 127*–130*; Wolf 2002, 20. This activation of cult images on the battlefield ultimately relates to the accounts of the intervention of the gods in military campaigns, such as Castor and Pollux at the Battle of Lake Regillus (Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.6, 3.11–13, trans. P. G. Walsh, 48–49, 111–112) and Divus Julius at Philippi (Val. Max. 1.8.8, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 110–111).

[16] Von Dobschütz 1899, 53–54, 131*–134*; Pentcheva 2006, 41.

[17] Von Dobschütz 1899, 1–39.

[18] Von Dobschütz 1899; for the relation between the cult of the emperor and *acheiropoietic* icons, see also Volbach 1940–1941, 121–126; Wolf 2002, 3–42.

[19] La Regina 1966.

[20] Dionysus of Halicarnassus mentions in his description of the *Ludi Romani* (*Ant. Rom.* 7.72.13–14) that, at the tail of the procession preceding the games, images of the gods were borne on *fercula* upon men's shoulders. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.,* trans. E. Cary, 4:372–373: "Last of all in the procession came the images of the gods, borne on men's shoulders, showing the same likenesses as those made by the Greeks."

[21] Von Dobschütz 1899, 55–57; Cameron, *Holy Face*.

[22] Von Dobschütz 1899, 57–60, 134*.

[23] Life of Pope Stephen II, in Duchesne 1955–1957, 1:443, 1–7; for an English translation, see Davis 1992, 57; see also von Dobschütz 1899, 136.

[24] Pentcheva 2006, 43.

[25] Wilpert 1907, 262; Wolf 1990, 38–39.

The route from the Lateran to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore on the Esquiline follows the itinerary of the Assumption procession on the eve of 15 August, as first documented at about the same time, in the mid-eighth century.[26] On this occasion the Savior icon, which was kept in the papal chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran Palace, was carried through the city and, after a series of stops in various Roman churches, was united with an image of Christ's mother, the so-called *Salus Populi Romani*, at Santa Maria Maggiore.[27]

The decision of Stephen II, who had begun his pontificate that very year, to employ the Savior icon, in keeping with the ancient and Byzantine use of the *palladium* in times of military danger, should be understood as another type of appropriation that connects the Roman Savior with its Byzantine models. The protective powers of the image establish an authentic aura that works with the idea of supernatural and divine power. Pope Stephen's activation of the Lateran Savior in a ritual context may also be considered in relation to the complex early medieval understanding of antiquity, which is labeled today with the generic term "Carolingian *Renovatio*."[28] This coincided in Rome with the first efforts of the Church to expand the territory of the Papal Republic of St. Peter.[29] Although the Byzantine *acheiropoietoi* and the Lateran Savior are not connected by provenance, the Roman icon was linked to its Greek counterparts through the medium of a legendary narrative at that time. Forced by the threat of iconoclasm, according to the legend, the Byzantine patriarch Germanos tried to save the *Kamuliana* in Constantinople from destruction and set it out to sea, where it found its way, under its own guidance, to Rome. The belief that the Lateran icon was a nonmanufactured sacred image was related to and elucidated by its professed powers of self-propelled movement.[30]

Icons, Veils, and the Numinous

Remains of pigments on the bottom section of the Savior icon suggest that it was part of certain cult practices that included washing or anointing. Such actions are described in a letter written by Pope Hadrian I (772–795) to Charlemagne. According to the pope, icons in Rome were anointed with holy chrism before being presented to the faithful for veneration.[31]

Ritual cleansing may have necessitated the first interventions to preserve the icon. This took place at the latest in the mid-tenth century, during the pontificate of John X (914–928). The panel received a new frame, a cover of hempen canvas on the reverse of which a jeweled cross was painted, and a massive golden nimbus studded with precious gems on Christ's head. For the first time, a cloth was applied to cover the face of the Savior, a detail that suggests the liturgical actions of veiling and unveiling.[32] Similar rites are documented for the *Mandylion* in Constantinople. At the beginning

[26] On the procession of the Lateran Savior, see Marangoni 1747, 112–139; Wolf 1990, 37–73; Parlato, *Volto di Cristo*, 51–52; 2000, 74–80.

[27] On the icon and its context in Roman cult practices, see Wolf 1990.

[28] Schramm 1929, 42–63; Panofsky 1960, 43–54; see also Hubert, Porcher, and Volbach 1970.

[29] On this development, see Noble 1984.

[30] Von Dobschütz 1899, 68.

[31] *Quia usus sanctae nostrae catholicae et apostolicae Romanae ecclesiae fuit et est, quando sacrae imagines vel historiae pinguntur, prius sacro chrismate unguntur, et tunc a fidelibus venerantur*. "It is the custom of our holy catholic and apostolic Roman church that when holy images and histories are painted, they are first anointed with holy chrism and then venerated by the faithful." Mansi 1901–1927, 13:col. 778; Wilpert 1907, 167.

[32] According to Wilpert only the face of Christ down to the neck was covered with a cloth, which was attached to the margins of the icon; see Wilpert 1907, 168. He distinguishes three major phases during which the image underwent significant interventions, which he calls "restorations." During the first campaign, under John X, the painting had already been given a cover of cloth, as Wilpert was able to learn from physical examination of the panel in 1907; see Wilpert 1907, 168–170.

of Lent the image was removed from its shrine in the Palatine Chapel of the imperial palace to the sacristy, where it was wrapped in a white cloth. It was then set on a throne, and four priests, led by the patriarch, carried it through the church. After the procession inside the church, the throne with the icon was placed on an elevated spot (a *stipes*) behind the altar, where the patriarch offered his veneration to the image and kissed it. Toward the end of the liturgy he replaced the white cloth with a purple one and in so doing concealed the image again from public view. The source describes a particular mid-tenth-century practice in Constantinople, at a later time than Pope Hadrian's letter, but the author explicitly refers to the city of Edessa, where the icon had been before its translation to Constantinople in 944, and hence to an earlier tradition of veiling.[33]

The Constantinopolitan practice of veiling and unveiling icons in order to stage their mystic quality is also documented later, in 1075, by the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos. From the mid-eleventh century onward an icon of the Virgin Mary as *orans* with a clipeus of Christ in her chest, at the Blachernai Monastery, became the protagonist of a weekly liturgical ceremony called the "usual miracle." The silk cloth that covered the icon was lifted "miraculously," providing the faithful in the church with visual access to the image until the following morning.[34] In a similar way, the icon of Christ at the Chalke Gate was also concealed behind a miraculous veil.[35]

In Rome, the icon of the Savior was subjected to further interventions in the late eleventh and the second half of the twelfth century, when the entire image—not only the face as in the tenth century—was covered by curtains.[36] Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) arranged for several layers of silk to conceal the painting because the awe-inspiring magnificence of the Savior's gaze was believed to pose a life-threatening danger to the faithful.[37] By then, liturgical unveilings appear to have been an established practice in the cult of icons and were likewise common for the medieval replicas of the Savior.

The custom of concealing the sacred by means of curtains to enhance the numinous quality of a shrine or an icon seems to have deep roots in religious practices and was not confined to images only. In his description of the Shrine of St. Chad, the bishop of Mercia and Lindsey who died in 672 and was buried close to the Church of St. Mary's in Lichfield, the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine monk Bede (672/673–735) mentions that the tomb took the form of a small wooden house (*tumba lignea in modum domunculi facta*). The site containing the tomb was covered (*locus coopertus*) and had an opening at one side (*habente foramen in pariete*) through which the pilgrims could reach in and pick up some dust.[38] Recent archaeological excavations at Lichfield suggest that the devotional

[33] Von Dobschütz 1899, 146, 107*–114*; Hager 1962, 34.

[34] On the icon and the performance of the miracle, see Pentcheva 2006, 154–160. On the veil as an attribute to Byzantine icons, see Nunn 1986. Nunn is particularly interested in the supernatural and healing powers that the veils assume upon physical contact with the icons and that they are able to mediate when a person is touched by the veils.

[35] Nunn 1986, 83.

[36] There is no evidence that the icon of the Savior was subjected to any major interventions between these two phases.

[37] Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia*, dec. III 25 (1212–1214), after von Dobschütz 1899, 292*–293*: *Est et alia dominici vultus effigies in tabula aeque depicta, in oratorio S. Laurentii, in palatio Lateranensi, quam sanctae memoriae nostri temporis Papa Alexander III. multiplici panno serico operuit, eo quod attentius intuentibus tremorem cum mortis periculo inferret*; Marangoni 1747, 88; Wilpert 1907, 170–174; for the Latin edition of the text, see von Dobschütz 1899, 292*–293* and Wolf 1990, 327–328; for the English translation of the source, see Belting 1994, 541–542; Noreen 2006, 234 n. 9. On the protective function of veils for late medieval and early modern paintings in Tuscany, see Schmidt 2007, 191–199.

[38] Bede the Venerable, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.3: *Est autem locus idem sepulcri tumba lignea in modum domunculi facta coopertus, habente foramen in pariete, per quod solent hi qui causa devotionis illo adveniunt, manum suam immittere, ac partem pulveris inde adsumere. . . .* ("Now the same place of the sepulchre is covered with a wooden tomb made like a wooden house, having a hole in the wall, at which they that come thither for devotion's sake are wont to put in their hand and take to them some of the dust therefrom . . ."; Bede 1996 [1930], 2:29).

setting of the tomb, described by Bede as a shrine covered by what could have been a canopy, draws on the arrangement of the tomb of St. Peter in the *confessio* of the Vatican Basilica in Rome, which was commissioned by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604).[39]

Veils that cover icons in Rome are documented as early as the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth century. The *Liber Pontificalis* reports that Pope Leo III (795–816) donated a large purple veil, to hang before images in the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere.[40] The act of veiling panel paintings also occurs in the cult of ancient Roman deities, as seen in a representation of a procession with a veiled painting of the goddess Diana.[41] Textiles and cloths in connection with icons thus had a long tradition in Rome. The use of large veils was also deeply rooted in Christian religious practices.[42] These veils adorned basilicas on feast days, where they were hung as decorative tapestries on the walls, in the *intercolumnia* of the nave, on the choir screens, and on temporary arcades that were erected in the presbytery for special occasions. Curtains are first mentioned in connection with the altar during the pontificate of Sergius I (687–701) toward the end of the seventh century. Particularly popular, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, were the so-called *tetravela* (a set of four veils).[43] They are mentioned in the Life of Pope Leo III, for the high altar of St. Peter's; in the Life of Paschal I, for the Chapel of Saints Sixtus and Fabianus in the transept of St. Peter's; and in the Life of Leo IV, for Santi Quattro Coronati. Each served to highlight the venerability and glory of the altar, to embellish it, and to underscore its sanctity.[44]

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the adornment of the altar area with veils became more common in churches in and around Rome.[45] The Ciborium altars in those churches, for example in the titular Church of San Clemente and the Benedictine monasteries of Sant'Andrea in Flumine, at Ponzano Romano, and Castel Sant'Elia near Nepi, still have iron rods in place that connect the supporting columns of these marble structures (fig. 5). Some of the rods even preserve the iron rings from which the veils originally hung. A good illustration of this practice can be seen in a late eleventh-century fresco of the *Miracle at the Tomb of Saint Clement* in the Lower Church of San Clemente in Rome.[46]

A western counterpart to the Byzantine veiling of the *Mandylion* during Lent is documented at the beginning of the eleventh century. The early eleventh-century *Consuetudines Farfensis*, from the Benedictine Abbey of Farfa near Rome, records that a curtain hanging between the choir and altar during Lent was pulled open on the Wednesday after Palm Sunday after the Compline.[47] This custom quickly spread through the West, as documented in sources from the German monastery in

[39] Rodwell et al. 2008. The rectangular opening that gave visual access to the niche containing the tomb of Peter could be closed behind another set of shutters or a door, which in the mid-ninth century is called *cooperculum*. For the *confessio* in St. Peter's under Gregory the Great, see De Blaauw 1994, 2:539–541.

[40] *Velum tyreum maiorem qui pendet ante imagines.* Duchesne 1955–1957, 1:26; for the English translation, see Davis 1992, 219; Bertelli 1961, 18; Andaloro 1976; 2000, 56; Romano 2002, 303.

[41] Ehlich 1953, 185, fig. 52.

[42] Osborne 1992; for further bibliography, see pp. 314–315 n. 24; Noble 2000; most recently see the meticulous reconstruction of veils in the cult practice of Carolingian Rome in Andaloro 2001–2002 [2003].

[43] Braun 1924, 2:139; Duchesne 1955–1957, 1:375: *Hic fecit in circuitu altaris basilicae superscriptae tetravela VIII, IIII ex albis et IIII a coccino*. For the English translation, see Davis 2000, 88: "Around the altar of the basilica to cover all four sides he provided 8 veils, 4 of white and 4 of scarlet cloth."

[44] Braun 1924, 2:169–170.

[45] Braun 1924, 2:144.

[46] Romano 2006, 132.

