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ACTA AD ARCHAEOLOGIAM ET ARTIVM HISTORIAM PERTINENTIA

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Inscriptions in Liturgical Spaces

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STEFANO RICCIONI

The Word in the Image: an Epiconographic Analysis of Mosaics of the Reform in Rome*

Abstract

Using a new methodological approach, called epiconography, the present paper examines the most significant monuments produced in Rome during the Gregorian reform: the mosaics of S. Clemente and S. Maria in Trastevere. This approach situates the works in the historical and cultural contexts of their production, and attempts to resolve the divide between "visible" and "legible", figure and text, which has been present for so long in art-historical studies. The two mosaics are exemplars of a practice of "visual composition" that followed the rules of medieval rhetoric in order to emphasize an ecclesiastical message. This strategy was typical during the Gregorian reform, since S. Clemente was composed under the direct influence of the initial ideals that gave impetus to this ecclesiastical reform, while S. Maria in Trastevere constitutes the apex of "Gregorian art", showing the triumph of the reformed Church. In both mosaics, the scripts guide the viewer by the type of letters used, the placing of texts and images, and their colors, depending on the position of the viewer in the architectural space of the church. Gregorian art demonstrates how traditional models of decoration are reinterpreted to create new *schemata*, closer to the contemporary message of the Church. Reformers created a visual rhetoric based on the display of closely connected scripts and images, which systematized knowledge for the benefit of the beholder.

Historians of art and architecture have traditionally displayed little interest in including textual components in their analyses. When they do discuss texts, they focus mostly on defining a methodological dichotomy between text and image, with the result that they treat even inscriptions displayed on monumental works as something "other", that is, as elements symbolically and aesthetically outside the composition. This attitude can be traced back to Giorgio Vasari, who defined inscriptions in works of art as "gofferia" (awkwardness or clumsiness),

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grant to work on epiconography. I again benefited from important discussions and suggestions with Prof. Herbert Kessler. Finally, my thanks to Lucy Donkin, David Defries, Anne Dunlop and Louis Hamilton with whom I discussed my work and who helped me with my English. Obviously, any errors remain my own responsibility.

On the relationship text and image, see: Riccioni 2008a, 465-469; Riccioni 2010/2011, 326-327, with bibliography.

considering them on par with jokes.² Thus, inscriptions (called tituli) have been treated using two main interpretative approaches: in the first, their relationship to the images is ignored in favour of their apparent value as literary texts and historical sources; in the second, they are treated as complements to and descriptions of the images.3 Although recent studies, especially those that focus on a particular type of text in art - the signature of the artist4 - have begun to revise our understanding of the relationship of text to image,5 the traditional attitude still prevails in most scholarship. This conservatism has had a particularly deleterious effect on our understanding of medieval art because, in the Middle Ages especially, images were treated as controlled and selected visual transpositions of texts, while displays of the written word on visible monuments (even when not read) indicated authority (auctoritas). Furthermore, words were interpreted as visible signs of an invisible referent.6 In fact, because of its predominantly Christian nature, the medieval image is connected to the Word Incarnate and therefore to the definitions of the words "visible" and "legible".7 Even though it cannot be established that images could be "read" more easily than words, medieval image-making was intended to be a narrative and didactic art addressed especially to the illiterate: it was intended to be the "literature of the laity" (literatura laicorum).8 These strands converged in Pope Gregory the Great's (d. 604) iconic statement that "pictures are the scripture of the uneducated," an axiom that was repeated with many variations in later discussions of the function of art.9 From this perspective, the division between text and image is a matter of a specific literacy rather than ontology. On the one hand, this view made images available for exegesis according to the allegorical hermeneutics used for sacred scripture. On the other, it meant that the rhetorical arts of classical antiquity and monastic discourse could be applied to the composition of images.

Working within this medieval perspective to advance and celebrate their ideals, the Gregorian reformers created a rhetorical art by "composing" new images. During the twelfth century, reform theologians accorded an important role

Vasari, Le vite, Barocchi & Bettarini (eds.) 1967,
 II. 171.

³ Riccioni 2008a, 465, with bibliography.

On the signature in art, see: Chastel (ed.) 1971; Klotz 1976; Claussen 1992; Claussen 1981; Dietl 1995; Fraenkel 1992; Dietl 2009. For a more comprehensive project on signatures in works of art, see: Donato (ed.) 2003a [2008]; Donato 2003b [2008].

⁵ The bibliography is vast. See Riccioni 2008a. More recently, interest in text has moved towards a new methodological approach, see: Donato 1997; Méhu 2006a; Kessler 2007b; Thunø 2007; Gardner [forthcoming].

⁶ Kessler 2000; Castelnuovo & Sergi (eds.) 2004; Ganz & Lentes (eds.) 2004; Bouché & Hamburger (eds.) 2005; Hahn 2006.

⁷ Illich 1993; Cavallo 1994; Barreto, Cerman, Soubigou & Toutain-Quittelier (éds.) 2007.

⁸ Reflections along these lines inform the majority of the medieval debate about images, the 'word', and text (whether biblical or liturgical), see: Gombrich 1969; Gombrich 1982; Riccioni 2008a, 465. On the function of Christian art, see: Duggan 1989; Duggan 2005.

Gregorius Magnus, Registrum Epistularum, 9.209,
 768, lines 12-14; Gregorius Magnus, Registrum
 Epistularum, 11.10, 874, lines 23-26. Kessler 2006.

to church decoration, and it is possible to argue, with Herbert Kessler, that they created a kind of "theory of Art". 10 For example, in the eleventh century, the monk Peter Damian wrote a letter to Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino concerning images that show Christ flanked by St Peter and St Paul, a common artistic composition. 11 He also wrote picture captions that directed viewers to the higher, spiritual meaning of what was visible.12 The words were meant to prevent viewers from interpreting the images as simple descriptions of reality and, more importantly, to help them escape the danger of idolatry and "heresy". 13 Reformers also interpreted the architecture and decoration of churches allegorically as a reflection (image) of biblical and liturgical knowledge (texts). In the writings of Bruno of Segni and Honorius Augustodunensis, the church building is a sacred space, a microcosm designed to reflect the macrocosm. 14 Bruno of Segni described the church building as a symbolic universe, and suggested a comparison between architecture, liturgical furniture, decoration, biblical symbolism and the living members of the Church. 15 In his writings, the unity of the church building is based on concord and peace, as an example to the faithful.16 Bruno wrote: "In the house of God nothing must appear fatuous or foolish, ugly or impure";17 and in the De figuris ecclesiae he declared: "In the temple nothing is idle; whatever is written or carved is written for our instruction. The walls themselves teach us and, in a certain way, speak to us".18

Exegesis of the visual image logically implied a concern for its rhetorical composition. The Gregorian reformers created a practice of visual composition that followed the rules of contemporary rhetoric in order to emphasize an ecclesiastical message. Much of this composition was based in what Mary Carruthers has called "monastic rhetoric", which cast rhetoric as an orthopraxis designed, like

¹⁰ On the existence of a theory of Art in the Gregorian reform, see: Kessler 2007a; Kessler 2007b; Riccioni 2010/2011, 328, with bibliography.

¹¹ Petrus Damianus, De picturis, PL 145, 589B-596B. Leclercq 1960, 233; Riccioni 2006, 20-21; Kessler 2007a, 25, 33-35; Speciale 2009.

¹² Kessler 2007a, 33-34. Peter Damian's poems and sermons contain several interesting verses that could have been composed (or simply used) for picture captions, see: Petrus Damianus, Carmina sacra et preces, PL 145, 917-985.

¹³ On the concept of 'heresy' in the Middle Ages and more specifically during the Gregorian reform, see: Lambert 2002 [1992].

Bruno Signinus, De sacramentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 1089B-1110A; Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 875A-902B; Bruno Signinus, De ornamentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 901B-942D; Honorius Augustodunensis, De gemma Animae, PL 172, 541-738. Hamilton 2005; Hamilton

^{2007;} Quintavalle 2003.

The foundations of the Church are Jesus and the prophets: Bruno Signinus, De sacramentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 895C; the columns are the apostles: Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 896A; the windows are the Fathers of the Church: Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 896B; the walls represent the congregation of saints: Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 896A. On Bruno of Segni, especially on De Laudibus ecclesiae, its symbolical meaning and its importance for church dedication, see, Hamilton 2010, 162-211.

⁶ Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 896B.

¹⁷ Bruno Signinus, De ornamentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 940C.

¹⁸ Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 886C-886D.

asceticism, to shape character and was the dominant mode of rhetorical training from the fourth through the eleventh centuries. ¹⁹ A new interest in rhetoric emerged in the eleventh century, based on a revived interest in the principles enunciated in "Ciceronian" texts, especially the *De inventione* and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. ²⁰ This interest resulted in the *ars dictaminis*, a kind of theory of composition ²¹ given authority by the antiquity of the classical books (*auctoritas antiquitatis*) from which it drew. ²² This rhetoric influenced various enterprises – poetry, preaching, the arts of memory and the writing of letters and books. ²³ Arguably, it also influenced the composition of images in works of art. Alberic of Montecassino (d. 1088), a supporter of Gregory VII and an influential rhetorician introduced the *ars dictaminis* in the school of Montecassino. ²⁴ The close relationship between the Gregorian reformers in Rome and the abbey of Montecassino ²⁵ helps to explain some of the novelties in Roman church decoration in this period.

Using a new methodological approach, the present paper examines the most significant monuments produced in Rome during the twelfth century, the mosaics of S. Clemente and S. Maria in Trastevere. The two mosaics are exemplars of the monumental and rhetorical art of the Gregorian reform, since S. Clemente was composed under the direct influence of the initial ideals that gave impetus to this ecclesiastical reform, while S. Maria in Trastevere constitutes the apex of Gregorian art, showing the triumph of the reformed Church.

The Epiconographic Methodology

As an art historian, I am interested in understanding the visual discourse generated by the interaction between images and the written word, especially as expressed in monumental works displayed to the public. When displayed, writing

¹⁹ Carruthers 1998, 1-6, 60-115.

²⁰ In the Middle Ages, most scholars attributed the Ad Herennium to Cicero. Freedberg 1982, 87-97; Murphy 2005, 1-26; Ward 1995; Ward 2006.

²¹ Camargo 1991, 17-28; Bolgar 1982. In the De inventione, Cicero gives the "five parts of rhetoric" as: invention (inventio), arrangement (dispositio), style (elocutio), memory (memoria) and delivery (pronuntiatio); Murphy 2005, 1-2.

²² Murphy 1974, 89; Carruthers 2008 [1990], chap. 6.

²³ Yates 1966; Mary Carruthers demonstrated that the techniques of rhetoric, used during the classical period, were adopted by monks to create a map of loci, a kind of mnemonic archive. See Carruthers 2008 [1990], 154; Carruthers 1998, 81-82. On composition of letters and books, see Baldwin 1928; McKeon 1942; Murphy 1974; Parkes 1976.

Alberic, monk and teacher at Monte Cassino, composed the Dictaminum radii [Albericus Casinensis, Flores rhetorici; Alberic of Monte Cassino, "Flowers of Rhetoric"]; on Alberic but not specific on ars dictandi, see: Radding & Newton 2003. He was among the first medieval philosophers to connect classical rhetoric to the writing of letters, helping create the ars dictaminis. On the origins of the ars dictaminis, see: Murphy 1971a; Bloch 1972; Murphy 1971b, 56-64, 67-69; Larmon Peterson 2003. On Alberic and the birth of the ars dictaminis in Bologna, see: Licitra 1977.

²⁵ The literature is vast; see, for example, Toubert 1990, 93-138, 193-238 [2001, 73-102, 143-175]; Riccioni 2006, 11-15 and Riccioni 2010/2011, 321-324, with bibliography. Grégoire 1971; Kitzinger 1972a; Cowdrey 1986 [1983]; Bloch 1986; Speciale 1991; Avagliano (ed.) 1997; Cowdrey 2000.

is an image and an object, visible and tangible, even before it is a text to be read. In purely iconographical terms, images are signs that bear an intrinsic meaning. This is particularly true of inscriptions presented in monumental contexts. ²⁶ Working together in a complex reciprocal relationship, the scripts and the other images give the monument/icon a unified and highly articulated meaning that cannot be divorced from the physical impact of the image on the public. In fact, the inscriptions best reveal the complexity of the visual message. If the work of art is recognized as an ensemble of diverse semantic vehicles, which include both images and texts, inscriptions are essential for defining and understanding the compositional process and the function of the object. Inscriptions allow viewers to understand the modes of communication of the work of art as a result of a coherent cultural system. Indeed, when words and images appear together in the same context, the figural and linguistic systems of communication derive meaning from one another and generate in their turn new semantic content.

