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**Guido da Siena's Narrative Panels and the
Madonna del Voto: The Formation of the
Marian Civic Identity in Sienese Art c.1260**

Volume One of two volumes

(Text)

by

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
the History of Art at the University of Warwick.**

This dissertation may not be photocopied.

University of Warwick, Department of the History of Art

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis examines the reconstructed altarpiece formed by the *Madonna del Voto*, the *Coronation of the Virgin*, and the twelve narrative panels dated circa 1267 and attributed to Guido da Siena, currently dispersed in museums in Europe and America. The reconstructed altarpiece is vital to the study of early Siennese art because of its association with the *Madonna del Voto* in Siena cathedral, the most venerated icon believed to be once on the high altar. If proven, it represents a significant rediscovery of an altarpiece commissioned to commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin who granted Siennese victory over Florence in 1260 at the Battle of Montaperti, giving birth to Siena's identity as 'the City of the Virgin'. Moreover, it reveals a more comprehensive view of the precedent of the complex altarpiece, the *Maestà* by Duccio di Buoninsegna dated 1308-11. However, the unconventional format and the iconographical programme of Guido's reconstructed altarpiece has been criticised, and its original location on the cathedral high altar is questioned.

The four chapters of this thesis reassessed the validity of the reconstruction of Guido's altarpiece and its original location on the high altar by combining the methodological tools of altarpiece studies and pictorial narrative studies. Chapter 1 clarified that the reconstruction is highly probable from a technical viewpoint. Chapter 2 proposed an alternative interpretation of the historical documents suggesting its original location on the high altar. Chapters 3 and 4 examined the two extra-biblical episodes (the *Ascent of the Cross* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*), which are often associated with Franciscan commissions, and argued that they were selected to emphasise the Virgin's intercession. The reconstructed altarpiece of exceptional format and iconographical selection was thus probably an invention for the important commission for Siena cathedral where art embodied the Marian civic identity.

List of Abbreviations

- AOMS Archivio dell'Opera Metropolitana, Siena
- ASS Archivio di Stato, Siena
- DRB Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible
- MVC *Meditationes vitae Christi*
- PL *Patrologiae Cursus Completes: Series Latina*

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Figure 138 *Virgin and Child with seventeen scenes from the Life of the Virgin*, Florentine artist, thirteenth century. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

Figure 139. *Assumption of the Virgin*, Coppo di Marcovaldo, c.1261. Museo Civico, San Gimignano.

Figure 140. *Virgin and Child; Annunciation; Nativity; Adoration of the Magi; Assumption of the Virgin*, Margarito and Ristoro d'Arezzo, 1274 or 1283. Santa Maria delle Vertighe, San Savino.

Figure 141. *Ascension of Christ*, c.1260-94. Fresco from the monastery of San Bartolomeo, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Ferrara.

Figure 142. *Virgin and Child, Saints Andrew and James and a supplicant with six scenes from the Virgin's Life*, Magdalene Master, c.1275-80. Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

Figure 143. *Virgin and Child; Coronation of the Virgin; Dormition of the Virgin; Finding of Jesus in the Temple; Lamentation*, Italian and French artists working in the Levant, 1250s. Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai, Egypt.

Figure 144. *Assumption of the Virgin with scenes from her Last Days*, Cesi Master, end of thirteenth century. Institut de France, musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

Figure. 145 *Assumption of the Virgin*, Master of the Subiaco Dossals, first half of the fourteenth century. Santa Maria di Monteluca, Perugia.

Figure 146. *Assumption of the Virgin*, Master of the Perugia Triptych, second half of the thirteenth century. Santa Giuliana, Perugia

Figure 147. *Assumptioin of the Virgin*, Master of the Subiaco Dossals, first half of the fourteenth century. Cappella della Madonna, Sacro Speco, Subiaco.

Figure 148. *Christ and the Virgin Enthroned* (detail from the right wing of a triptych), Duccio di Buoninsegna, first quarter of the fourteenth century. The Royal Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Figure 149. *Coronation of the Virgin*, School of Duccio, first half of the fourteenth century. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.

Figure 150. *Coronation of the Virgin* (detail from *Tabernacle no. 35*), workshop of Duccio, first quarter of the fourteenth century. Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena.

Figure 151. *The Life of the Virgin*, workshop of Giovanni Pisano, 1284-1311. Cathedral, Siena, lintel above the central portal of the western façade.

Figure 152. *The Distribution of the Alms* (detail showing the view of central portal of the western façade of Siena cathedral), Domenico di Bartolo. Pellegrinaio, Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena.

Introduction

This thesis examines the reconstructed altarpiece formed by the *Madonna del Voto* (Siena Cathedral), the *Coronation of the Virgin* (the Courtauld Institute of Art, London), and the twelve narrative panels attributed to Guido da Siena (Fig. 1).¹ The narrative panels are currently housed in different museums in Europe and America: the *Annunciation* in the Princeton University Museum; the *Nativity* and the *Presentation in Temple* in the Louvre in Paris; the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Flagellation* in the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg; the *Christ Mounting the Cross* in the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht;² the *Massacre of Innocents*, *Betrayal*, *Crucifixion*, *Deposition* and *Entombment* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (Figs 2-13). Measuring circa 36 x 49 cm each, the panels were found in the nineteenth century together with the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Courtauld Gallery in London (measuring 33.7 x 166.6 cm) in the former Vallombrosan monastery of Badia Ardenga situated in the south of Siena near Montalcino (Fig. 14a, b).

From the early twentieth century onward, there has been a debate on the reconstruction of the original structure that the narrative panels once belonged to. The narrative cycle itself is significant showing exceptional selection of scenes, which has not been fully appreciated. In addition, the more recent combination of

¹ The only monograph on Guido da Siena is J. Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena* (Princeton, 1964). The group of paintings formerly attributed to Guido da Siena has been re-examined by Luciano Bellosi and other scholars identifying several other Siennese duecento painters such as Dietisalvi di Speme and Guido di Graziano: L. Bellosi, 'Per un contesto cimabuesco senese: a) Guido da Siena e il probabile Dietisalvi di Speme', *Prospettiva* 61 (1991), pp. 6-20; A. Bagnoli et al. eds, *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico* (Milan, 2003). Some of the narrative panels as well as the *Madonna del Voto* are attributed to Dietisalvi di Speme based on Bellosi (1991). To avoid unnecessary confusion, I attribute all the panels to Guido da Siena although I consider the cycle to be the result of collaboration between Guido and Dietisalvi.

² *Christ Mounting the Cross* is on loan to the Lindenau-Museum at present.

Guido's narrative panels with the *Madonna del Voto* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* redefines the history of the Italian painted altarpiece as we know it. What we believed to be the traditional format and iconographical programme of the Italian painted altarpiece becomes challenged. It is also vital to the study of early Sienese art because of this association with the *Madonna del Voto* in Siena cathedral, the most venerated icon dated circa 1267, believed to be once on the high altar (Fig. 15). If the combination of the panels is correct, it represents a significant rediscovery of an altarpiece commissioned to commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin who granted Sienese victory over Florence in 1260 at the Battle of Montaperti, which gave birth to Siena's identity as 'the City of the Virgin'. Moreover, it reveals a more comprehensive view of the precedent of the complex altarpiece that is known as the *Maestà* by Duccio di Buoninsegna dated 1308-11 (Fig. 16a,b).³

Siena in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was an important centre of Marian and narrative art production. The most significant example of this rich experimental age of narrative church decoration in Sienese art is the *Maestà* for the high altar of Siena cathedral by Duccio di Buoninsegna dated 1308-11 and now located in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena. If the combination of Guido da Siena's twelve narrative panels, the *Coronation of the Virgin*, and the *Madonna del Voto* is proven, it can be appreciated as a significant narrative altarpiece preceding Duccio's *Maestà*. This thesis therefore aims to reposition Guido's narrative in Siena cathedral as an extraordinary work of novelty designed

³ It was assigned in 1307/8 to the leading Sienese painter Duccio di Buoninsegna (documented 1278-1319) by the Opera del Duomo whose members were appointed by the Sienese government. It was placed on the high altar of Siena cathedral in 1311. Recent state of research on Duccio's *Maestà*: D. Gordon, *The Italian Paintings before 1400* (London, 2011), pp. 174-187.

for the high altar for the most crucial civic commemoration, taking into account the methodologies of altarpiece studies and pictorial narrative studies.

Previous scholarship has mainly focused on the stylistic, formal, functional and iconographical development of Sieneese paintings (Bagnoli et al. 2003, Bacci 2009) especially in the context of altarpiece studies (Gardner von Teuffel 1979, Gardner 1983, Van Os 1984-90, Seiler 2002), geographical and political background of artistic commissions (Norman 1999), and patronage of individuals (Schmidt 2005) and mendicant orders (Derbes 1996). Studies focused specifically on narrative cycles include the analysis of disposition of scenes (Aronberg Lavin 1990) and storytelling (Lubbock 2006). Research on the original context of narrative cycles includes studies on the decoration of the church space around the altar (Kroesen and Schmidt 2009), the veneration of the relic, reliquary and images, and meditative practice (Parshall 1999, Flora 2009). During research for my Masters degree, I identified a corpus of narrative cycle from Italy with a view to reading sequences and patterns.⁴ In this doctoral thesis, I combine all available tools of analysis to solve the problems posed by the reconstruction of what is fundamentally a dismembered altarpiece which lacks documentation.

1. Sieneese Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Historical Background

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Siena developed drastically, and underwent difficult times of constantly changing political background (Bowsky 1981). The ‘golden age’ of Siena begins after the miraculous victory over the rival

⁴ Kayoko Ichikawa, ‘The Program of the Passion Cycle on the Reverse Side of Duccio’s *Maestà*: Focusing on the Scenes of *Saint Peter’s Denial*’, MA dissertation (Keio University 2007).

city Florence in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, which is proudly described in the Sieneese chronicles already in the fourteenth century. The miraculous effect of the dedication of the keys of the city gate in front of the image of the Virgin became a legend, and made Siena the ‘City of the Virgin’ (Ishinabe 1988, Norman 1999). The emphasised context of the Ghibelline Sieneese victory over the Florentine Guelf remained in people’s memory, even though after a short while, the city had to take the Guelf ally to protect their profits. As a result, most of the works of art with the image of the Virgin came to be understood in this Marian context.⁵ This view has very much influenced Sieneese art history. The process of de-mythicising the Marian image from this context and understanding individual works of Sieneese art in their original setting is still in progress (Mina and Heal in Cannon 2000), and Guido da Siena’s narrative altarpiece provides a better view of the earliest Sieneese Marian altarpiece at the dawn of its golden age.

Siena under the Nine (1287-1355) is considered to be the ‘golden age’ (Bowsky 1981). The city prospered under this government of mercantile-banking oligarchy. The Nine played an active role in art commission especially for the Cathedral, Palazzo Pubblico, and the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala (Norman 1999, Ide 2000). Although the city enjoyed prosperity during this period, it was not as stable as it seemed: the government was constantly in tense relationships with other city states and with the noble families within the city. The Nine constantly had to watch out for conflicts outside and inside their city. Artistic commissions seemed to have been utilised to stabilise the Sieneese status inside and outside their city. The mendicant orders established themselves in the city

⁵ For the summary of the confusion surrounding which painting, if any, Duccio’s *Maestà* might have replaced, see Gordon (2011), p. 179.

during this period, and construction of their church buildings gave opportunity to commission artworks. In the case of Sieneese art, the question of who played the most influential and leading role in developing religious art remains open.

The Black Death (1348) is considered to have marked a turning point in the discourse of the history of art although this remains challenged (Bourdua 2012). Millard Meiss provided the dominant model for understanding painting of the second half of the fourteenth century (Meiss 1951). As argued by Meiss, the plague of 1348 had a devastating impact on fourteenth-century culture and the art it produced. People rejected the naturalistic and humanistic developments of the early fourteenth century and sought a return to images that were both more hieratic in content and more abstract in form.⁶ On the other hand, Judith Steinhoff observed through the works of Bartolommeo Bulgarini (active circa 1337-78) that although painters did draw on many earlier Sieneese artistic traditions, they were not responding to a widespread spiritual crisis engendered by the plague (Steinhoff 2006). Indeed, starting from Guido da Siena's altarpiece, Sieneese art was produced in order to constantly renew the special protection of Mary based on traditional images but also reforming old images according to contemporary theological and political circumstances.

Sieneese School: Artists from Siena

The Sieneese School was first distinguished by Guglielmo Della Valle in his

⁶ For the analysis of Meiss' method, see J. B. Steinhoff, *Sieneese Painting After the Black Death: Artistic Pluralism, Politics, and the New Art Market* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 9-15.

Lettere Sanesi.⁷ From the end of the nineteenth century, the recognised corpus of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Sieneese art was included in the context of Italian art history (Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1883-1908, Venturi 1906-1939, Toesca 1927). In this context, works of art were studied according to the paradigm of periodisation (Romanesque and Gothic, or Duecento and Trecento) and media (paintings, sculptures, and other objects) distinguishing major artists of each region as the central key figures in stylistic development. In the case of Sieneese art, Duccio di Buoninsegna, Simone Martini, and Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti formed the nuclei.⁸ Earlier painters such as Guido da Siena and Dietisalvi di Speme have been recognised in the context of the pre-golden age of Sieneese art. Duecento art has been studied in previous scholarship as characteristic of various panel paintings (Venturi 1907). It is mostly understood under the category of pre-ducciesque period (Van Marle 1920). Not only painters, but also sculptors and artists of metalwork from Siena have been recognised working beyond its territory. The fact that Siena was active and playing the leading role not only in paintings demonstrates that Sieneese art was prolific and influential at this time, and Guido da Siena's altarpiece also demonstrated the most advanced style, format and iconographical programme in the mid-thirteenth century.

Sieneese Art: Geographical Expansion

Sieneese artists in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries often worked beyond the

⁷ G. Della Valle, *Lettere Sanesi di un socio dell'Accademia di Fossano sopra le Belle Arti*, 3 vols (Venice, 1782-1786).

⁸ Adolfo Venturi categorizes Sieneese painters as follows: Duccio di Buoninsegna – His followers: Ugolino (di Nerio), Segna di Bonaventura, etc. – Simone Martini – Diffusion of Simone's art in Naples – Lippo Memmi – Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti – Sieneese followers in the manner of Simone Martini, Lippo Memmi and Lorenzetti (brothers). See the table of content in A. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. 5 (Milan, 1907), p. VI.

Sieneſe territory: works of art ordered from the Sieneſe artists are found in Perugia, Assisi, Pisa, Arezzo, Florence, Cortona, Orvieto, Avignon and Naples. Siena was then in the course of stretching its territory. However, the expansion of Sieneſe artistic style or iconography did not always coincide with the expansion of its territory. For example, Massa Marittima was not yet under Sieneſe control when the reduced copy of Duccio’s Siena Cathedral *Maestà* was commissioned for its cathedral (Norman 1999). On the other hand, artists of works found within Siena and its territory did not necessarily come from Siena. For example, the Florentine artist Coppo di Marcovaldo was active in Siena and in San Gimignano, leaving important models of the large-scale *Virgin with Child Enthroned* (the so-called ‘Madonna del Bordone’ in Santa Maria dei Servi in Siena) and the painted cross with lateral narrative scenes in Pinacoteca Civica in San Gimignano. The inter-relationship or similarities between Sieneſe art and Venetian, Byzantine, or Crusader art is still a current issue and will be discussed in Chapter 3.⁹

2. Altarpiece Studies: From Reconstruction to Recontextualisation

Decontextualisation of Religious Art

Already before the nineteenth century, religious objects had become works of art to be collected and admired out of their original context. However, in Italy, it was in the nineteenth century that numerous religious objects were taken out from their original location and collected. This was also the case in Siena, which led to

⁹ The role of Crusader art in the transmission of the Byzantine painting tradition to Italy: J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099-1291* (Aldershot, 2008); J. Folda, ‘Icon to Altarpiece in the Frankish East: Images of the Virgin and Child Enthroned’, in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. V.M. Schmidt (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 122-145; A. Derbes, ‘Siena and the Levant in the Later Dugento’, *Gesta* 28 (1989), pp. 190-204.

the compiling of catalogues (*Catalogo* 1872, 1895, 1903, 1909, Dami 1924). The origin of the gallery in Siena is explained in the foreword of the catalogues: the old panel paintings of the Sieneese School were collected by the diligent Abate Giuseppe Ciaccheri at his own expense or with donations from citizens after the suppression of the convents and the confraternities ordered by Pietro Leopoldo di Lorena. There was another suppression of the monasteries and lay confraternities in 1810 ordered by the French government. The mayor of the city Cav. Luigi Bianchi utilized this occasion to found an institute for the citizens, namely the Istituto di Belle Arti.¹⁰ In this way, the paintings became works of art to be collected and displayed in the museums becoming the objects of art historical studies.¹¹

Art historical tools of analysis began to develop in order to organise the works of art in chronological order for the making of catalogues and the displaying of the objects, which were mostly panel paintings. Starting from a historical and philological approach, stylistic analysis developed because of the lack of historical documents. Meticulous tools of analysis for cataloguing works of art have been exercised up to the present producing informative catalogue of collection and exhibition of Sieneese art including not only paintings but also sculptures, miniatures, stained-glass windows and metalwork (Torriti 1980, Chelazzi Dini 1982, Cioni 1998, Bagnoli 2003, 2009, 2010, Bartalini 2005).

After being decontextualised to become collection items, works of art, especially Italian panel paintings, travelled far resulting in the dispersal of collections all over the world. Large-scale panel paintings were often cut down to

¹⁰ *Catalogo della galleria del R. Istituto Provinciale di belle arti di Siena* (Siena, 1872), pp. 3-4.

¹¹ Duccio's *Maestà* was also found after 1878 in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo founded in 1870: Bagnoli et al. (2003), p. 212.

form smaller panels with a figure (or figures) or a narrative scene, which was the case for Guido da Siena's narrative altarpiece. This is most significantly demonstrated in the case of Duccio's *Maestà*.¹² Although most of the panels remain in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Siena, some of the narrative panels from the front and back predella are dispersed.¹³ It was indeed through the attempt to reconstruct Duccio's *Maestà* that altarpiece studies developed in the twentieth century.

Reconstruction: Rediscovery of the Most Complex Altarpiece

Various reconstructions of the original form of Duccio's *Maestà* have been proposed (Dobbert 1885, Weigelt 1909, Lusini 1912, De Wald 1955, 1961, Cooper 1965, Stubblebine 1969, 1979, White 1979¹, 1979²). In the first place, the dispersed narratives were placed in chronological order based on iconographical observation. This was followed by observation of physical traits and scientific analysis during the restoration (1952-58), which revealed the structure of how the main panels were originally combined together (Brandi 1959). White's reconstruction based on the precise measurement revealed that the central pinnacle panel on the front and the back, and one scene from the back predella were missing (White 1979¹, 1979²). Further iconographical investigation suggested the possibility that the predella was box-shaped, raising the issue that there might have been two more scenes missing from the sides of this box

¹² For summary of the disassembly of the altarpiece, see Gordon (2011). p. 177.

¹³ Present location of the dispersed panels: the *Annunciation*, the *Healing of the Man born Blind*, and the *Transfiguration* (London, National Gallery); the *Nativity* flanked by *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel* (Washington, National Gallery of Art, Andrew W. Mellon Collection); the *Temptation on the Mountain* (New York, Frick Collection); the *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (Washington, National Gallery of Art); *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (Madrid, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection); the *Raising of Lazarus* (Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum).

structure (Stubblebine 1977, Sullivan 1985). Moreover, to place the enormous double-sided panels on the altar, lateral buttresses that reached to the floor were posited as the supporting system (Gardner von Teuffel 1979).

As the result of reconstruction from the point of view of carpentry, the overall format and design including the supporting system of this monumental double-sided altarpiece was revealed. The double-sided structure, which was like a painted wall immovable once set up, posed further question of its original setting in the church (Gardner 1983).¹⁴ In this way, the original location of the panel paintings, namely the altar, became the focal point of studies (Borsook 1994).¹⁵ Siena was considered the important centre for the development of altarpieces (Van Os 1984-90).

Recontextualisation: Further Development of Altarpiece Studies

The double-sidedness of Duccio's *Maestà* has directed the scholarship towards its original location, which led to the question of the audiences and the function of the altarpiece. In 1984 Kees van der Ploeg (in Van Os 1984) used the *Ordo Officiorum* of Siena Cathedral written in 1215, to argue that the choir was situated behind the high altar, which would have meant that the front of the *Maestà* with the Virgin and Child, saint and angels, was designed to be viewed from the nave, while the narrative scenes on the back were to be viewed by the clergy. This idea that the front was directed to the laity and the back was for the canons became more acceptable giving the double-sided altarpieces the role to separate the space

¹⁴ For the catalogue of double-sided altarpieces in central Italy: K. Toyama, 'The Double-sided Altarpieces', in *Dentou to Shouchou: Bijutsushi no matorikkusu [Tradition and Symbol: Matrix of Art History]*, ed. F. Maeda (Tokyo, 2000), pp. 23-53.

¹⁵ This volume is a result of an international symposium held in June 1988 at the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti in Florence.

in the church (Toyama 2000). The idea that the Christological theme on the back was suited for the canons and the Marian theme on the front for the laity was taken further to strongly characterise Siena as the city of the Virgin, especially from the political point of view, and Siennese art became understood mainly in this Marian context (Ishinabe 1988, Norman 1999).

Thus the iconographical theme and the format were considered in relation with the function and audience: the back side with small-scale narrative scenes of Christological theme was considered appropriate for the canons, and the front with large-scale Virgin and Child Enthroned with Marian theme narrative was for the laity. However, the location of the choir has been revised with the more careful reading of the *Ordo Officiorum*: the choir was, until the 1360s, in front of the high altar which was positioned towards the eastern end of the hexagonal choir under the dome (Struchholz 1995). The function of the narrative cycle on the rear and its audience were opened to question again.

Accepting the new setting of the choir in front of the high altar, Peter Seiler argued that the depository for the Eucharist was on the reverse side of the altar, and the Passion cycle on the back was appropriate to accommodate extralitururgical private devotional practice linked to the growing movement of devotion to the Eucharist (Seiler 2002).¹⁶ The issue of devotional image and its function as aid to meditation for individual or personal devotion is considered not only in the private context with smaller objects but also in the public context with larger objects (Schmidt 2005). Given that the illustration on the reverse was accessible to a wider audience, it is also considered probable that it functioned as

¹⁶ For the whole summary of the setting and function of Duccio's *Maestà*, see Gordon (2011), pp. 178-9.

a wall painting that enclosed the sanctuary in the church as in northern Europe (Bacci 2009). Related to the issue of function and audience of altarpieces, another important subject that has been argued is patronage. In the case of Duccio's *Maestà*, the Dominican bishop at the time, Ruggiero da Casole, has been considered to be the theological advisor.¹⁷

Whilst we know much about the monumental altarpiece of Siena cathedral's high altar by Duccio, what do we know of the antecedents? How did Siena come to produce such a complex altarpiece? What was precisely the message Duccio's narrative cycle conveyed, and how did the role of pictorial narrative develop in Siena? The aim of my thesis is to position Guido da Siena's reconstructed narrative altarpiece as a precedent of Duccio's *Maestà* in the context of the development of the gospel narrative cycle in Siennese art in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by using the tools of analysis developed in the study of Duccio's *Maestà*.

¹⁷ He was approved by the Papal legate, Napoleone Orsini, to settle the discord between the major families in Siena contesting the bishopric. Bishop Ruggiero da Casole is supposed to have had an important role in the planning of the programme of Duccio's *Maestà*, and thought carefully of a programme to bring peace to Siena. P. Seiler, 'Duccio's *Maestà*: The Function of the Scenes from the Life of Christ on the Reverse of the Altarpiece: A New Hypothesis', in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. V. M. Schmidt (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 250-277; B.A. Mulvaney, 'Duccio's *Maestà* Narrative Cycles: A Study of Meaning', Ph.D. thesis (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 1998); D. Waley, *Siena and the Siennese in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991). On Dominican patronage: J. Cannon, 'Dominican Patronage of the Arts in Central Italy: the Provincia Romana, c. 1220-c. 1320', Ph.D. thesis (University of London 1980); idem, 'Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Siennese Polyptych', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982), pp. 69-93; idem, 'Dominic *alter* Christus? Representations of the Founder in and after the *Arca di San Domenico*', in *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans*, eds K. Emery Jr. and J.P. Wawrykow (1998), pp. 26-48; idem 'Dominican Shrines and Urban Pilgrimage in Late Medieval Italy', in *Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000-1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, eds P. Davies, D. Howard and W. Pullan (Burlington, 2013), pp. 143-164 (hereafter referred to as Cannon 2013¹); idem, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New Haven and London, 2013, hereafter referred to as Cannon 2013²).

3. Studies of the Pictorial Narrative

Gospel Narrative Cycles

Siena in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was crucial for the development of gospel narrative cycles in Italy. This I define as any visual representation of the gospel story depicted in three or more scenes selected from the four Gospels and Apocrypha including episodes from the Annunciation to the Pentecost; the selection varied from cycle to cycle.¹⁸ Gospel narrative cycles can be found among diverse objects (mural paintings, stained-glass windows, doors, pulpits, tabernacles, reliquaries, reliquary shutters, miniatures, altarpieces, painted crosses, pluvials, Lenten cloths), are of different media (fresco, marble, ivory, metal, glass, wood, textile), and vary in scale.¹⁹ They can be presented in a series of compartments of any form and dimension, either equal or unequal. By focusing

¹⁸ Example with minimum scenes: a canvas painting (c.1270) in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena attributed to Guido da Siena. The so-called 'Paliotto' represents three episodes: *Transfiguration*, *Entry into Jerusalem*, and *Raising of Lazarus*. At present it is under restoration at Opificio delle Pietre Dure in Florence. For the recent report: M. Ciatti et al., 'The "Paliotto" by Guido da Siena from the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena' in *Studying Old Master Paintings: Technology and Practice; The National Gallery Technical Bulletin 30th Anniversary Conference Postprints*, ed. M. Spring (London, 2011), pp. 1-7. Example with numerous scenes: a panel painting (mid-14th century) in the Diocesan Museum of Pienza attributed to Siennese painters Cristoforo di Bindoccio and Meo di Pero. This winged triptych represents forty-eight gospel episodes from *Annunciation* to *Ascension*. Illustrations in detail: M. Bacci, *Iconografia evangelica a Siena: dalle origini al Concilio di Trento* (Siena, 2009).

¹⁹ Guido's 'Paliotto' is probably the earliest surviving example of a painting on a linen fabric support in Tuscany, measuring 91 x 186 cm, considered to be a cloth that covered the front of the altar. The Pienza triptych is most probably an altarpiece to be placed above the altar, painted on wooden panels in the form of a large winged triptych measuring approximately 1.5 m square when it is opened. Example of sculpted cycle: marble pulpit (1265-1268) for Siena cathedral by Nicola Pisano with participation of his son Giovanni Pisano and other assistants. Example of small-scale object: reliquary of the Holy Corporal in Orvieto Cathedral (1338) commissioned to the Siennese artist Ugolino di Vieri and his assistants. The narrative cycle from *Annunciation* to *Resurrection* is shown on the compartments of translucent enamel on silver plaquettes covering the front and the back. Illustrations in detail: E. Cioni, *Scultura e Smalto nell' Oreficeria Senese dei secoli XIII e XIV* (Firenze, 1998). Example of large-scale painting: fresco cycle in the collegiate church in San Gimignano (1333-1341) by Siennese painters Lippo and Tederigo Memmi. Recent study: A. Bagnoli ed., *La collegiata di San Gimignano: L'architettura, i cicli pittorici murali e i loro restauri* (Siena, 2009).

on just three compartments, there already emerges the problem of the selection of episodes and their disposition, which gives the complexity in the reading direction and the hierarchy of the scenes.²⁰ This is significantly demonstrated in the previous scholarship on Duccio's *Maestà*. A series of diagrams proposing the reading direction of the back panel given in Deuchler's monograph (1984) still remains an open question.

Duccio's *Maestà* is significant as the first model of a large-scale double-sided altarpiece with predella and pinnacles, approximately 5m square, with an extensive gospel narrative cycle containing more than forty-eight scenes.²¹ Nothing like Duccio's *Maestà* had been painted before nor was it ever fully copied. However, numerous prototypes were brought together and fused into this single work. Moreover it was located on the high altar of Siena Cathedral for almost two centuries²² to be referenced as formal, iconographical, and stylistic norm in Siena and its periphery. This exceptional model makes Siena in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is to say before, during and after Duccio's *Maestà*, crucial for the development of gospel narrative cycles in Italy.²³

The new framework of gospel narrative cycle allows us to take into

²⁰ Guido's 'Paliotto' has slightly unequal compartments. *Entry into Jerusalem* is wider than the other scenes and is shifted out of chronological order, which suggests that it is intended to be the focal point of the painting. Ciatti et al. (2011), p. 2.

²¹ See above p. 2, n. 3.

²² It was removed on 8 July 1506, when Pandolfo Petrucci replaced it with a ciborium by Vecchietta formerly in the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala. Gordon (2011), p. 177.

²³ Duccio's gospel narrative cycle is illustrated on the front and back of the predella and on the main panel and in the pinnacles on the back. The multi-tiered design of Duccio's *Maestà* and its carpentry was very innovative: Italian gothic altarpieces in the form of polyptych with predella and pinnacle panels became standardised only after Duccio's *Maestà*. However the addition of predella was first documented in Cimabue's lost *Maestà* for the Ospedale of Santa Chiara, Pisa, and possibly on the lost *Maestà* of 1302 by Duccio himself for the government of the Nine. The addition of pinnacles is found on the altarpiece by Vigoroso da Siena (1291) in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Perugia. Seiler (2002), p. 251. Duccio's *Maestà* is innovative because the pinnacle panels are filled with narratives and not angels.

account comparable examples of different materials, form, and function, which are usually studied separately, and to examine church decoration more comprehensively. This will redefine this period as a rich experimental age of narrative church decoration, positioning Siena as one of its most important centres.

Setting and Audience: Comprehensive Church Decoration

Various objects with gospel narrative cycle are found within the church space in a liturgical or devotional context. They were especially considered to be effective to emphasise Passion and Eucharist playing the role as aid to meditation (Parshal 1999, Seiler 2002, Flora 2009), although Guido da Siena's narrative altarpiece conveys a more public message. Now altarpiece studies take a wider view to consider decoration around the altar (Kroesen and Schmidt 2009), and Guido's altarpiece should also be considered within the context of cathedral decoration. Not only the comprehensive church decoration but also how people experienced the church space in the Middle Ages is reconstructed (Bacci 2005, Cooper and Robson 2013, Cannon 2013²). Personal devotion did not always take place in a private or individual space (Schmidt 2005). This could be exercised in the church space collectively or individually, also during mass as well. Various objects other than paintings came to be studied in the same context of church decoration. This approach of reconstruction and recontextualisation of comprehensive church decoration is also reflected in the recent exhibitions held in London: *Devotion by Design: Italian Altarpieces Before 1500* (The National Gallery, London, 6 July –

2 October 2011);²⁴ *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (The British Museum, London, 23 June 2011 – 9 October 2011);²⁵ and the recently renewed display of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Medieval and Renaissance Galleries. Based on this recent methodology, Chapter 2 examines the architectural situation and the interior decoration process of Siena cathedral focusing on the changing locations of the *Madonna del Voto* from the mid-thirteenth century to the seventeenth century.

Form and Function: Places of Narrative

Gospel narrative cycles are found among various forms of panel paintings, as well as among various other media. Duecento art is characterised by the production of panel paintings. Garrison compiled a catalogue of Italian Romanesque panel paintings, including Guido da Siena's panels, categorising them according to the form (Garrison 1949). Among the saints and Madonna panels, panels with gospel narrative cycle are included among various forms. The earliest example of gospel narrative cycles on panel can be found on the apron of the painted crosses. Evelyn Sandberg-Vavalà (1929) focused on this specific form and catalogued various painted crosses with and without narratives. The development of the form of panel paintings from horizontal to vertical panel leading to the later development of the altarpiece has been examined considering the relationship between form and function (Hager 1962, Van Os 1984, Krüger 1992, Schmidt in Bagnoli et al. 2003, Seiler 2002), but until now Guido da Siena's reconstructed altarpiece has been left out because it does not fit the 'standard' form of painted altarpieces.

²⁴ S. Nethersole, *Devotion by Design: Italian Altarpieces Before 1500* (London, 2011).

²⁵ M. Bagnoli et al. eds, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London, 2011).

Marilyn Aronberg Lavin's *The Place of Narrative* (1990) compiled a catalogue of Italian mural paintings with narrative cycles, and analysed the disposition of the scenes and their reading sequence, but the panel paintings including Guido's narrative were excluded from the discussion. Italian panel paintings were given prominence comparable to that of mural paintings within church decoration. The complexity in the reading direction and the hierarchy of the scenes is significantly demonstrated in the previous scholarship of Duccio's *Maestà* (Deuchler 1979, 1984). Although miniature has also been taken into account as source of composition for panel paintings (Earenfight 1994), how certain images spread from one medium to another remains an issue worthy of further study. I have attempted to see the development of certain iconographies comparing various media in Chapters 3 and 4 to address the validity of such methodology in understanding how images and ideas behind it can travel from one place to another through different channels.

The Role of Pictorial Narrative

Pictorial narrative played an important role in public art in medieval Italian city states, and Guido da Siena's narrative altarpiece also played a civic commemorative role in Siena. Hans Belting remarked on the new role of pictorial narrative in Trecento especially from Giotto onwards, which can also be applied to Guido's work. According to Belting, pictorial narrative changed from a literal narration of a biblical event to an allegory, a metaphorical narration understood in political terms. Thus narrative became a way of carrying out arguments, phrasing topics of general interest, and illustrating a concept addressing a general audience

through its official use on public walls. In this function, pictorial narrative gained importance by reaffirming common principles of civic life. Narration had become a method of exposition and also a mode of persuasion. Persuasion meant arguing and illustrating the argument with narrative verifications. The argument is made visible as such, and it is made visible in suggestive rhetoric, which included vivid narrative. Merely to relate a historical event was insufficient when the intention was to cause it to be remembered as the exemplification of a general truth. Narration was used as another way of explanation. Thus, narrative became instrumental, and not an end in itself.²⁶ As we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, Guido's narrative was not a literal illustration of the biblical story, but an experimental attempt to expand the biblical narrative to argue the importance of Mary as their civic protectress.

Iconography and Programme: Thematical Development

The gospel narratives were analysed iconographically in the context of the life of Christ, Mary, or the saints (Schiller 1971, Kaftal 1985). Schiller's first two volumes of *Iconography of Christian Art* (1971) are divided into two parts: *Christ's Incarnation, Childhood, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, Works, and Miracles* and *The Passion of Jesus Christ*. The fact that the second volume is devoted fully to the Passion of Jesus Christ shows its importance in Christian art. The sacramental interpretation of Christ's sacrificial death was to be especially influential during the Middle Ages. Pious attention was directed towards the Passion from the fourth century when Christians in Jerusalem commemorated

²⁶ Hans Belting, 'The New Role of Narrative in Public Painting of the Trecento: *Historia* and Allegory', in *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, eds H.L. Kessler and M.S. Simpson (Washington D.C., 1985), pp. 151-168.

Christ's suffering at liturgies celebrated at the historical sites. This meditative contemplation of Christ's suffering seems to have already existed in the east. The crusade of the twelfth century undertaken to liberate the Holy Sepulchre again focused religious thought on the Passion and probably awakened an interest in the historical events which occurred in the Holy Land. A concern with the gospel stories and the apocryphal writings began to run parallel with mystical meditation. The doctrine of transubstantiation was made dogma at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. The feast of Corpus Christi was also promoted to become a feast of the Church (1246). As mysticism centred on the Passion and eucharistic belief made themselves increasingly felt, many new pictorial types emerged to form devotional images.²⁷ At the same time, Marian iconography developed in parallel with the theological discussion of the role of Mary in Christian faith. Thus Schiller's fourth volume, which is not translated into English, focuses on the iconography of the Church and Mary.²⁸

The new iconographic catalogue of Sienese art titled *Iconografia evangelica a Siena* (Bacci 2009) divided the gospel story into three parts according to similar categories: *the Incarnation, the Infancy, and the Public Life of Christ; the Events of the Passion; the Events of the Resurrection*. This volume has brought various objects together grouping them according to each episode in chronological order. Although a variety of details and mutual development among various media can be observed, this does not allow us to observe the selection of episodes in each narrative cycle. The iconographical selection needs to be

²⁷ G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2 (London, 1972), pp. 1-11. Study on the feast of Corpus Christi: M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991).

²⁸ G. Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, vol. 4 (Gütersloh, 1966).

analysed in individual case studies so that the programme or theme of each narrative can be understood. Certain iconographical elements can be given emphasis in a gospel narrative cycle. For example, Jules Lubbock has pointed out that the extraordinarily long cycle of the *Trial of Christ* in Duccio's *Maestà* was intended to emphasise the importance of law and justice at the time when the Sienese government had a serious problem with the conflict between major families (Lubbock 2006). He argued that the presence of Saint Peter denying three times was to emphasize the firm attitude of Christ. Beth Mulvaney has also pointed out the prominence of Saint Peter in the Passion cycle of Duccio. However she gives him a rather negative role as a contrast to Christ (Mulvaney 1998).²⁹ Judas is also observed as a featured figure in the Franciscan context (Robson 2004). Thus the commonly depicted biblical narratives could convey different kinds of messages by featuring certain iconographical episodes and details. In Guido da Siena's narrative cycle, as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, the introduction of two extra-biblical episodes emphasised the core message of the altarpiece: the intercession of the Virgin.

4. The History of Guido da Siena's Narrative Panels

The place of Guido da Siena's twelve narrative panels has been the subject of a century-long debate. Curt Weigelt initially considered that they formed part of the predella of an altarpiece (Weigelt 1911). He later proposed a different reconstruction (Fig. 17) arguing that the twelve narrative panels originally formed

²⁹ In my master thesis, I concluded that Saint Peter's role needs to be reconsidered in a more positive context possibly to encourage the viewers. Ichikawa (2007).

part of the wings of a tabernacle that housed the large panel of the Virgin Enthroned, the so-called *San Domenico Madonna* (Fig. 18), by Guido da Siena (Weigelt 1931). He based his reconstruction on the existing formal model known as the *Marzolini Triptych* in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia (Fig. 19), and assumed that the cycle originally consisted of twenty-eight scenes. James Stubblebine proposed a reduced version with twenty-four scenes (Fig. 20). The upper corners of the two panels, the *Annunciation* and the *Flagellation*, diagonally cut off by the frame, prompted the gabled format (Stubblebine 1959). Based on technical research, Robert Oertel suggested a much smaller version with only twelve surviving scenes (Fig. 21): it was made from four large horizontal planks with the joins slightly rising to the right leaving a gap in the centre (Oertel 1961).³⁰

Based on stylistic analysis, Luciano Bellosi attributed some of the narrative panels to Dietisalvi di Speme, probably a collaborator of Guido, and related them to the so-called *Madonna del Voto* in Siena cathedral (Fig. 15), which he also attributed to Dietisalvi. The *Madonna del Voto* was long considered the central part of a larger dossal, presumably painted for the cathedral's high altar before Duccio's *Maestà*.³¹ Following the suggestion by Henk van Os that this was also a double-sided altarpiece,³² Bellosi placed the narrative on the reverse of the *Madonna del Voto* (Bellosi 1991).

Further technical research by Holger Manzke taking Bellosi's suggestion

³⁰ An unpublished drawing by Oertel in the Lindenau-Museum archive (Fig. 22) shows that he placed the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the gabled top of the panel. I am grateful to the Lindenau-Museum especially to Julia Nauhaus and Tobias Ertel who allowed me to consult the archive.

³¹ This is based on the chronicle accounts.

³² H. van Os, *Sieneese Altarpieces 1215-1460: Form, Content, Function*, vol. 1 (1984), pp. 17-20.

further led to a new reconstruction with the *Madonna del Voto* in the centre, which was presented in the exhibition titled *Claritas: Das Hauptaltarbild im Dom zu Siena nach 1260, Die Rekonstruktion* held in the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg in 2001. The *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Courtauld Gallery in London (Fig. 14a,b), which had a common provenance with the other narrative panels from the Badia Ardenga, was placed at the top (Fig. 23). All the panels including the *Madonna del Voto* shared the same characteristic of the slightly inclining wood joints (Fig. 24). Thus a monumental panel painting was revealed. It was also argued that it stood on the high altar of the cathedral before Duccio's *Maestà* (John and Manzke 2001).

However, the *Claritas* reconstruction was soon questioned because of its unusual format, and its improbable location on the high altar. Based on further technical analysis on the Princeton *Annunciation* by Norman Muller which revealed the diagonally cut off corner to have been a later modification (Muller 2001), Victor Schmidt argued that the original format of the narrative cycle should have been rectangular (Fig. 25), as were contemporary Sienese panels (Schmidt 2001²). Monika Butzek argued that the *Madonna del Voto* was never placed on the high altar, but on a side altar dedicated to Saint Boniface (Butzek 2001¹). Thus any accompanying panels should have included the titular saint among others (Fig. 26), according to the contemporary popular formula (Butzek 2010).

Further technical research by Norman Muller proves, in my view and as will be detailed later, the *Claritas* reconstruction: the X-radiograph of the *Madonna del Voto* has revealed the position of the dowels, and the characteristic

horizontal wood grain which is identical with the *Annunciation* panel (Muller 2004). Muller also identified the similar saw marks at an identical angle found on the Courtauld *Coronation* and the *Madonna del Voto*. At a certain point, most probably in the fifteenth century, the *Madonna* was cut out of the original panel structure, and the rest was reconstructed as was already proposed by Manzke (Manzke 2001), which probably caused the diagonal corners (Fig. 27). The coat-of-arms of the Tuti family, who had power over Badia Ardenga, was painted much later on the *Coronation* panel with Prussian blue, an invention of the eighteenth century, as was reported by Caroline Villers and Astrid Lehner (Villers and Lehner 2002).

From an iconographical point of view, Miklos Boskovits proposed a reconstruction retaining the gable-ended horizontal format but excluding the *Madonna del Voto* and retaining the entire mandorla (Fig. 28), possibly with the *Assumption of the Virgin* and/or the *Dormition of the Virgin*, which appear often under the *Coronation*, although the iconography of the *Coronation* itself was still rare around this time in Italy. He evaluated the innovative iconography anticipating Duccio's stained-glass window (Boskovits 2008).

Most recently, Dieter Blume has analysed the iconographical programme of the cycle for the catalogue of an exhibition titled *Die Erfindung des Bildes: Frühe italienische Meister bis Botticelli* held in the Bucerius Kunstforum in Hamburg in 2011. Accepting the *Claritas* reconstruction (John and Manzke 2001) and also taking into account the original location of the *Madonna del Voto* on the nave altar proposed by Butzek (Butzek 2001¹, 2010), he argued that the cycle featuring Mary as the protagonist was suited to accompany the *Madonna del Voto*.

The main purpose was to thank the Virgin who had miraculously interceded in the recent Battle of Montaperti in 1260. Although the altar was dedicated to Saint Boniface, whose feast day fell on the day of the victory, the main aim was to vividly retain the memory of the Virgin's miraculous intercession. Because the altarpiece was the central focus of Sieneese citizens, he concluded that it is reasonable to place it in the nave where it was much more accessible for both individual and collective devotion (Blume 2011).

Blume remarked on the exceptional model of the monumental Madonna in half-length with narratives at this time in Siena. The narrative cycle is adapted ("getrimmte") for this special civic concept: Mary is the protagonist, repeated and given emphasis with blue mantle and her slightly larger scale. This is also expressed through the selection of episodes and details in each scene. The six scenes on the left show the gospel narrative episodes of the Infancy of Christ: the *Annunciation*, the *Nativity*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Presentation in the Temple* (also known as the *Purification of the Virgin*), the *Flight into Egypt*, and the *Massacre of the Innocents*. The six scenes on the right show the episodes of the Passion of Christ: the *Betrayal*, the *Flagellation*, *Christ Mounting the Cross*, the *Crucifixion*, the *Deposition*, and the *Entombment*. The cycle does not depict any episode from Christ's Ministry between the Infancy and the Passion cycle nor any of the episodes from the Resurrection cycle. Instead, the panel is crowned on top with the scene of the *Coronation of the Virgin* in a mandorla supported by the angels. This clearly shows that the narrative cycle has a Marian programme focusing on the events of Mary's life including episodes that do not appear in the four Gospels. Mary appears in all of the scenes except in the *Massacre of*

Innocents, the *Betrayal* and the *Flagellation*. In each scene, she is depicted prominently in the central position large in scale playing the active role.³³

As Blume argues, the narrative explains the relationship of the Mother and Child. For example, by confronting the *Massacre* with the *Flight into Egypt*, it shows the despair of the mother prophesied in the *Presentation in the Temple*. It continues on the right in the *Crucifixion*, *Deposition*, and closes with the *Entombment* where Mary has her son in her hands again. It thus emphasizes the unity of the Mother and Child – which corresponds to the central panel. An altarpiece with such an innovative narrative programme and extraordinary form was probably customised for this most special occasion.³⁴ According to Ioli Kalavrezou, promotion of the Motherhood of Mary had been important in Byzantine tradition since the Iconoclastic period, for Christ became a man through the Virgin's humanity. Her presence in the newly created scene of the *Deposition*, the lowering of her son from the cross, states the emotional bonds between them.³⁵ In Guido's scene, she climbs up the ladder to take her son in her arms and presses her cheek against his.³⁶ In the *Entombment*, or the *Lamentation*, again she bends over her son and embraces his body pressing her cheek against his. This reminds us of the icon of the Virgin Eleousa where she lovingly cuddles the Christ-child. The combination of "simultaneous emotional feelings of motherly

³³ D.Blume, 'Bilder am Ort der Eucharistie. Die vielen Rollen des Altarretabels', in *Die Erfindung des Bildes: Frühe italienische Meister bis Botticelli* (exhibition catalogue, Bucerius Kunstforum, Hamburg, 1 October 2011 - 8 January 2012), eds O. Westheider and M. Philipp (Hamburg, 2011), pp. 34- 45, pp. 40-42.

³⁴ Blume (2011), pp. 41-43.

³⁵ Ioli Kalavrezou, 'The Maternal Side of the Virgin', in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, (exhibition catalogue, Benaki Museum, Athens, 20 October 2000 - 20 January 2001), ed. Maria Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), pp. 41-45.

³⁶ Depicting the Virgin stepping on the ladder might be characteristic in Guidesque art: this is also observed in the Guidesque mural cycle in the lower church of Siena cathedral. I am grateful to Joanna Cannon and her MA students for sharing this observation.

love and suffocating pain”, as described by Kalavrezou,³⁷ is already represented in Guido’s Infancy cycle: in the *Nativity*, Mary has an anxious expression preoccupied by her son’s death. This concept had already been established in the east, and spread in the west by Guido’s time.³⁸ Thus, the Infancy cycle on the left is, in other words, the story of the Holy Mother and Child. In the same context, the Passion cycle on the right can be said in other words to be the story of the Compassion of Mary: the Virgin becomes one of the main characters who displays the pain and suffering that her son’s death has brought about. After the sorrowful separation, the Mother and Child are reunited in heaven as demonstrated in the Coronation: Mary becomes the Queen of Heaven and her intercession becomes eternal.

Although substantial evidence from technical, iconographical and contextual view has been provided to support Manzke’s reconstruction, scholars have yet to agree.³⁹ Therefore, my study aims to confirm the basic combination of panels proposed by Manzke’s reconstruction by providing further technical observations in Chapter 1. It will be followed in Chapter 2 by the re-examination of the history of the *Madonna del Voto* in relation to the formation of Sienese civic myth that re-opens the possibility of its original location on the high altar of the cathedral. Further detailed analysis on the iconographical programme of the reconstructed

³⁷ Kalavrezou (2000), p. 43.

³⁸ Kalavrezou (2000), p. 44.

