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**Genoa and the Christian East:
Artistic Exchanges in the Late Middle Ages**

Volume I of two volumes (Text)

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

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

Abstract

This thesis explores the generally little-studied history of art in medieval Genoa and the manifestations of Eastern Christian cultures in the city from the late twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The study is structured in accordance with the main sites that house examples of the city's ties with the Eastern Mediterranean. Chapter 1 is centred on the Hospitallers' complex of San Giovanni di Pré and aims to include the frescoes of the lower church in the disputed phenomenon of 'crusader art' and overall the complex artistic situation in Europe around the year 1200. Chapter 2 discusses the early arrival of the Carmelites in Genoa and their use of Byzantinising style to validate their ancient origins. Chapter 3 introduces the topic of Genoese self-representation in the religious and civic heart of the commune – the cathedral of San Lorenzo and analyses the frescoes produced by a Byzantine painter at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Chapter 4 continues to investigate the formation of the Genoese identity, this time through the role of the relics and precious objects from the East that were preserved in the cathedral. Chapter 5 is devoted to the decoration of the canons' cloister of the cathedral, which has sometimes been described as of Eastern influence. Although several details of the decoration resemble widespread examples of Byzantine and Byzantine-influenced iconography, I contest that it instead reveals certain connections with contemporary Roman art, possibly, through the network of the Fieschi family. Chapter 6 sheds light on various aspects of Armenian presence in Genoa, challenges the theory of the Fieschi's special involvement in this process, and describes the arrival of Armenian monks from Cilicia at the turn of the fourteenth century. Chapter 7 presents the first study in western scholarship of MS. V3–834 from the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, which was produced in Genoa in the monastery of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni in 1325. Finally, Chapter 8 is devoted to the Mandylion, and the reasons why it was donated to the Bartholomites and not transferred to the cathedral, in the context of the perception of earlier relics from the East.

As a result, the thesis reveals that the Genoese had a very selective approach to the adaptation of Eastern Christian imagery. Their city was not overwhelmed with Eastern visual elements, but at the same time these elements formed part of the international character of Genoese culture.

Abbreviations

ASCG	Archivio Storico del Comune, Genoa
ASG	Archivio di Stato, Genoa
ASLSP	Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BL	British Library
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
CICO	Pontificia Commissio ad Redigendum Codicem Iuris Canonici Orientalis. Fontes. Series III
CSFS	Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
PML	Pierpont Morgan Library

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Source: Stefania Gerevini, 'Written in Stone: Civic Memory and Monumental Writing in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Genoa', in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, ed. Antony Eastmond (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 208, fig. 62 .
109. Inscription on the arcade of central nave, cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, north arcade.
Source: Gerevini, 'Written in Stone', p. 209, fig. 64.
110. Cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, view of central nave from the East.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 516, fig. 538.
111. Chapel of St John the Baptist, north aisle, cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, 15th century.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 284, fig. 283.
112. Marble urn of John the Baptist, 1225, cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.
Source: Di Fabio, *La cattedrale di Genova*, p. 184, fig. 75
113. Janus on the upper arcade of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Northern side of the central nave, 1307. Author's photograph.
114. Marco il Greco or painter of Byzantine origin, the Last Judgement, fresco on the western wall of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, c. 1312. Author's photograph.
115. The Last Judgement, fresco, Panagia ton Chalkeon, Thessaloniki, 11th century.
Source: <https://www.thebyzantinelegacy.com/chalkeon> [accessed 16 June 2019].

116. The Last Judgement, ivory panel from Constantinople, 11th century, V&A, London, inv. no. A.24-1926, 15 x 21 cm.
Source: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O94171/the-last-judgement-panel-unknown/> [accessed 16 June 2019].
117. The Last Judgement, icon from St Catherine monastery, Sinai, 12th century, tempera on wood, 62 x 46 cm.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
118. The Last Judgement, fresco from the capella di San Silvestro, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, mid-13th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
119. Eve and Angel sending the souls to hell, detail of the Last Judgement, fresco, cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, Byzantine painter, c. 1312.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 508, fig. 530.
120. Detail of the mosaic of the Last Judgement from western wall of the basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, c. 1100.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
121. The Last Judgement, mosaic from western wall of basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, c. 1100.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
122. The Last Judgement, fresco on the ceiling of the parekklesion, Kariye Camii monastery, Istanbul, early 14th century. Author's photograph.
123. (1, 2) Angels on the intrados of arch, west wall of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.
Source: Di Fabio, *La cattedrale di Genova*, pp. 266–7, figs 50–51.

124. Last Judgement and Martyrdom of St Lawrence tympanum of central portal, exterior, cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, c. 1225. Author's photograph.
125. Central tympanum of the Royal portal, Notre Dame, Chartres, 12th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
126. (1, 2) Justinus leads Trifonia and Angel with crown of martyrdom, Martyrdom of St Lawrence, mosaic detail, west façade, c. 1225.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 92, fig. 41 and p. 93, fig. 42.
127. Christ of the Last Judgement, detail of fresco from western wall, interior of the cathedral of San Lorenzo.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 509, fig. 532.
128. Christ, detail of mosaic from narthex of the Kariye Camii, Istanbul, early 14th century. Author's photograph.
129. Virgin with Child with Sts Nicolas and Lawrence, fresco, portal of San Gottardo, interior, southern wall of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
130. Triptych St George slaying dragon between St Peter and John the Baptist, northern wall of cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
131. (1, 2) Comparison of St Peter from Tryptic with St George and from Last Judgement. Details of frescoes form western and northern walls at the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 248, fig. 243 and p. 508, fig. 531.
132. St George slaying the dragon, detail of fresco from northern wall of cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.

Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 2, p. 249, fig. 244.

133. St George and dragon, mosaic icon from Constantinople, Musee du Louvre, early 14th century, d. 22 cm, inv. n. OA 3110.

Source: *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 230, fig. 137.

134. St George and dragon, Novgorod, mid 14th century, Tretyakov gallery, Moscow.

Source: <https://www.pravmir.ru/ikona-georgiya-pobedonostsa/> [accessed 17 June 2019].

135. St George and dragon, Byzantine relief plate, 12–13 centuries, 5.5 x 7 cm, Sculpture Collection and Museum of Byzantine Art of the National Museums of Berlin, inv. 584.

136. St George and dragon, Russian icon, end of 14th century, tempera on wood, Tretyakov gallery, Moscow.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

137. Man of Sorrows with St. Mary and St. John the Apostle or John the Baptist, fresco, portal of San Giovanni, interior, northern wall of cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Author's photograph.

138. Man of Sorrows with St Mary and St John the Apostle, ca. 1300, tryptich, tempera on panel, private collection, Dordrecht, the Netherlands.

Source: *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, fig. 14.14, p. 458.

139. Man of Sorrows, ca. 1400, mosaic panel, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, ca. 1300, 23 × 28 cm.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

140. Master of the Borgo Crucifix (Master of the Franciscan Crucifixes), Man of Sorrows, tempera on wood, 1255-60, 32 x 23 cm, National Gallery, London, inv. NG6573.
Source: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/master-of-the-borgo-crucifix-master-of-the-franciscan-crucifixes-the-man-of-sorrows> [accessed 24 July 2020].

Chapter 4. Communal Relics and Precious Objects from Eastern Christian states

141. Diagram with reconstruction of possible sacristies of the cathedral.
Source: Clara Altavista, 'Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno: il tesoro del Duomo di San Lorenzo e Genova dall'XI al XVI secolo', in *I luoghi del sacro. Il sacro e la città fra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, ed. F. Ricciardelli (Florence: Polistampa, 2008), p. 105, fig. 7.
142. *Sacro Catino* at the Museo del Tesoro, Genoa, green glass, d. 33 cm. Author's photograph.
143. (1, 2) *Croce degli Zaccaria* at the Museo del Tesoro, Genoa, 67 x 41 cm. Author's photograph.
144. (1 – 6) *Croce degli Zaccaria*, details. Author's photographs.
145. Genealogical tree of the Zaccaria.
Source: Domenico Promis, *La zecca di Scio durante il dominio dei Genovesi* (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1865), p. 19.
146. *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, Byzantine production, c. 1261, Museo Sant'Agostino, Genoa, 377 x 132 cm.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
147. Scheme of scene sequence on the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*. Based on Wikimedia Commons.
148. *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, detail, upper register, scenes 8–10. Author's photograph.
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150. *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, detail, upper register, scenes 3–6. Author’s photograph.
151. (1 – 4) *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, detail, lower register, scenes 12, 13, 14, 15. Author’s photograph.
152. (1 – 3) *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, detail, lower register, scenes 16–17, 18–19, 20–7. Author’s photograph.

Chapter 5. Rome, Venice, Byzantium in Local Interpretation: : the Canons’ Cloister of San Lorenzo

153. Plan of the canons’ cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.
Source: *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto, da Bisanzio a Genova*, eds Gerhard Wolf, Colette Dufour Bozzo, Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Milan: Skira, 2004), p. 12, fig. 3.
154. Decoration of first room at the canons’ cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, here dated to mid-13th century. Author’s photograph.
155. Decoration of the second room the canons’ cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa, here dated to mid-13th century. Author’s photograph.
156. Month of May, detail of decoration of the canons’ house in Susa, 1240–1250.
Source: Giovanni Romano, ‘Per un atlante del gotico in Piemonte’, in *Gotico in Piemonte*, ed. Giovanni Romano (Turin: Casa di Risparmio di Torino, 1992), 30.
157. Detail of decoration, Cressac-sur-Charente, Angoulême, 12th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
158. Detail of decoration, crypt of basilica in Aquilea, 12th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
159. Caffaro, *Annals*, 12th century, Paris, BNF, MS. Lat. 10136, fol. 110r.

Source: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9076701x/f120.item> [accessed 18 June 2019].

160. Details of Breviary, Metz, France, 1302–1303, London, BL, MS. Yates Thompson 8, fols 1, 3, 7, 92, 232v.

Source:

<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8114&ColIID=58&NStart=8> [accessed 18 June 2019].

161. Hanging draperies of the first room at the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
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167. Church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, Novgorod, fresco, 14th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
168. Decoration of Yılanlı kilise, Göreme, Cappadocia, 9th–12th centuries. Author's photograph.
169. Decoration at Castelvecchio, Verona, fresco, 14th century. Author's photograph.

170. Decoration from church of San Saba, Rome, 13th century.
Source: Irene Quadri, 'La decorazione pittorica della 'quarta navata' di San Saba', in *Il Duecento e la cultura gotica*, ed. Serena Romano', p. 368.
171. Decoration from Santa Maria ad Cryptas in Fossa, c. 1265–1285.
Source: <https://www.artapartofculture.net/2019/03/04/santa-maria-ad-cryptas-riapre-la-chiesa-gioiello-dabruzzo/> [accessed 18 June 2019].
172. Decoration from oratory of San Pellegrino in Bominaco, 1263.
Source: <http://www.spaziovidio.it/medievale/HTML/cartina/caporciano2.html> [accessed 18 June 2019].
173. Vegetal ornament in the first room at the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Author's photograph.
174. The ornaments of the Aula Gotica at Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, 1240s.
Source: Andreina Draghi, *Il palazzo cardinalizio dei Santi Quattro a Roma* (Milan: Skira, 2012), p. 40.
175. Decoration from St John Abbey, Müstair, 12th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
176. Diagram of the decoration in the second room at the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa.
177. Damaged paintings of the second room at the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Author's photograph.
178. Buildings: possible start of months at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Author's photograph.
179. January, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.

180. March, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
181. April, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
182. May, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
183. January and February, *Supplicationes variae*, 1293, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Plut. 25.3, fols 16 r and v.
Source: Amy Neff, 'Byzantium westernized, Byzantium marginalized: two icons in the *Supplicationes variae*', *Gesta*, 38 (1999), p. 93, figs. 18, 19.
184. January, February, March and April, decoration of the Aula Gotica, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, 1240s.
Source: Draghi, *Il palazzo cardinalizio dei Santi Quattro*, p. 41.
185. Sculptural decoration on the apse of the cathedral in Fidenza, two-headed god Janus feasting.
Source: <http://www.museoduomofidenza.it/ricerca-museo.asp?Immg=1&Museo=specifico&IDOpera=13300> [accessed 19 June 2019].
186. (1, 2) Decoration from a palazzo on piazza Lovatelli, Rome, mid-13th century.
Source: Rossella Motta, 'La decorazione pittorica in un edificio in piazza Lovatelli', in *Il Duecento e la cultura gotica*, ed. Serena Romano, pp. 131–2.
187. March or February, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.
188. Reconstruction of 13th-century fresco with calendar from Santa Maria de Aventino, 17th century, Windsor Royal Library 9217.

Source: Irene Quadri, 'Il perduto calendario di Santa Maria de Aventino', in *Il Duecento e la cultura gotica*, p. 239.

189. Hospitality of Abraham, mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna, 6th century.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

190. Hospitality of Abraham, mosaic, cathedral of Monreale, 1180s.

Source:

<http://www.christianiconography.info/sicily/hospitalityAbrahamMonreale.html>

[accessed 19 June 2019].

191. April, Psalter, Winchester, 11th–12th centuries, London, BL, Cotton MS. Tiberius B V/1, fol. 4v.

Source: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Tiberius_B_V/1 [accessed 19 June 2019].

192. April, Psalter, England, 11th–12th centuries, BL, London, Cotton MS. Julius A. VI, fol. 4v.

Source:

http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_julius_a_vi

[accessed 19 June 2019].

193. May, fresco from Torre d'Aquila, Trento, ca 1400.

Source: Enrico Castelnuovo, *Il ciclo dei mesi di Torre Aquila a Trento* (Trento: Museo provinciale d'arte, 1987), p. 60.

194. April, killing of the sheep, detail of decoration at the second room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Author's photograph.

195. April, sculptural decoration from the façade of San Marco, Venice, 1240s.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

196. April, fresco from Aula Gotica, Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome, 1240s.
Source: <http://altmarius.ning.com/m/blogpost?id=3496555%3ABlogPost%3A767700>
[accessed 19 June 2019].
197. Pavement San Michele Maggiore, Pavia, 12th century.
Source: <https://www.ilbelsanmichele.eu/portfolio-category/mosaici/> [accessed 19 June 2019].
198. May, sculptural decoration from the façade of San Marco, Venice, 1240s.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Chapter 6. Genoa, Armenia and the Bartholomites: Dynamics of Cultural Interactions

199. Map of churches with hypothetical and documented presence of Armenians in Genoa.
200. Apse of Santo Spirito, Genoa.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
201. Map of Medieval Genoa and its environs.
Source: *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, p. 22, map 6.
202. Bust of San Basil at narthex of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, Genoa. Author's photograph.
203. Maps showing the growth of the Bartholomites in Italy during the 14th century.
204. Entrance to San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
205. Frescoes at the chapel of St Mary in San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, Genoa, 15th century.

Source: Rita Cavalli, ‘San Bartolomeo degli Armeni’, in *Medioevo restaurato*, p. 57, fig. 4.

206. (1, 2) Plans of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, Genoa.

Source: Alberto Carlo Scolari, ‘La Chiesa di San Bartolomeo degli Armeni di Genova’, in *Atti del Primo Simposio di Arte Armena* (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1978), p. 646, fig. 1 a, b.

207. Church of San Bernardino, Genoa.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

208. Church of San Pantaleo, Genoa.

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

209. Church of Sant’Antonino, Genoa.

Source: Wikimedia Common.

Chapter 7. The Genoese Gospel Book V3–834 from the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

210. (1 – 3) Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, silver gilded cover, 1347. Author’s photograph.

211. Example of script and page layout with margin decoration from Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fols 173v, 174r. Author’s photograph.

212. Colophon from Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 93v, 94r. Author’s photograph.

213. End of colophon with the erased lines, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 94v. Author’s photograph.

214. *Epistula ad Carpianum*, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 1v. Author’s photograph.
215. Example of canon table, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 2v. Author’s photograph.
216. Map of places connected with the history of the manuscript and the origins of the Bartholomites.
217. Incipit page, Gospel of St. Luke, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 155r. Author’s photograph.
218. Incipit page, Gospel of St. John, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 247r. Author’s photograph.
219. Initial of St. Matthew, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 8r. Author’s photograph.
220. Initial of St. Mark, Gospel Book, Genoa, 1325, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 95r. Author’s photograph.
221. Grigor Mlchetsi, Incipit page St. Matthew. Gospels of Lvov, 1197–1199, National Library of Poland, MS. Akc. 17680, fol. 12r.
Source: <https://lamus-dworski.tumblr.com/post/84924623669/skevra-evangeliary-or-lviv-evangeliary-armenian> [accessed 21 June 2019].
222. Sargis Pitsak, Incipit page St. Luke, 1352, Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS. 7631, fol. 175r.
Source: *Матенадаран: армянская рукописная книга VI – XIV веков*, eds V.O. Kazarian, S.S. Manukian (Moscow: Книга, 1991), p. 215, fig. 402.
223. Hovasap’, Symbol of St. Mark, Constable Smbat’s Gospels, 1260–1276, Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS. 7644, fol. 125r.

- Source: *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries from the Matenadaran Collection*, eds Emma Korkhmazian, Gravard Akopian, Irina Drampian (Leningrad: Aurora, 1984), pl. 107.
224. Symbol of St. Mark, Glajor Gospel, 14th century, University Research Library, Los Angeles, UCLA, Arm. MS. 1, fol. 189 r.
Source: *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*, ed. Thomas F. Mathews (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1991), p. 189.
225. Symbol of St. Luke, Glajor Gospel, 14th century, University Research Library, Los Angeles, UCLA, Arm. MS. 1, fol. 299 r.
Source: *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, p. 299.
226. Symbol of St. Matthew, 14th century, Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS. 4060, fol. 12r.
Source: *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, pl. 36.
227. Symbol of St. Luke, 13th century, New York, PML, MS. M.620, fol. 188r.
Source: <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/28/122663> [accessed 21 June 2019].
228. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, detail of polyptych from the church of St Peter and St Paul in Roccalbegna, c. 1340. Author's photograph.
229. St Jerome with a dove from Lives of the Hermits Paul and Guthlac, 9th century, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 389, fol. 2v.
Source: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/yz220fk7648> [accessed 21 June 2019].
230. Messale Ambrosiano, mid-14th century, Milan, Biblioteca del Capitolo Metropolitano, MS. II.D.2.32, fol. 137v.
Source: *La miniatura in Italia: dal tardoantico al Trecento con riferimenti al Medio oriente e all'Occidente europeo*, eds Antonella Putaturo, Donati Murano, Alessandra

- Perriccioli Saggese (Vatican City: BAV; Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2006), pl. 157.
231. Decoration of Royal Pantheon of the Kings of Leon in the church of San Isidoro in Spain, fresco, 12th century.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
232. Symbol of St. John, Morgan Beatus Apocalypse, Spain, 10th century, New York, PML, MS. M.644, fol. 4r.
Source: <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/7/110807> [accessed 21 June 2019].
233. Apocalypse de Saint-Sever, middle of the 11th century, Paris, BNF, MS. Lat. 8878, fol. 3v, 4r.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
234. Christ and Four Beasts; incipit pages with symbol of St John, Toledo, 1220, New York, PML, MS. M.429, fols 2r, 5v–6r.
Source: <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/thumbs/112348> [accessed 21 June 2019].
235. Inicial with St John from Bible, 1250–1251, Vicenza, Biblioteca del Capitolo della Cattedrale presso la Biblioteca del Seminario, MS. U.VIII.4, fol. 60r.
Source: Giordana Canova Mariani, ‘Miniatura a Vicenza tra Medioevo e Rinascimento’, in *La Parola illuminata: per una storia della miniature a Verona e Vicenza tra Medioevo e eta Romanica* (Verona: Fondazione Cariverona, 2011), p. 253, fig. XI.4.
236. Initial with St. John, Bible, Maestro di Bagnacavallo, 1270, Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, MS. D.XXI.4, fol. 95r.

237. Bible, Bologna and Crimea, 13th or 14th century with additions of the 17th century, Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS. 2705, fol. 476v and 334v.
Source: *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, pl. 158–9.
238. Frontispiece of St. Mark, Rome, 1310, Nouvelle Djourfa no. 38 (39), fol. 101 r.
Source: Jean-Michel Thierry, *Les arts arméniens* (Paris: Mazenod, 1987), p. 430, pl. 465.
239. Incipit page with St. Matthew, Gospels, Perugia, 1331, Yerevan, Matenadaran, MS. 7628, fol. 4r. Source: *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, pl. 164.
240. Envy; Men, *Codex Cocharelli*, Genoa, 1320–1340s, London, BL, MS. Add. 27695, fols 2v, 4r.
Source:
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8334>
[accessed 21 June 2019].
241. Gluttony, *Codex Cocharelli*, Genoa, 1320–1340s, London, British Library, MS. Add. 27695, fols 13r, 14r.
Source:
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8334>
[accessed 21 June 2019].

Chapter 8. The Mandylyon: A Relic that the Commune did not Need

242. (1, 2) Panel of the Mandylyon, front and verse, after 1210, Genoa, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.
Source: *Mandylyon: Intorno al Sacro Volto, da Bisanzio a Genova*, eds. Gerhard Wolf, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Milan: Skira, 2004), pp. 111 and 112.

243. Mandyllion, silver revetment with scenes from the history of the icon, Genoa, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.
Source: *Mandyllion*, pp. 49–59.
244. Details of revetment with scenes from the history of the Mandyllion.
Source: *Mandyllion*, pp. 49–59.
245. Monument to Leonardo Montaldo in the tympanum of the cathedral. Photograph of the first half of the 20th century, Genoa, Centro DocSAI, photographic archive, inv. number c7174.
Source: *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo a Genova*, vol. 1, p. 417, fig. 254.

Introduction

During the late Middle Ages, Genoa was one of the richest and largest cities in Europe and among the leading maritime forces in the Mediterranean world. The sea was at the centre of Genoese life, and many episodes of its history can be explained by the search for new markets and better trading deals. As part of Genoese naval activity, the city also became famous for transporting crusaders to the Holy Land and later for assisting the migration movements from the Middle East to Western Europe as Christians started to lose territories to the Saracens, Mongols and Mamelukes. The grounding of Genoa's economy on commerce and the aggressive geographical expansion of its markets led to an enormous trading network that connected very distant cultures of the medieval European world. At the pinnacle of the republic's power, around the years 1260–1340, the Genoese had access to the Black Sea, Northern Africa, the Middle East, France, the Iberian Peninsula, England and even to the shores of the Baltic Sea.

As other medieval city-states, Genoa had a very developed written tradition, and today, the Genoese archives preserve the largest collection of medieval notarial documents. There are also several annals and histories, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, as well as the most famous hagiographical compendium – the *Legenda Aurea*, one of the most popular books in the European Middle Ages. As a result, Genoese history and in particular the economic side of the Republic's life have been comprehensively studied over the last centuries by many prominent scholars. The extant Genoese literary sources provide information on many processes that happened in the Mediterranean region from the Middle Ages onwards.

The research topic of this thesis arose from the imbalance between Genoa's vast international connections and economic prosperity, on the one hand, and the relatively scarce visual evidence of these ties and riches in the city, on the other. Because when exploring contemporary Genoa, a visitor can be surprised to see how little has been preserved from the

Middle Ages and, more specifically, from the interactions with Eastern Christianity in terms of visual art. To quote the words of Steven Epstein, – ‘the Genoese lived in a city that must have seemed drab compared to Florence and Venice, but they themselves, gorgeously dressed and stuffed with delicacies, valued a portable culture, that perhaps contributed to their reputation for pride and vanity’.¹ It is therefore unsurprising that art historians have been less interested in the city, and that even today most research on medieval Genoese art is conducted by local scholars. Consequently, this means that general studies on Italian and European artistic processes often leave Genoa out of their focus.

Through diverse case studies, this thesis aims to raise fundamental questions regarding the artistic manifestations of Eastern Christian cultures in Genoa. How broad was the Eastern visual culture this city during the late Middle Ages? How did the cultural transfer happen? How were the images and objects from the East perceived by local Genoese? How did their perception change with the arrival of cultural elements from the East and during the subsequent years? What was the role of the images or artefacts in their new housing locations? Who were the agents and what memory did they bring?

Genoa’s International Affairs

In order to answer these questions, it is worth bearing in mind the ever-changing relations between Genoa, other Italian Maritime republics and the eastern states during the late Middle Ages, because the interests of Genoa in the eastern Mediterranean underwent many fluctuations that were closely tied to the Genoese trading politics in these territories. The First Crusade in the eleventh century opened the eastern markets to Genoese merchants. Additionally, it secured Genoa’s key role as the main transporter of the crusaders and pilgrims to the Holy Land. In the twelfth century, a tense rivalry began between the Genoese,

¹ Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese: 958–1528* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 177.

Pisans and Venetians over dominance of the eastern markets and territories of influence. Because of their geographical position, conflicts with Pisa arose as soon as the Genoese naval activity expanded outside the Ligurian coasts, and both cities spent the twelfth and thirteenth centuries fighting over Sardinia, Corsica and more distant territories. Finally, in 1284, the Genoese defeated the Pisans in the battle of Meloria.²

The presence of Genoa expanded rapidly during the thirteenth century, from Egypt, Sicily and the Crusader States to the new markets of Provence, Spain, Sardinia and partly Constantinople. It is important to remember, however, that initially, Byzantium had much closer ties with Venice than with other maritime republics, giving the former most of the trading privileges.³ One of the reasons for this was that the thirteenth century started with the Fourth Crusade and the capture of Constantinople, in which the Genoese took no part.⁴ For many years, this determined the hegemony of Venice in Byzantine territories and almost completely excluded Genoa from all affairs with Constantinople.⁵ This meant that for the first half of the thirteenth century, the main connections of the Genoese with the eastern Mediterranean were concentrated in the Holy Land and the Crusader States. At the same time, the local opposition to Venice paved the way to the Genoese to become a potential force in helping the Byzantines recapture Constantinople in the second half of the thirteenth century.

A new era in the relationship between Genoa and Byzantium started in 1261 when the two sides signed the Treaty of Nymphaeum.⁶ According to the agreement with the Nicean

² Thomas Kirk, 'Mediterranean Rivalries', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, ed. Carrie E. Beneš (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 463–66.

³ Jeffrey Miner, Stefan Stantchev, 'The Genoese Economy', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, p. 402.

⁴ On the reasons why the Genoese did not take part in the Fourth Crusade, see Merav Mack, *The Merchant of Genoa: the Crusades, the Genoese and the Latin East, 1187–1220s* (Ph.D, Cambridge, University of Cambridge, 2003).

⁵ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 103.

⁶ Sandra Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova* (Genoa: ECIG, 1992), pp. 117–24; Michel Balard, 'La Romanie génoise (XIIe–début du XVe siècle)', *ASLSP*, 18 (1978), pp. 42–45; Steven Epstein, *Purity Lost: Transgressing Boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000–1400* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), pp. 100–8.

Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–1261, 1261–1282), the Genoese provided him a naval force to reconquer and later defend Constantinople. In return, the emperor promised exceptional trading privileges that included, among other things, tax waivers and free access to the Black Sea. This changed the focus of Genoese traders from Alexandria and Syria to the Black sea, Cilicia and Cyprus. At the same time, the Genoese monopoly in these lands led to an incredible growth of Genoa's economy itself. Scholars describe the period between 1260 and 1340 as 'the apogee of Genoese commercial and naval power', with the peak of its commerce occurring in the year 1293.⁷ A few years later in 1298, the Genoese Lamba Doria defeated the Venetian fleet in the battle of Curzola.⁸ However, unlike the events of 1284, this did not mark the end of their rivalry with Venice but merely brought some short years of peace that the Genoese needed to resolve internal issues and to strengthen their positions in the eastern territories.

After the treaty of Nymphaeum, Genoa obtained three outposts where to base its trading net in the East. The first, from 1267, was Pera, the famous Genoese colony on the other side of the Golden Horn in Constantinople (see map fig. 1). In 1316, the Genoese built there the Palazzo del Commune (fig. 2) and later in 1348, the famous Galata tower (fig. 3). The second base of the Genoese in the East was Caffa (modern-day Feodosia) in Crimea, which the Genoese purchased from the Golden Horde in the 1270s.⁹ The third place was Chios that was ruled by the Genoese family Zaccaria for more than two centuries from 1304 with a short interruption in the period of 1329–1347. Additionally, Genoa had a strong position in Trebizond. Thus, the Genoese trading system at its peak extended from the southeast of the Black Sea, through Cyprus, Sicily, southern France, Spain and to the North up to Southampton in England.