To reflect on these themes is to confront the constitution of the medieval image, understood as a complex discourse in which epigraphy played an important role.27 In the discipline of epigraphy some of these themes are now being addressed; it is no longer limited to the study of inscriptions in hard substances such as stone or bronze, but is open to the function of "universal and lasting publicity", 28 a certain solemnity of purpose, and a slow execution that employs particular techniques of script.²⁹ In this way, epigraphy shares with the history of art the same objects of investigation and the same material approach. It pays attention to style and form; the sign and the drawing constitute the graphic nature of the written word. Inscriptions provide a multi-layered testimony comprising three fundamental aspects - text, script, and monument30 - and therefore cannot be divorced from the context to which they are linked organically and with which they form a single "complex monument".31 Still, epigraphy lacks the aesthetic, iconographic and stylistic means to treat the study of texts in images as a unified whole. That is to say, what is still missing is a precise methodology that considers the inscriptions as visual objects functioning in various ways in the work of art, to be investigated in the totality of their aesthetic components. I call this methodology "epiconography". 32

Epiconography aims at filling the gap between text and image, reading and seeing, by studying textual components in images, their visual disposition and their function in the visual narrative, but also by treating scripts as images. The term epiconography combines the original meanings of epigraphy (ἐπι-γράφειν =

²⁶ Petrucci 1986, XX (the English translation, Lappen 1993, does not contain the methodological introduction quoted).

²⁷ On this argument, see: Favreau (ed.) 1996; Méhu 2006b; Treffort 2006.

²⁸ Favreau 1979, 16; Favreau 1997. For a recent

methodological approach to medieval epigraphy, see Treffort 2008, 3-10.

²⁹ Petrucci 1994, 819.

³⁰ Campana 1984, 363.

³¹ Campana 1967; Campana 1976, 85.

³² Riccioni 2008a; Riccioni 2008b.

to write on) and iconography (εἰκονογραφία = figurative representation), without forgetting, however, the other possible meanings of γράφειν (to write, but also to draw, paint, depict) on (ἐπί) the image (εἰκών), where the script itself is an icon. It addresses, therefore, a way of seeing that is not simply the combined results of an epigraphic and iconographic examination, but an interpretative system (both descriptive and analytical) that considers the artifact as a "irreversible compound", overcoming the Vasarian dichotomy between text and image. This approach situates the work in the historical and cultural context of its production, and attempts to eliminate the division between visible and legible, figure and text, which has been present for so long in art-historical studies. In this way, the history of art can widen its investigative horizons and claim a central role in the examination of visual, and also verbal forms, establishing a point of departure for future research, not just in the humanities. Indeed, the discipline of art history is currently advancing towards themes of wide relevance from the perspective of the history of images and perception. These approaches extend the history of art from the field of anthropology and socio-cultural study, to the study of cognition and neuroscience, exploring issues of visibility, including interior, invisible visions.

S. Clemente

Examination of the compositional methods of visual discourse, extended to include the style of inscriptions and images, reveals the narrative and iconographical function of the apse mosaic of S. Clemente in Rome, ³³ commissioned by Pascal II (1099-1118) and finished before 1119. ³⁴ The mosaic includes inscriptions which are all integral to the work and closely related to the images (FIG. 1). ³⁵ The scripts guide the viewer through the type of letters, the placing of texts and images, and the colors, depending on the position of the viewer in the architectural space of the church. From a seventeenth-century drawing by Ciampini, we can see that the nave was originally divided into two main parts: one part that included the area of the apse and the extended chancel known as the *schola cantorum*, which ended at the two pilasters of the nave, and the area open to the laity, beyond those pilasters (FIG. 2).

The focal point of the mosaic is the Crucifix in the apse conch. The Crucifix is aligned on an axis with the bust of Christ, who is shown with one hand raised in blessing within a roundel at the center of the surrounding arch. The inscription, which is placed around the lower edge of the arch, frames the apse and joins the

³³ This section is taken from my book. The literature on the mosaic is vaste, for a comprehensive bibliography see: Riccioni 2006; Croiser 2006a, 209-218; Riccioni 2007a; Riccioni 2010/2011, 341-344.

³⁴ On the consecration of S. Clemente in 1118-1119, see: Barclay Lloyd 1986; Barclay Lloyd 1989, 43-51; Claussen 2002, 303; Riccioni 2006.

^{3;} Quintavalle 2009, 409, 437, note 41. Quintavalle suggests the mosaic was finished in around 1110. The hypothesis is plausible, although the scholar does not provide any new information.

³⁵ On inscriptions in S. Clemente, see: Nilgen 1996, 160-162; Favreau 1997, 233-236.



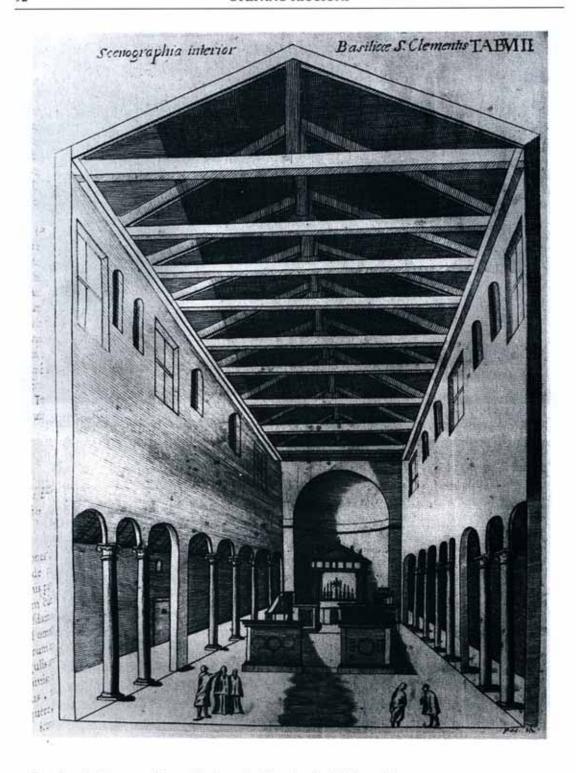
Fig. 1 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic in the apse and on the surrounding wall. Photo: S. Clemente.

two parts of the decoration. The text is an antiphon from the Christmas Mass, and reads: GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO SEDENTI SUP(ER) THRONUM ET IN TERRA PAX HOMINIBUS BONE VOLUNTATIS.³⁶ Displayed in an elegant and balanced manner, in a semi-circular arrangement within a golden frame on a blue background, the inscription is interrupted at the top of the arch by the image of Christ.

To the left and right of the arch, the prophets (FIG. 3) Isaiah and (FIG. 4) Jeremiah, dressed as ancient Romans, are identified by inscriptions: ISAIAS and HIEREMIAS, and by quotations on their scrolls written in black capitals on a white background. Isaiah's reads: VIDI DOMINUM / SEDENTEM SUPER SOLIUM, and Jeremiah's: HIC EST D(EU)S N(OSTE)R ET N(ON) ESTI/MABIT(UR) ALIUS ABSQ(UE) ILLO. Isaiah's scroll contains an explicit quotation from the beginning of Isaiah 6, after the Song of the Vine. 37 The text was

³⁶ Translation: "Glory to God in the highest seated on His throne and on earth peace to men of good will".

³⁷ Is. 6, 1: "In anno, quo mortuus est rex Ozias, vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum".



 F_{IG} . 2 – S. Clemente, Rome. The interior. Drawing by G. Ciampini (Vetera Monimenta, I, tav. VIII).

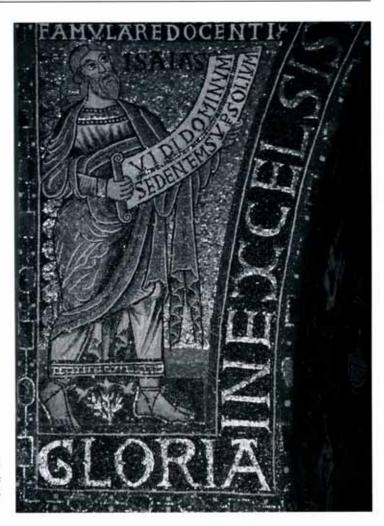


Fig. 3 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. The prophet Isaias. Photo: S. Riccioni.

read during the first part of the Christmas Mass introducing the canon ³⁸ and is closely connected with the inscription of the *Gloria*, where the phrase *sedenti super thronum* is interpolated. Moreover, the reference to a throne (either as *thronum* or *solium*) is connected with the ideological relationship between *Ecclesia* and the papacy. This connection, so important to the Investiture Controversy, is made explicit by the papal throne at the base of the apse and symbolizes the authority of the Church over the Empire. ³⁹

For a broad discussion of this argument, see Riccioni 2006, 23-34, 80-81.

³⁸ Sinding-Larsen 1978; Sinding-Larsen 1984, 47-50.

³⁹ On the symbolic meaning of papal throne during the Gregorian reform, see Gandolfo 1981.

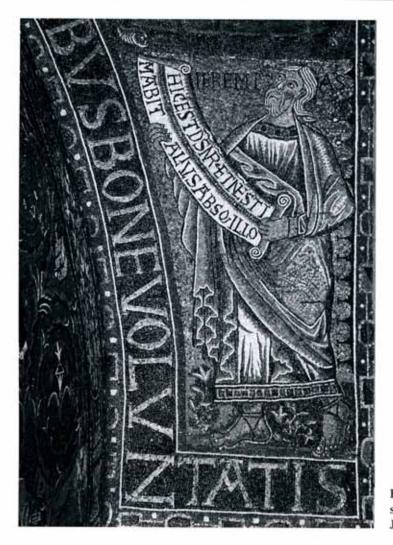


Fig. 4 – S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. The prophet Jeremiah. Photo: S. Clemente.

Jeremiah's text is a reference to Baruch 3,40 excerpted from the sermon Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos,41 a polemical text against heretics and the Jews that was written in the fifth century by Quodvultdeus, but ascribed to St. Augustine during the Middle Ages. It was eventually developed into a "prophet play" used during the Christmas Mass, and also employed in several epigraphic con-

daeos, 11.7: "Hic est [...] Deus noster, et non aestimabitur alius absque illo, qui invenit omnem viam scientiae, et dedit eam Iacob puero suo et Isrhael dilecto sibi. Post haec in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est". Thomas 1950; Favreau 1997, 227.

⁴⁰ Bar. 3, 36: "Hic Deus noster non aestimabitur alius adversus eum hic adinvenit omnem viam disciplinae et tradidit illam Iacob puero suo et Isrhael dilecto suo post haec in terris visus est et cum hominibus conversatus est".

⁴¹ Quodvultdeus Carthaginiensis ep., Contra Iu-

texts.42 The quotation was often ascribed to Jeremiah because of his association with the doctrine of divine incarnation; and it was often used in polemics against the Jews. 43 Moreover, because the sermon Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos was ascribed to St Augustine, the text was well known at Montecassino. 44 Manuscripts found in the monastery's library in the eleventh century, entitled Sermones et homiliae diversorum Patrum, contain portions of it,45 and annotations like In vig(ilia) natalis Domini and In nat(ivitate) Domini confirm that the text was read at Christmas.46 The iconographical origins of the prophets on the apse arch are probably to be found in the dialogue between the Roman reformers and the monks at Montecassino.47 The same iconography of Isaiah and Jeremiah may have been used in the almost lost mosaic on the apse arch of Salerno Cathedral⁴⁸, based on what on what is known of the inscription along the frontal frame of the apse conch.49 In any case, the iconography of the prophets with written scrolls extending the length of their bodies, which later became quite common, may be regarded as an "epiconographical" novelty created during the Gregorian reform to signify speaking images teaching the congregation of the faithful the correct interpretation of the artistic program.

On each side of the arch are two saints: St Peter and St Clement on the right; St Paul and St Lawrence on the left. Each pair has an inscription under the saints' feet. The text under St Lawrence and St Paul is a kind of commentary, external to the images: DE CRUCE LAURENTI PAULO / FAMULARE DOCENTI (FIG. 5). It is displayed on two lines, and written in white letters on a black background. In contrast, the inscription under St Peter and St Clement is internal to the visual composition and makes visible the voice of St Peter speaking to St Clement: RESPICE P(RO)MISSUM / CLEMENS A ME TIBI CH(RIST)UM

dell'origine, aggrandimento e stato dei seggi della città di Salerno, original manuscript in the Library of the Badia of Cava dei Tirreni, Arca XIII, ms. 142; Braca 2003, 115. According to Braca the description of Del Pezzo demonstrates that the inscription was not placed at the base of the apse conch. The oldest transcription of these verses was made by Marsilio Colonna 1580, 77; Mazza 1681, 42. The edition used here is that published in Acocella 1966, 27: "Da Mattahaee Pater Patris hoc det et innuba mater / ut pater Alphanus maneat sine fine beatus / Ecce Dei natum sine matre Deum generatum / praedicunt vates nasci de virgine matre / sic Christus natus nostros removendo reatus / vivit cum patre in coelo et cum virgine matre". See also: Kitzinger 1972b, 152, note 11. The verses were replaced on the mosaic during a restoration campaign in 1950. On the prophets in Salerno mosaic, see: Pace 1997, 195-196.