³⁹ In the same catalogue of the Hamburg exhibition where Blume accepts the reconstruction, Bastian Eclercy doubts it in his entry. *Die Erfindung des Bildes* (2011), pp. 122-125.

altarpiece especially focusing on two significant scenes, the *Ascent to the Cross* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*, in Chapters 3 and 4 will provide a better understanding on the original intention of the commission, will challenge the Franciscan provenance and will relocate the altarpiece in Siena cathedral.

Chapter 1 The Reconstruction

Studies of Italian panel paintings have developed into increasingly complex altarpiece studies combining multiple points of view to reveal the original context of fragmentary pieces. Along with stylistic, iconographical, and formal analysis, technical observations have provided valuable information to understand the original structure and format of altarpieces that have been sawn down and dispersed around the world in different museums and collections. By focusing on the physical aspects of panel paintings, the accuracy of their reconstruction has been greatly enhanced. In the significant case of Duccio's *Maestà* (1308-11), the meticulous measurement of the surviving panels revealed the absent parts of the original structure (White 1973¹, 1973²). In addition, the observation of the supporting system of monumental altarpieces has provided an indispensable perspective to consider how panel paintings were physically installed (Gardner von Teuffel 1979). Scientific analysis of the layers of painted panels (Bomford et al. 1989; Van Asperen de Boer 1989) and observation of punch marks (Skaug 1994; Frinta 1998) have provided more information on materials and artistic practice, which facilitates the dating and grouping of fragments. X-radiographs have revealed the pattern of wood grain confirming that different fragments originally formed a single panel sometimes combined in an unusual format.¹ Collaborations between art historians and restorers have been fruitful at reaching some convincing reconstructions of Trecento polyptychs (Beatson et al 1989; Israëls 2009). Nowadays, physical as well as archival evidence constitute

¹ Most notable example is the series of narrative panels attributed to Giotto and workshop including the *Pentecost* in the National Gallery, London. See Gordon (2011), p. 233-235. Cf. C.B. Strehlke and M.B. Israëls, *The Bernard and Mary Berenson Collection of European Paintings at I Tatti* (forthcoming), pp. 319-329.

considerable factors to support the reconstruction of panel paintings.

The reconstruction of the twelve narrative panels attributed to Guido da Siena placing the *Madonna del Voto* in the centre surmounted with the *Coronation* proposed by the Lindenau-Museum in 2001 was also a result of collaborative research by the art historian Barbara John and the restorer Holger Manzke (Fig. 23). However, controversy ensued soon after. Although the main reason for the objection of this reconstruction was its unusual format and iconographical combination, the technical observation provided by Manzke was also criticised as it was difficult to follow. Additional technical observations followed after the exhibition in several publications (Muller 2001, 2004; Villers and Lehner 2002), and critical analysis is still necessary to arrive at a comprehensive and balanced view of the original structure of the panel in question. In this chapter, I will first present the *Claritas* reconstruction and the responses it triggered. Second, I will trace the physical observations by Manzke and other scholars to re-assess their reliability and the validity of the proposed combination of the panels and propose a modified reconstruction of the original structure. Third, I will focus on some contradictions pointed out in the past and re-examine the physical history of the panels that might have been the cause of these. I will conclude that the physical evidence does not invalidate the combination of the panels proposed in the *Claritas* reconstruction of 2001 as my modified reconstruction suggests.

1. The *Claritas* Reconstruction (2001) and Various Responses

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg initiated a project principally aiming at reconstructing the original ensemble to which the twelve narrative panels attributed to Guido da Siena belonged. The starting point of the project was Robert Oertel's observation in collaboration with the restorer Konrad Riemann for the catalogue of the museum's collection published in 1961. Oertel had observed that the twelve narrative scenes originally constructed a horizontal panel with a gabled top and a central part now lost (Fig. 21). Based on both technical and art historical observations, the purpose of the museum's project was to confirm the combination of the twelve narrative panels and find the missing parts, which were identified as the *Coronation of the Virgin* (Courtauld Gallery) and the *Madonna del Voto* (Siena Cathedral). The result of the project was presented in the exhibition titled *Claritas. Das Hauptaltarbild im Dom zu Siena nach 1260. Die Rekonstruktion* held between 24 May and 15 August 2001. The twelve narrative panels were brought together and displayed in a horizontal gabled format including full-scale colour photographs of the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the *Madonna del Voto* that could not travel for the exhibition. All the panels and images were mounted in a wooden frame of the presumed original dimension, more than three metres wide and nearly two metres high.

The archival research by the art historian Barbara John (2001, 2002) tracing the provenance of the panels provided further convincing evidence to support the ensemble of all twelve narrative scenes and the Courtauld *Coronation*. The same provenance for the panels had already been suggested by Hans-Joachim

Ziemke (1969) who noticed that all of the panels were copied by the German artist Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866) and numbered consecutively in an album in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt. Ramboux, who was also a collector, must have copied the panels towards the end of his trip to Italy between 1832 and 1842, and purchased three of the panels: the *Nativity*, the *Presentation in the Temple* and the *Mounting of the Cross*.² This is supported by the fact that the illegal sale of the panels led to a lawsuit in Siena between 1841 and 1843 resulting in Ramboux asking for permission to export the three panels on 12 May 1842.³ The 1862 catalogue of his own collection mentioned that they belonged to a cycle depicting the life of Christ from the former abbey of Ardenga near Montalcino. This provenance corresponds with that mentioned for the five panels in Siena in the 1852 catalogue of the Istituto di Belle Arti, the forerunner of the Pinacoteca Nazionale, as from the Badia Ardenga. The three panels in Altenburg (the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Flagellation*) formerly belonged to Bernhard von Lindenau, whose agent in Italy, Emil Braun, was well-informed about Ramboux's acquisitions before purchasing them in 1850.⁴ As for the *Coronation*, the coat of arms painted on it proved to be of the Tuti family from Siena who were the prebendaries of Badia Ardenga since the end of the fifteenth century.⁵ Thus the evidence points to the common provenance of all the panels mentioned above supporting the hypothesis that Ramboux observed and traced the twelve narrative scenes and the *Coronation* all together on his visit

² John considered Ramboux saw the whole altarpiece to which the narrative panels belonged to, and he might have even witnessed its dismembering. B. John, 'Guido da Siena's *Misteri di Gesù Cristo*', in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed V. M. Schmidt (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 278-289, p. 285.

³ John (2002), p. 284.

⁴ John (2002), pp. 279-280.

⁵ John (2001), pp. 115-116.

to Badia Ardenga between 1832-42.

The restorer Holger Manzke (2001) provided further technical observation to support the ensemble of all narrative panels not only with the *Coronation* but also with the *Madonna del Voto*. First, he focused on the horizontal wood grain and searched for the panel that shared this feature arriving at that *Madonna*, a combination which had already been suggested by Luciano Bellosi in 1991 from stylistic analysis. Based on close examination of the originals and the X-radiographs, Manzke provided further information about supports, joins, dowels, back sides, paint layers and repaintings to explain that the panels all share the same features. The original structure and the supporting elements of the original panel were shown in diagrams (Fig. 24). The *Madonna del Voto*'s unquestionable origin from the cathedral of Siena and the traditional belief that it was the high altarpiece before Duccio's *Maestà* led to the conclusion that the whole ensemble was originally commissioned for the high altar of Siena cathedral.

John and Manzke also posited both physically and historically what might have occurred after the whole ensemble was removed from the high altar of Siena cathedral in 1311 when Duccio's *Maestà* replaced it and before it reached the Badia Ardenga in Montalcino. The documents from the mid-fifteenth century suggested to them that the decision was made to build a new chapel for the *Madonna delle Grazie*, which is identified as the *Madonna del Voto*, and to reduce the size of the panel to facilitate carrying it in processions. Thus by the time the new chapel was built, the original panel was at least reduced in size. John considered the separation of the narrative cycle and the *Coronation* from the

Madonna must have taken place at one time probably after the decision in 1448, and the side panels and the gable were reassembled to form a new single panel, as supported by Manzke's technical observation, before it was brought to Badia Ardenga.⁶ Turning to the history of the monastery, the panel must have arrived after 1464 when the Vallombrosan monastery was dissolved to be a prebend and before 1575 when the panel was seen there by Monsignor Bossio. The Tuti Family whose coats of arms were added on the *Coronation* gave further clue: John suggested that Giulio Tuti, who was a canon of Siena cathedral from 1573, might have first moved the panel to San Giorgio in Siena where he was a rector, and then to Badia Ardenga. Both in San Giorgio and Badia Ardenga, the panel with its christological theme could serve the lay confraternities, respectively the Congregazione del S. Chiodo and the Compagnia di S. Croce.⁷ Thus John could trace certain connections between the cathedral and the monastery.

The *Claritas* exhibition was a valuable contribution to the study of early Italian paintings and the high altarpieces of Siena cathedral, although the reconstruction was not fully accepted. Victor Schmidt (2001¹) praised the importance of the museum's enterprise and acknowledged the value of technical information provided by Manzke, especially the measurements which formed the basis of the reconstruction, if they were correct. He also noted that "some technical similarities show that the panels indeed come from the same artistic milieu, but do not necessarily prove that they belonged to the same ensemble."⁸

Although the common provenance was an important factor for the combination of

⁶ John (2001), p. 115.

⁷ John (2001), pp. 115-117.

⁸ V.M. Schmidt, 'Thirteenth-century panel paintings from Siena. Altenburg', *The Burlington Magazine* 143 (2001), pp. 512-514 (hereafter referred to as Schmidt 2001¹), p. 512.

the narrative panels and the Courtauld *Coronation*, Schmidt did not find any technical argument decisive to prove that it was originally the gable of the altarpiece. He also showed restraint to include the *Madonna del Voto* in the reconstruction on the basis that the measurements provided were difficult to follow without a photograph of the reverse reproduced.⁹ The inconsistency of the diagrams and the inaccurate dimensions of the planks and the joints remained a concern. The same applied to the photomontage where the Courtauld *Coronation* was reproduced at the wrong scale¹⁰ and the reconstruction of the inner moulding did not match the original remaining on the panels. Moreover, the inner moulding of the *Coronation* extending to protrude into the main frame seemed unlikely. Therefore, Schmidt called for further discussion to follow up the accuracy of the technical observation that was crucial to the reconstruction.

The combination of the narrative panels and the *Madonna del Voto*, which was critical to argue the origin of the whole ensemble from the cathedral high altar, also required further clarification and explanation from archival, formal and iconographical points of view. Schmidt (2001¹) questioned the date of the actual separation of the panels. Although the document of 1455 attests to the civic decision made to saw down the panel of the *Madonna del Voto*, there is no mention of the narrative scenes in the oldest references to the *Madonna* in the cathedral inventories of 1420 and 1423, which led him to question whether they were cut down twice. He was also not convinced of the peculiar iconographical

⁹ Schmidt may have misunderstood that Manzke's measurements of the planks consisting the panel of the *Madonna del Voto* were made directly on the reverse. Actually, the reverse is covered with modern canvas for stability. Instead, Manzke could have made the measurements on the full-scale X-radiograph. I thank Edith Liebhauser, the restorer of the *Madonna del Voto*, for showing me the photograph of the reverse to confirm this.

¹⁰ I disagree with this because the dimension of the Courtauld *Coronation* in the photomontage seems to be produced at the right scale.

combination of “a large half-length Madonna flanked by narrative scenes,” which in his view only appears in small triptychs in Tuscan paintings: rather, narrative scenes accompanied large panels in high format consisting of vertical planks showing the Madonna enthroned. In addition, Schmidt pointed out that the iconography was barely related to its presumed successor, Duccio’s *Maestà*. From this point of view, the *Madonna* should have accompanied other saints venerated in the church, as was the case for the stained-glass oculus or Duccio’s *Maestà*. Although the 1423 inventory claimed that the *Madonna del Voto* then on the altar of Saint Boniface had once been on the main altar, the significance of the dedication to the saint whose feast day fell on the day of the Sienese victory at Montaperti in 1260 led Schmidt to question whether the panel was intended for this altar from the beginning. Thus the unusual iconographical combination was expected to be reconsidered in a clearer context of the cathedral decoration and the formal development of early Italian panel paintings.

Soon after the exhibition, several publications followed providing further technical and archival information, which prompted to revise the combination of the *Coronation* and the narrative panels proposed by the *Claritas* reconstruction. Schmidt himself asked Norman Muller to carry out further investigation focusing on the top left corner of the *Annunciation* panel in Princeton to prove whether the triangular part formed by the blue diagonal border line was original or not, which turned out to be a later modification (Muller 2001).¹¹ Muller could observe minute fragments of the original gold leaf and its preparation outside the blue border. In addition, he could observe that the

¹¹ This was published in *Prospettiva* dated 2001 but actually came out later in 2002.

original incised lines that mark the outline of the corner of the green building extended beyond the blue border. He also acknowledged the publication of Caroline Villers and Astrid Lehner (2002) which convincingly demonstrated that the Courtauld *Coronation* was originally around 30 centimetres wider at the base, which he considered as a support that the extension of the diagonal line of the left side of the *Coronation* would have not reached the corner of the *Annunciation* as shown in the *Claritas* reconstruction. Thus Muller confirmed that the *Annunciation* panel was originally rectangular. With this result, Schmidt (2001²) was more convinced that the whole structure to which the twelve narrative panels once belonged originally formed a rectangular shape that did not necessarily end with a gable (Fig. 25). The suggestion by Villers and Lehner that the original inclination of the sides of the *Coronation* was steeper led Schmidt to conclude that it would have not matched the angles of the diagonal lines at the corners of the narrative panels.¹² Accordingly, the shared inclination of the angles of the *Coronation* and the two narrative panels in itself did not prove that they originally belonged together.

The combination of the *Madonna del Voto* with the narrative panels was also questioned further by Monika Butzek's publication on the history of the *Madonna del Voto* which proposed that its original location was the side altar dedicated to Saint Boniface (Butzek 2001¹). Butzek herself considered from an iconographical point of view that it must have accompanied half-length saints on each side, as already suggested by Stubblebine (1959), including the titular saint. Schmidt (2001²) also remained uncertain about the rare iconographical

¹² See below pp. 47-48, 51-52.

combination of the half-length Madonna with the Christological cycle especially because for him it still lacked decisive technical proof. He argued that the narrative cycle would rather have accompanied a full-scale saint in the centre. Moreover, he noted that the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* which is found relatively frequently in Franciscan commissions might suggest a Franciscan provenance for the narrative cycle. In his view, it was odd that Duccio had not repeated this iconography on the back of the *Maestà* if the narrative cycle had come from the cathedral and was the antecedent of this high altarpiece. Hence the combination of the *Madonna del Voto* and the narrative cycle was doubted iconographically all the more because it failed to offer convincing technical evidence.

The discussion of the reconstruction of the twelve narrative panels seemed to have regressed. Both Butzek and Schmidt's interpretations were accepted by Silvia Giorgi in the Duccio exhibition catalogue in 2003 abandoning the combination of the twelve narratives, the *Coronation* and the *Madonna del Voto* proposed by the *Claritas* reconstruction. Boskovits (2008) also agreed with Butzek that the combination of the narrative cycle and the *Madonna* was unlikely iconographically if the panel was intended for the altar of Saint Boniface. He also argued that the original mandorla of the *Coronation*, if reconstructed in full, would have not been compatible with the *Madonna del Voto* below. However, he believed that the provenance from Badia Ardenga did prove that the narrative panels and the *Coronation* originally belonged together. He understood that the red border line forming the diagonal angle on the *Flagellation* panel was original, which led him to combine the *Coronation* and the narrative cycle again in a

horizontal gabled format (Fig. 28). In his view, the *Coronation* should have appeared on top of other Marian episodes according to the iconographical 'tradition' at that time. He conceived that the original gabled panel at the highest point would have been around 200-220 cm and the mandorla reconstructed in full would be approximately 160-180 cm in height leaving some more space below the mandorla. This dimension would allow space for an *Assumption* in the lower part of the mandorla and a *Dormition* below the mandorla. Acknowledging the innovative programme anticipating Duccio's stained-glass window for Siena cathedral, Boskovits concluded that the panels arrived at Badia Ardenga only at a later moment. Thus both the reconstruction and the provenance of the narrative panels were re-opened for discussion.

Meanwhile, the technical research by Manzke was thought by some to remain valid enough to support the combination of the panels proposed by the *Claritas* reconstruction. Jutta Penndorf (2009) emphasised that the intensive technical research of all panels by Manzke utilising X-radiograph, infra-red reflectogram, UV fluorescence and microphotography provided clearly objective results that awaited wider acceptance in art history: the flow of the joins, the width of the planks, and the discovery of the dowels proved the ensemble of the twelve panels, the *Coronation* and the *Madonna del Voto*. The combination suggested by the *Claritas* reconstruction was supported by Norman Muller (2004) who published the X-radiograph of the *Madonna del Voto* to facilitate the observation of the physical features such as the wood grain, joins and the position of dowels. He observed the characteristic horizontal wood grain which was homogeneous with the *Annunciation* panel, as well as the similar saw marks at an

identical angle found on the Courtauld *Coronation*. In his view, the hallmark which proved the original ensemble of the *Madonna del Voto*, the *Coronation* and the narrative panels was the joins of the planks that slightly rise to the right found among all the panels. He explained that the truncated corners on the two narrative panels including the *Annunciation* were caused most probably in the fifteenth century when the *Madonna* was cut out of the original structure and the rest was reassembled to form another single panel, as suggested by John and Manzke (2001). Thus Muller basically agreed with the *Claritas* proposal, although he noted that a cusped moulding on the *Coronation* extending into the main frame was unlikely (Figs 23, 24, 27). By 2011, the *Claritas* reconstruction was accepted by Dieter Blume who supported the combination of the panels from further iconographical interpretation. Yet the validity of the technical observation by Manzke followed up by Muller needs further examination.

Scholars disagree with the combination mainly from the point of view of form, original setting, and iconography. This is emphasised all the more because the physical evidence provided so far is considered not convincing enough or difficult to follow. At the same time, there is no evidence that decisively negates the combination. The same applies to the archival evidence: there is no archival material that neither decisively confirms or negates the various reconstructions proposed so far. Leaving the task of further archival and iconographical discussion for the later chapters, the rest of this chapter will focus on the technical evidence. Before examining the physical operation that might have altered the original appearance of the panel, the following section will evaluate the validity of the past observations that support the *Claritas*

reconstruction by examining the accuracy of the measurements that is crucial to confirm the original combination.

2. Re-assessing the Original Panel Structure and a New Reconstruction

As noted above, the idea that the twelve narrative panels originally formed a complete cycle on their own and belonged to a horizontal panel rather than wings of a tabernacle or a triptych was first proposed by Oertel (1961). In order to determine the disposition of each panel in their original ensemble, he focused on the position of the joins (Figs 21, 22).¹³ His reconstruction was based on close technical observation and measurements, although some parts remained speculative. In his view, the horizontal flow of the joins could be observed from the reverse of the panels in Siena and Altenburg,¹⁴ and also on the X-radiographs of the panels in Altenburg and Princeton.¹⁵ The joins are clearly visible as thin white lines slightly rising to the right covered with strips of parchment appearing as dark undulating band in the X-radiographs of the *Annunciation* (Fig. 29), the *Flight into Egypt* (Fig. 30), and the *Flagellation* (Figs 31a,b).¹⁶ On the X-radiograph of the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 32), Oertel could observe the

¹³ Figure 22 is an unpublished drawing by Oertel in the Lindenau-Museum archive. I am grateful to the Lindenau-Museum for allowing me to consult the archive.

¹⁴ He mentioned that he could not observe the original panel in Princeton (the *Annunciation*) and the panels formerly in the Strölin collection (the *Birth of Christ* and the *Presentation in the Temple*). He did not mention whether he saw the panel in Utrecht himself, although a correspondence between Oertel and the museum in Utrecht in the archive of the Lindenau-Museum suggests that he asked them to provide him with the measurement of the height of the joins that should be visible on the reverse.

¹⁵ The joins are shown in black bold lines in Oertel's diagram (Fig. 21).

¹⁶ I am grateful to Norman Muller for allowing me to have a close observation and to take photographs of the *Annunciation* and the X-radiograph and for providing me with further information in conversation. I thank the Lindenau-Museum for allowing me to observe and photograph the X-radiograph of the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Flagellation*.

parchment strip but not the join.¹⁷ The reverse of the panels in Siena and Altenburg are planed down and cradled making it difficult to observe the complete flow of the joins. At the same time, this operation has made visible the dowels or the dowel holes originally buried inside, which also indicate the position of the joins. Oertel reported that on the reverse of the *Entombment*, a dowel joining the two planks could be observed. Although he could not observe the join of the *Massacre of the Innocents*, he pointed out that the horizontal fracture that appeared on the pictorial surface flowed continuously from the *Flight into Egypt* suggesting that they were neighbouring panels.¹⁸ For Oertel, the width of the lower plank of the *Flight into Egypt* measuring only circa 10 cm suggested that it was originally wider possibly leaving more space below to accommodate an outer frame of circa 10cm in width. He understood that the diagonal corner of the *Flagellation* was part of the original composition because the golden ground terminated there and the triangular area did not receive the grounding, thus conceiving a gabled format. He pointed out that the angle of this corner circa 29° corresponded with that of the Courtauld *Coronation*, but nevertheless refrained from including it in his reconstruction.

As Figures 21 and 22 demonstrate, the height of each neighbouring panel grouped on the right corresponds: the *Betrayal (Gefangennahme)* and the *Flagellation (Geisselung)* at circa 16.5 cm, *Christ Mounting the Cross (Kreuzbesteigung)* and the *Crucifixion (Kreuzigung)* at circa 11 cm, and the *Deposition (Kreuzabnahme)* and the *Entombment (Grablegung)* at circa 16 cm.¹⁹

¹⁷ This is shown in broader broken line as either the join or the fracture in Oertel's diagram (Fig. 21).

¹⁸ This is shown in finer broken line as the fracture in Oertel's diagram (Fig. 21).

¹⁹ See also my own diagram (Fig. 33).

These measurements are circa 7-8 cm higher than the height of the joins observed on the panels grouped on the left. Oertel understood that this difference was caused because of the joins of each panel rising to the right by circa 1 cm.²⁰ If the flow of the joins were continuous, it could be roughly calculated that the width of the original structure consisting of four horizontal planks were of circa 370 cm in total, which is eight times the average width of each scene.²¹ This meant that a central panel of circa 180 cm in width was missing, which for Oertel seemed unlikely because of the lack of precedents, thus he considered the joins were not continuous.²² In any case, the horizontal orientation of the planks suggested that the panels did not belong to the wings of a tabernacle, which would more likely have consisted of vertical planks.

Oertel's observation of the joins of the twelve narrative panels was followed up by Manzke (2001) who provided further technical information but without publishing all the measurements in full. He could closely observe all the panel at first hand including the two panels now in the Louvre that were inaccessible to Oertel. While most of the panels are planed down and heavily cradled on the back, the three panels that once belonged to the Ramboux

²⁰ Oertel's measurements of the height of the join of each panel are as follows: the *Annunciation* (left circa 8 cm, right circa 9 cm from the bottom edge of the panel); the *Adoration of the Magi* (circa 2 cm above the lower picture frame which was overpainted in the modern period and still present in Oertel's time); the *Flight into Egypt* (left circa 7.7 cm, right circa 8.7 cm from the lower picture frame); the *Betrayal* (circa 16.5 cm above the lower picture frame); the *Flagellation* (left circa 15.5 cm, right circa 16.5 cm above the lower picture frame); the *Ascent of the Cross* (left 10.4 cm, right circa 11.1 cm from the bottom edge of the panel); the *Crucifixion* (11 cm from the bottom edge); the *Deposition* (circa 16 cm from the bottom edge); the *Entombment* (circa 16 cm from the bottom edge). Oertel (1961), pp. 65-66.

²¹ Oertel's measurement of the height and the width of each panel is as follows: the *Annunciation* (36 x 47 cm); the *Nativity* (36 x 47 cm); the *Adoration of the Magi* (34 x 46 cm); the *Presentation in the Temple* (33 x 44 cm); the *Flight into Egypt* (34 x 46 cm); the *Massacre of the Innocents* (32 x 37 cm); the *Betrayal* (33.3 x 29.5 cm); the *Flagellation* (34 x 46 cm); the *Ascent of the Cross* (35 x 46 cm); the *Crucifixion* (33.2 x 45 cm); the *Deposition* (33 x 44 cm); the *Entombment* (33.5 x 44 cm). Oertel (1961), p. 60.

²² "Man wird also annehmen müssen, daß das auf beiden Seiten gleichmäßige Ansteigen der Fugen nur Zufall ist und daß es sich nicht um durchlaufende Fugen handelt." Oertel (1961), p. 66.

collection, namely the *Nativity*, the *Presentation in the Temple* and the *Ascent of the Cross* retain the original surface on the reverse, where he could have observed the joins. Otherwise he could observe the joins partially on X-radiographs, although he could not analyse those of the five panels in Siena.²³ He notes that it was also difficult to detect the inclination of the joins of the *Crucifixion*, the *Deposition* and the *Entombment* from the reverse due to the modern addition of wood on the left side. Nevertheless he summarised by noting that the join of each panel consisting of two horizontal planks is found in the lower half always rising to the right by circa 1.0-1.8 cm. Manzke conceived that the joins were continuous and the original panel was structured with continuous planks. According to his new measurements, the central missing part must have been around 116-123 cm.²⁴ By adding the width of the planks separated above and below the joins, he calculated the width of the two planks in the middle of the original panel consisting of four horizontal planks as 27.6-29.0 cm and 38.8-40.2 cm, including the width of the area lost through sawing.²⁵ Although he did not provide individual measurements of the height of the joins as Oertel did, the position of the joins were marked on the diagram (Fig. 24).

More important was Manzke's observation of the dowels as they indicate the position of the joins. He observed from the reverse of the panels that

²³ To my knowledge, the Sienese panels have never been x-rayed.

²⁴ Manzke's measurement of the height and the width of each panel is as follows: the *Annunciation* (35.5 x 47.7 cm); the *Nativity* (36.3 x 47.6 cm); the *Adoration of the Magi* (33.9 x 46 cm); the *Presentation in the Temple* (34.5 x 48.5 cm); the *Flight into Egypt* (33.9 x 46 cm); the *Massacre of the Innocents* (33.2 x 40.4 cm); the *Betrayal* (34.1 x 32.5 cm); the *Flagellation* (33.8 x 47.4 cm); the *Ascent of the Cross* (34.6 x 46 cm); the *Crucifixion* (33.4 x 47.9 cm); the *Deposition* (33 x 44 cm); the *Entombment* (34.2 x 47.3 cm). Manzke (2001), p. 11. Manzke did not provide diagrams with detailed measurements or how his calculation was made. Therefore, I have given my own for better understanding (Fig. 33).

²⁵ See Fig. 33. These measurements are important, as we shall see below, because they correspond to the width of the planks of the *Madonna del Voto*.

the dowel in the bottom left corner of the *Adoration* reaches down to the top left corner of the *Flight into Egypt* where an empty dowel hole of 3.6 cm is found.²⁶ This confirms that the two panels were originally joined. Manzke calculated that the length of the original dowel must have been $11.3 + 0.4 + 3.6 = 15.3$ cm including the loss of circa 4 mm caused by sawing. This is the longest found among the panels excluding the one in the *Flagellation* measuring 16 cm.²⁷ Most of the other dowels are 12.2-13cm long. Manzke also observed the dowels in the join area of the *Annunciation* and the *Massacre of the Innocents*, a dowel hole on the reverse of the *Crucifixion*,²⁸ a dowel on the reverse of the *Entombment* already noted by Oertel,²⁹ and a sawn down dowel hole on the bottom right side of the *Presentation of the Temple*.³⁰ The dowels are placed rather regularly, which increases the validity of the hypothesis that the narrative scenes were painted on a single horizontal structure consisting of four continuous horizontal planks joined together.

The combination of the narrative panels and the *Madonna del Voto* is all the more plausible not only because the *Madonna* panel also shows joins slightly rising to the right but also because the width of the original horizontal planks more or less match each other. According to Manzke, the *Madonna del Voto* consists of five horizontal planks, and their width from the bottom to the top is

²⁶ There is another dowel in the bottom left corner of the *Flight into Egypt* which is visible on the X-radiograph (Fig. 30).

²⁷ I confirmed that this is visible both on the reverse and on the X-radiograph (Fig. 31b). I am grateful to Julia Nauhaus for her permission to observe the reverse of the panel, and to Tobias Ertel for facilitating the observation.

²⁸ I could not verify these observations.

²⁹ Oertel (1961), p. 66.

³⁰ I could also observe this when the panel was displayed in the exhibition titled *Paintings from Siena: ars narrandi in Europe's Gothic Age* held in Palais des beaux-arts in Brussels (2014).

circa 6-7 cm, 28.7 cm, 39.8 cm, 27 cm, 11-9.3 cm.³¹ The three planks in the middle demonstrate the original width, two lower ones corresponding with the measurement Manzke calculated for the original width of the two middle planks for the narrative scenes, namely 27.6-29.0 cm and 38.8-40.2 cm (Fig. 33). Although Manzke did not provide minute measurements, his calculation roughly corresponded to the measurements Oertel had given regarding the position of the joins. Regarding the narrative group on the left, the total width of the lower plank of the *Adoration* and the upper plank of the *Flight into Egypt* is circa 29.8 cm, and that of the lower plank of the *Annunciation* and the upper plank of the *Adoration* is circa 38.5 cm. Regarding the group on the right, the total width of the lower plank of the *Crucifixion* and the upper plank of the *Entombment* is circa 28.5 cm, and that of the lower plank of the *Flagellation* and the upper plank of the *Crucifixion* is circa 38.7 cm. As Manzke pointed out,³² we need to keep in mind that the panels were sawn apart at different times and kept under different conditions, which makes it difficult to have perfectly matching calculations. Even so, the correspondence of the approximate calculation of the width of the planks makes it highly probable that the narrative scenes and the *Madonna del Voto* were painted on the same planks joined together.³³ Moreover, this is supported by the position of the three dowels observable on the right half of the X-radiograph of the *Madonna del Voto* joining the lower four planks. They appear regularly placed among the other dowels found on the narrative panels (Fig. 24).

The Courtauld *Coronation* also shares common features with the

³¹ Manzke could have measured this on the full-scale X-radiograph (Fig. 36).

³² Manzke (2001), p. 15, n. 28.

³³ I thank Daniele Rossi for his indication that the numbers of planks consisting the altarpiece is fundamental for the reconstruction. I am grateful to Umi Toyosaki for introducing me to him.

narrative panels and the *Madonna del Voto*. The *Coronation* panel consists of two horizontal planks, and the join rises slightly to the right, which is visible both on the back (Figs 34a-c) and on the X-radiograph (Figs 35a,b). It retains the original surface of the reverse protected by a coating of red lead paint. In the central axis, there is a shadow of a vertical batten circa 10-10.5 cm in width and three nail holes spaced approximately 10-13 cm.³⁴ On the pictorial surface just above Christ's right wrist, namely in the position of the top nail hole, there is a round lump seemingly a remain of a nail head.³⁵ Similar traces are also observed on the *Madonna del Voto*. Although the back of the panel is lined with modern canvas, the shadow of the batten is around 10 cm wide and some of the nail holes spaced approximately 10-13 cm are visible on the X-radiograph (Fig. 36).³⁶ The traces of the nails are visible on the pictorial surface, the most prominent being the one on the Virgin's right cheek (Fig. 37).³⁷ Therefore, it is highly likely that the *Coronation* and the *Madonna del Voto* belonged to the same structure because the width of the shadow of the batten and the interval of the nail holes are consistent.

As investigated above, the combination and the position of the twelve narrative panels, the *Madonna del Voto* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* proposed

³⁴ Manzke (2001), p. 23. See also Villers and Lehner (2002), pp. 295-296.

³⁵ Manzke (2001), p. 23. In the handling session at the Courtauld conservation department on 17 June 2014, we agreed that it is unlikely that the nail head remains below the surface because it does not show clearly on the X-radiograph. It might be the case that the nail was removed and then the hole was filled in with gesso before repainting. The second-top hole also seems to be gessoed in slightly causing the round surface on the front, while this could not be detected for the bottom hole under the pictorial surface of the modern repainting. On the back, similar treatment of filling in with gesso is visible in the join area. I am grateful to Joanna Cannon and Karen Serres for organising the handling session and to the members who participated for sharing their observations.

³⁶ I measured this on the X-radiograph of the *Madonna del Voto* published in Muller (2004) using the visual analysis tool ImageJ. I thank Zuoxin Zhou for directing me to utilise this tool. Manzke (2001) reported that he could see the red lead paint on the outer part of the panel.

³⁷ Edith Liebhauser considered the nails were sawn when the batten was removed and the pieces remained in the panel. She thought it was impossible to remove this without causing damage, so they remained. I thank Edith Liebhauser for making the unpublished restoration report available and sharing the observation in conversation.

by the *Claritas* reconstruction (2001) is considerably plausible based on the measurements of the width of the horizontal planks, that of the vertical batten and the regular placing of the dowels. The original panel presumably consisted of seven horizontal planks. All of the joins incline upwards slightly to the right. As Muller (2004) emphasised, this must have been caused by the mis-alignment of one edge of the bottom plank resulting in all subsequent planks to repeat this discrepancy, which “serves as an identifying mark for this particular dossal.”³⁸ Based on the measurements of the *Madonna del Voto* panel, the width of the original planks was 27-39.8 cm. This means that there must be a missing part of plank circa 6-16 cm in width between the lower plank of the *Coronation* measuring circa 10-11 cm and the top plank of the *Madonna del Voto* measuring 11-9.3 cm, (Fig. 33). Manzke estimated the original size of the reconstructed panel to be circa 310 cm wide and 175 cm high, thus the central arch-shaped picture field of the *Madonna del Voto* was circa 96 cm wide and 124 cm high.³⁹ The current measurement of the *Madonna* is 87 cm wide and 113 cm high,⁴⁰ thus it was reduced by at least circa 10 cm both in width and height.

Surprisingly, no one has clearly pointed out that it is reasonable to assume that the composite panel was gabled because the dowels are placed inwards as the panel becomes narrower towards the top. The original angle of the oblique side of the gable is not limited to the current angle of the *Coronation* or the corner area of the *Annunciation* and the *Flagellation* because these were most

³⁸ Muller (2004), p. 36.

³⁹ Manzke (2001), p. 29.

⁴⁰ Unpublished report by Edith Liebhauser. According to Giorgi (2003), it is 82 x 112 cm. S. Giorgi, ‘Dietisalvi di Speme, *Madonna col Bambino* (“*Madonna del Voto*”)', in Bagnoli et al. (Milan, 2003), pp. 38-41.

probably caused by later alterations.⁴¹ As Villers and Lehner calculated, a mandorla reconstructed using the two point method, in which the radius equals the width of the mandorla, “would require a panel with a maximum width of 196 cm and sloping sides rising at an angle of 37.5° to accommodate it” (Fig. 38).⁴² This means that the *Coronation* was wider both at the top and the bottom,⁴³ which is likely because of the position of the dowels. There are two dowels visible on the X-radiograph at both edges of the join of the two planks (Fig. 35a,b), which are also visible sawn off on the sides of the panel (Figs 39a-c). There are also traces of two dowels on the top margin, which is the original edge of the plank, visible on the X-radiograph. One on the right is visible with the naked eye, while the one on the left is not visible due to the modern wooden addition. All of the dowels were originally longer to join planks that were much wider.

The thickness of the panels that retain the original back surface roughly correspond: the *Madonna del Voto* circa 2.6-2.7cm,⁴⁴ the *Coronation of the Virgin* 3.0-3.5 cm,⁴⁵ and the *Ascent of the Cross* 2.0-2.8 cm. The slight difference might have been caused when the joined planks were roughly levelled after joining.⁴⁶ The tool marks extending across the join are visible on the back and on

⁴¹ See below pp. 50-51.

⁴² Villers and Lehner (2002), pp. 296-297. I suppose the mandorla looked like the one we see in the gable area of the triptych attributed to Duccio di Buoninsegna and workshop in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Fig. 44). Here the half-mandorla is slightly extended downwards. If this was also the case for the Courtauld *Coronation*, the panel should have been higher than Villers and Lehner suggested, which required a wider base line and less steep angles of the slope.

⁴³ The current dimension of the Courtauld *Coronation* is 33.7 cm high and 166.6 cm wide with the top margin 22.6 cm. Villers and Lehner (2002), p. 295. According to Manzke, it is 34.0-34.2 cm high and 166.2 cm wide with the top margin 43.6 cm wide. Manzke’s measurement of the top margin is correct. Manzke (2001), p. 23.

⁴⁴ Manzke (2001), p. 27.

⁴⁵ Villers and Lehner (2002), p. 296. Manzke’s measurement is 2.8-3.5 cm. Manzke (2001), p. 23.

⁴⁶ Villers and Lehner did not specify which tool was used. Villers and Lehner (2002), p. 296. On the other hand, Muller considered a saw was used. Muller (2004), p. 36. While the rather regular spacing of the mark suggest that this was probably the case, there remains a possibility that a plane

the X-radiograph of the *Coronation*, which is even more evident on the photograph taken in raking light.⁴⁷ As Muller pointed out, similar marks at an identical angle are also visible on the X-radiograph of the *Madonna del Voto*.⁴⁸ After the composite panel was levelled, a batten for reinforcement was nailed from the front surface. The entire back of the panel together with the batten was covered with red lead paint. According to Muller, this is “a substance that retards the transmission of X-rays and registers as a light color on the X-radiograph image.”⁴⁹ When the batten was removed, a margin of unpainted wood was exposed, which appears as a dark area on the X-radiograph. Manzke reported that also on the original back side of the *Nativity* and the *Presentation in the Temple*, margins of width 1.6-2 cm without the red lead paint were observed on the edge suggesting that there was once a batten in this area too.⁵⁰

As Oertel pointed out, the lowest plank was presumably wider by circa 10 cm most probably accommodating an outer frame.⁵¹ The outer frame which contained and supported the whole structure must have surrounded the perimeter of the composite panel as suggested by the reconstructions by Oertel and Manzke. As a comparative example, Manzke mentioned the framing of *Saint Peter Enthroned* attributed to Guido di Graziano and dated c. 1280 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena (Fig. 40).⁵² The picture field of the narrative scenes, the

was used. The process and tools used for levelling such a large panel remains a subject to be explored further.

⁴⁷ Villers and Lehner (2002), pp. 296.

⁴⁸ Muller (2004), p. 36.

⁴⁹ Muller (2004), pp. 34-35.

⁵⁰ The position of the battens are shown in vertical broken lines in his diagram. He also suggested that the nail holes that are visible in similar positions on the margin of the Sienese panels might have been the traces of the nails that fixed the batten. Manzke (2001), p. 16.

⁵¹ Oertel (1961), p. 66. According to Manzke, the composite panel was originally at least 6.5 cm wide. Manzke (2001), p. 29.

⁵² Manzke (2001), p. 29.

Coronation and the *Madonna and Child* were probably surrounded with an inner half-tubular frame that can be also observed on the *Saint Peter* panel and other Sienese duecento panels. The mouldings of the inner frame surviving on the *Coronation*⁵³ and the *Madonna del Voto* are worked in a similar way. A half-tubular wood piece circa 0.5-1.7 cm wide and 0.6-0.8 cm high⁵⁴ was attached to the front surface and then covered with canvas to receive the gesso ground. Fragments of a similar inner frame also remain on the left and top of the *Nativity* and the *Presentation in the Temple*, and on the right of the *Ascent of the Cross*.⁵⁵ On the left edge of the *Presentation*, one can see a piece of wood attached to the panel surface and then covered with canvas before the gesso was applied.⁵⁶ Although the Sienese panels do not retain any original part of the inner frame, they retain the original margin 2.4-3.0 cm wide⁵⁷ that would have accommodated the inner frame. The total width of the margins of the neighboring panels of the *Deposition* and the *Entombment* is circa 6.0 cm. Thus between the half-tubular inner framing of the narrative cycle circa 1.0 cm wide, there should have been a vertical margin of circa 4.0 cm. A similar solution is found on the horizontal inner framing of *Saint John the Baptist Enthroned* dated circa 1270-80 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena (Fig. 41).

The wooden support with inner and outer frame attached was covered with canvas and gesso. On the gesso surface, the artist drew his composition and then incised a thin line with a metal stylus to fix the design and to preserve the

⁵³ Only the moulding on the left is original.

⁵⁴ Manzke (2001), p. 23.

⁵⁵ Manzke (2001), p. 18.

⁵⁶ The photograph of the upper edge of the *Ascent* in Manzke (2001), p. 18, also shows a similar piece of wood placed on top of the panel before being covered with canvas.

⁵⁷ Manzke (2001), p. 14.

main components of the preliminary drawing such as contours of the figures and the buildings.⁵⁸ Incision lines define the area for the red border lines, suggesting that they were original except the diagonal red line on the *Flagellation*, which is likely to be a later modification. If it was originally diagonal, this ought to have been marked with an incised line. After the gilding, haloes were punched and paint was applied. The haloes in the *Coronation* and the *Madonna del Voto* are decorated with identical five-petal punch marks.⁵⁹ The coherence of style and colour palette also indicates that the panels once belonged together. The use of azurite instead of ultramarine blue for the Virgin's mantle observed among the panels is especially characteristic.⁶⁰ It should be understood that the similarities do not merely point to the same workshop practice but also further support the original combination.

Based on the analysis above, I propose a modified version of the reconstruction of the original composite panel as shown in Figure 1. The *Claritas* reconstruction is mostly correct. However, it needs revision of the gabled area and the corners of the narrative panels that were originally not diagonally cut. To accommodate the original half-mandorla, the angle of the gable must have been steeper. The lost elements including the original inner framing remain an open question, especially the gap between the *Madonna del Voto* and the *Coronation*. It can only be assumed that the *Coronation* was placed within a half-mandorla supported by two flying angels. A mandorla including a holy figure being

⁵⁸ Muller (2004), p. 30.

⁵⁹ Manzke (2001), p. 28.

⁶⁰ Schröder reported that azurite was identified as pigment in a paint sample taken from the Virgin's headdress in the *Ascent of the Cross*. Schröder (1989), p. 87. The Virgin's mantle in the *Coronation* is predominantly azurite. Villers and Lehner (2002), p. 300. The same applies to the *Annunciation*. Muller (2004), p. 31. Also the blue mantle of the *Madonna del Voto* is azurite. Manzke (2001), p. 28.

supported by angels is a very common composition in medieval Italian art. To name one earlier example from Umbria, Alberto Sotio depicts Christ ascending to Heaven in a full mandorla supported by four flying angels in his painted cross in Spoleto cathedral signed and dated 1187 (Fig. 42). The *Ascension* mosaic of the façade of San Frediano in Lucca shows Christ enthroned enclosed in a three-quarter mandorla supported by two flying angels (Fig. 43). The triptych attributed to Duccio di Buoninsegna and workshop in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston shows a half-mandorla supported by two angels appearing on top of the arched inner framing, which I suppose was the most probable case for the reconstructed panel (Fig. 44). A *Coronation* framed within a trilobate arch encapsulated in a half-mandorla enclosed in a gabled structure is found in the tympanum in the north portal of the cathedral of Chartres (Fig. 45).

3. The Alterations to the Original Panel: The Cause of Confusion?

While the combination of the twelve narrative panels, the *Madonna del Voto* and the Courtauld *Coronation* remains highly probable, some discrepancies have been reported, which might have occurred due to later alterations to the original panel. Before the *Claritas* reconstruction proposed the combination of the narrative cycle and the Courtauld *Coronation* (2001), Lon Schröder (1989) had already objected to grouping the *Coronation* with the *Ascent of the Cross* from a technical point of view. He pointed out that the *Coronation* lacked the red border line originally present on the narrative panels, although traces of blue were found. He reported that when the panel was inspected in December 1979 by J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer and Caroline Villers, “a cross-section of a paint sample showed

that the layer containing azurite was a later addition over a flesh-colored layer on yellow.”⁶¹ There was no red border line observed beneath the blue line on the *Coronation* as was the case for the other narrative panels. Schröder understood that the traces of red discovered beneath the green bands at the left and top of the *Ascent* were remains of the original border.⁶² He reported that similar remnants on the five panels in Siena were also revealed by the stereomicroscopic examination. According to Schmidt, Daniele Rossi also confirmed with a microscope that the red border lines of the Sienese panels are original.⁶³ The original red border lines on the Altenburg panels were also uncovered under the repainted blue border line during the restoration by Manzke (2001).⁶⁴ However, as already noted above, the diagonal red line on the *Flagellation* is likely to be a later modification. The issue of the alterations to the border lines is confusing because they seem to have been altered several times. Whether the red border line was originally applied to the *Coronation* or not remains an open question because the original border area of the *Coronation* gable is lost. Thus the lack of red border lines cannot be a decisive factor to exclude the *Coronation* from the reconstruction. In contrast, the similar alterations made to the border lines support the original ensemble of the panels.

The original panel of the *Madonna del Voto* was sawn down at least once at the latest in 1455.⁶⁵ Edith Liebhauser reported that the panel was sawn on all sides, at different times, but the current dimensions are datable to 1848 when

⁶¹ Schröder (1989), p. 90. J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer (1989) published the microphotographs of this paint cross-section of a sample from the blue strip near the wing of an angel.

⁶² The *Ascent of the Cross* was restored by Sylke and Holger Manzke together with the Altenburg panels in 1999-2001. Manzke (2001), p. 13, n. 19. The restoration revealed the traces of the original red border line.

⁶³ Schmidt (2001²), p. 112, n. 4.

⁶⁴ Manzke (2001), p. 21.

⁶⁵ See below Chapter 2, pp. 93-94.

the *Madonna* was inserted into a silver frame (Fig. 46).⁶⁶ It might have been the case that the panel had been already reduced when it was first recorded on the altar of Saint Boniface in 1423.⁶⁷ If we accept the hypothesis that the ensemble was originally the high altarpiece, it might have been sawn down for the first time when it was taken down from the high altar and moved to a side altar. This is a reasonable solution if we consider that the size of a side altar would have been much smaller than the high altar.⁶⁸ In any case, the *Madonna* was extracted from the original structure and independent at the latest in 1455, and it has remained in the cathedral since then.

The nails and the batten in the central axis were removed most probably when the panel was first sawn down to extract the *Madonna*. As suggested by Manzke, they must have then started by sawing off the gable. First, they sawed down vertically along the half-tubular frame on the right. Then they sawed along the horizontal base line. In this way, they could avoid large damage. After the gable was removed, they would have vertically sawn down the two sides of the *Madonna*. Thus the *Madonna* became an independent panel. Meanwhile the two narrative groups and the *Coronation* were reassembled as suggested by Manzke (Fig. 27). The *Coronation* had to be reduced to fit the narrower width. It is likely that the panel was reduced according to the diagonal lines of the angels' wings. However, the *Coronation* must have been slightly larger as suggested by

⁶⁶ Edith Liebhauser's unpublished report. I thank her for providing me with a copy.

⁶⁷ See below Chapter 2, pp. 62-63.

⁶⁸ For the measurements of high altars and a trend towards the construction of wider altars in thirteenth-century central Italy, see Julian Gardner, 'The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974), pp. 57-103, esp. p. 76 and n. 115; Julian Gardner, 'Some Aspects of the History of the Italian Altar, ca. 1250-ca. 1350: Placement and Decoration', in *Objects, Images, and the Word: Art in the Service of the Liturgy*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2003), pp. 138-160, esp. pp. 138-142.