⁷ Miner, Stantchev, 'The Genoese Economy', pp. 404–6.

⁸ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 183; Kirk, 'Mediterranean Rivalries', pp. 466–67.

⁹ Evgeny Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa in the Black Sea Region: Evolution and Transformation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018).

During the second half of the fourteenth century, the incredible success of Genoa began to decline. One of the reasons for this could be the plague of 1348 that the Genoese brought to Italy on their ships from Caffa.¹⁰ Although accounts of this period are surprisingly scarce, indirect evidence (like the figures of import and consumption of food) suggests that the city suffered a major loss of population. On the other hand, we still do not know the extent to which the plague affected the trade and economy of the city as the demand for luxurious goods continued to grow.¹¹ Another external reason that made the second half of the fourteenth century less successful for Genoa was the continuing and intensifying rivalry with Venice in the East that resulted in several new wars. The first one broke out during the 1350s, and though by the end of it both sides were equally devastated, factional tensions inside Genoa re-emerged, and its citizens had to invite Giovanni Visconti, archbishop of Milan, to rule them. The second one is known as the War of Chioggia (1378–1381), and while it also nominally ended without particular advantage for any of the sides, it secured the future domination of Venice simply because Genoa found it increasingly more difficult to recover from the war's consequences and, therefore entered the fifteenth century in deep crisis.¹²

Genoa's Political Formation and Internal Affairs

The internal political situation in Genoa was typically not as prosperous as its international affairs. Its history during the late Middle Ages is full of civic strife first between the families seeking power and later between the supporters of the Guelf and Ghibelline parties. As a result, in order to preserve some order in the city, Genoa underwent several changes in the structure of its political system. As reconstructed from the sparse written sources, during the first half of the twelfth century, Genoa gradually started to adopt the institution of the consul

¹⁰ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 212.

¹¹ On sources and possible figures concerning the plague of 1348 and the economy of the city, see *ibid.*, pp. 211–21.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 236–42.

to regulate civic affairs in the city. The main responsibility of the consuls was to keep the republic's internal situation in peace so that the city could succeed in its international undertakings.¹³ The organisation of the consulate in Genoa is not completely known, but it seems that the citizens and, in other situations, the previous consuls elected the new consuls. By the end of the twelfth century, however, as in other regions of Northern Italy, the government of the consuls was combined with a podestarial regime. The *Podestà* was a foreign person appointed to govern the city for a short period with the help of the *consilium* (ranging from eight to more than a hundred consuls at different times).¹⁴ Furthermore, some officials were appointed to govern the narrower needs of the commune, such as maintaining defensive castles and armed galleys. There were other more institutions that were formed by members of various Genoese noble families, such as the *anziani*, a committee of the elders, or the *nobiles*.

Drastic changes in the internal political situation occurred in 1257, when as a result of civic strife, Guglielmo Boccanegra was raised to power by the people under the title of *Capitano del Popolo*.¹⁵ As Luca Filangieri noticed, this meant that the *popolo* now wanted to take part in the republic's political decisions.¹⁶ For the period of 1257–1262, the duties of the consuls were transferred to the committee of the thirty-two elders chosen to represent different regions and social groups of the city. The middle of the thirteenth century was also marked by the dominant position of the Guelfs in Genoa, especially during the years of Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) who was a member of the Fieschi family.¹⁷ By 1270, the situation changed again, and the pro-imperial Oberto Spinola and Oberto Doria became *Capitani del Popolo*, restoring the general council and establishing the *società di popolo* which meant the

¹³ On the early forms of consulate and the swift from *compagna* to consulate, see Luca Filangieri, 'The Commune', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, pp. 99–105.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 109–10.

¹⁵ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 135–39, 146–52.

¹⁶ Filangieri, 'The Commune', p. 114.

¹⁷ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 123–24.

integration of non-noble people into the government of the city. However, already by the end of the century, the system was once more reformed, and in 1300, the Podestà was called to rule with the *anziani* and an *abate del popolo*, whose functions are still to be clarified.¹⁸ The following decades did not bring internal stability to the city and during the first half of the fourteenth century, the feuds of the noble families (especially the Spinola and the Doria versus the Fieschi and the Grimaldi) only intensified, which is a crucial factor to remember when examining the eighty years of commercial peak and prosperity between 1260 and 1340.

By the second quarter of the fourteenth century, a new class of merchant families (mainly, the Adorno, the Fregoso and the Montaldo) started to gain political weight. In 1339, Simone Boccanegra (1339–1344, 1356–1363) was elected the first Doge of the Genoese Republic, finally ending constant institutional changes, but without drastically improving the internal political stability, which was still vulnerable to fights between different fractions. During the rest of the fourteenth century, the Genoese people changed their rulers every few years, and none of the Doges reached ten years in office. With the establishment of the *Dogato*, the committee of the elders was once again tasked with making major political decisions, while the Podestà was appointed the administration of justice.¹⁹

The instability and the continuous experiments with the institutional system in Genoa over the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was accompanied by a search for civic identity.²⁰ During this period, Genoa adopted all of its main symbols that would, in future, represent its cultural and social positioning among other states. For instance, the association of the Latin name *Ianua* with the gates and the Roman god Janus can be traced from the

¹⁸ Filangieri, 'The Commune', p. 116.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

²⁰ On the formation of Genoese identity, see Giovanna Petti Balbi, 'Il mito nella memoria genovese (sec. XII–XV)', *ASLSP*, 29 (1989), pp. 211–32; eadem, *Una città e il suo mare: Genova nel Medioevo* (Bologna: Clueb, 1991); Carrie E. Beneš, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250–1350* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), pp. 63–88; eadem, 'Civic Identity', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, pp. 193–217.

twelfth century when an image of gates appears on Genoese coins,²¹ and was also described in the texts of Jacopo da Varagine which served as a conceptual base for the early fourteenth-century decoration of the city's cathedral.²² Other symbols, such as the cross of St. George, were tied with the role of Genoa in the crusades.²³ Several saints also obtained the status of city patrons (John the Baptist and St. Lawrence) and represented Genoa in the colonies and in eastern states as the Genoese churches were consecrated to these saints (for example, John the Baptist in Caffa, St. Lawrence in Ayas).

The Middle Ages is also the period when the extensive Genoese literary corpus began to form. The official annals of the city that started with the famous *Annales Ianuenses* by Caffaro (c. 1080 – c. 1164) are one of the main sources of Genoese history today.²⁴ In 1152, the commune ordered a decorated copy of the annals for the public archive which today is kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (MS. Lat. 10136).²⁵ Soon after that, the consuls established the tradition of recording the city's history and appointed the next notary to

²¹ Beneš, 'Civic Identity', p. 195.

²² Scholars mainly use two editions of Jacopo da Varagine's *Chronicle: Iacopo da Varagine e la sua Cronaca di Genova dalle origini al MCCXCVII*, ed. Giovanni Monleone (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1941); *Iacopo da Varagine, Cronaca della città di Genova dalle Origini al 1297*, ed. Stefania Bertini Giudetti (Genoa: ECIG, 1995); Henceforth I will be using the latter with an indication to both Italian and Latin texts. For the *Golden Legend*: Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, eds Alessandro and Lucetta Vitale Brovarone (Turin: Einaudi, 2007); idem, *Золотая Легенда*, ed. Irina Kuvshinskaya (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Franziscanzev, 2017).

²³ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 110; Beneš, 'Civic Identity', p. 205.

²⁴ Critical editions of the Genoese annals: *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, eds Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, Cesare C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (Genoa: Istituto sordo-muti, 1890–1929). Editions of Caffaro: *Gli annali di Caffaro (1099–1163)*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi (Genoa: Frilli, 2002); *Caffaro, Genoa and the Twelfth-Century Crusades*, ed. Martin Hall (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). On Caffaro, see Richard D. Face, 'Secular History in the Twelfth Century. Caffaro of Genoa', *Journal of Medieval History*, 6 (1980), pp. 169–85; Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Caffaro e la cronachistica genovese* (Genoa: Tilgher-Genova, 1982); Gabriella Airaldi, 'Memoria e memorie di un cavaliere. Caffaro di Genova', *Crusades*, 2 (2003), pp. 25–40; Cesare C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Caffaro e i suoi tempi* (Genoa: Frilli, 2004).

²⁵ Michael McCormick, 'Annales Ianuenses', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), published online: 2005.

<https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-0293?rskey=1kmCjo&result=283> [accessed 4 June 2019]. Other copies of the manuscript are in Genoa: ASG, Manoscritti restituiti dalla Francia, no. 3, and London: BL, Add. MS 12031.

continue the cartulary – Giovanni Scriba (acts between 1154 and 1164).²⁶ The annals were pursued until the last record of Jacopo Doria in 1293. To reconstruct the Trecento in Genoa, we can only rely on the works of Giorgio Stella (died in 1420), a later chronicler, who traced the history of Genoa up to 1405 and his brother Giovanni Stella who followed his work until 1435.²⁷

Other important sources of communal records are the *Libri Iurium*, collections of documents that prescribe the citizens' rights and privileges and include papal bulls, acts, treaties, imperial charters and other juridical material. Genoese scholars edited the twelve volumes of the *Libri Iurium* covering the period from the twelfth to the seventeenth century in an almost fully published series today: 'Fonti per la storia della Liguria' by the Società Ligure di Storia Patria.²⁸ However, as Sandra Macchiavello and Antonella Rovere point out, these sources are only a part of the many documents of the Genoese Republic that were kept in its archives, as we know about the existence of many other *libri* that have not been preserved.²⁹ Finally, another type of unique Genoese medieval written sources that we have in possession are the notarial cartularies published, for instance, in the 'Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi' under the direction of Geo Pistarino.³⁰ They provide fruitful primary material for historical research of the city's life.

²⁶ His followers: Oberto Cancelliere (1163–1173), Ottobono Scriba (1174–1196), Ogerio Pane (1197–1219), Marchisio Scriba (1220–1224). Then, for several decades, the annals were written by a group of authors. See Sandra Macchiavello, Antonella Rovere 'The Written Sources', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, pp. 37–38.

²⁷ Giorgio and Giovanni Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1975).

²⁸ Available online: <http://www.storiapatriagenova.it/Fonti.aspx> [accessed 4 June 2019].

²⁹ Macchiavello, Rovere 'The Written Sources', p. 39.

³⁰ During the work on this thesis I used among others: 'Le carte del monastero di San Siro di Genova, dal 952 al 1224', eds Aurelia Basili and Luciana Pozza, *CSFS*, 18 (1974); Alessandra Sisto, 'Genova nel Duecento. Il capitolo di San Lorenzo', *CSFS*, 28 (1979); Gabriella Airaldi, 'Le carte di Santa Maria delle Vigne di Genova', *CSFS*, 3 (1969). In other series, for instance: 'Navigazione e commercio genovese con il Levante nei documenti dell'Archivio di Stato di Genova (secc. XIV–XV)', eds Gian Giacomo Musso and Maria Silvia Jacopino, *Pubblicazioni degli archivi di stato*, 84 (1975).

Genoa's History and Art: Literature Review

Genoa as a research subject has attracted scholarly attention in the past, although probably not as much as some other Italian cities. In the following historiographical sketch, I will only name the general works on medieval Genoa, while at the beginning of each chapter I will present a more detailed description of the literature that I use for specific topics. The literature review presented below consists of two parts: the broadly historical studies on the role of the city (including Mediterranean studies and the main works on Genoa's ties with the East) and research on artistic material. This division may seem somewhat artificial, especially for the latest interdisciplinary works, but it is dictated by the original lack of interest in Genoese and Ligurian art that was symptomatic of the scholarship until roughly the last fifty years. Finally, even though not all the works that I mention here are substantially used in the following chapters, they do provide the necessary information to present the historical and cultural context for the period under study and to form the methodological framework of this thesis.

Since the first publication of Fernand Braudel's ground-breaking thesis in 1949, the history of the Mediterranean has been the subject of interest for many researchers of diverse fields.³¹ Over the past seventy years, the knowledge regarding the subject matter has evolved, and a separate discipline has emerged. The field of 'Mediterranean History' combines political, social, economic, and environmental histories, to name just a few. Interest in the Mediterranean as a separate phenomenon and in Genoa as an important micro-region within it is still examined in research done by modern scholars.³² The sea that throughout centuries divided and at the same time united many different cultures became a

³¹ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 3 vols (Paris: Colin, 1949). The English translation by Sian Reynolds: idem, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols (London: Collins, 1972–1973).

³² Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: a Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley, 2000).

phenomenon that researchers have transferred to other geographical areas and epochs.³³ The questions that scholars address the most is the issue of the migration of goods, ideas, rituals and images across the Mediterranean. A very important matter in this broad view is the balance between human and non-human impact. In other words, on one side there is the inevitable role of the natural environment or, for instance, political events and on the other side there is human agency and individual impact, as described by David Abulafia ‘the roulette wheel spins and the outcome is unpredictable, but human hands spin the wheel’.³⁴ During the period under study in this thesis, the Genoese maritime republic and its citizens played one of the leading roles in the region, as active participants and mediators between diverse areas of the Mediterranean world.

The history of Genoa as part of the global processes that took place in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages is relatively well studied. To some extent this is because the unique collection of sources in the Genoese archives has been subject of scholarly interest during the past two centuries. As mentioned above, Genoese scholars published many primary sources and since the nineteenth-century work of Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, Cornelio Desimoni and Gerolamo Berlotto, modern historians (Dino Puncuh, Sandra Macchiavello, Gabriella Airaldi and many others) continue to make these documents available to a wider audience.

Only in the middle of the twentieth century did the English-speaking scholarship fully appreciate the variety of the Genoese archival sources through the work of Roberto S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond.³⁵ Almost two decades later, Genoa played a key role in Lopez’ argument of the particular nature of Italian commerce in the Middle Ages and its role in the

³³ David Abulafia, ‘Mediterraneans’, in *Rethinking the Mediterranean*, ed. W.V. Harris (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 64–93. The volume overall aims to establish some theoretical grounds mainly on the examples of ancient history.

³⁴ David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: a Human History of the Mediterranean* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), p. xxxi.

³⁵ Roberto S. Lopez, Irving W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).

birth of Europe's commercial economy between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries that shifted from Byzantium to the West with the rise of the Italian Maritime Republics.³⁶ As part of the scholarly interest in commerce and in the connection between Genoa and the eastern side of the Mediterranean world, historians have been focusing on the Genoese relations with Byzantium and its colonies in the East. Michel Balard centred his studies on this aspect, starting from his thesis, first published in 1976, *La Romanie génoise* to his two volumes of *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*.³⁷ In Italian, Sandra Origone has written the main work on the relationships between Genoa and Byzantium throughout the Middle Ages.³⁸

Partly following the ideas of the 'new social history', Steven Epstein wrote his classic book *Genoa and the Genoese* also based on archival documents but he shifted his focus to the life of diverse groups of the city's population.³⁹ His research includes not only political events inside and outside of the city but also accounts on the spiritual life of the Genoese, the description of the medieval city, the participation of women in charity, the question of slavery and many other aspects of life in Genoa from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries. At the same time, although Epstein's book is still one of the best general works on medieval Genoa, it dedicates very little attention to the culture of this city, and overall, the book shows a lack of interest in the Genoese artistic heritage.

More recently, the seemingly narrow economic aspects of Genoese life became the focus of Quentin Van Doosselaere's study, who also based his research on Genoese archival sources including thousands of notarial records.⁴⁰ However, through the study of long-

³⁶ Roberto S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

³⁷ Michel Balard, *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer, tome 1. Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto, 1289–1290* (Paris: EHESS, 1973); idem, *La Romanie génoise (XIIIe–début du XVe siècle)* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1976), also published in *ASLSP*, 18 (1978); idem, *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer, tome 2. Les actes de Kilia du notaire Antonio di Ponzo, 1360* (Paris: EHESS, 1980).

³⁸ Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*.

³⁹ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*.

⁴⁰ Quentin Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

distance commercial agreements, the scholar traced broader questions concerning changes in the Genoese social structure and the transition from a world ruled by ‘men-of-arms’ to a new society of ‘men-of-capital’. And although the information potential of economic sources housed in the Genoese archives still maintains the attention of scholars, lately, other topics have also grown in scientific interest such as, the city’s civic identity or Jacopo da Varagine and his extensive literary heritage.⁴¹ Epstein recently examined the whole corpus of works of this highly influential medieval author, taking into account not only his well-known *Legenda Aurea* but also his many sermons and the *Chronica Civitatis Ianuensis*, which is awaiting a new edition.⁴²

Interest in the city’s medieval artistic heritage started to form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the works of Genoese scholars who collected archival registers for Genoese churches and that are now often the only existing sources of this information. However, although these records can be very useful to modern art historians, the information that the scholars recorded usually concerned institutional history, accounts of internal affairs and occasionally the development of the churches.⁴³ In addition to collecting primary evidence and providing it with a description, Federico Alizeri sought to present a more detailed analysis of the monuments he was mentioning.⁴⁴ His artistic guide of the city is still full of valuable information that has also been used during the writing of this thesis.

⁴¹ Beneš, *Urban Legends*. Note also two sessions on Jacopo da Varagine at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, 2018.

⁴² Steven Epstein, *The Talents of Jacopo da Varagine: a Genoese Mind in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2015). Beneš mentions her forthcoming publication in the introduction to *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, p. 8, footnote 21.

⁴³ See, for instance, Nicolò Perasso, ‘Memorie e notizie di chiese e opera pie di Genova’, ASG, Manoscritti, 835–846.

⁴⁴ Federico Alizeri, *Guida artistica per la città di Genova*, 2 vols (Genoa: Grondona, 1846–1847); idem, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalla fondazione dell’Accademia*, 3 vols (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino, 1864–1866); idem, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalle origini al secolo XVI*, vols 1–3: Pittura, vols 4–6: Scultura (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino, 1870–1880).

However, as mentioned above, more recent scholarship did not show much interest in the study of medieval art in Genoa or even less in Liguria until the second half of the twentieth century. The reason for this is very simple: Genoa does not house as many majestic examples of canonical works as other Italian cities, for instance, Rome, Florence and Venice and is nearly always omitted in scientific overviews of the Italian Renaissance. Most mid-twentieth-century general works on the history of Italian art either do not include Genoa before the fifteenth century or devote very little attention to the artistic process in this medieval city. For example, Pietro Toesca's book on the Trecento dedicates only two pages to the topic of our interest, combining the art of the regions of Liguria and Piemonte.⁴⁵ Published in several editions throughout the second half of the twentieth century, John White's *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1250–1400* only mentions the façade of the Genoese cathedral and three medieval secular buildings.⁴⁶

In 1970, Colette Bozzo Dufour and Ennio Poleggi started a series of books devoted to art of Liguria and Genoa, with the first volume dedicated to the art from Antiquity to the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ Despite the fact that this volume only touched on some aspects of the Tuscan artistic influences on the medieval painters who worked in Genoa, it played an important role in the emergence of studies on art in this region. In the 1980s, Giovanni Romano and Elena Rossetti Brezzi wrote the chapters on Ligurian painting during the Duecento and Trecento for the volume edited by Enrico Castelnuovo; this meant that the art of Liguria was finally included in general works on Italian art history.⁴⁸ At the same time, international scholars began to show interest in medieval Ligurian art: for instance, the second volume of the *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine italienne: XIII siècle* contains a

⁴⁵ Pietro Toesca, *Il Trecento* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1951), pp. 798–800.

⁴⁶ John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1250–1400* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993). It was first published in 1966.

⁴⁷ Colette Bozzo Dufour, Ennio Poleggi, *La pittura a Genova e in Liguria: dagli inizi al Cinquecento* (Genoa: Sagep, 1987) (first edition – 1970).

⁴⁸ Giovanni Romano, 'Pittura del Duecento in Liguria' and Elena Rossetti Brezzi, 'Pittura ligure del Trecento', in *La pittura in Italia. Il Duecento e il Trecento*, 2 vols, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo (Milan: Electa, 1986), I (1986).

section on Liguria, and a year later Robert Nelson published his fundamental paper on the frescoes of the Genoese cathedral inscribing it into the circle of art in Palaeologan style.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, individual objects linked to Byzantine emperors (such as the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*) also became known to a wider group of scholars.⁵⁰

Over the subsequent years, interest in Genoese medieval art continued to rise, and while the corpus of sources was still in the process of being gathered and elaborated, fundamental research based on archival, archaeological and restoration evidence already began to appear. By the Great Jubilee in 2000, some medieval sites (for instance, the cathedral and San Giovanni di Pr ) underwent restoration through which a lot of new material was found and which resulted in major publications.⁵¹ Overall, during the last two decades, although mainly through the work of local researchers, Genoese medieval art is being examined from many new perspectives. While earlier art historians aimed either to find objects from Byzantium or to trace some Tuscan influences, today there is more of a focus on understanding what Genoese art is and what makes it special. The issue of multiculturalism remains one of the most important research topics, but it is not seen as something that contrasts the local component, rather as something that is an integral feature of the latter. The international artistic connections throughout the history of Genoa were studied in a series of five books edited by Clario Di Fabio and Piero Boccardo, which is devoted to Genoa's interactions with the Mediterranean basin, Atlantic and continental Europe, as well as with France and Spain.⁵² Clario Di Fabio is one of the most knowledgeable

⁴⁹ *Manuscrits enlumin s d'origine italienne: XIIIe si cle*, vol. 2, eds Fran ois Avril and Marie-Th r se Gousset (Paris: Biblioth que Nationale de France, 1984); Robert S. Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter in Trecento Genoa: The Last Judgment at S. Lorenzo', *The Art Bulletin*, 67, 4 (1985), pp. 548–66.

⁵⁰ Pauline Johnstone, 'The Byzantine 'Pallio' at the Palazzo Bianco at Genoa', *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 87 (1976), pp. 99–108.

⁵¹ *Cattedrale e chiostro di San Lorenzo: conoscenza e restauro*, eds Giampaolo Bartolozzi and Gianni Bozzo (Genoa: Sagep, 2000); *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta: arte e restauri di un ospedale Genovese del Medioevo*, ed. Giorgio Rossini (Genoa: Sagep, 2001).

⁵² *Genova e l'Europa: opere, artisti, committenti, collezionisti*, eds Clario Di Fabio and Piero Boccardo (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2005).

contemporary researchers of Genoese art. His work has been used in all the chapters of this thesis regardless of the variation of themes. In numerous monographs and papers, Di Fabio focuses, among other things, on the questions of cultural communication, artistic commissioning, civic memory and identity.

An important part of the trend to re-evaluate Genoese medieval art is the effort to bring together all the source material preserved and inscribe it into the artistic processes that occurred during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries in the Mediterranean (for example, the style around the year 1200, the connections with Byzantium and Avignon, the question of Sienese influences and the ‘primitive style’). A number of scholars under the guidance of Giuliana Algeri and Anna De Floriani undertook this work in 2011.⁵³ With regards to more narrowly focused questions, there is a tendency to sum up and combine different aspects of Genoese medieval art that can be found in other papers by Clario di Fabio or Federica Volpera.⁵⁴

A separate area of research is focused on the Genoese cathedral of San Lorenzo which represents a micro model of the multicultural pot that Genoa was in the Middle Ages. Definitive works were brought together by Clario di Fabio in 1998 and more recently by a group of prominent international scholars who studied and photographed every inch of this building.⁵⁵ Among the scholars working on Genoese architecture, there are also those whose interests lie in the artistic heritage of the Genoese colonies in the Black Sea, including the

⁵³ *La pittura in Liguria: il Medioevo*, eds Giuliana Algeri and Anna De Floriani (Genoa: De Ferrari, 2011).

⁵⁴ Clario Di Fabio, ‘Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo. Documenti e memorie d’arte’, in *Genova e l’Europa mediterranea: Opere, artisti, committenti, collezionisti*, pp. 41–68; Federica Volpera, ‘Tracce della retorica bizantina nella pittura ligure tra XIII e XIV secolo’, *Iconographica*, 14 (2015), pp. 100–27.

⁵⁵ *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo: secoli VI–XIV*, ed. Clario Di Fabio (Genoa: Banca Carige – Fondazione Casa di Risparmio, 1998); *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa: la di San Lorenzo a Genova*, eds Gerhard Wolf, Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti and Salvatore Settis (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2013).

remaining medieval churches and fortifications. Russian scholars, and more recently Rafał Quirini-Popławski, have significantly advanced this topic.⁵⁶

Rebecca Müller has proposed a different approach to art in Genoa during the Middle Ages in her book *‘Sic hostes Ianua frangit’: Spolien und Trophäen im mittelalterlichen Genua*.⁵⁷ Following the example of the work of Arnold Esch, she reassessed a variety of medieval artefacts kept in Genoa as *spolia* and trophies, considering them as objects with their own history which were transferred into a new context and consequently started to bear different meanings, usually those of victory, power and glory. Müller’s work is divided into four parts: *spolia* in public places (such as the Roman marbles in the doorways of four churches); trophies of the city (objects captured during the crusades and the wars with Pisa, Venice and some Spanish cities and exhibited in communal places); the use of *spolia* for the glorification of a family (for example, the Doria in connection with the quarter of San Matteo and the church of San Fruttuoso); and finally the tomb of Francesco Spinola with a Roman sarcophagus, which the scholar also interprets as a trophy. Müller’s approach in combination with her comprehensive knowledge of the historical context allows her to inscribe these objects of very different natures, mediums and origins into the social and political life of the city and even to reconstruct some of the missing decorations.

⁵⁶ Sergey Vocharov, ‘Фортификационные сооружения Каффы (конец XIII – вторая половина XV вв.)’, *Причерноморье в Средние века*, 3 (1998), pp. 82–116; Rafał Quirini-Popławski, ‘Les échanges artistiques et culturels dans la construction et la décoration des bâtiments des colonies génoises de la mer Noire (XIIIe–XVe siècle)’, in *Les transferts artistiques dans l’Europe gothique: repenser la circulation des artistes, des œuvres, des thèmes et des savoir-faire (XIIe–XVIe siècle)*, eds Jacques Dubois, Jean Marie Guillouët, Benoît Van den Bossche and Annamaria Ersek (Paris: Picard, 2014), pp. 163–74; idem, *Sztuka kolonii genueńskich w Basenie Morza Czarnego (1261–1475). Z badań nad wymianą międzykulturową w sztuce późnośredniowiecznej* (Krakow: Imedius, 2017).

⁵⁷ Rebecca Müller, *‘Sic hostes Ianua frangit’: Spolien und Trophäen im mittelalterlichen Genua* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2002).

Methodology and Scope of Study

In the present thesis, I bring together diverse works of art including wall decoration, miniatures, icons, textiles, and reliquaries that are directly tied to Genoa and focus on one aspect of this cross-cultural communication: the manifestations of Eastern Christianity in the city. Hereof, I will be using the word ‘East’ completely excluding any Islamic origin and meaning Christian states in the East (the Crusader States, Serbia, Georgia, Armenia) and territories or cultures broadly connected with Byzantium. This will include, for different periods of time, not only Constantinople, but also Serbia, Greece, Russia, and some churches of Sicily. I suppose that the Genoese and the communities that established their houses in the city associated visual or literal references to ‘the East’ variegatedly depending on the circumstances. Predictably, connections with the East could be used to show wealth or sanctity and closeness to the Holy Land. More interestingly, they were interpreted as a demonstration of antiquity and modernity alike. Such antinomy is evident both in the decoration of the Carmelite church and the cathedral where ‘eastern style’ (either by a follower of Cimabue or a painter trained at the Paleologan court) simultaneously addresses the will to follow contemporary trends and to demonstrate the antiquity of faith or of the Order’s roots. This, however, can be explained through a widespread understanding that Byzantium was, on the one hand, the most powerful and rich empire of Christendom – which Western states wished to imitate – and, on the other, that it was the successor of Rome and a bridge to the primeval and universal history of Christianity. As will be shown below, this particular image of Byzantium can be traced in the Genoese political and cultural discourses.

Therefore, the analysed objects and images bore a direct connection with the places of their origin. In the recently published *Companion to Medieval Genoa*, Müller writes about the geohistory of art – a concept that introduces the analysis of visual culture into

Mediterranean studies.⁵⁸ Like on the geopolitical stage, other Italian republics, France, Spain, Byzantium, Armenia, the Crusader States as well as many other neighbouring states (for instance, those around the Black sea) all formed part of and played their unique roles in the cultural history of the Mediterranean, in general, and in that of the city of Genoa, in particular. Therefore, in discussing locations in Genoa and the imagery that they carry, I will also inevitably address the memory of the distant places from where their cultural impulses came.