⁴² Sepet 1867; Sepet 1868; Sepet 1877; see also: Sepet 1878; Young 1921; Thomas 1950. On liturgical *drama* and its influence on art, see: Forsyth 1972, 49-60; Favreau 1997, 225-227.

⁴³ Glass 1991, 203-221, esp. 213-219.

⁴⁴ Newton 1976, 42-43; Newton 1999, 315-317.

See manuscripts: Montecassino, Biblioteca dell'Abbazia, Casin. 99; 100; 103; 106; 107; 115 and 462. Iguanez 1915, 101-103, 103-109, 119-123, 130-137, 137-141, 180-183, III (1941), 96-100; Avagliano 1970, 304, no. 6, 305, no. 7, 10, 13, 14, 306, no. 22, 315, no. 91; Loew & Brown 1980, II, 65-67, 69, 74, 87-88.

⁴⁶ Glass 1991, 215.

⁴⁷ Riccioni 2006, 18-20.

⁴⁸ On the Salerno mosaic, see: Kitzinger 1972b; for a new interpretation of the mosaic and its chronology, also connected with the Gregorian reform, see: Iacobini 2005.

⁴⁹ See the description of Del Pezzo, Contezza

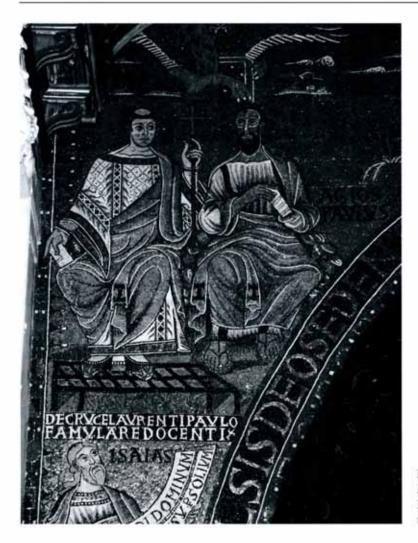


Fig. 5 – S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. St Paul and St Lawrence. Photo: S. Clemente.

(FIG. 6). This inscription is written in two colors: the first line is in white characters on a black background, while the second line has yellow characters on a red background. It functions in the same manner as rubrics in manuscripts, 'highlighting' the beginning of the text, and has a rhetorical value as a guide for readers. The inscription was specifically emphasized to exalt the pope as successor of Peter, thus demonstrating the primacy of the Church of Rome. ⁵⁰

per electionem Petri, et tertius in gradu [...]". On Bonizone of Sutri and the influence on the Church reform, see: Berschin 1992 [1972]. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries reformers thought that St. Clement had succeeded St. Peter, but he was actually the third pope after St. Peter, see: Scorza Barcellona 2000.

⁵⁰ Bonizo Sutrinus, De sacramentis, PL 150, 860B: "Post beati Petri apostolorum principis inclytum martyrium quod uno eodemque die cum beato Paulo doctore gentium sub Nerone Caesare suscipiens, gloriosam Romanam fecit Ecclesiam, Clemens natione Romanus Romanum suscepit pontificatum. Qualiter vero primus sit

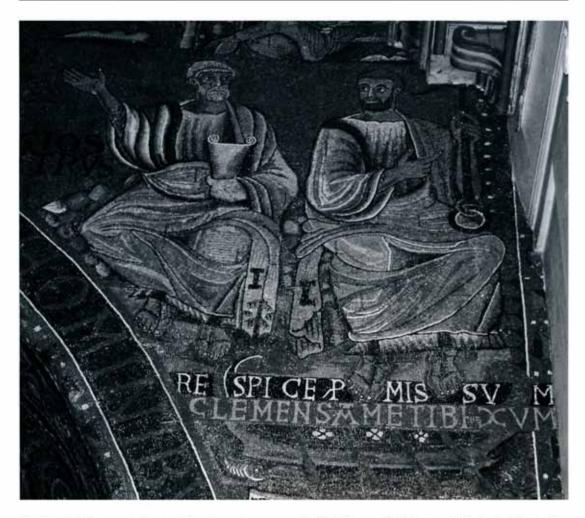


Fig. 6 - S. Clemente, Rome, Mosaic on the apse arch, St Peter and St Clement, Photo S. Clemente.

If we focus our attention on the style of the inscriptions, especially the *Gloria* and those on the scrolls of the prophets, we find further elements for analysis. The script of the *Gloria* is in golden capitals of monumental type and displays some Greek graphic elements, which have not previously attracted attention from scholars: for example, each letter *O* in the *Gloria* underneath the prophet Isaiah and (FIG. 7) in *hominibus* displays the characteristic "gem" or ornamental mark found in Greek inscriptions, and each *M* includes a cross-stroke where the two oblique strokes meet.⁵¹ Such graphic ornamentations,

⁵¹ Other distinctive elements are the A with the broken central bar and horizontal line at the



Fig. 7 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch, letters O and M in hominibus. Photo: S. Riccioni.

which are also present in the caption for Jeremiah, were not native to Roman book production or monumental epigraphy, whether painted or inscribed on stone. 52 Rather they come from Byzantine southern Italy, where the Latin alphabet of display scripts had been modified under the influence of elegant Greek graphic models. Between the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth, this precise geo-cultural area saw the elaboration of a Latin minuscule rich in Byzantine elements. It was used widely in epigraphy, especially in the southern Italian province of Apulia and the city of Salerno, ruled by the Normans, in the Benedictine communities of Campania, in Bari, Sicily

⁵² See Supino Martini 1987, 156-159, pl. XXX, 170-173, pl. XXXV. From a palaeographic point of view, the rare examples of characters displaying Greek influence in Rome and the areas under Roman influence are the result of

a familiarity with the Beneventan script. For an overview of epigraphic script in Rome, see also: Supino Martini 2001a; Supino Martini 2001b.

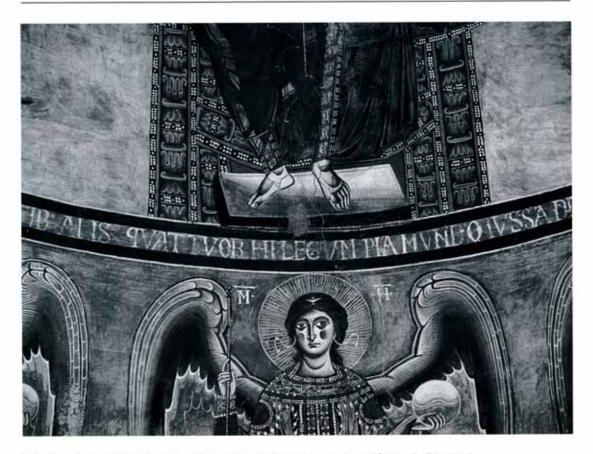


Fig. 8 - S. Angelo in formis. Inscription in the apse painting. Photo: S. Riccioni.

and the abbey of Montecassino (FIG. 8).⁵³ In Rome, this graphic style was rare. Not coincidentally, however, it can be found on the bronze doors of S. Paolo fuori le mura, which were made in 1070 in Byzantium and brought to Rome via Amalfi, when Hildebrand, the future Pope Gregory VII, was a monk at the basilica.⁵⁴ The presence of this graphic style in the mosaic of S. Clemente demonstrates particular contacts with authors or patrons connected to cultural environments influenced by Byzantium. Considering the close relationship be-

⁵³ Significant "Greek" elements are found in the script of liturgical manuscripts and Exultet rolls from the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh (the Pontifical of the Biblioteca Casanatense, from Benevento, and the Exultet 1 from Bari), as well as in the majuscule and capitals of manuscripts written in Beneventan script at the Abbey of Monte Cassino, dating from the second half of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth. The same elements

are found in monumental works executed during the abbacy of Desiderius (1058-87), such as the inscriptions incised on the bronze doors brought to Monte Cassino from Byzantium or the inscriptions in the church of S. Angelo in Formis, where the painted inscription in the apse below the Pantokrator displays the characteristic M and O.

⁵⁴ On bronze doors, see: Seloni (ed.) 1990; Angelucci 2003 [2008]; De Spirito 2003 [2008]; Iacobini (ed.) 2009.

tween the church of S. Clemente and the abbey of Montecassino – for example, the ex-librarian of the abbey, Leo of Ostia⁵⁵ was called to write Clement's *Passio* – it may be taken to confirm that the workshop commissioned to execute the mosaic included artisans from the cultural area of Benevento and Cassino who were familiar with Greek culture and script.

When the images are analyzed, in terms of shape, style, or meaning and in relation to the graphic and textual elements, and when the scripts are themselves considered as images, a *schema* emerges in the mosaic – an organization of the figural discourse – composed according to rhetorical principles borrowed from the *ars dictaminis*. ⁵⁶ For example, the rhetorical style, form and display of the inscription of the *Gloria* on the triumphal arch match the monumental dimensions of the figures on the arch, all easily legible from afar, corresponding to the *ornatus gravis* or solemn style in the rhetorical terminology of the *Ad Herennium*. ⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the inscription at the base of the conch, in a smaller format, matches the tiny figures almost hidden in the acanthus/vine scroll, and corresponds to the *ornatus adtenuatus* or humble style. The strategy divided the viewers into those who could gain entrance to the choir (that is to say the reformed canons ⁵⁸) and could thus see the small text and images in the tendrils from close up, from those who, beyond the *schola cantorum* (in other words, the laity), could only make out the inscriptions and images in the monumental format.

The inscription of the conch itself is, moreover, made up of two texts:

- ECCLESIAM CHRISTI VITI SIMILABIMUS ISTI || QUAM LEX ARENTEM SET CRUS FACIT E(SS)E VIRENTEM;⁵⁹
- DE LIGNO CRUCIS IACOBI DENS IGNATIQ(UE) REQUIESCUNT IN SUPRA-SCRIPTI CORPORE CHRISTI.⁶⁰

The first indicates that the pictured acanthus tendrils should be interpreted as the vine, a symbol of the Church; the second mentions the relics - the wood of

⁵⁵ Meyvaert & Devos 1955; Meyvaert & Devos 1956. See also: Riccioni 2006, 18-20.

⁵⁶ In classical and medieval rhetoric, schemata and diagrams were used to organize concepts. For mnemonic purposes, schemata serve as fixed points for memory storage and as a cue to start the recollective process, see: Carruthers 2008 [1990], 332. The schema of a composition guided the ductus, its logical and narrative 'flow', see: Carruthers 1998, 77-81.

⁵⁷ The Rhetorica described three levels of rhetorical style, see: Cicero M. Tullius ps., Ad C. Herennium, 4.13.55: "Sunt igitur tria genera, quae genera nos figuras appellamus, in quibus omnis oratio non vitiosa consumitur: unam gravem, alteram mediocrem, tertiam extenuatam vocamus. Gravis est quae constat ex verborum

gravium levi et ornata constructione. Mediocris est quae constat ex humiliore neque tamen ex infima et pervulgatissima verborum dignitate. Adtenuata est quae demissa est usque ad usitatissimam puri consuetudinem sermonis".

⁵⁸ On the new church of S. Clemente and its canonry build for reformed canons, see: Barclay Lloyd 1989, 20-35; Riccioni 2006, 7-10.

⁵⁹ Translation: "We make the Church of Christ similar to this vine that the law makes arid but the cross makes luxuriant".

Translation: "The wood of the cross and the teeth of Jacob and Ignatius are placed in body of Christ written above". Note the term suprascripti, used in the sense of 'displayed', 'painted' or 'made in mosaic' but literally meaning 'written above'.



Fig. 9 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. The owl. Photo S. Clemente.

the Cross and St James's tooth – that were preserved in the church. 61 The second text is embedded within the first, creating a visual correspondence between texts and images. The reference to the relics is found at the center, on the same axis as the Crucifixion, while the two parts of the leonine verse referring to the Church extend to the ends of the apse conch, corresponding with the acanthus/vine tendrils above. This type of composition, unlike traditional processes of reading a linguistic message which demand an uninterrupted progression of text, is characteristic of figural messages and corresponds to the iconography of the apse conch. In the gaps between the tendrils, the large acanthus/vine scrolls contain tiny figures of animals, especially birds on the upper level of the decoration, amorini, and groups of people (FIG. 9). Moving from the details to the design as a whole, it becomes clear that the acanthus tendrils, symmetrically arranged

Istituto Centrale del Restauro, which has demonstrated that the mosaic was made during one single campaign of works, see Anselmi & D'Angelo; Basile 2002. Furthermore, the paleographical examination reveals that the inscription was coherent with epigraphic script in medieval Rome, see Riccioni 2006, 68, note 26.