Ramboux's drawing (Fig. 47b,c). This probably caused the angle of the slope of the gable to be less steep, which would have led to the creation of the diagonal corners of the narrative panels. Initially the red diagonal border might have been added to respond to this alteration. Consequently, the blue border was painted over the red ones on the narrative scenes and also around the perimeter of the *Coronation* to give the whole structure a visual unity, as suggested by Muller.⁶⁹

The reassembled narrative panel arrived in Montalcino by 1575 when Monsignore Bossio recorded that he saw an icon painted on panel with the Passion of Christ ('iconam depictam in tabula cum Passione D.N. Iesu Xri') on his pastoral visit to the Badia Ardenga.⁷⁰ The 1817 inventory of the monastery referring to the now missing one from 1798 mentions an ancient painting of the mystery of Jesus Christ ('una pittura in tavola antica rappresentante vari misteri di Gesu Cristo') above the cupboard in the sacristy.⁷¹ The coats of arm of the Tuti family might have been already added earlier and then repainted later using Prussian blue after 1708. The blue border line was applied on the narrative panels and the perimeter of the *Coronation* to give visual unity, as Muller pointed out. This might have been partially repainted for restoration reasons after the eighteenth century.

The panels were dismantled in the nineteenth century when they were individually sold. The paint losses of the *Coronation* and damage to other narrative panels might have already occurred because they appear in similar areas. The heavily damaged *Coronation* underwent restoration and extensive repainting

⁶⁹ Muller (2004), p. 37.

⁷⁰ Published by Cesare Brandi, 'A proposito di una felice ricostruzione della celebre Madonna di Guido da Siena', *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 2 (1931), p. 80, quoted by John (2002), p. 285.

⁷¹ Archivio Vescovile di Montalcino, Ardenga, filza 2, Carteggi diversi, anno 1768-1794, quoted by John (2002), p. 285.

for market reasons. During this operation, the edges with blue border lines could have been sawn off and removed. The narrative panels underwent different restoration processes according to their destination at different moments in time.

As analysed above, some features suggest similar alterations made to the panels, which again point to their original combination. Some discrepancies could have occurred because it is likely that alterations were made several times and restorations were done at different times.

The *Claritas* combination and disposition thus remains highly probable, although further technical investigation suggests that there is a need to revise the *Claritas* reconstruction and diagrams, as I tentatively proposed (Fig. 1). Some discrepancies which led to criticism might have occurred due to later alterations to the original panel. Further investigation using CT scanner to obtain 3D information would be desirable for more precise analysis.⁷²

The reconstructed structure is monumental in size (circa 175 x 310 cm). Because of this, it is more likely that it was placed on the high altar rather than the side altar. Moreover, the cathedral was under construction in the second half of the thirteenth century, and it is unlikely that a side chapel was immediately built in the nave, which was still under construction in the 1260s.⁷³ In the next chapter, the history of the *Madonna del Voto* will be re-examined to explore the issue of the original location.

⁷² CT scan is already introduced in archaeological studies for conservation purpose. It especially works well for wooden materials. I thank Zuoxin Zhou for mentioning this in our conversation. CT scan is now also introduced in the conservation process of Buddhist sculptures.

⁷³ See below Chapter 2, pp. 74-77.

Chapter 2 The Vicissitudes of the *Madonna del Voto*

Sieneese civic identity of the ‘City of the Virgin’ derives from a myth of the miraculous intercession of the Virgin in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, a memory that has been transmitted through various writings, artistic production and rituals elaborated over the centuries. Apparently commissioned shortly after the battle to commemorate the special protection of the Virgin, the *Madonna del Voto* (Fig. 15) remains in the cathedral as the most venerated civic icon. Every year during the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, it is transferred from the Cappella del Voto to the high altar in front of which the traditional ritual of candle offering is re-enacted.¹ This image has been central to the transmission of the civic myth although it has changed not only its physical form but also its location within the cathedral. Tracing the vicissitude of the *Madonna del Voto* clarifies the process of the formation of Marian civic identity through constant construction and decoration of the cathedral.

Despite its well-established historical importance, the position of the *Madonna del Voto* as the former high altarpiece of Siena cathedral has recently been challenged. The interpretation by Monika Butzek (2001¹) that the *Madonna del Voto* was placed on the side altar dedicated to Saint Boniface from its time of commission has been widely accepted, although it is still open to discussion. In this chapter, I will first clarify why the original location of the *Madonna del Voto* on the high altar was questioned and how it can be reconsidered. Second, I will

¹ For a summary of the present-day Sieneese annual festivals in front of the *Madonna del Voto* in August, see G. Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion and the Sieneese* (Aldershot, 2004), p. xiv. There is still a strong belief that the *Madonna del Voto* was the image on the high altar which received the dedication in 1260. See for example the most recent publication on the history of Siena by Mario Ascheri, *Storia di Siena: Dalle origini ai giorni nostri* (Pordenone, 2013), p. 51.

propose an alternative interpretation of the thirteenth-century historical documents which form the basis of the current theory that it was not a high altarpiece. Third, I will re-investigate the validity of the fifteenth-century historical writings and documents that suggest the *Madonna del Voto* was once on the high altar. Fourth, I will re-examine when and how the special chapel for the *Madonna del Voto* was established. This will lead to the conclusion that there still remains a possibility that the *Madonna del Voto* was originally placed on the high altar.

1. The Original Location of the *Madonna del Voto*

“Centuries of confusion and oceans of ink might have been saved had historians in treating of the two early Madonna paintings that ostensibly followed one another upon the high altar of the Cathedral of Siena, the one still in the Cappella del Voto in the Cathedral, the other now in the Museo dell’Opera (No. 22), turned to a systematic study of the surviving documents.”² After more than half a century from Edward Garrison’s attempt to solve the complication, the two images of the Madonna central to Sieneese civic devotion, which were both called *Madonna delle Grazie* already in the fourteenth century, still remain confused. The Madonna panel in the Opera Museum is currently labelled the *Madonna degli occhi grossi*, a nickname originally given to the other Madonna in the Cappella del Voto. For clarity, the two images will be differentiated here by the denominations according to their current places: the *Madonna del Voto* (Fig. 15)

² E.B. Garrison, ‘Toward a New History of the Siena Cathedral Madonnas’, in *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Italian Painting*, vol. 4 (Florence, 1960), pp. 5-22 (hereafter referred to as Garrison, 1960¹), p. 5.

and the *Opera Madonna* (Fig. 48).³ Modern scholars have been attempting to give clearer answers to the following two questions: which was the image of the Madonna in front of which the Sieneſe dedicated the city in 1260? Were the images of the Madonna placed one after another on the high altar of the cathedral or not?

The general belief that the Sieneſe dedication of the city to the Virgin in 1260 took place in front of an image of the Madonna on the high altar of the cathedral and that the image was ſubſequentlſ replaced twice derives from Sieneſe chronicle accounts.⁴ According to the *Anonymous Chronicle of 1202-1362*,⁵ a new panel for the high altar by Duccio was installed on 9 June 1310 replacing the panel that was ſubſequentlſ placed on the altar of Saint Boniface which is called the “Madonna delle Grazie” or the “Madonna degli occhi groſſi”, and this was the Madonna who heard the entreatſ of the Sieneſe people before the Battle of Montaperti:

How the panel of the high altar of the cathedral was completed and transported to the cathedral. In the year of our Lord on the 9th day of June in the above-mentioned year 1310.

And alſo in the ſame period under the aforementionſd ſovereignty, the work of the high altar panel was accompliſhed. It was transported to the cathedral and located on the aforeſaid high altar, and the panel that is today on the altar of Saint Boniface, which is called the

³ For a ſummary of the confuſion and denomination of the images of the Madonna, ſee M. Butzek ‘Per la ſtoria delle due “Madonna delle Grazie” nel Duomo di Siena’, *Proſpettiva* 103-104 (2001), pp. 97-109 (hereafter referred to in aſ Butzek, 2001¹), p. 98 and M. Israēlſ, *Sassetta’s Madonna della Neve: An Image of Patronage* (Leiden, 2003), p. 36, n. 98.

⁴ For a ſystematic hiſtorical analysis of the Sieneſe chronicles, ſee E.B. Garrison, ‘Sieneſe Hiſtorical Writings and the Dates 1260, 1221, 1262 Applied to Sieneſe Paintings’, in *Studies in the Hiſtory of Mediaeval Italian Painting*, vol. 4 (Florence, 1960), pp. 23-58 (hereafter referred to aſ Garrison, 1960²).

⁵ According to Garrison, it is likelſ that the chronicle was compiled at about the date of the laſt entry in it and thus the original was of about 1362, althoſh it is only known in ſeveral manuſcript copies from the late ſeventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Garrison (1960²), pp. 35-36.

Madonna degli occhi grossi and the Madonna delle Grazie, was removed. This was the Madonna who heard the prayers of the people of Siena when the Florentines were defeated at Montaperti. And in this way the aforesaid panel was replaced because the new panel was completed. The new panel was more beautiful, devotional and monumental, and it shows the Old and New Testaments on the back. ... This panel was executed by the painter Duccio di Niccolò in the house of the Muciatti outside the gate of Staloreggi ...⁶

However, the *Montaperti Account* by Niccolò di Giovanni di Francesco Ventura⁷ notes that the civic dedication took place in front of a smaller ancient image of the Madonna in half-relief which was attached to the campanile inside the cathedral without an altar near the Porta del Perdono at that time. According to Ventura, the “Madonna delle Grazie”, which was then on Saint Boniface altar, was made to commemorate the dedication for the high altar where it took place. Ventura also mentions another panel that was made after this:

In this period, the reader should know that a panel with the image of Our Lady Mother Virgin Mary was made for the high altar of the cathedral where such dedication [of the keys of the city] took place. She was depicted in half-length, holding her son in her arm. To commemorate the dedication of the charter of the ally of the city of Siena with the *contado*, a scroll was depicted in the hand of the Child which he holds in his arm. Later the panel was removed from the high altar and placed on the altar which is today called the altar of Saint Boniface in the cathedral along the

⁶ “Come la tavola de l’altare maggiore del Duomo si finì e portossi al Duomo. Anni Domini a dì VIII di Giugno d’Anno detto di sopra MCCCX. E anco nel detto tempo, e della Signoria predetta, si fornì di fare la tavola dell’altare maggiore e fù portata a Duomo, e posta al detto altare maggiore, e funne levata quella la quale sta ogi a l’altare di S. Bonifazio, la quale si chiama la Madonna degli occhi grossi, e Madonna delle Grazie. E questa Madonna fu quella, la quale esaudì el populo di Siena, quando furo rotti e Fiorentini a Monteperto. E in questo modo fu promutata la detta tavola, perché fu fatta quella nuova, la quale è molto più bella e divota e maggiore, ed è da lato dietro al testamento vecchio e nuovo. ... La quale tavola fece Ducc[i]o di Niccolò dipintore, e fecesi in chasa de’ Muciatti di fuore della porta a Staloreggi. ...” Siena, Comunale, A. III. 26, fol. 43v. A. Lisini and F. Iacometti, *Cronache Senesi* (Bologna 1931-1939, L. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XV, T. VI), p. 90. Cf. Garrison (1960²), p. 37; Butzek (2001¹), pp. 98-100.

⁷ This account is known in the original manuscript signed in 1442 with forty-eight miniatures illustrating the event. Garrison (1960²), pp. 41-42.

campanile. She is called the Madonna delle Grazie to whom I have devotion, because she is more graceful than one can describe. But before I go on, I want to inform you of one thing, that is, the Madonna which was on the high altar of the cathedral where such dedication took place was a smaller and very ancient panel with the image of Our Lady half cut, that is, in half relief, and so are the surrounding figures. This [panel] is hung on the campanile inside the cathedral by the Porta del Perdono without an altar, and this is the Madonna to whom such dedication was made. And then the image of the Madonna which we mentioned above as called the Madonna delle Grazie was made. And then the beautiful panel with those beautiful surrounding decoration was made to profoundly honour Our Lady, who is worthy of it and of more gift, and to [respond to] the grace which she has brought to the city of Siena and her citizens.⁸

The combination of the two accounts allows the following deduction: the panel on the high altar in 1260 which received the dedication was the Madonna carved in half relief, which was on the campanile in 1442;⁹ this was replaced shortly after the battle by the panel which was on the altar of Saint Boniface by the late fourteenth century;¹⁰ and this was once again replaced by Duccio's altarpiece

⁸ “In quello tempo sappi lettore fu fatta una tavola a quello altare maggiore di duomo dove fu fatta tale donagione colla figura di nostra dona madre Vergine Maria, e fu dipinta dal mezo in su, e tiene il suo figliuolo in braccio, e a commemorazione della donagione della carta fatta allei della città di Siena col suo contado, fu dipinta una carta in mano al bambino che elle tiene in braccio, da poi fu levata da quello altare maggiore, e fu posta allaltare che oggi si chiama di S. Bonifazio in duomo longo il campanile, la quale si chiama la Madonna delle Grazie abivi divozione, perochelle piu graziosa che non si dice. Ma prima che io vada più inanzi ti voglio avisare duna cosa, cio è la Madonna, che stava allaltare maggiore di duomo la dove fu fatta tale donagione era una tavola più piccola e molto antica con figura di nostra donna di mezo taglio cioè di mezzo rilievo, e chosi le figure dintorno, la quale sta attaccata al campanile dentro in duomo allato alla porta del perdono senza altare, e quella è la Madonna a chui fu fatta tale donagione, poi si fe quella, che detto abbiamo di sopra si chiama la Madonna delle Gratie, e da poi si fe quella bella tavola con quello bello adorno dintorno per honorare bene la nostra donna chome quella che merita quello e più dono, e alla grazia che essa fè alla città di Siena e a suoi cittadini. ...” Siena, Comunale, A.IV.6, pp. 9-13, and A.IV.5, fols. 4-5 v, quoted by Garrison (1960²), p. 43.

⁹ This image is conventionally identified with the *Opera Madonna* (Fig. 48). See D. Norman *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven and London, 1999), pp. 29; idem, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena (1260-1555)* (New Haven and London, 2003), p. 41.

¹⁰ This image is conventionally identified with the *Madonna del Voto* (Fig. 15). See Norman (1999), pp. 29-30; Norman (2003), pp. 41-42.

(Fig. 16a,b) in the early fourteenth century.¹¹

The two earlier images of the Madonna associated with the high altar of Siena cathedral in the chronicle accounts have been identified as the *Opera Madonna* (Fig. 48) and the *Madonna del Voto* (Fig. 15) based on the analysis of historical documents.¹² Garrison (1960¹) extracted the history of the two Madonnas by systematically analysing the cathedral inventories. The inventories, taken together with the two chronicles, has led to the later and current disputes. The inventory of 1423 records two ancient panels of Our Lady. One was on the altar of Santa Maria delle Grazie near the Porta del Perdono:

The chapel by the Crucifix. The altar of Santa Maria delle Grazie by the Porta del Perdono with an ancient panel with the image of Our Lady with predella at the foot and iron for curtains without curtains.¹³

The other was on the altar of Saint Boniface which had once been on the high altar:

The chapel of Saint Boniface with the ancient panel with the image of Our Lady with her son in her arm which is popularly called the Madonna degli occhi grossi, and which was the ancient and principal panel of the aforementioned

¹¹ Several chronicle accounts regarding the installation of the new high altarpiece in 1310/1311 mention that the panel was painted by Duccio. See the passage from the *Anonymous Chronicle of 1202-1362*, the *Montauri Chronicle* and the *Agnolo di Tura Chronicle* cited in Garrison (1960²), pp. 37, 39 and 53. To support this, several documents regarding the agreements made between Duccio and the *operaio* (clerk of works) of Siena cathedral survive between 1308 and 1309. The chronicle accounts of the triumphal procession accompanying Duccio's panel on 9 June 1311 can be corroborated by payments made to the musicians. See Gordon (2011) pp. 176-177 and pp. 183-184, n. 9-19.

¹² The most recent ground plan of the cathedral with the identification of altars according to the inventory of 1420 (Fig. 49) is in M. Butzek ed., *Gli inventari della sagrestia della Cattedrale senese e degli altri beni sottoposti alla tutela dell'operaio del Duomo: 1389-1546* (*Die Kirchen von Siena*, Beiheft 4, Florence, 2012).

¹³ "La cappella alato al Crocefisso. L'altare di Sancta Maria dele Gratie alato ala porta del perdono con una tavola antica ala figura di nostra donna con predella da piei et ferro di tende senza tenda." Siena, Archivio dell'Opera Metropolitana (hereafter cited as AOMS), Libro 29, fol. 18 v, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 11.

church; with the predella of the story of Saint Boniface, with iron and vermilion curtain, with predella with two steps at the foot, with one panel on the side and a figure of Saint Francis, and a small one of Our Lady in a frame with linen cloth with a figure of Saint Anthony on the side.¹⁴

In Garrison's view, the original *Madonna delle Grazie* identified with the *Opera Madonna* was removed from the altar rededicated to Santa Maria della Neve and placed on the opposite wall as recorded in 1435:

The altar of Santa Maria della Neve by the Porta del Perdono. On the altar a painted panel of Our Lady on gold [back] and other saints with the miracle of the snow with predella and iron and vermilion curtain with two iron candelabras on the altar, and on the opposite side of the aforementioned altar, there is an ancient panel of Our Lady which was previously on the aforementioned altar.¹⁵

It was then removed from the cathedral to the chapel of Saint Ansanus in Castelvechio where it was recorded in the 1446 inventory:

The chapel of Saint Ansanus in Castelvechio. An ancient panel with predella and with the figure of Our Lady in half-relief and some figures of some saints.¹⁶

Around this time, the appellation of the *Madonna delle Grazie* was officially

¹⁴ “La Cappella di Sancto Bonifatio con una tavola a figura di nostra Donna col suo figliuolo in collo antica che volgarmente si dice et chiama la Madonna degli occhi grossi, la quale fu la tavola antica e principale ne la decta Chiesa; co' la predella a la storia di Sancto Bonifatio, con ferro et tende vermiglie, con predella a ij gradi da piei, con j tavola da lato et figura di Sancto Francesco, et una piccola di nostra Donna in uno telaio con panno lino a la figura di Sancto Antonio da lato.” AOMS, Libro 29, fol. 19, published by A. Lisini, ‘La Madonna degli occhi grossi’, *Misc. storica senese*, Vol. I, 1893, p. 11, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), pp. 15-16.

¹⁵ “L'altare di Santa Maria della neve alato alla porta del perdono si è l'altare suni la tavola dipenta di nostra donna messa a oro et altri santi col miracolo della nieve con predella dappie et ferro con tenda vermiglia con due candelieri di ferro in su l'altare et rincontra al detto altare si è la tavola antica di nostra donna che stava prima al detto altare.” AOMS, Libro 30, fol. 19, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 11.

¹⁶ “La Cappella di Sancto Sano in Castelvechio. Una tavola anticha con predella con figura di nostra donna di mezo rilievo et più figure di più santi.” AOMS, Libro 31, fol. 44, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 11. See below p. 91.

given to the panel on the Saint Boniface altar, which was later called the *Madonna del Voto*.¹⁷ Thus the older image of the true *Madonna delle Grazie* was neglected while the Madonna on the Saint Boniface altar was remembered as the previous high altarpiece. In Garrison's view, this led to the confusion that the *Madonna delle Grazie* which received the dedication in 1260 was the *Madonna del Voto* instead of the *Opera Madonna*.¹⁸

The change in architectural style and space in Siena cathedral in the second half of the thirteenth century was also a reason to conceive that there was a necessity for a new high altarpiece. Henk van Os (1984) considered the physical setting on the memorable day of the dedication of the city to the Virgin in 1260 which took place in front of the *Opera Madonna* which was originally a rectangular antependium reduced to its present truncated shape at a later time as yet unknown to us. He pointed out that a major rebuilding programme was under way at the time. He explained the old high altar had been demolished and a new one erected on the same site before the new, enlarged cathedral was dedicated in 1267. At the same time, a low screen with carved decoration was built around the choir-stalls, and a new pulpit by Nicola Pisano and assistants was installed. Therefore, he presumed that the obsolete altar painting had to be replaced by a new one, namely the *Madonna del Voto*. The new gabled, horizontal format of the altarpiece he conceived was suitable for the wide altar which stood in a large open space beneath a high vault. Because he understood that the choir stalls were situated behind the high altar, he proposed that the panel was painted on both sides with the Madonna and saints on the front and the scenes of the Saviour on

¹⁷ The title of the *Madonna del Voto* for this image can be traced back to 1763. Butzek (2001¹), p. 98 and n. 10.

¹⁸ Garrison (1960¹), p. 10.

the back.¹⁹ Thus the new architectural setting of the eastern end of the cathedral that took shape in the 1260s most probably prompted the commission of a new type of high altarpiece, of which the *Madonna del Voto* was a fragment.

The idea that the *Madonna del Voto* in its original form was suitable for the new high altar and thus provided the model for Duccio's *Maestà* was reinforced from a stylistic and iconographical point of view. Luciano Bellosi (1991) envisaged the *Madonna del Voto* on the high altar together with the narrative panels from Badia Ardenga which he attributed to Guido da Siena and the Master of the Galli-Dunn Madonna, most probably identifiable with Dietisalvi di Speme and the painter of the *Madonna del Voto*. Accepting the hypothesis of Van Os that the new high altarpiece was painted on both sides, he proposed that the narrative of Christ was on the back of the Madonna and saints.²⁰ Although the setting of the choir stalls was revised by Edith Struchholz (1995) to be placed in front of the high altar (Fig. 50), Barbara John (2001) argued that the new reconstruction of the *Madonna del Voto* proposed by Holger Manzke (2001) showing the narrative scenes on each side of the centrally placed Madonna surmounted with the *Coronation of the Virgin* was suitable both formally and iconographically for the architectural setting of the high altar dedicated to the Virgin and newly built between 1264 and 1267.²¹ Hence the *Madonna del Voto* accompanied with the narrative cycle seemed even more convincing as a high

¹⁹ Van Os (1984), pp. 15-20.

²⁰ Bellosi (1991), p. 13 and note 15. He questioned where Van Os obtained the information that the new cathedral of Siena was dedicated in 1267, which Stefano Moscadelli could not even find among the documents relevant to the construction of the cathedral. Van Os perhaps assumed this from the document in Biccherna dated 1267 recording the payment made by the commune for the candles offered in front of the altar of the Virgin. This document will be cited in the next section of this chapter, p. 67, n. 25.

²¹ She considered the year 1264 as the completion of the cupola and the year 1267 as the consecration of the cathedral. John (2001), pp. 111-113.

altarpiece preceding Duccio's *Maestà*, which meant that it was argued that the former was moved to the side altar only after the latter was installed in 1311.

The comprehensive archival research project focusing on the architecture of Siena cathedral, which resulted in the publication of the third volume of *Die Kirchen von Siena* (1999-2006),²² led to an alternative interpretation of the original location of the *Madonna del Voto*. Monika Butzek (2001¹) proposed that the panel commissioned to eternalise the victory of Montaperti was intended for a special side altar from the beginning. In her view, the *Anonymous Chronicle of 1202-1362*, which had been a source for those scholars who believe that Duccio's *Maestà* replaced the *Madonna del Voto*, was invalid because of its numerous inaccuracies starting with the wrong date (1310) for the installation of Duccio's *Maestà*. Butzek attached greater importance to a more credible document of the civic statute dated September 1262 which urges the civic authorities to find a place in the cathedral to build a chapel for the saints who granted victory to the Sienese. The saint on whose feast day the Battle of Montaperti fell was Saint Boniface, to whom the altar once accommodating the *Madonna del Voto* was dedicated. Therefore, she conceived that the panel of the *Madonna del Voto* was originally commissioned for a new special altar and not for the high altar.²³

The provisional location for the commemorative chapel mentioned in

²² The third volume of *Die Kirchen von Siena*, a catalogue of churches in Siena and their artworks sponsored by the Kunsthistorischen Institut in Florence, is dedicated solely to the cathedral and consists of text bound in two parts (numbered 3-1.1.1 and 3-1.1.2, published in 2006) and plates (numbered 3-1.2 and published before the text volumes in 1999). In addition to the volume in German, four separate supplementary volumes in Italian are published at present: the inventories of the *Opera* (1995), the seventeenth-century letters and designs relevant to the cathedral (1996), the construction history of the cathedral between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries (2005), and the inventory of the cathedral sacristy between 1389-1546 (2012).

²³ Butzek (2001¹), pp. 98-102. The relevant thirteenth-century documents will be cited in the next section for a closer examination. See below Section 2 of this chapter.

the 1262 statutes was also indicative for Butzek that the altar was actually erected in the nave. The location in focus was the chapel of Saint James, which had to be demolished in the course of the enlargement of the cathedral nave following the completion of the new transept marked by the globe placed on top of the cupola in 1263. In her view, the chapel was included in the bishop's palace adjacent to the south nave, where the palace and the chapel were subsequently rebuilt as recorded in the ground plan of 1659 right before their definitive demolition (Fig. 51). Butzek interpreted that the clear link between the bishop's chapel and the new communal chapel mentioned in the statutes could only be explained if it was intended to be built in the nave from the beginning noting that the inventories from 1420 allow us to locate the altar of Saint Boniface with the *Madonna del Voto* in the third bay of the south nave.²⁴

Several other documents support Butzek's hypothesis that the special chapel with the altar of Saint Boniface was realised towards the end of the thirteenth century. The document in the Biccherna dated 1267 regarding the payment made by the commune for the candle offered for the feast of Saint Boniface indicate the beginning of the cult of Saint Boniface.²⁵ The statutes of 1274 indicate that all the candles were to be donated in the cathedral on the day of Saint Boniface by the responsibility of the commune.²⁶ Moreover, the intention

²⁴ Butzek (2001¹), p. 102.

²⁵ "Item XXX libras et XVI soldos quos soluit camerarius dictus fratri Melano operario per CXII libras cere de qua cera facti fuerunt XXVI ceri scilicet duarum librarum pro quolibet, qui ceri conburuntur ante altare sancte Marie et pro uno cero XXV librarum cere pro festo sancti Pelegrini et pro duobus ceris XXV librarum cere pro festo sancti Bonifatii et pro uno cero X librarum cere que deportavit ad festum Sancti Pelegrini." ASS, Biccherna 41, c. 20r (1267 luglio-settembre), quoted by Butzek (2001¹), p. 108, n. 29.

²⁶ "Item statutum et ordinatum quod omnes cerei qui offeruntur in ecclesia maiori civitatis Senarum in festo beati Buonifatii et etiam omnes cerei qui offeruntur pro censu in vigilia beate Marie virginis vel alio tempore sint et esse debeant operis dicte beate Marie virginis receptricis et gubernatricis civitatis Senarum Deum ut civitatem et homines gubernet semper de bono in melius

of building a new chapel declared in the 1262 statutes was not repeated any more in 1274, which meant that for Butzek the issue was resolved. Thus she believed that the location of the new altar was decided and approved by then. The petition of the bishop dated 1277 referring to the reconstruction of the new palace and chapel meant for her that the external wall of the south nave had been completed by then.²⁷ Finally, her date of 1270-80 for the *Madonna del Voto* corresponded to the dates suggested above.²⁸

The interpretation of the thirteenth-century archival documents by Butzek that the original location of the *Madonna del Voto* was in the nave was accepted almost as a fact. Machtelt Israëls (2003) also considered the statutes of 1262, in which the commune intended to have a special chapel in the cathedral dedicated to the Virgin of Montaperti, invalidated the persistent hypothesis that the *Madonna del Voto* was intended for the high altar in substitution of the *Opera Madonna*.²⁹ Silvia Giorgi (2003) summarised the interpretation by Butzek (2001) in the catalogue entry of the Duccio exhibition held in Siena in 2002-2003 that the *Madonna del Voto* was commissioned after the victory of the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, the foundation of the commemorative altar in the third bay of the south nave was decided in the 1262 statutes, and its erection was approved by 1267, which Giorgi considered a possible date for the commission of the panel to the

augmentando.” ASS, Statuti di Siena 3, fol. 1r-v, published in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 740, n. 44.

²⁷ See below pp. 78-79 and n. 58.

²⁸ Butzek (2001¹), p. 103. See also M. Butzek, ‘Di nuovo sulla *Madonna del Voto*. La trasformazione in icona di una tavola da altare’, in *Presenza del passato. Political ideas e modelli culturali nella storia nell’arte senese*, Convegno internazionale, Siena, 4 May 2007 (Siena, 2008), pp. 147-154, p. 148.

²⁹ Israëls (2003), pp. 36-37.

artist.³⁰ Dieter Blume (2011) also considered Butzek's proposal of the original location of the *Madonna del Voto* in the nave convincing because the civic chapel should have been accessible for a wider audience.³¹ Thus the current leading hypothesis is that the commune intended to build a special chapel in the cathedral nave in 1262 and it was realised to accommodate the *Madonna del Voto*.

What was on the new high altar then if it was not the *Madonna del Voto*? Israëls (2003) considered the venerable image of the *Opera Madonna* was on the high altar until Duccio's *Maestà* was installed in 1311.³² On the other hand, Joseph Polzer (2012) still considered the *Madonna del Voto* monumental in its original size to be intended for the high altar constituting an intermediate step between the *Opera Madonna* and Duccio's *Maestà*.³³ Diana Norman (1999) had regarded the *Madonna del Voto* as the high altarpiece even though she acknowledged the intention originally expressed by the commune in the 1262 statutes. In her view, the priority was given to the embellishment of the new high altar which was also referred to as a focus of devotion in the statutes.³⁴ In fact, as we shall see in the next section, the relevant thirteenth-century documents do not clearly mention an altar or an image or a chapel of Saint Boniface. Therefore, there is an opportunity for an alternative interpretation: whether the *Madonna del Voto* was a high altarpiece or not is still open to question.

Current consensus can be summarised as follows. There are two images

³⁰ Giorgi (2003), p. 38. See also S. Giorgi, 'Il dossale di San Bonifazio in onore della vittoria di Montaperti', in *Le pitture del duomo di Siena*, ed. M. Lorenzoni (Milano, 2008), p. 36 and p. 44.

³¹ Blume (2011), pp. 40-41. See also Butzek (2008), p. 149.

³² Israëls (2003)

³³ J. Polzer, 'Concerning Chrysography in *Dugento* Tuscan Painting and the Origin of the Two Washington *Madonnas*', *Arte medievale* IV serie - anno II (2012), pp. 161-186, p. 166 and p. 183, n. 14. He also considered 1267 is too late for the production of the *Madonna del Voto* on stylistic and iconographic grounds.

³⁴ Norman (1999), pp. 31-33.

once called the *Madonna delle Grazie* in the cathedral that can be identified as the *Opera Madonna* and the *Madonna del Voto*. The *Opera Madonna* is associated with the altar once in the cathedral near the Porta del Perdono in the south transept which was dedicated to the Madonna delle Grazie. The *Madonna del Voto* is associated with the altar once in the third bay of the south transept which was dedicated to Saint Boniface and later to the Madonna delle Grazie. These locations and titles are acknowledged as early as 1442 by the chronicler Ventura and recorded in the cathedral inventories from the fifteenth century. However, there was already uncertainty as to which *Madonna delle Grazie* received the dedication on the eve of the Battle of Montaperti in 1260. In the mid-thirteenth century, the cathedral was under reconstruction which started from the eastern end and a new high altar was installed. The commune intended to commemorate the miraculous victory in the cathedral and the *Madonna del Voto* was most probably commissioned for this purpose soon afterwards. However, whether it was located on the new high altar or in a special chapel remains an open question.

The original location of the *Madonna del Voto* needs re-investigation focusing on the following points. First, the physical plausibility and the accessibility within the cathedral under construction in the thirteenth century have to be re-examined. Second, the question of how the communal intention expressed in the 1262 statute was realised has to be reconsidered in a social and political context at that time: who had the ultimate authority to decide? Third, the process of the interior decoration of the cathedral in the fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries needs further analysis to understand the context in which the confusion of the *Madonna delle Grazie* occurred in the fifteenth-century writings and

documents. Finally, precisely from when and how the *Madonna del Voto* started receiving significant devotion in the cathedral nave and assigned the special role of the civic icon needs to be re-examined. The following sections will trace the history of the *Madonna del Voto* from these points of view.

2. The 1262 Civic Statute and the Cathedral under Reconstruction

The rubric of the 1262 civic statute about finding a place for the construction of the chapel in honour of God and the Blessed Virgin (“De inveniundo loco pro cappella construenda ad honorem Dei et beate Virginis”) raises questions about the architectural situation of the cathedral and the social and political context at that time. The rubric urges the civic authorities to find a place to construct a chapel in honour of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints who granted victory to the Sienese, if they would be asked by the bishop, since it is necessary to demolish the chapel of Saint James for the embellishment of the cathedral. In this place to be approved, the new chapel should be built at the expense of the Opera:

The priors of the Twenty-Four and the treasurer and the four providers of the Commune of Siena and consuls of both *mercantie* are obliged, if in the future they will be asked by the bishop of Siena, to find and to decide and to arrange one single place where they should see more suitability to construct and erect at the expense of the Opera of Santa Maria a chapel in honour of and in respect for God and the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in whose solemnity Lord granted victory over the enemies to the Sienese, for it should be necessary to demolish the chapel of Saint James for the embellishment of the cathedral. And in that place that the aforesaid people approved and set in order, the aforementioned chapel should be constructed at the expense of the Opera of Santa Maria.³⁵

³⁵ “Et teneantur priores XXIIIor et camerarius et IIIor provisores Comunis Senarum et consules utriusque Mercantie, si exinde fuerint requisiti a domino episcopo Senarum, invenire et videre et

First of all, the decision to construct a new chapel was supposed to be proposed by the bishop. The commune assumed it would be proposed that the new chapel should commemorate saints who granted Sienese victory and this should be realised in place of the chapel of Saint James. However, it is uncertain whether the bishop actually proposed as the commune expected. What did it mean for the bishop and the commune to build a civic commemorative chapel in place of the bishop's chapel? What was the architectural and the political situation behind the construction of the cathedral in the mid-thirteenth century?³⁶ What was actually realised in the following years? In this section, I will offer an alternative interpretation of the thirteenth-century documents by focusing on what was physically and diplomatically possible.

The 1262 statute was the first code of law compiled in Siena. Its origin can be traced back to the time of the consuls in the twelfth century and it was formed very slowly under the Ghibelline government. It was compiled by September 1262 and was active and already in use in 1264 when the first amendment was made. The amendments occur until 1269 when the Sienese Ghibellines were defeated at Colle Val d'Elsa.³⁷ The victory of the Battle of

ordinare locum unum in quo eis videretur magis conveniens pro construendo et faciendo fieri expensis Operis Sancte Marie unam cappellam ad honorem et reverentiam Dei et beate Marie virginis et illorum sanctorum, in quorum solempnitate dominus dedit Senensibus victoriam de inimicis, cum oporteat cappellam Sancti Iacobi destrui pro ornatu episcopatus. Et in illo loco quem predicti ordines approbaverint et ordinaverint, dicta cappella fiat expensis Operis Sancte Marie." Siena, Archivio di Stato (hereafter cited as ASS), Statuti di Siena 2, fol. 2r quoted by Zdekauer (1897), dist. I, rubr. 14 and *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 734, n. 29.

³⁶ In the twelfth century in Pistoia, the bishop's chapel of San Niccolò was built over the sacristy built by the commune which served the chapel of Saint James at the entrance of the cathedral. According to Maureen Miller, the bishop's chapel was built as a result of the competition between the bishop and the commune over control of the relic and cult of the civic patron saint. M. Miller, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy* (Ithaca, 2000), p. 222.

³⁷ The primary study of the 1262 statutes is Zdekauer (1897). See also Waley (1991).

Montaperti which occurred a few years before the compilation of the 1262 statute definitively promoted the initiative of the commune and the active participation of the citizens in the rituals and the feasts of the church. Saint George to whom the commune attributed the aid to their victory in the shape of Manfred's German cavalry was to be specially commemorated by a civic procession with candles to his church on his feast day.³⁸ The devotion to the Virgin was also regularised. Two candles were to be lighted in front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the cathedral, day and night, at the expense of the commune of Siena.³⁹ A lamp was to be burnt in front of the *carroccio* in honour of God and the Virgin Mary.⁴⁰ All the citizens of Siena as well as foreign citizens who are around aged between eighteen and sixty except the poor and the sick were obliged to come and stay in the city of Siena for the vigil of the Holy Mary in August and bring a candle to the cathedral.⁴¹ These statutes were established with the conviction that the government was the defender of the catholic faith.⁴²

The phenomenon of increasing civic involvement in the cult of patron saints, according to Diana Webb (1996), emerged in the period when the civic government was gaining more leadership in politics in the course of twelfth century. The laymen who began to rule the citizens in the city and its surrounding

³⁸ Waley (1991), p. 162. ASS, Statuti di Siena 2, quoted by Zdekauer (1897), dist. I, rubrr. 123.

³⁹ "Item, statuimus et ordinamus quod duo cerei debeant ardere coram altare beate Marie virginis episcopatus Senarum die et nocte expensis Communis Senarum. Et predicta iurare debeant camerarius et IIIor et in eorum brevi apponantur." ASS, Statuti di Siena 2, fol. 1r, quoted by Zdekauer (1897), dist. I, rubrr. 2 and *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 733, n. 29.

⁴⁰ "Item quod debeat ardere lampax die et nocte coram carroccio comunis Senarum, expensis comunis Senarum, ad honorem dei et beate Marie Virginis. Et predicta iurare debeant camerarius et III.or, et in eorum Brevi apponere." Zdekauer (1897), dist. I, rubrr. 3.

⁴¹ "Item, statuimus et ordinamus quod omnes cives Senenses assidui habitatores et cives forenses, qui sunt et erunt a XVIII annis supra usque LX, qui erunt in civitate Senarum, teneantur venire et esse in civitate Senarum in vigilia sancte Marie de augusto et ire cum cereo ad episcopatum Senensem cum hominibus sue contrate, exceptis pauperibus et hodie vel infirmitate gravatis."

⁴² "Nos potestas vel consul civitatis eiusdem iuramus ad sancta dei evangelia servare, manutenere et defendere catholicam fidem, quam sancta romana ecclesia tenet et docet" Zdekauer (1897), dist. I, rubrr. 1.

area were taking over the political role of the bishop and his entourage, and this committed them to an interest in the civic cult. The lay governing body “had to learn to share the public responsibility for obtaining celestial guarantees of the city’s well-being; this and their increasing involvement, collectively, in the management of the fabric of the cathedral and other urban churches, and individually as patrons and benefactors of those same churches, meant a continuing involvement with the saints whose names were invoked and whose relics lay within the city and its locality.”⁴³ The rubric in question arguing the construction of a new chapel should be understood in this context. Although the commune was willing to fund and take part in the new project in the cathedral, they also needed the guidance of the bishop to decide what was adequate to be realised in this occasion.

The present cathedral structure and the surrounding area had been continuously reconstructed in the course of history. The two significant buildings have disappeared today: the old bishop’s palace that stood adjacent to the south aisle of the cathedral until the seventeenth century (Figs 51, 52), and the old baptistery, depicted in Duccio’s *Maestà* (Fig. 53), that stood in front of this palace until the very beginning of the fourteenth century. The old urban structure with the bishop’s palace and the independent baptistery close to the cathedral itself demonstrates the central role of the bishop before the age of the commune.⁴⁴ At

⁴³ D. Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-States* (London, 1996), p. 54.

⁴⁴ On bishop’s palaces in medieval Italy, see Miller (2000). The *Ordo officiorum ecclesiae senensis* dated c.1215 compiled by the bishop and the canons focusing on their rituals gives some explanation of the function of the episcopal buildings. See K. Van der Ploeg, ‘On Architectural and Liturgical Aspects of Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages’ in Van Os (1984), vol. 1, pp. 105-160, idem, *Art Architecture and Liturgy: Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen, 1993) and R. Argenziano, *Agli inizi dell’iconografia sacra a Siena: culti, riti e iconografia a Siena nel XII secolo* (Firenze, 2000).

the time when the 1262 statute was compiled, the area in the south and the west of the cathedral including the bishop's palace, the chapel of Saint James and the old baptistery was still untouched (Fig. 54).

The project to enlarge the eastern end of the cathedral became active after 1255. Several documents dated 1255-1257 mention the acquisition of the land in the area behind the cathedral.⁴⁵ Afterwards some documents appear regarding the furnishing for the newly enlarged chancel area. A testament dated 26 June 1259 of the wool handler Bonaguیدا di Cristofano allots 50 lire for the construction of the new high altar.⁴⁶ Part of this high altar (Fig. 55) and the panels from the choir enclosure (Fig. 56a) survive in the Opera Museum in Siena.⁴⁷ On 26 September 1259, the *Operaio* Fra Vernaccio paid the carpenter Manuello di Ranieri for the choir stalls.⁴⁸ A document that can be dated 16 November 1259 regarding the construction of the choir argues the necessity to keep the doors open towards the house of Guido Troiani and the bridge, that is, on the rear of the cathedral.⁴⁹ A

⁴⁵ *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 726-727, ns. 7, 8, 10, and 11.

⁴⁶ "...Ego Bonaguیدا quondam Cristofani lanaiolus, volens de bonis meis per nuncupationem disponere, in [pri]mis relinquo pro anima mea L libr. denariorum Senensium qui erogari debeant in constructione et hedificatione altaris Sancte Mar[ie] de Senis maioris ecclesie episcopatus Senarum noviter fiendi..." ASS, *Diplomatico S. Agostino*, 1259 giugno 26 (casella 146); ed Giorgi and Moscadelli (2003) n. 3; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 729, n. 14.

⁴⁷ See Norman (1999), p. 28 and p. 218, n. 17. There is also a panel thought to be from the choir enclosure of Siena cathedral in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Fig. 56b).

⁴⁸ "...Ego magister Manuellus quondam Ranerii in veritate non spe future numerationis confiteor me habuisse et recepisse integre numeratas a te fratre Vernaccio de Sancto Galgano, nunc operario opere Sancte Marie de Senis, dante et solvente nomine et vice dicte opere et pro ea, LX libr. denariorum Senensium de summa et quantitate LXXV libr. denariorum Senensium, quas mihi dare et solvere promisistis pro ipsa opera et eius nomine, videlicet pro factura sedium cori maioris ecclesie..." ASS, *Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana*, 1259 settembre 26, old n. 233 (casella 146) quoted by Milanesi (1854-1856), vol. 1, n. 1; Giorgi and Moscadelli (2003), n. 4; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 729, n. 15.

⁴⁹ "Consilium campane et Populi, Senis in ecclesia Sancti Christofori more solito congregatum, fuit in concordia super facto cori ecclesie maioris civitatis Senarum cum dicto domini Pelacanis, qui consuluit et dixit super facto dicti cori quod tres sapientes viri per terçerium sint cum operario et videant et ordinent qualiter melius possit fieri in dicta ecclesia et totum quod inde ordinaverint ipsi novem de comuni concordia vel maior pars ipsorum ita fiat, dummodo non claudantur porte que sunt versus domum Guidi Troiani et versus Pontem..." *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 729, n. 16.

document dated 28 November 1259 decides the construction of the choir area including location of the altar of the Virgin and the stalls.⁵⁰ From these documents, we understand that the eastern end of the cathedral was to be designated as the important entrance from the city centre most probably because the western side of the cathedral would be soon inaccessible during the long term due to the reconstruction of the nave.⁵¹ When the Battle of Montaperti occurred in 1260, the construction of the eastern part of the cathedral was still in progress.

Around the time the 1262 statute was about to be in force, the cupola was completed with the golden *mela* on the top in 1263.⁵² From then on, the interior decoration of the crossing area was carried out. In 1265, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano were commissioned to work on the new pulpit (Fig. 57a,b).⁵³ A *Biccherna* document of 1267 refers to candles offered in front of the altar of Holy Mary and

⁵⁰ "...ad ordinandum, costruendum et statuendum corum episcopatus Senarum et que pertinent ad ipsum corum...fuerunt in presentia notarii et testium subscriptorum in plena concordia et statuerunt et ordinaverunt quod altare Sancte Marie et chorum prefati episcopatus et que pertinent ad ipsum corum fiant, construantur et actentur et compleantur sicut designatum, ordinatum et statutum est per dominos canonicos dicti episcopatus et operarios hoferis Sancte Marie, salvo quod quedam ianua ex parte retro dicti episcopatus, videlicet illa que nunc est aperta, sit et remaneat aperta...fuerunt in concordia et statuerunt et ordinaverunt quod tota ecclesia debassaretur et fodere debeat ad modum platee episcopatus et quod maior ianua episcopatus que est ex parte retro dicti episcopatus, que nunc est clausa, aperiat et actetur ut melius potest actari, ita quod homines et gentes possint commode ire et intrare episcopatum predictum. Et quod altare Sancte Marie et corum ipsius episcopatus fiant et construantur supus metam maiorem dicti episcopatus et quod fiant gradi ad ipsum corum ex omnibus partibus, per quos gentes ascendant et accedant ad corum et ad altare eiusdem episcopatus...testibus presentibus et rogatis, in anno Domini millesimo CCLVIII, inditione III, die IIII kalendas decembris..." ASS, Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana, 1259/60 gennaio 29 (sic), old n. 246 (casella 148) quoted by Milanese (1854-1856), vol. 1, n. 3; Giorgi and Moscadelli (2003), n. 6; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 729-730, n. 17.

⁵¹ The Porta del Perdono situated in the south transept might have also been one of the major entrances while the western main portal was under construction. For a similar architectural situation in Santa Maria Novella, Florence, cf. Cannon (2013²), pp. 319-323.

⁵² "In nomine Domini, amen. Anno eiusdem millesimo CCLXII, indictione VI^{ta}, die nono kalendas februarii ... Et eos solvi et dedi in emendo plumbum ad coperiendum metam eiusdem operis ..." ASS, Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana, 1262/3 gennaio 24 (casella 162), Moscadelli (1981), p. 44, ns. 2, 3, quoted in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 735, n. 30.

⁵³ "... pro faciendo et fiendo unum pervium de mormore in suprascripta ecclesia Sancte Marie de Senis ..." ASS, Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana, 1265 settembre 29, old n. 288 (casella 176) quoted by Della Valle, *Lettere sanesi*, vol. 1, pp. 179-182; Milanese (1854-1856), vol. 1, n. 8; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 736-738, n. 35.

those for the feast of Saint Boniface.⁵⁴ This does attest to the establishment of the feast, but does not actually mention any altar or chapel dedicated to Saint Boniface intended in the statutes of 1262. In 1268, the pulpit was completed.⁵⁵ If we consider that the cathedral decoration was focused on the furnishing of the crossing area, it is difficult to assume that the special side chapel of the Virgin was being constructed in the nave at this time. It is more likely that the panel of the *Madonna del Voto* which can be dated around this time was commissioned to decorate the eastern area, and most probably for the new high altar.

In 1274, the second civic statutes were composed this time by the Guelf government. The candles were to be offered in front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary day and night at the expense of the commune.⁵⁶ Then the candles were to be offered for the feast of the Blessed Boniface and for the vigil of the Blessed Virgin.⁵⁷ Again there is no specific mention of an altar or a chapel of Saint Boniface. The altar at the centre of the civic devotion seems to be the main altar. It is more likely that the bishop suggested the establishment of the feast for Saint Boniface rather than a chapel for the saint.

⁵⁴ See p. 67, n. 25.

⁵⁵ "... Ego magister Niccholu olim Petri lapidum de Pissis, populi Sancti Blasii, confiteor tibi fratri Melano, operario Operis sive fabricae maioris ecclesie Denensis, operariatus nomine pro ipso Opere recipienti et stipulanti, me recepisse et habuisse et in veritate habui et recepi Pissis a Ginattagio et Ghuccio mercatoribus Senensibus pro te et tuo nomine et dicti Operis dantibus et solventibus LXXVIII libr. bonorum deneriorum Pisanorum parvorum pro pretio lapidum pervii quod fieri debet in ecclesia Senensi et IIIor leonum et VII basarum ..." ASS, *Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana*, 1267 luglio 16 (casella 186), quoted by Rumohr (1827-1831), vol. 2, p. 153f.; ed Milanese (1854-1856), vol. 1, n. 10; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 738, n. 37.

⁵⁶ "Item, statuimus et ordinamus quod duo cerei debeant ardere ante altare beate Marie virginis episcopatus Senarum die et nocte expensis Comunis Senarum..." ASS, *Statuti di Siena* 3, fol. 1r, quoted by *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 740, n. 44.