[47] Albers 1900, 46; Braun 1924, 2:149: *post completorium cortina tollenda, quae inter chorum et altare pendebat diebus quadragesimae* ("after the Compline, the curtain, which hung between the choir and the altar during Lent, is taken away").

Fig. 5. Ciborium altar. Castel Sant'Elia near Nepi (photo © Alison Locke Perchuk, 2006).

Hirsau and writings by Rupert of Deutz and by Honorius of Autun.[48] Occasionally a veil was drawn aside at a specific moment during the reading of the gospels: "And Behold the veil of the temple was torn" (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38).[49] In the West, where the application of veils in churches was a response primarily to aesthetic demands, the veil acquired a symbolic-liturgical significance relatively late and was limited to the para-liturgical practices of Holy Week, such as the use of Lent cloths.[50]

In contrast, veils played a meaningful role in the Byzantine liturgy early on. They created a hierarchical and liturgical perimeter for the area of the altar and thereby contributed to the effective staging of the celebration of the Mass. At the same time they shielded the mystery of the Eucharist from the eyes of the catechumens.[51]

Screens, cloths, and the strategies of veiling are frequent topoi in the Old and New Testaments (Psalm 103:3, "My God, you are very magnificent, you are beautiful and splendidly adorned. You are garbed in a garment of light"). In the Letter to the Hebrews (Hebr. 10:19–21), St. Paul refers to the body of Christ as a veil that conceals his divinity, providing an early allusion to the paradox of the unrepresentability of the Christian God, who had become man.[52] Patristic and medieval theologians used the metaphor of veiling—the concept of *integumentum* (a cover or shield)—to explain the mystery of Christ's dual nature; in these writings deciphering the meaning of signs and symbols was perceived as an act of unveiling, as a revelation (*revelatio*).[53] Jeffrey Hamburger has drawn attention to the meaning of the veil topos in relation to the iconographic innovations in the context of late medieval female monastic mysticism,[54] while Klaus Krüger has demonstrated that some concepts of the image (*Bildkonzepte*) in Renaissance Italy were rooted in this medieval tradition.[55]

Variations of a diagram of the "mystical ascension of the soul" in Heinrich Seuse's *Exemplar* elucidate the connection of the exegetical topos of the veil with the veneration and presentation of

[48] Braun 1924, 2:148–151.

[49] Braun 1924, 2:152.

[50] Krause 2003; Eberlein 1982, 6–7.

[51] Braun 1924, 2:166–167.

[52] Krüger 2001, 16; Wolf 2002, xii; for the iconographic and exegetical tradition of the veil motif in medieval art, see Eberlein 1982.

[53] On the allegorical concept of *integumentum* in medieval literature, see Brinkmann 1971 and Bezner 2005.

[54] Hamburger 1989, 26–27; 1990, 133–142.

[55] Krüger 2001, 15–17; Schmidt 2007, 199–206.

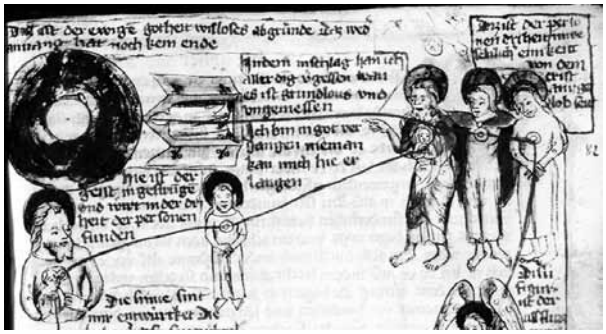

Fig. 6. Heinrich Seuse, Exemplar*, The Mystical Ascension of the Soul. Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Nationale, MS 2929, fol. 82r (photo Bibliothèque Universitaire et Nationale).*

Fig. 7. Henrich Seuse, Andachtsbuch *from Konstanz, The Mystical Ascension of the Soul. Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 710, fol. 106r (photo Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek).*

the image. In the Strasbourg version of 1360–1370 (today in the Bibliothèque Universitaire et Nationale, MS. 2929, fol. 82r), a veiled painting inside an open tabernacle constitutes a barrier for the soul to meet the Godhead (fig. 6). In a late fifteenth-century devotional prayer book from Konstanz (today Einsiedeln Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 710, fol. 106r), the veil that had covered the painting has disappeared and has been replaced by a winged altarpiece with a Crucifixion scene on the center panel (fig. 7).[56] Seen in this light, the new medium of the winged altarpieces, which could be opened and closed, was not only connected with the ritual process of veiling and revealing but could also function as an allegory of a spiritual revelation.

The ritual practices involving the Savior image in the Lateran suggest that the relationship between the image as *integumentum corporis Christi* (the veil of Christ's body) and the rising status of the miraculous image in this period had become more complex and multilayered. The gradual concealing of the Sancta Sanctorum Savior, aside from the purely practical function necessitated by the poor condition of the panel, is connected with the increasingly frequent ritual acts of veiling and revealing that shaped the aesthetic components of cult practices around the medieval altar from the eleventh century onward.

The successive steps of the veiling of the icon came to a peak when the image was "restored" for the third time during the pontificate of Innocent III, between 1198 and 1216. A lavishly decorated silver cover now shielded the painting entirely, except for the face, which was painted on cloth and sealed by a transparent crystal.[57] It is not clear whether by that time the painted figure of Christ had vanished, wiped away by the repeated processes of ritual washings, so that the cover, beyond adding new layers of meaning to the miraculous image and adorning it lavishly, also served the purpose of hiding the damage (fig. 8). The decoration of the cover consists primarily of a variety of geometric ornaments, medallions, squares, and stars, with a series of small figures placed from top to bottom

[56] Krüger 2001, 18.

[57] In the course of the first intervention during the pontificate of John X, the upper part of the panel, where the face had originally been painted, was covered with a cloth on which the face of Christ was painted. See Wilpert 1907, 168; for the intervention during the pontificate of Innocent III, see Wilpert 1907, 174–177; Romano 2002; Noreen 2006. On the silver cover and possible Byzantine influences, see Di Berardo 1994.

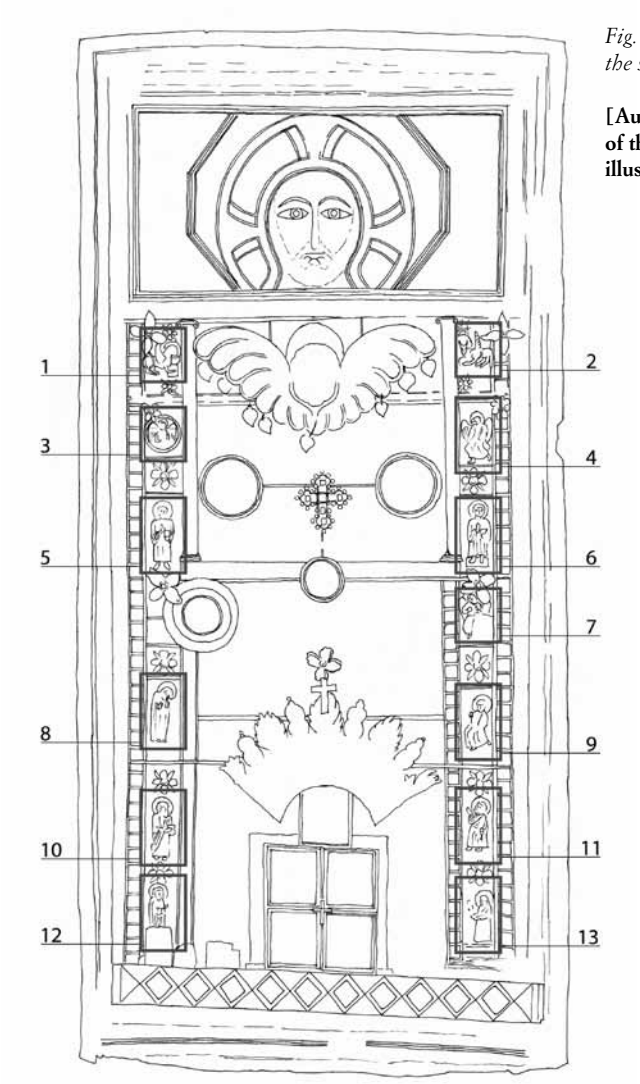

Fig. 8. Icon of the Savior (acheropita)*, iconography of the silver sheath (drawing N. Stanković).*

[Author: Please add a note that specifies what each of the numbers 1 through 13 represents in this illustration.]

along both sides. These decorative elements seem to imitate precious embroidered silks or other textiles, such as those that may have previously covered the icon. In fact, precious fabrics, such as the Byzantine silks made in the sixth to seventh centuries that were kept in the Sancta Sanctorum, show similar ornamental patterns.[58] The roundels, square patterns, and borders of the silver cover are particularly close to those of a large (360 × 112 cm) embroidered linen cloth dating to the eleventh to twelfth centuries that was used to cover the altar of the chapel itself.[59] The visual connection between the silver cover and the altar cloth of the chapel suggests that the ties between the cover and such textiles were even more specific and emphasized the function of the icon as an altarpiece.

Furthermore, the iconography of the silver cover with the representation of the four Apocalyptic Beings and the images of Mary and John the Evangelist, who often appear together in the *Deesis*

[58] For the precious silks that were kept in the treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum, see Volbach 1934, esp. figs. 6 and 9; see also Grisar 1907, 169–182; Volbach 1942. Similar ornamental patterns characterize the garments depicted in the Lower Church of San Clemente in Rome: Mass of St. Clement, Enthronement of Clement; see Romano 2006, figs. 2 and 3.

[59] Volbach 1934, 192–195 and fig. 16.

and at the Passion, moved the Savior icon into an eschatological context.[60] The deacons Steven and Lawrence, and the apostles Peter and Paul, as well as an unidentified pair of saints, established a link with the most important church in Rome, the Lateran Basilica, dedicated to the Savior and John the Baptist. A small door in the bottom portion of the silver cover allows access to the painted feet of the Savior and testifies to the continuity of the traditional custom of the washing of the feet during the week before Easter.[61] Kirstin Noreen has convincingly linked the program of the door's four scenes with the liturgical activities organized by two civic confraternities dedicated to the care of the icon and has pointed to their function of granting access to Christ's body and thus to a form of revelation.[62]

2. *The* acheropita *as Triptych*

While the date of the silver cover is certain, thanks to the inscription naming Pope Innocent III as the donor, there are no indications for the date of the two silver-covered wings. Joseph Wilpert, in his study of the Lateran icon, believed that under John X's pontificate in the tenth century a wooden panel with the image of the *Madonna Avvocata* was attached to the left of the icon, and a second wing showing the Baptist to the right. Taken together, this ensemble would have formed a *Deesis*[63] and would have been well suited for prayers of intercession during liturgical processions. It would have also established a connection with the dedication of the Lateran Basilica to the Savior and the Baptist. This intriguing hypothesis has recently been discussed by Herbert Kessler.[64] Based on the tenth-century testimony of Benedict of Soracte, who mentions three remarkable paintings in the Lateran Palace, Kessler follows Wilpert's argument that the Lateran icon had wings at an early stage.[65] The tenth-century source is not explicit, however, since it provides nothing more than a general description of three magnificently composed images in the Lateran Palace, made in the course of the restoration campaign of the *patriarchium* under Pope John X (914–928), but without indicating their specific location. The terminology used in the passage refers to the quality or beauty of how the paintings were actually made (*mirifice composuit picta decorate*), implying that they were made by painters and not through divine intervention. Indeed, the description more accurately corresponds to other kinds of paintings, of a more decorative character and possibly executed on a monumental scale, which could have been made for the Lateran Palace. The fragmentary inscription from the time of the painting's restoration by John X refers to the icon in the singular and with the demonstrative pronoun: "Pope John restored this icon."[66] The present wooden wings, sheathed in silver and showing the Annunciation, John the Baptist, and other saints, are much more recent, having been made for the Jubilee of 1650. However, according to an early fifteenth-century will

[60] Wilpert 1916, 1010; Hager 1962, 39.

[61] Belting 1994, 65; Wolf 1990, 45–46.

[62] For a detailed discussion of the scenes shown on the silver cover's little door, see Noreen 2006, 230–234. See also her article on the icon in the context of the late medieval and early modern confraternities: Noreen 2007.

[63] Wilpert 1916, 1107–1108; he bases his argument mostly on the existence of the three triptychs in Tivoli, Trevignano, and Viterbo but does not give historical and material evidence for the Roman *achiropita*. Wolf 1990, 40, departing likewise from the later medieval copies, assumes that the Savior icon had received wings that show a *Deesis* group but does not speculate about when that intervention occurred.

[64] Kessler 2007, 118 and n. 32.

[65] Benedict of Soracte: *Renovavit igitur Iohannes decimus papa in Lateranensis palatium; tria mirifice composuit picta* ("Pope John X had renovations made in the Lateran Palace; three wonderfully composed pictures"); Kessler 2007, 118 and n. 32. Duchesne 1955–1957, 2:241 n. 8; Wilpert 1907, 170.