⁶¹ On a more comprehensive interpretation of the apse inscription see Riccioni 2006, pp. 65-75, with discussion of earlier bibliography. The hypothesis that the last section of the inscription was changed during the papacy of Innocent II (Stroll 1988; Stroll 1991, 118-131, esp. 126-131) should be revised after the restoration by



Fig. 10 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. St Ambrose. Photo S. Clemente.

in five roundels on five levels on each side, form a *schema* that functions in rhetorical terms taken from manuscripts. It is, in effect, a diagram, inspired by the trees of medieval mnemonic and preaching techniques, which contain figures functioning as *exempla*. In these terms the composition of style and color follows the precepts of medieval rhetoric found in the study of *ornatus*, ⁶² and the scripts themselves must be considered as images, in which iconicity and textuality are matched in an integrated, rhetorical *machina*. ⁶³

As part of this rhetorical strategy, St Ambrose, with his red halo, is distinguished from the other Fathers of the Church, who have blue halos in the mosaic (FIG. 10 and 11). In fact, the red halo functions in the same manner as the inscription under St Peter and St Clement, "rubricating" the image of the saint because it has a rhetorical value as a guide for viewers indicating that the

⁶² In rhetorical terms, ornatus is closer in meaning to furnishings or equipment than its English cognate 'ornament'. On these concepts as

they relate to the mosaic of S. Clemente, even if from a different perspective, see Bonne 1997. Carruthers 2008 [1990]; Carruthers 1998.



Fig. 11 - S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic in apse conch. St Augustine. Photo S. Clemente.

saint is the key to understanding the allegorical significance of the apse conch. Reading Ambrose's writings, in particular the *Hexaemeron*, we can find further clues to the interpretation of the images-*exempla* contained in the tendrildiagram. Above the image of St Ambrose are birds (the animals closest to the sky and thus to God) and symbols of heaven; the world is at the same level and under the saint, we can see a group of humans and fighting animals, which together symbolize the people of the Church and their ascetic struggle against temptation in order to reach God (FIG. 12). Finally, not a part of the mosaic, but symbolically connected with it, is the papal throne, which is located at the base of the apse conch (FIG. 13). The back of the throne was made from a marble *spolium* that displays the inscription: MARTYR. This *spolium* was selected from the debris of the early Christian church of S. Clemente because

form churches of Rome, see Gandolfo 1974-1975; Gandolfo, 1981; Kinney 1996; Riccioni 2005.

⁶⁴ On this symbolic interpretation see Riccioni 2006, 41-64.

⁶⁵ On the use of spolia with inscriptions in Re-



Fig. 12 – S. Clemente, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. Heron fighting against a lizard. Photo S. Clemente.

the inscription makes visible the connection between the martyrs St Peter (the first pope), St Clement (thought to have been Peter's successor), and the pope sitting on the throne (originally, Pascal II). As we have seen, the highlighted inscription under their feet draws attention to this pair of saints. Thus, without integrating the two means of communication, figural and textual, it is impossible fully to understand either the mosaic's rules of composition or its message.

This reading of the S. Clemente mosaic reveals the complexity of the message and the way in which the audience (both *idiotae* and *literati*) was directed by a sophisticated combination of texts and images. The complexity of the visual narrative functioned as an invitation to the observer to explore, elaborate, and create individual meaning as a stimulus for contemplation. This particular strategy seems to have been developed during the Gregorian reform and ultimately used to celebrate the triumph of the Church after the Investiture Controversy.



Fig. 13 – S. Clemente, Rome. The papal throne in the chancel. Photo: P. Zolli.

S. Maria in Trastevere66

In 1130, after the death of Honorius II (1124-1130), Gregory Papareschi was elected pope, taking the name Innocent II (1130-1143). In the same year, however, Peter Pierleoni was elected to the papacy as Pope Anacletus II, creating a schism. Forcing Innocent II to flee, Anacletus governed Rome until his death in 1138, at which time Innocent II returned to Rome. The close connections between the Pierleoni family and the Trastevere quarter, as well as the fact that

tion). The bibliography on the mosaic is vast, for a comprehensive bibliography see Parlato & Romano 2001, 60-75; Romano 2006; Croiser 2006b; Riccioni 2010/2011.

⁶⁶ This section is taken from my dissertation for the Licence in Mediaeval Studies of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies of Toronto, see: Riccioni 2009 (under revision for publica-



Fig. 14 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse and on the surrounding wall. Photo: S. Riccioni.

Peter Pierleoni was cardinal, have led scholars to ascribe the first rebuilding of S. Maria in Trastevere to him. ⁶⁷ Since Innocent II, who came from the "de Papa" or Papareschi family, the other powerful Roman family in Trastevere, ⁶⁸ had the *damnatio memoriae* of Anacletus II ratified in the Second Lateran Council when he had regained possession of the city, ⁶⁹ we cannot exclude that the evidence for the correct attribution was destroyed. The mosaic of S. Maria in Trastevere, however, was probably done under Innocent II, after the end of the schism, closely related to the historical events and probably finished in 1143. ⁷⁰

the time Innocent II died: Kinney 1975a, 42-53. See also: Krautheimer, Corbett & Frankl 1967, 65-71; Parlato & Romano 2001, 60-75, esp. 61-64, 73 (on the date of the mosaic); Croiser 2006b; Kinney 2006, 200-201.

⁶⁷ Krautheimer 1980, 212-214, 217-218, 226.

⁶⁸ Di Carpegna Falconieri 2004, 410.

⁶⁹ Mansi (ed.) 1901-1962, XXI, 535. All acts, decisions and activities of the antipope were invalidated.

⁷⁰ Kinney 1975b, 190-222, esp. 215-216. Dale Kinney suggested that the church was finished by

Various twelfth-century sources credit him with the work on the church and its decoration.⁷¹

The apse mosaic is based on a symmetrical schema: each image corresponds with another on the other side of the central axis. If the arch is seen to serve as a frame, a rhetorical exordium or introduction to the main theme of the narrative, the conch contains the core message of the discourse. The composition of the mosaic is organized around a central vertical axis and symmetrically composed horizontal levels.72 The central axis is marked by a vertical succession of motifs, all of which refer to Christ. At the apex of the arch is a gold cross with pendant alpha and omega; in the soffit of the conch, a christogram combining the first two letters of Christos; just below the christogram, a tiny cross; in the center of the conch, the figure of Christ wrapped in a gleaming gold mantle; and, at the bottom, a cross-nimbed lamb. Just as at S. Clemente, the papal throne is located at the base of the apse conch outside the mosaic and is symbolically connected to the meaning of the mosaic (FIG. 15). Four different levels of images intersect the vertical axis horizontally: the upper level of the arch, the central level of the conch and the arch, a monumental inscription, and a frieze of lambs. Although Christ is in the very center, the central image of the apse is extended to his right to include the Virgin Mary. They are seated on the same throne and Jesus embraces the Virgin as if she were his wife (FIG. 16). If we understand the pair as the central image of the conch, the main message is the enthronement of and marriage between Mary / Ecclesia / sponsa and Christ.73 This, however, leaves the vertical axis as being of less importance. Ursula Nilgen has even suggested that this composition was the result of a change in the original iconography after the death of Anacletus II,74 who probably initiated the re-building of the church. As we will see, this hypothesis cannot be accepted.

At the top of the arch is a row of apocalyptic symbols: the four winged creatures identified with the four evangelists, and the seven candlesticks (FIG. 17). The names of the evangelists are given in plaques with polychrome frames – it should be noticed that only the inscription below the eagle is entirely original (FIG. 18). The mise en page of the text is completely novel, even compared

⁷¹ LP, II, 384: "ecclesiam beatae Dei genitricis Mariae tituli Calixti totam innovavit et construxit". Benedictus canonicus also wrote in his Liber politicus (1143) that Innocent II had rebuilt the church and decorated it with mosaics, see: Liber censuum, II, 169: "Innocentius papa II, dominus meus [...] Ecclesiam sanctae Mariae Trastiberim novis muris funditus restauravit et absidem ejus aureis metallis decoravit". See also Fabre 1892, 13, n. 3. The Liber censuum was probably written no later than 1143, be-

cause it is dedicated to Cardinal Guido de Castello, elected pope Celestine II in 1143.

⁷² Kinney 2002, 22-24.

⁷³ On Mary as wife of Christ and queen, see: Wellen 1966; Kitzinger 1980; Verdier 1980, 40-47.

⁷⁴ Nilgen 1981.

⁷⁵ Apoc. 4, 6-8; Apoc. 4, 5.

⁷⁶ On the conservation and restoration of the mosaic, see: Matthiae 1967, I, 421-422, II, Grafico del restauro di S. Maria in Trastevere, s.n.; Lotti 1996; Tiberia 1996, 187-197, esp. 187-192, fig. 84.

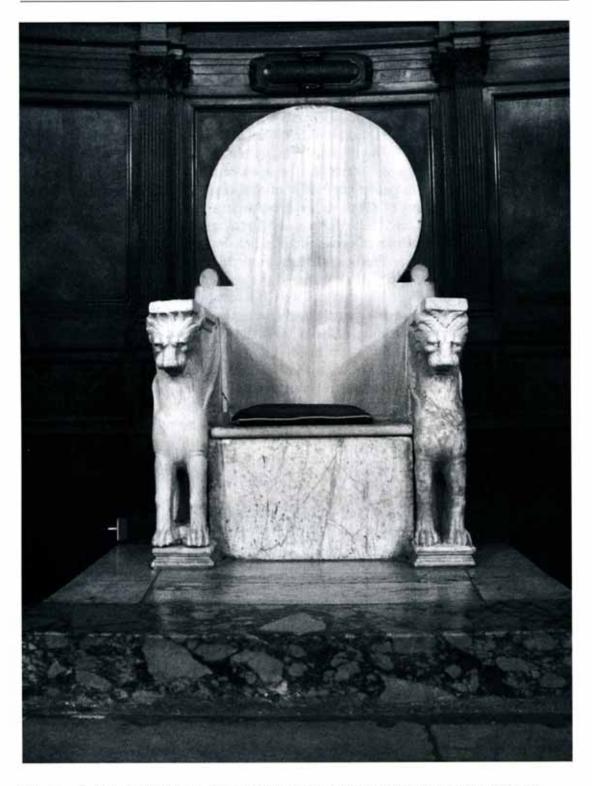


Fig. 15 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. The papal throne in the chancel. Photo: S. Riccioni,



Fig. 16 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. Christ and the Virgin. Photo: S. Riccioni.

with the mosaic of S. Clemente. The use of frames to include the names of the evangelists, and to isolate them, is previously unknown in Roman (and not only Roman) mosaic decorations. To the left and right of the arch are the prophets (FIG. 19) Isaiah and (FIG. 20) Jeremiah, dressed as ancient Romans. The figures are identified by labels in colored hexagonal frames: ISAIAS P(RO)PH(ET)A and HIEREMIAS P(RO)PH(ET)A, and by quotations on their scrolls written in white capitals on a red background. Isaiah holds the words: ECCE VIRGO CONCI /



Fig. 17 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. Alpha/Omega and the four Beasts of the Apocalypse. Adapted by S. Riccioni from A. Giorgetti in Andaloro & Romano 2006, 305, no. 1.

PIET ET PARIET FILIUM, and Jeremiah: CHR(ISTU)S D(OMI)N(U)S CAPTUS E(ST) / IN PECCATIS N(OST)RIS.

The iconography of the prophets on the arch comes from the apse mosaic of S. Clemente, with some important exceptions. The scroll of Isaiah contains an explicit reference to the conception of Christ, taken directly from the Vulgate. The Since the early Christian period, this formula had also been used in polemical texts against heretics and the Jews, such as the sermon Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos discussed above. This quotation became frequent between the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century as can be seen in the Disputatio Iudei et Christiani of Gislebertus Crispinus, which uses it four times. Before this text can be assigned a polemical value, as coming from the prophet play, however, the quotation on Jeremiah's scroll must be taken into account. Normally, after Isaiah's quotation-dialogue Jeremiah responds: "Hic est Deus noster, et non aestimabitur alius absque illo (or adversus eum)." The quotation in Jeremiah's scroll does not correspond with the answer given by the prophet in the drama.

⁷⁷ Is. 7, 14: "Virgo concipiet et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel, quod est interpretatum 'Nobiscum Deus' ".

⁷⁸ Tertullianus, Adversus Marcionem, PL 2, 338A-B; Tertullianus, Adversos Judaeos, PL 2, 616C-617A; Zacchaeus Christianus, Consultationum Zacchaei christiani et Apollonii philosophi libri tres, II, 4. Quid Judaeis respondendum sit, PL 20, 1114B; Evagrius monachus, Altercatio inter Theophilum christianum et Simonem judaeum, PL 20, 1170D; Hieronymus Stridonensis, Ad Pammachium, PL 22, 574; Hieronymus Stridonensis, Liber hebraicarum quaestionum in Genesim, PL 22, 973D-974B; Agustinus Hipponensis, Contra Faustum manichaeum, PL 42, 282; Paulinus Aquileiensis, Contra Felicem Urgellitanum,

PL 99, 371C.

⁷⁹ Quodvultdeus Carthaginiensis ep, Contra Iudaeos, 11.6.