⁵⁷ "... Item statuimus et ordinamus quod omnes cerei qui offeruntur in ecclesia maiori civitatis Senarum in festo beati Buonifatii et etiam omnes cerei qui offeruntur pro censu in vigilia beate Marie virginis vel alio tempore sint et esse debeant Operis dicte beate Marie virginis receptricis et gubernatricis civitatis Senarum ut ipsa intendat pro Comuni nostro apud ipsum Deum ut civitatem et homines gubernet semper de bono in melius augumentando." ASS, *Statuti di Siena* 3, fol. 1r-v; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 740, n. 44.

The petition of the bishop in 1277 for the reconstruction of the bishop's palace states that in order to compensate for the destruction of the bishop's palace for the construction of the cathedral, a bishop's palace should be built by the new palace towards the church of Saint John with the chapel in honour of God and the glorious Virgin and the Blessed James at the expense of the commune:

... Because it has been signed and ordered through the Council of the city of Siena thus far that for the recompensation of the building of the cathedral which was demolished for the work of the great cathedral, it is obliged to build a certain palace of the bishop by the new palace towards the church of Saint John with all expenses and masters and workers of the Commune of Siena until this palace will be completed, as it was established in the public document written by the hand of the notary Galganus, and because this palace with a chapel in honour of God and the glorious Virgin and the blessed James and in service and honour of the Commune of Siena the lord bishop Bernardus of Siena should construct and did supply great expense from his own up to now and the always here aforesaid Commune of Siena has decided to destroy in order to do what was said before, and building this palace and the chapel could not be completed without the support and favour of the Commune of Siena, the aforementioned lord bishop claims from you in the power of God and in that of the Council and the Commune of Siena that, observed piety, and for the honour of God and the aforementioned Commune of Siena and for the remission of your sin, you would sign and order in such way that the aforementioned palace and chapel, that is a special palace of the Commune of Siena insomuch for God and for human beings and especially for recovering, with promptness, the amicable relationship of the church of Rome and the Commune of Siena, should be completed in a short time so that in another moment through the aforesaid Council of the Commune of Siena was confirmed ...⁵⁸

⁵⁸ "... Cum per Consilium civitatis Senarum hactenus fuerit firmatum et ordinatum quod pro recompensatione domorum episcopaliū que destructe fuerunt pro opere maioris ecclesie debetur edificari quoddam palatium episcopale a canto palatii novi versus ecclesiam Sancti Iohannis, omnibus expensis et magistris et operariis Comuni Senarum dum usque ipsum palatium fuerit consumatum, ut continetur in publico instrumento publicato manu Galgani notarii, et ipsum palatium cum cappella ad onorem Dei et Virginis gloriose et beati Iacobi et ad servitium et onorem Comuni Senarum dominus Bernardus Senensis episcopus construi faciat et magnias expensas fecerit inde de suo et usque nunc dictum Comune Senarum gravare distulerit de dicto opere fatiando nec ipsum palatium et capellam complere possit sin<e> auxilio et favore Comuni Senarum, petit a vobis domino potestate Consilio et Comuni Senarum dictus dominus episcopus

From this and the statute of 1262 regarding the demolition of Saint James, we can confirm that the bishop's palace and the adjacent chapel of Saint James were demolished for the enlargement of the cathedral and the part of the bishop's palace was already rebuilt as a new palace close to the old baptistery of Saint John. There was ample space for the bishop to rebuild his residence with the chapel which he wished to dedicate to Saint James and not to Saint Boniface.⁵⁹

Where was the bishop's chapel relocated during the rebuilding process of the chapel of Saint James? According to Maureen Miller, the addition of chapels to episcopal residences in Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was an important element which emphasised the bishop's spiritual power also used to achieve temporal ends.⁶⁰ I propose a possibility that the lower church of Siena cathedral temporarily took this function. The mural cycle in this area must have been commissioned not too long after the commission of the *Madonna del Voto* panel and the completion of the pulpit in 1268 from an iconographical point of view. The iconographical detail of the *Crucifixion* with three nails instead of four is considered to be introduced to Italy through the Sienese pulpit (Fig. 57b).⁶¹ While Guido's *Crucifixion* still shows the archaic version with four nails (Fig. 11), the mural painting in the lower church shows the innovative version with three nails (Fig. 58). The lower church must have been completed before the

quod, intuitu pietatis, et pro onore Dei et dicti Comunis Senarum et remissione vestrorum peccatorum, firmare velitis et taliter ordinare quod predictum palatium et capella, quod est speciale palatium Comunis Senarum quoad Deum et mundum et specialiter pro recipiendis, cum expedit, amicis Romane ecclesie et Comunis Senarum, compleatur in brevi sicut alias per dictum Communis Senarum fuit Consilium stabilitum ...” ASS, Consiglio Generale 21, fol. 66r-67r, quoted by Milanese (1854), vol. 1, n. 12; Giorgi and Moscadelli (2003), n. 12; *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 743, n. 50.

⁵⁹ The chapel of Saint James was rebuilt. See Giorgi and Moscadelli (2005), p. 61, n. 61.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 6 in Miller (2000), pp. 216-252.

⁶¹ Derbes (1989), pp. 193-195

construction work moved on to the western part of the cathedral because the eastern side must have been operational as the main entrance of the cathedral before the western part became inaccessible. By 1284, the construction work had moved on to the western façade of the cathedral (Fig. 59), as observed by an anonymous chronicler (1202-1362) in the account of May of that year, who notes the laying of the foundation stone.⁶²

While the construction work was still in progress on the western façade, the interior decoration of the eastern side was still ongoing. Another statute was drawn up in 1287, namely the year of the establishment of the government of the Nine, and this orders the works on the round window behind the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, attributed to Duccio (Fig. 60).⁶³ The rubric in the same statute stipulating the candles to be offered for the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary in August is extensive.⁶⁴ It still includes the feast of Saint Boniface: “And all the candles offered here in the cathedral of the citizens of Siena for the feast of Saint Boniface and all the candles offered here as taxes for the vigil of the blessed

⁶² “En quello anno del mese di magg[i]o si cominc[i]ò a fondare la facc[i]a del Duomo dina[n]zi allo spedale Sante Marie; e fu fatto nella prima pietra una grande solennità, e ’l vescovo con tutto el clericato cantando ini e salmi e orazioni, a riverenzia della Vergine Maria, e con aqua benedetta e oncenso, e con suono delle chanpane e delle tronbe del comuno; e fu una grande solennità, e fu messo ne’ detti fondamenti molta moneta di più ragioni per segno di donagione.” Alessandro Lisini and Fabio Iacometti eds, *Cronache senesi* (Bologna, 1931), p. 68.

⁶³ “De vitrianda fenestra maioris ecclesie. Item, statutum et ordinatum est quod fenestra rotunda magna que est post altare beate Marie virginis maioris ecclesie debeat vitriari ad requisitionem operarii Operis eiusdem beate Marie virginis hoc modo, silicet quod vitrum dicte fenestre debeat haberi et emi expensis Comunis Senarum et totum aliud laborerium expensis operarii predicti.” ASS, Statuti di Siena 5, fol. 13v, ed. Pellegrini, I documenti, n. 38b, quoted in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 746, n. 59a [3], Bacci (1944), p. 22, and John (2001), p. 113.

⁶⁴ “Quomodo cives Senenses teneantur portare cereos ad festum beate Marie virginis de mense augusti in vigilia ipsius festivitatis et quomodo comunitates castrorum comitatus debeant portare cereos ad dictum festum in die dicte festivitatis et de hiis que spectant ad opus Operis Sancte Marie.” ASS, Statuti di Siena 5, fol. 17r-19v, ed. Pellegrini, I documenti, n. 38b, quoted in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 746, n. 59a [4].

Virgin Mary”.⁶⁵ Again there is no mention of a special altar or a chapel for Saint Boniface. It is also worth pointing out that Saint Boniface was not included in the stained glass by Duccio as one of the patron saints of Siena.

After 1287, the construction work was more concerned with the area of the church of Saint John, the old baptistery, and this continues on in later documents for a while. On 3 July 1301, the Council of the Bells decided the demolition of the church of Saint John and its reconstruction in another place.⁶⁶ The supplement of the statute dated May 1304 discusses the work to be done where there used to be the church of Saint John,⁶⁷ thus by then the old baptistery was already demolished. Between 1304 and 1307, there are documents relevant to the area formerly occupied by Saint John and the area between the cathedral and the hospital of Santa Maria.⁶⁸ According to Andrea W. Campbell, the rebuilding of the new church of Saint John was in conjunction with the enlargement of the cathedral.⁶⁹

In September 1308, there are two documents regarding the works assigned

⁶⁵ “Et omnes cerei qui offeruntur in ecclesia maiori civitatis Senarum in festo beati Bonifatii et omnes cerei qui offeruntur pro censu in vigilia beate Marie virginis vel alio tempore sint et esse debeant dicti Operis Sancte Marie.” Ibid. p. 747.

⁶⁶ “... Item, cum audiveritis legi in presenti Consilio capitulum constituti Comunis Senarum quod loquitur quod dominus potestas Senarum de mense iulii teneatur et debeat facere fieri generale Consilium campane Comunis et Populi et L per terçerium de radota et in eo proponere quid sit faciendum de ecclesia Sancti Iohannis elevanda de loco ubi nunc est et in quo loco reponatur et hedificetur dicta ecclesia et de expensis necessariis pro domibus emendis occasione dicte ecclesie reponende et aliis expensis decta occasione necessariis faciendis et quicquid dictum Consilium tunc firmaverit et ordinaverit de predictis et circa predicta dominus potestas teneatur et debeat executioni mandare, quid super hiis sit agendum utiiter pro Comuni Senarum in Dei nomine consultatis. ...” ASS, Consiglio Generale 60, fol. 28v -29v, published in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 758, n. 86.

⁶⁷ “Item, statuimus et ordinamus quod totus locus ubi consuevit esse plebes et ecclesia Sancti Iohannis prope maiorem ecclesiam civitatis Senarum, ubi nunc est via qua itur ad dictam maiorem ecclesiam, sit et teneatur mundus et quod mactonetur dictus locus usque scalellas platee domus expensis hominum et personarum habitantium domos ex utrasque parte dicte vie ...” ASS, Statuti di Siena 8, fol. 94v, published in *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), p. 760, n. 90.

⁶⁸ See *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 760-61, ns. 90-95.

⁶⁹ See A.W. Campbell, ‘The Social and Artistic Context of the Baptistery of Siena’, Ph.D. thesis (Rutgers University 2000), pp. 21-29 and 34.

to the Opera in the canon's residences situated above the refectory, the kitchen and the portico of the canons.⁷⁰ The first document regarding Duccio's *Maestà* for the high altar is dated 9 October 1308.⁷¹ In 1310, the number of *maestri* of the Opera is reduced to 10, probably in relation to the completion of the western façade of the cathedral.⁷² From then on, this becomes the new main entrance. In 1311, Duccio's *Maestà* must have been installed through the newly completed portal.

Considering the inaccessibility of the cathedral building under reconstruction after the mid-thirteenth century, it is difficult to believe that the chapel in honour of Saint Boniface was built around the time of the notices regarding the celebration of his feast day. It is also necessary to consider the role of the bishop, his residence, and his chapel in the city. The relationship between the bishop and the commune was inter-dependent. The bishop remained a spiritual advisor regarding the construction of the cathedral and civic religious rituals and feasts. In the unstable political climate of the rivalry between the Ghibelline and the Guelph, the bishop might have been cautious in how to commemorate the intercession of the saints in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260 which the Florentine Guelph lost and the Ghibelline Siena won. Therefore, celebrating the feast of Saint Boniface at the altar of the Virgin might have been a compromise temporary solution. As a result, this might have led to the association of the Madonna image

⁷⁰ *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 763, ns. 98-99.

⁷¹ "Anno Domini MCCCVIII^o, indictione VII^a, die VIII^o mensis octubris. Appareat omnibus evidenter quod dominus Iacopus quondam domini Giliberti de Mariscottis de Senis operarius Operis Sancte Marie civitatis Senarum, nomine et vice dicti Operis et pro ipso Opere ex una parte, et Duccius pictor olim Boninsegne civis Senensis ex altera parte, cum ipse Duccius accepisset a dicto operario ad pingendum quandam tabulam ponendam super maiori altari maioris ecclesie Sancte Marie de Senis ..." ASS, Diplomatico Opera Metropolitana, 1308 ottobre 9 (casella 527), quoted by *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 763-64, n. 100.

⁷² *Die Kirchen von Siena*, vol. 3.1.1.2 (2006), pp. 765-66, n. 107. For a summary of the chronology, see Giorgi and Moscadelli (2005).

with the name of Saint Boniface in the first instance.

3. The Renewed Interest in the *Madonna delle Grazie*

After the completion of the western façade around 1311, the major architectural concern was the construction of the new baptistery. Around 1317, the construction of the baptistery began but was interrupted by the project of the new cathedral beginning from 1339. The construction of the Duomo Nuovo itself was interrupted by the Black Death in 1348. The new baptistery project was only to be resumed in 1355 and completed in the 1360s.⁷³ During this period, the interior design of the cathedral kept on developing: new altarpieces were commissioned.

Inside the cathedral after the installation of the *Maestà* in 1311, the four altars dedicated to the patron saints of Siena, Ansanus, Savinus, Crescentius and Victor, were decorated with altarpieces between 1333 and 1351. The date of 1333 is known from the painted inscription of Simone Martini's *Annunciation* (Florence, Uffizi) for the altar of Saint Ansanus. In 1335, Pietro Lorenzetti received an initial payment for the Saint Savinus altarpiece depicting the *Birth of the Virgin* (Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo). In 1337, wood was acquired for the Saint Crescentius altarpiece, and payments were made between June 1339 and May 1340 to Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the woodworker Paolo di Bindo for the work upon this altarpiece depicting the *Purification of the Virgin* (Florence, Uffizi). The painted inscriptions on these two altarpieces bears the date of 1342. Payments were made in 1351 for the Saint Victor altarpiece depicting the *Nativity* attributed to Bartolomeo Bulgarini (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard

⁷³ Giorgi and Moscadelli (2005), pp. 91-105.

University Art Museums).⁷⁴

As the result of the enlargement of the cathedral, the high altar was relocated and *Maestà* was reinstalled in 1362-3.⁷⁵ Following this, old altarpieces were reframed and redecorated. There are two documents around 1380 regarding the redecoration and repainting of the panel painting of the *Madonna delle Grazie*, which might be identified as the *Opera Madonna*. The document dated 20 August 1379 mentions three pinnacles and two colonnettes and a predella that are made of wood, with ciborium, made for the *tavola* of the altar of the Grazie.⁷⁶ The document dated 22 August 1380 mentions the payment made to the painters Francesco and Andrea Vanni for the parts of the panel and the work done for the Madonna of the Grazie in the cathedral estimated for master Luca (di Tommé) and a colleague.⁷⁷ Although the redecoration of the *Opera Madonna* does not survive, the photograph of the *Madonna* taken before the restoration suggests that the face of the Virgin was repainted (Fig. 62), and the illustration in Ventura's manuscript illumination give us an idea of how it looked like with the additional elements mentioned in the 1379 document (Fig. 63).⁷⁸

In April 1400, the painter Paolo di Giovanni Fei was paid for “vernicie e spogna” for the *tavola* of Saint Boniface (“Ala tavola di San Buonefazio”).⁷⁹ In the same month, the painter Martino di maestro Agostino was also paid for

⁷⁴ Norman (1999), pp. 67-85. Cf. Figure 61.

⁷⁵ Giorgi and Moscadelli (2005), p. 104.

⁷⁶ “A maestro Barna di Turino, a’ di 20 d’ahosto, f.ni due, e’ quali gli demo per tre colmi e due colonegli e una predela di lengniamme, civorati e’ quagli fecie per la tavola de l’altare de le Grazie.” Arch. D. Lib. d’Entrata e Uscita 1379, n. 5, f. 44. Published in V. Lusini, *Il Duomo di Siena*, I, p. 319, n. 62, partially quoted by Butzek (2001¹) in p. 104 noted as AOMS, 212 (362), c. 44r in n. 35.

⁷⁷ “per lo frusto dela tavola e sua fadigha eve [=ebbe] a la Madona dele Graçie in duomo, istimata per maestro Lucha [di Tommé] et uno compagno.” AOMS, 213 (363), c. 33r, quoted by Butzek (2001¹), p. 104.

⁷⁸ Cf. Butzek (2001¹), pp. 104-105.

⁷⁹ Sigismondo Tizio cited in G. Milanese, *Documenti cit.*, I, p. 306, quoted by Butzek (2001¹), n. 39.

gilding the panel of Saint Boniface (“metitura in oro dela tavola di san Bonifacio”) and the works evaluated by the painter Andrea di Vanni (“le quagli cose stimò maestro Andrea di Vani dipentore”).⁸⁰ The episode of the Virgin Mary married to Joseph was depicted, and the inventory of 1423 mentions the predella with the story of Saint Boniface.⁸¹ Butzek (2001¹) understood that the episode of the Virgin’s marriage was depicted below the *Madonna del Voto* and a scene from Saint Boniface’s life was depicted below the lateral saints.⁸²

In 1403 the chapels of the four patron saints were also redecorated.⁸³ The chapels were furnished with choir stalls (“coro”)⁸⁴ and fresco cycles with miracles of titular saints.⁸⁵ From around this time, these chapels attracted the attention of the citizens and became burial sites, which resulted in the production of new tomb monuments.⁸⁶

Around 1360, a hundred years after the victory of Montaperti when Siena must have been in the rehabilitation process after the plague, there seems to have been a renewed interest in reviving past civic history: the first account of the Battle of Montaperti appeared around this time, and the old images in the cathedral were redecorated by repainting and renewing the frames. This is also the time when the earliest inventories of the cathedral appeared, and probably the earliest chronicle was compiled around this time too. As we have seen, the accounts in these historical writings allude to the confusion of the appellation of

⁸⁰ AOMS, 228 (378), cc. 69v, 70r-v. Published in Milanesi Documenti I pp.37,42 s., 305 s., quoted by Butzek (2001¹), n. 39.

⁸¹ Butzek (2001¹), p. 104.

⁸² Ibid., p. 104. Cf. Silvia Giorgi’s reconstruction in Giorgi (2008), p. 41, fig. 7.

⁸³ Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

⁸⁴ AOMS 499 (707) c. 196v, partially quoted by Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

⁸⁵ Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

⁸⁶ Butzek (2001²) p. 53.

the images of the cathedral's Madonna which still continues today. The documents regarding these images of the Madonna survive only from the late fourteenth century. The documentation and the historical positioning of the civic images were based on distant memories and beliefs, which led to the confusion of the images of the *Madonna*.

The oldest surviving inventory of the cathedral also survive from around the time when the old altarpieces started to be redecorated.⁸⁷ The inventory of 1389 (updated in 1390 with integration of 1410, updated until 1417) records what is found on the altars starting from the high altar (“altare maggiore”) and continuing on to the side altars in the following sequence: Saint Ansanus altar (“altare di santo Sano”), Saint Savinus altar (“altare di santo Savino”), altar of [Santa Maria] delle Grazie (“altare dele Gratie”), Saint Catherine altar (“altare di santa Chaterina”), altar of the Magi (“altare de’ Magi”), Saint Peter altar (“altare di santo Pietro”), altar of Saint James Intercisus (“altare di santo Jacomo interciso”), altar of Santa Maria dalla Porta (“altare di santa Maria dala Porta”), Saint Anthony altar (“altare di santo Antonio”), the [Four] Crowned [Martyr Saints] altar (“altare de’ Coronati”), Saint Crescentius altar (“altare di santo Cresscentio”), and Saint Victorinus altar (“altare di santo Vittorio”).⁸⁸ There is no mention of the altar of Saint Boniface, but there are references to the altar of Santa Maria dalla Porta (the altar of Saint Mary at the Door) and the altar of [Santa Maria] delle Grazie (the altar of [Saint Mary of] the Graces). If the “altare di santa Maria dala Porta” refers to the altar of the *Opera Madonna*, the “altare dele Gratie” should refer to the altar of the *Madonna del Voto*, which means at this point the

⁸⁷ Cf. *Die Kirchen von Siena*, Beiheft 4 (2012) edited by M. Butzek.

⁸⁸ Butzek (2012), p. 28 (c. 12 r-v).

confusion was already happening.

The inventory of 1420 records “all the things and panels and altars of the cathedral.”⁸⁹ The cathedral inventories from 1420 onward refer to panel paintings on the altars of Santa Maria delle Grazie⁹⁰ and Saint Boniface.⁹¹ This is the first documented instance of an actual altar dedicated to Saint Boniface. In the inventory of 1423, there is more information of the layout of the altars and further description of the panels. The altar of the Santa Maria delle Grazie is situated on the side of the Porta del Perdono with an old panel of the figure of the Madonna.⁹² The chapel of Saint Boniface has an old panel of the figure of our Lady with her son which is referred to as “Madonna degli occhi grossi” and which was the old and the principal panel of this church.⁹³ As Garrison mentioned, the inventory of 1429 repeats the foregoing with minor differences of orthography.⁹⁴

Although there was a growing interest in the historical images of the Madonna in the cathedral, there was already confusion. The inside of the cathedral was also attracting attention as burial site. In 1440 Carlo d’Angiolino Bartoli who was bishop from 1427 wanted to be buried in the chapel of Saint Crescentius. The

⁸⁹ There are two copies. “Segue inventario di tutte le chose e tavole e altari del duomo e chanpane in prima.” Quoted by Butzek (2012), p. 74 (c. 13v). Butzek includes a plan of the cathedral with indication of the altars (Fig. 49). Butzek (2012), p. 75.

⁹⁰ “[219] Uno altare di santa Maria dele Grazie chon tavola, feri, tenda, grado, chandelieri” ASS, Opera della Metropolitana, 28, c. 14v, quoted by Butzek (2012), p. 76. Cf. Garrison (1960¹), p. 11.

⁹¹ “[222] Uno altare e tavola di santo Bonifazio, feri e tende e chandelieri e grado e banchi da lato” ASS, Opera della Metropolitana, 28, quoted by Butzek (2012), p. 76. Cf. Garrison (1960¹).

⁹² See above p. 62 and n. 13.

⁹³ See above pp. 62-63 and n. 14.

⁹⁴ “[353] L’altare di sancta Maria dele Gratie a lato ala porta del Perdono, con una tavola antica ala figura di Nostra Donna, con predelle da piei et ferro di tende senza tenda. . . . [357] La cappella di sancto Bonifatio, con una tavola a figura di Nostra Donna col suo Figluolo in collo, antica, che volgarmente s dice et chiama la Madonna degli occhi grossi, la quale fu la tavola antica et principale nela decta chiesa, cola predella ala storia di sanco Bonifatio, con ferro et tende vermiglie, con predelle a II gradi da piei, con I tavola dalato et figure di sancto Francesco, e I piccola di Nostra Donna in uno telaio in panno lino ala figura di sancto Antonio da lato.” ASS, Opera della Metropolitana 29 (I-1429/B), c. 18v and 19r, quoted by Butzek (2012), pp. 110-111.

chapel of Saint Ansanus was under the patronage of the Pecci family.⁹⁵ It is understandable that Sieneese citizens were increasingly interested in the history of the cathedral's chapels and the paintings that embellished them. Their interest may have led to historical research and cataloguing of the images including historical evaluation. Around 1442 there was still a debate about which was the original *Madonna delle Grazie*, according to the writings of Ventura.⁹⁶ Consequently, as we shall see in the next section, the *Madonna del Voto* definitively took over the historical position of the miracle-making Madonna of Montaperti and the successive miraculous role of the *Madonna delle Grazie*.

4. The Images and the Chapel of the *Madonna delle Grazie*

In the inventory of 1435, we encounter yet another Madonna: the altar of Santa Maria delle Neve by the Porta del Perdono, and opposite, the ancient panel of Our Lady, which was once on the said altar mentioned above (“L’altare di santa Maria delle Nieve a lato ala porta del Perdono ... et rincontra ... la tavola antica di Nosstra Donna, che stava prima al detto altare.”)⁹⁷

In 1420, the merchant Turino di Matteo di Turino, who was an impressive figure in the political and social life of Siena, was chosen to be the new *operaio*, the superintendent of the cathedral. He supervised several projects during his short office including the revitalisation of the construction of the pavement. He must have worked also on the preparations for the Council of Siena, which started in July 1423, and for the arrival of Pope Martin V in the city. However, he died on

⁹⁵ Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

⁹⁶ See above pp. 60-61.

⁹⁷ Butzek (2012), p. 154.

the 20th August 1423 after hardly two years in office. He was buried exceptionally in the cathedral and granted the privilege of perpetuating his memory through the decoration of a chapel in the cathedral in front of which he was buried. This was realised by Turino and his wife Ludovica's close-knit circle of influential friends. Turino dictated his last will on 24th August 1421, which does not specify any pious gifts. However, his wish to found a chapel in the cathedral is mentioned in the documents of the testimonies of the witness on 27th and 29th November 1423. His future burial site was to be near the chapel next to that of the Crucifix or near the Porta del Perdono, or the chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie. His wife Ludovica was to be the patron of the altar during her lifetime, and she was authorised to present to the bishop a chaplain, who had to start officiating the altar by 1st September 1424. However, the troubles in settling the inheritance caused the long interval between Turino's project to endow a chapel and its materialisation, which is known from the 1430 contract with Sassetta. The official assignment of the chapel to Ludovica dates to 4 November 1426, where Turino's will to construct an altar and a chapel dedicated to Santa Maria delle Grazie, next to the Porta del Perdono, is expressed. Sassetta's altarpiece was completed in 1432 (Fig. 64).⁹⁸

In the 1430 contract, Ludovica entrusts Sassetta with the task of painting an altarpiece to be placed on the altar of Saint Boniface near the Porta del Perdono (“ad altare cappelle Sancti Bonifatii, que cappella est prope portam ecclesie maioris prefate, que vocatur et dicitur la porta del Perdono”). Machtelt Israëls explains that this must be the same chapel near the entrance, the chapel of Santa

⁹⁸ Israëls (2003), pp. 13-24.

Maria delle Grazie.⁹⁹ According to Israëls, this is the only time that the titulus of the very same altar near the Porta del Perdono is recorded as Saint Boniface.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the Porta del Perdono altar was known as “Sancta Maria dala porta” or “Santa Maria delle Grazie” in the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century inventories. She also notes that in the first preserved inventory of 1389, the altar in the side-aisle of the nave is called “L’altare de le Gratie” though later it is solely referred to as the altar of San Bonifazio.¹⁰¹

In 1435, the altar near the Porta del Perdono formerly called “Santa Maria delle Grazie” is now called “Santa Maria della Neve.” The *Opera Madonna* remains on the wall on the opposite side of this altar.¹⁰² The *Madonna del Voto* is still in the chapel of Saint Boniface: “The chapel of Saint Boniface. The altar with an old painted panel with iron and vermilion curtain with steps at the foot with a small panel on the side with a figure of Saint Francis and a small panel with a figure of Our Lady with two iron candelabras on the altar.”¹⁰³ The inventory of 1439 repeats the entries.¹⁰⁴ In 1442, Ventura carefully explained the history of the images of the Madonna in the cathedral and mentioned the *Opera Madonna* was

⁹⁹ Israëls (2003), p. 27.

¹⁰⁰ Israëls (2003), p. 35.

¹⁰¹ Israëls (2003), p. 37.

¹⁰² See above p. 63 and n. 15.

¹⁰³ “La capella di santo bonifatio l’altare colla tavola antica dipenta con ferro e tenda vermiglia con gradi appiei con una tavoletta dallato (con) figura di sancto francesco et una tavoletta con figura di nostra donna con due candelieri di ferro in su l’altare.” AOMS, Libro 30, fol. 19, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 16. A second copy: Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari), ad annum, fol. 19.

¹⁰⁴ “La Cappella di Santa Maria della nieve, altare et tavola messa a oro colla nostra donna et alter figure col miracolo della nieve predella a piei ferro due candelieri (la tenda posta a fol. ...) di ferro et riscontra la tavola antica che prima stava insul detto altare.” *Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari), ad annum* quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 11. “La Cappella di santo Bonifatio altare et tavola antica dipenta ferro et tenda rossa gradi a piei con due tavolette, una di santo Francesco et una di nostra donna con due candelieri di ferro.” 1439 *Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari), ad annum*, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 11 and 16.

still by the Porta del Perdono.¹⁰⁵

In 1446, the *Madonna del Voto* still remained in the chapel of Saint Boniface¹⁰⁶ but the *Opera Madonna* was recorded in the chapel of Saint Ansanus in Castelvecchio (Fig. 65).¹⁰⁷ In the margin by the entry of the chapel of Santa Maria della Neve in the 1439 inventory which was updated until 1446, there is a note which was added later by a different hand mentioning that the panel is in the chapel of Saint Ansanus in Castelvecchio.¹⁰⁸

The document dated 28 December 1447 discusses the redecoration of the chapel of the “Madonna delle Grazie” which refers to the *Madonna del Voto*.¹⁰⁹ The deliberation of the Council dated 20 October 1448 discusses reducing the size of the image of the Virgin:

The deliberation of the Council. The aforementioned nobles ... masters etc.. intend to carry out a certain procession around the city, and to carry in the aforesaid procession the panel with the figure of the most glorious Virgin Mary to whom our city had been given and dedicated, and the keys themselves were presented. And because the aforesaid panel is of great width and great weight and would be difficult itself, in the mentioned way, to carry according to the present status, it has been decided ... to make it possible, if it would be considered appropriate, to cut the aforementioned panel and to carry the figure of the Virgin Mary in the aforesaid procession without causing the mentioned prejudice or damage.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ See above pp. 60-61 and n. 8.

¹⁰⁶ “La Cappella di Sancto Bonifatio. Uno altare con tavola dipenta alantica con figura di nostra donna, gradi, tende rosse, due candelieri di ferro, due tavolette dallato l’una di nostra donna l’altra di sancto Francesco con le stimate.” AOMS, Libro 31, fol. 28 v, quoted by Garrison (1960), p. 16. A second copy: Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Libro n. 867 (Unventari), ad annum, fol. 28v.

¹⁰⁷ See above p. 63 and n. 16.

¹⁰⁸ “la deta tavola è ala cappella di Santo Sano in Castelvecchio.” AOMS, Inventari del 1439, 1492 (867), ns. 4a,b, quoted by Butzek (2012), p. 206, n. 128.

¹⁰⁹ “Deliberazione del Concistoro. La Signoria di Siena delibera di spendere fino alla somma di 250 fiorini d’oro per ornare la cappella della Madonna delle Grazie in Duomo.” ASS, Concistoro, Libro 491, fol. 45, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 16.

¹¹⁰ “Deliberazione del Concistoro. Predicti Magnifici ... Domini etc... intendunt facere quandam processionem per civitatem, et portari facere ad dictam processionem tabulam cum figura gloriosissime Virginis Marie ad quem civitas nostra fuit data et donata, et claves ipsius presentate. Et cum dicta tabula sit magne latitudinis et magni ponderis et difficile esset ipsam, eo modo,

It is not clear whether they reduced the size immediately or not. This document also ascertains the belief in 1448 that this panel was the subject of the episode of the dedication of the keys. Thus there was already a legend of the offering of the keys to the Madonna diffused by then. The inventories from 1449 onward describe the newly refurbished chapel of the Virgin of Saint Boniface in the cathedral. The 1449 inventory tells what had become of the ancient painted panel:

The chapel of Our Lady called of Saint Boniface. An altar with an ancient painted panel with the figure of Our Lady with a gilt silver crown with four lilies on her head and two parts, one with silver star, one with cristal, and Jesus in the middle, and another small silver crown on the head of the Child held in Our Lady's arm, and in addition, 34 pairs of eyes made of silver scattered around Our Lady, a little star of white silver nailed, a small angel decorated with gold and azurite with a candelabra in the hand, a veil of white silk and three sceptres in front of Our Lady, a lamp holder made of wood alongside and across the front of the aforesaid panel, with 9 lamps burning, and an egg attached to the aforesaid chapel, and an iron candelabra along the whole altar, two round candelabras for the candles. And one small pendant box with the coat of arm of the Opera, and a step at the foot and on the side a chest to store candles, and a small panel of Our Lady in a frame.¹¹¹

portare prout ad presens est, decreverunt ... qui possint, si eis videbitur, secare facere dictam tabulam et figuram Virginis Marie portare ad dictam processionem sine abiquo eorum preiudicio aut damno." ASS, Concistoro, Libro 496, fols. 31v-32, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 16.

¹¹¹ "La chapella della nostra donna detta di sancto Bonifatio. Uno altare con tavola dipenta alanticha con figura di nostra donna con una corona dariento dorata in testa con quatro gigli et due mezi dallato, corona stella dariento coruno cristallo, et Giesù in mezo, et più una coronetta dariento dorata in capo al bambino tiene in collo la nostra donna, et più 34 paia docchi dariento confetti intorno alla nostra donna, et più una stelluza dariento biancho confitta, et più uno agnioletto rilevato messo ahoro et azura coruno candeliere in mano, et più uno velo di seta biancha a tre verghe dinanzi alla nostra donna, et più uno lampanaio dilegnio longho atraverso dinanzi a detta tavola, con 9 lampade che ardano drento, et più uno huovo disturzo (sic) atacho ad detta capella, et più uno candeliere di ferro longho per tutto laltare, due candelieri tondi per limocholi. E una cassetina pendolina con l'arme dell'uopera, et più grado da piei et dal lato uno cassonciello da riporre è mocholi, et più una tavoletta di nostra donna in telaio." 1449 *Siena, Arch. dell'Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari) ad annum*, fol. 22. v, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 16. 1450 AOMS, *Libro n. 32*, fols. 2 v. repeats the foregoing with minor differences of orthography. Garrison (1960¹), p. 16.

The traces of the ornaments, namely the holes caused by these were evinced during the restoration.¹¹² It is likely that by then (1449), the *Madonna* was already an independent icon.¹¹³ Meanwhile, the *Opera Madonna* is recorded in Castelveccchio in the same year.¹¹⁴

In 1451, further decoration of the chapel with the panel by then called the “Madonna delle Grazie” is deliberated and commissioned to Urbano da Cortona.¹¹⁵ Together with his brother and sculptor Bartolomeo, Urbano agrees to begin work on 31 January 1452.¹¹⁶ On 16 July 1455, the permission is given to saw down the panel of the *Madonna del Voto* which is called the “Madonna delle Grazie”:

The Deliberation of the Council. The nobles and the powerful masters and the captain of the people with a standard-bearing commander were summoned ... decreed that the Operaio of the cathedral can sever the panel of the altar of the most glorious Mother forever Virgin, which is called the *Madonna delle Grazie* as much as it holds the figure of the aforesaid most glorious Virgin Mary, in the mentioned manner and form which the aforementioned Operaio will consider appropriate and approve, so that it is possible to carry properly in the future procession, without any prejudice or damage, in every

¹¹² Edith Liebhauser’s unpublished report.

¹¹³ See Chapter 1, p. 54.

¹¹⁴ “La chapella di Sancto Sano in Chastelveccchio. Una tavola antica con predella con figura di nostra donna di mezo rilievo et più figure di più santi.” 1449 *Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari) ad annum*, fol. 36, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 6. 1450 AOMS, *Libro n. 32, fol. 16*, repeats the foregoing with minor differences of orthography. Garrison (1960¹), p. 11.

¹¹⁵ “Deliberazione dell’Opera. ... che si faccia una bella et ricca et ornata cappella allato alaltare et tavola de la Madonna delle Gratie in Duomo, etc., etc.” 22 September 1451, *Arch. dell’Opera, Deliberazioni e Contratti, Libro n. 21 (old E. V)*, fol. 112 (172), quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 16. Published by Milanesi, *Documenti*, Vol. II, p. 273 note.

¹¹⁶ “Urbano di Pietro da Cortona e Bartolomeo suo fratello, scultori, prendono a fare la cappella della Madonna delle Grazie in Duomo.” 19 October 1451 *Siena, Arch. dell’Opera, Deliberazioni e Contratti, Libro n. 24 (old E. IV)*, fols. 29ff. Garrison (1960¹), p. 17. Published by Rumohr, *Italianische Forschungen*, Vol. II, p. 204. Published by Milanesi, Vol. II, p. 271, No. 191. Cf. Lusini, *Il Duomo di Siena*, Vol. II, p. 68, on Urbano and his work on Chapel, with reference to this and other documents; *ibid.*, p. 72 note 2 on Francesco di Antonio, orafo, contract for the Crown and other accoutrements; *ibid.*, p. 96 note 3, on Operaio, Cristoforo Felici, and various accoutrements for Madonna (1459).

way.¹¹⁷

This might have reduced the width and the height of the *Madonna* that was already extracted from the original panel structure, which must have been still quite large in scale.¹¹⁸ It is likely that the panel was cut down by 1458 when the inventory describes the chapel of the Virgin of Saint Boniface with its new marble decoration.¹¹⁹ The chapel with its new decoration is depicted in several paintings between 1483 and the beginning of seventeenth century (Figs 66-69). Meanwhile the *Opera Madonna* is still in Castelvechio.¹²⁰ The chapel with the *Madonna del Voto* is referred to as the “Madonna delle Grazie” in the inventory of 1467¹²¹

¹¹⁷ “Deliberazione del Concistoro. Magnifici et potentes Domini et Capitaneus populi una cum Vexilliferis Magistris convocati... decreverunt quod Operarius Duomi possit separare tabulam altaris gloriosissime Matris semper Virginis Marie, que vocatur la Madonna delle Gratie quantum tenet figuram dicte gloriosissime Virginis Marie, eo modo et forma quibus dicto operaio videbitur et placebit, ita ut comode portari possit ad processionem proxime fiendam, sine aliquo suo preiudicio aut dampno, omni modo.” 16 July 1455 ASS, Concistoro, Libro 533, fol. 16 v. (3rd item), quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 17.

¹¹⁸ See Chapter 1, pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁹ “La Chapella di Nostra donna delle gratie detta di Sancto Bonifatio. Uno altare con tavola dipenta allantica con ficura di nostra donna connuna corona dariento intesta con quattro gigli et due razzi dallato con una stella dariento conuna... (?) et Giesù innessa, et più una coronella dariento dorato in chapo al bambino che tiene in collo la nostra donna, et più una stelluzza dariento dorata in fronte alla nostra donna con collana dariento smaltata, et così l’a il bambino a incollo coruno razetto dariento inmezzo cierta doppa (?) di vetro con quarantadue paia d’occhi dariento intorno alla nostra donna con due braccia concierte chiudendo di brochato cremisi et fodarata di velluto verde piano et inmezo con uno fregietto d’oro, con uno velo di seta bianca cuopre essa nostra donna, con uno ornato di tavola dipento tarsiato dove sta drentro, con due candelieri di ferro tondi conmocholi, con grado di legnio et tenda rossa, conuno principio di chapella di marmo si fa a detta chapella e per che non è fornita non la descriviamo altrimenti, con uno cieretto fiorito di ciera appichato achapo detta chapella, con più inmagini di ciera dinanzi a detta chapella, con una tavola appichata allato adetta chapella di cierte indulgentie dipenta con papa et chardinali et con armi di papa chalista et altre armi, coruna chasettina si tiene insullo altare per l’offerta con l’arme dell’uopera et uno chasonciello per la cera sta allato adetta chapella.” 1458 AOMS, *Libro n. 33*, fol. 27, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 17.

¹²⁰ “La chapella di sancto Sano inchastelvechio. Una tavola antica con predella con fichura di nostra donna di mezo rilievo et più ficure di più santi.” 1458 AOMS, *Libro n. 33*, fol. 42 v, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 6.

¹²¹ “La capella di Nostra Donna de le Gratie. Uno altare con tavola dipinta allantica cola figura di nostra donna col suo figliuolo in collo, coruna corona di rame dorata con una stella d’argiento e una corona in capo al bambino nostro signiore chettiene incollo la nostra donna, et più una stelluzza dargiento in fronte alla nostra donna con collana smaltata, et così l’è il bambino, con due razetti dargiento in petto, et insu le spalle de la nostra donna, con 56 paia d’ochi dargiento intorno et conuna tenda dipinta d’oro fino di taffecta bianco, conuno velo di seta bianca cuopre la nostra donna, con due candelieri di ferro da mocholi tondi, con grado di legnio, con una capella grande e

whereas the *Opera Madonna* is always in Castelvecchio.¹²² The inventories from then on (1473, 1480, 1482...) repeat the previous entries.¹²³

In 1451, the same year when the decoration of the chapel of the *Madonna delle Grazie* was commissioned, a new marble tabernacle for the chapel of San Savino was also ordered. In 1456, the chapel of Sant'Ansano received a similar commission.¹²⁴ From 1583, a new project to redecorate the patronal chapels began. In 1593, a new painting by Casolani replaced Simone Martini's polyptych of the *Annunciation*, which was removed from the altar to Sant'Ansano and transferred to Castelvecchio.¹²⁵ Thus the interior design of the cathedral was constantly renewed and reformed causing redecoration, redefinition and relocation of images leading to the confusion of its original status. Finally, the chapel of the *Madonna delle Grazie* itself was demolished together with the bishop's palace in 1659.¹²⁶ In 1660, Pope Alexander VII decided to erect a new chapel for the *Madonna delle Grazie*, which was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.¹²⁷ From the latter half of the eighteenth century, the *Madonna delle Grazie* gained the new title of the *Madonna del Voto*,¹²⁸ which remains the current status of this civic icon.

bellissima di marmo con più intagli e figure e storie di nostra donna tutte intagliate di marmo e messe ahoro fino et più colori, conuno tabernacolo di marmo in mezo a detta cappella, dove ista la tavola detta de la nostra donna, intagliato di marmo e lavorato con più cuori, bellissimo, messo ahoro, connuno ciero fiorito di ciera grande attaccato dinanzi ala detta cappella, et uno usciolo di ferro dove s'entra dentro la detta cappella, et uno cassonciello dove si mette la ciera che si cava di detta Cappella." 1467 *Siena, Arch. dell'Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari), ad annum*, fol. 15, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 17.

¹²² "La capella di Santo Sano in Castelvecchio. Uno altare con una tavola antica con figura di nostra donna in mezo (rilievo) et più santi et predella col arme de l'Opera." 1467 *Siena, Arch. dell'Opera, Libro n. 867 (Inventari), ad annum*, fol. 22, quoted by Garrison (1960¹), p. 6.

¹²³ "NOTE. Several sixteenth-century Inventories, 1500, 1525, 1536, etc., contained in Libro n. 868 of the Arch. dell'Opera, repeat, essentially, the foregoing entry." Garrison (1960), p. 12.

¹²⁴ Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

¹²⁵ Butzek (2001²), p. 53.

¹²⁶ Butzek (2001¹), p. 106.

¹²⁷ Butzek (2001¹), p. 106.

¹²⁸ Butzek (2001¹), p. 98. See above p. 64, n. 17.

The history of the cathedral of Siena begins with the bishop in charge of the church and the rituals. Then the enlargement involves the civic will and money. The decoration project demonstrates the increasing power of the commune although the bishop remains the lord of the cathedral. The history itself tells this power balance. The various phases of the cathedral of Siena and its painted images and altars should be understood as follows: (1) 1210-1260: pre-history of the *Madonna del Voto* of the romanesque cathedral, the *Ordo*, the *Opera Madonna* and the Battle of Montaperti; (2) 1260-1310: the newly enlarged cathedral and the *Madonna del Voto*, the pulpit, the lower church mural cycle, the stained glass window, and the completion of the façade; (3) 1310-1360: the *Maestà* and the patronal altars, the baptistery and the Duomo Nuovo; (4) 1360-1420: recovering from the Black Death and interest in compiling the old legend and redecorating old images; (5) 1420-46: the confusion and resolving the Madonna of Saint Boniface, the Madonna delle Grazie, and the Madonna della Neve; (6) 1447-1660: the new chapel for the *Madonna delle Grazie*, the sawing down of the Madonna panel, and the construction of the Cappella del Voto.

There are several kinds of documents of different nature that have been used in art historical research. However, their different roles have not been analysed well in the historical context. In the middle of the thirteenth century, there was a rivalry and gradual change of powers over the construction and the interior design of the cathedral from the bishop to the commune. The 1215 *Ordo*

tells the importance of the cathedral and the bishop's palace and chapel involved in the civic rituals such as baptism.¹²⁹ When we consider the reconstruction of the cathedral in the middle of the thirteenth century, the documents involved are the *Opera diplomatico* that talks about what has been discussed or agreed between the parties involved, but do not necessarily always give the decisive action made. The civic statutes also discuss the decisions made by the civic government, but do not prove what has actually taken place following the decision. In some occasions, the *Biccherna* documents, which record what payments have been made for civic activities, attest to the actions actually been made. The chronicles that appear after the middle of the fourteenth century are accounts that glorify the city's history which is written much later than the events actually occurred. There is dramatisation but to some degree facts should be included. Interpolation appears especially in the fifteenth century when the cult of the image of the Virgin was revived. The inventory of the cathedral, which is a record of the treasures in the cathedral such as textiles and metalworks, and later also paintings, partially reveal the original location and the provenance of such paintings.

Taking into account the different nature of the documents observed above and by focusing on the images of the Madonnas and their titles as they appear in the documents and historical writings, the vicissitude of the Marian images of Siena cathedral can be summarised as follows: the *Opera Madonna* was called the "Sancta Maria da la porta" or the "Madonna delle Grazie" in the historical documents; the *Opera Madonna* was never called "Madonna degli occhi grossi" in the documents, in contrast to what modern art historians have stated.

¹²⁹ See Argenziano (2000) and A. Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes 1125-1325* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2005).

The *Opera Madonna* seems to have been on an altar dedicated to the Virgin which was the focus of the Marian cult in the cathedral at the time of the Battle of Montaperti. Perhaps it was the altarpiece of the high altar of the Romanesque cathedral that was demolished, but I do not believe that the *Opera Madonna* was ever placed on the new high altar (which was envisaged in the document of 1259).

The *Madonna del Voto* was generally called the “Madonna del San Bonifacio”, the “Madonna degli occhi grossi” but also the “Madonna delle Grazie” in the early sources until the *Opera Madonna* was removed to Castelvechio. Inventories state that it had been on the “principal” altar before moving to the chapel of Saint Boniface, which was transformed into the Chapel of the Virgin. This chapel was demolished in the sixteenth century. Thereafter it was relocated to its current position in the Chapel of Voto (Fig. 70).

There is another image of the Madonna which might have been the cause of confusion in the fifteenth century, the *Madonna della Neve*. This altarpiece by Sassetta replaced the *Opera Madonna* on the altar of the Madonna delle Grazie near the Porta del Perdono. It seems the two ‘Madonna delle Grazie’ or the ‘Saint Boniface Madonna’ were already confused in the fourteenth century and the confusion continued in the fifteenth century, when the chronicler Ventura attempted to resolve this in 1442. The case might have been that when it was officially decided by the Commune circa 1448 that the *Madonna del Voto* was the miraculous icon in front of which the Siense dedicated the keys of the city, the original role of the *Opera Madonna* was forgotten. Another cause might have been that because the face of the *Opera Madonna* was repainted by then, the citizens might have not been able to appreciate the ancient aspect of this image,

thus preferring the *Madonna del Voto* which retained the original aspect and which was receiving numerous *ex voto* offerings.

The documents also suggest that the panel was already an independent icon of the *Madonna* by the time it was located on the altar of Saint Boniface. Thus the document of 1455 might have been referring to a reduction in the width of the icon of the *Madonna*.

We should consider the commission of the *Madonna del Voto* to have taken place sometime between the establishment of the civic statutes in 1262 and that of the civic cult of Saint Boniface in 1267. However, the statutes of 1262 seems to be not decisive enough to negate the possibility of the original location on the high altar of the *Madonna del Voto*. Where could such a monumental horizontal panel be located circa 1267? Two facts should be taken into consideration. First, the original panel structure of the *Madonna del Voto* was monumental whether it had narrative scenes or saints on the sides. Second, the nave where the special chapel of the Madonna was initially destined was still under construction. The construction work in the cathedral makes it difficult to believe that the special Marian chapel was in the nave circa 1267. The chapel might have only been realised circa 1311 when the *Madonna del Voto* was removed from the high altar. There is still the possibility that the Madonna del Voto was originally on the high altar although it was not the Commune's first intention.