[66] *Hanc (i)conam decimus renovavit papa Iohannes*. See Wilpert 1916, 1106.

Fig. 9. Icon of the Savior (acheropita)*, open state with wings. Rome, Sancta Sanctorum (photo Vatican Museums, Photographic Archives).*

published by Wilpert, two wooden wings that could have been attached to the icon years earlier had received a silver cover in 1405 (fig. 9).[67]

Icons with attached wings were common in antiquity, as is documented in wall paintings in Rome and Pompeii,[68] where they functioned mainly as decorations for the homes of wealthy citizens. Three paintings in the J. Paul Getty Museum, made between A.D. 180 and 250, probably in the Fayum region, were until recently believed to have formed a small triptych (fig. 10).[69] In the reconstruction, the central panel shows a deceased man carrying a sprig of green leaves in his right hand and holding a maroon wreath in his left hand. The left and right panels present the Egyptian deities Serapis and Isis, respectively. The recent examination of the paintings by Norman Muller, published in an article together with Thomas Mathews, however, cautions against such a reconstruction. The wings taken together with the deities measure ca. 50 cm and are much wider than

[67] Wilpert 1907, 254–255 and figs. 16 and 17.

[68] For examples of painted triptychs, see Ehlich 1953, 165–170; a good example from the mid-first century A.D. is in the Casa del Criptoportico, Pompeii: see Gschwantler 1997/2000, 16, fig. 3.

[69] On the panels as triptych, its date, and its function, see Thompson 1982, 24–25, 46–50; see also Gschwantler 1997/2000, 21; Kessler 2007, 119. Thomas Mathews and Norman Muller are currently working on a project on the pre- and early Christian icons in Egypt. They date the central panel to the mid-third century and the wings to the late second century and do not believe that the three paintings were part of a triptych. See Mathews and Muller 2005, 7; see also Mathews 2006, 41–43.

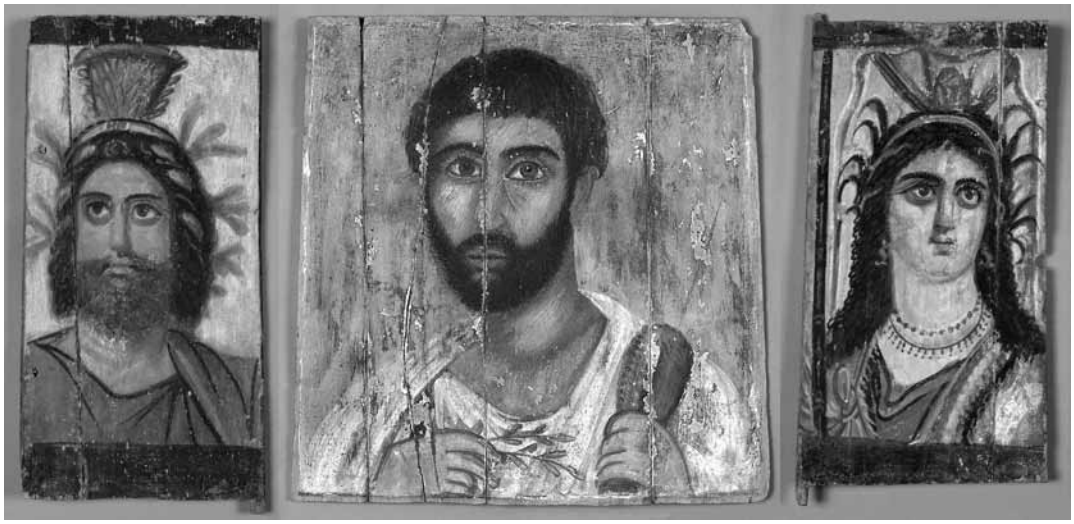

Fig. 10. Triptych of a deceased man between Serapis and Isis, tempera on wood. Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum (photo J. Paul Getty Museum).

the central panel (36 × 37.5 cm). They could have been attached to a different painting, forming a triptych, or to a shrine, as believed by Muller, for use in a domestic setting, on or near an altar, or in a wall niche in the context of the popular ancestor cult in Egypt.[70]

Panel paintings with wings were also common among early Byzantine icons. During his expeditions to Mt. Sinai (1958–1965), Kurt Weitzmann discovered that many of the icons in the Monastery of St. Catherine had been central panels or side wings of triptychs.[71] He was able to reconstruct only one of these in full: a ninth-century icon showing the Ascension of Christ in the center and Sts. Theodore and George on the wings.[72] Like the Roman and Egyptian pieces that preceded them, the Byzantine fragments at Mt. Sinai were small and, as Weitzmann suggested, were apparently used in a domestic or private context.

The only exception among the Sinai material is the relatively large wing of a seventh-century triptych with a standing figure of Elijah, measuring 61 cm. It was probably attached to a slightly taller central panel and was part of a triptych that could have been positioned on a side altar of the church or set against the walls of the nave or chapel.[73] Compared to the Roman Savior icon, with its height of 142 cm, these Byzantine triptychs are significantly smaller. Their wings seem to have functioned as protective covers, like the ones provided for portable icons, which were generally covered by a lid.[74] No evidence has survived for a sixth-century icon of the same size as the Lateran Savior that had wings attached at the time it was made.

In response to the Wilpert/Kessler argument that the Lateran panel had been provided with wings as early as the tenth century, I propose that they were added at a somewhat later date, perhaps

[70] For the various types of framing for such triptychs, see Ehlich 1953, 163–184, and on frames of icons, see Mathews 2006, 42 and fig. 42.

[71] Weitzmann 1976, 9.

[72] Weitzmann 1976, 69–73; the center panel measures 41.8 × 27.1 cm, the wings 38.6 × 13.5 (and 13) cm.

[73] Weitzmann 1976, 10 and ill. B 17.

[74] Weitzmann 1976, 9.

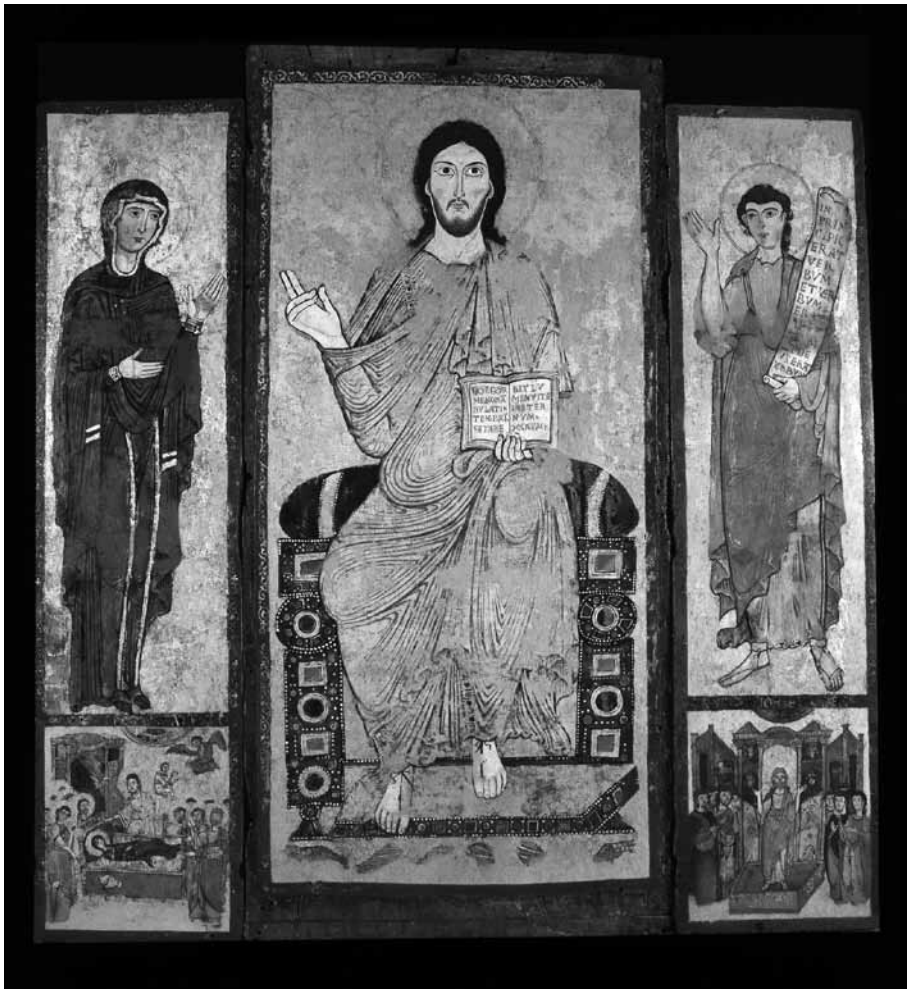

Fig. 11. Savior triptych. Tivoli, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

shortly before the earliest preserved copy was made for the city of Tivoli, around 1100 (fig. 11).[75] The Tivoli replica takes the form of a triptych, with the enthroned Christ in the center panel and Mary and John the Evangelist depicted on the wings. Further evidence for the installation of wings on the Lateran icon by this time appears in the later *Ordo* of the *Liber Censuum* (1192), in which Cencius Camerarius describes the liturgical festivities in the Sancta Sanctorum on Easter morning. The pope, accompanied by cardinals, would enter the chapel and open the shrine of the image of the Savior. He kissed the feet of the image and with elevated voice proclaimed three times, "The Lord has risen from the tomb, alleluia."[76] It seems clear that, rather than providing protection, the wings attached to the Lateran *acheropita* were intended to enhance the miraculous or numinous quality of the image. By the early fifteenth century at the latest, these wings were covered with a silver sheath.

[75] For the discussion of this triptych, see p. 239 below.

[76] Camerarius 1892, 297 n. 32; see also Benedictus Canonicus for the Vigil of the Assumption feast, who describes a similar practice, stating that the pope "opens the image." Although Benedict refers to this practice as going back to Pope Leo IV in the ninth century, no other evidence supports his statement. Grisar 1907, 55–56; Kessler 2007, 118.

Authenticity and the Artist

The growing apparatus of tools for veiling and concealing the Savior icon in its liturgical context coincides not only with the gradual vanishing of the painted surface but also with its demystification in the intellectual discourse of the image, which introduced additional strategies of authentication for an icon. First adjustments to the narratives regarding the status and the idea of the miraculous origins of the Savior icon may be observed in the eleventh century. At this point, the *acheiropoietos* of the Lateran, previously regarded as an image that had miraculously traveled to Rome in the eighth century, began to be viewed as a semi-*acheiropoietos*. The most important witness to this change is the Cistercian monk Nicolaus Maniacutius, from the monastery Tre Fontane in Rome.[77] According to his treatise, the *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris* (written ca. 1140), the apostles decided to make an image of Christ immediately after the Ascension, while they were still under the direct impact of His presence.[78] The task was assigned to the artistically talented "Greek" apostle, Luke. After he had prepared the panel for the painting and sketched the outlines, the image was completed by the hands of angels, shining radiantly in heavenly light. The detailed description of the making of the picture given by Maniacutius suggests that a legendary account of the event was already in circulation. This thesis finds further support in a will of 1029 that bequeaths half of the deceased's house to the image and associates its authorship with the evangelist Luke.[79]

By the thirteenth century the Savior icon was regarded as an image made entirely by human hands, although these hands belonged to the revered apostle St. Luke (Gerald of Wales, *Speculum Ecclesiae*, chap. 6, ca. 1215–1220).[80] These modifications concerning the legendary origins of the icon reveal a change in the parameters of authentication.[81] Miraculous fabrication and efficacy no longer sufficed for this purpose; instead, the eyewitness testimony of the painter-saint authenticates the image and attests to its authority and truthfulness.

Connected with this shift are the proliferating legends regarding the artist-saints Luke and Nicodemus, who were believed to have personally witnessed the biblical events and who were connected with the increasing importation of Eastern icons into the West after the fall of Constantinople in 1204.[82] A passage in a sermon on the Three Magi delivered at S. Maria Novella in Florence by Fra Giordano da Rivalto on the Feast of the Epiphany in 1306 (1305 according to the Florentine calendar) documents that the concept of authenticity was connected with the idea of the similitude of the representation and a Greek provenance:

> Another great testimony exists, that is their first images [of the Three Magi], which came from Greece . . . and the paintings came primarily from saints; in order to receive the most precise

[77] Von Dobschütz 1899, 135*; Wolf 1990, 61–62.

[78] N. Maniacutius, *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris*, BAV Fondo S. Maria Maggiore 3, fols. 233–244. For the edition of the eighteenth-century source, see Wolf 1990, 321–325 (referred to as: *De sacra imagine SS. Salvatoris in palatio Lateranensi*, Rome 1709); see esp. 321–322.