⁸⁰ Bruno Signinus, In Matthaeum, PL 165, 76C-76D, 169C-170A; Petrus Cluniacensis, Adversus Judaeorum, PL 189, 585D-587C; Petrus Cluniacensis, Adversus sectam Saracenorum, PL 189, 703A-703D.

⁸¹ Gislebertus Crispinus, Disputatio Iudei et Christiani, 44, 45, 55, 59.

⁸² The hypothesis that both S. Clemente and S. Maria in Trastevere contain anti-Jewish messages is emphasized by Mary Stroll, see Stroll 1991.

⁸³ Thomas 1950; Quodvultdeus Carthaginiensis ep, Contra Iudaeos, 11.7; Favreau 1997, 227.



The text in the scroll of Isaiah was used as a liturgical *formula* in the antiphon for the first Sunday of Advent⁸⁴ and, with a variation, in the office of the Annunciation.⁸⁵ The text was also frequently used in exegetical comments to provide typological support for the incarnation of Christ and the mystery of the Trinity.⁸⁶ Bruno of Segni quoted the text in this sense in his *De laudibus beatissimae Virginis Mariae*;⁸⁷ Honorius Augustodunensis and Rupert of Deutz both used Isaiah in their commentaries on the Song of Songs.⁸⁸ Finally, St Bernard of Clairvaux quoted the text in two situations: as a sign of the Advent of Christ⁸⁹ and in his work on the Assumption of the Virgin.⁹⁰

The quotation on Jeremiah's scroll is from Lamentations (*Threni*)⁹¹ and was often interpreted as a reference to the Passion of Christ who takes upon himself the sins of all, to expiate them through his sacrifice.⁹² During the eleventh and twelfth

⁸⁴ Hesbert & Prevost (eds.) 1963, I, 4-5, n. 1. The text of the sermon also is used in the Office for the Wednesday and Saturday of the third week of Advent (Hesbert & Prevost 1968, III, 191, no. 2557).

⁸⁵ Hesbert & Prevost (eds.) 1968, III, 191, no. 2558.

⁸⁶ Tertullianus, De carne Christi, PL 2, 781C; Novatianus, De Trinitate, PL 3, 901A-905C; Ambrosius Mediolanensis, In psalmum David CXVIII, PL 15, 1309B; Hieronymus Stridonensis, In Isaiam, PL 24, 107B, 144B; Agustinus Hipponensis, De consensu evangelistarum, XXVI. Idololatria per Christi nomen et Christianorum fidem juxta prophetias eversa, PL 34, 1061; Gregorius Magnus, In Ezechielem, hom. I, PL 76, 786B, 792 C.

⁸⁷ Bruno Signinus, In Lucam, PL 165, 342C-343B; Bruno Signinus, De laudibus Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, PL 165, 1022B.

⁸⁸ Honorius Augustodunensis, In Cantica canticorum, PL 172, 351D; Rupertus abbas Tuitiensis,

In Cantica canticorum, PL 168, 871A-909A.

⁸⁹ Bernardus Claraevallensis, In adventu Domini, Sermo II, PL 183, 41A-41C.

Bernardus Claraevallensis, In Assumptione B.V. Mariae, PL 183, 433B-433D.

⁹¹ Lam. 4, 20: "Spiritus oris nostri Christus Dominus captus est in peccatis nostris".

Augustinus Hipponensis, De Civitate Dei, XXXIII. De Christo et vocatione Gentium quae Jeremias et Sophonias prophetico Spiritu sint praefati, PL 41, 591-592; Hieronymus Stridonensis, Adversus Pelagianos, PL 23, 560C; Hieronymus Stridonensis, In Ezechielem, PL 23, 105C-105D; Hieronymus Stridonensis, In Zachariam, PL 25, 1515C-1515D; Isidorus Hispalensis, De fide catholica, XXIII. Comprehensus est, PL 83, 479B; Amulo Lugdunensis, Contra Judaeos, PL 116, 179B; Rabanus Maurus, De laudibus Sanctae Crucis, PL 107, 253C; Rabanus Maurus, In Jeremiam, PL 111, 1259B-1261A; Paschalis Radbertus, In Lamentationes Jeremiae, PL 120, 1229D, 1230C, 1231A, 1231B.

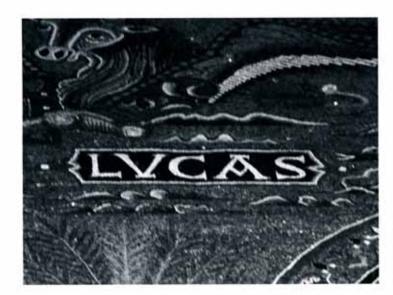


Fig. 18 – Rome, S. Maria in Trastevere. Mosaic on the apse arch. Framing of the inscription under the symbol of Luke. Photo: S. Riccioni.

centuries, we find confirmation of this interpretation in the writings of Peter Damian, 93 Rupert of Deutz 94 and Gerhoh of Reichersberg (a student of Rupert of Deutz). 95 Even if Peter Damian quoted the text in a treatise against the Jews and there are three more quotations in his polemical works 96 we cannot assume that the triumphal arch bears a specific polemical message against the Jews. In a general sense, both the Isaiah and Jeremiah texts were used to support the Church in its struggle against heresy and incorrect interpretations of the Bible. As in the mosaic of S. Clemente, 97 the texts and the images of the prophets recall the authority of correct interpretation but are adapted to convey different messages.

In monumental art, the scrolls held by saints or prophets usually employ black letters on white backgrounds. At S. Maria in Trastevere, in contrast, the inscriptions on the scrolls held by the prophets are written in white script on a red background. As we have seen in S. Clemente, this choice recalls the rubrics in manuscripts and has a rhetorical function, because the texts on the scroll are emphasized to introduce and guide the right interpretation of the new iconography of Christ (as both

⁹³ Petrus Damianus, Contra Judaeos, PL 145, 56C: "Et Hieremias: 'Spiritus, inquit, oris nostri Christus Dominus captus est in peccatis nostris: cui diximus: In umbra tua vivemus in gentibus (Lam. 4)'. Et per beatum Job ipse Dominus in passione positus conqueritur [...]". Petrus Damianus, De Quadrigesima et Quadriginta duabus mansionibus Hebraeorum, VII, Quare tentatio virtuti admisceatur, PL 145, 557B; Petrus Damianus, In Vetus Testamentum, XIX. In epistola ad Hildebrandum, PL 145, 1061C-1061D.

⁹⁴ Rupertus abbas Tuitiensis, De Trinitate et operibus eius, PL 167, 1418D-1419A; Rupertus abbas Tuitiensis, In Apocalypsim, PL 169, 845A.

Gerhohus Reicherspergensis, In psalmos et cantica ferialia, PL 183, 1277C-1278B.

Hieronymus Stridonensis, Adversus Pelagianos, PL 23, 560C; Isidorus Hispalensis, De fide catholica, XXIII. Comprehensus est, PL 83, 479B; Amulo Lugdunensis, Contra Judaeos, PL 116, 179B; Petrus Damianus, Contra Judaeos, PL 145, 56B-56D.

⁹⁷ Riccioni 2006, 68-71.

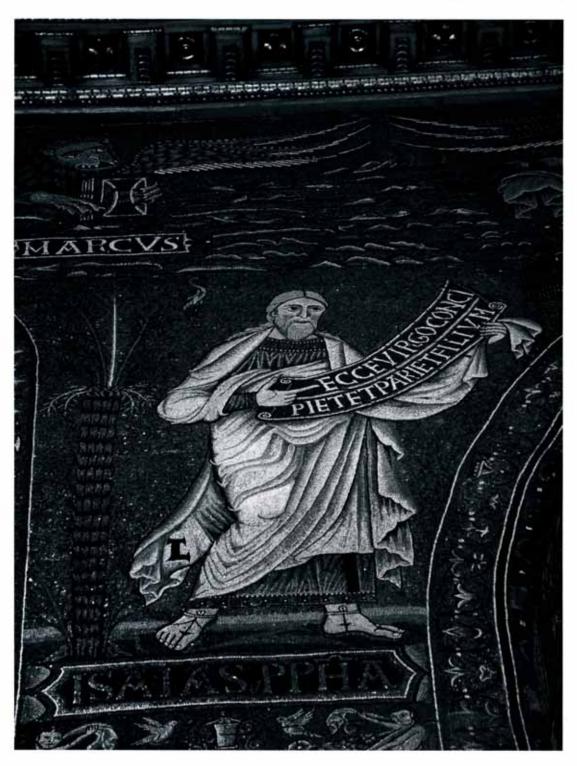
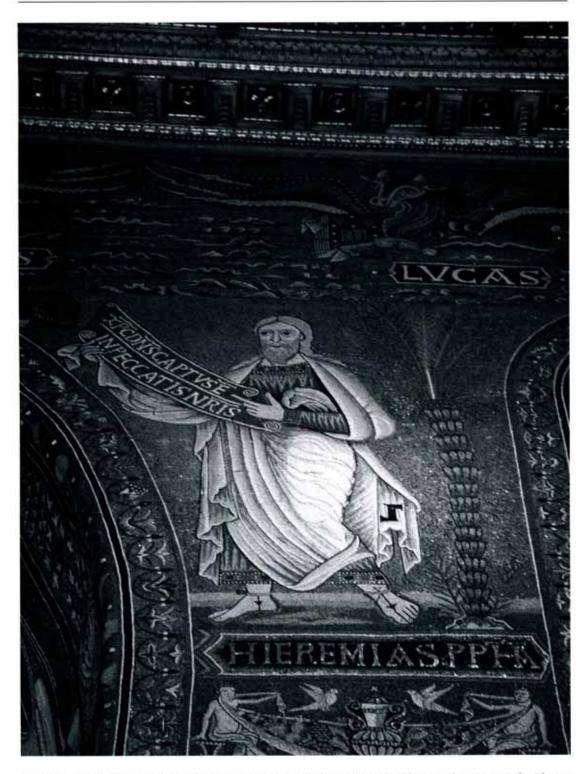


Fig. 19 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. The prophet Isaias. Photo: S. Riccioni.



 F_{IG} , 20 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic on the apse arch. The prophet Jeremiah. Photo: S. Riccioni.

filius and sponsus) and Mary (not only as mater but also Ecclesia and sponsa) on the same throne, displayed in the apse conch. The use of both red and white could also have been inspired by political considerations related to the papacy since a variety of writings suggest that these colors had both ecclesiastical and imperial connotations. In his De mysteriis, for example, St Ambrose had described the Church as dressed in white in the pure garments of innocence. 98 The white and shining tiara in the Donation of Constantine is clearly a symbol of the resurrection of Christ.99 In Honorius Augustodunensis's commentary on the Song of Songs, white and red are related to the Church. 100 Describing the garments of the emperors, the Libellus aulae imperatoris (written sometime before 1154) lists, after the chlamys, a shirt woven from "the finest and whitest" linen. 101 The origins of this garment lay in Byzantium, where the emperor dressed in a tunic of white silk under the purple chlamys. 102 Moreover, white and red together were the colors of Christ. In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Rupert of Deutz described Christ as "pure (snow-white) with holiness and red with the Passion" 103 and exegetical tradition reported that the Holy Sepulcher was decorated in white and red, symbolizing divinity and martyrdom. 104

Innocent II was clearly conscious of the significance of these colors, being the first Pope to use a sarcophagus made of porphyry, the imperial stone par excellence. 105 The sarcophagus, which was transported to the Lateran from Castel S. Angelo, had the added attraction of being the same as the one used by the Emperor Hadrian. Unfortunately, only a fragment is still to be found in the Lateran cloister, 106 but it is known from numerous testimonies. 107 Although the

⁹⁸ Ambrosius Mediolanensis, De mysteriis, 7.34-37.

⁹⁹ Ladner 1984, 301.

¹⁰⁰ Honorius Augustodunensis, In Cantica canticorum, PL 172, 415B: "Hujus genae sunt verecundia, qua erubescit peccare, vel peccasse. Quae sunt ut fragmen mali punici, quia exterius rubent charitate, interius albescunt castitate [...]".

¹⁰¹ Libellus de cerimoniis aulae imperatoris (Graphia aureae Urbis Romae): Schramm (ed.) 1969, 344 and CT 3, 101: "Imperator ferat camisum, ex subtilissimo et candidissimo bisso contextum, cum aurea bulla, ornatum a pedibus ad mensuram brachii in circuitu de auro frigio". Schramm dated the Graphia aureae Urbis Romae to 1030, but the Graphia must have been written after the death of Anastasius IV (13th December 1154), because his sarcophagus is mentioned in chapter 16. See Schramm 1969, 353-359; Bloch 1984; Paravicini Bagliani 1994, 119-20, 68, note 100.

¹⁰² Paravicini Bagliani 1994, 138, note 62.

¹⁰³ Rupertus abbas Tuitiensis, In Cantica canticorum, PL 168, 920: "Candidus sanctitate, rubicundus passione". This is probably to symbolize the white lily of the confessor and the red rose

of the martyr. I am grateful to David Defries for this suggestion.