Chapter 3 The Iconography of the Ascent of the Cross

The *Claritas* reconstruction of the narrative cycle attributed to Guido da Siena here dated circa 1267, as discussed in Chapter 1, showed a very innovative iconographical programme with Marian emphasis by including two extra-biblical episodes: the *Ascent of the Cross* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*. This chapter will focus on the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross*. As pointed out by Michiataka Ono (1993), the inclusion of this relatively rare episode characterises Guido's cycle. Unlike later examples from the seventeenth century which exclusively show Christ nailed to the cross lying on the ground, Guido's version shows Jesus himself mounting the cross with a ladder. Anne Derbes (1996) argued that this version originated in the east and was brought to the west through the mediation of the Franciscans who favoured its emphasis on the voluntary nature of Christ's sacrifice. Moreover, she pointed out that the iconographical detail of Mary's interceding action in Guido's version demonstrated that the Sieneese adapted this version of the episode to suit their Marian civic identity. This interpretation has been widely accepted leading to the assumption that the original location of Guido's narrative cycle was likely to be a Franciscan convent in Siena (Schmidt 2001², Giorgi 2003). For Victor Schmidt (2001²), the fact that Duccio's *Maestà* did not include this characteristic episode made it unlikely that Guido's cycle was intended for the high altar of Siena cathedral as Duccio's precedent.¹ The questions arising in this chapter are as follows: does the inclusion of the *Ascent of the Cross* always prove a Franciscan provenance? Can Guido's Marian emphasis actually prove its original location in the cathedral of Siena? Is there any

¹ See Chapter 1, p. 37.

specific reason why Duccio should have or should not have repeated this episode in the cathedral high altarpiece?

The episode of the *Ascent of the Cross* is not narrated in the four Gospels but appears in late medieval meditative texts such as the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (hereafter cited as MVC).² This was indeed considered the source of inspiration for this extra-biblical iconography especially in Italy.³ The MVC is a text that prominently claims its Franciscan origin in the prologue where Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi are presented as models to be followed.⁴ This Franciscan affiliation of the text has also supported the persisting theory that the image of the *Ascent of the Cross* in the west points to Franciscan patronage. However, as we shall see, images and ideas around this theme appear earlier than the MVC, and continue to appear later in different traditions. Therefore, the development of the image and the text related to this episode must be considered in a more complex and dynamic context. In this chapter, I will first review how this iconography came to be considered Franciscan and examine how this can be reconsidered. Second, I will explore further how the image, eastern in origin, reached the west by looking closely at the diffusion of the iconography and ideas behind it. Third, I will re-investigate the issue of “Franciscanness” of this iconography by analysing how both text and image around this theme developed in the Franciscan sphere and beyond. Finally, I will focus on the Marian emphasis

² See below pp. 131-132.

³ G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile aux XIVe et XVIe siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédonie et du Mont Athos* (Paris, 1st ed. 1916, 2nd ed. 1960), pp. 380-381, 387. See A. Derbes 'Byzantine Art and the Dugento: Iconographic Sources of the Passion Scenes in Italian Painted Crosses', Ph.D. thesis (University of Virginia 1980), p. 195, n. 40, for other writers who have cited this as textual source for *Christ Mounting the Cross*.

⁴ S. McNamer, 'The Origins of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*', *Speculum* 84 (2009), pp. 905-955, p. 906.

in Guido's iconography in a wider context of Marian devotion in the west. I will conclude that the inclusion of this iconography with Marian emphasis in Guido's cycle was well suited for the purpose of the civic commission of this narrative panel for Siena cathedral.

1. From the East to the West through the Agency of Franciscans?

The iconography of the extra-biblical episode of Christ's ascent of the cross seems to have developed in the process of visualising the moment right before the Crucifixion. Based on Millet (1916) and Sandberg-Vavalà (1929), Miklós Boskovits (1965) also explored the iconography in the context of the "Preparation for the Crucifixion" in his article on a panel painting depicting *Christ Ascending the Cross* in the Christian Museum in Esztergom, Hungary (Fig. 71), which he tentatively attributed to the late fourteenth-century Pistoiese painter Giovanni di Bartolomeo Cristiani.⁵ According to Boskovits, the representation of episodes between the Way to Calvary and the Crucifixion was omitted in early Christian and medieval art, but allusion was made symbolically. He took as an example a Byzantine reliquary of the eleventh or the twelfth century in the Cathedral Treasury in Esztergom (Fig. 72), which showed Christ being condemned by the soldiers in front of the cross in the bottom left. He emphasised that a representation of a ladder placed against the cross appears only in the thirteenth century in Byzantine and Italian miniatures but without the motif of Christ

⁵ Boskovits later republished this article with corrections and updates. M. Boskovits, 'Un dipinto poco noto e l'iconografia della Preparazione alla Crocifissione', in *Immagini da meditare* (Milan, 1994), pp. 189-231. The introduction regarding the attribution was entirely rewritten, where he attributes the panel to the Master of the Madonna Lazzaroni. The major part of the iconographical analysis is unchanged but for updates and further information on attribution, dates and bibliography.

climbing it: the *Preparation on the Cross* in a Gospel-Lectionary in the Iviron monastery at Mount Athos (Cod. 5, f. 214v; Fig. 73) and the *Arrival at the Cross* in an illuminated manuscript of the New Testament by a northern Italian artist (Cod. Vat Lat. 39, f. 64v; Fig. 74). However, he also pointed out that along with this abstract representation, which suggested that Christ would have climbed the cross with a ladder, another version of Christ nailed to the cross on the ground was depicted in the eleventh-century Barberini Psalter (Cod. Vat. Barb. gr. 372, Fig. 75).⁶

Gertrud Schiller in her *Iconography of Christian Art* (1972) also included the episode of Christ ascending the cross under a larger category titled “Preparations for the Crucifixion on Golgotha”. As Schiller emphasised, the Gospels are silent on this subject except that they mention Christ was crucified between two thieves and was given vinegar mixed with gall or myrrh before the crucifixion.⁷ The earliest depiction of one of the preparation episodes, namely the nailing of Christ to the cross, appears in the Khludov and Pantokrator Psalters (Figs 76, 77), both written in Constantinople in the ninth century, and in copies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸ In these Byzantine illustrations to the Psalms, a miniature appears near the illustration to Psalm 21: 17: “They have dug my

⁶ Boskovits (1965), p. 70, Boskovits (1994) pp. 196-197. For the Barberini Psalter, see below p. 104 and n. 10.

⁷ Schiller (1972), p. 82.

⁸ For the reconstruction of the pictorial content of the Pantokrator Psalter, see J.C. Anderson, ‘Further Prolegomena to a Study of the Pantokrator Psalter: An Unpublished Miniature, Some Restored Losses, and Observations on the Relationship with the Chuldov Psalter and Paris Fragment’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998), pp. 305-321. Based on the comparison of the traces left on the Pantokrator Psalter and the Bristol Psalter, an eleventh-century adaptation of the Pantokrator, it is likely that the Pantokrator Psalter showed the version where Christ was nailed on the cross standing on the hill (Fig. 78).

hands and feet.”⁹ Four servants nail Christ’s hands and feet to the cross, which is either standing on the hill or lying on the ground. In the Theodore Psalter (London, British Library, Add.19.352) completed in 1066, Christ is shown nailed to the cross which stands on the hill of Golgotha (Fig. 79). In the Barberini Psalter (Cod. Vat. Barb. gr. 372; Fig. 75), possibly completed in the late eleventh century and belonging to the lineage of the Khludov Psalter (Fig. 76), Christ is shown nailed lying on the ground close to the hill of Golgotha. Three soldiers sit in front of the hill and cast lots for his garment, which is a reference to Psalm 21: 19: “They parted my garments amongst them; and upon my vesture they cast lots.”¹⁰ In Schiller’s view, Italian artists in the thirteenth century took over and developed the version in which the Cross stands upright.¹¹ Moreover, Schiller concluded that the motif of Christ ascending the cross “was taken up by artists of the Middle Byzantine period and thereafter – apart from a few exceptions among German manuscript illuminations – used only by Italian artists under Byzantine influence.”¹²

Both Boskovits and Schiller observed that the iconography of the Preparation of the Crucifixion appears in the Byzantine Psalter tradition as early as the ninth century, and examples from the eleventh century already show two versions: Christ being nailed on the cross on the ground or straight up on the

⁹ The English version of the biblical texts are taken from the Douay-Rheims Catholic Bible, Challoner Revision (hereafter cited as DRB). Psalms are numbered according to the Vulgate Bible and DRB, which can be consulted at www.drbo.org.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 82-83. For a brief summary of Byzantine marginal psalters of the ninth to the fourteenth century, see E. Tsuji, ‘Peter’s Repentance in the Theodore Psalter’, *Patrimonium* 6 (2013), pp. 79-88, pp. 79-80 with bibliography on the Theodore Psalter (n. 1) and the Barberini Psalter (n. 10). For the establishment and the development of Christological themes in the marginal psalters, see C. Walter, ‘Christological Themes in the Byzantine Marginal Psalters from the Ninth to the Eleventh Century’, *Revue des études byzantines* 44 (1986), pp. 269-288.

¹¹ Schiller (1972), p. 86.

¹² Schiller (1972), p. 87.

ground.¹³ Although the version with the standing Cross suggested that Christ had to ascend himself, a ladder only appears in the thirteenth century (Boskovits 1965), and the motif of Christ climbing the ladder only appeared in Italy in the thirteenth century (Schiller 1972).¹⁴ Thus the origin of the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* was placed in the west.¹⁵

Boskovits analysed examples in Italian art from the second half of the thirteenth century, which almost exclusively show the version that suggests Christ ascended the cross standing upright. The earliest examples of this type appear around 1260 on a painted cross by Coppo di Marcovaldo in the Museo Civico, San Gimignano (Fig. 80a,b), and in the mural cycle by the Master of San Francesco in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi (Fig. 81).¹⁶ In the former, Christ starts to climb the ladder, whereas in the latter, although the composition is similar, the focus is on the act of disrobing rather than on the ascent. The disrobing and the ascent are combined in a fresco painting which he dates in the 1280s in San Vittore, Ascoli Piceno (Fig. 82).¹⁷ Boskovits observed that at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century, examples from Umbria and Emilia-Romagna focus more on the disrobing and do not depict the ascent, whereas in Tuscan examples, the representation of

¹³ It is likely that already in the ninth century, the Khludov Psalter and the Pantokrator Psalter showed different versions of the nailing. See above p. 103 and note 8.

¹⁴ See also Derbes (1980), p. 180.

¹⁵ See also M. Boskovits, 'Kreuzbesteigung', in (Milan, 1994), in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed Engelbert Kirschbaum, vol. 2 (Freiburg, 1970), cols 602-605.

¹⁶ Coppo's painted cross has been traditionally attributed between 1250 and 1260 from stylistic ground. It has been traced to the Conservatorio di Santa Chiara in San Gimignano. The Clarissan house in this city was founded c. 1261. Derbes (1996), p. 21 and p. 193, n. 59. John Moorman mentions that the Clarissan house in San Gimignano was founded in 1261. J.R.H. Moorman *Medieval Franciscan Houses* (New York, 1983), p. 658. The fresco cycle in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi is generally dated c.1260, although Chiara Frugoni suggested that it can be dated earlier c. 1250. Frugoni (1993), p. 281-285.

¹⁷ Boskovits (1965), pp. 76-77. Boskovits (1994), pp. 200-205. He also remarks the symbolic meaning of the ladder, which is placed in the centre in the example of the north Italian miniature c.1200 (Fig. 74).

Christ climbing the cross with a ladder is more diffused (Figs 83-85). Often the scene is amplified with details and transformed into a complex composition full of movements, such as in an example by the Riminese painter Giovanni Baronzio in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice (Fig. 86). As an example where the violence of the executioners is featured, Boskovits mentioned a drawing formerly in the Artaud de Montor Collection in Paris (Fig. 87). In his view, in the example by Guido da Siena (Fig. 10), Mary becomes an active participant: she wraps her son with her veil and with another hand she energetically rejects the executioner who tries to intervene, as if she wants to stop the ascent. He observed it is also full of action in a panel painting by an Umbro-Tuscan artist circa 1280-90 in the Davis Museum in Wellesley College, Massachusetts (Fig. 88).¹⁸ He also observed that the Preparation of the Crucifixion was divided into several scenes and enriched with various episodes, for example in a panel painting by the Master of Monte Oliveto circa 1325 in the Alana Collection, Delaware (Fig. 89a),¹⁹ a panel painting attributed to a Florentine artist Bonaccorso di Cino in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Fig. 90), and in a narrative cycle by the Master of San Gaggio in the Timken Art Museum in San Diego (Fig. 91).²⁰ Thus a variety of ways of depicting the episode can be observed among the late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Italian examples.

In addition to the fact that the earliest images of the *Ascent* are found

¹⁸ The most recent catalogue entry of this panel is in *Sanctity Pictured: The Arts of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders in Renaissance Italy* (exhibition catalogue, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, Tennessee, 31 October 2014 - 25 January 2015), ed T. Kennedy (Nashville and London, 2014), pp. 119-120. See also below pp. 148-151, 157.

¹⁹ For further information of this panel, see the catalogue entry by Ada Labriola in M. Boskovits ed., *The Alana Collection: Italian Paintings from the 13th to 15th Century* (Florence, 2009), pp. 104-109, and below p. 148 and p. 151, n. 130.

²⁰ For further information of this panel, see below p. 153.

among Italian paintings, scholars emphasised the contemporary development of devotional literature and activities in the west, speculating on the western initiative in the development of this iconography. While Millet (1916) considered the inspirational literary source to be the MVC which he believed to have developed in Italy in the thirteenth century,²¹ Sandberg-Vavalà (1929) suggested the influence of apocryphal texts. Boskovits mentioned various textual sources related to the Passion of Christ (Boskovits 1965, 1994). The apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus retains Christ climbed the cross himself.²² The devotional texts such as the *Liber de laude novae militiae* by Bernard of Clairvaux,²³ *De Passione Domini* also attributed to the same author,²⁴ and *De Meditatione Passionis Christi* attributed to Pseudo Bede²⁵ share the same concept. In contrast, the *Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini* formerly attributed to

²¹ See below pp. 136-137 for the most recent discussion of the dating of the MVC.

²² ‘...giunsero allora sul monte detto del cranio, che era composto di pietre, e là gli Ebrei innalzarono la croce; poi spogliarono Gesù e i soldati gli tolsero le vesti e le distribuirono tra loro. Lo vestirono di un abito rosso, lo costrinsero a salire e lo inchiodarono sulla croce...’ *Evangelium Nicodemi* I B., ch. 10, 3; ed. C. de Tischendorf, in *Evangelica apocrycha* (Leipzig, 1876), p. 246, cited in Boskovits (1965), p. 70.

²³ ‘Ascendit itaque crucem calvus noster, mundo pro mundo expositus; et revelata facie ac discoperta fronte purgationem peccatorum faciens...’ S. Bernardi Abbati, *Liber De Laude Novae Militiae ad Milites Templi*, ch. 10 in *Patrologiae Cursus Completes: Series Latina*, ed. Jacques P. Migne (hereafter cited as P.L.) 182, col. 932, cited in Boskovits (1965), p. 92, note 12, and Boskovits (1994), p. 199, note 12.

²⁴ ‘Ante oculos ejus fuit in cruce levatus et ligno durissimis clavis affixus, et ipse tanquam agnus coram tondente se vocem non dabat, nec aperiebat os suum...’ S. Bernardi Abbati, *Liber de Passione Christi*, P.L. 182, col. 1135, cited in Boskovits (1965), p. 92, note 12, and Boskovits (1994), p. 199, note 12.

²⁵ ‘Cogita quod usque ad locum Calvariae populus clamans venit, et tunc ibi videntibus omnibus, expoliatur suis vestibus, et cum maximo dolore, quia vestis interior adhaerebat ei fortiter propter sanguinem flagellationis, et tunc apparuit corpus ejus, tam eleganter figuratum, totum cruentatum. O quantus dolor tibi erat, mater sanctissima, cum aspiceres ista. Deinde parata cruce dicunt ei, ascende, Jesu, ascende. O quam libenter ascendit, o quanto amore ista omnia pro nobis sustinuit, o quanta patientia, o quanta mansuetudo! ... Sic totus nudus in cruce elevatur et extenditur. Sed mater ejus amantissima velum suum, quod habebat in capite suo, posuit circa eum plena anxietate, et involvit locum verecundum Sic crudeliter elevatur, extenditur, et toto sacro corpore distenditur et dissipatur.’ *De Meditatione Passionis Christi* in P.L. 94, col. 566, cited in Boskovits (1994), p. 200, note 13.

Anselm narrates that Christ was nailed to the cross lying on the ground.²⁶ Boskovits considered the source for the amplified visual examples could have been a text widely diffused in the second half of the thirteenth century contemporary with the appearance of the iconography in question. In his view, the MVC could have been the source for later examples, and for the earlier examples, he suggested influence from the lay activity of dramatic lauds and mystery plays dedicated to the Passion of Christ, which could have inspired both writers and artists.²⁷ However, this western initiative in developing the image of this episode was challenged by the discovery of an earlier depiction found in the east.

With the discovery of the earliest surviving depiction of *Christ Mounting the Cross* in an eleventh-century Armenian manuscript in Erevan (Matenadaran 10780, fol. 125v; Fig. 92), Thomas Mathews posed the need to reconsider the consensus placing the initiative for this iconography in the west, possibly in Franciscan circles (Mathews and Sanjian 1991). He argued that the so-called *Vehapar Gospel* points toward an iconographic tradition of greater antiquity, and Armenian exegesis offers a new line of interpretation for the subject. He remarked that in its western use, which is almost exclusively Italian, the iconography commonly has a strong Marian interest, in some instances “[Mary]

²⁶ See below pp. 144-146. Boskovits also remarked that *The Tree of Life* by Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio tells a similar story: ‘...per commandamento prese l’amor nostro umilmente la croce e poselasi su’ suoi omeri santi, tutti percossi e laceri e flagellati, e caricato da sì greve peso fu tratto e menato e percosso e sospinto al vile luogo del tormento di monte Calvario, e poiche ivi fu giunto tutto ansio e trangosciato, non gli fu dato pur un poco di sosta, ma tutto ignudo lo rispogliavano un’altra volta da capo, e d’un vile sudario il cinsero intorno, e ricoprironlo un poco, e sparserlo e tirarlo e tesserlo e trasselo da ogni parte a modo di pelle; e poi il chiavaro e forarlo nelle mani e ne’ piedi...’ in *Mistici del Duecento e del Trecento*, ed A. Levasti (Milan, 1935), p. 171, cited in Boskovits (1965), p. 92, note 13 and Boskovits (1994), p. 199, note 13.

²⁷ Boskovits (1965), pp. 77-86, Boskovits (1994), pp. 206-225. He points out that the two versions of the nailing of Christ to the Cross appear contemporarily in devotional and dramatic literature, and especially from the fourteenth century, the version of Christ nailed on the ground became exclusive to the religious drama. He concluded that this was due to the practicality of the religious drama. On the practice of singing lauds and the *Laudesi* company in Florence, see B. Wilson, *Music and Merchants: The Laudesi Companies of Republican Florence* (Oxford, 1992).

actively tries to prevent Christ's ascent, throwing one arm around him and warding off the soldiers with the other."²⁸

Anne Derbes (1995) analysed the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* as a case study of the reception of Byzantine art in Italy during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Agreeing with Mathews' argument that the origins of this image should be placed in the east, she turned to the western interpretations considering how and why the Tuscan painters adapted and changed the image. She identified two versions of the *Ascent* in the east: the earlier examples show Christ energetically climbing the ladder (Fig.93), whereas the later examples show him halting the action (Fig. 94), which emphasises the horror of the moment rather than Christ's voluntary self-sacrifice. She interpreted this change in parallel with that of the iconography of the Crucifixion, where the living Christ was gradually replaced by the image of Christ dead on the cross, showing an increasing concern with the human reality of Christ's Passion.²⁹ She argued that only the earlier version appears with any frequency in Italy, and considered that dugento painters like Guido da Siena appropriated the image from Byzantium. However, she emphasised Guido's scene was not identical to the Byzantine images but differed in its general expansion to include many new details. She especially remarked "the prominent role accorded to Mary: she fends off a young man with her right arm and with her left encircles her son's waist in a futile attempt to prevent him from climbing the ladder." She interpreted this activist role of Mary as typically Sienese because it "reminds us of her

²⁸ T.F. Mathews and A.K. Sanjian, *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel* (Washington D.C., 1991), p. 131.

²⁹ A. Derbes, 'Images East and West: The Ascent of the Cross', in *The Sacred Image East and West*, eds Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Urbana, 1995), pp. 110-131, pp. 111-114.

intervention on behalf of the Sienese” that led to the victory in the Battle of Montaperti. Therefore, she concluded that Guido’s version is “a self-consciously Sienese reinterpretation” of an eastern model.³⁰

As an example that preceded Guido, Derbes took Coppo di Marcovaldo’s painted cross in San Gimignano (Fig. 80a,b), and argued that it showed a different interpretation: Christ does not bound energetically up the ladder but stands at the foot of the cross haltingly placing one foot on the lowest rung. Thus she argued that the Tuscan painters in the mid-thirteenth century experimented freely with the Byzantine images producing strikingly dissimilar images of the same moment. She also saw a parallel in contemporary texts, namely the MVC providing alternative versions of the episode, and concluded “consistently both the texts and the images of the period suggest a tolerance for ambiguity and an openness to new ideas.”³¹

Derbes later placed this case study in a wider context of the depictions of the Passion of Christ in central Italy in the latter half of the thirteenth century, where the transformation of narrative painting is especially pronounced (Derbes 1996). She focused on the Passion cycle because the narrative cycles surviving from this period almost exclusively showed the story of Christ’s suffering and death on the cross. She documented the “reinventing of the Passion” that was intended not merely to instruct but also to elicit “sympathetic and affective participation.” She observed how the Italian painters recasted the images produced in Byzantium and northern Europe to form a new narrative. She argued the Franciscan Order was the most important sponsor of this new type of passion

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 115-118.

³¹ Ibid. p. 119.

image, through which they promoted their ideology, especially humility, poverty, and renunciation.³² In this context, the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* was also an image shaped by Franciscan ideology together with the Stripping of Christ to promote the themes of critical importance to the Order. She cited Franciscan-related texts where authors elaborate on this moment to convey not only Christ's humiliation during the passion, but also Christ's nudity, which proclaimed his poverty.³³ Thus she also placed Guido's example as a Franciscan product: the unusual motif of the nude thief seated on the ground emphasised humiliation and nudity, and the action of the willing ascent itself was a metaphor for taking the cross and renouncing the world.³⁴ In her view, the *Stripping of Christ* and the *Ascent of the Cross* "offer the clearest case of the direct involvement of the Franciscans in constructing the new images of the Passion that appear in the mid-duecento Italy and beyond," and the images "can be read as a kind of visual equivalent to texts like the Statutes of Narbonne and Bonaventure's *Apologia pauperum*: an assertion of the Franciscan vow of poverty and longing for martyrdom, and a reminder of the origins of Franciscan poverty and self-sacrifice in that of Christ."³⁵ So far this interpretation has been widely accepted.

³² Derbes (1996), pp. 1-11, 23.

³³ Ibid. pp. 138, 149-151.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 153-156.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 157. Derbes (1980) had already considered the popularity of the iconography of the Mounting among the Franciscans based on the observation by Gertrude Coor who considered the earliest literary references to this event are probably all Franciscan compositions and the iconography of the Wellesley panel which places the Funeral of St. Clare below "makes it certain that this work, composed under the influence of Guido da Siena, was produced for Franciscan worship". G. Coor, 'Coppo di Marcovaldo: His Art in Relation to the Art of his Time', *Marsyas* 5 (1947-1949), pp. 1-21, p. 18, n. 21. Therefore, she considered the San Gimignano Crucifix whose "inclusion of the Mounting of the Cross, a subject first popularized by the Franciscans, suggest that it was originally destined for a church of that order, p. 6. Derbes (1980), pp. 186-187. Sarah McNamer (2009) supported this Franciscan context from textual studies of the MVC. For further discussion, see below pp. 133-135.

Meanwhile, Anna Eörsi explored the symbolical meaning of the ladder in the iconography (Eörsi 1997).³⁶ Boskovits had already remarked the ladder itself as one of the instrument of the Redemption along with other instruments of the Passion because the act of ascending the cross emphasised the voluntary nature of Christ's death (Boskovits 1965, 1994). Eörsi argued from a theological point of view that the symbolical meaning of the ladder was inherent in the theme itself from the Early Christian period: Benedict of Nursia considered Jacob's ladder the prototype of the twelve degrees of humility which must be mounted to attain the love of God, whereas John Climacus's *Ladder of Paradise* discussed the virtues that lead to Redemption and the vices that must be conquered. Eörsi compared the iconography of the *Ascent* with other iconography with the motif of a ladder, such as the illustration from the *Garden of Delights* showing representatives of various social classes striving to ascend the ladder of Virtues (Fig. 95). She amplified the textual and iconographical sources by especially looking at examples from north of the Alps. For example, the pictorial commentary of the illustration to Psalm 76: 2 in the *Bible moralisée* in Paris shows the personification of Humility, one of the most important Christian virtues, depicted as a semi-clad youth about to ascend a ladder (Fig. 96), while Pride dressed in ornate garments falls headlong to the ground. She also compared the *Ascent* with another curious theme of Christ Crucified by the Virtues illustrating the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux, which also deals with the manifestation of Christ's virtues and the voluntary nature of his sacrifice (Fig. 97). According to Eörsi, this strange iconography, which also emerged in the middle of the

³⁶ A. Eörsi, 'Haec scala significant ascensum virtutum: Remarks on the Iconography of Christ Mounting the Cross on a Ladder', *Arte Cristiana* 85 (1997), pp. 151-166. She does not refer to Mathews (1991) or Derbes (1995, 1996).

thirteenth century but in the north, was another formulation of the same idea behind the iconography of the *Ascent*, which was typically Italian. She also pointed out the ambiguity of the role of the participants in the *Ascent*, for example, in Guido's version where the Virgin participates actively: "Is it the mother, who wants to protect her son from harm, or is it the God-Bearer who would not let the soldiers prevent the Saviour from carrying out his task?"³⁷ Theological ideas around this theme were also developing, not necessarily in a Franciscan setting, in parallel with its visualisation.

Ideas and images regarding the extra-biblical episode of the *Ascent of the Cross* thus developed in different forms in the east, the west and the north. The oldest visual example survives in the east in the Armenian gospel illumination. It is thus far understood that this iconography most probably reached the west, more precisely to Italy, through the activities of the Franciscan friars who were especially interested in this theme as can be seen in the devotional literature by Franciscan authors, the most influential being the MVC whose authorship has been recently revised.³⁸ The visual representation evolved showing various details especially in Italy with Marian emphasis, which was considered significant for Guido's example in the Sieneese civic context, where the characteristic Marian devotion is rather taken for granted. On the other hand in the north, the symbolical meaning of the theme of the *Ascent* was visualised in other

³⁷ Eörsi (1997), p. 158. For an introduction to the *Bible moralisée*, see John Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées*, vol. 1 (Pennsylvania, 2000), pp. 1-9. The iconography of Christ Crucified by the Virtues, which appears often and almost exclusively in manuscripts made for nuns in northern Europe, was also depicted in a late fourteenth-century Italian panel in Museo Correr, Venice (inv. No. 1023). The inventory indicates that this panel came from the Benedictine nunnery of S. Zaccaria in Venice, and the provenance is supported by the inclusion of a supplicant figure of a Benedictine nun. See J. Cannon, 'An enigmatic Italian panel painting of the Crucifixion in the Narodni Galerie, Prague' in *Image, Memory and Devotion: Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley*, eds Zoë Opačić and Achim Timmermann (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 157-180, pp. 169-170 and n. 34.

³⁸ See below pp. 127-128 and p. 139.

forms in a different setting. The development of the textual tradition and devotional practice in the west seems to have been happening in parallel in different situations but sharing a similar concern. It did not happen only within the context of the Franciscans, whose contribution is rather overemphasised in the current art historical research compared to that of other orders or institutions. In fact, as we shall see, the areas on both sides of the Mediterranean and over the Alps were connected in a very complex way in the thirteenth century when the political and cultural landscape was constantly changing. The development of the iconography of the *Ascent* needs to be reconsidered in this broader historical and cultural background. Ideas and images must have circulated in this area appearing in multiple contexts, not only in the Franciscan sphere or solely through their agency. Once the role of Franciscan movement is reassessed in this dynamism of culture, Guido's example can be reconsidered in the context of Marian devotion developing in the process of the decoration of Siena cathedral, and not in the Franciscan milieu.

2. From Armenia to Siena: A Shared Concern in Different Contexts

How could an eleventh-century Armenian iconographical model reach Siena in the thirteenth century? Although the intermediary role of the Franciscan friars as suggested by Derbes (1996) seems significant, there is a need for a more detailed explanation. The fact that this earliest eastern example comes from an Armenian manuscript also raises an issue that resonates with the current reconsideration in Byzantine studies: the Mediterranean "east" was not only about "Byzantine" or "Orthodox". In the same way, the Mediterranean "west" was more complex than

being a mere counterpart of the “east” or “Orthodox”. In the thirteenth century, contacts between both sides of the Mediterranean increased tremendously following the Fourth Crusade (1202-4) and the establishment of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1261). The Mediterranean east and west were inter-connected through various channels in the east including different centres of political power: the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia, the Lusignan kingdom in Cyprus, and the remnants of the Byzantine Empire.³⁹ The increasing contact between distinctive Christian cultures, the Roman Catholic, the Greek and Armenian Orthodox, led to discussions of both uniting and differentiating.⁴⁰ In any case, there must have been exchanges of ideas as well as artistic practices through various agencies. Under this climate, the two counterparts of the Mediterranean shared a homogeneous artistic style often described as “Byzantine” or “Byzantinising”, and at the same time, they developed distinctive iconographical details. It is significant that the iconography in question here, the *Ascent of the Cross*, appeared frequently especially in the mid-thirteenth and the early-fourteenth centuries both in the east and the west. The following iconographical analysis will provide a better view of the historical background of

³⁹ See the review of Derbes (1996) by V. M. Schmidt, ‘Anne Derbes, Picturing the Passion in late medieval Italy. Narrative painting, Franciscan ideologies, and the Levant’, book review, *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26 (1998), pp. 116-117.

⁴⁰ For example, Jerome of Ascoli is recorded as late as 1272-4, seeking to achieve the union of the Byzantine and Latin Churches as a senior member of a papal embassy to Constantinople. Cooper and Robson (2013), p. 18. For a brief explanation of an alienation between the east and the west in the late thirteenth century as a consequence of the failure to achieve church union, see A. Neff, ‘Byzantium Westernized, Byzantium Marginalized: Two Icons in the *Supplicationes variae*’, *Gesta* 38 (1999), pp. 81-102, pp. 94-95. According to Sergio La Porta, there was an intense debate between the Armenian and Latin Churches in the Kingdom of Cilicia in the second half of the thirteenth century. Generally, the monarchy and the upper-class clergy in the Cilician court favored closer ties including union with the Latin Church, whereas monastic circles especially in Greater Armenia were much less enthusiastic and even hostile towards such policy. S. La Porta, *The Armenian Scholia on Dionysius the Areopagite: Studies on Their Literary and Philological Tradition* (Lovanii, 2008), p. 23.

this crucial moment for the both sides of the Christian world.

The moment when Christ was affixed to the cross, on which the Bible remains silent, was already depicted in two versions in the Byzantine psalter illustrations from the ninth century which appeared earlier than the eleventh-century Armenian Gospel manuscript. It seems however their main concerns regarding this moment were different. The psalter illustration focused on the act of nailing and disrobing since the illustration accompanied the psalter texts that alluded to these specific events: nailing and dividing the garment.⁴¹ In this respect, the iconographic detail of a man, often a soldier kneeling on the ground or on the arm of the cross, holding up a hammer over his head, which appears in many of the examples of the *Ascent* or the *Preparation of the Crucifixion*, functions as a reminder of the typological connection of the gospels and the psalter. The act of disrobing that later became a central concern for the Franciscans must have been similarly a reminder of this typological tradition in the first instance. On the other hand, the Armenian gospel illustrations focus on the act of Christ himself climbing the ladder. In my view, the two different foci here respectively emphasise the two different natures of this episode: the nailing and disrobing draw attention to the suffering of Christ through his passion,⁴² whereas the climbing stresses the salvation through his voluntary sacrifice.⁴³ It seems not a coincidence that this iconography became a focus during the time when the issue of the dual nature of Christ, human and divine, was explored both

⁴¹ See above pp. 103-104.

⁴² Walter understood the development of the Christological development of the marginal psalters was related to the trends in Byzantine theology and the renewed interest in typology of the iconophiles attaching great importance to the revelation of Christ's humanity in the Old Testament in their polemics against the iconoclasts. Walter (1986), pp. 282-283, 287.

⁴³ The Armenian literature also does emphasise the importance of Christ as God becoming an image of a man in the flesh. See below p. 117-118.

in the east and the west.

The iconography of Christ Ascending the Cross seems to have been handed down in the Armenian tradition of Gospel illumination as a characteristic feature. As noted above, the earliest surviving depiction appears in the so-called *Vehapar Gospel* (Erevan, Matenadaran ms 10780, Fig. 92) attributed reasonably to the middle of the first half of the eleventh century in comparison with its closest parallel, the Gospel (Erevan, Matenadaran ms 6201) which is precisely dated in the colophon to 1038.⁴⁴ The *Vehapar Gospel* contains sixty-six miniatures of the Christological cycle, rudimentary but vivid in style, focusing on the terrestrial life of Christ including the ministry and the sacrifice but excluding the infancy episodes which echoed the Adoptionist idea which diminishes the divinity of Christ. This selection shows the interest of the commissioning clergy who was interested in the value of the ministry and the continuous redemption of Christ in the Church. This focus demonstrates the Armenian Christology. The role of the Gospels in Armenian devotion is comparable to that of the icons in the Byzantine and the Orthodox world. This manuscript, nourished with ancient exegeses, is identified as the principle source of inspiration for the so-called *Glajor Gospel* (Arm. m.s. 1, Fig. 98), the major work realized in Syunik in the beginning of the fourteenth century under the direction of a master of theology, today in the Special Collections of the University Research Library, UCLA.⁴⁵ This manuscript, studied extensively in the monograph by Thomas Mathews

⁴⁴ The colophon of the *Vehapar Gospel* mentions the restoration of the manuscript in 1088, which gives the *terminus ante quem* of the commission. See the catalogue entries by Ionna Rapti in *Armenia Sacra: Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IV^e-XVIII^e siècle)* (exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 21 February – 21 May 2007), eds Jannic Durand et al. (Paris, 2007), pp. 188-190. I am grateful to her for directing me to relevant literature and providing me with helpful information through a discussion in person.

⁴⁵ Rapti in *Armenia Sacra* (2007), pp. 188-190.

(1991), includes the *Ascent* among other scenes which can be traced back to the eleventh-century manuscript, the *Vehapar Gospel*.

One of the chief themes of Armenian reflection on this extra-biblical subject, according to Mathews, is “the freedom and strength of Christ in his death”. This is demonstrated by the way “Christ ascends the ladder with perfect dignity and poise” in the *Glajor Gospel* followed by the painter Awag in 1340 in Matenadaran ms 212 (Fig. 99) “showing Christ freely ascending the cross.”⁴⁶ Mathews saw a parallel in the Armenian literary sources citing Agat’angelos in the *History of Armenians* referring to the Crucifixion: “The son of God too became in the flesh an image of man, in the likeness of human images, mounting the elevated cross as if climbing a high summit.”⁴⁷ He also cited the fourteenth-century commentator Yovhannes Erznkaci commenting on Christ’s arrival at Golgotha referring to Adam’s burial and Jacob’s vision of the ladder imagining the restoration of paradise:

... he came upon the place where the ancients said was the grave of the first man, in order that he might heal the decapitated man. For as by his birth he released the curses of Eve in Bethlehem, so in his death on the place called Golgotha he released those of Adam. ... the cross was raised in the highest of the mountains ... which was raised higher than the worship of all idols by becoming the house of the God of Jacob, where Israel poured out oil on the rock at his vision of the ladder (Gen. 28:18-19) ...⁴⁸

According to Mathews, the identification of Golgotha as the place of Adam’s burial place first appears in Origen and turns up often in Armenian sources. In his view, the further identification of the site as Jacob’s Bethel which he named the

⁴⁶ Mathews (1991), p. 132.

⁴⁷ Mathews (1991), p. 132.

⁴⁸ Cited in Mathews (1991), p. 132.

“House of God” and the “Gate of Heaven” is a special Armenian tradition. He argued that the subject of Christ Ascending the Cross was interpreted as an extension of Jacob’s vision of the ladder through which the angels ascended to and descended from paradise: Christ who was led by God’s providence to this site opened the Gate of Heaven by ascending and descending the ladder of the cross. This concept is emphasised in the *Glajor Gospel* by pairing the *Ascent* with the *Descent from the Cross* which are painted full-page on successive folios consciously designed as a kind of diptych, which is peculiar to the UCLA Gospel. According to Mathews, the miniature represents a fusion of the older Armenian version of the subject with current Byzantine and western models: the composition pared down to Christ and soldiers emphasises the Armenian concept by omitting the Virgin and crowds usually included in the western composition, although a parallel of the motif of the soldier carrying nails is sought in the west.⁴⁹ This supports the idea that the motif of Christ ascending the cross and the concept behind it was consciously handed down in the Armenian tradition.

The iconography of Christ Ascending the Cross continued to be included in some other Armenian Gospel manuscripts in the late middle ages, according to Ioanna Rapti, mainly in the two very extensively illuminated Gospel books (Matenadaran ms 7664 and Vienna Mekhitaristen Kongregation 242), which she considers to be more dependent on Byzantine Gospels, particularly those illuminated in the so-called decorative style.⁵⁰ The Gospel by Grigor Soukiassiantz (Matenadaran ms 7664) is an example from Sourkhat, Crimea dated

⁴⁹ Mathews (1991), pp. 131-132.

⁵⁰ Email correspondence with Ioanna Rapti. The manuscripts were studied by Rapti in her dissertation: Ioanna Rapti, ‘Enluminure arménienne en Crimée génoise, aux XIV^e-XV^e siècles. Origines et développement d’un centre provincial de production livresque’, Ph.D. thesis (Paris EPHE 1999).

1332 that includes the iconography of *Christ Mounting the Cross* (Fig. 100).⁵¹ According to Rapti, the formation of the tradition of Armenian manuscripts occurred in the tenth and the eleventh centuries when diverse details and iconography can be observed. The tradition was renovated in Cilicia in the latter half of the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century, the evolution of the Armenian society is reflected in manuscripts that show a mixture of different cultures.⁵² The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia in the thirteenth century was among the most powerful cultural and political centres which was located in the centre of the world. It was the centre of cultural influx and outflux. The Silk Road, which brought culture of the farther east, ended at the port of Ayas, which was connected to the rest of the Mediterranean world. According to Rapti, some of the characteristic details such as twisted trees and undulating rocks (Fig. 101), which are only found in Cilician Armenian manuscripts, might have indeed been inspired directly from Chinese paintings. On the other side of the coast, there was the Latin kingdom of Acre, which could be the port of French influence. The geopolitical situation in the Mediterranean east in the thirteenth century allowed the courtly artistic style to develop and be shared among the aristocracy, most likely, to form a sort of cultural federation among themselves. This specific amalgamated courtly style is indeed the so-called “Byzantine” or “Byzantinizing” style widely shared in the thirteenth century both in the east and the west, and this is the context in which the similarities between duecento Sieneese art and “Byzantine” art should be considered.⁵³ It is understandable that innovations in

⁵¹ Tamara Mazaéva and Hratchia Tamrazyan eds, *La Miniature Arménienne: Collection du Maténadaran* (Erevan, 2006), p. 302, n. 79.

⁵² Rapti in *Armenia Sacra* (2007), p. 181.

⁵³ Conversation with Ioanna Rapti.

both artistic style and theological ideas were happening in the Mediterranean east where different cultures both clashed and merged with each other. It can also be assumed that the intellectuals travelling between the east and the west, including Franciscan friars but not exclusively, were contributing to the innovations. Considered in this dynamic situation of cultural and intellectual exchange, the retention of the iconography of Christ Ascending the cross in the Armenian Gospel illumination should be understood as an intention to maintain their tradition distinguishing themselves among other Christian groups.

On the other hand, the introduction of the traditionally Armenian iconography with variation outside the Armenian sphere can be understood as a demonstration of adapting a new idea in their own context, and not as an Armenian affiliation.⁵⁴ The fact that the iconography appears frequently in the limited period between the late-thirteenth and the early-fourteenth centuries both in the east and the west leads me to think that this Armenian iconography had a great impact and stirred discussion around the theme in the context of the dual nature of Christ among different Christian groups when they were inevitably in contact with each other. It seems that the idea of the cross opening the Gate of Heaven was appreciated later in both Italian and Byzantine examples: the *Ascent* is often paired with the *Descent* in the fresco cycles in the Balkan area, for example in Saint Nicholas in Curtea de Argeş, Romania (Fig. 102),⁵⁵ and the Italian panel paintings such as the narrative panel in the Timken Museum, San

⁵⁴ This is an important point of view when considering the Franciscan-ness of this iconography in the west: introduction of this iconography does not always point to a Franciscan affiliation. This will be analysed in the next section of this chapter.

⁵⁵ Tafrali dated the erection of Saint Nicholas (Biserica Domnească) around 1238-1240 and its fresco decoration around 1262-1272. One of the inscription includes the date 1262. O. Tafrali, *Monuments Byzantins de Curtéa de Arges* (Paris, 1931), pp. 317-319.

Diego (Fig. 91), the gabled panel in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (Fig. 83), and the narrative triptych in the Frick Collection, Pittsburgh (Fig. 103a).⁵⁶ However, it is significant that the focus is not always on the strength of Christ as was the tradition in the Armenian examples, and not only western examples but also eastern examples show Christ suffering, such as in San Nikita in Čučer, Macedonia (Fig. 94). In my view, the Armenian tradition continued and proactively tried to preserve the strength of Christ in their iconography, whereas the rest of the east and the west focused also on the human aspect of Christ exploring various emotions among the figures included in this event. The variation of details seen in every example should be investigated in its own context.

Christ Mounting the Cross attributed to Guido da Siena, which is our main concern here, should also be considered in the wider Mediterranean and European context of cultural and intellectual exchange. The cultural interdependence between the east and the west, especially the artistic interconnection between Siena and the Levant in the later thirteenth century, was analysed by Derbes (1989). She observed that Sienese details were found in Cilician Armenian examples, and argued that a document of 1268 referring to the activity of Sienese merchants in Acre is suggestive for a direct physical contact between the two cultures.⁵⁷ She further emphasised the cultural flow from the east to the west by remarking on Franciscan activities (Derbes 1996).⁵⁸ Although

⁵⁶ The triptych depicting the *Virgin and Child between two Saints with the Scenes of the Life of Christ* in the Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh, is attributed to an anonymous Paduan Giottoesque painter of the fourteenth century in the electronic catalogue of Fondazione Zeri. Cf. Federico Zeri, *Diari di Lavoro*, vol. 1 (Bergamo, 1971), pp. 34-35.

⁵⁷ Derbes (1989), pp. 195-196.

⁵⁸ Derbes (1996), pp. 24-27.

more research on the roles of other orders and institutions is needed,⁵⁹ it gives us an idea that an Armenian iconography and ideas behind it could easily reach Siena. Moreover, there were Armenian settlements in Italy: the number of cities with Armenian church doubled between the mid-twelfth century and mid-fourteenth century from nine to twenty-two. Most Armenian churches were accompanied by a hospital which accommodated travellers who were often pilgrims and merchants.⁶⁰ Thus images and ideas could have circulated and have been appropriated in different contexts between Siena and the Levant through various agencies. It is likely that the discussion about the two natures of Christ was also developing within Italy involving scholars from different affiliations in various contexts. The powerful Armenian visual and theoretical model could have appeared not only in Franciscan but also in other Christological discussions in Siena during Guido's time.⁶¹

In the thirteenth century, Italy and Siena, however, had stronger intellectual ties with the north. Derbes (1980) also observed iconographical influences from the north in Italian painted crosses, in which she again later emphasised the agency of the Franciscans (Derbes 1996). Not only Franciscans but also scholars of other affiliations travelled north of the Alps to other

⁵⁹ As Schmidt has mentioned in his review on Derbes (1996), the Dominicans, Carmelites, Knights Templar and Cistercians were also active in the Mediterranean East. Schmidt (1998), p. 116.

⁶⁰ Gaiane Casnati, "Presenze armene in Italia. Testimonianze storiche ed architettoniche" in *Armeni in Italia* (Rome, 1990), pp. 28-38, esp. p. 30. At Tre Fontane in Rome, which is believed to be the site of Saint Paul's martyrdom, there is an Armenian inscription of 1263 which attest to the presence of Armenians in Italy as pilgrims in the thirteenth century. Gardner (1974), p. 83.

⁶¹ The formation of the university in Siena around this time also supports the development of the intellectual environment. A document as early as 1240 already express an interest of the Commune of Siena to develop a place for education, and prestigious figures were present as teachers in Siena, such as the doctor Pietro detto Ispano, who later became Pope John XXI (1276-77), present in Siena between 1245-50. Ascheri (2013), p. 40.

intellectual centres, where new ideas and images were developing.⁶² For example, the Sienese Ambrogio Sansedoni (1220-1286), who entered the Dominican Order in 1237, studied in Paris with Albertus Magnus and then at Cologne and also taught there.⁶³ One of the most significant developments in the north was the *Bible moralisée*. There the theme of the Ascent developed into a different allegorical form.⁶⁴ It is worth noting that the allegorical elements which were foreign to Armenian gospel tradition were fused into the thirteenth-century manuscripts from Cilicia producing innovative images: for example, the episode of the Foolish Virgins appears in the iconography of the Last Judgement in the Gospel manuscript illuminated in Hromkla, Cilicia, by Toros Roslin dated 1262 in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (MS W.539, fol. 109v; Fig. 104), which is inspired by the *Bible moralisée*.⁶⁵ In addition, the allegories of Ecclesia and Synagogue, which derive from Byzantine and western tradition, appear in another Cilician Armenian manuscript by Toros Roslin dated 1268 in Matenadaran, Erevan (Ms. 10675, fol. 321, Fig. 105).⁶⁶ This also supports the dynamic circulation of ideas and images in the wider European and Mediterranean area among different groups.

The Mediterranean east and the west seemingly were fused together in the thirteenth century, and the thirteenth century saw the development of Gospel

⁶² In the thirteenth century, the University of Paris was the most pre-eminent academic environment in Europe. Cooper and Robson (2013), p. 45 and p. 246, n. 68.

⁶³ Innocenzo Taurisano, 'Ambrogio Sansedoni, Beato' Enciclopedia Treccani (1929), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/beato-ambrogio-sansedoni_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/beato-ambrogio-sansedoni_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/) consulted 27 June 2015.

⁶⁴ See above pp. 112-113.

⁶⁵ *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts* (exhibition catalogue, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 4 May – 7 August 1994 and Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 28 August – 23 October 1994), eds Thomas F. Mathews and Roger S. Wieck (New York, 1994), pp. 149-150.