[79] Wolf 1990, 270 n. 217 refers to a will dated 1029, published by Soresini 1675, in which one-half of a house is bequeathed to the image of the Savior, which has been painted by St. Luke at the request of the Virgin Mary and the apostles. It was finished by divine intervention of the Lord, came to Rome miraculously, and is in the Church of San Lorenzo in the Lateran Palace. For the exact transcription of the text of the source edited by Soresini, see Wolf 1990, 317. See the same version in the *Descriptio*, 357, written around 1070.

[80] Wolf 1990, 328; and the contemporary German edition of *Likeness and Presence*, already published in German in 1990. For the quote in English translation, see Belting 1994, 542 (quoted from *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera 4, Rerum Brittanicarum medii aevi scriptores* 21, ed. J. S. Brewer [London 1873] 278–279).

[81] For the sources referring to the Lateran Savior as an *acheiropoietos* to a semi-*acheiropoietos*, see von Dobschütz 1899, 64–68; Wolf 1990, 61–62, 328; Andaloro 2000, 43–45; Noreen 2006, 228, 234 n. 2.

[82] Belting 1994, 342–348; Bacci 1998; 2003.

> knowledge, the figures of the saints were depicted in the very beginning exactly how they were, in their appearance and in their condition[83] and in their [own] way. Thus one finds that Nicodemus first painted Christ on the cross on a fine panel primarily in the appearance and the way in which he was, so that whoever saw the painting almost saw the entire event, so well was it depicted according to the likeness and appearance. Because Nicodemus was present when Christ was nailed to the cross and when he was deposed from it; and this is the panel from which this beautiful miracle emerged because of which the Feast of the Holy Savior is celebrated. Likewise we find that Saint Luke painted our Lady on a portrait panel, very accurately, and this panel now is in Rome, still kept with great devotion. The saints made these images to provide the most precise notice to the people about these events. Therefore, all these images, specifically the old ones, which came long ago from Greece, have the highest authority, because in there [Greece] lived many saints, who painted the told events mentioned before, and gave testimony to the world, from which one receives the highest authority, just like from that of books.[84]

The authentic image, mimetic quality, and alleged personal testimony of the painter are joined together in a meaningful web of correlations that diverges from the legend-based authenticity of earlier images and indicates a new understanding of the image, a development that has been described in great depth by Hans Belting.[85]

In addition to the changes concerning its origins and character as a miraculously produced image, by the late twelfth century the Lateran Savior was confronted by a new and serious rival, the image of the Veronica.[86] The increasing importance of the *Mandylion* in the circle of the Komnenos dynasty and its connections with imperial power and rulership in Byzantium had an impact on the politically ambitious Roman papacy, which became eager to legitimize itself in the same way, through the possession of sacred and miraculous images. The relic of the *sudarium*, originally regarded as a contact relic, a handkerchief with which Christ had wiped blood and sweat from his face on his way to Golgotha, had been listed among the relics kept in the Basilica of St. Peter's from the tenth century on. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, however, this relic began to be considered as a direct impression of Christ's face left on the cloth, and it became the "true image," the *vera icon* or Veronica's veil (fig. 12).

The Vatican relic was first documented as an imprint in 1191, on the occasion of the visit of the French king Philippe Auguste in Rome.[87] Although its identification as a miraculous image was of more recent origin, the *Veronica*—like a seal and an imprint—was connected with strategies of juridical authentication. In recent years Gerhard Wolf has fueled a lively debate regarding the *sudarium*'s specific character as both relic and image. The relic of the cloth made the imprinted image authentic, and vice versa: the image, made from the blood and sweat of Christ, authenticated the cloth-relic.[88] The *Veronica* thus responded precisely to the well-established and sophisticated cult of the *Mandylion* in Constantinople and at the same time satisfied new claims concerning the verifiability of arguments in favor of its authenticity that were raised in the twelfth century. This new image, made by miraculous impression, soon outranked the much older Savior icon, which was rooted in a web of legendary narratives.

[83] "Condition" in this context refers to the previous discussion in the sermon of the social and intellectual status of the Three Magi, namely, whether they were kings, barons, wise men, or philosophers.

[84] Giordano da Pisa 1867, 170–171; see this quote also in Davidsohn 1927, 214. Belting refers to the sermon but does not provide the correct reference. Belting 1990, 22 n. 33; 1994, 305; more recently on this quote, see Lubbock 2006, 8–9, 299.

[85] Belting 1990; 1994.

[86] Belting 1994, 215–224; Wolf, *Holy Face*; *Volto di Cristo*, 103–167and catalogue entries 169–211; 2002, 43–145; see also Kuryluk 1991.

[87] Wolf 1990, 81.

[88] Belting 1990, 133, 218–221; Wolf 1990, 81–82; *Volto di Cristo,* 103–104.

Fig. 12. Veronica*, from Mathew Paris,* Chronica maiora*. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College,Ms 16, fol. 53v* Veronica *(photo Cambridge, Corpus Christi College).*

3. Appropriation in Copy

Reproducing a Vanished Surface

Despite the shifts in its reception and status, it was the Lateran icon of the Savior and not the *Veronica* that became the prototype for a series of copies in the area around Rome from around 1100 to the sixteenth century.[89] This phenomenon, I believe, is related to the Lateran icon's status as a civic symbol and protector in the context of the revival of communal institutions in Rome. Among these, the refounding of the Roman Senate, in 1143, was perhaps the most significant. The Senate was responsible for the supervision of the most important city affairs, conducted negotiations with neighboring cities, and decided on military engagements and peace settlements.[90] The Roman citizens' struggle for autonomy and independence (from the power of the popes and baronial families) inspired the people of smaller cities and towns in outlying regions to take similar steps toward local control. An example of this development is the establishment of a senate in the city of Viterbo in northern Latium in 1148, only a few years after the founding of the one in Rome.[91]

Unsurprisingly, the construction of civic identity in these towns was based on the model provided by the center. In this context, the Lateran icon, thanks to its function as a *palladium* of the city of Rome, became a symbol of communal identity and protection in the Roman hinterland as well. Significantly, this development coincided with the very moment when—in the context of the Roman Curia—it was replaced by the *Veronica*, an image closely associated with Pope Innocent III's aggressive claim to power, political as well as spiritual.[92] The apotropaic aura of the Lateran icon, which had ensured the protection of the people of Rome from military conquest and plague,

[89] On the medieval copies of the Lateran icon of the Savior, see Volbach 1940–1941; Garrison 1955–1956; Hager 1962, 36–38; Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 46–50. To date, only a few of these paintings have received scholarly attention. A comprehensive study of them is still very much to be desired.

[90] For the communal revival in Rome, see Baumgärtner 1989; for the complex and often hostile relationships between Rome and the cities in the surrounding region, see Partner 1972, 106–265. For the Lateran Savior as a civic symbol in the context of the communal revival in Rome and Lazio, see Wolf 1990, 33, 73–76, 79–80. On the concept of the copy in medieval painting, see Kessler 1994.

[91] Wolf 1990, 79.

[92] Belting 1994; Wolf 1990, 81–87; *Holy Face*; *Volto di Cristo*, 103–114; Parlato, *Volto di Cristo*, 86.

was believed to be inherent in the copies made of it. The cities in the Papal State—although in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries periodically engaged in political and military conflicts with Rome as well as with one another—followed the religious practices of the region's most important urban center. The Savior icon was copied in precisely this context, as was its processional apparatus. In Tivoli and Viterbo, citizens were involved in these activities through their membership in religious confraternities, which oversaw the organization and staging of these rituals. The itinerary and the prayers performed during the Vigil of the Assumption of the Virgin in Tivoli testify to the Tivoli Savior icon's role as a civic symbol, a *palladium*.[93]

Most of the Savior replicas, such as the panel from Sutri (1170–1207), depict the enthroned Christ. Strong, even brush lines of white, brown, and black define the statuesque face, whose tranquil, frontal gaze engages the beholder (see fig. 2).[94] The play of the drapery is stylized and decorative; the golden background underscores the general impression of the immaterial. The authenticity of the series of Savior images in Latium is defined by a general reference to the prototype, regardless of minor formal differences concerning the throne, the hand gesture of Christ, or the book. By the time the copies were produced, most of the original paint of the figure of the Lateran Savior seems to have been lost, and veils—and from around 1200 onward a silver cover—had been affixed to the surface, so that the appearance of the prototype offered a mere point of departure for the replicas, barely more than a generic rendering of a seated figure with a book or scroll and a gesture of benediction.[95]

It is unclear what kind of access the painters of these copies were granted to the private chapel of the pope in order to make their copies, and we can only speculate about how much of the painting they would have been able to see. No medieval sources describe the process of copying the icon. But the earliest surviving copy, the center panel of the triptych in the Cathedral of Tivoli, is of particular interest in this respect (see fig. 11). Made around 1100, before the *acheropita* was covered more permanently with the silver sheath, it shows the enthroned Christ with the open book in his left hand and his right hand raised in benediction. Below the throne at Christ's feet—and this is significant—appears the fragmentary depiction of the Four Rivers of Paradise, with two stags drinking from the waters at the outermost left and right.

The panel in Tivoli is the only one among the medieval copies of the Lateran Savior in Latium where this motif is added. The Four Rivers are a prominent feature of early Christian and medieval apse mosaics in Rome, as for example in the conch of Santa Costanza (third quarter of fourth century), at Santi Cosma e Damiano (first half of sixth century), and in the ninth-century apse mosaic in Santa Prassede. The motif may also have appeared in the early Christian apse mosaics in Old St. Peter's and the Lateran Basilica. These are now lost, having been replaced by newer decorations, under Pope Nicolas IV (r. 1288–1292) for the Lateran and Pope Innocent III (r. 1277–1280) at St. Peter's, which have also not survived.[96] The appearance of the Four Rivers and the stags in the Tivoli panel suggests that the painters of the copies may have worked from a variety of sources. The Lateran icon seems to have served as the principal, yet generic, model for the specific icon type. Its concealment by means of veils or wings, together with the disappearance of the actual painted surface, made it necessary for the painters to resort to visually more accessible representations of the enthroned Christ, as in the monumental apse decoration in Rome.

[93] Pacifici 1928–1929, 1426–1432. See also Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 47.

[94] Volbach 1940–1941; Wolf 1990, 80; *Volto di Cristo*, 60.

[95] Romano 2000.

[96] Andaloro 2006, 36 and bibliography; see also Buddensieg 1959 and Christe 1970 (nn. 1 and 2 for further references).

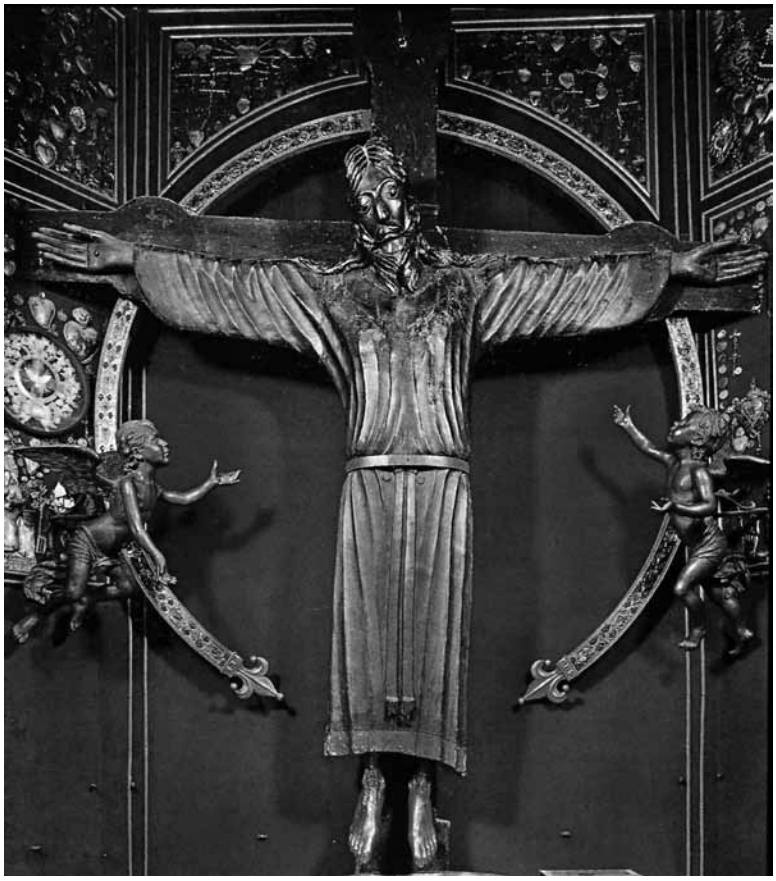

Fig. 13. Volto Santo. *Lucca, Cathedral of San Martino (photo Ghilardi, Lucca).*

Measurements and Legends

In addition to phenotypical references, measurement and proportion seem to have been important criteria for the efficacy of a replica. The 142 cm height of the Lateran icon corresponds to the 145 cm height of the image in Tarquinia,[97] 148 × 70 cm in Tivoli,[98] 144 cm in Trevignano, and 138 cm in Capranica.[99] While no documents describing the measuring of the Lateran icon are presently known, the practice is recorded in relation to the production of other types of copies. The Irish monk Adamnan, writing around 680, describes how carefully the Gallic bishop Arculf took the measurements of monuments such as the Holy Sepulcher and other churches and shrines during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. His drawings of the plans of four buildings onto wax tablets have been lost, but they count among the few early known architectural drawings of this type, and copies of them are preserved in manuscripts dating from the ninth to the thirteenth century.[100] A report about a copy made of the *Volto Santo* in Lucca in the mid-eleventh century indicates that this was a fundamental aspect in the production of replicas of venerated images (fig. 13). According to this

[97] Garrison 1955–1956, 5 proposes a height of 145 cm. He believed that the figure of Christ is standing (accepted by Hager 1962, 36) and that it was cut at the lower end by 35 cm.