¹⁰⁴ Adamnanus Hiensis, De locis sanctis, 1.3, 232, lines 16-19; Beda venerabilis, De locis sanctis, 2, 305, lines 2-4; Hermann 1969.

¹⁰⁵ Deér 1959, 146-154. On the color of porphyry and its meaning in ecclesiastical history, see: Steigerwald 1999; Longo (ed.) 1998; Filoramo 1998, 233-241.

¹⁰⁶ As suggested by Kessler & Zacharias, it survives a fragment in the Lateran cloister, see Kessler & Zacharias 2000, 27-28, fig. 23. But, in the opinion of Herklotz, all the fragment are lost, see Herklotz 2001 [1985], 147-148, note 67 and note 70, 151-153.

¹⁰⁷ It seems plausible that Innocent II wanted to use the imperial signs quoted by the Dictatus papae as specific to the bishop of Rome. The reuse of the sarcophagus appears to have made a great impact on contemporaries; it was mentioned in the Mirabilia Urbis Romae, CT 3, 46-47; in the Graphia Aurea Urbis, CT 3, 86; by Iohannes diaconus, Liber de Ecclesia Lateranensi, CT 3, 348; by Petrus Mallius, Basilicae veteris Vaticanae

first evidence of the association of red and white as symbols of the pope is found in a passage of the *Cerimoniale* of Gregory X (1272-1273) concerning the *immantatio* and coronation, there was a long tradition of having these two colors signify the relation of the Church to the papacy and papal power. The *Mysteria evangelicae legis et sacramenti eucharistiae* of Lotario dei Conti di Segni, the future Innocent III, demonstrates a clear awareness of this symbolic value: "Licet autem in apostolorum Petri et Pauli martyrio rubeis sit utendum, in conversione tamen et cathedra utendum est albis". ¹⁰⁸ Red and white thus became the colors of the banner of the Roman Church, ¹⁰⁹ and a visible sign of the *imitatio imperii* and of the *plenitudo potestatis* of the Roman pope as *vicarius Christi*. ¹¹⁰ Hence, the scrolls held by the prophets can be seen to display the colors of Christ and of the banner of the Church and Papacy, functioning as a kind of monumental "coat of arms". The visibility of papal power was a fundamental concern during the papacy of Innocent II, who continued the policies of Gregory VII, exalting the temporal power of the pope and assuming the symbols of empire.

The central image of the apse is Christ with the Virgin Mary (FIG. 21). They are seated on the same throne and Jesus embraces the Virgin. To either side are a host of saints, martyrs and popes, all identified by colored inscriptions under their feet: on the left, Innocent II, St Lawrence, and Pope Calixtus (FIG. 22); on the right, St Peter, Pope Julius I, Pope Cornelius, and St Calepodius (FIG. 23). This arrangement conforms to the rule of symmetry based on the rhetorical organization of visual speech.

The first problem involved in analyzing the group of the Virgin and Christ is to determine the origin of the iconography. 111 It seems to be the first known example of the union of two specific themes: Christ and Mary as spouses 112 on the same throne, and the Virgin crowned as *Ecclesia*. 113 According to Emile Male and Ernst Kitzinger, the apse mosaic in S. Maria in Trastevere is a monumental representation of the Feast of the Assumption. 114 This theme is clear from

- descriptio, CT 3, 431; and in a biography of Innocent II written by bishop Boso. Subsequently Anastasius IV transferred the sarcophagus of Helen, also made of porphyry, to the Lateran.
- 108 Innocentius III, Mysteria evangelicae legis et sacramenti eucharistiae, De sacro altari mysterio libri sex, PL 217, 801. During the two important feasts in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul (29th June) and of the Chair of St. Peter (22th February), the Pope had to wear liturgical garments in these two colors: red (during the feast of 29th June) and white (during the feast of 22th February). See: Paravicini Bagliani 1994, 47-48.
- 109 Galbreath 1930, 1-5; Erdmann 1933-1934, 46. That these colors were explicitly used by the Church is mentioned only from the thirteenth century, but their symbolic meaning was pres-

- ent earlier in the ecclesiastical texts.
- 110 Paravicini Bagliani 1994, 120.
- 111 The French origins of the iconography suggested by Emile Mâle and Guglielmo Matthiae were convincingly refuted by Verdier and are no longer accepted. See Mâle 1953, 182-185, esp. 184; Matthiae 1967, 305-314; Verdier 1976; Verdier 1980, 40-47.
- 112 On Virgin as Ecclesia during Gregorian reform, see: Russo 1996, 232-249; on the marriage between Mary/Ecclesia and Christ, but in thirteenth century, see: Aronberg Lavin 2009, 160-164.
- 113 On Mary as Queen, see: Nilgen 1981; Osborne 2009; Themelly 2009, 118-134.
- 114 M\u00e1le 1942, 200-209, esp. 201; Kitzinger 1980, 8-9. For the composition of the Assumption/ synthronos in the conch see also Tronzo 1989.



Fig. 21 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic on the apse conch. Photo: Stefano Riccioni.

the inscriptions displayed on the book held by Christ and the scroll unrolled by Mary. Christ's book reads: VENI / ELEC/TA MEA / ET PO//NAM IN / TE THRO/ NUM / MEUM. 115 The text is a paraphrase of a verse from the Song of Songs: "Veni de Libano, sponsa mea, veni de Libano, veni, coronaberis", 116 which was used in the responsory of the liturgy for the fiftheenth of August, as given, for example, in the ninth-century Compiègne Antiphonal. 117 The text is also found in the manuscripts of the *cursus romanum* used during the liturgy for the feast of the Virgin's Assumption and for the communion of virgins: "Veni electa mea, et ponam in te thronum meum, quia concupivit Rex speciem tuam", 118 in a passage which also draws on Psalm 44 (Vulgate 45), verse 12. The Virgin's scroll reads: LEVA / EIUS / SUB CA/PITE ME/O ET DEX/[T]ERA IL/LIUS AM/PLESA/

¹¹⁵ Translation: "Come my chosen one, and I will place you on my throne".

¹¹⁶ Cant. 4, 8.

¹¹⁷ Compiègne Antiphonal, Paris, Bibliothèque Na-

tionale, ms lat. 17436.

¹¹⁸ Hesbert & Prevost 1963, I, 125 (Feast of the Assumption), 368, 369, 371 (Communion of virgins).

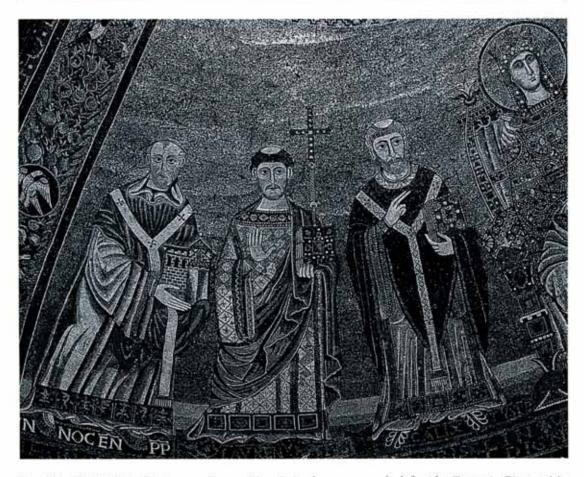


Fig. 22 – S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch, left side. From A. Giorgetti in Andaloro & Romano 2006, 308, no. 4.

BIT(UR) ME.¹¹⁹ These words are a literal quote from Cant. 2, 6, 10-11; 8, 3, and were sung during the feast of the Assumption.¹²⁰

The exegetical tradition regarding the Song of Songs is extensive, 121 and during the Gregorian reform it was added to by a number of commentaries which

Translation: "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand will embrace me". Regarding this inscription, De Rossi noted that the restorer changed the term AMPLESABIT (UR) with the abbreviation meaning ur to AMPLESABIT, without the horizontal stroke over the letter T, making it lose the abbreviation, so it currently reads AMPLESABIT, see De Rossi 1899, f. 140v. Recent restoration did not remarked this change, see Tiberia 1999, 190, fig. 83. Mary Stroll argued that the substitution of S for X in amplesabitur could have been a

[&]quot;foreign usage" related to the French influences imported by Innocent II, see Stroll 1991, 130. It seems more likely that the version amplesabitur had been caused by a linguistic idiotism of Italian vernacular, as the word crus for crux in the apse inscription of S. Clemente, see also De Rossi 1899, f. 140v; Riccioni 2006, 68, note 26.

¹²⁰ Cecchelli 1933, 93; Hesbert & Prevost 1963, I, 286.

¹²¹ Astell 1990; North, 1998; Debergé & Nieuviarts 2002.

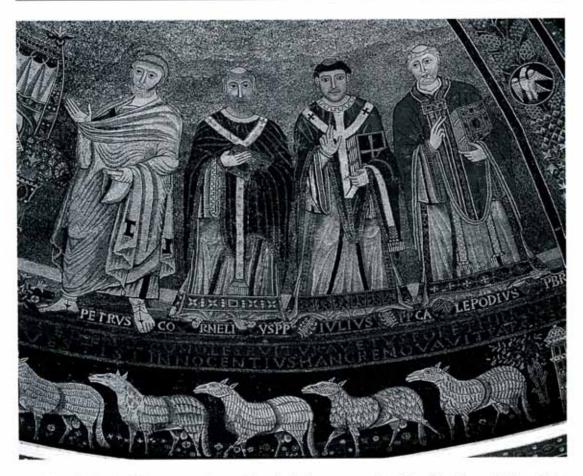


Fig. 23 – S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch, right side. From A. Giorgetti in Andaloro & Romano 2006, 309, no. 5.

accentuated an ecclesiological dimension. 122 Most of these were based on the interpretation of pseudo-Jerome, used since the Carolingian period in texts read for the Feast of the Assumption. 123 During the eleventh century, Bruno of Segni dedicated a long treatise to the Song of Songs, where an explicit association between the sponsa and the Virgin/Ecclesia is introduced for the first time 124 In the first book of his Sententiae, the description of the Church as bride of Christ, also connected to the bride of the Song of Songs, comes partly from the Apocalypse of John and partly from Psalm 44; and she sits on the throne near Christ as his

¹²² Ohly 1958; Wirth 1999, 426-430.

¹²³ Hieronymus ps., De assumptione beatae Mariae Virginis, PL 30, 122C-145B, esp. 138B: "Nunc autem circumndant eam [Virgin Mary] flores rosarum, indesinenter eius admirantes pulchri-

tudinem inter filias Jerusalem in qua posuit rex thronum suum, quia concupivit eius speciem ac decorem". Juge 1944.

¹²⁴ Bruno Signinus, In Cantica canticorum, PL 164, 1233-1288.

queen. 125 In the fifth book, the Virgin Mary is compared to the city of God on the grounds that her virtues are fortified as if by walls. 126 For these qualities Mary is regarded as the hortus conclusus, the bride of the Song of Songs. 127 Reading on, the association becomes more explicit, with Bruno quoting both Isaiah: "Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium", 128 and Jeremiah: "Faciet Dominus miraculum super terram, femina circumdabit virum", 129 that is the Virgin Mary who will bear Christ. 130 St Bernard developed this exegetical tradition in his commentary on the Songs of Songs. Ernst Kitzinger was the first to identify Bernard's commentary as an inspiration for the iconography of the apse conch. 131 Vitaliano Tiberia has further related the mosaic to Bernard's concept of "Mary as mediator", 132 an association that in the mosaic is supported by the gesture of Mary as advocata. 133 The teachings of St Bernard regarding Virgin Mary as mediator, enjoyed a wide diffusion from the twelfth century onwards, and were accepted by theologians and lay people alike. 134

The different voices in the dialogue between the Virgin and Christ are made visible through the different media, scripts, and layout of the texts they hold. The following discussion focuses on the "epiconographical" appearance of the scripts on the book and the scroll. On the book, the text is written in black book hand, as demonstrated by the three uncial *Us* (FIG. 24), ¹³⁵ while the scroll has gold classical capitals on a blue background (FIG. 25). The letters are framed by the scroll, but whereas text is usually written parallel to the long side of a scroll, in this case it is written as if on a book, parallel to the short side of the scroll. Most importantly, the different media (book and scroll) have different visual impacts and sym-

¹²⁵ Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 888-891, esp. 890B: "Coronabitur igitur, et illa corona coronabitur de qua superius dicitur: 'Et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim (Apoc. 12, 1)'. Possumus tamen per illam quae de Libano venit eos intelligere, qui ex Judaeis crediderunt [...]. Haec est autem illa mulier, sive potius illa regina (coronata enim est, quod reginarum proprium est) de qua Psalmista loquitur, dicens: 'Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumdata varietate. Audi filia, et vide et inclina aurem tuam, obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui; quoniam concupivit rex speciem tuam [Psal., 44 (45), 10]".