Following Michael Baxandall's insight into the controversial use of the word 'influence',⁵⁹ this work builds on recent approaches to the notion of cultural memory and aims to demonstrate the various mechanisms through which the memory about the Eastern Christian 'past' revealed itself in a new Genoese context. The thesis heavily relies on Maurice Halbwachs's and Jan Assmann's theory of communicative and cultural memory.⁶⁰ It distinguishes between two types of collective memory: while communicative memory is based primarily on everyday communication and thus is often oral, cultural memory is the established knowledge that one obtains through generations in repeated societal practice.

⁵⁸ Eadem, 'Visual Culture and Artistic Exchange', in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, p. 295, follows *Time and Place: The Geohistory of Art (Histories of Vision)*, eds Thomas Dacosta Kaufmann and Elizabeth Pilliod (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

⁵⁹ Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: on the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 58–59: 'Influence' is a curse of art criticism primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient: it seems to reverse the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account. If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X. But in the consideration of good pictures and painters the second is always the more lively reality.... If we think of Y rather than X as the agent, the vocabulary is much richer and more attractively diversified: draw on, resort to, avail oneself of, appropriate from, have recourse to, adapt, misunderstand, refer to, pick up, take on, engage with, react to, quote, differentiate oneself from, assimilate oneself to, assimilate, align oneself with, copy, address, paraphrase, absorb, make a variation on, revive, continue, remodel, ape, emulate, travesty, parody, extract from, distort, attend to, resist, simplify, reconstitute, elaborate on, develop, face up to, master, subvert, perpetuate, reduce, promote, respond to, transform tackle... — everyone will be able to think of others. Most of these relations just cannot be stated the other way round — in terms of X acting on Y rather than Y acting on X. To think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation'.

⁶⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992); Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Cultural mnemonic helps guard, reactivate and convey the second type of memory, that is, to form succession and collective identity. Assmann acknowledges that Aby Warburg enriched Halbwachs' theory by treating images as cultural objectifications that carry cultural memory.⁶¹ It thus implies that the concept of 'influence' is much more nuanced than previously perceived. With respect to this study, it suggests that cultural memory could be transferred from the East to Genoa in two forms: first, through certain physical objects that carried the memory about their place of origin; and second, through ideas that contributed to the formation of the Genoese identity from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.

In this respect, I investigate how ideas and works of art were perceived at their place of origin, according to the historical and cultural circumstances surrounding their existence. I am interested in whether by being moved to a different location and context they kept their original meaning (as the frescoes of the Carmelites). In other cases, I will look at how the Genoese tried to adapt them to the Genoese realities (like the frescoes at San Lorenzo), or how they completely lost their original meaning but gained a new narrative upon their relocation (such as the *Sacro Catino*) or even kept their original significance while also obtaining a new one for their new audience (like the *Pallio*).

In addition, I will also take a look at how these visual statements were used by the commune or by the bearers of other cultures when they arrived in Genoa. In the first case, I will analyse artefacts with regard to the secular history of the commune. In the second case, I will examine objects through the cultures that were introduced to Genoa by the migrating religious communities. I am interested in understanding the process of adaptation and assimilation of the arriving groups of people and whether it was mirrored in the images that these Orders commissioned. An important part of this research is the attempt to connect

⁶¹ Jan Assmann, John Czaplicka, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique* 65 (1995), pp. 125–33.

Genoa's visual culture with literary sources and to reconstruct the possible audience of the message that the artefacts and images conveyed.

Most of the material that I will be analysing is of religious nature, or at least located in churches. However, the fluctuating nature of sacral and secular spaces and the art that filled these places is especially evident in the example of Genoa, where the cathedral for a long time played an important civic role instead of the communal palace. The overlap of political and religious imagery in public spaces, the meaning it bore and the effect it had at the time of rising collective identity has been addressed by many prominent scholars and continues to summon new theories. One example is Klaus Krüger's monograph on the active role of images in the formation of political discourses, with a particular focus on Florence and Siena in the fourteenth centuries.⁶²

The collection of artistic creations under examination in this work is assembled around four religious sites in Genoa and in the vicinity of its medieval walls: the cathedral of San Lorenzo and the churches of San Giovanni di Pré, Santa Maria del Carmine and San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. As mentioned, each place provides very diverse examples of artistic mediums: from architecture and wall painting to relics, textiles, icons and miniatures. In some cases, the state of conservation allows us to reconstruct the whole programme and the idea behind the images, while in others, we can only study a few preserved characteristic details. Additionally, the state of knowledge significantly varies from site to site and from object to object: while the cathedral has been attracting scholarly attention for a long time, Santa Maria del Carmine has only received scant attention. Similarly, hundreds of pages have been written on the Mandylion in San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, whilst the manuscript V3-834 from the State Hermitage Museum that was produced at the monastery is still barely known to the modern scholarship. In addition to the brief historiography presented this far,

⁶² Klaus Krüger, *Politik der Evidenz: Öffentliche Bilder als Bilder der Öffentlichkeit im Trecento* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2015).

each chapter will focus in more detail on specific issues and the corresponding literature used in addressing them.

In this thesis I use the framework of place to discuss diverse works of art. I will touch upon the question of Eastern imagery in the city from three different perspectives that are based on the origin of the commissioners. The first part will address the process of bringing Eastern Christianity to Genoa by bearers of the Eastern cultures who lived in the Crusader states. Genoa, as a stronghold of international trade and a city of great transportation capacity between distant lands, attracted religious communities that at different times and under various circumstances were moving from the East. Consequently, I will examine two Catholic Orders, the Hospitallers and the Carmelites, that established their houses in Genoa in the second half of the twelfth and in the thirteenth centuries respectively. Both orders were operating in the Holy Land and then travelled to the West, handling their Eastern origins differently depending on their current needs. They also present two different channels of how Eastern imagery arrived in Genoa at the beginning and at the end of the Duecento, the periods when the decoration of their houses was produced. In Chapter One, I discuss how the Hospitallers arrived in Genoa in the second half of the twelfth century and eventually built the large complex of San Giovanni di Pré. The frescoes in the lower church commissioned by the Hospitallers at the very beginning of the Duecento remain one of the only examples of artistic production in Genoa that, as I will consider, form part of a very disputed category, the so-called 'crusader art'. Additionally, I clarify the iconography of the angels and offer a new interpretation of the deacons analysing them in the context of new forms of charity in Genoa during the first decades of the thirteenth century. Chapter Two addresses the church of Santa Maria del Carmine as a unique case study that has not yet received full attention of many scholars and thus it is rarely mentioned in works devoted to

the Carmelites in general or works on the role of religious orders in Genoa.⁶³ This is despite the fact that it houses possibly the earliest Italian example of the Order's decorative programme produced at the very end of the thirteenth century in the *maniera greca* brought to Genoa by a Tuscan follower of Cimabue. Offering a new reading, I argue that the figures of the Carmelites in the decoration of the altar chapel were not supposed to present any particular saints but rather anonymous friars as the Deacons in the lower church of San Giovanni di Pré and that they were introduced in the programme to compete with the larger Mendicant Orders and further promote the Carmelites. I also explain the appearance of St Bartholomew with a local veneration and of the female saint, who I believe to be St Catherine, with the message of teaching and beating opponents with erudition.

The second part of this thesis deals with the way the Genoese commune itself acquired and adapted Eastern imagery and objects for its needs. Chapter Three is devoted to the cathedral of San Lorenzo, the heart of Genoese civic identity that has preserved some important Eastern artefacts. I start with the most famous example of a Byzantine work in Genoa: the early fourteenth-century frescoes attributed to Marco il Greco. I am interested in the way traditional Eastern elements are combined with local ideas, as well as in the message the commissioner wanted to convey through the use of the Eastern style. Following the method of Di Fabio, I approach the images not only from the perspective of style and iconography but also in combination with the Genoese narrative about the origins and the role of the city in history. As a result, I conclude that the images of the northern wall were linked with the theme of christening which in the Genoese narrative became an argument of the supremacy of Genoa among other Italian cities. Chapter Four explores the relics and the precious diplomatic gifts that were kept in the cathedral. Most of these objects generally appeared in Genoa much earlier than the Byzantine frescoes did; they are often associated

⁶³ *A Companion to Medieval Genoa* has no mention of the church, although, for instance, Chapter 13 specifically deals with the question of religious orders in the city.

with the crusades, the treaty of Nymphaeum and other historical events. And although many of them were venerated long before the Duecento, only by the end of the thirteenth century did they all become part of the civic identity founded on the texts of Jacopo da Varagine. This chapter synthesises the research produced on the objects over the last years (including the findings of a recent restoration of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*) and is particularly important in the understanding of the dynamics of the Genoese perception of valuable objects coming from the East: the accounts on the *Sacro Catino*, the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* and especially the *Croce degli Zaccaria* allow me to trace the changing interest towards relics and representative objects of Eastern origin and to correlate them with the history of the Mandylion in San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. Finally, Chapter Five discusses an example of the *lingua franca*, the artistic language that demonstrates pictorial elements also used in the East but almost impossible to categorize into ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’, since by the Duecento these elements already formed part of the broadly Western imagery. These issues will be raised in connection with the decoration of the canons’ cloister of the cathedral which I propose to date to the middle of the thirteenth century and connect with several Roman and Venetian artistic examples.

The last centre under study is the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni founded at the beginning of the fourteenth century by a group of Armenian monks. Although they were Catholics originally, they belonged to another Christian tradition and a very different culture. Because the question of the Armenian presence in Genoa is the least studied of all topics addressed in this dissertation, in Chapter Six, I have attempted to gather all preserved evidence of this community in the city such as the history of its relations with the Kingdom of Cilicia, the congregation of the Bartholomites, and the Genoese churches that researchers have associated with the Armenians. In Chapter Seven, I analyse a manuscript that was produced at San Bartolomeo degli Armeni in 1325, kept today at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. Being the only example of such production in Genoa, it remains in

the shadows of scholarly interest and has been properly studied only by Soviet art historians. Finally, Chapter Eight is devoted to the mysterious donation of the Mandyllion to the Armenian monastery in Genoa. In order to find the possible reasons for the actions of Leonardo Montaldo, I immerse into the relationship of the Armenians to Abgar, King of Edessa who received the Mandyllion, and the changed attitude of the Genoese towards representative objects from the East compared to previous times.

There are other objects that though connected to the theme were excluded from the thesis. First, the magnificent Genoese manuscripts that, although discussed briefly alongside relevant works are large and complex enough to become a separate topic of research themselves: they include the late thirteenth-century *Supplicationes Varias* from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence (MS. Plut. 25.3), studied by Amy Neff, and the *Codex Cocharelli* dispersed over several libraries, which is famous for its miniatures of Genoa, images of the East and marvellous examples of medieval interest in natural history. There is also an example of the private use of Byzantine imagery in the church of San Matteo, which belonged to the Doria family, and despite renovations in the sixteenth century is still decorated with a medieval mosaic of the titular saint (1270s–1280s). Lastly, there are smaller artefacts that have been connected with Byzantine painters or their circle of influence: some fragmentary frescoes found in Genoese churches (for instance, the Madonna with Child from San Donato or the head of John the Baptist from San Siro di Struppa) as well as some examples of painting such as the life of John the Baptist from Sant'Andrea della Porta at the Museo di Sant'Agostino.

Part I. Catholic East moving to the West:

Crusaders and Religious Orders from the Levant

These following two chapters focus on the religious Orders of the Hospitallers and the Carmelites, which arrived in Genoa at the end of the twelfth and in the middle of the thirteenth centuries. Both formulated their identity through their connections with places in the Holy Land: the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem and Mount Carmel. At the same time, the circumstances under which both Orders established their houses in the city and commissioned their decoration were very different. The Hospitallers arrived when they were at the peak of their popularity and wanted to have a stronghold in Genoa – one of the main transitional points of the routes between the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean. The situation of the Carmelites was different: they arrived when their position within the Catholic Church was precarious, and they needed to fight for their survival. Inevitably, this was expressed in the visual evidence that both orders left in Genoa.

Chapter 1. The Question of ‘Crusader Art’: The Hospitallers’ Complex of San Giovanni di Pré

The first chapter is devoted to the centre of the military Order of the Hospitallers – the complex of San Giovanni di Pré, which was built in the twelfth century outside the walls of the city and which today houses some of the rarest examples of early thirteenth-century frescoes in Genoa. I would like to place these frescoes within the context of the cultural exchange between diverse regions of the Mediterranean during the European campaigns in the Holy Land. I will, therefore, start with a historiographical overview of the current state of research on this topic and the approaches that were used to study the art connected with

the crusades. The second section of this chapter presents an examination of San Giovanni di Pré and the frescoes of its lower church, and in general the presence of the Hospitallers in Genoa.

The Study of Eastern and Western Origins of Art around 1200

To paraphrase Ernst Kitzinger, since Lorenzo Ghiberti and Giorgio Vasari blamed the *maniera greca* for everything that was wrong with Italian painting of the Duecento,¹ the debates around the origins of the art produced during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have not lost their relevance, though certainly the context has changed drastically.² In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this term was used to contrast with Giotto's *maniera nuova* and to describe the outdated medieval style, thus, leaving aside any interest in its actual origin. The nineteenth century is known for the rising interest in the crusades and in 'national' art that resulted in the formation of a systematic gathering of sources on these topics and the effort to re-evaluate the pertinent complex tradition.³ At the same time, the artistic language that appeared in the Latin East was seen as a variant of the Western schools, mainly of the French.⁴ The Eastern component was interpreted as 'Byzantine' without providing any further details and, consequently, often left outside of scholarly attention. The established view towards the art produced during the crusades started to change with the

¹ Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Byzantine Contribution to Western Art of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *DOP*, 20 (1966), p. 27.

² I found one of the most extensive and detailed descriptions of the historiographical state of the problem and the debates around the 'Crusader art' in Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 5–20; idem, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1–20; idem, 'East Meets West: The Art and Architecture of the Crusader States', in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 488–509.

³ Melchior de Vogüé, *Églises de la Terre Sainte* (Paris: Victor Didron, 1859); Gustave Léon Schlumberger, *Numismatique de l'Orient latin* (Paris: Leroux, 1878).

⁴ Camille Enlart, *Les monuments des Croisés dans le Royaume de Jérusalem*, 2 vols (Paris: Geuthner, 1925–1929) continues the tradition established by de Vogüé; see also works by Paul Deschamps, 'La sculpture française en Palestine et en Syrie de l'époque des Croisades', *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, 31, 1–2 (1930), pp. 91–118; idem, *Les châteaux des Croisés en Terre Sainte*, 2 vols (Paris: Geuthner, 1934–1939).

publication of Thomas Boase's paper, in which he considered this art as a meeting point of European (not only French) and Levantine cultures (Byzantine and Arab).⁵

Since the end of the 1950s, the pioneering work of Hugo Buchthal and Kurt Weitzmann drastically changed this field of studies.⁶ They were the first scholars to properly incorporate the figural art of the crusades (panel painting and manuscript decoration) into the corpus of previous research that was usually based on only architecture and sculpture. This addition was partly possible due to the examination of the vast icon collection of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai carried out by Princeton University and the Universities of Michigan and Alexandria from 1958 to 1965. As a result of this work, many new studies emerged. For instance, in 1965, there was a symposium on 'The Byzantine Contribution to Western Art in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' later published in the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* series by Harvard University Press.⁷ But what was most important for the advancement of this field is that since the mid-twentieth century secondary literature presented the art of the crusades not as part of Western art that emerged in the East with the arrival of the crusaders, but as a multicultural phenomenon with roots not always possible or necessary to trace.⁸

The second half of the twentieth century also challenged the term 'crusader art'. Hans Belting was one of the first scholars to question whether it is worth using this term and whether it truly embraces the whole artistic phenomenon in question. To counter the label 'crusader art', and while analysing the nature of thirteenth-century German painting and its

⁵ Thomas S. R. Boase, 'The Arts in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 2, 1 (1938), pp. 1–21.

⁶ Hugo Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Kurt Weitzmann, 'Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons on Mount Sinai', *Art Bulletin*, 45 (1963), pp. 179–203; idem, 'Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom', *DOP*, 20 (1966), pp. 49–83.

⁷ See, for instance, Kitzinger, 'The Byzantine Contribution to Western Art', pp. 25–47; Weitzmann, 'Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom', pp. 49–83; James H. Stubblebine, 'Byzantine Influence in Thirteenth-Century Italian Panel Painting', *DOP*, 20 (1966), pp. 85–101.

⁸ Weitzmann, 'Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons', p. 182.

correlation with Byzantine art, he introduced the concept of the ‘lingua franca’.⁹ Belting developed the idea of Weizmann who had written about the challenges of discerning the national origins of this transitional art. However, Belting came to different conclusions. He suggested that Byzantine culture did not influence artists in the thirteenth century, but rather that the latter had fully embraced diverse elements of Eastern and Western cultures and produced a common language used all over the Mediterranean region. Belting opposed the division of the Mediterranean along zones of Byzantine and Western influences. Thus, for him, the *lingua franca* is the synthetic art that appeared in Europe after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, while ‘crusader art’ should be restricted to the twelfth century and the work of crusader artists in the Holy Land.¹⁰

A few years later, Gustav Kühnel continued to study and to add monumental paintings to the corpus of crusader art.¹¹ He based his research on an analysis of four buildings: the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the church of the Hospital of St. John in Abu Gosh, the Theoctistus monastery in the Judean desert, and the Crypt of John the Baptist at Sebaste. In addition to introducing to scholarship and making available previously unknown material, his main interest was the reconstruction of the decorative programme as well as the iconographical tradition and the style of the frescoes of these monuments.

At the same time, by the end of the century, the interest towards ‘indigenous’ art in the crusader states started to grow, and the Eastern element ceased to be considered exclusively of Byzantine origin. Scholars began to work on the background of other local artistic traditions: those of the Melchites, Jacobites, Armenians, Cypriots, Copts and others.¹² For instance, in the first volume of *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098–1187*,

⁹ Hans Belting, ‘Zwischen Gotik und Byzanz. Gedanken zur Geschichte der sächsischen Buchmalerei im 13. Jahrhundert’, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 41, 3–4 (1978), 217–57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹¹ Gustav Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin: Mann, 1988).

¹² This was of course anticipated in historical studies, for example, in Joshua Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), pp. 214–32.

Jaroslav Folda suggested that the examination of this topic should be shifted to an Eastern perspective.¹³ A few years earlier, Lucy-Anne Hunt analysed the mosaics in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and argued that their programme reflects the political situation among several groups of local Christians at the moment of their creation.¹⁴ Today, we see that the interest in local cultures and artistic migration continues to grow, and there is still endless material and space for debate.¹⁵

Since the 1990s, the term ‘crusader art’ has started to gradually revive. Bianca Kühnel offered a summarising look on twelfth-century art in the Holy Land that was conducted over several studies.¹⁶ But, perhaps more importantly, she aimed to determine and comprehend the nature of crusader art: its origins (Western Romanesque, Byzantine, ‘indigenous’ and Muslim art), the role of the commissioners, its diverse styles, as well as the social interactions between the conquerors and the local cultures. Kühnel determined several features that were constant in all forms of crusader art: the integration of the past and respect towards (and iconographical awareness of) the *Loca Sancta*, in addition to the connection with contemporary aesthetics and political trends. Additionally, together with Gustav Kühnel, the scholar has carried out major work on the study of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem’s monumental painting. Their most recent work together is devoted to the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which follows the aforementioned research on wall paintings in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹⁷

¹³ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders*, pp. 15–16.

¹⁴ Lucy-Anne Hunt, ‘Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of “Crusader” Art’, *DOP*, 45 (1991), pp. 69–85.

¹⁵ Annemarie Weyl Carr, ‘Iconography and Identity: Syrian Elements in the Art of Crusader Cyprus’, *Church History and Religious Culture*, 89, 1–3 (2009), pp. 127–51, with bibliography on studies on Syrian wall-paintings on pp. 128–29; Anastasia Drandaki, ‘“A Maniera Greca”: Content, Context, and Transformation of a Term’, *Studies in Iconography*, 35 (2014), pp. 39–72, especially footnote 69.

¹⁶ Bianca Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century: a Geographical, an Historical, or an Art-Historical Notion?* (Berlin: Mann, 1994).

¹⁷ Bianca and Gustav Kühnel, *The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem: The Crusader Lining of an Early Christian Basilica* (Berlin: Schnell Steiner, 2019).

The most ambitious attempt to make a complete collection of pertinent sources and to review the named phenomenon in detail belongs to Jaroslav Folda. In his general works and numerous papers devoted to particular areas and objects, he defends the use of the term ‘crusader art’ and attempts to give it a clear definition at the same time as extending its chronological framework to the end of the thirteenth century.¹⁸ According to Folda, crusader art is ‘all artistic work done in the Crusader States of Syria-Palestine for Crusader/Frankish/merchant patrons and/or by Crusader artists between 1098 when Antioch and Edessa fell into the hands of armies of the First Crusade and 1291 when the crusaders were thrown into the sea at St. Jean d’Acre’.¹⁹ The scholar proposes to consider the art produced in the Crusader States as a separate phenomenon and therefore contrary to the existing understanding of it as a sort of European colonial art in the East or as an Eastern Christian influence on Western artists. He admits that the context, function and style of the objects produced in the twelfth century differ from those of the thirteenth century, but argues that crusader art remained ‘strictly independent as a uniquely Eastern chapter in the history of European medieval art’.²⁰ Subsequently, he considers most works of crusader art as a product of crusader artists and not of Byzantine or Byzantine-influenced Italian and French artists as was traditionally argued in previous literature.²¹ Nonetheless, his use of the term ‘crusader art’ is often criticised in modern scholarship.²²

At this point, it is important to note that although most of the studies that have been mentioned above are focused on art in the Near East, this is not the main subject of my current work. However, the art of the crusaders and the cultural situation on the eastern side

¹⁸ See ‘What is Crusader Art?’ in Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land*, pp. 511–27 and a shorter version in idem, *Crusader Art: The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099–1291* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2008), pp. 13–15.

¹⁹ Idem, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land*, p. 515.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 513.

²¹ Ibid., p. LXVII.

²² Robin Cormack, ‘Review of Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (2005)’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 149 (2007), p. 556.

of the Mediterranean basin are undoubtedly subjects closely related to the transformation that took place in Western European art. It is unfounded to restrict ‘crusader art’ to only the Eastern Mediterranean since ‘crusader artists’ from the East constantly travelled to the West, worked and left their artistic production there. I would argue that some of the Genoese artworks described in the following pages should also be seen as part of the same phenomenon, despite the fact that they were not produced in the East.²³ In my opinion, the decoration of San Giovanni di Pré shows, at least in some parts, the same features as the art that Folda and the Kühnells described in their books. Thus, from the point of view of my research, I believe that we can refer to some works produced in the Latin West as ‘crusader art’. This seems especially justified since the commissioner of the monument’s decoration was the Order of the Hospitallers, so the context in which this art was produced is closely tied to the crusades. Folda accentuates in many studies the role of the Templars and especially of the Hospitallers as major patrons of crusader art.²⁴ As I will show, a part of the decoration in the Hospitallers’ complex of San Giovanni di Pré belongs to a group of painters who were raised in this complex culture that emerged on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean sea. They produced a decoration which, as I will demonstrate, had very clear origins in both the Western and Eastern iconographies and appeared in a place that served as a transitional point between the East and the West. In this respect, the Order of the Hospitallers played a crucial role in creating a ‘channel’ for the diffusion of this ‘crusader’ artistic language in Genoa at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Understandably, the application of the term ‘crusader art’ has become relatively loose as, at this point, it includes an extremely broad range of styles and cultural interrelations. As

²³ On the tradition of direct adoption in architecture from the Holy Land see, for instance, Bianca Kühnel, ‘Monumental Representations of the Holy Land in the Holy Roman Empire’, in *Die Kreuzzugsbewegung im römisch-deutschen Reich (11.–13. Jahrhundert)*, eds Nikolas Jaspert and Stefan Tebruck (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2016), pp. 319–45.

²⁴ This idea features constantly in Folda’s narrative, for instance, in *Crusader Art: the Art of the Crusades in the Holy Land, 1099–1291*, p. 29.

mentioned above, the methodological grounds for the use of this notion have been justly questioned. However, for the purpose of this thesis the term can be helpful: because we do not have any accounts on the artist's origin and background but we know for certain that the commissioners and the context of the production was tightly connected with the crusades, the term at hand specifies this particular situation that occurred in Genoa. In the discussion of the frescoes in San Giovanni di Pré I will use the term 'crusader artist' meaning a painter that arrived from the Holy Land, was closely familiar mainly with the Byzantine culture and whose work appeared in Genoa through the mediation of the Hospitaller Order.

San Giovanni di Pré. Early History and Structure of the Complex

By the second half of the twelfth century, the quarter of Pré was a rural zone outside of Genoa's city walls when the Hospitallers came to settle there. The toponym 'di Pré' comes from the word 'prato' and can be translated as 'from the fields'. It was included inside the limits of the city only after the enlargements of its walls in the middle of the fourteenth century. And yet, this was a comparatively lively neighbourhood due to its positioning by the sea and the presence of several religious communities. Today, the quarter of San Giovanni di Pré still houses a large medieval complex that consists of a two-level church connected to a hospital and other adjacent buildings (figs. 4–7).

According to some eighteenth-century archival evidence collected by Nicolò Perasso, the first church that appeared in this district was the church of the Holy Sepulchre in the seventh century which belonged to the homonymous order.²⁵ It is believed that the church was constructed in memory of the destroyed church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land after the siege of Jerusalem in 636.²⁶ However, the first extant documentation comes from as late as 1098, the year when the ashes of John the Baptist arrived in Genoa and were placed

²⁵ Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, MS. 836, p. 300.

²⁶ Carlo Ceschi, *Architettura romanica genovese* (Milan: Alfieri, 1954), p. 212.

in this church outside the city walls.²⁷ Consequently, however, the ashes were transferred to the Duomo and apparently kept there by the altar in a silver shrine.

To return to the twelfth century, after the positions of the Catholic Orders in the Holy Land became less stable, and especially after the seizure of Jerusalem in 1187, the congregation of the Holy Sepulchre gradually began to decline.²⁸ However, by the middle of the twelfth century, the Order of the Hospitallers received the region under its rule. In the *Registrum Curiae*, published in the nineteenth century by Belgrano, there is a mention of the *ecclesia Sancti Sepulchri* in 1143, but the references to this church vanish from the written sources by the end of the twelfth century.²⁹ Although there is no mention of the Hospitallers in this early record of the *Registrum Curiae*, some researchers believe that by 1143 the church already belonged to the Knights of St. John.³⁰ Still, it is not clear how both congregations interacted during this transitional time. For example, we do not know if the new church of San Giovanni di Pré appeared on the site of the Santo Sepolcro or in its closest vicinity. The latest archaeological excavations of the 1990s have demonstrated that there are no clear traces of previous constructions under the current complex of San Giovanni di Pré but that the Hospitallers used pre-existing columns that could have belonged to the former

²⁷ Agostino Calcagnino, *Historia del glorioso precursore di N.S. S. Gio. Battista, protettore della città di Genova : nella quale si registra la sua vita e morte, & il successo delle sue sacratissime reliquie : come furono acquistate da' genovesi e portate nella loro patria, e come in essa sono custodite, e riuertentemente tenute* (Genoa: Farroni, 1648), pp. 95–96; Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, vol. 2, 1, p. 193.

²⁸ There is, however, a view that the Genoese canons of the Holy Sepulchre were autonomous from the Order that appeared in Jerusalem: see Giorgio Rossini, 'San Giovanni di Pré e la tipologia delle chiese doppie presso l'ordine di San Giovanni di Gerusalemme', in *Cavalieri di San Giovanni e territorio: la Liguria tra Provenza e Lombardia nei secoli XIII–XVIII*, ed. Josepha Costa Restagno (Genoa: Bordighera, 1999), p. 73.

²⁹ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', in *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta*, pp. 18, 156, footnote 4; Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, 'Il Registro della curia arcivescovile di Genova pubblicato ed illustrato dal socio Luigi Tommaso Belgrano', *ASLSP*, 2, 2 (1862), pp. 5, 8.