⁶⁶ *Treasures in Heaven* (1994), p. 76.

imagery production both in the east and the west. However, their interest and centre of focus were slightly diverted and the iconography of the *Ascent* developed in various ways. It is true that the iconography of *Christ Mounting the Cross* was typical in the Armenian tradition, and it was shared among all the Mediterranean and European area. It was perhaps one of the most striking models that became a central focus in the Christological discussion between the mid-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries. It is no surprise that it was known to Guido too because the iconography and the ideas behind it could reach the Sienese intellectual sphere through various routes. Some iconographical details which are likely to be a western development also reached the east. As a result of the dynamic cultural circulation, a closest parallel to the Duecento Sienese paintings might be found in the Serbian mural cycle, although there might not be strong direct contacts between the two areas. In the north, the concept of the voluntary sacrifice of Christ was expressed in a completely different form of allegorical Crucifixion, which also reached back to the east. This interaction was taken further by ever more increasing contact between the two sides of the Christian world. The episode central to the Christological discussion must have been a shared concern in both the east and the west when the Christianisation movement was an issue of great concern confronting other religious or cultural groups. Although the image was shared, the ideas developed in different directions in each individual context. In the east, Christ's divinity and salvation were rather emphasised. The iconography did develop in a distinctive way in the west especially with emphasis on the role of Mary, which also seems to have reached back or simultaneously developed in the east on some occasion: in the

mural painting in Saint George in Staro Nagoričino (Fig. 106) and Saint Clement in Ohrid (Fig. 107), Mary modestly appears with John the Evangelist in the background behind the rocks of the scene of the *Ascent*. In the west, although the voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice was still a focus in the earlier examples including Guido's, the details of nailing and disrobing related to the typological tradition of psalter illustration remained, and Christ's suffering and Mary's compassion were increasingly emphasised leading to the inclusion of more details of violence. What was the driving force behind this development in the west? And what precisely was the contribution of the Franciscans?

3. Reconsidering the Role of the Franciscans in a Wider Context

“How did it happen that, in the fourteenth century, Christians wished to see their God suffer and die?”⁶⁷ The question posed by Émile Mâle over a century ago was most recently answered by Sarah McNamer (2010) in the context of the history of emotion from a literary critic and historian's point of view. According to McNamer, the compelling story of the emergence of compassion for the suffering Christ has been that a novel kind of affective prayer invented and developed by Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux was reinvented by Francis of Assisi and his Order “promoting compassionate devotion to the Passion with unprecedented zeal and bringing it out of the cloister into the world.”⁶⁸ The three towering figures have dominated the narrative of the drastic change in medieval

⁶⁷ E. Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources*, ed. Harry Bober, translated by Marthiel Matthews (Princeton, 1986). Originally published as *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen âge en France* (Paris, 1908), p. 82.

⁶⁸ S. McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, 2010), p. 58.

Christian sentiment, which is called the Anselmian, Bernardine, or Franciscan “revolution”, and resulted in the emotion of compassion itself being referred to as Anselmian, Cistercian, or Franciscan.⁶⁹ In response to the new explanation for the origin of affective devotion advanced by Rachel Fulton who argued that the change in emotional attitudes toward Christ and his Passion was promoted chiefly by the widespread apocalyptic disappointment following the year 1033, when Christ was expected to return in Judgment, McNamer advanced a different narrative that women were instrumental to this shift in sensibility in its earliest stage. She rightly pointed out that the landmark texts in the affective tradition, including the MVC, were written for or first sent to women dedicated to the religious life.⁷⁰ Moreover, McNamer challenged the typical notion of “Franciscan literature” formed through Franciscan studies, which attributes the origin of compassionate devotion to the suffering of Christ to Francis, by convincingly arguing that such affective practice had been central to the lives of religious women before its adoption by the Franciscans and that the author of the original version of the MVC was indeed a woman.⁷¹ This theory which calls for a reconsideration of the role of the Franciscans has thus far not been incorporated into art historical studies, which I attempt to do here.

The pseudo-Bonaventuran MVC is typically regarded as the quintessential Franciscan meditative text composed sometime between circa 1336 and 1364 and attributed to the Franciscan preacher Johannes de Caulibus of San Gimignano. According to McNamer, it is widely agreed that it was the single most influential devotional text in the later Middle Ages and well over two

⁶⁹ McNamer (2010), pp. 58-59.

⁷⁰ McNamer (2010), pp. 59-60.

⁷¹ McNamer (2010), Chapter 3.

hundred manuscripts survive. It was rapidly disseminated in Latin and translated into every major European vernacular. With its gentle invitations to the reader to enter the scene to feel love and compassion for Christ and the Virgin, and especially with its illustrative depictions of the violence Christ endured, the MVC represents the literature of empathetic piety in the later Middle Ages which brought the revolutionary shift in sensibility also influencing the visual arts. Because it clearly announces its Franciscan origins in the prologue presenting Francis and Clare as models to be imitated and in the text referring to Franciscan friars, houses and customs, it has been placed in the centre of the modern narrative of the “Franciscan revolution”.⁷² This narrative has also been dominant in art historical studies placing Franciscans, more precisely the Franciscan friars, in the centre of the development of the new type of visual passion cycle encouraging affective devotion to the audience, which is an influential theory promoted by Anne Derbes (1996).

In search for what precisely makes the MVC Franciscan, McNamer argues that it has “a divided heart”: the elements that can indeed be designated as ‘Franciscan’ in a sense that they derive from ideologies promoted by the Franciscan Order are not the same as the affective features fostering compassion for the suffering Christ, which rather belong to the tradition of the devotional texts for women.⁷³ In fact, the Franciscans in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries produced relatively little meditative writings for use in private prayer like the MVC. They rather copiously produced works of theological, historical or scholastic nature, of which Bonaventure’s writings are by far the most important

⁷² McNamer (2010), p. 87-88. McNamer (2009), p. 905-906.

⁷³ McNamer (2010), p. 95.

and were widely copied, translated, and imitated. Although Bonaventure's meditative writing *Lignum vitae (Tree of Life)* and the MVC have much in common formally and stylistically, their fundamental impulses, according to McNamer, are disparate: in Bonaventure's work "affective response is assertively situated within a framework of speculative theology; thus the texts seek to engage the reader's intellect more than the heart" and "the reader is never allowed to lose sight of the divinity of Christ, and this arguably inhibits rather than fosters compassionate response."⁷⁴ Through careful reading of the MVC, McNamer observed an affective dissonance that troubles this text: within its "revolutionary" base of heartfelt passages, many counter-revolutionary passages are inserted, which restrict rather than encourage feelings of compassion, expressing a worry that Christ is depicted as too human and vulnerable. In McNamer's view, these counter-revolutionary gestures can indeed be identified squarely as Franciscan, while the revolutionary affective tenor of this text issues from a tradition of meditation among women.⁷⁵ This new textual criticism calls for a revision of the analysis of visual narratives.

The revised textual history of the MVC proposed by McNamer explains well the evolution of its affective dissonance: the long Latin version of the MVC which has been regarded as the original version composed by a single Franciscan author, in her view, is actually an edited version of a much shorter original text in Italian, which was subsequently heavily glossed and expanded into a longer Italian version, and finally translated into Latin by a Franciscan redactor correcting the perceived inadequacies of the original including the highly human depiction of

⁷⁴ McNamer (2010), p. 90.

⁷⁵ McNamer (2010), p. 95.

Christ.⁷⁶ Most probably, the original devotional text for a nun was composed in the vernacular, and then translated into Latin by the redactor so that it could be disseminated more broadly throughout Europe and translated into other vernaculars.⁷⁷ McNamer argues that the short Italian version surviving in only one copy in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canonici Italian 174 (hereafter referred to as the Canonici version), represents the earliest state of the original MVC, which has an artistic integrity and contains the quintessential affective, stylistic and devotional features in compact form.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the long Latin version shows the contradictions of style, aim, and tone, which suggests that it was “the work of two authors: one with a gift of affective and dramatic devotional writing, the other skilled at instruction.”⁷⁹ In her view, this was the result of the practice of interpolation which was very common in the later Middle Ages conducted in good conscience to give religious texts more adequate alignments with scriptural or exegetical tradition or church doctrine. McNamer observed evidence of interpolation throughout the Latin MVC: a recurrent vocabulary referring to a process of interpolation, the quotations from Bernard of Clairvaux, awkward transitions between parts of the text, and discrepancies in stylistic texture, most significantly the flatness of the chapters on the public ministry suggesting their addition by a writer with stronger didactic impulse.⁸⁰ Interestingly, as we shall see later, these competing affective priorities and the process of taming the excess of emotion can also be observed in the development

⁷⁶ McNamer (2010), pp. 95-96.

⁷⁷ McNamer (2009), p. 925-926.

⁷⁸ McNamer (2009), pp. 907-908.

⁷⁹ McNamer (2009), p. 911.

⁸⁰ McNamer (2009), pp. 911-921.

of the iconography of the *Ascent* in Italy.⁸¹

The affective dissonance in the MVC is most clearly pronounced in the description of the scene of the crucifixion, or the two versions of the crucifixion, which has been our concern here. The long Latin MVC presents two different ways of imagining the crucifixion:

Now take a careful look at each and every move. They force the Lord Jesus to climb the cross by the cross by the short ladder. Without protest, without resistance, he humbly does whatever they wish. Then when he reached the cross on the uppermost step of that short ladder, he twisted his body around; he opened up those royal arms and stretched out his most beautiful hands, extending them high for his crucifiers. He looks to heaven to his Father, saying, "Here I am, Father! Even to the cross you wished me to be humiliated for the salvation and love of humankind. It is right. I accept it, and I offer myself to you for those whom you have willed to be my brothers. Then you too, Father, for love of me, accept it and be appeased at long last: wipe away all the old stain, and keep it far from them. I offer myself to you for them."

At this point the one who is behind the cross takes his right hand and fastens it to the cross. That done, the one who is on the left side takes his left hand also and pulls and stretches it as tightly as he can; and another sets the nail, hammers and fastens it in place. After this, they climb down, and take away all the ladders. Only the nails, hammered into his hands, hold up the Lord while his body weight pulls him down. With all that still another comes along and pulls him downward by the feet as tightly as he can; and when he is at full extension, someone else attaches both feet with a very heavy nail.

Some, however, believe that he was not crucified this way, but that they crucified him with the cross lying on the ground. After they nailed him to the cross they lifted him up and fixed the cross in the ground. If this version is more acceptable, then see how they grab hold of him so contemptuously, like the lowest kind of laughing stock, and furiously hurl him on top of the cross on the ground. They grab his arms, and after a wrenching stretching, attach them to the cross. And watch this done the same way with his feet, which they pulled down on

⁸¹ See below pp. 149-152.

as tightly as they could.⁸²

In contrast to the general tendency to interpret this juxtaposition as the liberal-mindedness of the author simply doubling the contemplative options, McNamer argued that it was the result of an interpolation showing two contradicting affective responses of the original author and the redactor: the recumbent crucifixion makes the crucifiers as the active agents emphasising Christ as a passive human victim eliciting compassion, whereas the scene of the ascent shows an image of Christ actively stretching out his arms up to the crucifiers and offering himself to the Father encouraging the reader to see through the violence to the scheme of salvation.⁸³ It seems that the redactor accepted the two ways of imagining the crucifixion, which was already the case for the earlier tradition, although he strongly recommended the *Ascent of the Cross* rather than the *Raising of the Cross* by describing the former in length with emphasis on Christ's dignity.

In fact, the Canonici version, considered by McNamer to be the closest to the original version of the MVC, describes only the version where Christ is nailed to the cross on the ground with great care and affection emphasising violence and pain Christ suffered:

And then he was led to the place where the cross was laid out.
And there, naked like this, he was brutally taken and stretched
out on the cross with many injuries; and then the nails were
prepared. And then the crucifiers take the right hand and
place it over a hole in the cross, and they place the nail over
the hand and begin to hammer it in. And oh, what a great pain

⁸² F.X. Taney et al. trans and eds, *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (Asheville, 2000), pp. 252-253, cited in McNamer (2010), pp. 96-97; cf. M. Stallings-Taney ed., *Iohannis de Caulibus Meditationes vite Christi: olim S. Bonaventuro attributae* (Turnhout, 1997), 271-2.

⁸³ McNamer (2010), pp. 97-98.

that was to the Lord Jesus! And know, too, that every blow of the hammer was a blow of the sword to his most sweet mother. And when they have finished nailing the right hand, they take the left, which does not reach the hole they have made. So these wicked men begin to stretch it by force to make it join up to that spot. And so violently do they pull the arm that all the ligaments are stretched, and force it to stretch up to its place. Oh, what great pain does Our Lord endure! And when they have nailed the hands, they grab his feet furiously and begin to pull them to make them reach the hole they have made. And they pull so hard that it seems that the limbs and the bones are completely torn apart. And then they put one foot on top of the other, and with one huge nail they affix them. Now imagine what pain that was! And note here that these cursed dogs, to increase his suffering, had made the nails rough, and they were huge nails, and they were nailed into the most sensitive places in the body. And for these three reasons Jesus Christ felt more suffering, and also for the copious amount of blood that issued from his body, because his most holy body was stretched in a way that forced much blood to flow.

Now when Our Lord was stretched out on the cross, he opened his most holy arms and offered his most holy hands to his crucifiers. And he raised his eyes to heaven and said, "O my Father, behold me here. It has pleased you that I be humiliated even to the cross for the love of humankind. Behold, I have received our obedience and have offered myself to you for those whom you have chosen to be my brothers. If you receive this, my sacrifice, I ask that you from now on be placated, for my love for humankind, and that all old offenses will be forgiven; and I will die." And at this the cross was raised up and put in the earth. Now imagine what suffering this must have been, and what pain Our Lord must have felt being raised up, and so constrained that he was not even able to move his head. And his most holy body was so stretched by force that there was no bone that could be counted, as the prophet had predicted, "They have counted all my bones."⁸⁴

McNamer convincingly proposed that the passage of Christ ascending the cross, which rather dilutes the pathos of the original text, was added by the Franciscan redactor who sought to control the corporeality and affective intensity. Thus she

⁸⁴ Translation by McNamer (2009), pp. 943-945.

identified that the ascent of the cross as the ‘Franciscan’ way of imagining the event which is “less intent on eliciting sorrowing, grief-filled compassion, less intent on depicting Christ as suffering victim, that can justly be called distinctly Franciscan.”⁸⁵ However, as we have seen above, visual examples of the two versions of the crucifixion were already in circulation as early as the ninth century in the Byzantine psalter illustrations, and the iconography of the *Ascent* itself was typically Armenian in the first instance but consequently appeared in different contexts, not solely Franciscan, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. The traditionally Armenian iconography had a wider impact and must have been of interest for Christological discussions among other Christian intellectuals too. Therefore, we should not leap to the conclusion that the image of the *Ascent of the Cross* points to Franciscan patronage.

It is worth keeping in mind that there is no visual example of the iconography of Christ Ascending the Cross of which we know for sure was commissioned for or by a Franciscan friar. Thus McNamer’s analogy citing Derbes’ visual analysis to support her textual analysis contrasting the affective responses of women and friars needs review. In McNamer’s view, Coppo di Marcovaldo’s depiction of the *Ascent* in the painted crucifix in Museo Civico in San Gimignano (Fig. 80b), which she understood to be made for the nuns of Santa Chiara in San Gimignano, shows Christ as more human and vulnerable, whereas Guido da Siena’s example showing Christ assertively climbing the ladder reflects the Franciscan ideology of voluntary sacrifice.⁸⁶ However, the fact that we do not have decisive evidence to support the original intention of the commission of both

⁸⁵ McNamer (2010), p. 101.

⁸⁶ McNamer (2009), pp. 942-943. McNamer (2010), pp. 98-101.

panels makes it difficult to generalise from these two examples that the Clarissan nuns preferred the humane Christ reluctant to ascend whereas the Franciscan friars preferred the divine Christ freely climbing the ladder. The panel depicting *Christ Mounting the Cross and the Funeral of Saint Clare* in the Davis Museum in Wellesley College, Massachusetts (Fig. 88), is a further support that the iconography of Christ Ascending the Cross could also appear in a Clarissan context, although whether a Franciscan friar oversaw the commission remains an open question.⁸⁷ On the other hand, there is also an example of Christ Ascending the Cross which was not commissioned for a Franciscan convent: in the mural painting in the parish church of San Vittore in Ascoli Piceno datable around 1250-70 (Fig. 82),⁸⁸ Christ is assertively climbing the ladder and at the same time, as observed by Boskovits and Derbes,⁸⁹ being stripped of his garment. Whether the commissioner of this fresco cycle was an affiliate or an advocate of the Franciscan Order is unknown, although according to Derbes, the Franciscan order was very strong in Ascoli whose Franciscan house was said to have been founded by Francis himself.⁹⁰ The above examples from the latter half of the thirteenth century calls for a revision of the definition of the ‘Franciscan’ commission, patronage, or affiliation. Derbes (1996) grouped the commission for the Franciscans and the Clarissans, whether for their convent or for an individual including those who might have not been a friar but a mere advocate, all under one category of the ‘Franciscan’ commission, as if there was a monolithic

⁸⁷ For this panel, see M.R. Katz ed., *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 151-152; *Sanctity Pictured* (2014), pp. 119-120.

⁸⁸ Furio Cappelli, ‘La chiesa di San Vittore: uno scrigno di pittura votiva’ in *Guida alle chiese romaniche di Ascoli Piceno: città di travertino*, Michele Picciolo ed (Ascoli Piceno, 2007), pp. 103-119, esp. pp. 111-113. Boskovits dated it to 1280s. See above p. 105.

⁸⁹ Boskovits (1965), pp. 76-77. Boskovits (1994), p. 201. Derbes (1996), p. 237, n. 6.

⁹⁰ Derbes (1996), p. 238, n. 12.

Franciscan ideological visual policy.⁹¹ However, it remains true that the Franciscans as preachers and scholars had great impact on wider audiences, and they must have been active advisors, overseers, and redactors of artistic production. The question here is, to what extent were the Franciscan friars influential in controlling the visual images containing this controversial iconography circulating among different gender groups and individuals both religious and lay?

First, approximately when did the correction of the MVC by the Franciscan redactor occur? Although the MVC was once dated to the late thirteenth century or early fourteenth century on the assumption that it must have influenced Giotto and other early trecento artists, the *terminus post quem* of circa 1336 and the *terminus ante quem* of 1364 for the long Latin version has now been established.⁹² McNamer identified that the MVC quotes at length the *Revelations of Elizabeth of Hungary*, a text concerning Elizabeth of Töss, daughter of the king of Hungary, which was almost certainly composed after Elizabeth's death in 1336.⁹³ The first indisputable evidence for the MVC's existence is found in *La Passione di N.S. Gesù Cristo* by Niccolò di Mino Cicerchia of Siena, a long Italian poem on the passion composed around the year 1364, which partially translated and adapted the MVC.⁹⁴ However, the date of the original text of the

⁹¹ For the complexity of the relationships between friars minor, workshops and the laity in artistic patronage, cf. L. Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge and New York, 2004).

⁹² McNamer (2009), p. 905 and n. 1. The date and the authorship of the MVC has recently been repropounded by Dávid Falvay and Peter Tóth: they propose the beginning instead of the second half of the fourteenth century. D. Falvay and P. Toth, 'New Light on the Date and Authorship of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*' in *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imagination of Christ's Life*, eds S. Kelly and R. Perry (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 17-106.

⁹³ S. McNamer, 'Further Evidence for the Date of the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*', *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990), pp. 235-261, pp. 237-241.

⁹⁴ McNamer (1990), p. 249.

MVC might be earlier. According to McNamer, the Canonici version does not contain the extracts from the *Revelations of Elizabeth of Hungary*, and the *terminus post quem* for its composition confirmed so far is 1298 or 1299, the earliest possible dates for the completion of Mechthild of Hackeborn's *Liber specialis gratiae*, which is loosely cited in the text.⁹⁵ Thus the affective intensity among women's devotion must have been culminating towards the end of the thirteenth century, whereas the concern among friars to tone down the excessive emotion must have been gradually growing in the early decades of the fourteenth century. It seems not a coincidence that the various visual examples of the *Ascent* showing conflicting affections appear most frequently in Italy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, when the concern for controlling affective intensity was growing in the Franciscan sphere. At the same time, these dates suggest that the MVC could not be used as a support to explain the Franciscanness of the images of the *Ascent* produced in the mid-thirteenth century.⁹⁶ In addition, it was rather the *Stripping of Christ* that was included in the mural cycle of the 1260s in the mother church of the Franciscans in Assisi (Fig. 81), which was more related to their ideology of poverty and placed typologically with the *Renunciation of Goods by Saint Francis*.

Second, precisely what were the elements that the Franciscan friar who corrected the MVC was trying to control at the beginning of the fourteenth century? By retaining both versions of the Crucifixion in the MVC text, the redactor did acknowledge that the two versions in circulation were respectively acceptable in personal devotion, although he considered the version of the *Ascent*

⁹⁵ McNamer (2009), p. 946.

⁹⁶ For other textual source available in the mid-thirteenth-century, see above pp. 107-108.

was more adequate. As McNamer has suggested, the version where Christ was nailed on the ground could develop into excess of violence, blood, pain and suffering, inadequately depicting Christ as a mere vulnerable human destined to die. This concern is reflected in the phrases which were omitted by the redactor but existed in the Canonici version such as “And oh, what a great pain that was to the Lord Jesus!”, “I will die” and “Jesus Christ felt more suffering, and also for the copious amount of blood that issued from his body”.⁹⁷ The fact that quite a number of visual examples of the *Ascent* survive from this period compared to the that of Christ being nailed on the ground suggests that the Franciscans might have been quite successful in promoting the more adequate version of the *Ascent*. However, it is also true that the visual examples do involve a certain amount of violence, suffering and compassion, and we notice that the emotional level in each example varies if we turn to the various responses shown by other participants in this episode, especially that of Mary. Curiously, another phrase that was omitted in the long Latin MVC was “And know, too, that every blow of the hammer was a blow of the sword to his most sweet mother.” Thus it seems that the emotional response of Mary was also under scrutiny.⁹⁸

Third, who were the Franciscan friars trying to control? Given its survival in a single manuscript, McNamer proposed that the original version of the MVC was actively censored, and the motive for the Franciscan redactor’s efforts to correct it is easy to imagine if the author and its readers were subject to

⁹⁷ Compare the texts cited above pp. 131-133.

⁹⁸ See below Section 4 in this chapter for further analysis of Mary in this iconography.

the control of the Franciscan Order.⁹⁹ McNamer argued that both the author and the readers of the Canonici version were nuns because there is a phrase where the former addresses the latter that Christ is “our sweet spouse (nostro dolce spoxo)”. Significantly, this phrase has been deleted by the redactor in other versions, most probably because it did not apply to him in the context of nuns’ social and legal identity of *sponsa Christi*, although it would have applied in the context of Church as Christ’s spouse.¹⁰⁰ In addition, McNamer pointed out that the literary texture of the Canonici version, the knowledge of women’s lives and practical domestic concerns it demonstrates, and the privileged woman’s point of view, especially that of a mother, support the hypothesis that the author was a woman.¹⁰¹ In any case, McNamer concluded that “this version was undoubtedly written *for* a woman, and the way it embodies an incarnational aesthetic and seeks to generate a sorrowing, ameliorative form of compassion seems far more deeply related to the gender of its first audience than to its Franciscanness.” It was actually the Franciscan redactor who attempted to tone down the emotional power of the original text.¹⁰² Although the original author and readers were likely to have been nuns under Franciscan friars’ supervision, the successive wider circulation of the MVC among various gender groups in both religious and lay sphere suggests that the Franciscans who were also spiritual mentors of non-mendicant audience had a broader scope than the corrected version of the

⁹⁹ The base dialect of the text of the Canonici version is Tuscan, although there is a significant Venetian overlay, which suggests it might have circulated beyond Tuscany. McNamer (2009), pp. 946, 949.

¹⁰⁰ McNamer (2009), pp. 949-950.

¹⁰¹ McNamer (2009), pp. 951-953.

¹⁰² McNamer (2009), p. 954.

MVC text would reach beyond the Clarissan or the Franciscan Order.¹⁰³

The role of Franciscan friars should be understood more broadly: they were mentors of devotional activities including the artistic production of wider audience religious and lay, male and female of all class. As learned scholars, friars would have consulted different textual and visual sources from various traditions to form their theological view, which they would have communicated to the public as preachers. They would have also expressed their view through both commissioning and giving advice to various artistic production within and beyond their order.¹⁰⁴ Although the revised date of the MVC appears to be too late to consider its influence on the visual expression of the theme of the *Ascent* in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the process of the redaction of the text to make it more suitable to be disseminated to a wider audience gives an idea of Franciscans' role as intellectual advisors and educators who were responsible for the moral well-being of the citizens in a society consisting of various individuals. Their concern must have been to make sure that the faithful are guided to ultimately see the divinity of Christ through the emotional exploration of the Passion.¹⁰⁵ For the contemplation of Christ's Passion, both versions were acceptable, although the *Ascent* was more suitable to illustrate the concept of the journey of seeing the divinity of Christ through his humanity. This idea is likely to have been shared among other Christian intellectuals and gained support as a theological view. Although Franciscans might have played a role in disseminating

¹⁰³ Holly Flora discusses two different types of the MVC, one for a female monastic context and another for a lay person. H. Flora, 'Patronage', *Studies in Iconography* 33 (2012), pp. 207-218.

¹⁰⁴ The *supplicationes variae* is one such case. See below pp. 141-142.

¹⁰⁵ See M. Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 2011) reviewed by R.G. Davis, 'Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages by Michelle Karnes', *Modern Philology* 112 (2014), pp. E20-E23.

the version of the *Ascent*, the inclusion of this iconography in Guido's altarpiece cannot be a hallmark of Franciscan patronage.

The idea that the inclusion of the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* does not necessarily manifest the Franciscan affiliation of the commissioner can be supported by the only precisely dated Italian visual example of this iconography included in the manuscript illumination of the *Supplicationes variae* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3, fol. 376r. Fig. 84). This is an early example of a richly decorated devotional manuscript dated by inscription to 1293, and its calendar indicates the intended use in Genoa.¹⁰⁶ Amy Neff initially considered that this was certainly made for an individual deeply affected by Franciscan spirituality, although not necessarily for a friar, as indicated by the inclusion of several Franciscan texts such as the Meditation on the Passion of Our Lord from the *Stimulus amoris* of James of Milan,¹⁰⁷ who is documented in 1305 as lector to the Franciscans of Domodossola, Piedmont, the Franciscan province of Genoa.¹⁰⁸ Later, she suggested more convincingly that it was most probably owned and read by its scribe Manuel, who can reasonably be identified as Manuel Fieschi of Genoa (d. 1348), nephew of Pope Innocent IV and member of a wealthy family of medieval Italy whose members were patrons of the Franciscans and held high ecclesiastical office. Manuel served as a scribe to the papal curia from the late 1320s until c.1343, which means he must have been a youth embarking on an ecclesiastical career who was most probably supervised by a

¹⁰⁶ Neff (1999), p. 81. Idem, 'An Aristocratic Copy of a Mendicant Text: James of Milan's *Stimulus amoris* in 1293', *Franciscan Studies* 65 (2007), pp. 235-250, p. 236.

¹⁰⁷ Neff (1999), pp. 81, 96-97.

¹⁰⁸ Neff (2007), p. 235-236.

Franciscan teacher in choosing the texts in his personal prayer book.¹⁰⁹ However, the *Supplicationes* also mentions the name of Dominic before Francis in the prayer, which according to Neff reflects ownership outside a Franciscan milieu. She adds that the Fieschi family's patronage also extended to the Dominicans who are acknowledged in several other ways in the *Supplicationes variae*.¹¹⁰ Neff places the *Supplicationes* as an example of early transmission of a Franciscan mystical treatise probably through a Franciscan mentor to an educated aristocrat preparing for a high ecclesiastical position in the secular church.¹¹¹ Thus the inclusion of the iconography in this case was likely to be an individual choice following an advice of a Franciscan friar. Returning to Guido da Siena's example, since the inclusion of the *Ascent* does not necessarily pinpoint its commission to a Franciscan convent as suggested by Derbes (1996) and Schmidt (2001), there remains a possibility that the altarpiece was commissioned for Siena cathedral: Franciscans might have been among the advisors of the narrative programme, but Franciscans did not necessarily have to be commissioners.

4. Marian Devotion in the West

The *Supplicationes variae* is a book for personal devotion which contains texts for vocal prayers and contemplative texts including the *Stimulus amoris* followed by a series of thirty-three full-page, tinted drawings of the life of Christ and twelve additional drawings of saints and devotional themes.¹¹² The scene of the *Ascent* (Fig. 84) found among the visual narrative of the life of Christ is rather

¹⁰⁹ Neff (2007), pp. 239-240.

¹¹⁰ Neff (2007), pp. 240-241.

¹¹¹ Neff (2007), p. 244.

¹¹² Neff (2007), p. 237.

sentimental: Christ who climbs the ladder shows slight hesitation turning his face back to exchange glances with his mother, eliciting a very emotional atmosphere. This is in contrast to the later example of another full-page manuscript illumination of the *Scenes from the Life of Christ and the Life of the Blessed Gerard of Villamagna* in the Morgan Library and Museum, New York (MS M.643, fol. 12), dated circa 1320 and attributed to Pacino da Buonaguida and workshop (Fig. 85):¹¹³ Christ displays no hesitation as he climbs up the ladder and his mother looks as if she is praying for his success to accomplish the divine programme of the redemption. The variation of details in the iconography of the *Ascent* including various attitudes of Mary as well as Christ thus seems to reflect the individual context and the audience of each commission depending on how and with whom they would identify themselves in the crucial moment. The last section of this chapter will focus on the role of Mary in this iconography.

Scholars have noted the prominence of Mary's interceding action seen in Guido's example viewing it as a western interpretation and especially characteristic of Siena.¹¹⁴ It is true in a sense that Mary's response in this episode was of greater interest in the west because the Byzantine or Armenian examples do not include her in this scene except for the two examples I know of: in the mural paintings in Saint George in Staro Nagoricino (Fig. 106) and Saint Clement in Ohrid (Fig. 107), she only appears very modestly in the background and does not come in the foreground as in the Italian examples. In Italian panel paintings, Mary shows a variety of responses in the same episode: she is actively interceding

¹¹³ For the most recent information, see the catalogue entry in *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance* (exhibition catalogue, J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, 13 November 2012-10 February 2013 and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 16 March-16 June 2013), ed. Christine Sciacca (Los Angeles, 2012), pp. 188-192.

¹¹⁴ See above pp. 105-106, 108-110.

in Guido's panel (Fig. 10), the Clarissan panel in Wellesley (Fig. 88), and the panel attributed to the Master of Monte Oliveto in the Alana Collection (Fig. 89a); she is in anguish in the panel in Christian Museum in Esztergom, Budapest (Fig. 71); and in the triptych in the Frick Collection, Pittsburgh, she looks as if she is praying for the success of her son's divine accomplishment (Fig. 103b), as was the case in Pacino's illuminated manuscript (Fig. 85). This calls for a closer interpretation of Mary's action and symbolic role in this iconography, which must be reflecting different needs for different audiences. How can the Marian emphasis in Guido's iconography be explored in a broader context of Marian devotion in the west, and especially in Siena?

The interpretation of Mary's action in Guido's depiction has been problematic. Not only Derbes but also Boskovits and Mathews remarked that Mary looks as if she is actively trying to prevent Christ's ascent by throwing her left arm around his waist and with the other arm fending off a young man who tries to intervene.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Anna Eörsi pointed out the ambiguity of Mary's role by questioning: "Is it the mother, who wants to protect her son from harm, or is it the God-Bearer who would not let the soldiers prevent the Saviour from carrying out his task?"¹¹⁶ An analysis of the evolution of devotional texts might give a better understanding of what was behind this development in images. As we have seen, although the Gospels do not tell exactly how Christ was put on

¹¹⁵ See above pp. 105-106, 108-110. Millard Meiss also described Mary in Guido's panel as "an embattled Virgin" as "the chief actor" who "forces her way between her son and a group of Jews and soldiers, angrily pushing one of them away while she encircles Christ with her other arm to prevent him from mounting the ladder." M. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton, 1978, paperback edition, first published 1951), p. 129. Stubblebine also considered the panel depicts 'the attempt of the Virgin to restrain her Son who so willingly approaches the cross while at the same time, she must fight off the youth at the left.' Stubblebine (1964), pp. 50-51.

¹¹⁶ See above p. 113.

the cross, references on this issue appear in early Christian and later medieval devotional texts. While the former generally emphasise Christ's voluntary sacrifice by understanding that Christ himself triumphantly ascended the elevated cross,¹¹⁷ the latter focus more on Christ's passion sometimes providing an alternative narrative that he was nailed to the cross on the ground before being elevated.¹¹⁸ Moreover special emphasis is given to Mary's compassion including the episode of the Mother covering her son's loin with her veil seeing him totally naked.¹¹⁹ In Pseudo-Anselm's *Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini* written after 1240,¹²⁰ Anselm asks Mary what had been done to Christ when he was taken to Calvary, and she describes the moment as follows:

Listen, Anselm, because what I shall tell you now is extremely sad, and none of the evangelists wrote about it. When they arrived at the most ignominious place of Calvary where decaying dogs and other animals are discarded, they completely stripped off the garment of my only son Jesus, and I was made lifeless; however, I took off the veil off my head, and covered his loins. After this, they laid down the cross on the ground, stretched him out on it, and struck the first single nail that was so thick that blood could not flow at that moment; in such way the wound was kept opened up. Afterwards they took ropes and tied my son Jesus's arms and

¹¹⁷ Derbes (1995), pp. 114-115.

¹¹⁸ Pseudo-Anselm's *Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini* describes that Christ was stretched out on the cross which was laid down on the ground. See the citation below. While the well-known version of the MVC presents both ways of imagining the crucifixion, the Canonici version considered by Sarah McNamer to be the original version of the MVC, describes only the version where Christ is nailed to the cross on the ground. See above pp. 132-133.

¹¹⁹ Montault observed the influence of Bonaventure's text on Guido's panel and arguing that the Virgin is in the act of covering her son's loin. B. de Montault, 'L'influence de Saint Bonaventure sur l'art italien à propos des peintures d'Utrecht et de Florence', *Revue d'art chrétien* 29 (1889), pp. 84-85. This theory was rejected by Stubblebine (1964). Lilian Armstrong interpreted that this gesture of Mary is related to other images where she attempts to cover Christ's nudity. In the case of the Wellesley panel, "Christ's willingness to suffer the Crucifixion and Mary's desire to protect him" had immediate relevance to the spiritual devotion for the Poor Clares and Franciscans. L. Armstrong in Katz (2001), p. 152.

¹²⁰ Derbes agrees with Amy Neff's proposition that this is a Franciscan text characterised by the inclusion of the episode of the Virgin covering Christ with her veil. Derbes (1996), p. 240, n. 39. Amy Neff, 'The Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini. Toward an Attribution', *Miscellanea Franciscana* 86 (1986), pp. 105-8.

hammered the second nail. Then they tied the feet with ropes, and struck very sharp nails, and it was so tense that all the bones and limbs were visible, so that the part of the psalm was fulfilled: ‘They have numbered all my bones’ (Psalm 21: 18). And then the prophecy of David himself, that is Christ himself, as said in the Psalm, was fulfilled: ‘Hearken, O daughter, and see’ (Psalm 44: 11). It was as if my son was saying: ‘Listen, my dearest mother, to the sound of the hammers, and see how they fix my hands and feet; and no one has compassion to me, you alone my chosen mother. Listen, daughter, and suffer with me.’ Hearing and seeing this, the sword of Simeon pierced my heart and soul. After this, they raised him with great effort, and it was so high that I could not even touch his feet. And when he had been raised, because of the weight of his body, all the wounds were ripped and opened, and then for the first time, copious amount of blood flowed from his hands and feet. However, I was dressed with a certain garment which women of this region were accustomed to wear, by which the head and whole body was covered, and it is as if it were linen; and this garment was completely sprinkled with blood.¹²¹

Here Christ’s suffering and Mary’s compassion at the moment right before the Crucifixion is explored through typological interpretations of the Psalm: Psalm 21 expresses a lament and distress of the psalmist surrounded by enemies inviting the reader to contemplate on the suffering of Christ, whereas Psalm 44 is a wedding

¹²¹ “Audi, Anselme, quod modo referam nimis est lamentibile, et nullus evangelistarum scribit. Cum venissent ad locum Calvariae ignominiosissimum, ubi canes et alia morticina projiciebantur, nudaverunt Jesum unicum filium meum totaliter vestibus suis, et ego exanimis facta fui; tamen velamen capitis mei accipiens circumligavi lumbis suis. Post hoc, deposuerunt crucem super terram, et eum desuper extenderunt, et incutiebant primo unum clavum adeo spissum quod tunc sanguis non potuit emanare ita vulnus clavo repetabatur. Acceperunt postea funes et traxerunt aliud brachium filii mei Jesu, et clavum secundum ei incusserunt. Postea pedes funibus traxerunt, et clavum acutissimum incutiebant, et adeo tensus fuit ut Omnia ossa sua et membra apparerent, ita ut impleretur illud, Psalmi: *Dinumeracerunt Omnia ossa mea* (Psal. XXI, 18). Et tunc impleta fuit prophetia ipsius David, ed est ipsius Christi, dicentis in psalmo: *Audi filia, et vide* (Psal. XLIV, 11). Quasi diceret filius meus: Audi, charissima mater mea, sonum malieorum, et vide qualiter manus meas et pedes meos confixerunt; et nemo mihi compatitur, nisi tu sola mater mea electa. Audi filia, et compatere mihi. Haec audiens et videns, gladius Simeonis cor meum et animam meam transfixit. Post haec erexerunt eum cum magno labore, et fuit adeo alte suspensus quod ejus pedes nusquam attingere poteram. Et cum erectus fuisset, tunc propter ponderositatem corporis Omnia vulnera lacerate sunt et aperta, et tunc primo sanguis de manibus et pedibus copiosius emanavit. Ego autem induta fui quadam veste, qua mulieres regionis illius uti solent, qua tegitur caput et totum corpus, et est quasi linteum; et fuit ista vestis tota respersa sanguine.” Pseudo-Anselm, *Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de Passione Domini*, in PL, vol. 159, cols 282-283. My translation.

referring to the Church as the bride of Christ, which can also be identified with Mary.¹²² Thus Mary's allegorical role is amplified: Mary is the Mother of Christ, the only chosen one who would suffer with Christ, the Bride of Christ, who will be crowned the Queen of Heaven. Here Mary is included in the crucial moment of the Crucifixion as the only person who equally suffers hearing the sound of the hammer and seeing the nail piercing the hands and feet, and thus becoming the co-protagonist in the divine programme of the Salvation closely united with Christ.

The allegorical understanding of Mary's role seems to be visualised well in Guido's *Ascent of the Cross* (Fig. 10). Here the Mother embraces her son protectively with one arm and with the other she tells the young man to refrain from stopping her. Mary is closely united with Christ who climbs up the ladder for the salvation of humanity. Her face shows a complex expression with a stern look holding back her grief anticipating her son's dreadful death. At the same time, her body leans towards her son acting in concert with him: her left knee is bent showing that her weight is on her left leg, and her right leg seems to be already in action to take the next step towards the ladder. She looks as if she is willing to be crucified together with Christ. This fits well with the understanding of Mary as the Bride of Christ, the allegory of the Latin Church, as well as an ideal model to follow for devout women. In fact, an actively interceding Mary also appears in a Clarissan context. In the fresco painting in San Sebastiano in Alatri, a Benedictine monastery that housed Clarissan nuns from 1233, Mary appears at the foot of the cross between a young man and Christ who is taking off

¹²² Walter (1986), p. 275, n. 51.

his garment (Fig. 108).¹²³ Moreover, the interest of the Order in the episode of Marian intercession is clearly shown in a panel depicting *Christ Mounting the Cross and the Funeral of Saint Clare* probably by a late thirteenth-century Umbrian painter in the Davis Museum in Wellesley College, Massachusetts, with a *terminus post quem* of 1255, the year of the canonisation of Saint Clare who is depicted with a halo in the scene of her funeral in the lower register of the same panel.¹²⁴ A similar motif of Mary's intercession appears in another example which can be placed in the context of women's devotion. The panel depicting the *Madonna and Child with Sts Catherine of Alexandria and Elizabeth, Annunciation, Way to Calvary, Christ Mounting the Cross* (ca. 1320) in the Alana Collection, Delaware, attributed to the Sienese Master of Monte Oliveto is likely to be from a women's devotional context, but not necessarily for a nun, as suggested by the inclusion of two female saints who are perfect models as the Bride of Christ. These comparable examples pose another question: did the detail of Mary's active intercession initially appear in women's or Sienese context?

Guido's panel and the Wellesley panel demonstrate very close similarity. One might assume that the master of the Wellesley panel used Guido's panel as a

¹²³ Derbes (1996), pp. 138-139. For the most recent information on this fresco painting, see E. Fentress et al, *Walls and Memory: The Abbey of San Sebastiano at Alatri (Lazio), from Late Roman Monastery to Renaissance Villa and Beyond* (Turnhout, 2005).

¹²⁴ The most recent catalogue entries of the panel dates it to c.1290. Katz (2001), p. 151; *Sanctity Pictured* (2014), p. 119. However, I have an impression that it can be dated earlier: the wings of the angels depicted in the spandrels are similar to those which are found in a group of paintings attributed to the Florentine painter Coppo di Marcovaldo (documented 1260-76). Chiara Frugoni accepts the attribution of the panel to an Aretine painter of the third quarter of the thirteenth century mentioned by Dominique Rigaux, based on Luiz Marque. Frugoni (2006), pp. 138-140. Cf. D. Rigaux, 'Claire d'Assise: naissance d'une image XIII^e - XV^e siècles', in *Sainte Claire d'Assise et sa postérité: Actes du Colloque international organisé à l'occasion du VIII^e Centenaire de la naissance de sainte Claire U.N.E.S.C.O. (29 septembre-1er octobre 1994)*, eds. Geneviève Brunel-Lobrichon et al. (Paris, 1995), pp. 155-185, p. 173; L.C. Marque, *La peinture du Duecento en Italie centrale* (Picard, 1987), pp. 92-93. The panel was in the collection of the marquise of Alberghetti in Arezzo at least from the nineteenth century. Marque (1987), p. 93.

model or vice versa.¹²⁵ Guido's panel, placed in the public space of Siena cathedral arguably on the high altar, must have been known to a wider audience. At the same time, the Wellesley panel measuring 79.4 x 51.8 cm, originally the central panel of a triptych with foldable wings, might have also been intended for a rather wider audience possibly also including Franciscan friars rather than just Clarissan nuns since it commemorates the saint's funeral attended by Pope Innocent IV with the inscription, as if to declare and promote her importance.¹²⁶ It is not inconceivable that a Franciscan friar could have advised Guido of the iconography of the Wellesley panel. In addition, there is always a possibility that they shared an earlier authoritative model that is unknown to us. Is it more probable that this specific iconography developed in the wider religious context especially in relation with the nun's ideal than that Guido invented the detail for the Sienese civic commemoration? Or could it have been the Sienese taking initiative in understanding Mary's role? In any case, the symbolism of Mary in this iconography must have been a shared interest among the nuns, friars and the citizens of Siena.

It also seems true that this detail of an actively interceding Mary was not depicted very often in later examples, or even regarded as an attitude to be corrected, as was the case for the version of the Crucifixion where Christ was

¹²⁵ Stubblebine considered the representation in the Wellesley panel to be 'a copy of Guidesque scene by a follower.' Stubblebine (1964), p. 50.

¹²⁶ I am grateful to Joanne Anderson for sharing this observation. The inscription reads '(Hic) est sepultura beatae clarae in qua sanctissim(us) papa (Innocentus) (a)s (ti)tit cum cardinalibus (et) fratribus minoribus (et) sororibus hui(us) ordini(s) q(ue)'. *Sanctity Pictured* (2014), p. 119. Chiara Frugoni points out that the Wellesley panel includes the women religious in the scene of Saint Clare's funeral, whereas the panel in Santa Chiara in Assisi, probably painted in 1283, only shows the friars, for only men were permitted to pay homage and show suffering in public. Therefore, the Wellesley panel is rather a scene of lamentation where pope blesses the deceased, in contrast to the Assisi panel which shows the solemn funeral executed by the pope. C. Frugoni, *Una solitudine abitata Chiara d'Assisi* (Rome and Bari, 2006), pp. 138-140.

nailed to the cross on the ground. In the later edited version of the MVC, Mary again shows compassion by covering her son's loin with her veil, although soon after she is separated from him:

With total mental absorption, place yourself in their presence and observe carefully all the atrocities committed against your Lord, as well as all that is said and done by him and through him. In your mind's eye, you can see some arranging the cross on the ground, others getting the nails and hammers ready, some others preparing the ladders and tools needed, others directing what has to be done, and still others stripping him. Now for the third time he is stripped and appears naked in front of the entire crowd; and his wounds are reopened because the clothing stuck to his flesh.

Now for the first time, his mother looks at her son, held captive and made ready for the onslaught of death's agony. She is saddened beyond measure, and embarrassed, because she sees him completely naked. They did not allow him even a loincloth. She rushes up, and gets close to him; she embraces him and girds him with her head covering. O in how great a bitterness is her soul now! I do not believe she could speak a word to him: if she could do more, she would do it; but she was unable to help him. Instead, her son is furiously ripped from her hands and is led to the foot of the cross.¹²⁷

The text shows an interpretation that covering her son with her veil was the only and last thing Mary managed to do for her son in the moment right before the Crucifixion, and as we have seen, Christ then resolutely climbed the ladder alone.¹²⁸ It makes it clear that the ultimate divine task of voluntary self-sacrifice was accomplished by Christ himself alone, thus creating a slight hierarchical difference between the roles played by Christ and Mary. This correction by the redactor of the MVC gives an impression that the attitude of Mary seen in

¹²⁷ Taney et al. (2000), pp. 252. Cf. I. Ragusa and R.B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. ITAL. 115*, translated by Isa Ragusa (Princeton, 1961), p. 333.

¹²⁸ See the citation above pp. 131-132.

Guido's as well as the master of Wellesley's panel of the latter half of the thirteenth century was considered inadequate by the first half of the fourteenth century.¹²⁹ The narrative triptych of the fourteenth century in the Frick Collection in Pittsburgh, which might also be intended for a female audience as suggested by the inclusion of the two female saints on each side of the Virgin and Child, also shows Mary calmed down in the scene of the *Ascent* (Fig. 103b).¹³⁰

The early fourteenth-century mural painting in Santa Maria Donna Regina in Naples is thought to be a close parallel of the MVC text of the visual examples.¹³¹ In the scene of the *Ascent*, Mary is clearly shown in the act of covering her son's loin as he is stripped off (Fig. 109). However, Christ is not

¹²⁹ The edited version of the MVC also describes Mary's compassion and her will to be crucified together, although in a less emotional way, and Christ mentions that she should not be on the cross with him: "And all these things are said and done in the presence of his most sorrowful mother, whose own suffering greatly increased her son's suffering, as his did hers. Virtually she was hanging on the cross with her son; and she would have chosen rather to die with him than live on. The terrible stresses are everywhere and his torments can only be imagined. They cannot be recounted. His *mother stood by the cross* (Jn 19:25) of her son, between his cross and the thief's cross. She did not take her eyes off her son; she was devastated as she poured her heart out in prayer for him to the Father: "Father and God eternal, You willed that my Son should be crucified; I cannot ask You to give him back to me now. But You see the great distress in his soul now. Please, lighten his suffering. Father, I commend my son to You." In turn, her son prayed silently to the Father for her: "My Father, You see how afflicted my mother is. It is right for me to be crucified, but not her. But she is here on the cross with me! It is enough for me to be crucified: I bear the sins of all the people. She deserves no such thing. You see her *desolate, afflicted with deep sorrow all the day long* (Lam 1:13). I entrust her to You, to make her sorrows bearable." *Near the cross* (Jn 19:25) with our Lady were John and Magdalene, and our Lady's two sisters, Mary the mother of James and Salome. Perhaps there were others, but let us be content with these in this tract of ours. All of them, and especially his beloved disciple Magdalene, were shaken with sobs and could not be consoled over their beloved Lord and Master; they felt deep sorrow for their Lord and Lady and for one other. Their sorrow was continually renewed because their suffering was continually renewed. Each time the Lord was taunted or another outraged was committed their grief actually increased." Taney et al (2000), pp. 254-155. Cf. Ragusa and Green (1961), p. 335.