[98] Hager 1962, 36.

[99] Garrison 1949, 111; Hager 1962, 36.

[100] *De locis sanct* 1.2.8: Adamnanus 1958, 44–55. Throughout the entire text, Adamnanus stresses the fact that Arculf took exact measurements of the holy sites. See also Krüger 2000, 188.

account, Abbot Leofstanus of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds in England, stopped in Lucca on the way back from Rome and took the dimensions of this crucifix, which he believed corresponded to the size and form of the true body of Christ, to provide an accurate copy of it for his home abbey.[101] The conforming dimensions of the series of copies in Latium suggest that the idea of an authentic image of Christ also included its measurements.

Moreover, the apparatus of legendary accounts was applied to some of these images and constituted an additional strategy for the authentication of icons. The Savior panel in Tivoli, for example, was held to have been painted by St. Luke and donated by Pope Simplicius (468–483), a native of Tivoli, to the local church (see fig. 11).[102] According to another legend, the *Salvator Mundi* panel in the cathedral in Velletri, dating from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, had come to Italy from Constantinople (fig. 14).[103] In his violent battle against image veneration, the iconoclast emperor Leo III (r. 717–741) had condemned the icon to destruction by fire, but it miraculously survived. In 737, the local bishop Giovanni received the icon from a Greek colleague with whom he had established a friendship while attending the Council in Rome in 721 (during the pontificate of Gregory II). Here the legend connects with the legendary tradition of the *Kamuliana* icon, which, as we have already seen, remained unharmed despite iconoclastic threats and subsequently traveled, according to a hagiographic tradition, from Constantinople to Rome.

Rituals and Their Representation

It is clear, then, that the authenticity of the copies of the Lateran Savior was determined not only by reference to the prototype as such and its miracle-working powers or origins. The medieval Savior panels also featured prominently in a para-liturgical, ceremonial apparatus that had been established around the Lateran icon, so that authenticity also arose from the images' functional or performative aspect. The integration of these panels into liturgical processions is documented by the so-called *macchine*, large glass-enclosed ornamented litters that were constructed to carry them. Some of these containers are still preserved in Trevignano, Velletri, and Tivoli (fig. 15).

On the occasion of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin and during Holy Week, the medieval Savior icons were carried through the streets of their respective cities in these sturdy wood-framed structures. The surviving *macchine* were made in the late eighteenth and the early

[101] Ferrari and Meyer 2005, 502 n. 11: *Sancta vero crux, que ibidem erecta est, sancta est et antiqua, et antecessoribus nostris in magne sanctitatis veneracione venerata, et multa miracula ante ipsam perhibebant celebrata. Nam quidam ante monachos introductos in ecclesiam Sancti Edmundi longum tempus ibidem hanc fuisse putant; alii quando Leofstanus abbas ivit Romam crucem sacram que venerator in civitate Lucana in itinere contemplasse, quam expressius habere formam et magnitudinem dominici corporis, prebeat et mensuram eius sumptam domum reversus hanc ad mondum eius et secundum ipsam fieri fecisse*. ("But the holy cross, which is erected there, is holy and very old, and worshiped by our ancestors in reverence of its great holiness, and many famous miracles have taken place in front of it. For some believe that it was in that place, before the monks were introduced in the Church of St. Edmund. Others [believe] that when Abbot Leofstanus went to Rome, on the route, he admired the holy cross that is venerated in the city of Lucca, which, in the most prominent way, is seen to have the form and size of the body of the Lord; after he had its measurements taken, when he was back home, he had it made in the dimensions of it and in its likeness.")

[102] This legendary belief is first documented in the inscription of 1570 on the tomb of S. Quirino, which was once together with the triptych in an underground chapel; see Garrison 1957–1958, 190. It is also documented by Giovanni Maria Zappi in his *Annali di Tivoli* (ca. 1572–1590); see the edition by V. Pacifici 1920, 5; for Zappi's description of the procession on the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, see Zappi 1920, 83–85. On St. Luke as the painter of the icon, see also M. A. Nicodemi, *Storia di Tivoli*, bk. 5, chap. 5, ca. 1589 (only copy preserved in the Biblioteca Alessandrina in Rome; see Nicodemi 1926, 104, 129). See also Ughelli 1717–1722, 1:190; Crocchiante 1726, 48; Bulgarini 1848, 63; Rossi 1904.

[103] The icon is first mentioned in connection with an altar in the side chapel of Saint Sebastian in the sixteenth century; Theuli 1968 [1644], 14; Hager 1962, 38. For the legend, see Theuli, fols. 314–315.

Fig. 14. Salvator Mundi. *Velletri, Museo Diocesano (photo Museo Diocesano).*

Fig. 15. Macchina *for the procession of the Savior Triptych. Trevignano (photo author).*

nineteenth century, and to my knowledge no earlier example has survived.[104] To this day in Tivoli, such a procession still occurs, on the eve of 15 August—the Vigil of the Assumption of the Virgin. The celebration culminates at the moment when two icons come together and bow to each other (*Inchinata*).[105] In Tivoli, as in most other cases, an image of the Virgin Mary, corresponding to the *Salus Populi Romani* at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, is brought into play alongside the image of the Savior. Just as in Rome, confraternities dedicated to the Savior icons were founded in Tivoli, Viterbo, and Velletri whose members were dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of these paintings and organized the processions in which they were carried.[106]

[104] Such a *macchina* is documented in Viterbo for the year 1787, *Sacrorum fastorum*, bk. 12; see Volbach 1940–1941, 120 n. 59. See also Garrison 1955–1956, 5 for a *macchina* in Casape.

[105] Pacifici 1928–1929; Wolf 1990.

[106] In Tivoli a "compagnia of the SS. Salvator" is documented as early as 1305. Volbach 1940–1941, 119. For the confraternities in the cities in Latium dedicated to the Savior panels, see Volbach 1940–1941, 118–120; Wolf 1990.

Many of the copies also show physical signs of this liturgical use. The icon in Sutri (fig. 2), for example, had to be restored in the eighteenth century because the medieval layer of paint had been eroded—especially in the lower part of the panel—from the ritual washings performed during the Easter and Assumption ceremonies, following the practice established for the Roman Savior icon.[107]

On the upper half of the early fourteenth-century icon from Palombara Sabina (fig. 16), certain traces in the area around the Savior's neck indicate the application of a cloth or veil that could have concealed the face of Christ from the eyes of the faithful, yet another imitation of the Roman prototype.[108] Other small points of damage along the contour of Christ's body suggest that a metal cover had been inserted over the halo and point to the application of a crown or some other eye-catching attribute to the head—again faithfully following the Lateran painting. In addition, the figure of Christ in the Velletri *Salvator Mundi* panel was—with the exception of the face—still covered with layers of red silk when it was restored in 1912 (see fig. 14).[109] This evidence suggests that ritual acts of veiling, as practiced with the Lateran icon in Rome, were also applied to the medieval copies in the towns of Latium.

Despite the basic (but fundamental) similarities in size, proportion, and liturgical function that all panels share, significant differences or discrepancies within the group testify to individual forms of appropriation of the prototype. The relief panel of Castelchiodato, which dates to the early thirteenth century, is not only adapted to another artistic medium but also integrated into a narrative setting that alludes to the ritual function of the panels (fig. 17).[110] By means of the two female figures, one washing Christ's feet (John 12:3) while the other anoints his head (Matt. 26:6–7; Macc. 14:3), the historical events that took place just before the Savior's arrest and Passion and the contemporary rituals of cleaning and purification are visually reconnected to the icon.[111]

The later painting from Palombara Sabina is particularly illuminating in regard to our theme of continuity and innovation in the case of the medieval copies of the Roman *achiropita* (see fig. 16). In contrast to the prototype in the Lateran, it shows the image of Christ with a long neck and blond hair, a clear reference to the face of the *Veronica*. Otherwise, the image is faithful to the Lateran prototype to the extent of reproducing the silver sheathing that was added under Pope Innocent III.[112] In this case, an entirely new dimension is added to the concept of the copy. It is not the replication of the prototypical image that is the subject here, but the gaze onto the original painting of the Savior as it was displayed at the Lateran, that is visualized in the Palombara panel. The act of viewing the panel, its reception, thereby becomes the subject of a new artistic interest in which the image is defined by means of its own fictional character.[113]

[107] Volbach 1940–1941, 97; *Volto di Cristo*, 60.

[108] Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 61.

[109] Gabrielli 1918, 66: "Restaurai poi l'immagine del SS. Salvatore del quale solo appariva la testa essendo tutto il resto coperto di damasco rosso imbullettato e logero per il tempo. (I then restored the image of the Holy Savior, of which only the head appeared because the entire remaining part [of the painting] was covered by the affixed red damask and frayed because of its age)."

[110] The dating of the panel has had—as did most of the medieval copies of the Lateran Savior—a long history. Convincing arguments for a date in the early thirteenth century have been recently proposed by Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 60; Curzi 2007. For the literature on the panel and its dates, see Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 60; Curzi 2007, 189 n. 12.

[111] Volbach 1940–1941, 108–109; Wolf 1990; Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 60. Most recently, Gaetano Curzi (2007) connected the iconographic invention of the two figures to the iconography of thirteenth-century depictions of the anointment of Christ's feet and head and to para-liturgical Easter plays in the Benedictine context of medieval Latium. He used this evidence to date the panel to the early thirteenth century.

[112] Measures 136 × 58 cm. Volbach 1934, 192; 1940–1941, 114; Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 61.

[113] On the emergence of a self-referentiality of the artwork in early Renaissance Italy, see Dunlop 2009 on secular painting in a residential context.

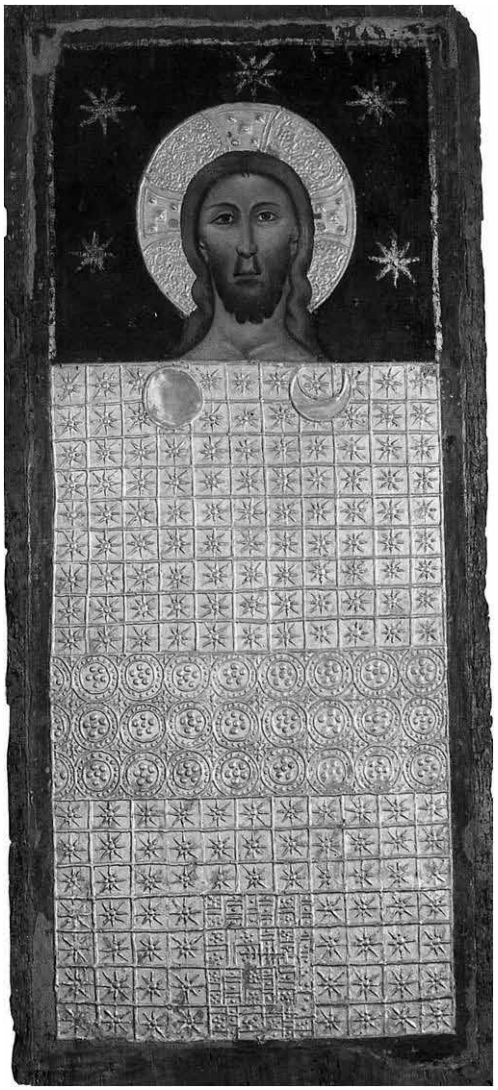

Fig. 16. Savior icon. Palombara Sabina, San Biagio Vescovo e Martire (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

Fig. 17. Christ as Savior. Castelchiodato, Santa Maria degli Angeli (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

Winged Altarpieces

Many if not most known copies of the Savior icon originally had two wings, a circumstance which supports the argument that the Lateran prototype had wings attached by the time the earliest of these "winged" copies was made. Because of its recent dating around 1100, the Tivoli triptych provides the earliest evidence for this thesis (see fig. 11). An investigation of the surviving panels that no longer possess wings is rendered difficult by the fact that many have been trimmed along their edges, and their original frames are lost. One of the earliest replicas, the *Salvator Mundi* in Velletri, is particularly intriguing in this regard but is also problematic, since it is covered by several layers of paint for which the dating is not entirely clear (see fig. 14). The traces of a much smaller figure

Fig. 18. Salvator Mundi*, detail of the frame. Velletri, Museo Diocesano (photo author).*