³⁰ Anna Dagnino, 'San Giovanni di Pré', in *Medioevo restaurato: Genova, 1860–1940*, eds Bozzo Colette Dufour and Rita Cavalli (Genoa: Pirella, 1990), pp. 160, 183, footnote 69; Elena Bellomo, *The Templar Order in North-West Italy (1142–c.1330)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 14.

church of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the construction of their own lower church.³¹

The first evidence of the hospital next to the church dates to 1156 or 1160.³²

The later chronology of the existing building is easier to reconstruct because a sepulchral stone with the portrait of the commissioner and the date of its foundation has been preserved on the south façade of the bell tower (fig. 8). The inscription should be read starting from the middle cross, returning to the beginning of the first line and continuing from the cross in the second line: + ACTOR(e) · W(illelmo) · D(omi)NI D(o)M(us) EXII h(ic) · // P(ro) Q(uo) QUESO P(at)ER Q(ui) TR(a)NSI(s) D(i)CI // + M · CLXXX · TEN(po)R(e) V(illelm)I INCOATU(m) E(st).³³ Through this inscription we learn that a certain William founded the current church around 1180. Scholars identified him as Guglielmo da Voltaggio (1160–1234), a descendant of a noble Ligurian family and the head of the Hospitaller Order who by the end of his life became the ambassador of Genoa to the Venetian Republic and negotiated the peace treaty with Alessandria in 1232.³⁴ The end of the construction is attested in two notarial documents of 1249; one is cited in the rare nineteenth-century book by Vincenzo Peirano and the other is kept in the Archivio di Stato in Genoa.³⁵

By the time of its construction, the Genoese complex of San Giovanni di Pré was the main Hospitallers' house among many others in coastal Ligurian cities: San Giacomo di Rupinaro in Chiavari, San Leonardo a Cavi di Lavagna and San Giovanni Battista in Sestri

³¹ Ceschi, *Architettura romanica genovese*, p. 214; Fulvio Cervini, *Liguria romanica* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2002), p. 119; Giorgio Rossini, 'La chiesa e la commenda di San Giovanni di Pré', in *La commenda di Pré: un ospedale genovese del Medioevo*, ed. Giorgio Rossini (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1992), pp. 20–21; idem, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 19–23.

³² Dagnino, 'San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 160, 184, footnote 71.

³³ Slightly different versions of the transcription can be found in Dagnino, 'San Giovanni di Pré', p. 184, footnote 76; Rossini, 'La chiesa e la commenda di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 21.

³⁴ Romeo Pavoni, 'Un protagonista della politica genovese della prima metà del XIII secolo: il gerosolimitano Guglielmo di Voltaggio', in *Riviera di Levante tra Emilia e Toscana: un crocevia per l'Ordine di San Giovanni*, ed. Josepha Costa Restagno (Genoa: Istituto Studi Liguri, 2001), pp. 27–77.

³⁵ Vincenzo Peirano, *Fra Guglielmo da Voltaggio, commendatore nei cavalieri di Malta, fondatore della chiesa di S. Giovanni di Pré (o de Capite arenae). Osservazioni e documenti* (Genoa: Tipografia della Gioventù, 1879), p. 11.

Levante.³⁶ Additionally, as Rossini noted, there was a great difference between San Giovanni di Pré in Genoa and other centres of the Order in Liguria – it was not intended to store weaponry.³⁷ Its main purpose was to shelter pilgrims who parted from Genoa to the Holy Land, to cure the ill and also to serve as a parish church for the surrounding area. In order to fulfil these needs, the medieval complex of San Giovanni di Pré consisted of two churches, one on top of the other with adjacent buildings that included the hospital and some monastic premises. Over the years, researchers have expressed various theories regarding the purpose of these spaces. In my description below, I will rely on the fundamental study by Giorgio Rossini that is based on the last restoration and the newest archaeological findings.³⁸

The space that is of most interest to us is the lower church of the Hospitallers' complex (fig. 5). Two rows of eight thin columns (possibly inherited from the previous church) divide it into three equal aisles that all end in the East with a single apse that originally had several windows for illumination.³⁹ This layout does not resemble the plan of a basilica and gives the impression of a unified hall that consists of equal square spaces, something that, as we will see later, led to several theories about the purpose of the church. On both sides of the altar, which is accessed from the presbytery, there are two autonomous chapels which, according to Rossini, are a clear sign that the structure is of an Eastern typology.⁴⁰ In the south, facing the city, the façade of the lower church is decorated with an arcade, which is another characteristic detail of the architecture of the Hospitallers.⁴¹ The northern façade of the church was adjoined to the cloister that occupied the space of the current oratorio di San

³⁶ On other Ligurian centres of the Hospitallers, see Giorgio Rossini, 'L'architettura degli ordini cavallereschi tra Genova e il Levante', in *Genova e l'Europa mediterranea*, pp. 109–31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 113–14.

³⁸ The description of the medieval construction is based on Rossini's chapters 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré' and 'L'ospitale e il complesso monastico'. The chapters include excellent diagrams, especially on pp. 20–21, 36, 52–53, 60, 76–77. Additionally, on the typology of the Hospitallers' double churches, see Rossini, 'San Giovanni di Pré e la tipologia delle chiese doppie', pp. 71–110.

³⁹ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Giovanni Evangelista. This area was reserved for the internal use of the monks. Restoration works also uncovered an original doorway that connected the lower church to the hall of the hospital on the western side. The remaining premises on the inner side of the complex included a warehouse in the north-eastern wing and the kitchen adjoining the hospital.

The walls of the upper church were built from the same material and in a similar technique as the Lombard school, which could imply that both levels were constructed simultaneously starting at the end of the twelfth century. However, following the suggestions of his predecessors, Rossini argues that the masonry alone does not validate the theory of the simultaneity of the constructions, because the technique applied in the construction of this complex was typical for relatively long time, as well as the use of the dark stone from Promontorio did not change significantly in Genoa from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.⁴² Therefore, another possible hypothesis is that the Hospitallers received the lower church and started its reconstruction in 1150, and later expanded it by adding the upper church sometime after 1180.⁴³ Unfortunately, the interior of the upper church was drastically reconstructed in the first half of the eighteenth century with the addition of a separate entrance through a new portal in the eastern apse, which thus, altered the direction and place of the altar (fig. 6).⁴⁴

The existence of these two levels also raises the question of their function. In the middle of the twentieth century, Carlo Ceschi claimed that the lower space had not been a crypt because it had no direct connection with the upper church. Instead, he suggested that it be considered a chapter house since it had no entrance from the street and, therefore, the premises were only for the internal use of the Hospitallers.⁴⁵ However, later restoration and archaeological works disproved this theory: the doors that originally connected the hospital

⁴² Ibid., p. 28–30. More about the possible construction stages in Ceschi, *Architettura romanica genovese*, pp. 214–15.

⁴³ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 58. See also diagrams on pp. 52–53, 60.

⁴⁵ Ceschi, *Architettura romanica genovese*, p. 214–16.

with the church were blocked in the sixteenth century when the church obtained parochial status and began to function independently.⁴⁶ More recent studies tend to argue that only members of the Order could use the upper church (sometimes as the chapter room) while the lower church was opened to the hospital and the neighbouring residents.⁴⁷ Rossini proposed another possible explanation, based on the architecture of the Order's original church of John the Baptist in Jerusalem. It was built as a *martyrium* in the fifth century on the place where the head of the saint was found, and by the time of the crusades, it also had two floors. In this context, the memory of the original place of gaining the relics and the first home of the Order in the Holy Land was transferred to the Genoese reality, where San Giovanni di Pré became, though for a short time, the first place to receive the ashes of John the Baptist. Consequently, Rossini suggested looking at the lower church in Genoa as a 'stanza delle relique' that can sometimes be found in other devotional churches.⁴⁸

The vast extension programme that began at the end of the twelfth century also included the premises of the hospital built on the same axis as the churches. Rossini connects the early appearance of a guest house for the cure and care of travellers in Western Europe with two diverse Eastern traditions: the Byzantine *xenodocheion*, and the Islamic *muristan* (for the sick) and *caravanseraï* (for the travellers).⁴⁹ This connection is easily traced through the original *muristan* that the Hospitallers had in Jerusalem attached to the church of their patron John the Baptist and close to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Originally the Genoese

⁴⁶ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 52.

⁴⁷ Edoardo Mazzino, 'Ospitale della commenda di San Giovanni di Pré', in *Restauri in Liguria* (Genoa: Sagep, 1978), p. 147.

⁴⁸ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 66–67; idem, 'San Giovanni di Pré e la tipologia delle chiese doppie', pp. 92–110.

⁴⁹ Rossini, 'L'ospitale e il complesso monastico', pp. 73, 88. See also Alexander Kazhdan, Alice-Mary Talbot 'Xenodocheion', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* <https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-5844?rskey=MwGI5p&result=5841> [accessed 21 June 2019].

hospital had one or two floors with the third being added in the fifteenth century.⁵⁰ Just like the church, the façade of the hospital was decorated with an arcade to form a stylistically unified ensemble. While describing the organisation of the hospital, Rossini writes that it was customary for the patients to take part in the mass through the open doors that led to the church.⁵¹ Both floors of the hospital consist of a large hall divided in the middle with a row of seven columns.

This reconstruction is important for the understanding of the context in which the frescoes in the lower church were produced. The Hospitallers built this vast complex in one of the main Italian maritime republics in order to have a transit point for pilgrims heading East. Thus, the ties with the crusades and the Holy Land had existed already in the purpose of the building and was confirmed in the architecture that followed examples of the other Hospitallers' houses in the Crusader States.

Frescoes in the Lower Church

Only in the 1990s, during restoration works, did researchers fully uncover the frescoes in the lower church of San Giovanni di Pré, although some of them were already visible in earlier years. One of the first descriptions of the frescoes belongs to Elisabetta Ghezzi who proposed a reading of the visible fragments in the chapel of St. Margaret before the restoration.⁵² The first stylistic and iconographic analysis, as well as the full description and introduction of the frescoes was produced by Rossini.⁵³ After him, Anna De Florian published a paper offering a more precise dating and connecting the style of the frescoes with Alpine imagery and the decoration of the cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. She also proposed two possible *termini ante quem* for the conclusion of the decoration inside the

⁵⁰ Mazzino, 'Ospitale della commenda di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 163; Rossini, 'L'ospitale e il complesso monastico', p. 81.

⁵¹ Rossini, 'L'ospitale e il complesso monastico', pp. 77–78.

⁵² Elisabetta Ghezzi, 'Considerazioni sulla chiesa inferiore di San Giovanni di Pré', *Argomenti di storia dell'arte* (1980), pp. 31–47.

⁵³ Rossini, 'La doppia chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 31–46.

church: archival documents show evidence that in 1216 the church was already functioning and that in 1249 all labours were fully completed.⁵⁴ Many questions, however, remain unresolved despite the fact that scholars have been gathering more information in recent years, such as Roberta Guzzetti's iconographical clarifications published a few years ago.⁵⁵

Only two places in the lower church are still decorated with the original frescoes (fig. 5). First, four angels carrying the *Agnus Dei* are found in one of the vaults of the narthex. Additionally, the south-eastern chapel, dedicated to St. Margaret of Antioch is decorated with images of her life and several scenes in the Apocalyptic theme are depicted in roundels under the arch that leads from the church to the separate space of the chapel. Although the percentage of preserved images is very small and the quality of their surface is often extremely poor, the remaining frescoes give researchers a very rough idea of the general decorative programme. The images in the roundels under the arches of the chapel of St. Margaret and the images in the narthex suggest that the decoration was widely based on eschatological motifs. This theme also makes sense because of the tradition of the decoration in the churches of the order in the Holy Land, for example, in the church of the Hospital of Saint John in Emmaus (Abu Gosh) from the third quarter of the twelfth century.⁵⁶

The main scholarly debates concerning this monument focus on the prototypes and the origin of the frescoes and, consequently, their dating. It is commonly believed that the frescoes in the narthex have more Eastern qualities, while the frescoes in the chapel of St. Margaret bear signs of Alpine style adoption. None of the researchers negates the Eastern impact on the frescoes of the narthex, but rather question the extent and the channel of this borrowing. In several works at the beginning of the 2000s, Rossini has suggested that a

⁵⁴ Anna De Floriani, '“Genova 1200”: L'apertura verso l'Europa', in *La pittura in Liguria*, p. 52; eadem, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré: osservazioni sulla pittura a Genova ai primordi del XIII secolo', *Studi di storia dell'arte*, 20 (2009), p. 9. Location of documents in Dagnino, 'San Giovanni di Pré', p. 184, fn. 78.

⁵⁵ Roberta Guzzetti, 'La “Resurrezione dei morti” nella commenda di San Giovanni di Pré a Genova: una nuova interpretazione per il “Giudizio Universale” della chiesa inferior', *Ligures*, 12–13 (2014–2015), pp. 31–38.

⁵⁶ Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 152–59, 173–77.

painter of Syrian or Byzantine origin was responsible for the entrance frescoes, while a Northern European artist could have painted the chapel. He also believes that the frescoes in the narthex of the church should be dated to the time of the Hospitallers' restoration, that is from the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, while the frescoes of Western background in the adjacent chapel belong to a later time, sometime within the first half of the thirteenth century, before the arrival of Manfredino da Pistoia and the cimabuesque culture.⁵⁷ In a short passage on the frescoes of the lower church, published in 2002, Fulvio Cervini suggested dating them to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.⁵⁸ In 2009, De Floriani has narrowed the dating to the first years of the thirteenth century.⁵⁹ In talking about their origins, she compared the frescoes of the St. Margaret chapel to several cycles of French and English Romanesque decoration and argued that they resembled Western prototypes, while the Eastern element was a reflection of the 'international style' that emerged around the year 1200.⁶⁰ The following analysis of the frescoes has led me to agree in general terms with Rossini's conclusions on the origin of the frescoes in the narthex and with De Floriani's description of the decoration of the chapel of St. Margaret and I believe that the date of production is either the very end of the twelfth century or the first years of the thirteenth century.⁶¹ This is based on some historical accounts on the construction of the church and the similarity of the frescoes to the decoration of the cathedral in Cefalù (mid-twelfth century) that will be discussed further.

The *Agnus Dei*

⁵⁷ Rossini, 'L'architettura degli Ordini cavallereschi', p. 113; Rossini, *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta*, p. 43.

⁵⁸ Cervini, *Liguria romanica*, p. 125.

⁵⁹ De Floriani, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 9, 19–20.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–19.

⁶¹ Guzzetti suggests to date the frescoes under the arch of the chapel of St Margaret as early as before 1190: see Guzzetti, 'La "Resurrezione dei morti"', p. 33.

Let us have a closer look at the first group of images (fig. 9). In the centre of the vault in the western end of the church, acting as a keystone, is the *Agnus Dei* carrying a red standard in a medallion on a blue background. The appearance of the Lamb of God is connected to both St. John the Evangelist and John the Baptist to whom the church was consecrated. In the Gospel (John 1:29) we read: ‘altera die videt Iohannes Iesum venientem ad se et ait Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi’ and later again John the Baptist directly calls Jesus the Lamb of God to his apostles: ‘Ecce Agnus Dei’ (John 1:36). The Lamb also plays a central role in the Book of Revelation where it, for instance, opens the seven seals (Revelation 6) or is praised by angels (Revelation 5).

This iconography dates back to early Christianity. It can be found in several early mosaic cycles, such as in the presbytery of San Vitale in Ravenna (also surrounded by four angels, sixth century, fig. 10) as well as in many less majestic examples such as the sarcophagus from the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna (fifth century, fig. 11). Consequently, the Lamb of God continued to be widely popular in the later Roman Catholic tradition. However, this symbolic image of Christ is never used in the imagery of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and so it is worth stressing that this is an important detail that we can securely attribute to the non-Eastern tradition. The reason why Byzantium and the depending territories avoided the image of the *Agnus Dei* comes from the Quinisext Trullan Council (691–692) that the Catholic church never accepted. The council’s 82nd rule banned the use of symbolical images of Christ that replaced his human images.⁶²

The Angels

Four angels surround the Lamb of God from San Giovanni di Pré and are depicted on the triangular segments of the vault (figs 12–15). Their appearance deserves special attention. Although most scholars describe them as four seraphim, there are some particular details in

⁶² Н. В. Квливидзе, ‘Агнец Божий’, in *Православная энциклопедия*, vol. 1, pp. 256–57. <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/63318.html> [accessed 26 June 2019].

their design that should be mentioned.⁶³ First of all, it seems that the angels either have a different quantity of wings (four or six) or their wings are in different positions, as if they were flying. The pair of angels to the top and bottom of the Lamb of God appear more dynamic: their wings are crossed (figs 12, 13). We can also note that the white feathers in the wings of the angel positioned over the *Agnus Dei* are painted in a very peculiar manner (fig. 12). They form a segment of a circle around the Lamb, something that is not seen in the other three images of the angels and contradicts the anatomy of the wings which should become thinner at that point. The same happens with the bottom pair of wings. As a result, the white strokes that appear to be feathers in the other angels become here brushes of light. Overall, the style of this angel shows much more freedom than we see in the other three severies. This angel not only surrounds the central medallion but also completely fills the space of the triangular segment of the vault where it is placed. This suggests to me that a more skilled artist painted it, and that he, probably, also started the fresco that he then left the other craftsmen to finish. A handover comes to mind because of the circle of light that apparently was intended to surround the whole medallion with the Lamb of God but which was never carried out by the painter of the other three angels.

As noted above, the two angels on the right and left sides of the Lamb are much more static (figs 14, 15), and it seems like the painter who made the six-winged angel under the Lamb (fig. 13) also drew these two angels. The white brush strokes on the wings are schematic and short and only alternate with the dark feathers forming a plain pattern rather than mysterious flashes of light. The pair of angels on both sides have either four wings, or more possibly six but in another position: in the upper and lower pair of wings the white feathers are turned out. However, the most important difference that, to my knowledge, has not attracted any scholarly attention, is the lack of halos in this pair of angels.

⁶³ Rossini, *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta*, p. 31; De Florian, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 9, 28, footnote 5.

These described details can be explained and easily traced in other Eastern images of angels. Without a doubt, the painter wanted to depict two types of angels: the cherubim and the seraphim. It is difficult though to identify exactly which pair represents which type of angel as they were often confused by artists. However, it seems that the cherubim are placed above and under the *Agnus Dei*, they have a halo and six wings (figs 12, 13), while the angels found on the sides of the Lamb have no halos and are likely to be the seraphim (figs 14, 15).⁶⁴

There are two details in the depiction of the four angels that suggest to me that the painter was well-acquainted with Byzantine imagery in the broad sense. First, I believe that the portrayed ‘anatomy’ of the angels has eastern origins. Secondly, this combination of the seraphim and the cherubim was not typical for the Latin visual culture as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century.

There are several ways how different types of angels could be depicted around the year 1200. According to Barbara Bruderer Eichberg, the Western iconographical repertoire before the middle of the thirteenth century only presented anthropomorphic images of seraphim and cherubim, in other words they looked like people with wings.⁶⁵ Another type of depiction of these angels was usually found in the Eastern Christian visual culture and can be described as ‘bodiless’: the angels in this case do not have a body, and their wings grow directly from their heads. Examples of such angels can be found on the pendentives of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (fig. 16). Bruderer Eichberg calls this variation in the portrayal of angels ‘zoomorphic’ and she believes that this illustrative tradition was established in the Latin West around 1260 on the dome of the Florentine baptistery, which was decorated with figures of angels in the form of a head (and no body) surrounded with three pairs of wings

⁶⁴ Barbara Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neuf choeurs angéliques: origine et évolution du thème dans l’art du Moyen Age* (Poitiers: Centre d’Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 1999), pp. 62–67. See also Oskar Wulff, *Cherubim, Throne und Seraphim: Ikonographie der ersten Engelshierarchie in der christlichen Kunst* (Altenburg: Oskar Bomde, 1894).

⁶⁵ Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neuf choeurs angéliques*, pp. 63, 65–66.

(fig. 17).⁶⁶ It is fair to say that there are many stages between these two types (both in Eastern and Western depictions) and sometimes we find the addition of hands and feet under the wings that suggest the existence of a body. However, the angels from San Giovanni di Pré clearly belong to the bodiless variant. The closest example to these that I could find are the mosaics of Cefalù produced between 1145–1160 by a Greek artist (fig. 18). Although the cherubim there do not have halos and both types of angels are covered with eyes, the position of the wings is identical to the fresco in Genoa (feathers out for the seraphim and feathers in for the cherubim).

The decoration of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond (1250–1260s) is another close comparison that has been suggested by Rossini.⁶⁷ Indeed, the types of angels, their placement of the vault and even the colour spectrum are very similar, but the dating of the frescoes does not allow to make any daring conclusions. First, as was discussed earlier, we know that all works inside the church of San Giovanni di Pré were finished by 1249. Secondly, according to Epstein, Genoa gained access to the Black sea only after 1264, while the main trading destinations in the first half of the thirteenth century were Oltremare and Sicily.⁶⁸ Thus, the similarities between the decoration in Trebizond, Sicily and Genoa suggest a wider use of the angel iconography by different artists closely familiar with the Byzantine tradition. Their appearance in Genoa in the first decades of the thirteenth century was possible from either Sicily or the crusader states. The latter seems more plausible since Sicily was already under the Hohenstaufen dynasty, and the Hospitallers had standing direct contacts with the Holy Land.

It should also be mentioned here that Anna De Floriani claims to have found a Western source for the angels of San Giovanni di Pré in the cathedral of Canterbury (ca 1130).⁶⁹ In

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶⁷ Rossini, *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta*, p. 38.

⁶⁸ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 97-98, 142-43. Within all Genoese trading operations, the share of the contracts with Sicily varied from 18% to 41% during 1191–1227. It reached its peak in 1214.

⁶⁹ De Floriani, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 17.

the chapel of St. Gabriel, we see an image of a seraph with six ‘fringed’ wings standing on a wheel (fig. 19). I should say that I have also found a pair similar angels on the intrados of the apsidal arch in Saint Martin de Vicq, France, decorated in the twelfth century.⁷⁰ However, this prototypes do not seem very representative for me. Firstly, I believe that the similarities could be traced to each other because both Genoa and Canterbury had connections with Eastern Christianity: scholars have named Canterbury among the English centres that reflect some signs of Byzantine stylistic revival in miniatures and frescoes during the twelfth century.⁷¹ Secondly and more importantly, the proposed examples differ from the images in Genoa. Unlike the angels of Eastern prototypes, these give a clear impression of a human body, even if it is not fully visible under the wings. The anthropomorphism occurs because of the overall proportions, the depiction of the bottom line of the dress and the form of the shoulders that can be guessed under the wings, while the angels from Genoa seem fantastic creatures with the wings coming directly out of their heads and without any trace of a human body. Other close and early examples of the bodiless type that I found in the Latin visual culture belong to the Franciscan circle where an angel is part of the episode of the stigmatisation of the saint: on the upper left scene of the altarpiece by Bonaventura Berlinghieri in the church of San Francesco in Pescia (c. 1235, fig. 20) and in a later fresco from the baptistery in Parma (1250–1270).⁷² An earlier example is in the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Niedertzell, Reichenau (c. 1200, fig. 21).⁷³ The angels at the far ends of the upper row of the apse fresco are in very bad condition, but we can still say that although they seem

⁷⁰ Clemence-Paul Duprat, ‘Enquête sur la peinture murale en France à l’époque romaine’, *Bulletin Monumental*, 102 (1942), p. 166, fig. 37. On the decoration of the church, see Marcia Kupfer, ‘Spiritual Passage and Pictorial Strategy in the Romanesque Frescoes at Vicq’, *The Art Bulletin*, 68, 1 (1986), pp. 35–53.

⁷¹ Viktor Lazarev, *История византийской живописи* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1982), p. 122; Krijna Nelly Ciggaar, *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962–1204: Cultural and Political Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 157.

⁷² See William R. Cook, *Images of St. Francis of Assisi in Painting, Stone and Glass from the Earliest Images to c. 1320 in Italy* (Florence: Olschki, 1999), pp. 154–55, 165–68.

⁷³ It is also worth noting that such an image appeared in Reichenau – a place with a rich tradition of Eastern and Western artistic interactions. This makes it, as in the case with Canterbury, not the best example to represent “Western style”.

to follow a similar idea of non-anthropomorphic creatures, they do not have a close resemblance to the Genoese angels.

This brings us to the second feature in the depiction of the angels in the frescoes from San Giovanni di Pré: the manner of distinguishing the cherubim from the seraphim. Most of the Italian and transalpine images mentioned above only included one angel. An example of an early Western combination of cherubim and seraphim in one scene can be found in the already mentioned mosaic of the baptistery of Florence (fig. 17) or later on one of the scattered folios from the *Laudario di Sant'Agnese* by Pacino di Bonaguida (PML, MS. M.742, c. 1340, fig. 22).⁷⁴ In the first, the cherubim and seraphim surround Christ above the scene of the Last Judgement in the tier that represents the hierarchy of angels. The two types of angels here have the same appearance while the only small difference between them is their colour (blue cherubim and red seraphim). In the fourteenth-century miniature, both colours are combined in each of the angels. Other examples compiled by Bruderer, Angheben and Wulff also demonstrate that when Western artists depicted the seraphim and cherubim, they not only mixed the types of angels, but also showed them without much (or any) differences.

Researchers often state that the angels were better distinguished in the Eastern Christian traditions.⁷⁵ Still, it should be said that similarly to Western art, eastern depictions of cherubim and seraphim by the Middle Byzantine period became widely confusing as well, as Glenn Peers has shown.⁷⁶ Moreover, their differentiation is often distinguishable only through the inscriptions that are frequently present (cf., for instance, the cherubim and seraphim from the cathedral of Cefalù, fig. 18). And perhaps, as Peers also suggested, there

⁷⁴ The manuscript is dispersed over the world in American and European collections.

⁷⁵ See, for instance, Marcello Angheben, 'Théophanies absidales et liturgie eucharistique: l'exemple des peintures romanes de Catalogne et du nord des Pyrénées comportant un séraphin et un chérubin', in *Les fonts de la pintura romànica*, eds Milagros Guardia, Carles Mancho et al. (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2008), p. 59.

⁷⁶ Glenn Peers, *Subtle Bodies: Representing Angels in Byzantium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 47–49; Wulff, *Cherubim, Throne und Seraphim*, pp. 26–90.

was no need for such a distinction between the cherubim and the seraphim among painters or viewers as long as both types of angels were present. However, it seems clear to me that the distinction between the cherubim and the seraphim that was used by the Genoese painters has origins in Eastern imagery. Pairs of angels of the same colour that are distinguished through the halos and the position of the wings are seen, for example, in the inner reliquary of the Limburg Staurotheke commissioned in the tenth century by Basil the Nothos, son of Romanos I Lekapenos, and transferred to Europe at the beginning of the thirteenth century (fig. 23).

It should be said that Byzantine imagery knew other ways to differentiate the angels, not only by the halos and the position of the wings. Another feature that could distinguish them apart was the quantity of wings (four or six) as in the famous miniature of the Last Judgement from the BNF (MS. Gr. 74, fol. 51v, twelfth century, fig. 24). In other cases, the details that we find in San Giovanni di Pré could be combined with other features. For instance, on the vault of the presbytery in the Duomo of Monreale in Sicily (the 1180s, fig. 25), where two angels surround the *hetoimasia* and, according to the Latin inscription, sing the ‘Sanctus’ hymn, the cherub is represented as a tetramorph.⁷⁷ And yet, the seraph does not have a halo, as in the decoration of San Giovanni di Pré. Similarly, in the earlier-mentioned mosaics from Cefalù all four angels do not have halos but the positions of the wings strikingly resemble the Genoese frescoes. Thus, although there was no established way of depicting the seraphim and the cherubim in the Eastern and Western visual traditions, the combination of distinct features in the narthex of San Giovanni di Pré clearly points to an artist that was closely familiar with Byzantine imagery.

⁷⁷ Wulff, *Cherubim, Throne und Seraphim*, pp. 27–48; Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neuf choeurs angéliques*, pp. 65–66.

The Deacons

The last group of extant frescoes in this part of the church are the images of deacon saints (fig. 26). They are placed on the intrados of two arches that support the vault (eastern and southern arches). The men are identified as deacons because of the garments that were typical in some Eastern Christian churches: the white *sticharion* and in particular the dark-red *orarion* over the left shoulder. The number of deacons is another peculiarity that is not easy to notice at first glance and even more difficult to explain. There are eighteen of them – ten under one arch and eight under the other. Since the images are almost exactly identical, and therefore, they are not portraits of individual saints, this specific number raises questions pertaining to its significance and could possibly help with a more precise identification.