¹³⁰ Censoring Mary's attitude might have actually occurred for the panel by the Master of Monteoliveto. Although it is unclear when the alterations to the panel occurred, the older reproduction of this panel (Fig. 87) shows an attempt at some point to give Mary a less active role in the episode: golden striation was added on Mary's mantle in each scene, especially to a figure on the left in the scene of the *Ascent* instead of the actively interceding one, probably to correct the seemingly too active and emotional attitude of Mary.

¹³¹ See C.A. Fleck, "To exercise yourself in these things by continued contemplation": Visual and textual literacy in the frescoes at Santa Maria Donna Regina' in *The Church of Santa Maria Donna Regina: Art, Iconography and Patronage in Fourteenth-Century Naples*, eds J. Elliott and C. Warr (Aldershot, 2004), p. 111.

depicted in the moment of climbing the ladder but when he is brutally stretched on the cross. At this sight, Mary collapses at the foot of the cross.¹³² The tendency to emphasise violence in the scene of the *Ascent* is also seen in the mural painting dated around 1330-40 in Sant'Antonio in Polesine, a Benedictine nunnery founded by the Blessed Beatrice II d'Este and protected by the Este family (Fig. 110).¹³³ The *Passion of Christ* panel in the Diocesan Museum in Mallorca attributed to an Italo-Byzantine painter and dated to the first quarter of fourteenth century,¹³⁴ whose inclusion of Saints Francis and Clare suggests a Clarissan audience, actually chooses the version where Christ is nailed to the cross on the ground (Figs 111a,b). Thus the visual examples also seem to suggest that devout women identifying themselves as the Bride of Christ had a certain tendency to contemplate the pain and suffering of Christ which would elicit more affective devotion, despite the effort of their instructors to control it. In any case, the prominent role given to Mary in the Italian examples of the narrative cycle of Christ's life makes Mary a co-protagonist in the narrative of Passion and Salvation.

Visual narratives of Christ's life with emphasis on Mary's presence, however, also appear in a broader context of Marian devotion suitable both for men and women, religious and lay. The inclusion of Mary in the scene of the *Ascent* and her emphasis throughout the narrative can be observed, for example, in

¹³² The edited version of the MVC mentions the swooning of Mary at the sight of the opening in the side of Christ: 'As expected, one of them, name Longinus, at the time godless and haughty, but later converted to martyrdom and sanctity, reaching out with his lance from a distance, disregarding their pleas and prayerful entreaties, *opened the right side* of the Lord Jesus with a gaping wound, *out of which there flowed blood and water* (Jn 19:34). Then his mother collapsed half-dead into Magdalene's arms.' Taney et al (2000), p. 258. Cf. Ragusa and Green (1961), p. 339.

¹³³ L. Caselli, *Il monastero di S. Antonio in Polesine: Un approccio storico artistico in età medievale* (Ferrara, 1992), pp. 9-10, 13-15.

¹³⁴ G. Llompарт, *La pintura Gòtica a Mallorca* (Barcelona, 1987), n. 12.

the panel painting of the *Virgin and Child with Passion Scenes* in the Timken Museum of Art in San Diego, attributed to the Magdalene Master and an unknown Florentine painter dated between the end of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century (Fig. 91). Derbes, who interpreted the iconographical programme as intrinsically Franciscan, suggested that this panel might have been commissioned for the Clarissan nuns housed in the Augustinian church of Santa Maria dei Candeli in Florence, the provenance recorded for this panel.¹³⁵ Derbes interpreted Christ's willing ascent as evoking Francis who himself appears in the adjacent scene of the *Crucifixion* kneeling and caressing the cross, whilst the Mariological emphasis, which reiterates the centrality of the Virgin, reminds us of both Francis and Clare's devotion to Mary.¹³⁶ The Pittsburgh triptych, which also has a narrative cycle with Marian emphasis including the *Ascent* accompanying the central image of the Virgin and Child, more explicitly suggests a female audience by including two female saints (Fig. 103a), whereas the panel painting of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Passion Scenes* in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin attributed to a Florentine painter and dated to the early fourteenth century, might have been conceived more neutrally in a lay Marian devotional context (Fig. 83). The full-length image of the Virgin and Child Enthroned was a central focus for a lay congregation singing lauds.¹³⁷

Guido's *Ascent* is also included in a narrative cycle with emphasis on the figure of Mary, as observed by Blume (2011), thus making the *Claritas*

¹³⁵ Derbes (1996), pp. 162, 243-245, n. 4. Moorman does not mention Santa Maria dei Candeli in his list of Clarissan houses in Florence, although he does list S. Matthew as a "house of Augustinian sisters who became Clares in 1391". Moorman (1983), p. 586.

¹³⁶ Derbes (1996), pp. 166-167.

¹³⁷ Boskovits (1965, 1994) already noted the influence of devotional and dramatic literature including lauds. See above p. 108.

reconstruction placing the Virgin and Child in the centre rather logical. It might still be the case that this type of narrative cycle developed in the Franciscan sphere, but as we have seen in the previous section, Franciscan friars could have acted as artistic advisors beyond their order. Therefore, the possibility that Guido's narrative cycle was commissioned for Siena cathedral remains open, and Marian emphasis can indeed support such a context. In addition to Derbes' interpretation that the iconographical detail of Mary's active interceding action in the *Ascent* demonstrates the Sieneese adapted version of the episode,¹³⁸ I would argue further that the selection of this episode itself is significant. It seems this scene was intentionally selected instead of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, a much more popular episode right before the *Crucifixion*. In my opinion, the *Ascent* was especially effective to visually emphasise the active intercession of Mary and her role as the protectress, which is well suited for the purpose of the Sieneese civic commission of this narrative panel, that is, to commemorate Mary's miraculous interceding role at the Battle of Montaperti in 1260. Guido's narrative cycle, which most probably accompanied the *Madonna del Voto*, was commissioned when the important civic identity of Siena as the 'City of the Virgin' was taking form, and it is highly possible that this panel was the precedent of Duccio's *Maestà*. Some scholars have questioned why then such an important episode was not included in Duccio's *Maestà* where the *Way to Calvary* was chosen instead of the *Ascent*.¹³⁹ In my view, the iconography of the *Ascent* was considered increasingly problematic because of the ambiguity of the role of Mary as well as

¹³⁸ Derbes (1996), p. 147. Derbes also argues that the Sieneese blazon in black and white, also depicted in the *Crucifixion* scene, is a Sieneese element. However, this is difficult to judge because of the heavy repainting in this area.

¹³⁹ See above p. 37 and p. 100.

other participating figures, and especially because of Mary's active intercession in this moment which came to be considered inadequate. The inherent contradiction in the episode itself could have been the reason why this iconography was not depicted later on both in the east and the west.

The iconographical analysis of the *Ascent of the Cross* has highlighted a fundamental problem of the dichotomy which has been created in the scholarship between the east and the west. This led to a simplification that the eastern iconography of *Christ Mounting the Cross* emphasising his divine nature and strength in death was brought to the west through the agency of the Franciscans who favoured the theme of voluntary sacrifice. They have also been exclusively assigned the responsibility of innovating the Passion cycle in Italy in the thirteenth century. Although the various visual examples demonstrate that the image was indeed re-interpreted in the west to suit individual contexts, a rather disproportionate emphasis has been placed on the role of the Franciscans: they have been praised for their open-mindedness indicated in the significant 'Franciscan' literature of the MVC in letting the readers freely explore their emotion through meditation of the humanity of Christ, thus contributing in the promotion of affective devotion that would eventually lead to the flourishing of the Renaissance in the west. However, this role of the Franciscans has been reviewed in this chapter by incorporating the most recent textual interpretation into the visual analysis: rather than fostering affective devotion, they may have been controlling the excess of emotion primarily among women, and more

broadly among lay population, who were also taking a considerable part as the driving force behind the development of Marian devotion.

The iconographical detail of Christ climbing the ladder eastern in its origin has been more precisely identified as typically Armenian and handed down in their Gospel illumination focusing on the *Ascent of the Cross* as a means to open the Gate of Heaven for human salvation. On the other hand, focusing on the suffering of Christ at the moment of the nailing to the cross was a typological development in psalter illustration which was traditionally Byzantine and beginning in the period of iconoclasm when the iconophiles emphasised the humanity of Christ. The earliest Italian examples from the 1260s of the *Ascent* showing Christ climbing the ladder surrounded by the enemies and the sound of the hammer thus seem to be an eclectic solution combining both Armenian and Byzantine traditions, which might reflect the atmosphere of the time of the attempts to achieve the union of churches in the east and the west. The cross-cultural dialogue suggested by the development of the iconography of the *Ascent* points to a broader Christological discussion surrounding this theme. Therefore the *Ascent of the Cross* should not be viewed solely as a Franciscan image or a hallmark to prove Franciscan patronage.

The process of the correction of the MVC which occurred in the first half of the fourteenth century does prove the interest of the Franciscan redactor, possibly friar John of Caulibus from San Gimignano, to promote the episode of the *Ascent* rather than the *Raising of the Cross* to arrest excessive emotion. The fact that most of the visual examples appear earlier than the edited version of the MVC questions the idea that it was the major direct textual source for this

iconography as has been long considered, and the visual examples showing various degrees of emotion involved suggests a parallel development of the image and the text.¹⁴⁰ The significant role given to Mary is connected not only with the devotional context of Siena but also with that of women whose identity as *sponsa christi* might have initially prompted the actively interceding gesture to be included in this iconography as clearly demonstrated in the iconographical combination of the Wellesley panel. On the other hand, the symbolic role of Mary as the Bride of Christ, the Queen of Heaven, was also appreciated in wider Marian devotional contexts, and the Sienese might have also taken the initiative to include the interceding gesture of Mary to commemorate her miraculous intercession at Montaperti. In this case, it might also have been that it was intended for the cathedral: a gospel narrative cycle with Marian emphasis accompanying the central image of the Virgin and Child can logically be placed as a precedent of Duccio's *Maestà*. In addition, the popularity of the iconography of the *Ascent* especially in Tuscany might suggest the visibility and the impact of Guido's model displayed in the cathedral. Duccio did not necessarily have to include this iconography again especially because by then Guido's depiction of Mary's active intercession might have been considered problematic. In the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, the cathedral of Siena was constantly in the process of developing an innovative decorative programme to honour the Virgin, which might be also supported by the earliest inclusion of the iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* in Italy in Guido's narrative cycle. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁴⁰ Other didactic methods such as preaching and instruction during devotional activities must have also played a significant role in the development. The influence of activities such as mystery plays has already been suggested by Boskovits. See above p. 108 and p. 153.

Chapter 4 The Iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin

The *Coronation of the Virgin* is another extra-biblical episode included in Guido da Siena's narrative cycle that appeared as a novelty in Guido's time in Italy. According to Gertrude Coor-Achenbach (1957) who published the panel for the first time, it is one of the earliest depictions of this episode in Italy.¹ Strictly speaking, an image of the *Coronation of the Virgin* depicts the moment when Christ is actually placing the crown on the Virgin's head.² In this sense, Guido's image, which I date around 1267, is the earliest surviving visual example of the *Coronation of the Virgin* in Italy. The type where the Virgin is already crowned and seated together with Christ on the same throne is found in Italy earlier than Guido's example in the apse mosaic of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome dated circa 1140-43 (Figs 112a,b),³ and later than Guido's example, for example in the fresco cycle by Cimabue in the Upper Church of San Francesco, Assisi dated circa 1279-82 (Fig. 113),⁴ in a panel painting by the Master of Clarisse in Santa Chiara, Siena, dated to early 1270s (Fig. 114),⁵ or in a seal from the end of the thirteenth century in the Rawlinson Collection in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Fig. 115),⁶ but not always with a crown on the Virgin's head. There must have

¹ G. Coor-Achenbach, 'The Earliest Italian Representation of the Coronation of the Virgin', *The Burlington Magazine* 99 (1957), pp. 328-332.

² Carolyn Wilson describes the Coronation of the Virgin as "an aspect of her triumph and reign in heaven" and the label 'Coronation of the Virgin' should be restricted to the representations in which "Mary is actually being crowned", although this is not always done. 'Triumph of the Virgin' is a more inclusive term which is assigned to the representation of "the crowned Virgin enthroned with Christ in heaven" and could also be used to designate scenes of the Coronation. C. Wilson 'Bellini's Pesaro Altarpiece: A Study in Context and Meaning', Ph.D. thesis (New York University 1977), p. 7 and n. 1.

³ See below pp. 164-166.

⁴ For the most recent information, see Cooper and Robson (2013), pp.85-86.

⁵ See the catalogue entry by Sabina Spanocchi in Bagnoli et al (2003), pp. 58-60.

⁶ See Julian Gardner's forthcoming article 'Vision or Design? Some Seals of Medieval Roman Churches'. I am grateful to him for sending me the article and the images.

been a certain significance for Guido da Siena to select the iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* rather than the crowned *Virgin Enthroned with Christ* in heaven.

Past scholars considered that precedents for Guido's *Coronation* were to be found among the French Gothic reliefs in the tympanum above cathedral portals around the mid-twelfth to mid-thirteenth century,⁷ as well as Gothic miniature or the drawings for stained-glass windows.⁸ This iconography was also included later in Duccio's stained-glass window for the cathedral in Siena dated circa 1288 (Fig. 60).⁹ It also appears later in the seal of a Franciscan guardian in Ghent dated 1291 (Fig. 116),¹⁰ in the apse mosaic of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome in 1296 (Fig. 117),¹¹ and in the mosaic on the counter-façade above the central portal of the cathedral in Florence dated circa 1300 (Fig. 118).¹² The early date for Guido's *Coronation* led Coor-Achenbach to suppose that Guido's panel could have been a model for Jacopo Torriti's apse mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. In her view, it must have been paired with an *Assumption* and must have taken Cimabue as a model for the double-figure composition, thus concluding that Torriti must have seen Guido's panel in Umbria in the 1280s.¹³

⁷ Coor-Achenbach (1957); J. Gardner, 'Pope Nicholas IV and the Decoration of Santa Maria Maggiore', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 36 (1973), pp. 1-50; Idem, 'The Franciscan Iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin before Bellini', in *Essays in Honour of John White*, eds H. Weston and D. Davies (1991), pp. 63-68; John (2001); R. Guerrini, 'Immagini dell'assunta: il transito della beata vergine da Duccio a Beccafumi', in M. Caciorgna and R. Guerrini, *Alma Sena: percorsi iconografici nell'arte e nella cultura senese* (Florence, 2007), pp. 11-65.

⁸ Coor-Achenbach (1957).

⁹ See Bagnoli et al (2003), pp. 162-179; M. Caciorgna et al. *Oculus cordis: la vetrata di Duccio; stile, iconografia, indagini tecniche, restauro* (Ospedaletto, 2007).

¹⁰ See Gardner (forthcoming).

¹¹ See below pp. 192-193.

¹² See A. Monciatti, 'L'incoronazione della vergine nella controfacciata della cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore e altri mosaici monumentali in Toscana', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 43 (1999), pp. 14-48.

¹³ Coor-Achenbach made connection with Torriti's mosaic pointing out the same inscription and thought Torriti must have taken Guido's panel as a model. Coor-Achenbach (1957), p 330.

This was later rejected by Julian Gardner who thought Guido's example did not belong to the Roman tradition, and Siena constitutes another major centre for the production of the *Coronation* iconography on its own.¹⁴

Although Guido's *Coronation* has been stylistically related to the twelve narrative scenes,¹⁵ the iconographical programme of the panel it originally belonged to remains an issue of debate. Lon Schröder (1989) questioned that the *Coronation* rounding off the scenes of the life of Christ would be an iconographical rarity. Barbara John (2001) who accepted Holger Manzke's reconstruction argued that the *Coronation* was very suitable for inclusion in the panel for the high altar of Siena cathedral, which was the focal point of the feast of the Assumption.¹⁶ The Marian cult had been promoted since the mid-thirteenth century, and the *Coronation* iconography was included in the subsequent installation of the stained-glass window circa 1288 (Fig. 60), and possibly in Duccio's *Maestà*. However, the reconstruction and original location proposed by Manzke and John have been questioned as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.¹⁷ Victor Schmidt (2001²) excluded it in his reconstruction of Guido's twelve narrative panels (Fig. 25). Caroline Villers and Astrid Lehner (2002) emphasised that it undoubtedly once formed part of a gabled structure, but also proposed that it might as well have been an independent panel. Miklos Boskovits (2008) retained the combination of the *Coronation* with the narrative scenes but proposed

However, this has to be reconsidered because it is actually the modern restorer looking at Torriti to restore the entirely lost part, including Christ's left hand holding the book with the inscription. Cf. Chapter 1, p. 55, and Ramboux's drawing (Fig. 47a).

¹⁴ Gardner (1973) and idem, 'The Franciscan Iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin before Bellini', in *Essays in Honour of John White*, eds H. Weston and D. Davies (1991), pp. 63-68.

¹⁵ Coor-Achenbach (1957), p. 329.

¹⁶ John (2001), pp. 100. However, her connection of the *Coronation* iconography with the feast of the Assumption based on the inscription on the book held by Christ is problematic because it was an addition in the modern restoration. See above n.13.

¹⁷ See pp. 33-38, 66-68.

that other Marian scenes would have been included in the centre beneath the *Coronation* (Fig. 28). Although Dieter Blume (2011) accepted the *Claritas* reconstruction and proposed further analysis for the iconographical programme,¹⁸ the inclusion of Guido's *Coronation* in the reconstruction of the twelve narrative scenes and the *Madonna del Voto* awaits wider acceptance also from an iconographical point of view. If my reconstruction were to be accepted, it would lead to the re-evaluation of Siena as one of the centres of the development of this important Marian iconography distinguished from Rome or Assisi, and independent from Torriti or Cimabue.

In this chapter, I aim to reposition Guido's *Coronation* in the Siennese context by tracing the development of the Marian iconography in Italy and the north. First, I will examine the earliest development of the iconography of the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven enthroned with Christ in relation to the feast of the Assumption in Rome. Second, I will explore the English origin of the iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the political and devotional context of the twelfth century. Third, I will focus on the positioning of the *Coronation of the Virgin* as the last theophany in Gothic sculpture and psalter illumination where the Virgin's role as the intercessor is emphasised. Finally, I will re-examine the development of the iconography in the thirteenth-century Italy and re-evaluate the significance of the imagery in Siena, Assisi and Rome respectively. I will conclude that it logically fits within the iconographical programme of the reconstructed panel for the cathedral of Siena commemorating the Virgin's miraculous intercession at Montaperti.

¹⁸ See above pp. 23-25.

1. The Roman Cult of the Assumption of the Virgin

The cult of the Virgin Mary and her imagery developed rapidly after the Council of Ephesus in 431, when she was defined the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. The dogma of the *Theotokos* express the belief “that the divine and human natures of Christ were one, that he was divine from the moment of birth, and consequently Mary was the Mother of God”.¹⁹ About this time, Christmas, which had been celebrated with Epiphany, was made a separate festival. Shortly afterwards, the Annunciation, the Purification, and the Assumption also began to be celebrated separately.²⁰ It was only after 431 that Mary began to appear in autonomous representations as the *Theotokos*, and before that, she appeared only as a secondary figure with subordinate roles. The earliest monumental representation was in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, which was begun by Pope Sixtus III soon after 432. Although the original mosaic is lost, a surviving copy of the accompanying text describes the composition as an enthroned Virgin and Child with three figures on each side depicting Pope Sixtus and five martyrs.²¹ However, according to Shepherd, the cult of the Virgin *Theotokos* as well as her imagery reached their full development in the sixth century when the iconography of the *Virgin in Majesty* accompanied by the archangels Michael and Gabriel appeared as an innovation among various media.²²

The iconography of the *Theotokos*, which shows the Virgin seated on a

¹⁹ D.G. Shepherd, ‘An Icon of the Virgin: A Sixth-Century Tapestry from Egypt’, *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 56 (1969), pp. 91-129, p. 91.

²⁰ M. Lawrence, ‘Maria Regina’, *The Art Bulletin* 7 (1925), p. 151.

²¹ Shepherd (1969), p. 92. A fourth-century Roman basilica was renamed Santa Maria Maggiore in 432 in celebration of Mary’s confirmed status as the Mother of God. It was the first church to be dedicated to Mary. Katz (2001), p. 28.

²² Shepherd (1969), p. 93.

jeweled throne holding the Christ Child in her lap, had a very distinctive development from the beginning in the east and the west. In the monuments in the east before the period of iconoclasm, the Virgin consistently wears the costume of a woman of the ordinary classes in late antiquity, although in the purple colour which was reserved for Byzantine royalty. On the other hand in contemporary Roman art, she is dressed in the elaborate costume of an empress.²³ In the icon of the Virgin called the *Madonna della Clemenza*, one of the holiest icons of Rome in Santa Maria in Trastevere (Fig. 119), she is given the adornments of a Byzantine empress: a pearl-studded crown with *pendulia*, a necklace, and a garment with pearl-embroidered hems. According to Kurt Weitzmann, the same iconography also appears among the frescoes in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome, where she is inscribed 'Regina Coeli', the Queen of Heaven. Although the concept of the heavenly queen is familiar in both Greek and Latin literature, the Virgin never wears a crown in Byzantine art, and her jewel-studded cross staff is also a western element.²⁴ Marion Lawrence was also convinced that this iconographic type of the Virgin with a high jeweled crown enthroned as "an empress in all her glory" was "a purely Roman adaptation".²⁵

The iconography of the crowned Virgin Mary or *Maria Regina*, which is not found in the east, continued to develop in Italy from the sixth century onwards. According to Marion Lawrence, even the orant type of the Virgin started to be crowned and adorned with imperial costume as early as circa 705-8 in the mosaic from old Saint Peter's, now in San Marco, Florence (Fig. 120).²⁶ The

²³ Shepherd (1969), p. 93.

²⁴ K. Weitzmann, *The Icon* (London, 1982), p. 50.

²⁵ Lawrence (1925), pp. 150-161, p. 152.

²⁶ Lawrence (1925), p. 153.

Virgin Annunciate also appears crowned in southern Italy in the frescoes in the crypt church of San Vincenzo al Volturno dated to 824-42.²⁷ In the eleventh century in the narthex of Sant'Angelo in Formis, the crowned Virgin appears in a medallion upheld by two angels (Fig. 121).²⁸ The crowned Virgin enthroned continues to appear often in a strictly frontal *sedes sapientiae* type.²⁹ By the twelfth century, the type was more widespread and varied, as evidenced by the appearance of the crowned Virgin in sculpted historical scenes such as the Epiphany. One of the first examples is seen in the lintel of the north portal of Piacenza cathedral dated to 1122 (Fig. 122).³⁰ Finally in the apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome with an inscription recording the date 1148 (Fig. 112a,b), a new type of iconography occurs: the crowned Virgin enthroned side by side with Christ in glory.³¹

The venerable basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere was completely rebuilt by Pope Innocent II between 1140 and 1143, and the apse mosaic was

²⁷ Lawrence dated it to 826-43. Lawrence (1925), p. 154. John Mitchell and Richard Hodges mention that the Virgin Mary enthroned in the same funerary church is also crowned and dressed in imperial robes as Queen of Heaven. J. Mitchell and R. Hodges, 'Portraits, the cult of relics and the affirmation of hierarchy at an early medieval monastery: San Vincenzo al Volturno', *Antiquity* 70 (1996), pp. 20-30, pp. 26-27. The decoration of the crypt can be firmly dated by the portrait of Epiphanius with a square halo, who was the abbot of the monastery between 824 and 842. J. Mitchell, 'Chapter 6: The Painted Decoration of the Early Medieval Monastery' in *San Vincenzo al Volturno: The Archaeology, Art and Territory of an Early Medieval Monastery*, eds R. Hodges and J. Mitchell (Oxford, 1985), pp. 125-176, p. 125. For the architectural history of San Vincenzo al Volturno in the ninth century with relevant bibliography, see R. Hodges et al, 'The Making of a Monastic City: The Architecture of San Vincenzo al Volturno in the Ninth Century', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 65 (1997), pp. 233-286.

²⁸ Lawrence (1925), p. 154. This seems an allusion to the iconography of the Assumption of the Virgin. A similar motif of the Virgin in medallion supported by two angels, although not crowned, appears in a manuscript illustration of the Dormition of the Virgin in the evangelary of Heinrich II in Munich dated 1007 or 1012 and in the lectionary of the Reichenauer School in Hildesheim dated around 1018. Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, figs 597 and 598.

²⁹ Lawrence (1925), pp. 155-156.

³⁰ Lawrence (1925), p.156.

³¹ Lawrence (1925), p. 156. For further information of the mosaic and the date, see below.

certainly in existence by the time of Pope Innocent's death in 1143.³² According to Ernst Kitzinger, the new theme of *synthronos* introduced to the Roman apse composition where Christ shares his throne with the Virgin placing his arm around her shoulder should be explained without reference to the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin in French cathedral art, as previously proposed by Émile Mâle.³³ Kitzinger acknowledges Mâle who recognises that the literary roots of the iconography was to be found in the Song of the Songs, although the immediate source for the designer of the mosaic was the liturgy of the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (August 15), where the biblical text of the Canticles were extensively cited and paraphrased.³⁴ Kitzinger emphasised further that the inscriptions in the mosaic had a bearing on the iconography. The text inscribed on the book held by Christ reads “veni electa mea et ponam in te thronum meum”, which is a paraphrase of the Cantic 4:8 (“Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, Veni de Libano, veni, coronaberis”) taken from the responses in the liturgy of Assumption Day. In its entirety in the liturgy, the phrase is followed by the final clause ‘quia concupivit Rex speciem tuam’, taken from the Psalm 44(45): 12. The text held by the Virgin reads “Leva eius sub capite meo et dex(t)era illius amplexabit(ur) me”, a literal quotation from the Canticles 2:6 and 8:3 recited in the same liturgy. The allegorical interpretation of the Song of the Songs identifying the bride with the Virgin Mary was intense in this period, leading to the rise of new pictorial representations. It is highly possible that the liturgical text of the Assumption itself was the source of inspiration for the Trastevere mosaic, as well as for other

³² E. Kitzinger, ‘A Virgin’s Face: Antiquarianism in Twelfth-Century Art’, *The Art Bulletin* 62 (1980), pp. 6-9, p. 7. A fourteenth-century inscription gives the years 1140-48 for the restoration of the church. *Ibid.*, p. 7, n. 5.

³³ Kitzinger (1980), pp. 7-8.

³⁴ Kitzinger (1980), p.8.

representations of bride and bridegroom sharing a common throne.³⁵

For the apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere, Kitzinger noted the significance of the specifically Roman celebration of the feast of the Assumption. Every year during the night of August 14-15, a great procession took place in which the most venerated icon of Christ in the Lateran was carried to the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, embodying Christ's visit to his mother in honour of her feast day.³⁶ Kitzinger argued that the procession, which passed through the centre of ancient Rome and by several churches, included the meeting of the images of Christ and the Virgin. It is likely that there was a moment when the icon of Christ was placed next to the venerable icon of Santa Maria Nova, the heir and successor of Santa Maria Antiqua abandoned in the ninth century. In Kitzinger's view, the group of Christ and the Virgin in the Trastevere mosaic was meant to evoke this specific moment: the rendering of the face of the Virgin which prominently differs from other faces in style must have been due to the mosaicist's deliberate quotation of the seventh-century icon of Santa Maria Nova (Fig. 123).³⁷ Thus the new iconographic type of Christ sharing his throne with the crowned Virgin in the Trastevere mosaic was a significant Roman development in relation to the local celebration of the assumption of the Virgin.³⁸

The assumption of the Virgin had been an issue for over a thousand

³⁵ Kitzinger (1980), pp. 8-11. See below pp. 166-171 for the possible reasons why the liturgical text of the Assumption was the main source for the iconography of the Triumph of the Virgin.

³⁶ The origin of this procession goes back at least to the eighth century. Kitzinger (1980), pp. 11-12. See also below p. 169.

³⁷ Kitzinger (1980), pp. 12-19. Cf. P. Verdier, *Couronnement de la Vierge: Les origines et les premiers développements d'un thème iconographique* (Montreal, 1980), pp. 45-47.

³⁸ This local tradition continues in the thirteenth-century apse mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore where the same liturgical text is inscribed and the Virgin is depicted in the orant pose characteristic to the icon of the Virgin in Santa Maria in Aracoeli in Rome. However, it introduces the different iconographic type of the Coronation of the Virgin. For further analysis, see below Section 4 in this chapter.

years. As Gertrud Schiller emphasised, the Gospels do not state anything about the last days of the Virgin's life. In fact, the last mention of her is in the Act of the Apostles 1:14 which accounts for Mary the mother of Jesus being among those who witnessed the Ascension of Christ.

In the east, the last days of the Virgin came to be discussed in the mid fifth century with the new title of Theotokos given to her at the Council of Ephesus: the earthly ark of the son of God could not have decayed in the tomb, and thus was taken up by God into heaven. As a result, legendary stories, sermons and liturgies regarding the theme emerged. The question of the fate of the Mother of God's body led to the development of the Mariological doctrine which was variously accentuated by theologians, as well as visual representations. Since the middle ages, neither texts nor images had given a clear conclusion until it was finally established as a dogma in 1950 by Pope Pius XII who defined that both the body and the soul of the Mother of God were raised into heaven.³⁹ As we shall see, the iconographical analysis of the *Coronation of the Virgin* from the mid-twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century will partially illustrate the long process of the discussion surrounding the theme of the assumption of the Virgin.

The legendary sources, although known from the end of the fifth century, were considered of no historical worth, for neither the Gospels nor the early church fathers had mentioned any aspect of Mary's last days. However, in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries, the compilations of the legend appeared in different languages to report that the journey of Mary to Christ in heaven was a historical event. The apocrypha, known under the pseudonym of

³⁹ Schiller, (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, p. 83.

John the Apostle, eventually became the literal source for the representation of the *Death* and the *Assumption of the Virgin*. As it spread, variations of the text occurred. One of the Coptic versions explained that Mary was assumed into heaven eight months after her entombment which occurred in January, thus giving dates for the celebrations. The legend was introduced to the west for the first time through Gregory of Tours (538-594) who included a short excerpt of the eastern legend within the reports of martyrs and miracles. In the west, the legend came to be known through the version titled *Liber de transitu Virginis Mariae* which probably appeared in the second half of the sixth century and was falsely attributed to the Bishop Melito of Sardis (died circa 180), thus known under the name Pseudo-Melito. Nevertheless theologians such as Andrew of Crete (circa 650 - circa 740) and John of Damascus (circa 650 - circa 750) generally ignored the legendary text in their sermons.⁴⁰

The feast of the commemoration of the Theotokos was first celebrated in Jerusalem on 15 August at the beginning of the fifth century. From the second half of the century, Mary's departure from the earth came to be celebrated as her birth in heaven alongside other martyrs. Under the rule of the emperor Maurikios (582-602), it became mandatory for all the churches in the Byzantine kingdom to celebrate the feast of the *Koimesis* (dormition), sometimes called *Anapausis* (rest) or *Metastasis* (transformation). However, no special emphasis was placed on her bodily Assumption. It was rather understood as her soul going back to heaven, in analogy with the description of Christ ascending to heaven in the New

⁴⁰ Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, pp. 83-88.

Testament.⁴¹ The feast celebrated on 15 August in Jerusalem was adopted in Rome either by Pope Theodorus I (643-649) who heard of it from the clergy from Jerusalem or by the Syrian Pope Sergius I (687-701). The procession on the feast day is known to be organised from the period of Sergius's reign. Under Hadrian I (772-795), the Roman feast became more considerable with the procession accompanied by the oration "Veneranda nobis Domina". In Rome, the focus was rather on the celebratory aspect than the discussion of her bodily assumption. After the Roman liturgy was introduced into the Carolingian kingdom and the Feast of the Dormition with the addition of the Vigil and the Octave was accepted in the calendar by Leo IV in 847, the August 15 feast spread throughout the west. The name "Dormitio" or "Depositio" was common for the feast until the tenth century, and from then on it was called "Assumptio Beatae Mariae Virginis".⁴²

As Schiller emphasised, the bodily assumption of the Virgin into Heaven had no place in the liturgical text until the later middle ages. The earlier lectionary did not contain any apocryphal texts. This explains the careful theological stance towards the theme, although people must have thought the feast was the commemoration of the bodily assumption of the Virgin. In Rome, there was no explicit interest in forming the Marian doctrine of the Assumption until the thirteenth century, despite the fact that the feast had been celebrated. This was because the only source consisted of the apocryphal texts, which were generally

⁴¹ Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, pp. 88-89.

⁴² Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, p. 89. The feast day was varied in the beginning: in the sixth century it was celebrated in mid-January, until the legend appears to argue that her body was taken to the paradise eight months after her entombment. The August celebration was unknown to Gregory of Tours. In the old Gallic liturgy around 700, the mass of the Assumption of the Mother of God commemorating the delivery of her immaculate body from her tomb to the paradise was celebrated in mid or late January after the Epiphany. In the western Gothic liturgy after the Sacrament of Toledo in the second half of the eighth century, both celebrations are known. In contrast, the celebration in January was never known in Rome. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

mistrusted. Their distribution might even have been prohibited, although the legend was known in the theological circle through the writings of Gregory of Tours, Pseudo-John and Pseudo-Melito.⁴³ In my view, this would explain why the narrative episodes of the last days of the Virgin were not depicted in monumental scale in the early middle ages. Although doubts occurred regarding the bodily assumption in a letter attributed to Jerome, a positive view was taken in a writing by pseudo-Augustine completed in the first half of the twelfth century with the ecclesiastical interpretation of the Cantic. This pushed forward the supporters of the bodily Assumption to visualise it in artistic production too.⁴⁴

The twelfth century saw an unprecedented interest in the Cantic and the development of the allegory of the mystic marriage of Christ and the Church identified as the Virgin.⁴⁵ Honorius Augustodunensis brought together the verses of the Cantic, venerated for a long time in liturgy, to honour the Virgin in his *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* written circa 1100.⁴⁶ Rupert of Deutz (d.1129) gave consistency to the Marian interpretation of the Cantic in his *Commentary on the Song*, which was followed by Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) who wrote eighty-six sermons on the Cantic over his lifetime.⁴⁷ The change in visual imagery occurred simultaneously: a variety of allegorical iconography of the embracing pair emerged representing the bridegroom and the bride of the Song of

⁴³ Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, p. 90.

⁴⁴ Verdier (1980), p.14.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wilson (1977), pp.18-19.

⁴⁶ Marilyn Aronberg Lavin attributed the work to Honorius of Autun (1080-1137), which T. A. Heslop points out as a common association among art historians, but scholars have been demonstrating his links with England and southern Germany. M. Aronberg Lavin, 'Cimabue's Life of Mary: Mother and Bride', in *The Liturgy of Love: Images from the Songs in the Art of Cimabue, Michelangelo and Rembrandt*, eds M. Aronberg Lavin and I. Lavin (Lawrence, 2001) pp. 5-48, (hereafter referred to as Aronberg Lavin, 2001¹), p. 25; T.A. Heslop, 'The English Origins of the Coronation of the Virgin', *The Burlington Magazine* 147 (2005), pp. 790-797, p. 792, n. 16.

⁴⁷ Aronberg Lavin (2001¹), p. 25.

Songs, which alluded to Christ and Mary.⁴⁸ For example, in the Stammheim Missal in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, created probably in the 1170s in Hildesheim, Germany, a folio facing the incipit of the liturgy of the Assumption shows the Virgin accompanied by Christ in a mandorla (Fig. 124). Above them, God the Father holds a crown to be placed on the Virgin. Angels, kings, prophets and doctors of the church surround them carrying scrolls with passages related to the liturgy and the theme of the Assumption.⁴⁹ Marilyn Aronberg-Lavin rightly pointed out that the Trastevere mosaic appeared as the earliest depiction of Christ and the Virgin as the celestial *sponsus* and *sponsa*, which must have been an important generative force in the visualisation of this iconographic type. Pope Innocent II, who commissioned the mosaic, had been in Paris and to Cluny where he visited Bernard of Clairvaux, who became one of Innocent's great supporters. Thus the theological interpretation of the Canticle developing in the north among the Cistercians in the twelfth century was reflected and visualised for the first time in the great Roman mosaic.⁵⁰

2. The English Origin of the Coronation of the Virgin

The earliest surviving visual example of the *Coronation of the Virgin* is found in England, and it is highly likely that England was indeed the place of origin for this iconography. George Zarnecki who led an excavation at Borough Marsh in Berkshire in 1948 uncovered various carvings originally decorating the

⁴⁸ Aronberg Lavin (2001¹), pp. 22-27.

⁴⁹ Aronberg Lavin (2001¹), pp. 22-24 and p. 113, n. 82.

⁵⁰ Aronberg Lavin (2001¹), p. 27. George Zarnecki also emphasised that "by far the earliest scene of the Triumph of the Virgin appeared in Rome on the mosaic of the apse of Sta Maria in Trastevere". G. Zarnecki, 'The Coronation of the Virgin on a Capital from Reading Abbey', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950), pp. 1-12, p. 7.

great twelfth-century abbey of Reading.⁵¹ The most significant discovery was the capital from the cloister showing two figures enthroned: the figure of Christ on the right is placing the crown on the head of the Virgin on the left ‘slightly bending towards Christ with her hands joined together as if in prayer’ (Fig. 125).⁵² Zarnecki dated this circa 1130 and argued that it was ‘the earliest known examples of the Coronation of the Virgin’ together with the tympanum sculpture of Saint Mary (now Saint Swithin) in Quenington, Gloucestershire dated circa 1150 (Fig. 126), although he remained cautious in drawing the final conclusion that England was the place of origin.⁵³ Nevertheless he provided some support for this possibility. Firstly, the cult of the Virgin was particularly strong in England at that time when the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was re-introduced in monasteries including Reading Abbey. The official recognition was given to the feast in the Council of London in 1129, which was accompanied by theological disputes and writings, thus creating an atmosphere for the inventions of Marian iconography. Secondly, the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin was instituted as a holiday by the laws of Alfred and recognised by Lanfranc as one of the five principal festivals of the year. In the illumination of the Benedictional of Saint Ethelwold made in Winchester circa 980 (British Library Add MS 49598, fol. 102v), the *Assumption of the Virgin* was depicted on the page facing the text of the benediction for the feast on 15 August (Fig. 127). The Virgin is represented reclining as she is raised to heaven where the

⁵¹ Zarnecki (1950), p. 1; Heslop (2005), p. 790.

⁵² Zarnecki (1950), p. 2.

⁵³ Zarnecki (1950), pp. 6, 10-11. Cf. C. R. Elrington ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England*: N. M. Herbert ed., *A History of the County of Gloucester*, vol. 7 (New York, 1981), pp. 127-128; D. Givans, ‘English Romanesque Tympana: A Study of Architectural Sculpture in Church Portals c.1050-c.1200’, 3 vols, Ph.D. thesis (University of Warwick 2001), vol. 2, pp. 123-124.

hand of God is shown holding a crown. For Zarnecki, this was a proof that the twelfth-century Reading *Coronation* was a logical development of a subject already present in tenth-century English art.⁵⁴

Most recently, Heslop argued further that the *Coronation of the Virgin* was indeed “a radical Romanesque invention, the inception of which depended on the political and devotional circumstances of early twelfth-century England”.⁵⁵ Heslop provided evidence that “an image showing the Virgin crowned seated beside God” had been used in an earlier decoration scheme in the chapter house of Worcester cathedral built as part of the total redevelopment of the church and monastic area initiated by Bishop Wulfstan II of Worcester in 1084. A transcription of the verses accompanying forty images, now destroyed, in the chapter house was made circa 1200 describing the *Coronation of the Virgin* as the culmination of the pictorial programme. It is likely that the building of the chapter house and its pictorial scheme were devised together around 1100. The building has a unique cylindrical form with a central column supporting a vault divided into ten bays by transverse arches (Fig. 128). Heslop suggested that the pictorial cycle was concentrated on this vault arranging the forty images in ten groups of four. A reliable visual record of the cycle as a whole is kept in the preliminary pages of a manuscript datable to circa 1260 in the library of Eton College (Fig. 129). The last two bays showed the *Unveiling of Synagogue* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* as the central elements each accompanied by three Old Testament prefigurations, or types (Fig. 130). Placed side by side, the *Coronation of the Virgin* was conceived as a revelation to Synagogue who should “see the reality

⁵⁴ Zarnecki (1950), pp. 11-12.

⁵⁵ Heslop (2005), p. 790.

with the advent of Faith”, as indicated by the accompanying verse surrounding the Synagogue: “Adveniente fide rem synagoga vide”. Other verses and pictures in the cycle allude to the final two bays constructing a coherent programme which clearly envisage Christ’s *Nativity* and *Ascension* as well as Mary’s *Assumption*.⁵⁶

The *Coronation of the Virgin*, referred to as *De Christo et Ecclesia* in the transcription circa 1200, is accompanied by a verse which describes the event as both a coronation and a marriage: “Bethroned with the dowry of Faith, made holy by her virtues, the Bride is crowned and united with God, the Bridegroom”. According to Heslop, the simultaneity of “crowned and united” is significant because it “links the nuptial and regal transformations into a single event”. The three types surrounding the *Coronation* alludes to the significance of this betrothal. The first type anticipates Christ’s birth: “Peace rejoices with Justice as Mary gives birth.” The second type is identified with the personifications of Mercy and Truth: “When Grace is given to the Law and the willing bride to the king.” The final type implies a link between the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the union of two peoples: “Here Judea binds herself to Christ, as likewise does Idumea. Thus can one flock be made for the Lord out of two.” Heslop argued that there were specific historical events that prompted these elements in the Worcester pictorial scheme. In August 1100, William the Conqueror’s youngest son, Henry ascended the throne, and promised to bring an end to the oppressive reign of his brother Rufus and to respect Anglo-Saxon law. As soon as he took the crown, he selected Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm III, King of Scots, and Margaret, as his bride. Since Matilda’s mother was a descendant of English kings, this marriage united

⁵⁶ Heslop (2005), pp. 790-792.

the Norman and English dynasties. In Heslop's view, the union must have been connected with the salvation of the Anglo-Saxon populace, who saw striking parallels between Matilda and the Virgin, and stimulated the imagination to create the new subject-matter of the *Coronation* as the rhetoric of reconciliation.⁵⁷

The intellectual background circa 1100 of Worcester also supports the possibility that it was actually the place of origin for the new Marian theme. Heslop suggested that the unique architectural form of the Worcester chapter house itself may have been regarded as an allegorical representation of Mary. The idea of the Virgin's body as architectural is evinced in the *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* of Honorius Augustodunensis who arrived in Worcester in 1100 or very soon after possibly in order to write this text. Following its introductory section comprising of short commentaries on the two biblical texts in the liturgy of the Assumption of the Virgin, the bulk is devoted to the Song of the Songs whose texts were sung in the antiphons at the canonical hours of the Marian celebration. The *Sigillum* was significant in giving consistency to the explicit association of the Song with the Virgin, and in stating that everything written about *Ecclesia* in the traditional exegeses equally applies to Mary. In his unprecedented reading of Ecclesiasticus 24, Honorius identifies Mary's role as the central support of the Church established as a column, as well as a tree bearing the fruit of glory and wealth. The Virgin had also been traditionally represented as the stem of a great tree linking the kings of Judah to the King of Kings. The design of the chapter house

⁵⁷ Heslop (2005), pp. 790-796. The development of the idea regarding Mary's intercession and her role in divine mercy as the mother of God reached its turning point with the writing of Anselm of Canterbury (d.1109), which also contributed to the development of the theology of the Immaculate Conception. C. Oakes, *Ora pro nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion* (London, 2008) pp. 27-29. See also below pp. 180-182.

thus symbolises Mary with the central column and the semicircular section ribs springing from it like the branches of a tree.⁵⁸

The theme of Mary's royalty was most explicitly developed in Honorius's commentary on the Song of the Songs glossing the line 'veni sponsa mea...coronaberis' where he directly addresses Mary to 'receive the crown of triumph which you have deserved'. However, the *Coronation of the Virgin* depicted on the vault of Worcester chapter house represented not only an enthronement but also an assumption in a chariot drawn by the symbols of the Evangelists. They were conceived as the revealed mysteries of the wings and the wheels of Ezekiel which appeared as one of the types in the neighbouring vault of the *Unveiling of the Synagogue*, thus implying what Synagogue ought to see when her veil is removed. The association of the tetramorph with a chariot also alludes to the enigmatic Quadriga of Aminadab in the Song of Songs (6:11): 'I knew not: my soul troubled me for the chariots of Aminadab'. The Venerable Bede, who wrote a commentary on the Song in the eighth century, associated the authors of the four gospels to the horses of the quadriga controlled by their charioteer, Christ. Bede conceived the Song as a triangular conversation between Christ, Ecclesia and Synagogue, and put this verse into the mouth of Synagogue. Following Bede's interpretation, Honorius proposed that the New Testament caused Synagogue's bewilderment. Interest in Bede's commentary at Worcester is further attested by a reworking of Bede's text in a manuscript now in the British Library, Royal 4 B iv. The manuscript including the commentary on the Pauline epistles by Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was probably brought to Worcester

⁵⁸ Heslop (2005), pp. 792-793.

via a pupil of Wulfstan named Nicholas who was sent to study under Lanfranc at Canterbury circa 1080. The reworking of the Song, most likely to be by Nicholas, re-attributed the preceding two verses originally attributed to Synagogue by Bede. The initial question ‘Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising’ is attributed to Synagogue ‘converted to the faith of Christ’ and the following verse beginning with ‘I descended’ to Ecclesia who has come down to earth. This allows the interpretation, as visualised in the vaults of Worcester chapter house, that the *Coronation of the Virgin* becomes a revelation to Synagogue with the advent of Faith.⁵⁹

The iconographic type of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Christ himself thus appeared as an innovation in the specific political and devotional climate in twelfth-century England. The Coronation conceived at the same time as the Assumption of the Virgin was based on the most advanced commentary of the Song by Honorius which was composed at Worcester circa 1100. The innovative visual programme was devised in relation to the historical event of the coronation and the marriage of the Norman king and the English princess in the hope that it would bring salvation to the Anglo-Saxon populace after the Norman Conquest. The royal association of the Virgin and Matilda in the theme of the *Coronation* must have had certain significance if we consider the fact that the iconography subsequently appears in Reading Abbey. The abbey was founded by King Henry I in 1121 and dedicated to the Virgin following the death of his first wife Matilda in 1118 and their only son in 1120.⁶⁰ The surviving imagery in the Reading capital circa 1130 (Fig. 125), as well as the provincial version in the Quenington

⁵⁹ Heslop (2005), pp.793-795.

⁶⁰ Heslop (2005), p. 790.

tympanum circa 1150 (Fig. 126), must have reflected a major composition possibly represented in a doorway tympanum of Reading Abbey, according to Zarnecki.⁶¹

The iconography in the tympanum at Quenington, probably reflecting that of the now lost Reading Abbey, differs from that at Worcester, as pointed out by Heslop: the figures share a throne rather than a chariot, and they are surrounded by the symbols of the Evangelists rather than being elevated by them. In addition, cherubs or seraphs are introduced accompanying the throne, as well as a large motif of a church at the bottom right. The verbal counterparts of these elements are found in the Old Testament especially Isaiah 61:1-5. For Heslop, this suggests that the Quenington tympanum demonstrates a vision equating the Old Testament temple with the New Jerusalem, and the Virgin as bride and mother with the Church. Such iconography of synthetic theophany finds its model in the Romanesque tympana of south-western and eastern France, the earliest being the one over the west portal of the great abbey church of Cluny started in the 1080s. Thus the concept of providing a visual exegesis of ecclesiastical authority in a major portal must have been introduced through the monks of Cluny whose presence is recorded in Reading Abbey.⁶² At the request of King Henry, Prior Peter and several brethren were sent from Cluny to begin the construction, and some monks from the Cluniac priory of Saint Pancras at Lewes came to help.⁶³ Although Heslop as well as Zarnecki remained cautious in drawing the conclusion

⁶¹ Zarnecki (1950), pp. 10-11. Duncan Givans in his survey of English Romanesque tympana places the iconography of the Coronation of the Virgin among the image type of majestic Christ, which was a frequent theme for the decoration of the tympana. He also understood the theme in terms of contemporary notions of power and authority as well as the growing cult of the Virgin in England. Givans (2001), pp. 154, 181-183.