¹²⁶ Bruno Signinus, De laudibus beatissimae Virginis Mariae, PL 165, 1021A: "Non incongrue ergo virgo Maria civitas Dei appellatur, quam virginitas mentis et corporis, quasi murus ita ex omni parte vallavit, ut nullus unquam libidinis accessus adesset, et omnis inimicus a suae virginitatis corruptione deesset".

¹²⁷ Bruno Signinus, De laudibus beatissimae Virginis

Mariae, PL 165, 1022A: "Unde Salomon in Canticis canticorum gloriam istius virginis decantat, dicens: 'Hortus conclusus soror mea, sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus: emissiones tuae paradisus (Cant. 4, 12)'. Virgo quippe Maria fuit hortus, in quo varii flores virtutum erant, et conclusus, quia undique virginitate munitus".

¹²⁸ Is. 7, 14.

¹²⁹ Jer. 31, 22.

¹³⁰ Bruno Signinus, De laudibus beatissimae Virginis Mariae, PL 165, 1022B: "[...] id est virgo Maria portabit in utero Christum, quem totus mundus capere non potest".

¹³¹ Kitzinger 1980, 11.

¹³² Tiberia 1996, 86, 96-101, 202 no. 18; Thérel 1984, 197-199. On Mary as mediator, see: Raugel 1935, 152-161; Limongi (ed.) 1980, 43-52.

¹³³ On Mary as advocata, see: Belting 2001 [1990], 381-403; Tronzo 1989, 176-179; Russo 1997. Wirth 1999, 435-440; Parlato 2002, 61, 64.

¹³⁴ Bittremieux 1929.

¹³⁵ On the symbolism of scripts, see: Petrucci 1976.



Fig. 24 - S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. Christ's book. Photo: S. Riccioni.

bolic significance. The scroll held by Mary is technically a *volumen*. The *volumen* symbolized intellectual activity in Antiquity, coming more specifically to signify Christian doctrine in the early Christian period. ¹³⁶ At that time, when books replaced scrolls, the book or *codex* was identified with the Bible. ¹³⁷ The book held by Christ is a *codex*. In this visual composition, the juxtaposition of *volumen* and *codex*, written in capitals and book hand, symbolises the shift from old to new: from scroll to book, and from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The different graphic typologies and the different colors of the letters and backgrounds further distinguish the two images and reveal an artistic program that assigns a precise iconographic and symbolic value to script and its graphic space. One may therefore presume that the contrasting treatment of the two media and their respective graphic forms is meant to signify a sort of integration of the old law (the Old Testament) and the new (the Gospels) through the embrace of the two figures. As



Fig. 25 – S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. The Virgin's scroll. Photo: S. Riccioni.

is apposite given their didactic connotations, the book and the scroll teach those who can read (*literati*) the meaning of the images of the apse arch. The Virgin Mary, as *sponsa* and *Ecclesia*, is intimately connected with Christ, and also with the pope, given the similarities, noticed by Kitzinger and Tronzo, with the icon of Christ (*acheropita*) in the *Sancta Sanctorum*. ¹³⁸

As suggested previously, the apse arch functioned as an introduction to the main theme of the mosaic, and was adapted to fit the central message of the apse conch. This becomes clear if we compare the images of the prophets and their scrolls with those in other mosaics of the Gregorian Reform in Rome – those of S. Clemente and those which once decorated the triumphal arch of S. Maria Nova. 139 The latter, now lost, were recorded in two drawings by Antonio

¹³⁸ Kitzinger 1980, 13; Tronzo 1989, 177-178.

¹³⁹ Enckell 2004; for a comprehensive bibliogra-

Eclissi, 140 and can be dated to around 1160, probably between 1165 and 1167 (FIG. 26 and 27).141 The iconography, identical as far as the figures of the prophets are concerned, even to the extent of the colors of the scrolls in the drawing of S. Maria Nova, is changed by the partial modification of the texts. While Isaiah has the same verse at S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Nova, he holds a scroll with a different text at S. Clemente. Jeremiah has a quotation from Baruch at S. Clemente and S. Maria Nova, but not at S. Maria in Trastevere. The difference reflects the different iconographic messages of the respective apses: S. Clemente's apse shows the Crucifixion and S. Maria Nova displays Maria hodegetria with the Son (FIG. 28). This observation leads to two conclusions. First, if the theme of the apse conch of S. Maria in Trastevere originally had been intended to be the Madonna of Mercy, as Nilgen suggested, we would expect the text on the scroll of Jeremiah to be the same as that at S. Maria Nova. As it is, the current iconography, with the enthronement of Christ and the Virgin Mary, is heralded by the scrolls of the prophets and must therefore have been planned from the beginning, solving the apparent problem of the alteration of the rules of symmetry discussed above. Second, the comparison opens up other possible ways of interpreting the apse of S. Maria Nova. When the texts of Isaiah and Jeremiah are quoted together, they reveal the influence of Quodvultdeus' Contra Iudaeos, Paganos et Arrianos, in which the two prophets testify consecutively to the coming of the Messiah, and orient the interpretation towards anti-Jewish and anti-heretical polemic, which is not the case at S. Maria in Trastevere.

On the triumphal arch, the deliberate use of colors is also evident in the inscriptions below the evangelists and the prophets. In the case of the evangelists, the frames of the inscriptions, which recall the works of goldsmiths, ¹⁴² are composed of variously colored bands. From the outside to the inside, these are red, sky-blue and white. The letters are white on a blue background. The frames of the captions under the prophets use a greater number of colors: red, sky-blue, green, white, gold and again green. The background is blue and the letters are gold. This compositional approach, which isolates the scripts from their context and highlights the name of the person, is an innovation. There is nothing comparable in earlier mosaics or other monumental images with captions. In both the western and eastern visual traditions, and especially in the Roman mosaics of SS. Cosma and Damiano, S. Maria in Domnica, S. Prassede, S. Marco, S. Cecilia and S. Clemente, the inscriptions that identify the figures are not framed.

The choice of colors is also significant. In the frames of the evangelists the colors correspond to those of gems mentioned in the passage in the Apocalypse describing the throne of Christ: red, white and green aquamarine. Commenting on

¹⁴⁰ Osborne & Claridge 1986, 212-218, nos. 84-96.

¹⁴¹ Julie Enckell has suggested 1165-1167, when Pope Alexander III was in Rome; Enckell-Juil-

lard 2004, 28-33; Enckell & Romano 2006, 340. 142 Favreau 1997, 153-155, fig. 30.

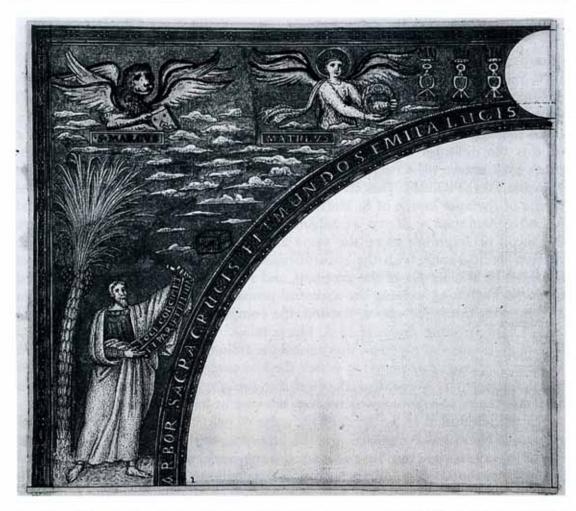


Fig. 26 – S. Maria Nova, Rome.. Mosaic on the triumphal arch, left side. Watercolour by Antonio Eclissi, Windsor (RL 8976, n. 1), from Osborne & Claridge 1986, 214, no. 84.

the passage, Bruno of Segni and Honorius Augustodunensis both interpreted these colors ecclesiologically: jasper (green) and sardonyx (red and white) are specific to the Church, the *sedes* on which God sits. Moreover, red and green, with a particular gradation tending towards sky-blue (*caeruleus*, *et quasi aqua viridis*), are the

dis; quia semper viridis, semper vivens, semper immortalis est, et nunquam ad siccitatem perveniens. Habet autem et colorem sardinis; siquidem Deus noster est ignis ardens"; Honorius Augustodunensis, Sacramentarium, PL 172, 751A-751B: "Sedes est Ecclesia, super quam Dominus sedet. Color jaspidis aquae judicium, color sardii judicium ignis".

¹⁴³ Bruno Signinus, In Apocalypsim, PL 165, 626A-626B: "Super hanc autem sedem Dominum sedere vidit, cujus species erat similis aspectui lapidis jaspidis et sardinis. Jaspis viridem habet colorem, sardius vero clarum et igneum. Tali ergo colore Dominus noster apparere voluit; ut nobis insinuaret quid appetere debeamus. Habet enim colorem jaspi-

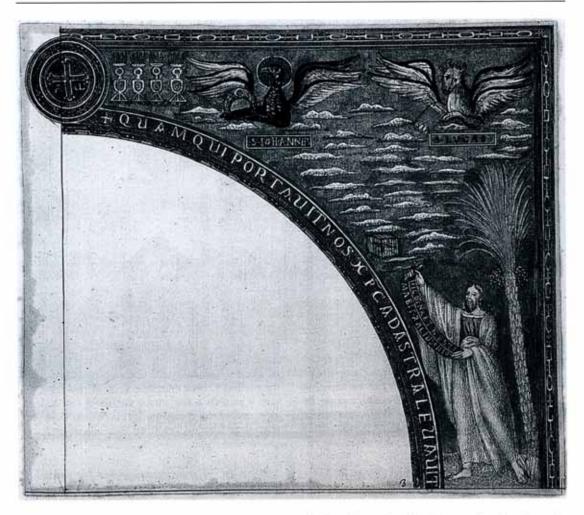


Fig. 27 – S. Maria Nova, Rome. Mosaic on triumphal arch, right side. Watercolour by Antonio Eclissi, Windsor (RL 8974, n. 3), from Osborne & Claridge 1986, 215, n. 85.

most important colors in the rainbow that appeared after the Flood. 144 Could the frames of the evangelists' inscriptions be an explicit reference to the arcus coelistis described in the Apocalypse of John? The same colors appear in the frames of the

quae semper virens nunquam ad siccitatem pervenit. Iris autem, id est arcus coelestis, duos principales colores habet, quorum alter est igneus, alter caeruleus, et quasi aqua viridis; et rubeus quidem martyrium, viridis autem baptismum designat. Nemo ergo sedi Dei appropinquabit, nemo viriditatem et immortalitatem suscipiet, nisi aut per martyrium transeat, aut baptismate abluatur: sint ergo iris, qui volunt esse in circuitu solis".

Bruno Signinus, In Pentateuchum, PL 164, 184A: "Et quia prius per aquam judicatus est mundus, iterum autem per ignem est judicandus; ideo duo principales colores in arcu apparent, viridis scilicet, et rubeus; et viridis quidem aquam, rubeus vero ignem praetendit"; Bruno Signinus, In Apocalypsim, PL 165, 626B-626C: "Et iris erat in circuitu sedis, similis visioni smaragdi. Smaragdus enim quasi herba viridis est, per quam immortalitatem intelligimus,



Fig. 28 – 28. S. Maria Nova, Rome. Mosaic in the apse conch. Maria hodegetria. After G. Piccini ICR from Andaloro & Romano 2006, 335, no. 1.

prophets' inscriptions, but here there is a different chromatic range. In addition to bands of red, white and green (in two different bands, outside and inside of the frame), there are bands of gold and sky-blue. These are the main "apocalyptic" colors (green, red, gold, sky-blue, violet) which describe the Heavenly Jerusalem, as suggested by Bruno of Segni in his commentary on the Apocalypse. 145

Turning now to the connection between colors, scripts, and images, I propose that the mosaic uses colors to symbolize the ideals of the Church following the Gregorian reform, but also to indicate to observers the correct way of reading the images. The author of the Ad Herennium mentions three essential styles: elegantia, compositio and dignitas. According to medieval rhetorical theory, the last must be realized using exornationes or images, called colores from the eleventh century on. 146

arum exornationes dividitur. Verborum exornatio est quae ipsius sermonis insignita continetur perpolitione. Sententiarum exornatio est quae non in verbis, sed in ipsis rebus quandam habet dignitatem". Murphy 1974, 22-23.

¹⁴⁵ Apoc. 21, 18-21; Bruno Signinus, In Apocalypsim, PL 165, 719-729D.