The deacons are all pictured with halos, long dark hair and no beard (fig. 27). The lack of beard suggests at first sight that they are young, but the horizontal lines on their high foreheads appear to be an indication of the contrary. According to the recent study by Andrew Jotischky, since the middle of the twelfth century, pilgrimage accounts described Eastern monks as men with long flowing beards. This appearance seemed unusual for travellers who were used to the Latin tradition in which churchmen were required to shave and trim their hair.⁷⁸ Therefore, the lack of beards on the Genoese fresco should be seen as a sign that the deacons were of Western origin, while the dress showed their belonging to the Eastern Christian culture. This combination of Eastern and Western features in the appearance of the deacons is the first suggestion that in a way they represented the Hospitallers themselves. However, the choice of number is puzzling. Was it intentional, or was it the result of the painter's miscalculation of space when he decorated the arches? The former seems more likely. The importance of this number of saints is also evident if we note

⁷⁸ Andrew Jotischky, 'The Image of the Greek: Western Pilgrims' Views of Eastern Monks and Monasteries c.1200–1500', *Speculum* 94, 3 (2019), pp. 677–79, 688–90. I am grateful to Professor Jotischky for discussing this during the workshop 'To Jerusalem and Beyond: New Directions in the Study of Latin Travel Literature c. 1250–1500' that took place at the University of Innsbruck on 4 April 2019.

that the third arch that holds the vault is decorated with an ornamental band and not another row of holy deacons (fig. 28). Unfortunately, I could not find a parallel group of saints that could help identify them.

Still, I would like to suggest several possible interpretations for this group of saints. First, as Rossini has noted, a deacon is the lowest and thus the closest to the people in the order of clergy in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁷⁹ The Acts of the Apostles (6: 2–6) describe the election of the first seven deacons that allowed the other Apostles to concentrate on praying and preaching and liberated them from the daily mundane obligations to the community. In this respect, the Hospitallers had a similar role, especially in the hospital of San Giovanni di Pré. They took care of sick people and served their everyday needs, while others could exclusively dedicate their lives to prayer.

This interpretation also seems plausible since modern scholars have a rare example of an account on what Genoese people in the thirteenth century saw as the perfect model of spirituality. I refer to the life of Ugo Canefri (1148–1233) who served the sick and the poor in the hospital of San Giovanni di Pré and was beatified soon after his death.⁸⁰ As Epstein argued, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, there was a shift from spiritual charity to more practical and socially-oriented forms.⁸¹ Sant’Ugo exemplified this practical spirituality devoting his life to serving the people.

Secondly, I would like to suggest another version of why the deacons could appear in this exact place in the church in one combination with the images of the angels and the *Agnus Dei*. As is well known, the *orarion* of the deacons symbolised their humility as a reminder of the towel that Christ used to dry the feet of the Apostles. But in addition to that, it was compared to the wings of the angels. It was common to weave on the *orarion* the words of the deacons’ pronouncement from the *Trisagion* that corresponded in the West to the

⁷⁹ Rossini, *La commenda dell’Ordine di Malta*, pp. 31–38.

⁸⁰ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 119–20.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Sanctus, a hymn that concluded the Eucharistic prayers and derived from the song of the cherubim (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8).⁸² Moreover, Rossini describes a traditional comparison between a monk and an angel and especially between the military monks and the seraphim, an analogy found both in Byzantium and the Latin West.⁸³ This is another confirmation to my theory that the deacons in some way represented the Hospitallers and that, perhaps, their number on the fresco was connected with the number of monks that worked in the hospital at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Then, the deacons were present in the fresco as witnesses of the glorification of the *Agnus Dei*.⁸⁴ More importantly, I believe that the deacons together with the angels were symbolical representations of the two main functions of the Hospitallers, particularly in the context of the Genoese practical spirituality in the early Duecento: looking after the people and defending the Christian faith.

As a result, the narthex of San Giovanni di Pré presents a mixture of images that were much more established in the East though with details that could only be possible in the West. Although at the beginning of the Duecento it became equally difficult to distinguish the angels in both Eastern and Western imagery, the art of the Byzantine circle shows much more similar examples of cherubim and seraphim together in one scene. The ‘anatomy’ of the angels at such an early date also suggests an Eastern prototype. And finally, the Hospitallers could have invited a painter trained in the East to decorate their church. At the same time, the *Agnus Dei* as a symbol of Christ could only relate to Latin liturgy. This combination of diverse traditions is similar to the twelfth-century reliquary of the True Cross from Denkendorf, Germany, described by Folda as an example of crusader art (fig. 29).⁸⁵ It

⁸² Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, Alexander Kazhdan, ‘Orarion’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* <https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3963?rskey=8BPO87&result=3961> [accessed 21 June 2019].

⁸³ Rossini, *La commenda dell’Ordine di Malta*, pp. 31, 158, footnote 42.

⁸⁴ According to Giovanna Petti Balbi, at this point there were never less than twelve monks in the house: Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Governare la città*, p. 147.

⁸⁵ Folda, *Crusader Art*, pp. 26–28.

was produced in the form of an two-barred cross popular among the crusaders and originating from Eastern-Christian tradition with an *Agnus Dei* in the centre of the back side.⁸⁶ So in both examples – the decoration of the narthex in the Hospitallers' church and in the reliquary – we see a direct combination of elements and ideas that were typical for different parts of the Mediterranean. Most importantly, by being placed together and transferred to a different cultural context, these elements were not intended to change or gain any additional meanings. They were only intended to show the multiculturalism of their commissioners.

This, however, does not help determine the origin of the painters who worked on the production of the frescoes. As mentioned above, it seems that at least one of them was familiar with Byzantine imagery, but in the first decades of the thirteenth century a direct connection between Genoa and Byzantium was not very likely, especially after 1204.⁸⁷ Other possible sources for this visual culture were Sicily and the Holy Land with both of which the Genoese had tight bonds. The similarity of the angels in Cefalù and San Giovanni di Pré as well as the active trade between Genoa and Sicily speak in favour of the painter's Sicilian origin. However, the particular iconography of the seraphim and the cherubim is too traditional to exclude the possibility of the painter coming from the Levant especially since the Hospitallers had direct access to these territories.

The Frescoes in the Chapel of St. Margaret

Let us continue with the second area where we find more preserved examples of the medieval decoration. It is situated in the southeastern side of the church, in a separate space known as the chapel of St. Margaret (fig. 5). The veneration of this saint in a Hospitallers' church is no surprise. It has been noted numerous times that her cult flourished among crusaders and

⁸⁶ For a group of similar reliquaries, see also Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century*, pp. 141, 239–41, fig. 110–11, 114–15, 118.

⁸⁷ Note the volume of Genoese trade with different destinations between 1191 and 1227, when commerce with Romania drops from 17% to 0% after the Fourth Crusade: Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 97, table 4.

pilgrims. Additionally, as Rossini has suggested, the Hospitallers also had a strong veneration of St. Margaret in general.⁸⁸ The images are in a critical state of conservation, with only the preparatory drawing remaining. Barely any scene can be seen completely. On the vault of the chapel today there are only four out of eight episodes from the life of St. Margaret (fig. 30). The northern segment of the vault shows traces of the saint's torture with nails. The western severy is the best-preserved area and presents a dragon swallowing the saint on one side (fig. 31) and her torture in a cauldron in front of the King sitting on a massive throne on the other (fig. 32). The last scene that we can distinguish is the beheading of St. Margaret (fig. 33).

The thorough stylistic analysis provided by De Floriani reveals some close connections of the frescoes in the chapel with several examples of Romanesque French and Alpine imagery, such as in Saint Savin sur Gartempe (fig. 34) and especially the decoration of the crypt of Saint Nicolas de Tavant (fig. 35).⁸⁹ The unique features of the painter's style in Genoa are the elongated figures that often seem to float in the space of the vault – as in the frescoes in the church of St. John, Müstair (twelfth century, fig. 36). Judging from the scene with the dragon, the painter paid close attention to clothing draperies and, as seen in the episode with the cauldron, to the anatomical structure and modelling of the body. The draperies, especially in the dress of St. Margaret in the process of being swallowed by the dragon, are quite skillful and resemble more sophisticated examples of art around the year 1200 such as the altar of Verdun⁹⁰ (fig. 37) rather than the French Romanesque paintings in smaller towns, such as the church of St. Nicolas de Tavant.

The most interesting scene concerns the episode of the swallowing by the dragon (fig. 31). St. Margaret is depicted twice: in the process of being swallowed and emerging

⁸⁸ Rossini, *La commenda dell'Ordine di Malta*, p. 43.

⁸⁹ De Floriani, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', pp. 15–17, especially fig. 16–21 on p. 16.

⁹⁰ Guzzetti uses the altar of Verdun as a comparison with one of the angels of the arch of the chapel: Guzzetti, 'La "Resurrezione dei morti"', p. 33.

from the same dragon with the help of an angel that is barely seen today at the top of the scene. It is worth noting as well that the depiction of this episode is characteristic for the period in question. As mentioned earlier, the popularity of St. Margaret rose quickly in the twelfth century, and soon she became one of the most venerated saints in the Latin West. Eventually, parts of her hagiography became too fantastic and were soon subjected to criticism from ecclesiastical authors. The main episode that was criticised in the ecclesiastical tradition was the story of her miraculous survival after the dragon had swallowed her. This version was described in detail in several texts produced in the thirteenth century, and the remaining frescoes in San Giovanni di Pré clearly illustrate the scene of Margaret leaving the womb of the dragon.⁹¹ However, around 1260, in the *Golden Legend*, Jacopo da Varagine cast doubts on this episode of the saint's life: 'What is said, however, about the dragon devouring her and then breaking open, is considered apocryphal and frivolous.'⁹² The noteworthy impact that Jacopo's texts had on Genoese historiography and imagery, as well as his immediate presence in Genoa, suggests that the frescoes in the chapel of St. Margaret were painted most probably in the first half of the thirteenth century, that is before Jacopo's critical remark. Yet the cult of St. Margaret and the traditional legend of her life clearly continued to exist despite the diligence of clearing up her hagiography.

The Resurrection of the Dead

The last group of images is found under the arch that leads from the chapel of St. Margaret to the main space of the church (figs 38, 39). Eleven roundels enclose scenes concerning the Apocalyptic theme that was already articulated in the narthex of the church. Unfortunately, some of these depictions were severely damaged; nonetheless, even the remaining frescoes give quite a clear idea of the creators' intentions. Since Rossini first described the frescoes

⁹¹ Wendy R. Larson, 'Three Thirteenth-Century *Lives* of St. Margaret of Antioch', in *Medieval Hagiography: an Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 675–708.

⁹² The life of St. Margaret by Jacopo da Varagine is translated into English in *ibid.*, pp. 681–83.

after the restoration, it was commonly believed that the theme of the decoration was the Last Judgement. However, a recent paper by Roberta Guzzetti has clarified that it is instead one of the stages before the Last Judgement, the Rising from the Dead.⁹³ I will start the description of the scenes from the bottom images on both sides (see diagram fig. 40). The narrative is divided into roundels that can be grouped to form three levels: the lower (terrestrial – I), the intermediate (the angels – II), and the highest (the Deesis – III).

Two medallions on one side of the arch and one more on the other form together the first terrestrial row (I – 1, 2, 3) depicting the resurrection of the dead. Although the three compositions are diverse, there are two figures in each roundel that are rising from a tomb. The difference is in the position of the bodies and, overall, in the composition of the scenes. The couple in the first medallion fill the upper part of the circle, while the tomb occupies the lower half. The men's backs repeat the circular composition of the medallion. In contrast, the roundel above is different (no. 3): the coffin is smaller, and the bodies here form two more dynamic lines, a vertical (the standing man) and a diagonal one (the man stepping out of the grave emphasised by the lid of the coffin). The medallion from the other side (no. 2) of the arch follows the dynamism of the second roundel but mirrors its direction. In the lowest medallions we can also notice that the painter tries to accentuate the anatomy of the figures, as it was seen on the vault of the chapel. He drew in detail the ribs, muscles of the stomach and legs, probably in order to emphasise the tension of the bodies trying to get up from the graves. However, these details do not appear very naturalistic and often form some sort of abstract decorative pattern.

The next five medallions form the second register of angels: two on one side (nos 5, 7) and three on the other (nos 4, 6, 8). The state of these medallions is in comparatively good condition, and we can note the draperies of the angels' clothes and their dynamic movement. The three angels placed in the lower medallions play the trumpets in different positions (nos

⁹³ Guzzetti, 'La "Resurrezione dei morti"', pp. 31–38.

4–6). At this point the scenes are levelled and so the two angels in the highest medallions are different (nos 7, 8): they have their hands covered as a sign of respect, as Guzzetti first proposed. Another possibility could be that the angels are carrying the Instruments of the Passion, as seen, for example, in the Hildesheim Psalter (BNF, NAL 3102, fol. 148r, 1201–1233, fig. 41)⁹⁴ or in the page of the Antiphonary from Pistoia produced in Florence in the late thirteenth century (PML, MS. M.273r, fig. 43). This interpretation is especially plausible since in the Genoese frescoes, Christ demonstrates the wounds on his hands, thus articulating the theme of the Passion. And finally, as we cannot determine with certainty what the square objects in the angels' hands signify, they might also be the scrolls or the books of the Dead mentioned in the Book of Revelation 20: 12–13. In any way, overall the second register illustrates the role of the angels as intermediaries between God and human beings: the actions of the lower angels are directed towards the earth while the angels closer to the third register seek the higher level.

Unfortunately, the upper register is the one that has suffered the most over centuries. Only half of the central figure is visible today (no. 11). We can see a dark red himation, a halo, a hand raised up showing the palm and part of the throne's cushion. All these details provide enough evidence to identify the figure as that of Christ showing his wounds. He has a special position not only in the narrative, but also in the direction of his figure – not following the slopes of the arch, but perpendicular to it and facing the viewer who is standing in front of the arch. Of course, in the placement of Christ there is also the metaphor of the keystone. The figures around Christ, have almost completely vanished from view. The first is commonly identified as John the Baptist, while the second was primarily labelled as another angel.⁹⁵ Although the depiction of John the Baptist makes sense in the Hospitallers'

⁹⁴ Since some folios of the manuscript are missing, the numbering of the folio with the miniature is not accurate. Here and after I am using the digitised copy available on Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100368768/f89.planchecontact> [accessed 3 August 2019].

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Rossini, 'L'architettura degli ordini cavallereschi', p. 114, fig. 7.

church, I would say that there are no clear details in the appearance of this male saint that would indisputably point to him. It seems that he has ginger hair and beard, a walking stick, no shoes and an unusual green himation. The figure on the other side is only preserved in the lower part. However, a closer look at the figure and in comparison with the medallions on the second tier makes it clear that it is not an angel. The absolutely static position of the extant lower part of the body is different from the dynamic stance of the angels and especially of their clothing which has thus allowed Guzzetti to identify this figure as the Virgin.⁹⁶ She is standing calm, her tunic is white, and the dark red himation is shorter than the tunic unlike the clothes in the medallions with the angels.

If the central figures are Christ with John the Baptist and Mary, together they would form the Deesis, which is the centrepiece in the Eastern iconography of the Last Judgement (as seen for example in MS. Par. Gr. 74 fol. 51v, BNF, twelfth century, fig. 44).⁹⁷ The Deesis also formed part of the decoration of the previously mentioned Hospitallers' church in Emmaus (Abu Gosh), the programme of which was also connected with the eschatological theme. According to Gustav Kühnel, the Deesis only became part of the Western representations of the Last Judgement from the thirteenth century.⁹⁸

On the other hand, let us have a closer look at some Western manuscripts mentioned earlier. The folio from the Florentine manuscript of the late thirteenth century (MS. M.273r) has a similar iconographical scheme, though more elaborated (fig. 43). In the upper row, Christ showing his wounded hands and is surrounded by John the Baptist and Mary, and two angels with their hands covered while carrying the Cross and the Holy Lance. The next two rows are the apostles and two groups of the Elect. The page is surrounded by angels holding scrolls and blowing trumpets. The lowest tier is the Resurrection of the Dead. We see similar details in the Hildesheim Psalter, created during the first third of the thirteenth century. It

⁹⁶ Guzzetti, 'La "Resurrezione dei morti"', p. 34, fig. 4.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

⁹⁸ Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p. 158.

has ten full-page miniatures devoted to topics that are closely related to the frescoes in Genoa. In the first miniature, Christ is surrounded by two four-winged angels and the figures of the Virgin and John the Baptist underneath. Again, the lowest row has the angels carrying the Instruments of the Passion. I should note that the four-winged angels here follow the Western iconography, i.e. clearly have bodies under their wings. The centre of the page is filled with the following text: the prayer *Kyrie eleison* and the names of the characters that are depicted around. The next four pages have the same layout, but they are occupied with the twelve Apostles and then thirty-six more saints (deacons, bishops, ecclesiastical writers, martyrs etc). The last miniature of the manuscript represents the Resurrection of the Dead (fig. 42). The central space of the page shows people getting out of tombs. Their poses are very vivid and varied and are also reminiscent of the Genoese frescoes. In the corners of the page, four angels call the dead by playing the trumpets. Overall, the miniatures show interest in the same details that we find in the frescoes of San Giovanni di Pré. The characters are all individual, the dresses of the angels and the anatomy of the figures are built similarly to that of the painters in Genoa. To make it clear once more, this does not imply that the Genoese frescoes were in any way influenced by or connected with the Thuringian school of miniature. However, in my opinion, these similarities provide additional and significant evidence of the mixed international style that appeared and flourished in the Mediterranean culture of the thirteenth century.

Conclusion

To conclude the description of this monument, the frescoes of the lower church in San Giovanni di Pré show a combination of Western – possibly French and transalpine – style with some elements that were inspired by Eastern models. Due to the poor conservation of the frescoes and, on the other hand, the complex artistic situation in the Mediterranean after the crusades, it is not easy to identify the precise sources for the Genoese frescoes. As De

Floriani noted, it is clear that they do not follow the existing Italian models.⁹⁹ But researchers have been proposing very diverse examples for comparison with an extremely broad geography: France and the Alpine area, England, Germany, Austria, Syria, Egypt, Byzantium, and Southern Italy to name a few.

I partly agree with Rossini's proposition to consider the frescoes at the entrance to the church as a broad Byzantine prototype with Sicilian or 'Crusader' origin of the frescoes at the entrance to the church: especially considering the angels of the vault of the narthex and the eighteen Deacons that have Eastern vestment.¹⁰⁰ After 1204 any direct connection with Byzantium was not possible for Genoa, so the origins of this interaction could only come either through the Holy Land or perhaps Sicily. However, I would argue that only one angel was produced by this painter of Eastern origin, while most of the other decoration belongs to a local artist (or artists). Either way, because of the combination of a clear Roman Catholic element with Eastern imagery, the links between the Hospitallers and the east, as well as the position of their house in Genoa on the pilgrimage routes to the Holy Land, I believe that these frescoes fit into the context of the crusader art of the twelfth century, although they were produced in Italy around the year 1200.

It is also tempting to connect the frescoes of the arch that leads to the chapel of St. Margaret with the images in the narthex of the church due to of their thematic similarity. Moreover, because the narrative there is not a full description of the Last Judgement, but only of the Resurrection of the dead, it could be that the rest of the church was also decorated with other Apocalyptic images to complete the topic. This is, of course, impossible to confirm since no other frescoes dated back to the beginning of the thirteenth century survived. Yet the style of these frescoes appears linked to the vault in the chapel of St. Margaret. The Eastern details of the iconography here (the Deesis, for instance) became

⁹⁹ De Floriani, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Rossini, 'L'architettura degli ordini cavallereschi', p. 113.

common by the thirteenth century for both Eastern and Western Mediterranean. The rich combination is not surprising given the political and cultural situation in thirteenth-century art in the region and, more importantly, the connections of the Hospitallers with both traditions arising in the East and the West. It seems very plausible that painters of diverse origin and training were invited to Genoa (or were already in the city) to work together on the decoration of a complex that was one of the main crusader centres in the region and was run by the Hospitallers, an international and influential congregation.

Chapter 2. Santa Maria del Carmine: The East through a Mendicant Prism

This chapter pertains to a very specific reflection of Eastern Christianity in Genoa – the emergence of the Catholic Order of the Carmelites in the East and its relocation and establishment in the West. The main Carmelite centre in Liguria was the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in the region of Terricio, outside the thirteenth-century walls of Genoa. Today it preserves one of the earliest cycles of frescoes that was commissioned by this mendicant Order in Italy, and reflects the friars' aim to promulgate the origin and history of the congregation.

In order to properly explain the late thirteenth-century decorative programme of Santa Maria del Carmine, I will first describe the long path that brought the Carmelites to Genoa and the complex situation that the Order faced after the Second Council of Lyon (1274), several years before the creation of the Genoese frescoes. Another important aspect that requires clarification is the current state of the church and the numerous alterations that it endured over the past centuries and especially the visible incursion of restorers in the 1930s. Finally, I will analyse the surviving images of the altar chapel and their possible interpretations.

The Early History of the Carmelites

The church of Santa Maria del Carmine houses another example of the adaptation of Eastern imagery in Genoa, in this case through the culture and following the needs of a European Mendicant Order – the Carmelites. Their early history remains in the shadows.¹ For instance,

¹ I base my description of the Carmelite history on these main works: Andrew Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); idem, *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Frances Andrews, 'The Carmelites', in idem, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006),

unlike for other mendicants, we do not know who was the founder of the Carmelite Order. Their name derives from the site where they originated, the Mount Carmel, in the northern territories of modern Israel. These lands were also known for their connection to the prophet Elijah who, according to the tradition, resided there in a cave and became a role model of ascetical life for the future hermitical communities. It remains unknown when exactly the first pre-Carmelite hermits appeared in the Holy Land, though it is usually traced to the twelfth century, based on several travellers' testimonials that mentioned some existing communities of monks in these lands. However, it remains unclear whether the monks were originally Catholic or Orthodox. Andrew Jotischky and Frances Andrews suggest that they could have been mixed communities.²

The earliest preserved document concerning the Carmelites dates back to the beginning of the thirteenth century and attests to the fact that by this time the Carmelites were already a rather developed community. This source records the first rule of the Order composed by Albert of Vercelli during his patriarchate in Jerusalem between 1205 and 1214. The rule was addressed to a certain 'B' and to the other hermits who lived under his obedience on Mount Carmel. In the Carmelite tradition, monk 'B' who petitioned Albert to write the monastic rule is Brocard (1199-1231), the second prior-general of the Order.³ As Jotischky has claimed, we do not know how St. Albert's rule transformed the life of the monks; it was quite basic and formally reminiscent of the Orthodox *typikon* rather than a rule of any Catholic Order. However, the main reason for its appearance was to thereby receive official ecclesiastical status through a papal confirmation.⁴ This is probably why we find the first mention of the Carmelite rule in the endorsement of Honorius III (1216–1227) issued in 1226. The full text of the rule has not survived to our days, but it has been

pp. 7–68; Patrick Mullins, *The Carmelites and St. Albert of Jerusalem: Origins and Identity* (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2015).

² Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, pp. 141–42; Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 11.

³ On the historicity of Brocard, see Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, pp. 134–35.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 141–43; Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 14.

reconstructed from other documents. The earliest identified manuscript that contains the full text is a letter of Innocent IV sent to the Carmelites, which was written in 1247 with the aim of confirming the previous rule with some alterations. These modifications were made to aid the Order's transition from Mount Carmel to Europe and to adjust to the changing nature of their service: from hermits to mendicants.⁵

The migration of the Carmelites from the Holy Land to the West started in the 1240s and continued throughout the second half of the thirteenth century. With the loss of the crusaders' conquests the exodus intensified, while the original Carmelite house in the East was destroyed in 1291.⁶ The first settlements of the Order in Europe appeared in Cyprus (1238) and Sicily (1240), accompanied by the returning crusaders, and soon spread to England (1242). In Italy, the first houses were established in Pisa (c. 1249), Milan (c. 1250), Bologna (c. 1260), Siena (before 1261) and Florence (1268).⁷ The relocation brought some fundamental changes to the life of the Order and thus caused an identity crisis. First, the number of friars attached to the Order grew significantly and spread out over a larger territory. Secondly, by the time of the arrival of the Carmelites, the position of other mendicant Orders in Europe was already much stronger, which consequently affected their capability to build new Carmelite houses and, therefore, spread across the continent. Lastly and most importantly, between 1247 and 1266, under the leadership of Simon Stock, the original function of the Carmelites was changed. With the modification of the rule in 1247 at the first General Council held outside of the Holy Land, the previously hermitic Order became mendicant. Pope Innocent IV granted the Carmelites permission to preach and confess in urban areas, and to build churches and cemeteries; they became more mobile and

⁵ Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, pp. 124–25, footnote 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁷ Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 26.

similar to the previously existing mendicant Orders, especially since the new rule had been composed with the help of the Dominicans.⁸

All of these changes led to a Carmelite identity crisis and to the Order's unstable position within the Church. The Carmelites spent the next few decades composing the history and mythology of their Order with the purpose of placing it amongst other competitive religious communities, defining their status and attracting prospective patrons to sponsor their very existence. The first surviving Carmelite text that addresses the question of their origin dates to 1281. It is entitled the *Rubrica Prima*, and we know of three more versions of this text produced in the following years and which slightly differ from the first text (1294, 1324–1327, 1357–1369).⁹ Each variant presents a short formula offered to the younger brothers when they need to respond to the questions of the people outside of the Order regarding the Carmelites' history and beliefs. The appearance of such a document certainly responded to the needs of the rapidly growing congregation whose new members were not familiar with the Order's history.

In constructing the Order's historical identity, especially during the fourteenth century, it became crucial to stress its connection with the East and with Mount Carmel.¹⁰ The Carmelite narrative started to cultivate the idea of an unbroken continuity from prophet Elijah to modern friars, thus making them the oldest of all mendicants. Every version of the *Rubrica Prima* mentioned Elijah and his disciple Elisha as the first inhabitants of Mount Carmel. The first version (1281) goes on to state that at the time of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216), Patriarch Albert brought their successors, the hermits, into a collegium, and that Pope Honorius III confirmed the establishment of the Order. The last assertion highlighted again the succession of the Order, from the prophets of the Old Testament to contemporary times.

⁸ About the modifications in the Rule, see, for instance, *ibid.*, pp. 14–17.

⁹ The text and the commentary can be found in Adrianus Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage: Rarely Reflections on the Nature of the Order* (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1989), pp. 33–43.

¹⁰ Jotischki, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 107–8.

The later versions of the *Rubrica* repeat this formula, only changing some details in the part of the described approval of the Popes. We can witness how the idea of succession from Elijah continued to flourish afterwards, for example, in Philip Ribot's treatise *De institutione et peculiaribus gestis religiosorum carmelitarum* written in the 1370s.¹¹

One more question concerning the *Rubrica prima* is especially important to examine in the context of the Genoese church and of other early artistic production commissioned by the Order: when did the Carmelite veneration of the Virgin start? Some evidence suggests that profound veneration started only in the fourteenth century, as is attested in the third version of the *Rubrica* composed in 1324–1327 where the Carmelites for the first time called themselves 'fratres ordinis beatae Mariae de monte Carmeli' and officially introduced the Marian theme into the Order's historiography.¹² According to James Joyce Boyce, in the early transitional Carmelite breviary (BNF, MS. Lat. 10478) produced in the 1240s, there is no mention of the feast of the Conception of the Virgin: it was only established in the rite of the Order by the General Chapter of Toulouse in 1306 and later became the main feast of the Carmelites.¹³ Thus we could conclude that the Order's ties with the Virgin only started in the fourteenth century.

On the other hand, Frances Andrews and Patrick Mullins have more recently argued that the Marian identity of the Order started much earlier, at least from the middle of the thirteenth century, as seen in the title of the Order that Pope Innocent IV used to call the Carmelites, and became widely known by the 1280s. Mullins also notes that the first hermits

¹¹ *Johannis Soreth expositio regulae fratrum Beatae Mariae Virginis de monte Carmelo. Philippi Riboti de institutione et peculiaribus gestis religiosorum Carmelitarum libri X*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS. Clm 471, 1477–1478. On the Carmelite claim of a historical succession from Elijah, see, for instance, Robert A. Koch, 'Elijah the Prophet, Founder of the Carmelite Order', *Speculum*, 34, 4 (1959), pp. 547–60; Jane Ackerman, 'Stories of Elijah and Medieval Carmelite Identity', *History of Religions*, 35, 2 (1995), pp. 124–47; Mullins, *The Carmelites and St. Albert*, pp. 52–79.