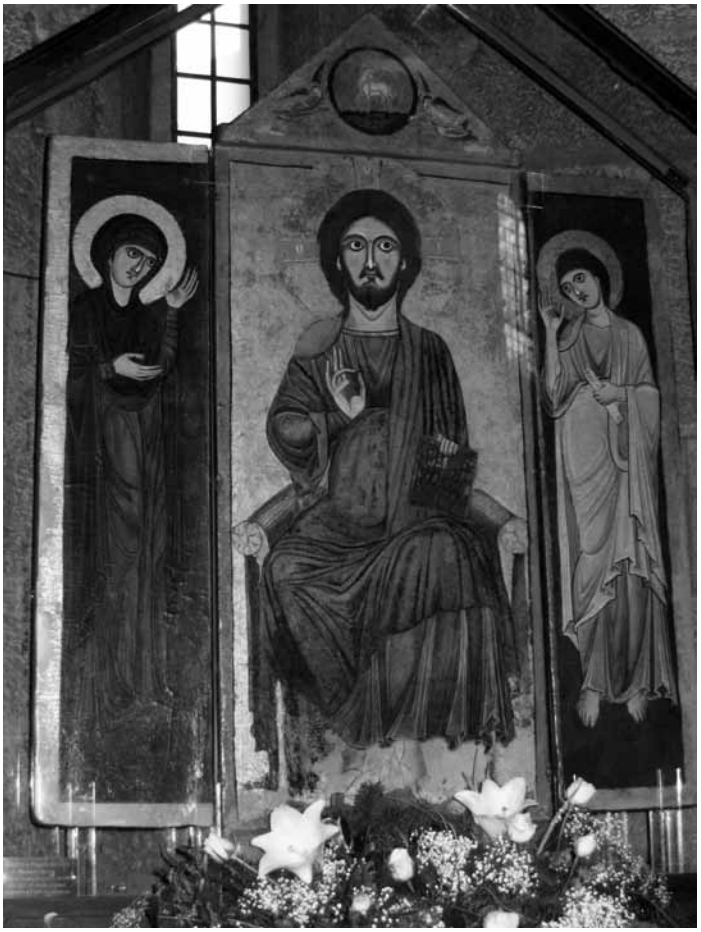

Fig. 19. Savior triptych, open state. Viterbo, Santa Maria Maggiore (photo author).

are visible underneath the depiction of Christ, in the area of his left sleeve, while under Christ's face there is an earlier version of a face. E. B. Garrison, who studied the panel closely, dated it to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. He also believed that the Velletri *Salvator* did not have wings and was not a triptych. However, the traces at the exact spots where hinges would have been attached to the wooden surface suggest that the panel originally had wings affixed to both sides (fig. 18). An account of a pastoral visitation by Cardinal Alfonso Gesualdo on 18 March 1595 mentions an enclosure made of wood in connection with the location of the panel above an altar. The description does not make it clear, however, whether the wooden shutters belonged to the space of the altar or to the *Salvator Mundi* panel itself.[114] The panel in Palombara Sabina also shows traces of hinges on its preserved frame, and on the panels in Tivoli, Trevignano, and Viterbo the wings are still in place (figs. 11, 19, 33).

[114] *Pro icona habet imaginem Salvatoris in tabula depicta que magna populi devotione colitur et in Vigilia Assumpt.is Beate Marie per civitatem processionaliter defertur collocata in pariete super altare cum cancellis seu cla(u)sthra lignea. . . .* ("As the icon, it has the image of the Savior painted on a panel, which is nourished by the great devotion of the people and which on the Vigil of the Feast of the Assumption of the Holy Mary is carried in procession through the city. It is placed at the wall above the altar with the enclosure or wooden shutters. . . .") Archivio Diocesano Velletri, Sezione 1, Titolo 1, Visite Pastorali, Visita Gesualdo 1595, Chiesa Cattedrale di San Clemente, fol. 7v. I would like to thank Fausto Ercolani of the Archivio Diocesano Velletri for his generosity. See also Garrison 1955–1956, 10–11, esp. 7 n. 1 on the borders of the panel.

Fig. 20. Winged carved altarpiece. Doberan, Cistersian Abbey (photo M. Hilbich).

The existence of winged altarpieces as early as the late twelfth or early thirteenth century in the vicinity of Rome has some intriguing and potentially far-reaching implications for the history of medieval art. In the standard developmental narratives, the origins of these types of winged images are linked to the carved altarpieces that emerged in central Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The altar in the Cistercian abbey of Doberan in northern Germany, for example, dates to around or shortly after 1300, and is therefore considered one of the oldest examples of a monumental winged altarpiece in Germany (fig. 20).[115] Scholars have connected the development of this type of image to the deposition and presentation of relics in shrines, and more particularly to the format of reliquary cabinets or to cabinets for Eucharistic vessels (fig. 21).[116] Rather than being related to such functional aspects, these winged altarpieces seem to be linked to the growing significance of the idea of revelation (*revelatio*) in the aesthetics of cult images in the late thirteenth century.[117]

The Savior triptychs in Latium testify that practices of veiling or concealing the sacred created a different type of winged image that could be opened and closed at a much earlier time and in another regional context, in the area around Rome. The Lateran *acheropita* was the first monumental panel painting to have been displayed in connection with an altar, at least from the late eleventh century onward but possibly since the early ninth century.[118] The conception of the medieval central Italian

[115] N. Wolf 2002, 22–39.

[116] N. Wolf 2002, 35–39.

[117] Krüger 2008, 179–199; N. Wolf 2002, 352–368.

[118] The position of the icon as placed on the altar is first mentioned in the *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*, which dates shortly after 1073. Although the source is later, I believe that the icon was set upon the altar when it was installed in the chapel, during the pontificate of Pope Leo III, and that the *Descriptio* hence refers to a situation already established round 800. *Descriptio*, 357: *Et super hoc altare est imago Salvatoris mirabiliter depicta in quadam tabula, quam Lucas evangelista designavit, sed virtus Domini angelico perfecit officio.* ("And above this altar is the miraculously painted image of the Savior, which the evangelist Luke drew, but which the virtue of the Lord finished through the work of the angel.") Hager 1962, 37. Slightly later, Pope Gregory IV (827–844) had an image of the Virgin placed on the altar in Santa Maria in Trastevere; see Duchesne 1955–1957, 2:80: *Sed et decorem altari addens . . . fecit ibidem*

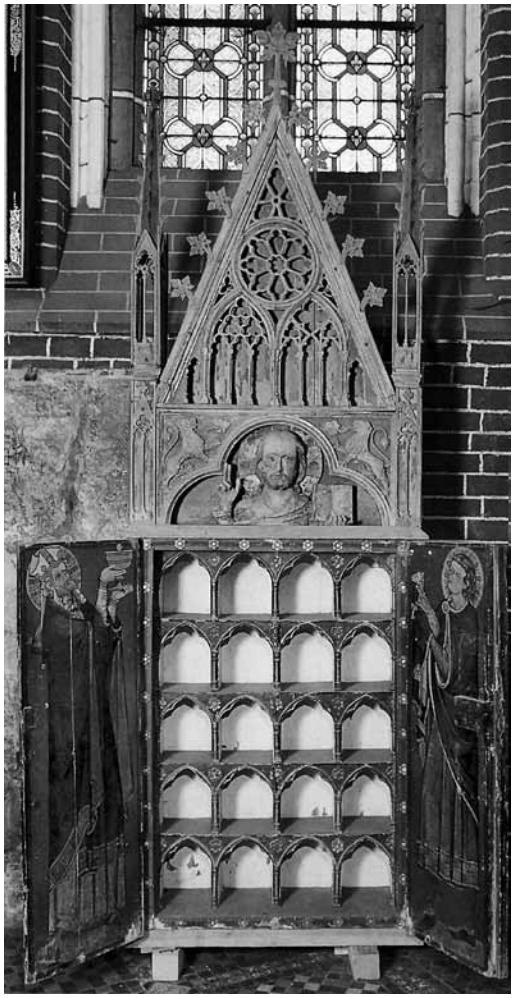

Fig. 21. Kelchschrank, *Cabinet for liturgical vessels. Doberan, Cistercian Abbey (photo Eschenburg, Warnemünde).*

Fig. 22. Vierge Ouvrante, *from Boubon, France. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum (photo Walters Art Museum).*

triptychs seems to depart from the liturgical activities and the interventions—the application of layers of cloth and eventually movable shutters or wings—that the Lateran Savior icon underwent.[119] These practices of veiling and revealing, already documented in the case of the single *acheropita* panel in the Lateran by the tenth century, were condensed, around or just before about 1100, into a new image type that bestowed on the closed image the aura of the numinous. Another, similar group of images are the so-called *Vierges Ouvrantes*, statues of the Virgin and Child that can be opened in the center to reveal a different layer of images inside (fig. 22). These sculptures begin

vestem crysoclabam cum blatta bizantea, habentem historia Nativitatis et Resurrectionis domini nostri Iesu Christi, et insuper imaginem beatae Dei genetricis Mariae refoventem imaginem oblatoris sui. ("Also, adding beauty to the altar . . . he provided there a gold-studded cloth with Byzantine purple, having the story of the Nativity and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and above an image of the Blessed Mother of God Mary cherishing an image of its presenter.") See Kinney 1975, 121–122.

[119] Wilpert 1907 defines the additions to the panel as "restorations."

to appear after 1200 in Spain and France and remained popular throughout central and northern Europe until the early modern period.[120] We still know very little about the conception and use of the painted triptychs in Latium and the early *Vierges Ouvrantes*. In these sculptures of the Virgin, the opening and closing does not seem to be directed as much to the protection of the object as it is to the visual and theatrical effect of a "moving" image.[121] In regard to the triptychs in Latium it is still unclear whether the wings were attached, when the paintings were carried in civic processions, or whether liturgical forms of veiling and revealing had been developed in the early stages of their use (during the twelfth century). But the possibilities for visually persuasive actions offered by the wings seem to have been an important aspect of the triptychs in Latium and the *Vierges Ouvrantes* alike. Various practices of veiling determined the forms of ritual practiced around the altar by about 1300 and would ultimately lead to the birth of the medieval winged altarpiece in central Europe, with its ritual opening and closing dependent on the liturgical calendar.

Salvator and Ecclesia

Figures of the principal apostles and protectors of Rome, Peter and Paul, appear on the back of the wings of the triptychs in Viterbo and Trevignano (figs. 23 and 24). On the Viterbo triptych, which was made in the mid-thirteenth century, additionally a cherub with a sword in his hand features on the reverse of the central panel (fig. 24). In this configuration the ecclesiological program of the Lateran icon's silver cover, which had placed the image of the Savior in the context of the history of salvation, is dispersed across different areas of the altarpiece. In the closed state of the Viterbo triptych, Peter and Paul are united in an iconic image that signifies the Roman Church, the door, which is Christ (John 10:9, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved") and also the door leading to the Savior concealed behind it.

The frontal view of the closed triptych also refers to a pair of celebrated early Christian icons of Peter and Paul that were already listed in the possession of the Lateran in the eleventh-century *Descriptio*.[122] These images are connected to two very important hagiographic texts that describe the fictive events of Emperor Constantine's conversion by Pope Sylvester and his legendary baptism, and thus the defining moments of the history of the Roman Church: the late fifth-century legend of Saint Sylvester (*Actus Silvestri*) and the later *Constitutum Constantini* (mid-eighth to mid-ninth century). According to these accounts, the emperor, who suffered from leprosy, had a visionary dream in which Peter and Paul appeared and advised him to seek help from Pope Sylvester, who had sought refuge from persecution at Mount Soracte outside Rome. When Sylvester returned to Rome and met with Constantine, he explained that the figures in the emperor's dream were the

[120] N. Wolf 2002, 296–299; Radler 1990. More recently on these fascinating sculptures, see Rimmele 2006; Gertsman 2008; Katz 2009; 2010.

[121] N. Wolf 2002, 298 does not exclude an occasional use of these Virgins as containers for the host but does not support his claim with sources. Kroos 1986, 58, 60 and Radler 1990, 40 argue against such a function.

[122] While images of Peter and Paul in a narrative context are widely spread in medieval Rome and Latium, their appearance on the closed wings of the Viterbo and Trevignano triptychs, forming a double icon, is very particular and points to the early Christian icons of the two apostles in Rome. They were kept in the Sancta Sanctorum until 1905. *Descriptio,* 338: *Super hoc etiam sacrosanctum altarium, super quod missam non celebrat nisi papa vel cardinalis episcopus, est tabula quaedam lignea, in qua depictae sunt imagines sanctorum Petri et Pauli, apostolorum, quas Constantinus imperator confessus est sancto Silvestro ante baptismum secum revera locutas fuisse per somnium.* ("On this most holy altar, on which only the pope and the cardinal bishop celebrate the Mass, there is a certain wooden panel, on which are the images of the saints Peter and Paul, apostles, which [i.e., the images], so Emperor Constantine confessed to Saint Sylvester before the baptism, talked to him in reality in a dream.") Andaloro 1995, 143–144 and figs. 28, 29; 2006, 230, figs. 11, 12.