⁶² Heslop (2005), pp. 796-797.

⁶³ Zarnecki (1950), p. 3.

for the English origin for the iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, there is no doubt that twelfth-century England was an important centre of Marian devotion with the potential of inventing a new iconography.

3. Gothic Portal Sculpture and Psalter Illumination

The *Coronation of the Virgin* was described as “the last theophany of Christian art” by Philippe Verdier who remarked that its appearance was simultaneous with the formation of Gothic architecture.⁶⁴ Although he did not strictly distinguish the *Coronation* and the *Triumph of the Virgin*, he rightly evaluated the significance of its introduction in the sculpted tympana on the façade above the portal of the cathedrals and the monasteries in northern France from where the theme consequently spread all over Europe. The tympanum of the portal is a sacred, circular space reserved for the representation of the theophany, like the apse mosaic in Rome. On the façade of the cathedral in Senlis (Fig. 131), which Verdier dates closer to 1153 than 1170, the earliest depiction of the crowned Virgin enthroned with Christ appears as an isolated theme in place of the traditional iconography of *Majestas Domini*: it marks the birth of the ‘*Majestas Domini et Mariae*’. Within the sequence of the history of the theophany, the *Coronation of the Virgin* is positioned immediately after the *Last Judgment* in the sculpted tympana on the facade of Gothic cathedrals: the *Last Judgment* and the *Coronation* form a diptych in Laon (1195-1205), Paris (after 1208), and Amiens (after 1220). At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the statues of the first decorative programme were arranged for the transepts of Chartres cathedral: the

⁶⁴ “Le couronnement de la Vierge est la théophanie ultime de l’art chrétien.” Verdier (1980), p. 9.

north portal was sculpted first with the *Coronation of the Virgin*, which corresponded to the Last Judgment on the south portal.⁶⁵

The iconographical programme of Gothic tympana, according to Verdier, visually argued the double assumption of the Virgin's soul and body in a narrative context. The *Coronation of the Virgin* was placed in the sequence of the episodes of her death and resurrection, as well as the integral assumption of her body and soul. Although the bodily assumption does not appear in any canonical text, and therefore doubts also occurred, the development of the ecclesiastical and Mariological interpretation of the Canticle in the first half of the twelfth century encouraged the supporters of the bodily assumption. In the French portal, the lintel below the tympanum accommodating the *Coronation* is divided into two scenes depicting the entombment and the raising of the Virgin by the angels. Therefore in the Gothic sculptural programme, the Coronation appeared as the culmination of the double assumption of the Virgin: firstly the assumption of her soul, which Christ takes in his hands, and secondly the assumption of her body by the angels. The *Assumption of the Virgin* in the composition of the *Ascension of Christ* remained uncommon sculpture before the fourteenth century. Nevertheless the *Coronation of the Virgin* began to appear often at the highest place on the façade of the church after the mid-thirteenth century as an autonomous theme.⁶⁶

The *Coronation of the Virgin* was a theme connected to Mary's role as the intercessor for humanity before Christ the Judge at the moment of the *Last Judgement*. This is suggested by how Mary turns to Christ in an orant pose in the

⁶⁵ Verdier (1980), pp. 9-10, 14.

⁶⁶ Verdier (1980), pp. 13-15.

iconography.⁶⁷ The concept of Mary's intercession and her role in divine mercy as the mother of God developed along with Marian devotion. The most significant contributions were Anselm's prayers and Bernard's sermons. Anselm's pupil and biographer, Eadmer, argued in his own tract, *De Excellentia Virginis Mariae*, that the Virgin must elicit mercy when her son comes to judge because she is the mother of God and therefore the mother of mercy.⁶⁸ The Cistercian Amadeus who became Bishop of Lausanne praised the Virgin's mediation in his sermon in which he imagined the Virgin enthroned in heaven, first after the Son, continually interceding for humanity.⁶⁹ Verdier noted that the valley of Cedron or the valley of Josaphat, where the Virgin was entombed and from where she was assumed into heaven, is the valley of judgement where God will come and judge all the nations according to Joel 3: 2.⁷⁰ This concept is visualised in the illustrations of the Ingeborg Psalter dated circa 1190 (Fig. 132): following the Last Judgement on folio 33v, folio 34r depicts the Coronation above the Entombment.⁷¹ In the thirteenth-century illumination of the Liege psalter in Keble College (MS 17), the *Coronation of the Virgin* also appears in a prominent position in the full-page illustration of the "Beatus" initial of Psalm 1 (Fig. 133), which is preceded by full-page gospel narrative illuminations.⁷² By the mid-thirteenth century, placing the *Coronation* at the very end of the Christian narrative as the last theophany, as well as introducing it in positions traditionally occupied by the Ascension or Christ in Majesty, had become a logical solution in Gothic sculpture and psalter

⁶⁷ M. Kimata, *Goshikku no shikaku uchū [L'univers visuel du gothique]* (Nagoya, 2013), p. 224.

⁶⁸ Oakes (2008), p. 29.

⁶⁹ Oakes (2008), pp. 27-30.

⁷⁰ Verdier (1980), p. 10.

⁷¹ Verdier (1980), p. 10.

⁷² M.B. Parkes, *The Medieval Manuscripts of Keble College, Oxford: A Descriptive Catalogue with Summary Descriptions of the Greek and Oriental Manuscripts* (London, 1979), pp. 51-54.

illumination. It is not a novelty or rarity then if the *Coronation of the Virgin* is placed in the reconstruction of Guido's narrative panel to round off the gospel narrative cycle. Such narrative sequence as well as ideas behind it might as well have reached Siena through psalter illustration.

The *Coronation of the Virgin* also began to appear in the initial of Psalm 109 in psalter illustration of the mid-thirteenth century together with the iconography of the Trinity. First of all, the initial 'D' of Psalm 109 starts to be illustrated in the latter half of the twelfth century with the image of God the Father seated together with Christ on a throne with the Dove ascending or descending between them. The iconography of the Trinity itself, which was restricted between the fourth and ninth centuries, generated between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries in the process of developing the representation of *Christ in Majesty* and the illustration of Psalm 109 whose first line alludes to God the Father letting his Son sit by himself: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand: Until I make thy enemies thy footstool."⁷³ According to Motokazu Kimata, the iconography of the Trinity developed further in the illustration of Psalm 109 in the thirteenth century in England and northern France. The beginning of Psalm 109 itself where God tells his Son to be seated on his right is cited in the Gospels around twenty times, and some of the passages are related to the *Ascension of Christ* (Mark 16:19) or his Second Coming (Mark 14: 62). More important is its inclusion in the *Apostles' Creed*:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

⁷³ Kimata (2013), pp. 192-193, 200-201, based on F. Bœspflug and Y. Załuska, "Le dogme trinitaire et l'essor de son iconographie en Occident de l'époque carolingienne au Ire concile du Latran (1215)", *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 37 (1994), pp. 181-240.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.⁷⁴

It is indeed this theme that the illustration of the initial of Psalm 109 seeks to visualise: Christ who has suffered and resurrected ascends to heaven and is seated on the right of his Father waiting for the moment of the Last Judgement. In Kimata's view, the Holy Spirit was added to the illustration of the synthronos of God and his Son for Psalm 109 to visualise the creed of the Holy Trinity in a clearer way. Establishing a complete vision of Christian faith was a crucial issue in the thirteenth century when the apocalyptic thought of preparing for the approaching moment of the Last Judgement was increasingly influential. The addition of the *Coronation of the Virgin* also occurs in this context.⁷⁵

In the initial "D" of Psalm 109 in the York Psalter (British Library, MS Add. 54179, fol. 110r), the *Coronation of the Virgin* appears above the Holy Trinity (Fig. 134). God the Father who is seated with a book in his left hand on

⁷⁴ This English translation of the Apostles' Creed is that of the International Consultation on English Texts, approved for Catholic use by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy cited in B.L. Marthaler, *The Creed* (New London, 2007, First printing of Third Edition, first published in 1987).

⁷⁵ Kimata (2013), pp. 207-218.

the bottom right points with his right hand to the space on the seat to his Son depicted as the resurrected Christ as demonstrated by his wounds and a staff with a cross in his right hand. Kimata pointed out that the iconography contains the sequence of Christ's Passion, Resurrection, Harrowing of Hell, Ascension and the Last Judgement as described in the *Apostles' Creed*. In this context, the motif of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit corresponds to the episode of the Incarnation, thus completing the whole vision of the Creed. Christ who had just arrived at the throne in the Trinity depicted below is now seated on the throne in the *Coronation* depicted above placing a crown on the Virgin's head. Just as God let his Son take his seat to his right, the Virgin is seated on the right of her Son. This has traditionally been linked to Psalm 44:10: "The daughters of kings have delighted thee in glory. The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety." At the same time, it resonates with the theme of Psalm 109. Two centuries earlier, the image of the crowned Virgin holding the Christ Child with the Dove perched on the crown had already appeared standing on the right of God the Father and his Son seated side by side in the iconography of the "Quinity" (Fig. 135) produced in Winchester c.1023-35 (British Library Cotton MS Titus D. xxvii, fol. 75v).⁷⁶ Similar imagery had appeared even earlier in the Utrecht Psalter circa 820 (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS Bibl. Rhenotraiectinae I Nr 32) where the Virgin and Child with a Dove perched on her head appears on the right of God the Father in the illustration of Gloria in Excelsis and the Credo (fols. 89v and 90r). This attests to the revival of traditional imagery in Psalter

⁷⁶ The term 'Quinity' was coined for this image by E. H. Kantorowicz. E. H. Kantorowicz, 'The Quinity of Winchester', *Art Bulletin* 29 (1947), pp. 73-85. Cf. W. Noel, 'Medieval Charades and the Visual Syntax of the Utrecht Psalter', in *Studies in the Illustration of the Psalter*, eds B. Cassidy and R. M. Wright (Stamford, 2000), pp. 34-41, pp. 40-41.

illustration in the eschatological climate in thirteenth-century England.⁷⁷

According to Kimata, Gothic art in the north which flourished from the mid-twelfth to the late thirteenth century, functioned as visual media which helped people to become capable of seeing the process of Salvation which was coming to its completion.⁷⁸ Thus it was not merely a bible illustration for those who could not read or write, but it was meant to be a device which encouraged the viewers to experience the revelation directly through viewing images, for retrieving the direct vision of God which had long been lost was crucial for the process of the Salvation.⁷⁹ The *Coronation of the Virgin*, which does not have any canonical textual source, gained a striking visual presence in Gothic art which provided the vision of what was yet to come. In the eschatological context of the mid-thirteenth century, the role of the Virgin as the intercessor in the Last Judgement was strongly realised. The iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Christ himself, when it is placed in the context of Psalm 109 and the *Apostles' Creed*, pinpoints to the moment of the Last Judgement. In this sense, the iconography emphasises her significant role as the intercessor, which is symbolised by her orant pose. Although the theme of the bodily assumption of the Virgin lacking canonical textual source remained controversial, Gothic art convincingly argued her significant role in heaven in the context of Christian faith through visual means, which consequently had a wider impact in the west.

⁷⁷ Kimata (2013), pp. 219-224.

⁷⁸ Kimata (2013), p. 27.

⁷⁹ Kimata (2013), pp. 6-12.

4. Thirteenth-Century Italian Development: Siena, Assisi and Rome

In contrast to the development in the north, Italy did not see considerable iconographical development related to the assumption of the Virgin after the great mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere for over a century. This might have been due to the controversial nature of the theme of the bodily assumption of the Virgin. Nevertheless, Marian devotion and images flourished in Italy as well as in the north. The Roman tradition of the iconography of Maria Regina and the cult of the assumption of the Virgin was well-diffused in thirteenth-century Italy. For example, Siena cathedral had been dedicated to the Virgin, and the feast of the Assumption had been celebrated in Siena by 1240. Many panel paintings of the iconographic type of the 'Maria Regina', the crowned Virgin and Child, are found among the panels attributed to Margarito d'Arezzo.⁸⁰ The iconography of the *Assumption of the Virgin* appears in the following paintings: the fresco painting in the baptistery in Riva San Vitale dated circa 1190-1230 (Fig. 136),⁸¹ a panel painting signed by the Spoletan painters Simeone and Machilone dated circa 1250-55 in Mayer van den Bergh Museum in Antwerp (Fig. 137),⁸² a panel

⁸⁰ Cf. S. Chiodo, "‘Maria Regina’ nelle opere di Margarito d'Arezzo' in *Medioevo: la Chiesa e il Palazzo*, A.C. Quintavalle ed. (Milan, 2007), pp. 598-603.

⁸¹ Cf. Verdier (1980), p. 12.

⁸² Cf. Marques (1987), p. 64. Meiss attributed it to a Siense but there was actually an inscription 'SYMEON' ET MACHILON' SPOLE:' under the Virgin's feet, which is much damaged. M. Meiss, 'A Dugento Altarpiece at Antwerp', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 71 (1937), pp. 14+16-19+22-25. Garrison (1976) dated it to 1270-75 because he thought that the date Meiss proposed as between 1250 and 1260 was too early and considered Coppo's Madonna in Orvieto for the Servites circa 1265 as the model for the painters. It shows "a highly eclectic style" of Giuntesque, Siense, and Pisan as central source. For Garrison, it is "much more Florentinizing than Sienizing". Two painters' work travelled as far as Ancona, Florence, Pisa, Siena and Orvieto. In spite of their eclecticism, they remain basically Spoletan for the notable "crispness of line and a fineness of chiaroscuro that characterize all the painting in the region". At the end of the twelfth century and in the thirteenth century, Spoleto had been an important outpost of the high Romanesque style, which, having its ultimate origins in the second half of the eleventh century in northeastern Spain, south-western France, and at Cluny, came in Italy to be focused particularly at Benedictine Montecassino. Benedictine manuscripts carried this style to Rome, where it was developed in the first half of the twelfth century in both manuscripts and frescoes and was further

painting attributed to a Florentine master dated circa 1260 in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow (Fig. 138),⁸³ the painted cross attributed to Coppo di Marcovaldo in San Gimignano (Fig. 139),⁸⁴ and a panel painting signed by Margarito d'Arezzo dated circa 1274 in Santa Maria delle Vertighe in Monte San Savino (Fig. 140).⁸⁵ In these panel paintings, the Virgin is depicted as a standing figure in an archaic orant pose. She also appears in a similar gesture in the iconography of the *Ascension of Christ*, for example in the fresco painting from the monastery of San Bartolomeo in Ferrara (Fig. 141). In Riva San Vitale, she is paired with *Christ in Majesty* in the neighbouring apse. The focus here is on the Assumption, and she is celebrated in analogy with the Ascension of Christ within the early Roman tradition.

The Assumption of the Virgin, according to Meiss, was a western representation and probably northern European in origin.⁸⁶ On the other hand in Byzantine art, the *Dormition of the Virgin* where Christ takes her soul in his hands was the only moment represented from the episodes of the last days of the Virgin. The *Dormition* was depicted on the following panels by western artists which demonstrates contact with the culture in the east: a panel painting attributed to the Magdalen Master dated circa 1285 in Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris (Fig.

modified thereafter. Almost simultaneously it spread north to Umbria, following its own development given local character by Alberto whose style can be explained only by supposing him to have had direct contact with transalpine Europe. Simeone and Machilone were heirs to this Spoletan style. E.B. Garrison, Jr., 'Simeone and Machilone Spoletenses', *Gazette des beaux-arts* 35 (1949), pp. 53-58.

⁸³ Cf. Marques (1987), p. 76.

⁸⁴ Cf. Schiller (1966-1991), vol. 4.2, p. 142.

⁸⁵ Cf. Marques (1987), p. 92. Signed 'MARGARITUS T.RE. S...ITIO C...M CC ...MSE.. AGUS...' Garrison dated it to 1280-85. Original relation of the two accompanying saint panels with the Madonna panel is not certain. Perhaps they were on inner surfaces of shutters. Garrison (1976), no. 358, p. 140.

⁸⁶ Meiss (1937).

142),⁸⁷ a Crusader panel in Sinai dated to the 1250s (Fig. 143),⁸⁸ and the panel painting in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow noted above (Fig. 138). The panel in Paris shows the crowned ‘Maria Regina’ type of the Virgin and Child accompanied by Saints Andrew and James and six narrative episodes focusing on the Virgin starting from the *Annunciation* and ending with the *Dormition*. The Crusader panel also depicts the *Coronation of the Virgin*, whereas the Moscow panel depicts the *Assumption of the Virgin* as the culminating scene of the extensive Marian narrative. In the latter half of the twelfth century, the images of the *Dormition*, the *Assumption* and the *Coronation* were in circulation in Italy, and the selection of scenes varied.

The *Coronation of the Virgin* by Guido da Siena (Fig. 14a) appears as the earliest introduction of this theme from the north to Italy circa 1267. The reason behind this innovation, in my view, must be explained by the intention of the commission: to commemorate the exceptional intercession of the Virgin at the Battle of Montaperti. On this occasion, Siena deliberately focused on the *Coronation* iconography developing in the north which emphasised the intercessory role of the Virgin. It is very significant that Guido chose the scene of the act of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Christ himself. The closest visual parallel is found in psalter illustrations, where Mary appears in the context of intercession.⁸⁹ Thus Guido chose the new Gothic iconographical type of the *Coronation of the Virgin* rather than the traditional image of the *Assumption* that

⁸⁷ Cf. A. Tartuferi and M. Scalini, *L'arte a Firenze nell'età di Dante 1250-1300* (Florence, 2004), pp. 98-99. Garrison dated it to 1275-80. Garrison (1976), no. 368, p. 142.

⁸⁸ Cf. R. Cormack, *Icons* (London, 2009, reprinted, first published 2007), pp.78-83; J. Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting: The Virgin and Child Hodegetria and the Art of Chrysography* (New York, 2015), pp. 68-75.

⁸⁹ See above Section 3 in this chapter.

was more diffused in the Roman-Italian tradition. However, the archaic pose of the Virgin showing her palms to the viewers reminds us of the pose she shows in the iconography of the *Assumption*. The motif of the angels carrying the mandorla containing the *Coronation of the Virgin* also resonates with the *Assumption* iconography.⁹⁰ At the same time, the chrysography given on the mantle of the Virgin, according to Jaroslav Folda, demonstrates the typically thirteenth-century western use of the originally eastern technique to honour the Virgin as the *Maria Regina*.⁹¹ Thus Guido looks not only to the north for the new iconography but also to the east as well as the Roman tradition. Guido carefully chose and combined the iconographic details of various cultures to form a completely new image of the *Coronation of the Virgin* which emphasises both thematically and visually her intercession, and yet conceived the scene as the *Assumption of the Virgin*.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, the *Dormition*, the *Assumption* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* came to be depicted in a cyclical context. By then the *Golden Legend* had been compiled and circulated providing textual source for the Marian theme.⁹² This must have encouraged the visualisation of the narrative cycle of the last days of the Virgin. According to Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, it is likely that Cimabue also used the *Golden Legend* as the narrative framework for the Marian cycle depicting four episodes from the last

⁹⁰ Cf. Verdier (1980).

⁹¹ Cf. Folda (2015).

⁹² It is worth noting that the chapter on the Assumption of the Virgin in the fourth volume of the *Golden Legend* compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa around 1260s, emphasises the episodes of the intercession of the Virgin. The English translation by William Caxton (first edition 1483) is available in the Internet Medieval Source Book of Fordham University. Jacobus de Voragine, 'The Assumption of our Lady' in the *Golden Legend*, vol. 4 (<https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/goldenlegend/GoldenLegend-Volume4.asp#Assumption>) consulted 29 September 2015.

days of the Virgin in the Upper Church of San Francesco in Assisi, although the main purpose was to argue the Franciscan doctrinal idea of the bodily assumption of the Virgin (Fig. 113). Focusing on the Bernardian interpretation of the Cantic, Christ and the Virgin are conceived as the bridegroom and the bride in the *Assumption of the Virgin*. Instead of the *Coronation* iconography, Cimabue depicts the *synthronos* type of the Triumph of the Virgin where she is seated side by side on the throne with Christ, which rather recalls the Trastevere mosaic. Thus Cimabue also looked at various cultural traditions to convincingly argue the bodily assumption of the Virgin producing a distinctive iconographic type of the double-figure *Assumption*. This type became popular in Umbria among various orders: the tabernacle by the Cesi Master for the Augustinian female convent of Santa Maria Stella in Spoleto (Fig. 144),⁹³ the fresco in Santa Maria di Monteluca (Fig. 145) and Santa Giuliana in Perugia (Fig. 146),⁹⁴ and the Virgin Chapel in Sacro Speco, Subiaco (Fig. 147). Umbria saw another different development depending on Assisi. In fact, it did not become so popular beyond the local area. The *synthronos* type was preferred in other Franciscan and Clarissan contexts as well as other female monastic contexts: the panel of *Christ and the Virgin Enthroned* by the Clarissan Master in the convent of the Poor Clares in Siena (Fig. 114)⁹⁵ and a scene from Duccio's small triptych (Fig. 148).⁹⁶ The theme of Mary as the Bride of Christ must have been significant especially for the nuns.

⁹³ Cf. Aronberg Lavin (2001²); *Giotto e compagni* (exhibition catalogue, Louvre Museum, Paris, 18 April – 15 July 2013), ed. D. Thiébaud (Paris, 2013), pp. 94-99.

⁹⁴ The convent of Santa Giuliana in Perugia was founded in 1253 and made a dependent of San Galgano in Siena. It was established by the Cistercian cardinal Giovanni di Toledo, Bishop of Porto. D.R. Gordon, 'Art in Umbria c.1250-c.1350', Ph.D. thesis (University of London 1979), p. 63.

⁹⁵ See above p. 158, n. 5.

⁹⁶ Cf. Bagnoli et al (2003), pp. 188-197.

Nevertheless the double-figure type of the *Assumption* was also considered too amorous and controversial, according to Aronberg Lavin.⁹⁷

In Siena, another different type of Marian cycle was produced in the focal point of the cathedral: the stained-glass window attributed to Duccio dated circa 1288 was installed behind the high altar emerging like an altarpiece above the high altar depicting the three episodes, the *Dormition*, the *Assumption* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*, in vertical composition (Fig. 60).⁹⁸ It explains the sequence of the bodily assumption in three scenes, yet choosing a different solution from that by Cimabue in Assisi. In the central scene of the *Assumption of the Virgin*, Mary is seated alone with her hands clasped in prayer on the bar inside the mandorla elevated by the angels. In the scene of the *Coronation* above, her arms are crossed and her head are inclined showing a submissive attitude,⁹⁹ which subsequently became characteristic in Sienese art (Figs 149, 150). Yet her right hand does not rest on her chest but it is slightly raised in the gesture of speech towards Christ, which suggests, in my view, the gesture of intercession: it is also similar to the gesture of the kneeling patron saints in Duccio's *Maestà* (Fig. 16a). Taking Gothic sculpture and manuscript decoration as compositional models, the window reads from the bottom to the top. It also clarifies the sequence of the assumption of the soul, the assumption of the body, and the coronation, which is the ultimate episode of the theophany. Building on its own tradition of the Coronation iconography, Siena responded to Assisi by producing another different version of the narrative cycle of the last days of the Virgin. Actually, the

⁹⁷ Aronberg Lavin (2001¹).

⁹⁸ For the architectural setting of the stained-glass window, Cistercians in San Galgano must have played a key role. Cf. M.H. Caviness, 'The Glazed Oculus, from Canterbury to Siena. Composition and Context', in Caciorgna et al. (2007), pp. 119-139, pp. 126-127.

⁹⁹ Cf. Coor-Achenbach (1957), p. 328.

Sieneſe image type of the ſingle-figure *Assumption* and the *Coronation* conſequently gained wider diffusion compared to Cimabue’s version in Aſſiſi.¹⁰⁰

In Rome, the iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* was championed for the firſt time by the firſt Franciſcan pope Nicholas IV in the apſe moſaic in Santa Maria Maggiore completed in 1295 by Jacopo Torriti.¹⁰¹ As Julian Gardner pointed out, the ultimate ſource for Torriti’s moſaic was the apſe moſaic of Santa Maria in Trastevere (Figs 112a, 117). Although it introduced a different type of iconography ſhowing the act of crowning, both moſaics were inſpired by the ſame text of Psalm 44:10: “The queen ſtood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; ſurrounded with variety”.¹⁰² They both ſhow Chriſt holding a book with the ſame text from the Canticle, ‘Veni electa mea et ponam in te thronum meum’, which was actually read in the Feaſt of the Aſſumption.¹⁰³ As Gardner remarked, the geſture of the Virgin in Torriti’s *Coronation* alſo ſeems particularly Roman.¹⁰⁴ Pietro Cavallini’s addition of the ſeries of ſcenes beneath the apſe in Trastevere alſo contributed to Torriti’s compoſition: the *Dormition* along with other Marian narrative ſcenes were alſo introduced below the main iconography of the *Coronation* in Santa Maria Maggiore.¹⁰⁵

In Santa Maria Maggiore’s apſe moſaic, one can ſee northern European

¹⁰⁰ In Duccio’s ſtained-glaſs window, Chriſt ſtill ſhows an ambiguous geſture: it is not very clear whether he is crowning the Virgin with both hands or he is crowning her with his right hand and bleſſing her with his left hand.

¹⁰¹ Gardner (1973), p. 12; Idem (2015). According to Gardner, the mid-thirteenth century ſeal of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Rome ſhows the ſynthronos type of the Virgin and Chriſt enthroned, which might have reflected the compoſition of the apſe moſaic. Gardner (forthcoming).

¹⁰² Gardner (1973), p. 10.

¹⁰³ See above Section 1. Guido’s *Coronation*, in my view, did not originally include the ſame inſcription, which was added during the modern reſtoration.

¹⁰⁴ Gardner (1973), p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Gardner (1973), p. 6.

as well as Roman influences.¹⁰⁶ The colour composition demonstrates awareness of north European art.¹⁰⁷ The vertical disposition of the *Dormition* and the Coronation is linked to a northern psalter illustration, although a more accessible source was the oculus in Siena, which was separated by the *Assumption*. In Rome the Assumption is indicated by the inscription. This was more appropriate for the papal commission because “the corporeal assumption of the Virgin was by no means universally accepted”.¹⁰⁸ Torriti might have intentionally avoided visualising the *Assumption of the Virgin* explicitly. The *Assumption* is alluded to by the angels holding the mandorla, which in my view is a similar solution to Guido’s Coronation, and by the inscription below. This is a very careful handling of the much debated doctrinal issue. Yet according to Gardner, the Santa Maria Maggiore mosaic, commissioned by the first Franciscan pope, is more related to Franciscan spirituality of the feast of the Assumption. Franciscan sermons of the late thirteenth century defends the simultaneous bodily and spiritual assumption of the Virgin.¹⁰⁹ Franciscans played a role in introducing the theme in the Roman apse, although the imagery in Assisi was not adopted.

The *Coronation* from the north became a popular theme in Italy following the appearance in Santa Maria Maggiore. Torriti’s version was copied by the Roman Cistercian foundation of the Tre Fontane.¹¹⁰ It was also introduced in Florence in the mosaic over the door on the counter-façade of the cathedral (Fig 118). The Florentine mosaic, in my view, is not a mere provincial reflection of the mosaic as argued by Monciatti (1999), but another local development. The

¹⁰⁶ Gardner (1973), p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Gardner (1973), p. 10.

¹⁰⁸ Gardner (1991), p. 63. Cf. Gardner (1973), p. 10

¹⁰⁹ Gardner (1973), idem (2015), idem (forthcoming).

¹¹⁰ Gardner (1991), p. 63.

Coronation must have been introduced as a continuous narrative sequence from the baptistery mosaic and as the last theophany concluding the story of Salvation. This shows that the northern image and the idea developing behind the iconography were well understood. The angels with trumpets allude to apocalyptic idea. The symbols of the Evangelists might not be merely a conflation with the iconography type of *Christ in Majesty* as suggested by Monciatti (1999), but a well-thought introduction based on northern models. Duccio's *Maestà* (1308-11) must have also included the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the missing central pinnacle. It is unlikely that the great altarpiece with extensive narrative lacked the image considered the culmination of the story of Salvation. Considering the controversial nature of the *Assumption of the Virgin*, it might have not included the *Assumption of the Virgin*. Duccio might have adopted the *Coronation of the Virgin* conceived as the *Assumption of the Virgin*, as was the case for Guido's *Coronation*. Giotto's polyptych circa 1327 in the Baroncelli chapel in Santa Croce in Florence is the earliest to show the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the central panel of the polyptych. This was also incorporated in the Marian narrative programme decoration of the chapel.¹¹¹ Following these examples, the Marian cycle as well as the *Coronation of the Virgin* gains much more popularity in the Trecento.

The earliest iconography of the *Coronation of the Virgin* appeared as an

¹¹¹ J. Gardner, 'The Decoration of the Baroncelli Chapel in Santa Croce', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1971), pp. 89-114; Gardner (2015).

innovation in England in the historical and political context of increasingly intense Marian devotion hoping that her intercession would bring peace and reconciliation to the French and English dynasties. The intercessory role of the Virgin was emphasised in French Gothic sculpture and psalter illustrations. The *Coronation* gains a position as the ultimate episode of the story of Salvation. Guido introduced this iconography to Italy in the earliest stage most probably because also in Siena in the mid-thirteenth century, intercession of the Virgin bringing peace and reconciliation was a critical theme after the Battle of the Montaperti. The Virgin seated beside Christ looking out to the viewers in the orant pose must have conveyed a strong message and emphasised the purpose of the commission to commemorate the miraculous intercessory role of the Virgin at Montaperti. Therefore, I would argue that the Coronation iconography was intentionally chosen to surmount the *Madonna del Voto*, and Siena independently developed its own Marian iconography.

Guido's *Coronation* not only takes the northern iconography as a model but also looks to the east and to the Roman tradition. The iconography northern in origin is framed in the mandorla elevated by angels like the early Roman image of the *Assumption*, and the Virgin is given the eastern chrysography on the mantle to show her status as Maria Regina. This eclectic solution is a typical phenomenon in the thirteenth century. The Marian narrative and the ideas behind the Marian doctrine developed in this context of cultural exchange, as was the case for *Christ Mounting the Cross*. Visual narrative introduced a much debated theme and developed in parallel with textual sources. Guido's contribution was the invention of the *Coronation of the Virgin* conceived as the *Assumption of the Virgin* for this

much debated theme. Guido's Coronation as well as Duccio's stained-glass window had a certain impact in the development of the Marian iconography in Italy, especially in introducing the theme in a prominent position within the church building. For Siena, the stained-glass window, a new medium from the north, might have been an innovative alternative selection in place of the traditional monumental mosaic in central Italy seen in Rome or Florence. Turning to Guido's narrative panel, the idea of placing the *Coronation* iconography at the top of the gabled panel might have shared a similar idea with the monumental apse mosaic in Rome. The idea of framing the *Coronation* within an arch, probably trilobate shaped in the original form, came from the portal sculpture of the northern cathedral. Siennese art in the beginning was based on the central Italian tradition, but innovation occurred when it turned to northern art, which resulted in forming a distinctive Siennese style. Siena acknowledged the existence of the well-established Roman cult of the Assumption of the Virgin, the Gothic typological concept, and the Byzantine Hodegetria to celebrate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin. The Marian cult and the discussion of her symbolical role developed through artistic production in the wider mediterranean and European Christian world, and Siena can be placed individually as an important centre along with Assisi and Rome.

Conclusion: Repositioning Guido's Altarpiece in Siena Cathedral

This thesis has argued that it is highly probable that the twelve narrative panels by Guido da Siena together with the *Coronation of the Virgin* originally accompanied the *Madonna del Voto*, and the reconstructed altarpiece was originally located on the high altar of Siena cathedral. Chapter 1 has clarified that the physical traits point to the fact that the panels once belonged to a single altarpiece. The correspondence of the width of the planks constituting the altarpiece, the consistency of the characteristic joints slightly rising to the right, and the regular intervals of the dowels suggest that the dismembered panels originally belonged to the same structure. Moreover, the correspondence of the width of the shadow of the main central batten observed on the *Madonna del Voto* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* strikingly suggest that they belonged together placed in the main vertical axis of the altarpiece. As Norman Muller argued, the reconstruction is the “one that proves there was a new, hitherto unknown type of altarpiece in thirteenth-century Italian art” which leads to “new interpretations and modifications”.¹ The horizontal gabled format of the reconstructed altarpiece and its monumental size, circa 310 cm in length, suggest that it was rather suitable for a high altar than a side altar.

Chapter 2 analysed the historical documents to reconstruct the building history of the cathedral and provided an alternative interpretation of the 1262 civic statutes which mentions a special chapel to be built for the commemoration of the Montaperti victory and the Virgin's intercession. The construction situation makes it difficult to assume that the chapel was built in the nave right after 1262:

¹ Muller (2004), p. 38.

the construction of the western façade began only in 1284, which meant that the site of the Boniface altar was near the construction area which was still inaccessible and not yet functioning as the main entrance of the cathedral. It is likely that the altarpiece, which can be dated circa 1267, was intended for the decoration of the eastern end of the cathedral. The centrality of Mary in the iconographical programme of the reconstructed altarpiece points to its location on a Marian altar. As argued by Cannon (2013²), it is likely that the major Marian panels were intended for the Virgin altars placed near the choir screens in case of Dominican churches. However, this was not always the case for other church buildings. For example, in the case of the Servite Order, the high altars were dedicated to the Virgin, and carried an image of her.² In the case of Siena cathedral, it was indeed the high altar that was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Chapter 3 has argued that the iconography of *Christ Mounting the Cross* does not necessarily always point to a Franciscan commission: the theme was a shared concern among the Christians in the east and the west as well as the north. The eastern iconography, more precisely Armenian in its origin probably travelled to the west through different channels, including the Franciscans. However, Franciscans initially did not have a monolithic view of the theme of how Christ was crucified: it was a much-debated current theological issue regarding the dual nature of Christ, which was a concern for Christians on both sides of the Mediterranean and beyond the Alps. The role of the Franciscans in promoting the image of *Christ Mounting the Cross* should be placed in a wider theological

² G. Mina, 'Coppo di Marcovaldo's Madonna del Bordone: Political Statement or Profession of Faith?', in J. Cannon and B. Williamson (2000), pp. 237-293, p. 246.

context. The motif of Mary embracing Christ, which appeared as an invention in the west and was understood as typically Sieneese, must have been a result of the increasing Marian devotion among various groups of people, both religious and lay, male and female. Considering Siena as one of the most important centres of Marian devotion, the motif of the interceding Mary in the iconography of the *Ascent of the Cross* can be a Sieneese invention in order to visually emphasise her intercession.

The *Coronation of the Virgin* examined in Chapter 4 is yet another selection which emphasised the theme of intercession depicting Mary in an orant pose. It was an iconography northern in origin invented to visualise the last theophany which concluded the process of Salvation: the complete view of the Catholic faith as expressed in the Creed was to believe that the Virgin who conceived through the Holy Spirit was raised to heaven, both body and soul, where she would be crowned and seated on the right of Christ. She was the ultimate intercessor for humanity to whom the Sieneese dedicated themselves. To commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin at the Battle of Montaperti, Sieneese must have looked for the most convincing iconography to visualise this privilege. Considering this exceptional historical fact, it can indeed be Guido da Siena's reconstructed altarpiece that brought this image to Italy from the north. At the same time, the iconography was italianised by depicting Mary in a rather archaic orant pose. In addition, Mary was given chrysography which was introduced from the east but only applied to Mary in the west to show her status as the Queen of Heaven. Guido da Siena's *Coronation of the Virgin* is yet another scene full of invention, which can reasonably be understood if it was for the high

altar of Siena cathedral to celebrate the Virgin's exceptional status as the intercessor of Sieneese citizens.

The four chapters of this thesis thus support the argument that the reconstructed altarpiece which shows unusual format and selection of scenes for a mid-thirteenth-century Italian panel painting could have indeed been an invention for the important commission for Siena cathedral to commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin.

The Role of Guido's Pictorial Narrative

The reconstructed narrative altarpiece uses the format of a vita panel of saints which explains the special role of the figure depicted in the centre. As Belting argued, pictorial narrative is an instrument for explanation and making arguments. The Marian-focused narrative thus reasonably accompanies the central iconography of the Madonna and Child. The selection of the scenes and the emphasis on Mary in each scene provides a Marian iconographical programme. The altarpiece must have functioned as an argument for the legitimacy of the Marian protection for Siena. It is indeed the extra-biblical episodes that characterises Guido's narrative cycle: the *Ascent of the Cross* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* were introduced to reform the Biblical narrative in order to emphasise the intercession of the Virgin. As we have seen, Guido's narrative cycle was not a literal narration of a biblical event. Guido's pictorial narrative provided an explanation of the important role of the Virgin especially for her miraculous intercession and protection for the Sieneese. It was devised to commemorate the significant supernatural yet historical event in Siena of the

actual intercession of the Virgin which occurred at the Battle of Montaperti in 1260. This was to be shared among the citizens beyond generations to form civic identity and solidarity. Here the pictorial narrative's role was to express abstract concepts visually, to show understandings to honour the Virgin to gain more protection, to share interpretation among citizens, and to publicize to audiences from outside the city. In my view, it was a way of showing effort, both intellectual and artistic, to obtain more intercession and protection as well as to demonstrate the privilege. It was a way to argue that Siena was protected by the Virgin, and to persuade that her intercession is eternalised.

Guido's Altarpiece as the Origin of Sieneese Art

As Diana Norman has argued, the role of Sieneese art has been to celebrate Siena's perceived status as a city under the divine protection of the Virgin Mary and the saints. In my view, Guido's pictorial narrative can indeed be placed in the very beginning of this development. Although Marian devotion was already developing in Siena before 1260, the miraculous intercession at Montaperti did mark a turning point for Siena to form the civic identity of "the City of the Virgin". From then on, perpetuating this status has become a communal concern in Siena. The phenomenon of increasing civic involvement in the cult of patron saints, according to Diana Webb, emerged in the period when the civic government was gaining more leadership in politics in the course of the twelfth century. The laymen who began to rule the citizens in the city and its surrounding area were taking over the political role of the bishop and his entourage, and this committed them to an interest in the civic cult. The lay governing body "had to

learn to share the public responsibility for obtaining celestial guarantees of the city's well-being", which led to their increasing involvement, collectively, in the management of the fabric of the cathedral.

In 1262, the first civic statute was compiled in Siena. The victory of the Battle of Montaperti which occurred a few years before its compilation definitively promoted the initiative of the commune and the active participation of the citizens in the rituals and the feasts of the church. The devotion to the Virgin was regularised in the statutes, and one rubric urges the civic authorities to find a place to construct a chapel in honour of God, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints who granted victory to the Sienese, "if they would be asked by the bishop, since it is necessary to demolish the chapel of Saint James for the embellishment of the cathedral. In this place to be approved, the new chapel should be built at the expense of the Opera." This has been related to the commission of the *Madonna del Voto*, although it is uncertain whether the bishop actually proposed as the commune expected. In any case, the narrative programme of Guido's cycle would have been adequate to realise the will of the commune to fund a new project in the cathedral for this commemorative occasion under the bishop's supervision.

The Role of Cathedral Art: Guido's Altarpiece for the Civic Celebration

Guido's narrative features Mary as the protagonist. Various sources were fused into this work to realize this programme in an impressively emotional way. As we have seen, Guido da Siena's narrative cycle shows an attempt to extend and reform the Biblical narrative by including two extra-biblical episodes with details that emphasised the Virgin's role as a mediatrix: the embracing gesture in the

Ascent of the Cross and the orant pose in the *Coronation of the Virgin*. The theme of the Virgin's intercession is also emphasised by the selection of the Hodegetria type of the Virgin and Child, which was the legendary image of the Madonna painted by Saint Luke and the model for the icon of the Madonna Protectress of Constantinople, the prototype of the City of Mary. Thus the reconstructed panel actually shows a very logical and suitable programme to commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin for the Sienese. Behind this project, we can see the intellectuals bringing new visual images and current theological ideas originating both in the east and the north. This shows the ambition of this project to bring together the most advanced ideas to renew the Biblical narrative to suit the purpose of the commission. The pictorial narrative by Guido da Siena functioned successfully in visualising the patron's, namely the commune of Siena's understanding and interpretation of the Virgin's important role. Expressing thanks to the Virgin, the Sienese wished to gain more protection from their extraordinary patron saint. This concept will be clearly stated later in the inscription of Duccio's enormous double-sided polyptych for the high altar of the cathedral: on the base of the Virgin's throne, it is written in Latin: "MATER SCA DEI/SIS CAUSA SENIS REQUIEI/SIS DUCCIO VITA/TE QUIA PINXIT ITA – Holy mother of God be thou the cause of peace for Siena, and, because he painted thee thus, of life for Duccio."³

Duccio's *Maestà* demonstrates the developed and elaborated pictorial narrative in the successive years of Guido's cycle, not only in scale but also in the development of the idea of the interpretation of the Gospel story. Each pictorial

³ J. White, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Mediaeval Workshop* (London, 1979), p. 100.

narrative has a different programme with different selection of scenes to emphasize their purpose. For example, the Siena cathedral pulpit by Nicola Pisano emphasizes the Last Judgement by assigning a major part to this episode, and the mural cycle in the lower church of the cathedral displays typology with the Old Testament episodes. The decoration of the cathedral dedicated to the Virgin with numerous pictorial narratives was elaborated in order to honour the civic patron saint, and to manifest its civic identity. It was an effort made for the constant renewal for the benefit of the city as a whole. Although Siena's cathedral was under the religious care of a bishop and a college of canons, the building's construction and artistic embellishment was controlled and orchestrated by Siena's government, which delegated responsibility to a board of works, the Opera del Duomo. This committee of citizens controlled the commissioning for the cathedral and the construction during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Repositioning Guido's Altarpiece in the Architectural Context

The project to enlarge the eastern end of the cathedral became active after 1255. In 1259 documents appear regarding the furnishing for the newly enlarged chancel area: In 1259, there is a mention of the construction of the new high altar as well as the choir area including location of the stalls and the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From these documents, we understand that the eastern end of the cathedral was to be designated as the important entrance from the city centre most probably because the western side of the cathedral would be soon inaccessible during the long term due to the reconstruction of the nave. When the Battle of Montaperti occurred in 1260, the construction of the eastern part of the

cathedral was still in progress. Around the time the 1262 statute was about to be in force, the cupola was completed with the golden *mela* on the top in 1263. From then on, the interior decoration of the crossing area was carried out. In 1265, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano were commissioned to work on the new pulpit. A *Biccherna* document of 1267 refers to candles offered in front of the altar of Holy Mary and those for the feast of Saint Boniface. This does attest to the establishment of the feast, but does not actually mention any altar or chapel dedicated to Saint Boniface intended in the statutes of 1262. In 1268, the pulpit was completed. If we consider that the cathedral decoration was focused on the furnishing of the crossing area, it is difficult to assume that the special side chapel of the Virgin was being constructed in the nave at this time. It is more likely that the panel of the *Madonna del Voto*, which can be dated around this time, was commissioned to decorate the eastern area, and most probably for the new high altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Repositioning Guido's Altarpiece in the Cathedral Decoration Programme

Following Guido da Siena's reconstructed altarpiece, the wall of the lower church was decorated in the 1270s with a gospel narrative cycle with focus on Mary along with the Old Testament episodes.⁴ As Antonina Sahaydachny argued, "Each work of art in the Duomo memorialized differently aspects of the life and destiny of the Madonna."⁵ In 1284, the construction of the façade began, and Mary's infancy cycle was sculpted above the main entrance. The sculptures of the prophets and ancient figures allude typologically to the birth of the Virgin.

⁴ The narrative programme of the lower church mural cycle is not fully studied yet.

⁵ A. Sahaydachny, 'The Madonna Protectress of Siena in the "Maestà" Altarpiece by Duccio (1308-1311)', in *1308*, eds A. Speer and D. Wirmer (Berlin, 2010), pp. 663-691, p. 675.

Sahaydachny borrowed the words of Enzo Carli describing it as a “sculptural prelude” for Duccio’s *Maestà*: every detail of the design symbolises the Virgin’s arrival into the cathedral of “Santa Maria Assunta”.⁶ It includes the important apocryphal scenes from the early life of Mary including images of her parents, Joachim and Anna, details of her birth, an image of her running up the steps to the temple at her Presentation, and representation of her betrothal to Joseph, carved into the lintel over the central door (Fig. 151). Statues of Old Testament prophets, of kings and sybils, and of Plato and Aristotle adorn the façade. According to Sahaydachny, this illustrates the preparation for her destiny as the Mother of God visible when entering. Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer, the new Gate of Heaven, and the Protectress of Siena.⁷ There was also originally a carving of the 1260 dedication of Siena to the Madonna (Fig. 152).

In 1287, the government of the Nine was established which presided over the golden age of Siena until 1355. The civic statute of 1288 mentions the commission of the stained-glass window attributed to Duccio. The first document regarding Duccio’s *Maestà* for the high altar is dated 9 October 1308. It must have been planned for the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Virgin’s intercession at the Battle of Montaperti. In 1310, the western façade of the cathedral was probably completed. From then on, this becomes the new main entrance. In 1311, Duccio’s *Maestà* must have been installed through the newly completed portal with a civic procession. Sahaydachny observed the continuity of the cathedral decoration programme from the façade sculpture to the *Maestà*, which assured Mary’s presence in Siena: Duccio’s *Maestà* was the culmination of

⁶ Sahaydachny (2010), p. 675.

⁷ Sahaydachny (2010), pp. 675-677.

the representation of Siena as the Virgin's "*locus sanctus* thus reaffirming her eternal protection of Siena and her intercession for the Sienese people."⁸ Inside the church, the stained glass window showed the destiny of Mary in Heaven, anticipating the heavenly court in the *Maestà*. Later in the mid-fourteenth century, the side altars for the four civic patron saints were adorned with altarpieces each depicting a Marian narrative episode in the central panel forming a unified programme elaborating the *Maestà*. Thus from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, the cathedral was constantly adorned with pictorial narrative visualising the presence of Mary in Siena, and Guido's narrative can be positioned at the very beginning of such a programme.

To conclude, this thesis has revealed the high probability of the reconstruction of Guido da Siena's narrative altarpiece and its original location on the high altar of Siena cathedral combining the methodological tools of altarpiece studies and pictorial narrative studies. Guido's pictorial narrative used extra-biblical sources to proactively renew the traditional narrative to suit its own context. It functioned successfully in visualising the patrons', namely the Commune of Siena's understanding and interpretation of the Virgin's important role. By expressing thanks to the Virgin through artistic production, the Sienese wished to gain more protection from their extraordinary patron saint. The decoration of the cathedral dedicated to the Virgin with numerous pictorial narratives was constantly

⁸ Sahaydachny (2010), p. 664.

elaborated in order to honour the civic patron saint, and to manifest its civic identity. The *Madonna del Voto* was commissioned by the Commune of Siena to commemorate the miraculous intercession of the Virgin in 1260, and the iconographical programme was most probably intended to visualise this concept. Guido's narrative cycle, as we have seen, was very appropriate for this purpose. Siena was an important centre of Marian art on its own, which proactively reformed the traditional narrative to renew their communal civic ideal. For Siena, it was important that the protection of the Virgin was constantly renewed, and pictorial narrative functioned to meet this purpose. Guido's narrative cycle can indeed be the very first civic-religious altarpiece placed in the cathedral that became a model for other narrative artworks to follow in Siennese art. The self-conscious Siennese details and selection seem to attest to the context of the commission when the important civic identity was taking form, and this altarpiece can be placed as the earliest example of the gospel narrative cycle of Siena as the 'City of the Virgin.'

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