¹² See Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 109–10.

¹³ The author speaks of a manuscript that shows the transition from the tradition of the Holy Sepulchre to the Carmelite rite: James Joyce Boyce, 'The Search for the Early Carmelite Liturgy: A Templar Manuscript Reassessed', *Revista de Musicología*, 16, 2, XV Congreso de la Sociedad Internacional de Musicología: Culturas Musicales Del Mediterráneo y sus Ramificaciones, v. 2 (1993), p. 270.

from Mount Carmel had a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, which can be considered an early testimony of her patronage.¹⁴ It is also possible to witness early Marian devotion in other Carmelite churches. Many of them (such as the ones in Genoa or Vercelli) were consecrated to the Virgin of Carmel. Moreover, as Christa Gardner von Teuffel has shown, the Carmelite churches in Naples, Rome, Siena, Pisa and Florence had thirteenth-century panels of the Virgin.¹⁵

Returning to the history of the Order, it should be stated that during the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the period that interests us the most, the status of the Carmelites in Europe gradually started to improve. During the Second Council of Lyon in 1274, several Orders (among others, the Pied and the Sack Friars) were suppressed. The main criteria for their abolition was the foundation period of these congregations: every Order that had been established after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) was to be eradicated.¹⁶ This made the claim of the ancient roots of the Carmelites a vital factor for the survival of the Order. Because they had not been suppressed and because Pope Gregory X (1271–1276) later confirmed their legitimacy, the position of the Carmelites within the Catholic hierarchy became stronger, although their rights and privileges were still inferior to those of the Franciscans and Dominicans. According to Andrews, the Carmelites, as well as the Augustinians, were allowed to continue ‘in their current state ‘until it should be otherwise arranged’’.¹⁷ The complete sanction of the Carmelite Order only occurred in 1286, when Pope Honorius IV (1285–1287) confirmed the Carmelite Rule. Finally, in 1326, Pope John XXII (1316–1334) equalised the status of the Carmelites with the rest of the approved mendicants giving them the same rights and privileges.

¹⁴ Andrews, *The Other Friars*, pp. 53–6; Mullins, *The Carmelites and St. Albert*, pp. 43–5, 49–51.

¹⁵ Christa Gardner von Teuffel, ‘The Carmelite Altarpiece (circa 1290–1550), the Self-Identification of an Order’, *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 57, 1 (2015), p. 7.

¹⁶ Richard W. Emery, ‘The Second Council of Lyons and the Mendicant Orders’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 39, 3 (1953), pp. 257–58.

¹⁷ Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 18. See also Emery, ‘The Second Council of Lyons and the Mendicant Orders’, p. 260.

The First Carmelites in Genoa

To my knowledge, Genoa is almost never cited as one of the first centres of Carmelite emergence in Italy despite the fact that their history in the city can be traced back to at least 1260.¹⁸ This early appearance is not surprising considering the close trading, political and cultural bonds that Genoa had with the eastern regions of the Mediterranean in the second half of the thirteenth century. Some evidence suggests that Ligurians were among the first Carmelite brethren and possibly even the leaders of the congregation. Benedict Zimmerman and recently Nicholas Coureas have both mentioned a certain Brother *Barthelmus Ligur* who apparently arrived in the Holy Land from Lombardy. He was the leader of the Carmelites after the death of Cyril of Constantinople in 1234 and, according to Zimmerman, was responsible for the relocation of the Order to Sicily and Cyprus.¹⁹

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Giacomo Giscardi wrote that the Carmelites had arrived in Genoa in 1260 together with Louis IX of France (1214–1270) who was returning from Syria: ‘... Religiosi di Monte Carmelo condotti in queste parti dal Santo Re Lodovico di Francia nel ritorno che fue da Siria...’.²⁰ At the end of the passage, we see a reference to the notarial documents that Giscardi used, but it does not appear to relate to the opening sentences mentioning Louis IX. This causes misunderstanding because from the passage it would seem that Louis actually arrived in Genoa with the friars and left some of them in the city: ‘Lascio adunque in Genua San Ludovico alcuni d’essi religiosi, i quali nell’

¹⁸ Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, *Istruzione di quanto può vedersi di più bello in Genova in pittura, scultura, ed architettura ecc.* (Genoa: Ivone Gravier, 1780), p. 165; Federigo Alizeri, *Guida illustrativa del cittadino e del forestiero: per la città di Genova e sue adiacenze* (Bologna: Forni, 1972), p. 377; Giorgio Rossini, *L’architettura degli ordini mendicanti in Liguria nel Due e Trecento* (Bodighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1981), p. 62; Lauro Magnani, *Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine* (Genoa: Sagep, 1980); Giovanni Battista Varese, ‘Lo sviluppo architettonico e i dati di restauro (2006–2009)’, *Bollettino d’arte*, 12 (2011), pp. 41–42.

¹⁹ Benedictus Zimmerman, *Monumenta historica carmelitana* (Lérins: ex Typis Abbatiae, 1907), pp. 246–47; Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus, 1195–1312* (Aldershot; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1997), p. 216.

²⁰ Giacomo Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese, monasterii e luoghi pii della città, e Riviere di Genova* (1750), Genoa, ASCG, MS. Molfino 23, p. 532.

anno succesivo pregevo in affitto certo luogo ...'. Subsequent scholars took Louis' arrival to Genoa for granted only questioning the date of his visit and the foundation of the Carmelite church.²¹

A connection between Genoa, St. Louis and the Carmelites does not seem impossible, since the monks usually travelled to the West with the returning crusaders.²² Moreover, we know that the Genoese transported the troops and later took part in the Seventh (1248–1254) and Eighth (1270) Crusades organised by Louis IX.²³ Finally, Jacopo da Varagine names Ugone Lercari and Giacomo di Letavia, two Genoese admirals who went with the King and commanded the fleet in 1248.²⁴

However, unlike his grandfather Philip Augustus, Louis did not use foreign ports to depart to or return from the Holy Land. Instead, he preferred to rent Genoese ships directly in Aigues-Mortes, a French port constructed specifically for its strategic access to the Mediterranean. This makes the reference of Louis' visit to Genoa all the more questionable. In addition, I have not found any records of the French king's arrival in the Ligurian city during 1254–1260. Instead, according to Jacques Le Goff, Louis IX had already entered Paris on September 7, 1254.²⁵ Thus, one possible explanation for Giscard's later account of the Carmelites' encounter with the king is the scholar's aim to directly connect the Order with the saint. This claim originates in the middle of the fourteenth century when Jean de Cheminot attributed the transition of the Order to St. Louis after the latter visited Mount Carmel in 1254.²⁶ Since then, the King's patronage of the Carmelites became widely known,

²¹ Rossini, *L'architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, p. 62; Teresita Gazzolo, *La Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine a Genova* (Genoa: Agis editrice, n.a.), p. 6.

²² Jotischky names Louis IX among the patrons of the Carmelites in *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 16, 34.

²³ Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, *Documenti inediti riguardanti le due crociate di San Ludovico IX re di Francia* (Genoa: Beuf, 1859); Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), pp. 119, 223;

²⁴ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 316.

²⁵ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, p. 155.

²⁶ Chapter VII of Jean de Cheminot's *Speculum fratrum ordinis Beatae Mariae de Monte Carmelo* in Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, p. 139. See also Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, p. 245.

and the eighteenth-century Genoese author could have included his name in the history of the Order's arrival to Genoa simply to demonstrate his erudition.

However, Giscardi specifically wrote that St. Louis *left* some of the monks in Genoa ('... lascio adunque in Genova San Lodovico alcuni d'essi religiosi...').²⁷ So there remains the possibility that the Genoese Carmelites did indeed travel from Mount Carmel or Cyprus together with the returning troops of Louis IX. They could have been left in Genoa without the King coming ashore, since the ships had to pass by the Ligurian shores en route from the Holy Land to France.²⁸ This suggests that they could have appeared in Genoa by the middle of the 1250s directly or initially arriving in Southern France with the crusaders and later reaching Genoa.²⁹ I have devoted so much attention to this episode with Louis IX because it not only illustrates how potentially early the Carmelites could have come to Genoa, but more importantly, it implies that the first Genoese Carmelites were probably Eastern monks (like the Bartholomites), and not Italian friars. As we shall see, the question of the Carmelite's origin is important for our understanding of the programme of the frescoes in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Genoa. The Carmelites delivered information about their past through these images, and knowing where they actually came from can help us to decode their message.

In any case, the earliest verified document that records the presence of the Carmelites in Genoa dates to 1260, the year of their acquisition of land outside of the twelfth-century walls in the region of Terriccio (fig. 45).³⁰ The Carmelites rented the land for 100 *soldi* from Raimondo Porporerio, possibly an ancestor of Oberto Purpureio, who at the beginning of the fourteenth century granted another plot of land in Genoa to the Armenian monks who were

²⁷ Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, p. 532.

²⁸ On the maritime technology and tactics see Kirk, 'Mediterranean Rivalries', pp. 457–63.

²⁹ According to David Abulafia, there were four days between Marseilles and Genoa: Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, p. 305.

³⁰ The document cited in Gazzolo, *La Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine*, p. 6. According to the small booklet, the record of the document is in *Atti del notaio Giovanni Polanesi*, 4 September 1260. On the early placement of the Carmelite churches outside or close to the city walls see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, p. 38.

fleeing from the invasions of the Mamelukes.³¹ Alizeri first noted this connection between the granters of the land to both religious communities and proposed that the family name originated from the word *porpora* (“purple”) and might be linked to the profession of textile dyers.³² Indeed, the studies devoted to the distribution of diverse production in Genoa during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have shown that the region of Terriccio was close to the medieval quarters of dyers.³³ According to Giscardi, the Carmelites first occupied a small chapel of the Annunciation that existed on the site of the modern church of Santa Maria del Carmine and which was constructed by Giovanni Argiroffo in 1182.³⁴ The remnants included in the construction of the later thirteenth-century church are still preserved today.³⁵

Predictably, other religious Orders in the city did not gladly receive the newly arrived Carmelites, especially since the territory that was donated to them had originally belonged to the ancient Genoese abbey of San Siro and had been occupied by the Benedictines. So the appearance of the newcomers on their land quickly caused a conflict, which was resolved with the help of Cardinal Ottobono Fieschi.³⁶ On 26 May 1262, the Carmelites received the official permission to construct their own church on the Genoese site.³⁷ The exact date of completion is unknown, but the construction lasted until the first half of the fourteenth century.³⁸ Primary sources have registered the names of the first Carmelite friars who lived

³¹ On the donation of the land to the Bartholomites see Chapter 6, p. 193.

³² Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, vol. 2, 2, pp. 949–50, footnote 1.

³³ Luciano Grossi Bianchi, Ennio Poleggi, *Una città portuale del Medioevo. Genova nei secoli X–XVI* (Genoa: Sagep, 1980), pp. 234–37, especially tav. XIV: Insedimenti produttivi nei secoli XIV–XV.

³⁴ Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, p. 533; Gazzolo, *La Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine*, p. 9; Magnani, *Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine*, p. 3; Varese, ‘Lo sviluppo architettonico’, p. 42.

³⁵ Varese, ‘Lo sviluppo architettonico’, p. 42, fig. 2.

³⁶ Rossini, *L’architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, p. 62; Anna De Florian, ‘Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane’, in *La pittura in Liguria*, p. 115. On the problems that the mendicants faced when they arrived in new cities, see Caroline Bruzelius, *Preaching, Building and Burying: Friars in the Medieval City* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 107–18.

³⁷ The text of the notarial acts by Giacomo Bonacorte and Parodo da Sestri in Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, pp. 532–33.

³⁸ Rossini, *L’architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, p. 64.

at the Genoese monastery – Stefano Priore, Tommaso, Gualterio, Raniero, Pietro and Alberto.³⁹

The Architecture of Santa Maria del Carmine

Although it is difficult to distinguish the typology of a mendicant church in general and though by the mid-thirteenth century there was no such established phenomenon in Liguria, the architecture of the Carmelite church in Genoa reproduces some features of the existing Dominican, Franciscan and Augustinian churches in the city.⁴⁰ It resembles the early churches of San Francesco di Castelletto (1224, consecrated in 1302), San Domenico (1217), and Sant' Agostino (consecrated in 1260).⁴¹ The first two churches were demolished in the first half of the nineteenth century, but enough evidence remains to reconstruct their original look.

Santa Maria del Carmine in Genoa is a three-aisle basilica with lateral chapels along the aisles, just like the original plan of the mendicant churches mentioned above (fig. 46). The size of the church and the proportions of the internal space also follow the other mendicant churches in the city.⁴² The aisles are divided by two rows of columns and terminate in the east in three rectangular chapels. The central nave and the altar chapel are higher than the lateral aisles. The main external distinction of the Carmelite church was its closed western façade. The original entrance to the church is still used today and is situated on the south wall (fig. 48), while the western portal was added only in the sixteenth century (fig. 49).

³⁹ Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, p. 532; see also Ratti, *Istruzione di quanto può vedersi di più bello in Genova*, p. 165; Angelo and Marcello Remondini, *I santuari e le immagini di Maria Santissima nella città di Genova* (Genoa: Caorsi, 1865), p. 117; Rossini, *L'architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, p. 62.

⁴⁰ Rossini, *L'architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, pp. 16–17. On the architecture of Carmelite churches, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, pp. 39–41.

⁴¹ Rossini, *L'architettura degli ordini mendicanti*, p. 62, Clario Di Fabio, “Gli affreschi di Manfredino e altri documenti genovesi di cultura figurativa ‘assisiata’: gli affreschi di Manfredino da Pistoia nella chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine a Genova”, *Bollettino d'Arte*, 12 (2011), p. 87.

⁴² Roberta Cavanna, ‘La chiesa di Sant'Agostino a Genova: un esempio di architettura mendicante fra tradizione e innovazione’, *Arte Lombarda*, n.s., 137, 1 (2003), p. 11.

Recent restoration works have revealed that the central nave had a screen and was originally divided into two parts – the *ecclesia* or *chorus fratrum* and the *ecclesia laicorum* (fig. 47).⁴³ The assignment of a reserved area for the friars was common in many medieval churches and, according to Andrews, a choir was also usually found in Carmelite churches in other countries.⁴⁴ Evidence of the existence of an intermediary screen in the Genoese church can be seen in the masonry of the central pillars, in the rhythm of the columns as the gap between them becomes wider in the chancel, and on the arch between the pillars that preserves a metal bracket to hang a crucifix above the entrance to the chancel.⁴⁵

During the following centuries, the church underwent several modifications. Around 1479, the areas for the laity and for the friars were united during the reconstruction of the ceiling and the roof (until the fifteenth century the *ecclesia laicorum* had a timber roof). Additionally, the solar motifs of the vaults of the central nave were added (fig. 51). Luckily for modern medievalists, after the Council of Trent, the Genoese Carmelites did not totally update the thirteenth-century church. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the friars enlarged the windows and added a new baroque altar. Additionally, according to old photographs, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the wall behind the altar was almost completely occupied by an organ, thus the frescoes of the altar chapel were not fully visible.⁴⁶

⁴³ Costantino G. Giraldi, 'Ecclesia Laicorum e Ecclesia Fratrum: luoghi e oggetti per il culto e la predicazione secondo l'*Ecclesiasticum Officium* dei frati predicatori', in *Aux origines de la liturgie dominicaine: le manuscrit Santa Sabina*, eds Leonard E. Boyle and Pierre-Marie Gy (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2004).

⁴⁴ Andrews, *The Other Friars*, pp. 39–41.

⁴⁵ On the placement of images of the Virgin and Crucifixes in the *ecclesia laicorum* and above the entrance to the *ecclesia fratrum*, see Joanna Cannon, *Religious Poverty, Visual Riches: Art in the Dominican Churches of Central Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 71–89, especially pl. 67 and 69. The pictures of details that suggest the existence of the chancel in Varese, 'Lo sviluppo architettonico', pp. 44–45, 47. All the descriptions of the reconstruction phases of the church are indebted to Varese's article.

⁴⁶ The photo of 1930 showing the state of the altar chapel in Varese, 'Lo sviluppo architettonico', p. 52, fig. 26. See also Luca Longhi, 'La riscoperta e il restauro degli affreschi', *Bollettino d'arte*, 12 (2011), pp. 68–69.

Restoration Works in the Twentieth Century

The church of the Carmelites was submitted to a vast decoration programme by the end of the fourteenth century (fig. 50). Four large figures of prophets and saints were painted on the sides of the eastern wall behind the altar. The upper part under the vault was filled with the depiction of the Annunciation. Finally, medallions with Carmelites and half-length images of other saints covered the remaining spaces of the altar chapel. The substantial reconstruction that most affected the preservation and thus the study of the Carmelite frescoes in Genoa took place in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1928–1935, Mario Zambaldi directed the restoration works in the church that heavily altered its medieval decoration. More recently, in 2006–2009, Italian restorers under the supervision of Giovanni Battista Varese, Luca Longhi and Clario di Fabio performed incredible task of bringing the original frescoes back to life.

Thus as it often happens, the decoration of the church is a mixture of diverse styles and epochs. Following the last restoration, the original frescoes can be more easily distinguished in the lighter areas, whereas the brighter zones are the remnants of Mario Zambaldi's interference, which restorers decided to keep because there are no original frescoes left underneath (fig. 52). It is easy to notice that although the twentieth-century renovation overall follows the outline of the medieval decoration, the newer drawing often resulted in something completely different and does not always coincide with the original (fig. 53). For example, in the pattern of the ornamental band, the flowers in the medieval layer clearly overlap with the black net that Zambaldi painted on the top layer.⁴⁷ This, however, is not surprising considering the technique that he decided to choose: he covered some parts of the thirteenth-century frescoes with a new layer of plaster and painted the frescoes on top of it, while in other cases, he directly painted onto the originals.⁴⁸ As a result,

⁴⁷ Longhi, 'La riscoperta e il restauro', p. 67, fig 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

Zambaldi redesigned all the painted surfaces, sometimes closely following the original design, and in other cases reimagining the frescoes in a style more suitable for his contemporary time and taste.⁴⁹

Another important problem regarding the study of the frescoes concerns the windows of the altar chapel. Modern restorers drew a diagram showing the diverse stages of the reconstruction from the seventeenth century up to the beginning of the twentieth century based on paintings and photographs of the church.⁵⁰ According to Varese, the existing windows in the eastern wall of the altar chapel that were re-opened by Zambaldi probably correspond to their medieval state. At the top, there is a large rosette with a triple-lancet window beneath it.⁵¹ However, the windows of the northern and southern walls of the chapel were closed up during the restoration in the 1930s. Each of these two side walls had two windows: while the large window was opened to the street, the second one was oriented towards the lateral chapel (see diagram fig. 50).

The Question of the Frescoes' Authorship and Dating

Inevitably, the numerous alterations to the church and its frescoes mentioned above led to confusion in their dating. As twentieth-century guidebooks claim, the frescoes of the altar chapel were dated to no earlier than the beginning of the fifteenth century.⁵² Hence, another important consequence of the recent restoration was the attribution of the frescoes by Clario Di Fabio in 2011. Basing his assumptions primarily on stylistic analysis, he suggests to attribute the decoration to Manfredino d'Alberto da Pistoia, a painter whose life is documented in Pistoia and Genoa from 1280 to 1293.⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 70, fig. 11.

⁵⁰ Varese, 'Lo sviluppo architettonico', p. 57, fig. 33.

⁵¹ On the alterations of the windows in the altar chapel, see Varese, 'Lo sviluppo architettonico', pp. 53–54.

⁵² Gazzolo, *La Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine*, p. 10 (no date, but after the restoration of 1930s); Magnani, *Chiesa di Nostra Signora del Carmine*, p. 14–15.

⁵³ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino'. On Manfredino da Pistoia, see Sebastiano Ciampi, *Notizie inedite della Sagrestia de' belli arredi del Campo Santo Pisano e di altre opere di disegno* (Florence: Molini, Landi e

The first firmly known date in the painter's biography comes from a notarial document that fixated the end of Manfredino's work in the cathedral of St. Zeno in Pistoia.⁵⁴ Such an important commission is unlikely to be the first in the painter's career, and scholars argue that the remaining frescoes in the church of Santa Maria in Ripalta in Pistoia should be attributed to him at an earlier stage of his life, i.e. the 1270s (fig. 54).⁵⁵ After finishing the decoration of the cathedral during the 1280s, Manfredino is thought to have painted the altar vault of the church of San Bartolomeo in Pantano (fig. 55).⁵⁶ Unlike the frescoes of the Duomo in Pistoia, the decoration of the churches is extant, although it is in a rather bad condition.

As for the following years of Manfredino's life, it is recorded that in 1291 the painter was still in Pistoia,⁵⁷ while the next year he had already moved to Genoa to decorate the church of San Michele di Fassolo.⁵⁸ Although the church was demolished in the middle of the nineteenth century, the frescoes with the author's signature and their date of creation were saved and are now preserved in the Museo di Sant'Agostino in Genoa (figs 56–58).⁵⁹

Compagno, 1810), pp. 92, 117, 145; Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno in Liguria dalla fondazione dell'Accademia*, 3 vols (Genoa: Tipografia di Luigi Sambolino, 1864–1866), I, pp. 54–56, 392–94; Peleo Bacci, *Documenti toscani per la storia dell'arte* (Florence: Gonnelli, 1910), vol. 1, 1, pp. 93–107; Pietro Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana. Il Medioevo* (Turin: UTET, 1927), pp. 961, 1012, 1042; Caterina Marcenaro, 'Manfredino d'Alberto', *L'Arte*, 40 (1937), pp. 110–30; Pier Paolo Donati, 'Il punto su Manfredino d'Alberto', *Bollettino d'arte*, 57 (1972), pp. 144–53; Roberto Longhi, 'Progetti di lavoro 'Genova pittrice'', *Paragone. Arte*, 30, 349–351 (1979), pp. 4–25; Romano, 'La pittura del Duecento in Liguria', p. 28; Pietro Torriti, 'Interventi e suggestioni toscani tra Due e Trecento', pp. 27, 30, 32; Gianluca Zanelli, Manfredino di Alberto, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 68 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana 2007), pp. 756–58; De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', in *La pittura in Liguria*, pp. 109–13; Michela Fasce, 'A proposito di Manfredino da Pistoia e la sua tecnica progettuale ed esecutiva', *Arte Documento*, 29 (2013), pp. 74–79.

⁵⁴ The copy of the document in Peleo Bacci, *Documenti toscani*, p. 107.

⁵⁵ Enrica Neri Lusanna, 'Di un affresco pistoiese del Duecento, l'Ascensione di S. Maria a Ripalta', in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di R. Salvini* (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1984), pp. 125–30.

⁵⁶ The arguments about the date of the fresco are discussed in De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', pp. 112, 127, footnotes 51, 52.

⁵⁷ Donati, 'Il punto su Manfredino d'Alberto', p. 147.

⁵⁸ Mario Marcenaro, 'San Michele di Fassolo', in *Medioevo demolito: Genova 1860–1940*, eds Colette Dufour Bozzo and Mario Marcenaro (Genoa: Pirella, 1990), pp. 81–120; Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', pp. 103–7; Fasce, 'A proposito di Manfredino da Pistoia', pp. 74–79.

⁵⁹ The inscriptions of the frescoes from San Michele a Fassolo are cited in De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 110: 'XXII IN MESE MADII and MAGISTER MANFREDINUS PISTORIENSIS ME PINXIT MCCLXXXII IN MESE MADII'.

The last documented record of Manfredino's activity dates to 1293.⁶⁰ Stylistic comparison and nineteenth-century evidence has allowed researchers to suggest that the painter had a hand in the so-called Acton Dossal (Florence, Villa La Pietra, Acton Collection, fig. 59).⁶¹ Although the authorship does not raise any questions among scholars, the dating is still imprecise, and researchers have been arguing whether the only example of a panel painting by Manfredino was produced in Pistoia or in Genoa for the church of San Michele di Fassolo.⁶²

This is a brief description of the main points of Manfredino's life and the works that have been attributed to him over the years. As mentioned above, Di Fabio recently studied the Carmelite frescoes proposing the quite precise dating window between spring 1292 and winter 1293, although he admits that the frescoes could have been produced sometime during the following years, after the last known written record of 1293.⁶³ He also attributed to Manfredino the façade of the neighbouring church of San Bartolomeo dell'Olivella (finished in 1305, according to the inscription on the building, figs 60–63), again basing his conclusions on the analysis of style, the structure of the halos and the historical connection between the two churches.⁶⁴ Though it is physically difficult to compare the frescoes of the Carmelite church and those of the façade of San Bartolomeo dell'Olivella looking from the ground upwards, the photographs provided by Di Fabio in his paper suggest that in the very least the same workshop was commissioned for the paintings in both churches. The ear of the apostle as well as the clothes he is wearing, do look alike (compare figs 78 & fig. 63).

⁶⁰ Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 1, pp. 54–56, 373.

⁶¹ The attribution was first suggested by Roberto Longhi in 1948 and is, in general, supported by modern scholars. See Clario di Fabio, 'Giotto lo chiamava collega', *L'Osservatore Romano* (16 July 2009), p. 4; De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 110 and footnote 50, pp. 126–27; Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', pp. 84, 107–9.

⁶² Donati, 'Il punto su Manfredino d'Alberto', pp. 148–49; Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 84; De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 112.

⁶³ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 115.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Overall, Manfredino's style reveals that he was a follower of Cimabue to such an extent that some scholars have tried to find examples of his work in the upper church of the basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, which, according to Bellosi, should be dated between 1288 and 1290.⁶⁵ But some of his paintings produced in Genoa resemble more closely the style of Constantinopolitan artists. This is especially evident in the case of the archangel from the church of San Michele al Fassolo (fig. 56), which can be included in one group of Byzantine artistic examples in Genoa with regards to the style of the draperies, similar to some miniatures of the *Supplicationes variae* (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Plut. 25.3, fol. 388 r, fig. 65) and the frescoes of the cathedral, and all of which were produced within two or three decades around the year 1300.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, I believe that this example is slightly different to the others, as comparison of the images reveals some stiffness in the position and the flow of the draperies of Manfredino's archangel.

The question of Manfredino's authorship of the Carmelite frescoes therefore remains open. The paintings were produced in the technique of 'buon fresco'.⁶⁷ The best preserved areas, such as the lower figures on the southern wall, show very fine work of exceptional craftsmanship. Unfortunately, although Manfredino's style has regularly been the subject of scholarly interest,⁶⁸ I am not completely convinced that we have enough evidence to confirm his authorship of the frescoes in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Genoa instead of, for instance, them being the production of his workshop or of any other follower of Cimabue

⁶⁵ Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, pp. 1052–54; Luciano Bellosi, *Cimabue* (Milan: Federico Motta, 2004), pp. 163–67, 290–92.

⁶⁶ On the *Supplicationes variae* see Amy Neff, 'The *Supplicationes variae* in Florence: a late Duecento Manuscript' (Ph.D dissertation, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1977); eadem, 'A New Interpretation of the *Supplicationes variae* miniatures', in *Il Medio Oriente e l'Occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo*, ed. Hans Belting (Bologna: Clueb, 1982), pp. 173–79; eadem, 'Byzantium Westernized, Byzantium Marginalized: Two Icons in the *Supplicationes variae*', *Gesta*, 38 (1999), pp. 81–102; De Floriani, 'Genova tra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', pp. 96–129; Federica Volpera, 'Iconografia e devozione come aspetti della maniera greca: alcune osservazioni sulle differenti icone mariane presenti in un manoscritto francescano tardo duecentesco', *Ikona*, 10 (2017), pp. 97–110; Amy Neff, *A Soul's Journey: Franciscan Art, Theology, and Devotion in the Supplicationes variae* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2019).

⁶⁷ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 88.

⁶⁸ Fasce, 'A proposito di Manfredino da Pistoia', pp. 74–79.

whose name we simply do not know today. Clario Di Fabio, for example, states that the colours and the preparatory design of the archangel in the churches of San Michele di Fassolo and in Santa Maria del Carmine are identical (figs 66 and 56).⁶⁹ However, it is worth remembering that there is not much left of the original archangel in the Carmelite church, while very similar draperies of the archangel's clothes can be found in the frescoes of the Byzantine painter in the cathedral of San Lorenzo (fig. 64).