Fig. 23. Savior triptych, closed state: Saint Peter and Saint Paul.Viterbo, Santa Maria Maggiore (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

Fig. 24. Savior triptych, reverse: Cherub (central panel), Peter and Paul (wings). Viterbo, Santa Maria Maggiore (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

apostles of Christ, Peter and Paul, and not pagan gods, as Constantine had assumed. The emperor then asked to see an image of the two apostles, so that he would be able to verify his dream ("And again we began to ask this most holy pope, if he had a distinct image of these apostles, so that we would learn by means of the painting, who those were, which the revelation had taught [us]"),[123] and he was shown portraits of Peter and Paul.[124] The text of the *Actus Silvestri* characterizes these images as icons by using the term *toracicula* (bust-length images). As a result of seeing the icons and recognizing the apostles as the messengers of the Christian God in his dream, Constantine converted to Christianity, was healed, and was ultimately baptized.[125]

This event is included in a fresco cycle of the life of St. Sylvester, painted in the mid-thirteenth century (about the same time as the Viterbo triptych) in the Sylvester Chapel in SS. Quattro

[123] *Exemplar Constituti Domni Constantini imperatoris*, 8–9, ed. Fuhrmann 1968, 72–74: *Et rursum interogare coepimus eundem beatissimum papam, utrum istorum apostolorum imaginem expressam haberet, ut ex pictura disceremus hos esse, quos revelatio docuerat.*

[124] In the *Actus Silvestri* the images of Peter and Paul are characterized by the Greek term *thoraciculum* (thorax chest) as bust-length images. See the edition by Levison 1924, 195: *Tunc sanctus Silvester iubet diacono suo, ut eorum toraciclas adferret.* ("Then Saint Silvester ordered his deacon to bring the bust-length images of them [Peter and Paul].") The *Constitutum Constantini* more generally mentions "imagines."

[125] *Exemplar Constituti Domni Constantini imperatoris*, 8–9, ed. Fuhrmann 1968, 72–74 and *Actus Silvestri*, edition in Levison 1924, 159–247.

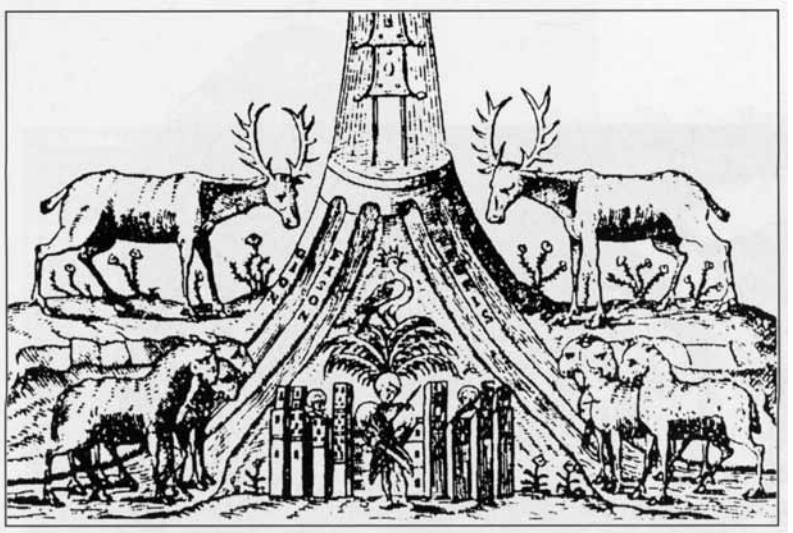

Fig. 26. Apse mosaic, detail. Rome, San Giovanni in Laterano. From Bosio 1610 (photo Biblioteca Vallicelliana).

Fig. 25. Cherub. Rome, San Giovanni a Porta Latina. (photo Soprintendenza speciale per il patrimonio storico, artistico ed etnoantropologico e per il polo museale della città di Roma).

Coronati in Rome.[126] The episode of the confrontation between Constantine and Sylvester assumes a prominent place in the narrative. The scene depicts the instant when the emperor gazes onto the icon with the bust images of the apostles and recognizes the figures from his dream, which marks the precise moment of Constantine's conversion.[127]

Returning to the Viterbo triptych, we may observe that its explicitly ecclesiological references are supported by other, more formal means.[128] The upper border of the center panel has the shape of an aedicule, decorated with the symbol of Christ as the sacrificial Lamb (fig. 19). When closed, this crowning element makes the triptych look like a container in the form of a house or *arca*, dominated by the image of the two apostles, so that it ultimately becomes the House of God, or the Church of Rome. The "monopoly of salvation" represented by the Church is emphasized on the reverse of the central panel by the cherub, evoking the angel guarding Eden (Gen. 3:24) (fig. 24). This motif can be linked to the almost identical iconic depiction of the cherub at the Gate of Paradise after the expulsion of Adam and Eve in the fresco cycle of San Giovanni a Porta Latina from the second half of the twelfth century (fig. 25).[129] An angel protecting the gates of a paradisiacal landscape also appeared under the central cross in the Lateran apse mosaic, commissioned by Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292) and executed by Jacopo Torriti (fig. 26).[130]

[126] The paintings were probably commissioned by the vicar of the Roman pope, Cardinal Stefano Conti, and made between 1244 and 1247. For the date of the wall paintings, see Rüttinger 2007, 69; Sohn 1997, 7.

[127] See Sohn 1997, fig. 4.

[128] The triptych is dated to the early thirteenth century (Garrison 1949, no. 280; 1955–1956, 14) or to the second half of the thirteenth century (Volbach 1940–1941, 113; Matthiae 1987, 151, 153).

[129] Matthiae 1987, 94–109 and fig. 88; Privitera 2001, 118 and pl. 4.

[130] Bosio 1610; Tomei 1990, 77–98; Privitera 2001, 119–120;

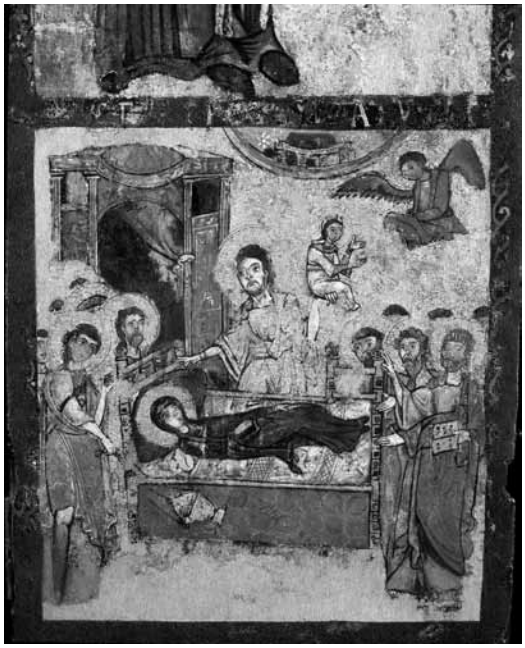

Fig. 27. Dormition of the Virgin, Savior triptych. Tivoli, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

Fig. 28. John the Evangelist preaching, Savior triptych. Tivoli, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

Deesis and Fons Vitae

When open, the triptychs in Tivoli, Trevignano, and Viterbo (see figs. 11, 19, and 33) display a Western version of the Byzantine *Deesis* motif, in which John the Baptist is replaced with the Evangelist, thus following the configuration on the silver cover of the Lateran Savior. The iconography of the triptych in Tivoli, which dates to shortly before or around 1100 (fig. 11), is perhaps even more significant since two small narrative scenes have been added below each figure: the *Dormitio Virginis* and a preaching John the Evangelist (figs. 27, 28).[131] Both episodes relate to the actual function of the panel in the course of the Assumption procession in Tivoli. The representation of Mary's death creates a historical link to the para-liturgical event of the Feast of the Assumption, and in the same way the image of John in the act of preaching alludes to the spiritual duties of the bishop to his constituency.[132]

The Evangelist is not an uncommon figure in the *Deesis* iconography of the medieval West. He appears prominently in the context of the Last Judgment scenes on French portals, such as the central portal of the south transept of the cathedral in Chartres, made in the first half of the thirteenth century.

Andaloro 2006, 193, and 202 for bibliographical references on the Lateran apse mosaic. The mosaic was destroyed in 1876 and replaced with the one that today preserves the medieval iconography according to the etching published by the Roman antiquarian Giacomo Bosio in his book *La trionfante e gloriosa Croce* (1610).

[131] Kessler 2007, 122–123, arguing on the basis of a meticulous stylistic, paleographic, and iconographic analysis of the triptych, confirms and solidifies the date of the late eleventh to the early twelfth century, suggested by Wilpert in 1916, 1118. *Roma e Lazio*, 232 proposes a similar date but pushes it slightly toward the first decades of the twelfth century and does so without proper argumentation. For the previous dating of the triptych, see Garrison 1955–1956, 14.

[132] Kessler 2007, 117–125. For the two narrative scenes, see esp. pp. 119–123.

Fig. 29. Tympanum with Maiestas Domini*, Mary, and John the Evangelist. Estella, San Miguel (photo © Colum Hourihane).*

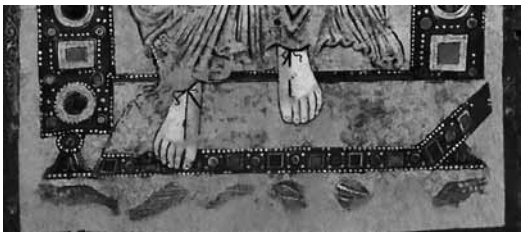

Fig. 30. Four rivers of paradise and stags drinking from the waters, detail, central panel of the Savior triptych. Tivoli, Cathedral of San Lorenzo (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

An earlier and less familiar example is the *Maiestas Domini* tympanum of the Benedictine Abbey of San Miguel in Estella in Spanish Navarre, made in the 1150s (fig. 29).[133] The presence of this motif in the Tivoli triptych, the oldest painting in the Latium series, is significant because it is the earliest known pairing of Mary with the Evangelist in intercession.[134] In the Estella and Chartres tympana, the praying figures of Mary and John are related to the events of the Passion, the Last Judgment, and the eschatological vision of God. They ultimately depart from the context of the Crucifixion, the event at which Mary was joined with John before the dying Christ.

The depiction of John the Evangelist on the inner side of the right wing offers an additional hint as to when the Lateran Savior may have received wings. If the Tivoli triptych faithfully copied the Lateran Savior icon, the wings must have been attached to the prototype by the time of its making (just before 1100). In that case, it seems more than likely that those wings also featured the Virgin Mary and the Evangelist, a motif that is unknown in the tenth century or before. Instead, the addition of wings with the innovative motif of John the Evangelist in the *Deesis* appears to have been developed at the moment Wilpert describes as the "second restoration campaign," toward the end of the eleventh century. Shortly after this intervention—around 1100 and about one century before its concealment behind Innocent III's silver cover—the icon was copied by the painters of the Tivoli triptych.

[133] Rückert 2004, 19–21 and pl. 4.

[134] Maria Andaloro (1970) already recognized the pairing of Mary with the Evangelist in the medieval triptychs in Latium as the first time the Baptist had been replaced. Recently, Marina Privitera (2001) linked this particular iconography in the central Italian triptychs to a medieval and patristic exegesis that focuses on the role of the Evangelist during the Passion.

The iconographic detail of the Four Rivers of Paradise with drinking stags, placed below the *suppedaneum* of Christ's throne, distinguishes the Tivoli triptych from the other examples from Latium (fig. 30). Herbert Kessler has acknowledged the significance of this detail in relation to the prototype at the Lateran. Emperor Constantine had donated seven silver stags from which water flowed for the Lateran Baptistery, which referred to the idea of eternal life and the water of baptism as *fons vitae*.[135] The motif of stags drinking from rivers was, of course, well established in early Christian Rome and bore paradisiacal connotations. Although it cannot be determined with certainty, this motif seems to have figured already in the fifth-century apse mosaic of the Lateran Basilica. The Roman antiquarian Giacomo Bosio's 1610 drawing of the thirteenth-century replacement (fig. 26) shows the bust of Christ with a gem-encrusted cross in its center, and below a depiction of the heavenly Eden protected by a cherub, the Rivers of Paradise, and stags drinking from the waters.[136] When Jacopo Torriti made the new mosaic at the end of the thirteenth century, he presumably followed the early Christian iconography of the apse in the highest-ranking church in Rome.[137] That the motif of paired stags drinking from the Rivers of Paradise was well established in early medieval Rome is furthermore underlined by its inclusion in the program of the early ninth-century Zeno Chapel, which Pope Paschal I donated to the Church of Santa Prassede for his mother Theodora.[138] Here the stags drinking from the rivers are placed at the foot of a mountain, topped by the haloed Lamb of God.