¹⁴⁶ Cicero M. Tullius ps., Ad C. Herennium, 4.18.4:"Dignitas est quae reddit ornatam orationem varietate distinguens. Haec in verborum et in sententi-

The background of the apse is gold. As the most radiant color, gold was traditionally a metaphor for light, the symbol of the incarnation of God in Christ according to the saving in the Gospel of St John: "Ego sum lux mundi".147 Moreover, the medium of gold mosaic was a vehicle for expressing the metaphysical idea of divine illumination. 148 For the reformers, gold also had ecclesiological meaning. Bruno of Segni described the personification of the Church as wearing golden garments. 149 Gold is an ornamentum ecclesiae, the symbol of the ecclesiastical virtues, because it represents wisdom, integrity and purity, without which no quality has value. 150 For Bruno the colors and the ornamentum had ethical significance and were associated with goodness. Moreover, in the Sententiae he accorded a fundamental role to colors connected to the liturgy, and urged readers to "see" and "understand" them. 151 In the mosaic, the clothes of the Virgin Mary and Christ are primarily golden, although those of Mary display a variety of colors. The clothes of the saints are all different but executed with carefully chosen colors. 152 Pope Cornelius (251-253) and Pope Calixtus (218-222) are dressed in blue/violet chasubles; Pope Julius I (337-352) is dressed in emerald green; the priest Calepodius in scarlet red; Pope Innocent II in purple with yellow highlights; and the deacon St Lawrence wears a mantel with sky-blue and green highlights over his dalmatic. This differentiation based on the colors of garments represented another innovation in Roman apse decoration. As we have seen, the same colors are also used on the frames of the triumphal arch. It is probable that they had an ecclesiological (and liturgical) meaning, since they are associated in Bruno of Segni's De ornamentis ecclesiae and De Confessoribus with the four cardinal virtues: hyacinthus - violet/blue - Wisdom; 153 coccus - red - Fortitude; 154 byssus - white

¹⁴⁷ Ioh. 8, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Especially on the metaphor of light in roman mosaics, see Borsook 2000; Thunø 2003; Thunø 2005.

Bruno Signinus, De figuris ecclesiae, PL 165, 890B-890C. Bruno Signinus, De ornamentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 940A-940B: "Haec regina ipsa est de qua loquimur, Ecclesia Dei [...]. Multa sunt ejus vestimenta, multa sunt ejus ornamenta; et ideo varietate circumamicta perhibetur; sed nullum ornamentum habet, quod vel aureum, vel deauratum non sit. Nullum sine auro est ei ornamentum. Saepe jam diximus quod per aurum, aut sapientia, aut vitae integritas, et puritas designatur, sine quibus nullum ornamentum pulchrum est, et quodcunque his non decoratur vile et abominabile est".

¹⁵⁰ Bruno Signinus, De ornamentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 940C-948D, esp. 940D: "Merito ergo in vestitu deaurato Ecclesia pingitur, cujus omnia ornamenta tam purissimo auro intexta sunt".

¹⁵¹ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165, 1064A-1067B, esp. 1066B-1066D: "Valde utile est, hos colores semper inspicere, et quid significent intelligere".

¹⁵² On clerical clothing, see Braun 1924; Reynolds 1999. On liturgical colors, see: Leclercq 1914; Reynolds 1999, 10-15.

¹⁵³ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165, 1066B: "Et hyacinthus quidem, quia est aerei coloris, ad sapientiam te provocat, quae de sursum est; quia 'omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est'

¹⁵⁴ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165, 1066D: "Coccus autem qui rubri et sanguinei coloris est ad fortitudinem nos invitat, qua sancti martyres armati occidi quidem potuerunt, vinci non potuerunt. Est autem coccum bis tinctum, quia duplex est martyrii genus, quoniam non solum illi martyres sunt, quos tyranni interficiunt; verum et illi, qui carnem suam cum vitiis, et concupiscentiis crucifixerunt".

- Temperance; ¹⁵⁵ purpur - purple - Justice. ¹⁵⁶ They were considered necessary "to adorn" the ecclesiastical building, ¹⁵⁷ the garments of its clergymen ¹⁵⁸ and in particular the Pope, suggesting that the saints were dressed in these colors in order to visualize the virtues of the Church.

Very unusually, the scripts and backgrounds of the inscriptions identifying the saints employ various colors which suggest associations between the figures. Calepodius and Cornelius are connected by yellow scripts on a blue background, probably because they were both martyrs and buried in the same cemetery. 159 The inscriptions identifying Lawrence and Calixtus employ the same golden script, but on different background: gold for Lawrence, blue for Calixtus. The use of the gold could be explained by the importance of both saints: Lawrence as a traditional saint of Rome and Calixtus as the founder of the church of S. Maria in Trastevere. 160 St Peter and Innocent are associated by texts written in white characters on a black background. Thereby a connection is created between the first pope and the new founder of the church, Innocent II, thus affirming him as the legitimate pope of the Roman Church. Only Julius II remains isolated with his sky-blue script on a blue background. This connection through color can be understood to follow the techniques of rhetoric and the arts of memory regarding the need to create visual connections between images. 161

At the bottom of the mosaic, above the frieze of the lambs, is a monumental inscription written in gold capitals on two lines with different colored backgrounds: green/sky-blue and blue. The text is composed in leonine hexameters and was inspired by the early Christian inscriptions which exalt the beauty of

¹⁵⁵ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165,1066D: "At vero per lini candorem temperantia figuratur, quae semper laeta et asperum nihil ostendens, omnia ad concordiam, et pacem trahere conatur".

¹⁵⁶ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165, 1066C: "Purpura vero justitia est, quoniam et purpura, et justitia ad reges pertinet, qui et legum conditores sunt, et purpura specialiter induuntur. Quibus etiam dicitur: 'Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram (Sap. 1)' ".

¹⁵⁷ Bruno Signinus, De ornamentis ecclesiae, PL 165, 915C-915D: "Quatuor illi colores, quibus vela et cortinae tabernaculi intextae erant, qui ubique simul et nunquam separatim ponebantur, quatuor istas virtutes significabant. Hiacynthus videlicet, et purpura coccus bis tinctus, et bissus retorta de quibus in Exodum sufficienter diximus: Nunc autem loquendi solummodo materiam ministramus. Illis tabernaculum, istis vero Ecclesia ornatur et de-

coratur, quia sine sapientia, sine justitia, sine fortitudine et temperantia nulla anima ornari vel decorari potest. Haec sunt illa ornamenta de quibus dicitur: 'Astitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato, circumamicta varietatibus (Psal. 44, 10)' ".

¹⁵⁸ Bruno Signinus, De Confessoribus, PL 165, 1066B: "Quatuor autem colores, quos ibi vides, quatuor sunt virtutes principales; prudentia, justitia, fortitudo, et temperantia. His quatuor virtutibus regitur mundus quae ita inter se conjunctae sunt, ut una sine reliquis esse non valeat. Ubi enim sapientia est, ibi justitiam, fortitudinem et temperantiam esse oportet. Similiter autem ubi justitia est, ibi sapientia est, fortitudo et temperantia. Sic est in aliis".

¹⁵⁹ On Calepodius, see: Amore 1963; Furlani 1949. On Cornelius, see: Gordini & Aprile 1964.

¹⁶⁰ Cecchelli 1949; Ferretto 1963.

¹⁶¹ Carruthers 1998, 79-81.

the decoration of the Church. The text is composed in three parts and is the key to interpreting the mosaic:

HEC IN HONORE TUO PREFULGIDA MATER HONORIS /
REGIA DIVINI RUTILAT FULGORE DECORIS //
IN QUA CHRISTE SEDES MANET ULTRA SECULA SEDES /
DIGNA TUIS DEXTRIS EST QUA(M) TEGIT AUREA VESTIS //
CU(M) MOLES RUITURA VETUS FORET HINC ORIUNDUS /
INNOCENTIUS HANC RENOVAVIT PAPA SECUNDUS. 162

In the first verse the Virgin Mary is celebrated as the mother of God using three terms (praeclara, rutilat, fulgore) which all allude to her brightness, a quality she holds in common with the building. Similar texts expressing the idea of divine light were common in ancient inscriptions on apse mosaics in Rome, 163 but here it may also suggest a reference to the commentary on Song of Songs written by Bruno of Segni. Bruno used the same verb rutilat to describe the shining quality of the Church, on account of which she was "adorned" by the virtues (iam decore virtutum rutilat Ecclesia). 164 This part of the text also confirms the iconographical interpretation of the mosaic as the union between Christ and the Virgin Mary symbolizing the church of Trastevere and the Universal Church. 165 The Virgin was celebrated for her qualities as Ecclesia and regina because of the association between the prefulgida mater and the shining regia. Moreover, the Church shone because it was "adorned" with the cardinal virtues represented by the various colors of the garments worn by the saints, while the crystalline brightness of the polychrome clothes of Mary evokes the celestial Jerusalem. As we have seen, gold was not only a metaphor for light and the incarnation of God in Christ, but also symbolized the ornamentum ecclesiae.

In the second verse, the reference to the Apocalypse is emphasised. The employment and repetition of the term *sedes*, which is both a verb and a noun, evoke the Biblical verse in which *sedes* means both the "apocalyptic throne", on which God sits, and the action of sitting. ¹⁶⁶ To the right of Christ is Mary, wrapped in golden garments, as in the descriptions of the celestial Jerusalem and the Queen of Psalm 44. The association between the Virgin's qualities of *mater*, *sponsa*, Queen and *Ecclesia* becomes explicit in this part of the inscription.

¹⁶² Translation: "In your honour, shining Mother, this palace of godly honour glows with the brightness of beauty. / Where you sit, Christ, will be a seat beyond time; worthy of your right hand is she enveloped by the golden robe. / As the old building was threatening ruin, Pope Innocent the second, originating from here, renewed it." For a previous interpretation of the inscription, see: Nilgen 1996, 162-163.

¹⁶³ Borsook 2000.

¹⁶⁴ Bruno Signinus, In Cantica canticorum, PL 164, 1248A

¹⁶⁵ For the political interpretation of Mary as the Universal Church, see: Nilgen 1981; for the interpretation of Mary as the local church of Trastevere, see: Wirth 1999, 435-441.

¹⁶⁶ Apoc. 4, 2: "[...] et ecce sedes posita erat in caelo, et supra sedem sedens".

Finally, the third part of the inscription connects the decoration and its symbolic meanings to the celebration of Innocent II, restorer of the church and victorious in the political controversy with Anacletus II. As has been observed, the inscription sheds light on the iconography of the mosaic suggesting not only the celebration of the Church as the Virgin but also the association of S. Maria in Trastevere with Maria Ecclesia. Therefore, in reconstructing the destroyed building both physically and morally (moles ruitura), Innocent II restored the regia, giving her brightness and symbolically restoring the dignity of the Church (lost during the papacy of Anacletus II), which Christ will maintain in eternity (ultra secula). This part of the inscription contains a political message. The Virgin Mary, in the recognizable garments of the Queen, symbolizes the Church (and the church of Trastevere) that, thanks to Innocent II, obtained a new brightness, and, after the Schism, returned to the arms of the pope, represented by the image of Christ.

We have seen that the mosaic is articulated by vertical and horizontal successions of motifs. The former refers to Christ, while the latter refers to the Church. As was also the case at S. Clemente, the horizontal reading is more complicated than the vertical one, revealing the complexity of the overall message by using a sophisticated combination of texts, images and colors. Still, even if the mosaic of S. Clemente was the model for the apse decoration of S. Maria in Trastevere, the visual programmes were conceived with completely different aims. At S. Maria, the horizontal reading has a kaleidoscopic character based on the relationship between the Virgo / Ecclesia / Mater / Sponsa and Christ, as it is interpreted in the exegesis of Bruno of Segni and St Bernard of Clairvaux, adapted to glorify Pope Innocent II. The colors of the garments all have a particular meaning and the scripts and frames of the inscriptions identifying the saints employ various colors that encourage the viewer to make associations between the figures. The fourth, and last, level of the horizontal composition is the frieze depicting the lambs that proceed from Jerusalem and Bethlehem towards the Agnus Dei. The Lamb of God has an unusual red nimbus, which should also be connected with a particular way of interpreting the mosaic using the colors as a rhetorical guide. The colors and the inscriptions make connections between the different parts of the narrative in order to underline the central theme of the mosaic. From the red scrolls of the prophets to the red garments of Innocent II and Calepodius, and the red-haloed lamb below, the composition is symbolically unified in the image of God and in the main theme of Christ's marriage to the Virgin.

The mosaics composed during the Gregorian reform, from its original ideals (S. Clemente) to its "triumph" (S. Maria in Trastevere), demonstrate how the reinterpretation of traditional models of decoration creates new *schemata*, more apposite to the contemporary message of the Church. Reformers created a new language based on the display of closely connected scripts and images, which systematized knowledge for the benefit of the beholder. This language was arranged in compositions using a kind of visual rhetoric, which borrowed from the rules of the *ars dictaminis* and monastic rhetoric in order to teach and make memorable

the message of the reformed Church. Epiconography aids our understanding of the various "iconographical" and decorative elements, especially the iconographical aspect of scripts used in images. The complexity of the visual narrative differentiated the audience (*idiotae* and *literati*) based on their knowledge and understanding of its sophisticated combination of texts and images. Furthermore, it functioned as an invitation to the observer to explore, elaborate, and create individual meaning as a stimulus for contemplation. This strategy, created at the beginning of the Gregorian reform to teach reformed canons how to instruct *illiterati*, was ultimately also used to celebrate the supposed triumph of the Church, after the Investiture Controversy, during the short Roman papacy of Innocent II.

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