Another reason for the difficulties in attribution is the bad preservation state of the surviving works which serve as models and that can be unanimously attributed to Manfredino. The signed frescoes from San Michele a Fassolo lack the upper layers of painting, and this has resulted in the green flesh tones of the saints.⁷⁰ This might explain why the style of San Michele seems to some scholars to be more linear than the style of the painter from the Carmelite church. Anna De Floriani has compared the figures of John the Baptist in the decoration of the Carmelite church with Cimabue's depictions in the transept of the church in Assisi and the remaining frescoes of Manfredino from San Michele a Fassolo. She concluded that the latter two appear more two-dimensional.⁷¹ Such an impression could have been caused by either the fact that we do not see the final brushstrokes in Manfredino's frescoes (but only the preparatory under layer), or because the styles of the painters are indeed different. It could also be that the painter of the Carmelite church was another follower of Cimabue in Genoa, but whose name we do not know.

Finally, this brings us back to the question of the frescoes' dating. The *terminus post quem* is 1287. As will be discussed again in the following pages, the date is connected with type of habit worn by the Carmelites as painted in the Genoese church, which was introduced during the Chapter of Montpellier held in that year. Most scholars propose a date later than 1292 or 1293, as suggested by Clario di Fabio. Anna De Floriani has argued that the frescoes

⁶⁹ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 113.

⁷⁰ De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 111.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

demonstrate a mature style that should be ascribed to the end of the 1290s, while Christa Gardner von Teuffel has dated them to c. 1300.⁷²

The Frescoes of Santa Maria del Carmine

Apart from the state of preservation and the numerous alterations, there is another factor that complicates the study of these frescoes: the lack of similar prototypes. As was already discussed earlier, at the time of the production of the frescoes, the Carmelite Order was a very young congregation that had just started to spread across Europe in general and in Italy in particular. In fact, Di Fabio, upon presenting the first detailed iconographical study of these frescoes, suggested that the cycle in question is the earliest example of Carmelite decoration in Italy.⁷³ This implies that there was no established programme or canon for decorating the church and, as it was discussed above, there did not even exist a developed narrative of the Order's past on which the painter could rely.

The medieval pictorial decoration of the church survives mainly in the altar chapel on all three walls (fig. 50). The eastern wall is divided into several registers. The scene of the Annunciation occupies the upper blue part flanking the oculus (figs 66, 67). The fact that the Marian theme is represented in a Carmelite church can be interpreted as an early sign of the Order's special devotion to the Virgin. On the other hand, as Clario Di Fabio has suggested, it could also have been a tribute to the Romanesque chapel that existed on the site before the construction of the church and which was dedicated to the Annunciation.⁷⁴

Although the fresco was almost completely repainted at the beginning of the twentieth century, we can still see the original position of the figures. The thirteenth-century painter inserts the figures in two triangular spaces on the far ends of the lunette. The Archangel shows movement through his pink draperies and in the position of his set backwards leg.

⁷² Gardner von Teuffel, 'The Carmelite Altarpiece', 16; De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 122.

⁷³ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 89.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

Even from the few remaining original details, it looks like the Archangel was inclined towards the Virgin. In contrast to the dynamic position of the Archangel, the figure of Mary would have been stable (fig. 67). The original detail of the halo suggests that her head was not as inclined as it is in the twentieth-century version that predominates today. It is also worth pointing out the heavy, sturdy throne that enhances the impression of steadiness and is even reminiscent of an altar. By adding the throne with a cushion and a footstool – details that are not required for the Annunciation scene especially given the fact that the figure is standing – the painter probably wanted to show additional respect and distinction to the Virgin.⁷⁵

The Carmelites inside the Medallions

The next register is a red ornamental band with rinceaux and two roundels with half-length saints (figs 68, 69). It continues onto the lateral walls of the altar chapel and is repeated on the lower part of the northern wall (fig. 50). These walls also have the same medallions with saints: one on the upper (fig. 70) and two on the lower register in the north which are, in fact, Zambaldi's work, (figs 72 and 73). There is one more medallion in the middle of the upper band in the South (fig. 71). Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to identify the depicted saints, because most of their faces and in some cases their whole figures were either lost during the remodelling of the windows or are hard to distinguish due to the condition of the painting.

Nevertheless, we can still see that the saints are dressed in dark tunics with white hooded mantles, the *cappa alba* that was introduced as the habit of the Carmelite monks during the Chapter of Montpellier in July 1287.⁷⁶ All of this proves that the figures in the

⁷⁵ Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 172, 194–95.

⁷⁶ On the dress of the Carmelites, the introduction of a new cloak and the significance of this event, see Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 45–47; Cordelia Warr, *Dressing for Heaven: Religious Clothing in Italy, 1215–1545* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 93–99; on the connection of the

roundels are Carmelites, also known as the white friars. The saints that were painted in the 1290s hold books in one of their hands while raising the other with the palm open. The position of their heads is almost always the same too, except for the left saint on the eastern wall (fig. 68). He is depicted slightly turned away from the altar, while the rest of the saints are all positioned frontally. We should note, however, that Zambaldi partially repainted this Carmelite, and from what remains it is impossible to understand what was the intention of the medieval painter and whether Zambaldi followed the original drawing in the design of his head and posture, or whether all the saints had exactly the same posture.

The most intriguing detail in the six roundels of the Carmelites is the depiction of the halos, although at the time of the frescoes' production the Order did not have any members canonised or even beatified. The first Carmelite catalogues of saints appeared in the middle of the fourteenth century.⁷⁷ Of course, some famous Carmelites who lived prior to the 1290s and who had played a significant role in the history of the Order could have been depicted in the church and some scholars have been trying to identify possible candidates. Jotischky cites a list of sixteen early saints and Di Fabio suggests several names that could have been present in the Genoese cycle: Bertold (died 1195) and Brocard (died 1231) – the first two Prior-Generals of the Order, Angelus of Jerusalem (1185–1220), Cyril of Constantinople (died c. 1234) and Simon Stock (died 1265).⁷⁸ However, although these men lived some time before the appearance of these frescoes, their popularity and veneration among the Carmelites started much later, mostly in the fifteenth and even sixteenth centuries.⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that the four original Carmelite saints on the walls of the Genoese church look almost identical to each other and have no attributes that could help distinguish

dress with the Marian theme, see Andrews, *The Other Friars*, pp. 53–54. The sources concerning the General Chapter in Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, pp. 49–70.

⁷⁷ Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, p. 190.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 191; Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 96.

⁷⁹ See, for instance, Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*, pp. 95–96; Gardner von Teuffel, 'The Carmelite Altarpiece', p. 5.

them. Their place in the decoration is far from being leading; they are much smaller than the central figures and seem to almost fuse in the ornamental band. Even their gestures do not show an active position: they are not preaching but receiving the teaching.⁸⁰ This is why I suggest that the friars in the medallions do not represent any specific saint or holy person; they are not portraits, but rather generic representations of Carmelite friars. We have encountered the same idea in the complex of San Giovanni di Pré on the intrados of the arches of the narthex where the seemingly anonymous deacons all had halos and a similar standardised appearance.⁸¹ This is also sometimes found in icons, as for example, the Virgin retable from the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia that was produced for the Carmelite house in Cyprus around the same time as the Genoese frescoes (fig. 75).⁸² In the retable, anonymous friars in Carmelite white scapulars kneel in front of the enthroned Virgin. The main difference is that they do not have halos, unlike their Genoese counterparts. But I assume the addition of the halos was more important for the friars in Genoa. The nimbi gave weight and authority, which were specifically important for a young congregation fighting for its place and survival. The Franciscans and the Dominicans had their respective founders, and followers canonised as early as the 1220s and 1230s. By the end of the century, it was easier for them to conceive decorative programmes that would represent and promulgate their Orders.⁸³ The Carmelites, on the other hand, did not have a specific historical founder or saints by the end of the thirteenth century, therefore, they needed to create their own mythology, as it seems, even through the invention of some not yet canonised friars.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Di Fabio in 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', 96 refers to Chiara Frugoni, *La voce delle immagini. Pillole iconografiche dal Medioevo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2010), pp. 89–94.

⁸¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 49–52.

⁸² Michele Bacci, 'Pisa e l'icona', in *Cimabue a Pisa: la pittura pisana del Duecento da Giunta a Giotto*, eds Mariagiulia Burrese and Antonio Caleca (Pisa: Pacini, 2005), p. 63, fig. 8; Gardner von Teuffel, 'The Carmelite Altarpiece', pp. 7–8, fig. 3 and bibliography in footnote 40.

⁸³ Cf. Klaus Krüger, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien: Gestalt- und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1992); Cannon, *Religious Poverty*.

⁸⁴ In the same way Elijah and Elisha dressed in the white cloak became the Carmelite main saints as the founders of the Order before the Carmelites had other saints with whom they could associate. See Joanna

In light of this theory, it is interesting to return to the two Carmelites from the northern wall (figs 72, 73) and to the saint on the left-hand side of the eastern wall (fig. 68) that were completely or partly repainted in the twentieth century. Unlike the remaining three originals from the upper band (figs 69–71), these have specific details, different poses and even some unique attributes. Two of them are in three-quarter profile. Furthermore, the right-hand side Carmelite on the northern wall has a distinctive appearance: he is an old man with a beard (fig. 72). But the most unique saint is the one depicted on the left – he has a dagger in his chest (fig. 73). I propose to consider that, Zambaldi depicted here St. Angelus of Jerusalem who, despite being stabbed to death with a sword, is often presented with a dagger as for example in Antonio de Pereda’s painting from the Museo del Prado made by 1667 (fig. 73).⁸⁵ In my opinion, Zambaldi’s illustration of the Carmelites in Genoa are the result of the same understandable desire to attribute the anonymous figures in the medallions with actual historical figures, to personify and associate them with the saints already known in the tradition by the twentieth century.

Beneath the ornamental frieze of the eastern wall, we find three lancet windows – Zambaldi’s addition that perhaps followed the original concept (fig. 50). Flanking them are four full-length saints grouped in pairs one on top of the other. (figs 76–79). The medieval painter made each saint over life-size.⁸⁶ They are placed inside two elongated painted niches on spiral columns with three triangular tabernacles on top of each niche. Although probably added in the fourteenth century,⁸⁷ this painted frame with painted architectural elements resembles the golden wooden arches on thin columns of Manfredino’s *Dossale* from the Acton Collection in Florence (fig. 59) and many other polyptychs by Italian painters who

Cannon, ‘Pietro Lorenzetti and the History of the Carmelite Order’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 50 (1987), p. 21; Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*, pp. 95–96.

⁸⁵ Acquisition number: P003342. De Floriani ‘Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane’, p. 118 suggests a different attribution of St. Albert, but I believe he is depicted on the south wall.

⁸⁶ See the diagram in Longhi, ‘La riscoperta e il restauro’, p. 78.

⁸⁷ De Floriani, ‘Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane’, p. 115.

followed the so-called *maniera greca* in the thirteenth century and later. If we develop this comparison, we can say that the altar decoration of the Genoese church echoes a large painted altarpiece such as the later *Pala del Carmine* from the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, produced by Pietro Lorenzetti for the church of St. Niccolò del Carmine in 1327–1329 or Andrea di Bonaiuto's *Madonna and Child with Saints* from Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, created in 1360–1362 (figs 80, 81).⁸⁸ In all these cases, there is a large central image (or window in the church) with several full-length saints in the lateral compartments framed by some intricate architectural décor, and on the spandrels of arches the saints that are less important for the declared programme.

John the Baptist and Elijah

On the left side of the eastern wall, the author painted two prophets from the Old Testament: John the Baptist and Elijah (figs 76, 77). In the top corner, the Baptist is dressed in a red himation over a camel-skin robe and carries a round object in his hands that can be identified as the *Agnus Dei*. There is also an inscription on a scroll around the capital of the right column with the word 'AGNVS'. Clario Di Fabio connects this image with the Carmelite and the Genoese veneration of the saint, whose ashes were kept in the cathedral of San Lorenzo.⁸⁹ However, I believe that even though the Carmelites undoubtedly knew the importance of the cult of the Baptist in the community that hosted them, they had a more direct connection with the named that was possibly more important for them specifically when they chose to place him as one of the main altar images.

It is therefore imperative to examine the connection between John the Baptist and the Carmelite Order. For instance, we find the image of the Baptist together with Elijah standing on one side of the *Maesta* in the already mentioned Carmelite Altarpieces by Pietro Lorenzetti (1329) and Andrea di Bonaiuto (1360–1362) (figs 80, 81). There is also mention

⁸⁸ Cannon, 'Pietro Lorenzetti', pp. 18–28.

⁸⁹ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 91. See Chapters 3 and 4.

of John the Baptist in the first chapter of Jean de Cheminot's *Speculum* (1337). He singles out John along with the Carmelite patrons Elijah and his disciple Elisha and states that as the friars imitated the apostles, so did the hermits follow Elijah and John the Baptist. He goes on to say that John's disciples had buried him between Elijah and Obadiah: 'Similiter et beatus Ioannes Baptista ad imitationem istorum cum aliquibus filiis prophetarum elegit habitare super fluvium Iordanis propter <loci> sanctitatem, quia Elias et Eliseus transierunt eum sicco pede, et divisus fuit fluvius ad imperium eorum et ad tactum palii sui. Hoc dicit Magister in Historia Tripartita. Nam et corpus beati Ioannis Baptistae fuit sepultum inter corpora sanctorum Elisei et Abdiae per manus discipulorum suorum, tamquam eiusdem devotionis frater et professor. Unde Isidorus, 7 Etymologiarum, 13 c., dicit quod "religiosi coenobitae imitantur apostolos, eremitae vero Eliam et Iohannem Baptistam".'⁹⁰

Elijah is placed beneath John the Baptist holding a scroll in his hands and dressed anachronistically in the white cloak of the Carmelites (fig. 77).⁹¹ This is a very important detail considering that the friars only changed their clothing a few years before the commission of the fresco. Without a doubt, and as Jotischky explained in length, the reason this habit was chosen was to emphasise the continuity of the modern friars from the Old Testament prophet. Moreover, Jotischki has claimed that the adoption of the new white cloak could be seen as "a re-enactment of Elijah's own passage from the earthly to the heavenly" as Elijah passed the cloak to his disciple Elisha when taken to heaven in a golden chariot.⁹² Tied to this theme, the scroll in the prophet's hands has an inscription based on the beginning of 2 Kings, 2: 'hELIAS // RA[P]TUS // EST . IN // C[A]ELUM // CVR[R]V . I // GNEO'.⁹³

⁹⁰ Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, pp. 119–20.

⁹¹ The role of Elijah in the Carmelite's identity has been described in almost every work concerning the order's early history. For research devoted to this specific question, see, for instance, Koch, 'Elijah the Prophet', pp. 547–60; Ackerman, 'Stories of Elijah', pp. 124–47.

⁹² Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, pp. 53–55; on the importance of the new habit, see also Cannon, 'Pietro Lorenzetti', pp. 25–26; Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*.

⁹³ Gardner von Teuffel, 'The Carmelite Altarpiece', p. 16.

Di Fabio highlights the importance of the place where the patron saint of the Order is placed – the lower corner – as a metaphor of the role of *lapis angularis*.⁹⁴

St. Bartholomew

The right upper figure is St. Bartholomew, who can easily be recognized due to the dark hair, beard, and the knife that he is holding (fig. 78).⁹⁵ He is dressed in a full-length dark red tunic and a yellow mantle decorated with a geometrical pattern composed of double circles. This design is almost completely faded, but in some parts, we can distinguish that the circles have some black rhombi inside with two tendrils at the end of each corner. This distinctive pattern, combined with the golden-yellow field, made the clothing look more intricately ornate and rich, which is something that is not clearly seen today from a distance.⁹⁶ Moreover, I believe this pattern also reflected the taste for Eastern textiles and echoed the Byzantine dress of the female saint beneath St. Bartholomew, who will be discussed in detail below. All of this contrasts with the bare feet of the Apostle.

Di Fabio has suggested that the appearance of Bartholomew, the patron saint of the Armenians was a sign of the Order's connection with Cilicia either through the commissioner or the origin of the Genoese Carmelites themselves.⁹⁷ As mentioned earlier, the Carmelites received their church's land from Raimondo Porporerio, an ancestor of Oberto Purpurerio. The latter played an important role in the early history of the Bartholomites, who are known to have arrived in Genoa from Lesser Armenia at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁹⁸ Although it is very tempting to connect these two churches, I am not totally convinced that the Carmelites would depict a large figure of St.

⁹⁴ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 91.

⁹⁵ George Kaftal, Fabio Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1985), col. 117.

⁹⁶ A similar pattern can be found on the dress of the Virgin on the apse mosaic at Santa Maria in Trastevere (fig. 85).

⁹⁷ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', pp. 92, 100–1.

⁹⁸ See Chapter 6, especially p. 193.

Bartholomew in their central altar only because one of the commissioners had trading (or any other) connections with Cilicia. On the other hand, Di Fabio and other researchers have also explained the figure of St. Bartholomew at the altar chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine in Genoa through their possible place of origin suggesting that the friars could have arrived from the Black Mountain in Cilicia and not from Mount Carmel or Cyprus.⁹⁹ The foundation of this theory lies on the belief that the appearance of St. Bartholomew in Genoa (altar, chapel or church), especially in connection to the family of the Fieschi, can be a sign of an Armenian presence there.¹⁰⁰ And indeed, if we remember the early history of the Carmelites' arrival, it was Cardinal Ottobono Fieschi, the future Pope Adrian V (1276) who helped them in the conflict with San Siro.¹⁰¹ Additionally, Di Fabio suggests that it was Opizzo Fieschi, patriarch of Antioch (1247–1268) and then administrator of the diocese of Genoa (1288–1291), who was the commissioner of the frescoes in Santa Maria del Carmine and the patron of Manfredino.¹⁰² Finally, Di Fabio refers to the fourteenth-century lists of the Carmelite houses in the Near East and points out that they often name the Black Mountain in Cilicia among the places where Carmelite monasteries could be found.¹⁰³

I believe, however, that there are several problems with this theory. First of all, the scholars that have been trying to track down the exact houses of the Carmelites agree that it is more likely that there were no Carmelite monasteries on the Black Mountain and that the only centres of Carmelites in the East that are known to have existed were on Mount Carmel, in Acre and Tyre.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Adrian Staring in the commentary to the *Domus in Terra Sancta* specifically writes: 'The Carmelites will not have been present in Jerusalem nor in

⁹⁹ De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 120; Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ This theory is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, pp. 181–83.

¹⁰¹ See p. 70 in current chapter.

¹⁰² Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 100.

¹⁰³ Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, p. 265.

¹⁰⁴ Elias Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel: a Study in Carmelite Origins* (Rome: Teresianum, 1979), p. 194; Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, p. 262.

Antioch nor on Montagna Nigra near Antioch' and explains that the hermits of the Black Mountain became the Order of the Fratres Heremitae Sancti Joannis Baptistae, and not Carmelites.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, as Anna De Floriani argued, there is, unfortunately, not enough evidence of any special connection between the Fieschi and the Genoese Carmelites, especially in relation with the commission of the frescoes.¹⁰⁶ Finally, we know, indeed, that the Fieschi had some veneration of St. Bartholomew, because their chapel in the church of San Francesco di Castelletto was consecrated to this saint.¹⁰⁷ But even if we assume that the Fieschi were involved in the decoration of the Carmelite church in Genoa or more probably that the Carmelites wanted to single them out for the help of this Guelf family to the Order, it is still not evident why we should conclude that the friars arrived in Genoa from Cilicia.

Thus the connection between the Order and Armenia is not easy to trace, but there are some further mentions of Cilicia and St. Bartholomew that I came across. The only reference to the Anatolian territories that I have found regarding the early Carmelite history is associated with Cyril of Constantinople who, according to the tradition, was one of the first leaders of the hermits in the Holy Land and during his life preached in Cilicia, where he converted the King of Armenia to Catholicism.¹⁰⁸ Artistic evidence, however, gives us more material that could show this link with the patron saint of Armenia. According to Kaftal, the only full cycle of the life of St. Bartholomew in the northwestern territories of Italy was produced in a Carmelite church, although later than the Genoese frescoes examined in this work. The cycle can be found in the church of San Gottardo in Cannobio. Its decoration started in 1338 and finished in the fifteenth century. The Carmelites there gave one of the

¹⁰⁵ Staring, *Medieval Carmelite Heritage*, p. 262.

¹⁰⁶ De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 121.

¹⁰⁷ 'Fieschi, Federico', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ed. Giovanni Nuti, vol. 47 (1997) <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/federico-fieschi_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/federico-fieschi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) [accessed 13 June 2019].

¹⁰⁸ Researchers have doubted his historical existence: see Friedman, *The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel*, p. 173. However, Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, p. 135–37 calls his figure 'troublesome', but does not argue his existence.

leading roles to St. Bartholomew and included him in the altar scene of the Crucifixion.¹⁰⁹ But still, I do not think the appearance of St. Bartholomew definitively points to their Armenian origins, and the connection with Cyril of Constantinople seems rather too vague to make any further assumptions.

St. Margaret or St. Catherine

Returning to the frescoes of the Genoese church let us continue with the remaining fourth large figure on the eastern wall (fig. 79). The female saint beneath St. Bartholomew has two possible attributions: St. Margaret of Antioch or St. Catherine of Alessandria. Scholars usually prefer the former attribution and substantiate it based on Di Fabio's assertion that this was as a sign of the Order's ties with Antioch and Ottobono Fieschi.¹¹⁰ However, it is not clear which of the two female Saints is depicted in the Genoese church programme and, at first glance, the rich Eastern dress together with the book in the figure's hands could help with the attribution. In literary sources, according to both Eastern and Western traditions, St. Catherine came from a noble and wealthy family and received an excellent education. What is especially important to us is that Jacopo da Varagine in the *Golden Legend* emphasised this last detail of her biography. After the description of her life, he listed five features 'worthy of admiration', and her wisdom was placed first.¹¹¹

In the fresco from Genoa, we see all attributes that could correspond to the description of St. Catherine's life: rich clothing, a crown, a book and probably a palm of martyrdom, which has almost completely vanished today. As all researchers have noted, the clothing of the saint is of Byzantine origin, and I believe this is a strong argument in favour of the

¹⁰⁹ Kaftal, Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, col. 117–22; Aquilino Zammaretti, *La caratteristica frazione di Carmine e la monumentale chiesa di San Gottardo alle porte di Cannobio* (Varallo: Arti grafiche Capelli, 1960); Fulvio Cervini, 'I cicli pittorici di San Gottardo a Cannobio: un'antologia di affreschi alla fine del Medioevo', *I beni culturali*, 11, 4–5 (2003), pp. 31–37; *La chiesa di San Gottardo a Carmine Superiore, Cannobio* (Viterbo: BetaGamma, 2004).

¹¹⁰ De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', p. 120.

¹¹¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, pp. 968–76, especially pp. 974–75.

attribution to St. Catherine. As Cynthia Stollhans demonstrates, the Byzantine imperial dress was used in connection with her cult first in Byzantium and then in the Holy Land before arriving in Pisa where there is a thirteenth-century icon of St. Catherine dressed in rich Eastern clothes (figs 82, 83).¹¹² Indeed the saint's clothing from Genoa closely recalls the female clothes of the Palaiologan time, such as the dresses of Sts Catherine and Irene from a fresco in the church of St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki (1310–1320, fig. 84). All figures have pearl decoration concentrated on the square panels on the upper arms, on a vertical band that goes from the neck to the bottom and on the hemline of the dress.¹¹³ On the other hand, there are also some details that are not very accurate: excessively wide sleeves at the wrist, which were typical for the female ceremonial costume since the eleventh century are not depicted.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the saint's head is covered with a white transparent veil and a crown, which does not have any direct analogies in the images of Byzantine empresses. The closest ones are from the twelfth century in the depictions of the wives of John II Komnenos and Manuel I Komnenos.¹¹⁵ These crowns also have a round ending of the segments, but St. Margaret's are grouped in trefoils. Clario Di Fabio suggested a Western origin for her crown, and we find a similar one with a transparent veil in the *Pala del Carmine* by Pietro Lorenzetti (fig. 80) and in the twelfth-century mosaic in the apse of Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome (fig. 85).¹¹⁶ But of course, these inaccuracies in the depiction of Byzantine costume are not unusual and only show that the painter was of Western origin and not closely familiar with the particular features of the Eastern imperial dress. In the same way, the Byzantine and Western portraits of Michael VIII Palaeologus differ drastically and in one of the Western depictions we see on the Emperor's head the same crown as in the Genoese

¹¹² Cynthia Stollhans, *St. Catherine of Alexandria in Renaissance Roman Art: Case Studies in Patronage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 19–21, see also p. 24.

¹¹³ Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, pl. 44.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73–76.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pl. 32 (c, d).

¹¹⁶ Vitaliano Tiberia, *I mosaici del XII secolo e di Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere: restauri e nuove ipotesi* (Perugia: Ediart, 1996).

fresco.¹¹⁷ This could mean that the painter specifically wanted to depict the imperial costume and that the crown was not just as a symbol of the saint's martyrdom.

At the same time, some details in the veneration of St. Margaret could point to this attribution. Despite the fact that the crown and the rich clothes could speak against identifying the painted figure with this particular saint and, for example, Kaftal does not include a crown as an attribute of St. Margaret in the North West of Italy, there are some more distant examples where these attributes were used in her images too.¹¹⁸ Clario Di Fabio believes that although it could be either of the two martyrs, the image of St. Margaret is more likely to appear in the Carmelite church in Genoa, among other reasons, because of the strong Ligurian veneration of St. Margaret and her connection with the origins of the Carmelite Order.¹¹⁹ Indeed, we find that on Mount Carmel, close to the church of Elijah, there was an Orthodox monastery of St. Margaret (St Marina in the Eastern tradition).¹²⁰ The placing of the saint's image opposite Elijah on both sides of the altar in the Genoese church speaks in favour of this version. In this case, both saints were tied to the Order's land of origin, Mount Carmel, and thereby surround the altar and appear as the foundation of the decoration of the church and the history of the Order. Thus, if we believe that the Carmelites in Genoa depicted the figure of St. Margaret, the crown, palm and book are the attributes of her martyrdom and final prayer. In the *Golden Legend* we read that she receives a crown of martyrdom at the

¹¹⁷ Deno John Geanakoplos, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 185.

¹¹⁸ Kaftal, Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints*, col. 461. At the same time, he provides some examples of fourteenth-century images of St. Margaret with a crown in other regions: idem, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1986) col. 661–65; idem, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North-East Italy* (Florence: Sansoni, 1978), col. 649–64. For St. Margaret with a very similar crown, see, for instance, the German thirteenth-century Psalter, MS. G.73, fol. 75r from the Morgan Library. < <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/26/77062> > [accessed 26 June 2019].

¹¹⁹ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', pp. 92, 101.

¹²⁰ Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, p. 103, map 2 and p. 131. Western medieval pilgrims knew about the monastery as we learn from their guides: *ibid.*, pp. 139–41.

end of her life: 'Egli la colpí e le staccò la testa con un sol colpo: cosí Margherita ebbe la corona del martirio'.¹²¹

Even though Di Fabio's assertion that the figure in question is more likely to be St. Margaret is widely accepted in modern scholarship,¹²² and that the allusion to the monastery on Mount Carmel seems plausible, I still think that there are some very strong possibilities that the figure in question is St. Catherine. The first indicator, as previously discussed, is the detailed depiction of the saint's rich dress and the specific form of the crown which, to my knowledge, are rarely found in the early images of St. Margaret, especially in this region. It seems more probable that the painter wanted to accentuate her elevated status and Eastern ancestry which we find in the legend of St. Catherine's life unlike the descriptions of St. Margaret's background. Secondly, the appearance of St. Catherine can also be explained through her popularity among the crusaders to whom the Genoese Carmelites owed a lot too. We also find this saint in connection with the early Carmelite imagery in the already mentioned altarpiece in Siena by Pietro Lorenzetti (fig. 80). Finally, Stollhans points out that unlike other female saints, St. Catherine was seen as a highly educated person who combated her antagonists using her erudition.¹²³ And we know that other mendicants, such as the Dominicans, chose her as one of their role models for this specific quality.¹²⁴ For the Carmelites at the end of the thirteenth century, her appearance could have been an image of fighting for their place in the Church through teaching and explaining their past to new members and to people in the community, which was exactly what they were doing by commissioning these frescoes and writing the *Rubrica Prima*.