Another prominent Roman example of a paradisiacal landscape with the four rivers and drinking stags appears in the apse mosaic in San Clemente (fig. 31). This mosaic was made ca. 1120–1130 and is therefore very close in date to the Tivoli triptych.[139] Just as in the Lateran apse, a cross features in the center of the conch. Considering San Clemente's proximity to the Lateran, as well as its significance in the context of the Roman Curia at the time of the Gregorian Reform, it is very likely that this mosaic was intended to respond to (or correspond with) the one in the Lateran Basilica.[140] Whatever the source, the motif of the stags drinking from the Rivers of Paradise on the Tivoli triptych emphasizes the theme of the cross and salvation, which also determines the *Deesis* iconography on the wings.

Icons and Relics

Another change with respect to the Lateran prototype concerns the use of the copies as reliquaries.[141] Evidence for the insertion of these relics is indicated in a variety of ways. On the twelfth-century panel in Velletri the inscription "RELIQUIE" appears on the opening lid of the repository, right above Christ's chest.[142] The icon in Tarquinia provides a strong visual clue as to the nature of the relic it

[135] Kessler 2007, 117; Life of Pope Sylvester (314–335) in Duchesne 1955–1957, 1:174.

[136] Bosio 1610, 702; Toubert 1970, 129, fig. 36; Privitera 2001, 119–120, pl. 5.

[137] On the early Christian iconography of the Lateran apse and its relation to the mosaic commissioned by Pope Nicolas IV, see Buddensieg 1959 and Christe 1970 (nn. 1 and 2 for further references).

[138] Mackie 1989, 183 and pl. XXXVI b.

[139] See Toubert 1970, 122–154 on the apse mosaic in San Clemente in general, and more particularly on the motif of the stags drinking from the Rivers of Paradise, pp. 130–136; Riccioni 2006 on the *fons vitae* motif and the stags, pp. 42–45.

[140] This mosaic was the first made after the ninth century, when several church apses had been decorated with mosaics in the context of the Carolingian *Renovatio*. Those mosaics show a standing Christ in the center, similar to the iconography of the *Traditio Legis*, where the paradisiacal context that is so powerful in the San Clemente mosaic is less obvious and strong. These apses do not include the motif of the stags.

[141] Garrison 1955–1956, 5–20; for the insertion of relics in some of these panels, see esp. p. 10.

[142] According to a restoration report by Prof. De Bacci Venuti from 1912, the inscription on the repository is medieval. See the report in Gabrielli 1918, 66. "La mano destra era tagliata da uno sportello praticato in antichi tempi, nel centro della figura a coprire un cavo operato nella vetustissima tavola di querce sul quale era scritto *Reliquie*. (The right hand was cut

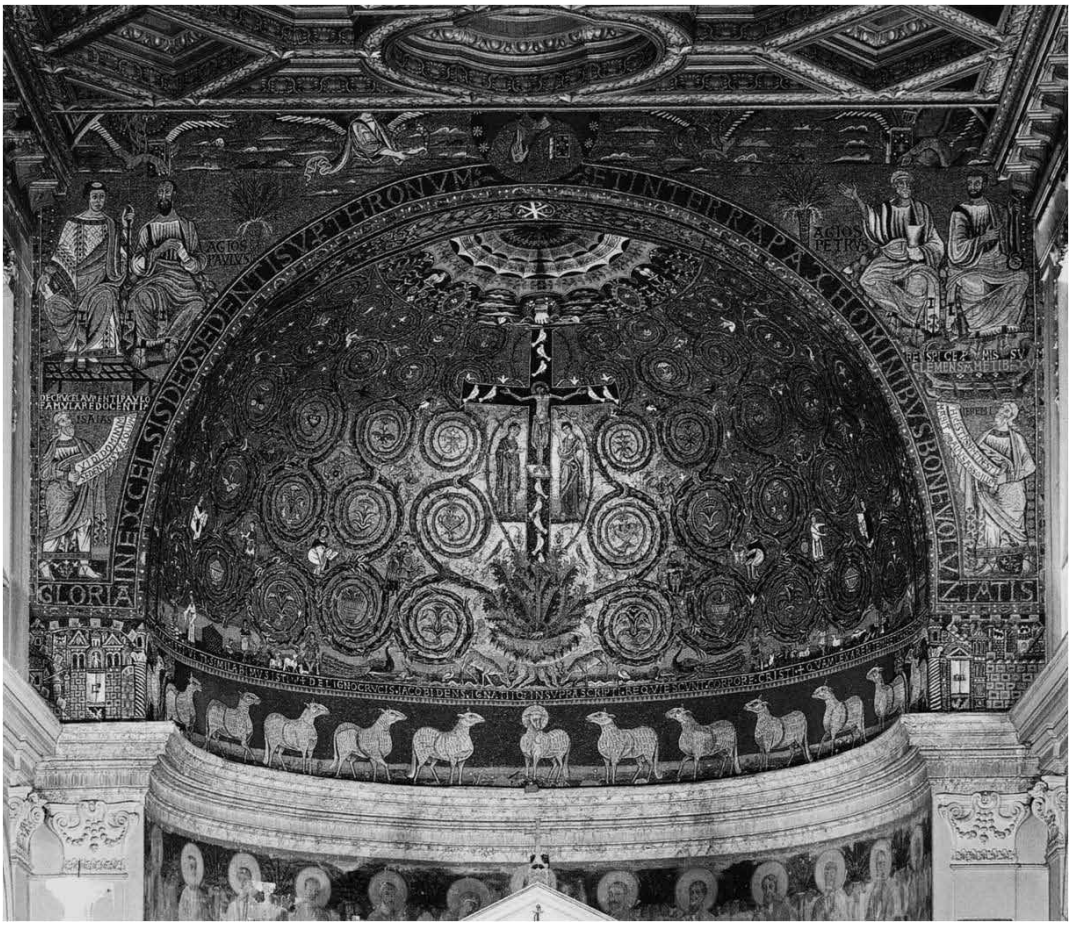

Fig. 31. Apse mosaic. Rome, San Clemente (photo Michael Imhof Verlag).

once bore, with the sign of the cross painted exactly in the center of the Savior's breast, between the thumb and the index finger of the blessing hand of Christ (fig. 32).[143] In this way, the Crucifixion and the concept of salvation were merged in a complex system of cross-references among the specific form of a venerable image type (the Savior icon), visual symbols, and the materiality of the relics. Once again, little is known about the nature of the relics that are embedded in these cavities; they were found in situ only in the Sutri panel, during the 1939–1940 restoration (see fig. 2).[144] The sheer fact of their application, however, emphasizes a corporeal understanding of the image, ontologically as an image body and functionally because of its role in the liturgy.[145]

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by the lid that was made long ago in the center of the figure to cover a repository, executed into the very old oak panel, on which [the word] *Reliquie* was written.)" The inscription "Reliquie" itself is not medieval but was "reconstructed" by De Bacci Venuti.

[143] Garrison 1955–1956, 5–6. He refers to a restoration of the panel in 1947–1948. The lower part of the panel, ca. 35 cm, was cut off. According to Garrison, the painting measured ca. 145 cm in height.

[144] Relics in a little bag were found during the last restoration in 1980, together with a note with the name of Giuseppe Picchiorri, who directed a conservation campaign during the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903). See Angelelli, *Volto di Cristo*, 60.

[145] Belting 2001, 95–96.

Fig. 32. Savior icon. Tarquinia (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, ICCD).

Fig. 33. Savior triptych. Trevignano Romano, Santa Maria Assunta, ca. 1200 (photo Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni Storico, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio).

The deposition of relics inside the body of an image again points toward Rome, and more specifically to the San Clemente apse mosaic (see fig. 31). An inscription along the lower border of the conch mentions the location of the relics behind the body of the crucified figure of Christ. The text also provides details regarding the nature of the relics, which included a splinter of the True Cross and tooth relics of the saints James and Ignatius.[146]

The insertion of relics into the body of an image leads to the sensitive theological issue of the veneration of images. As the Lateran Savior icon gradually lost its status as a miraculously made image in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth century, the addition of relics to the image in the replicas may be seen as an attempt to augment the venerable quality of the copies in an additional and different way. According to paragraph 62 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, only newly found relics authorized by the pope were officially cleared for veneration.[147] The insertion of relic particles into the very body of the Savior suggests that the icon's makers did not intend to distinguish between the veneration of relics and of images. It is precisely this fusion of the image and relic that also determined the power and aura of the copies.

The strategy of indicating the position of the relics in the corpus of the image by means of text was developed as a complex system of signification in the Trevignano triptych, which was made in the first half of the thirteenth century (fig. 33).[148] The central panel features the enthroned Christ,

[146] *DE LIGNO CRVCIS IACOBI DENS IGNATIIQ(VE) IN SVPRASCRIPTI REQVIESCVNT CORPORE CHRISTI*; Telesko 1994; Dietl 1997.

[147] Herrmann-Mascard 1973, 111: Canon 62 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215: *inventas autem de novo (reliquias) nemo publice venerari praesumat, nisi prius auctoritate Romani Pontificis fuerint approbatae*. Canon 62 refers only to the newly found relics.

[148] Volbach 1940–1941; Garrison, 1955–1956, 14; Parlato, *Volto di Cristo*, 81.

with a complete list of the deposed relics painted below his feet. The inscription names the relics of several saints particularly prominent in Rome—Achilleus and Nereus, Sabina, Cosmas and Damian—but also splinters of the True Cross, and pieces from the tomb of Christ, as well as the names of the painters and the patron of the commission.[149] An additional text in the open book in Christ's hand refers to the promise of salvation: "I am the King of the people of heaven, whom I redeem from death."[150] The relics as such are not visible under the painted surface of the panel; only the cross in the center of Christ's chest hints at the presence of the compartment below it.

The position of the main inscription below the feet of the Savior is significant. Moreover, the space allocated for the text differs from that of other similar inscriptions, which usually are placed within a real or painted frame. The particular placement of the inscription within the composition and the curved format ensure that the figure of Christ "stands on the relics." The triptych thus alludes to the prototype in the Sancta Sanctorum. The eleventh-century *Descriptio Lateranensis* explicitly states that the image of Christ in the Sancta Sanctorum stood on the altar and that "the relics of this shrine are gathered below his [Christ's] feet."[151] This altar, the so-called *arca cipressina*, had been donated by Pope Leo III around 800 and contained small amounts of dust, fragments of terracotta and stone of Palestine provenance (*pignora*), and other precious relics.[152] The *Descriptio Lateranensis* mentions particles from the river Jordan, the Mount of Olives, and many other locations, but also from the Tomb of Christ, and splinters from the Cross. In regard to the Lateran icon, the situation establishes a physical link between the image of the Savior and the Holy Land itself. By situating the inscription that lists the relics hidden in the panel's very "body" directly below the feet of Christ, the painters of the Trevignano triptych reproduced the idea of the Lateran Savior as standing on the very ground of the Holy Land.

Strategies of authentication have now shifted from tales of a miraculous fabrication to the medium of text, the relic inventory, to which the names of the painters and the patron have been added like the notary and witnesses of a medieval legal certificate: the Roman painters Nicolaus (*pictores romani*), son of Paul, along with his son Peter, and the arch-priest Martin, the patron of the panel. The juridical character of the inscription suggests a significant change in the understanding of the image that renounces legendary references, such as those to Luke. Instead, a written report describing the circumstances of its making and functional aspects of the object replaces authenticating narratives. The Roman painters assume personal responsibility for the painting's similitude to the prototype in the Lateran. The image has become an authenticated copy, which maintains its venerability because of its function as a relic depository.

[149] *Requiescunt reliquie sanctorum beatorum Iohannis Ba(ptistae), Cosmae e Damiani, Nerei et Achilei, Felicissimi Agapiti p(r)mi et Feliciani, Lignum sanctae crucis dei, [. . .] sancti Anastasii, Sancta Savina, Sancti Sixti, vestiment(o), s. Iohannis evangelista, vestimento S. Marcae evangelista, vestimento s. Sabe, sancti Dionisii et Euleutherii. /* NICOLAVS DE PAVLO CV*(m)* FILIO SVO PETRO *(Pict)*O*(res)* ROMANI / EGO ARCHIPR*(esbite)*R MARTIN*(us)* PINGERE FECI.

[150] REX EGO SVM CELI P*(o)*P*(uloru)*M QVI DE MORTE REDEMI.

[151] *Descriptio*, 357: *Et super hoc altare est imago Salvatoris mirabiliter depicta in quadam tabula, quam Lucas evangelista designavit, sed virtus Domini angelico perfecit officio; sub cuius pedibus, in quadam pretiosorum lapidum linea, pignora huius sanctuarii sunt recondite, quorum ista sunt nomina . . .* ("And on this altar is the image of the Savior miraculously painted on this panel, which the evangelist Luke drew, but which the virtue of God completed through the angelic office; under whose feet, in this line of precious stones are the remains [*pignora*] of this sanctuary gathered, the names of which are those . . .)

[152] Grisar 1907, 69–71; Thunø 2002, 160–171; Nees 2009, **xx–xx**.

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