¹²¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, p. 500.

¹²² De Floriani, 'Genova fra apporti bizantini e innovazioni toscane', pp. 115–20.

¹²³ Stollhans, *St. Catherine of Alexandria in Renaissance Roman Art*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Joanna Cannon, 'Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45 (1982), p. 71; Stollhans, *St. Catherine of Alexandria in Renaissance Roman Art*, pp. 28, 108–9.

Frescoes on the Lateral Walls

Let us continue our examination of this monument with the lateral walls of the altar chapel (fig. 50). As mentioned earlier, several thirteenth-century frescoes there suffered a lot from Zambaldi's intervention in the 1930s. The upper parts under the arches of the vault have three roundels. Today the original painting only remains in the lower segments of the medallions while the upper parts were completely repainted in the twentieth century (fig. 86). Underneath them is the ornamental frieze with the figures of the Carmelites, which we already discussed earlier (fig. 87). Among the friars, we also find several saints. On the northern wall the figures of Sts Peter and Paul are depicted on the sides, both of whom are easy to identify due to their characteristic appearance and the attributes that they are holding (figs. 88, 89). The inclusion of these Roman patrons would have been seen as a sign of loyalty to ecclesiastical authorities, a theme that was very important in the early Carmelite history and will be later repeated in the Pala del Carmine by Lorenzetti.¹²⁵ The saints on the southern wall are more difficult to identify, but Clario Di Fabio has suggested that they are the Evangelists St. Mark and St. John (figs 87, 90). Beneath the frieze, there were two windows on each side (four in total, see numbers 6, 7, 20 on diagram fig. 50). Today they are indicated with two painted niches with trees.

The lower row on the northern wall repeats the upper ornamental band. Here, the painter clearly embraced the theme of local patrons, introducing a medallion with St. Lawrence in between two roundels with the Carmelite friars (fig. 91). The bottom part of this wall ends with a painted drapery, similar to the one found in the first room of the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo (fig. 92, the same on the eastern wall fig. 93).¹²⁶

The southern wall differs in the bottom because of the passage leading to the old chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine (fig. 94). On the lower part, beneath the painted niche with a

¹²⁵ Warr, *Dressing for Heaven*, p. 98.

¹²⁶ Draperies from the canons' cloister of the cathedral: fig. 154.

tree that marked one of the two blocked windows, there are three more saints (fig. 50). Unlike the northern wall, they are not in medallions but rather in the spandrels. The saint in the middle is dressed in bishop's clothing, which most likely makes him Albert Bishop of Bobbio and Vercelli (both close to Genoa) who later became Patriarch of Jerusalem and wrote the first Carmelite rule (fig. 96). Although Patrick Mullins has shown that there are no traces of an early cult of St. Albert in Vercelli and that the first Carmelite missals did not include a feast in his honour, historical works composed within the Carmelite tradition did recognise his death, and his name is present in all versions of the *Rubrica Prima*.¹²⁷

The two saints on either side are not decisively identified yet (figs 95 and 97). Clario Di Fabio has proposed that these are the remaining Evangelists, Luke and Matthew.¹²⁸ The one on the left was completely altered in the 1930s, with the other one recently restored close to its original state. The problem with Di Fabio's identification is that these images of the Evangelists have different composition and scale from the ones in the upper ornamental frieze. However, this could be the result of the architectural features that would not allow the painter to fit another band between the large windows in the middle of the wall and the arches of the old chapel.

To summarise, I read the Duecento programme of the Carmelite decoration in Genoa as follows: in the highest area – the Annunciation with a special emphasis on the Virgin, while the centre is occupied with four large-scale figures connected with the Eastern legacy of the Order, its history and the need to advocate this information. On the right side of the altar, we find two old-testament hermits, Elijah – founder of the Order, and John the Baptist – the most significant Christian prophet, who in the Carmelite tradition is compared to Elijah (Matthew 11:13–14). On the left side – St. Bartholomew whose appearance remains problematic. The only explanation that I find plausible is connected to the Fieschi and their

¹²⁷ Mullins, *The Carmelites and St. Albert of Jerusalem*, pp. 82–86.

¹²⁸ Di Fabio, 'Gli affreschi di Manfredino', p. 93.

help to the Carmelites during their early history and arrival in Genoa. If this is true, the gratitude expressed to the Fieschi who were one of the main supporters of the Guelf fraction could also be a sign of loyalty to the Pope, a theme that is emphasized again on the northern wall. Below St. Bartholomew, in my opinion, is St. Catherine who was popular among the crusaders that brought the friars to the West, but more importantly reminded the members of the Order about the significance of knowing and advocating their past. On the northern wall, we see Sts Peter and Paul – the patron saints of Rome and whose presence would signal loyalty to the Pope, and St. Lawrence – a patron of Genoa, the city that received the Carmelites. On the southern wall, there are possibly the four Evangelists and St. Albert, the author of the first Carmelite Rule. The spaces between all the saints were occupied with small figures of Carmelite friars in medallions.

Conclusion

The church of Santa Maria del Carmine in Genoa is an example of a very early and at the same time an unprecedentedly elaborated Carmelite pictorial programme in Italy. Inevitably, it mirrored the main problems that the Order encountered in the thirteenth century when the friars arrived in the West and had to compete with the already established mendicant Orders. At the beginning, in the architecture of the church, the Carmelites preferred to follow the models used by other Orders that already existed in the city.

However, the programme of the pictorial decoration followed the needs of the next generation of friars, the ones that did not experience the hermitical life in the Holy Land and joined the Order in the subsequent years after the arrival of the Carmelites with Louis IX. Until the first half of the fourteenth century, the Order did not have a secure position within the Catholic Church and additionally had to respond to the growth of the congregation, while most of those who entered the Order in Italy had to be taught the origins of the Order and its mission. This led to the need to compose a reliable narrative on the subject of the Order's

history. The frescoes in the church in Genoa became one of the mediums used for such educational or sometimes political purposes. It is worth noting that most probably, the frescoes were addressed to the community of friars and were not designed for the lay congregation. Because of the developed choir that limited the view from the lay space of the church, it seems that the frescoes were mainly visible to the friars and played the same role as the *Rubrica Prima*. The style of the frescoes was again an example of the most progressive trends of the late Duecento that flourished, for example, in Assisi and Siena. However, I believe that together with the Carmelite programme, the style also served as a reminder of the Eastern origin of the Order and, thus, of its long history and authority. Similarly, Joanna Cannon regards the Byzantinising flavour of the thirteenth-century Madonna panels that we find in many Carmelite churches in Tuscany as serving the purpose of showing the Order's awareness of its origins.¹²⁹

Lastly, such use of Eastern style (understood in the broader sense) partly demonstrates a similar idea to the one that will be described below concerning the case of the frescoes in the Genoese cathedral of San Lorenzo, produced a few decades later by a Byzantine painter. Following the words of Jacopo da Varagine, I suggest that the Byzantine style of the frescoes was linked to the desire to represent Genoa as one of the earliest cities to accept Christianity.¹³⁰ Similarly, through the visual reconstruction of their Eastern past, the Carmelites claimed to be one of the premier and oldest Christian communities.

¹²⁹ Joanna Cannon, 'Pietro Lorenzetti', pp. 20–21.

¹³⁰ See Chapter 3, pp. 123–24.

Part II. Genoa adapts the East: The Role of Eastern Christian Elements in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo

The second part of this dissertation is centred on the cathedral of San Lorenzo – the principal medieval site of Genoese civic and religious identity. The Eastern Christian tradition formed a large part of the visual experience that the Genoese people had in the Duomo. The following chapters are not structured chronologically, but rather in accordance with the relevance of the space that houses the Eastern elements under examination. Hence, I will start with the most famous example of Byzantine imagery in the city: the frescoes from the beginning of the fourteenth century, produced by a foreign painter who was directly familiar with the last trends of the Palaiologan style. The second and the third chapters will mostly touch upon earlier material and partly address the issues described in the dissertation's first part, though in a different way. Above all, I am interested in the relics and artefacts that the Genoese kept in the cathedral and used as evidence of their prestige and power. Some of them were brought to the city during the crusades, while the others were acquired in the subsequent centuries. Lastly, the third chapter is devoted to the images of the canons' cloister, which in my opinion serve as an example of the international style that combines imagery from all over the Mediterranean.

Chapter 3. The Cathedral of Genoa and its Byzantine Frescoes

As in previous chapters, I will start with a historical overview and a description of the main stages of the cathedral's construction. This is important in helping us understand the role that the cathedral played in the city. The main body of this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the frescoes and their placement in the context of the previous decoration in the cathedral.

The Genoese Cathedral before the Fourteenth Century

According to the *Liber Privilegiorum Ecclesiae Ianuensis* published by Dino Puncuh, the basilica of San Lorenzo was consecrated on October 10, 1118.¹ Pope Gelasio II (1118–1119), who was visiting Pisa and Genoa on his way to France, conducted the ceremony (fig. 98). However, the exact foundation date of the new building and the completion of its works remain unknown, as these events do not necessarily coincide with the act of consecration: in the Middle Ages, the consecration of a church had a political significance and rarely took place when construction was completed.² We can nonetheless affirm with certainty that the reconstruction of the old basilica started in the second half of the eleventh century and continued into the twelfth century. The oldest parts of the modern cathedral, which date back to that period can be found at the base of the main apse, in some parts of the choir, and on the Romanesque portals to the south and north.³ Soon after being completed, the basilica was damaged by the earthquake of 1222 and the political clashes of the end of the thirteenth century, which will be described in more detail later.

The rise of the cathedral of San Lorenzo in the twelfth century was tied to the economic and political growth of the city but was certainly also a consequence of the events of 1133. After the nomination bull of Innocent II, the prelate Syrus became the first archbishop of

¹ *Liber Privilegiorum Ecclesiae Ianuensis*, ed. Dino Puncuh (Genoa: Palatio Archiepiscopali Ianuensi, 1962), pp. 3–4, doc. 1. On the archaeology, early history of the cathedral and the rivalry between San Lorenzo and San Siro during the previous centuries, see Vincenzo Promis, ‘Leggenda e inni sacri di S. Siro, vescovo di Genova’, *ASLSP*, 10 (1874), pp. 355–83; Sandra Macchiavello, ‘Per la storia della cattedrale di Genova: percorsi archeologici e documentari’, *ASLSP*, n.s., 37–2 (1997), pp. 21–36; Valeria Polonio Felloni, ‘La cattedrale e la città nel Medioevo a Genova: aspetti storico-urbanistici’, in *Amalfi, Genova, Pisa, Venezia: la cattedrale e la città nel Medioevo*, ed. Ottavio Banti (Pisa: Pacini, 1994), pp. 59–69; Clario Di Fabio, ‘Fra VI e XI secolo: “preistoria” e “protoistoria” della cattedrale di Genova e di San Lorenzo’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 15–27; Piera Melli, ‘Il sito fino all’età tardoantica. I dati archeologici’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 27–37.

² Valeria Polonio, ‘Tra universalismo e localismo: costruzione di un sistema (569–1321)’, *ASLSP*, 39, 2 (*Il cammino della Chiesa genovese dalle origini ai nostri giorni*, ed. Dino Puncuh) (1999), p. 144; Clario Di Fabio, ‘Le origini della cattedrale nuova e la consacrazione di Gelasio II: 1099–1118’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 51, 53–54.

³ Di Fabio, ‘Le origini della cattedrale nuova’, pp. 57–58.

Genoa, allowing the Genoese see to finally gain independence from Milan. This significantly contributed to the rise of political self-identity of the Genoese commune.

Researchers attribute the decoration of the lateral portals in the cathedral to Italian Romanesque sculptors (mostly Lombard) of the twelfth century: the northern portal dedicated to John the Baptist (between 1118 and 1142, fig. 99)⁴ and the southern to San Gottardo (after 1155, fig. 100).⁵ At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Genoese added the famous Gothic façade, richly decorated with sculptures by French artists (fig. 101). In 1226, a bronze gryphon was placed as a symbol of the Genoese commune and its glory (the original was replaced in 1307–1312, fig. 102).⁶ Jacopo da Varagine recorded that: ‘opus tam sumptuosum et nobile ecclesie Sancti Laurentij fecit commune Ianue et non persona aliqua specialis’.⁷ By that time the cathedral of San Lorenzo was already considered as the ‘Speculum civitatis Ianue’.⁸ Regarding this matter, it is also worth noting that until 1257, the year when the Palazzo San Giorgio was built, Genoa had no communal palace and San Lorenzo served not only as a religious centre for the bishop and the canons, but it was also used for political, diplomatic, economic and juridical purposes. In fact, the proprietor of San Lorenzo was the Genoese commune.⁹ Only after 1290, several buildings which belonged to the families of the Doria and the Fieschi were purchased in order to form the first proper communal palace that became the Palazzo Ducale in 1339, when Simone Boccanegra became the first Doge of the Genoese Republic.

⁴ Anna Dagnino, ‘Il cantiere del portale nord’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 69–72.

⁵ Ibid. and eadem, ‘Il portale sud: le iconografie e il loro messaggio’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 82–87.

⁶ Inv. M.S.A., 3624. See Clario Di Fabio, ‘La scultura bronzea a Genova nel Medioevo e il programma decorativo della cattedrale nel primo trecento’, *Bollettino d’arte*, 55 (1989), pp. 3–4; idem, ‘Il grifo bronzeo del 1226 e il simbolismo civico in Cattedrale’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 196–99.

⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, pp. 282–83, 472.

⁸ Polonio, ‘Tra universalismo e localismo’, p. 144.

⁹ Stefania Bertini Giudetti, *Potere e propaganda a Genova nel Duecento* (Genoa: ECIG, 1998), p. 19; Clario Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”: uso civico e decorazione “politica” della cattedrale di Genova fra XII e XIV secolo’, in *Medioevo: la chiesa e il palazzo*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Mondadori, 2007) pp. 305–7.

It is then only to be expected that the decoration of the cathedral before the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mirrored the civic role it played. We find small traces of Romanesque frescoes on the south wall devoted to the Genoese military expansion in Spain in the middle of the twelfth century: the scenes of the capture of Minorca (1146), Almeria (1147) and Tortosa (1148) together with narrative and commemorative inscriptions (figs 103, 104).¹⁰

The Fire of 1296–1297 and the Reconstruction of the Cathedral 1297–1317

Paradoxically, the reason for the fire in 1296 provides further indication of the important role that the cathedral of San Lorenzo played in Genoa in the second half of the thirteenth century, even after the appearance of the Palazzo di San Giorgio. It was on 30 December 1296 that the faction of the Guelphs rose against the *Capitano del Popolo* Oberto Doria.¹¹ The conflict continued for forty days and ended only in February 1297. The stage for this tragic episode was the primary political place of the city – the Duomo. According to Jacopo da Varagine, one of the factions started a fire in the tower of San Lorenzo seeking to take control of the situation.¹² The fire spread through the roof of the cathedral, damaging the interior colonnade. Its reconstruction started the next spring, in 1298. The Genoese had to substitute the old columns and to rebuild the arcades, as well as to completely recreate the decoration.

As a result, the interior of the reconstructed twelfth-century cathedral is composed of three naves that end in the east with three apses (fig. 105). The interior is reminiscent of the Pisan cathedral that was built around the same time: the nave is higher and divided from the

¹⁰ Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”’, pp. 307–11; idem, ‘La presa di Minorca, Tortosa e Almeria. Pittura ad affresco, storia e celebrazione civica nella ecclesia comunale’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 88–91; idem, *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, p. 361.

¹¹ On the conflict and the situation around it, see Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 182–84.

¹² Clario Di Fabio, ‘L’incendio del 1296 e la “Reparatio Ecclesiae” fra 1297 e 1317’, in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, p. 223; Roberto Paolo Novello, ‘La ricostruzione dopo l’incendio del 1297’, in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa*, vol. 1, p. 75. Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, pp. 331–32, 503.

lateral aisles with a two-level arcade that is continued onto the top of the walls with the windows of the clerestory (figs 106 and 107). The middle part of the arcade is decorated with rows of black and white marble. An important addition to the extant decoration produced in the early fourteenth century is an inscription in Gothic capital letters written in black pigment on the northern and southern side of the inner space of the arcade (figs 108, 109). The western wall, in the narthex, has a large rosette on the top and some fresco decoration above the portal (fig. 110). The eastern part was completely reconstructed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and, unfortunately, bears no traces of the medieval decoration (fig. 107). The left lateral aisle was drastically reconstructed in the middle of the fifteenth century when the chapel of John the Baptist was enlarged to display the ashes of the saint previously kept at San Giovanni di Pré (fig. 111).¹³ Shortly before 1225, a new marble urn for the ashes was commissioned to a European sculptor, the so-called ‘maestro dell’Arca del Battista’ (fig. 112).¹⁴ Unfortunately, we do not know exactly where in the cathedral the relic was displayed before that. The Genoese could have placed the ashes in diverse areas of the cathedral, as Clara Altavista has suggested: in the main altar, in the chapel of St. John (in the south nave, from 1200) or in the baptistery.¹⁵

According to the inscription from 1307 inside the central nave, on the northern wall, the reconstruction works were funded with public money, the *deceno legatorum*: ‘MCCCVII · PASTONUS DE NIGRO · ET NICOLAUS DE GOANO · FECERUNT RENOVARI HOC OPUS · DE DECENO LEGATORUM’.¹⁶ This was a special tax that was imposed on the citizens since 1174: ten percent of all bequest to any institution was given to the cathedral.

¹³ A medieval plan of San Lorenzo with the chapel of John the Baptist is in Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”’, p. 304, fig. 3.

¹⁴ Di Fabio ‘L’altare di San Giovanni Battista nel Duecento’, pp. 183–85.

¹⁵ Clara Altavista, ‘Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno: il Tesoro del Duomo di San Lorenzo e Genova dall’ XI al XVI secolo’, in *I luoghi del sacro. Il sacro e la città fra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, ed. Fabrizio Ricciardelli (Florence: Polistampa, 2008), pp. 108, 110, fig. 9b.

¹⁶ Stefania Gerevini, ‘Written in Stone: Civic Memory and Monumental Writing in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Genoa’, in *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World* ed. Antony Eastmond (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 206.

When San Lorenzo did not need additional money during previous centuries, these funds were used for the construction of the harbour.¹⁷ The works in the cathedral were supervised by the *reparatores ecclesiae* – one representative of the people and one of the noble families, which were elected for six months.¹⁸ The epigraphs inside the cathedral record the importance of this collective work, as they mention the names of the *reparatores* who conducted the reconstructions: in 1307, Pastone di Negro and Niccolò di Goano.¹⁹

Above the inscription on one of the small pillars there is a bust of Janus, the mythical founder of the city, with an explanatory title: ‘JAN[US] P[RI]M[US] REX // ITALIE · DE P[RO] // GENIE GIGAN // TIU[M] · Q[UI] FU[N]DA // VIT IAN[UAM] · T[EM]P[OR]E // ABR[A]HE’ (fig. 113).²⁰ The creators of this inscription made a clear reference to the history of Genoa written by Jacopo da Varagine less than 15 years before the reconstruction took place. As Beneš summarised, the Dominican priest described three early characters with the name of Janus: the founder, king of Italy; the prince of Troy, who made Genoa ‘bigger and better’; and the third – the well-known god worshipped in Ancient Rome.²¹ In the nave of the cathedral, we see a commemoration to the first Janus (fig. 113).

There is one more inscription on the southern side, which was produced five years later in 1312 and which commemorates the second phase of the restoration: ‘MCCCXII FILIPP[US] D[E] NIGRO [ET] NICOLAU[S] D[E] GOANO REPARATORES HUI[US] ECCL[ES]IE FECER[UN]T RENOVA[R]I HOC OP[US] D[E] D[E]CENO LEGATO[RUM] · JAN[US] PRI[N]CEPS TROIAN[US] ASTROLOGIA PERIT[US]

¹⁷ Polonio Felloni, ‘Da ‘opere’ a pubblica magistratura. La cura della cattedrale e del porto nella Genova medievale’, in *Opera: carattere e ruolo delle fabbriche cittadine fino all'inizio dell'Età Moderna*, eds Margaret Haines and Lucio Riccetti (Florence: Olschki, 1996), p. 123; eadem, ‘La cattedrale e la città nel Medioevo a Genova’, pp. 59–69; Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 211–14; Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”’, pp. 305–6.

¹⁸ Di Fabio, ‘L’incendio del 1296’, pp. 223, 230.

¹⁹ *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, pl. 559, 560.

²⁰ Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 208–9.

²¹ Beneš, *Urban Legends*, p. 76. On the inscriptions and the bust of Janus inside the cathedral, see *ibid.*, pp. 78–82.

NAVIGA[N]DO AD HABITA[N]DU[M] LOCU[M] QUERE[N]S SANU[M]
D[OMI]NABILE[M] [ET] SECURU[M] IANUA[M] IA[M] FU[N]DATA[M] A IANO
REGE YTALIE P[RO]NEPOTE NOE VENIT ET EAM CERNE[N]S MARE ET
MO[N]TIB[US] TUTISSIMA[M] A[M]PLIAVIT NO[M]I[N]E ET POSSE.²² Here we
read a prolonged version of the same legend on Genoa's mythical foundation and the second
Janus that arrived from Troy to govern and expand the city. These inscriptions are of great
importance for modern scholars since they show the formation of the Genoese identity and
the interest of the commune in its own history.²³ They also demonstrate that the
commissioners of the decoration were familiar with the oeuvre of Jacopo da Varagine and
used his works to compose the programme. We will return to this matter in the following
pages after the analysis of the Byzantine frescoes created in the Duomo at the same time as
these epigraphs.

The Byzantine Frescoes at the Cathedral of San Lorenzo

The most significant example of Eastern imagery in Genoa is the pictorial decoration at the
cathedral of San Lorenzo.²⁴ Art historians have attributed the frescoes to an early fourteenth-
century painter of Byzantine background. Stylistic analysis suggests that he was closely

²² Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 211–12.

²³ Clario Di Fabio, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi: la città e i suoi "mitti delle origini". Fonti, committenti, esecutori', in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 258–60; Beneš, *Urban Legends*, pp. 69–82; Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 214–16.

²⁴ Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, p. 1030; Torriti, 'Interventi e suggestioni toscane tra Due e Trecento', pp. 27–47 (pp. 33–34); Maria Clelia Galassi, 'Un maestro bizantino in S. Lorenzo', *La Casana*, 25, 2 (1983), pp. 42–48; Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter', pp. 548–66; Di Fabio, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi', pp. 260–70; idem, 'Bisanzio a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo', pp. 41–67; Robert Nelson, 'Byzantine Icons in Genoa before the Mandylion', in *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, eds Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2007), pp. 79–92; Giuliana Algeri, 'Tra Siena e Costantinopoli: i nuovi modelli figurativi', in *La pittura in Liguria*, pp. 133–53 (pp. 140–43); Michele Bacci, nn. 240, 242–46, 510, 527–32, in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa*, vol. 2, pp. 253–56, 349, 357–58; Federica Volpera, 'Proposta di lettura delle pitture di cultura paleologa all'interno del Duomo di Genova', *Intrecci d'arte*, 1 (2016), pp. 134–50.

familiar with the contemporary trends in Palaiologan art.²⁵ Regarding their importance and quality, these frescoes are an extraordinary example of Byzantine pictorial art in early-Trecento Genoa. Scholars therefore assume that a painter came to Genoa directly from Constantinople, and compare the Genoese frescoes with the best examples of Palaiologan art, such as those in the Pammakaristos church (c. 1310) and in the church of the Chora monastery (1315–1321).²⁶ In the nineteenth century, Federigo Alizeri brought to light a notarial document dated to 9 February 1313, which indicates that at the beginning of the fourteenth century a certain “Greek” painter Marcus from Constantinople was in Genoa (“magister Marchus Grecus pintor qui fui de Constantinopoli”).²⁷ Since the 1970s, the production of these frescoes has been linked with this painter.²⁸ In 1985, Robert Nelson published a detailed stylistic and iconographical analysis of the frescoes suggesting that there was not only a Constantinopolitan painter but also a local advisor who took part in the creation of the pictorial programme.²⁹ In 1998, Clario Di Fabio suggested a name – Bertolino Fieschi, a canon of the cathedral from 1287 to 1313.³⁰ He also found a possible direct connection between Genoa and the imperial court of Constantinople at the beginning of the fourteenth century: Theodore I, Marquess of Montferrat, (1291–1338), the second son of Andronikos II Palaiologos with Irene of Montferrat, was married in 1307 to Argentina Spinola, the daughter of the Genoese Capitano del Popolo Opizzino Spinola.³¹ However,

²⁵ Robert Nelson and Clario Di Fabio have come into agreement that the frescoes were completed by 1312. See Nelson, ‘Byzantine Icons in Genoa’, p. 79; Di Fabio, ‘Sculpture, affreschi ed epigrafi’, p. 261. Federica Volpera gives a slightly later dating: 1312–1315, and Efthalia Rentetzi concludes with the second decade of the fourteenth century: Rentetzi, ‘Gli affreschi bizantini nella cattedrale di Genova: una nuova lettura iconografica’, *Arte documento*, 28 (2012), p. 109.

²⁶ Nelson, ‘Byzantine Icons in Genoa’, p. 79.

²⁷ Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 1, pp. 406–7; see also Eugène Münz, ‘Les artistes byzantines dans l’Europe latine du Ve au XVI siècle’, *Revue de l’art chrétien*, 4, 3 (1893), p. 188.

²⁸ Alessandro Conti, ‘Problemi di miniatura bolognese’, *Bolletino d’arte*, 64 (1979), 9, 24, n. 27. The frescoes were attributed to the Byzantine tradition in Victor Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), pp. 322, 348; Longhi, ‘Progetti di lavoro’, p. 5.

²⁹ Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, pp. 548–66.

³⁰ Di Fabio, ‘Sculpture, affreschi ed epigrafi’, pp. 261–62.

³¹ Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”’, pp. 313–14. See also Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*, p. 138.

there are no documents preserved stating that the painter Marcus had worked at the Duomo. This gave other scholars room to question the Constantinopolitan origin and style of the frescoes: Michele Bacci and recently Federica Volpera both suggested a stylistic connection between the ‘Maestro del Giudizio’³² and the Serbian paintings carried out at the time of King Milutin (1282–1321).³³

The cathedral’s fresco programme includes several scenes which are mainly displayed on the western and northern walls of the Duomo. The best-preserved part is the Last Judgement over the central portal on the western wall. In addition, two other scenes are situated on the northern side. The first is of St. George flanked by John the Baptist and another male saint (either St. Barnabas³⁴ or St. Peter³⁵); the second is a severely damaged lunette over the Portale di San Giovanni that led to the baptistery. Finally, on the southern wall, there is a better-preserved painting over the Portale di San Gottardo – that of the Virgin with the Child and two saints. Although some of the frescoes are difficult to analyse because of their poor state, scholars have concluded that they are related and were made in the same period, while the larger scenes (the Last Judgement and the triptych with St. George) were most probably produced by one painter. This is based on stylistic analysis of smaller details, such as the drapery and the red contours. It is very likely that these frescoes were not the only decorations made during that time at the cathedral, but later reconstructions have destroyed the rest.

³² This name is used to distinguish the painter of the Byzantine frescoes in the cathedral of San Lorenzo after the main composition that he created on the western wall.

³³ Volpera, ‘Proposta di lettura’, p. 146.

³⁴ Carlo Ceschi, *Chiese di Genova* (Genoa: Stringa, 1967), p. 186; Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, p. 549.

³⁵ Bacci, articles 242–46, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, pp. 254–56.

The Last Judgement

As Nelson has noted, the fresco of the Last Judgement was saved thanks to its position: under the gallery and in the shadows, where no re-decoration was likely to be carried out in the following centuries (fig. 114). Scholars agree that the programme of the painting shows a mixture of some traditional Byzantine iconography and its Latin adaptation.

The composition of the Last Judgement in Eastern Christian art was set in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and did not undergo many changes in the following years.³⁶ By this period, the traditional iconographical examples were created: the church of Panagia Chalkeon (Thessaloniki, 1028, fig. 115), an ivory panel from Constantinople in the Museum of Victoria and Albert, London (c. 1100, A.24-1926, fig. 116), the Gospel book in Paris (later eleventh century, BNF, gr.74, fol. 51v, 93v, fig. 44), and the icon of the mid-twelfth century from the St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai (fig. 117). A common characteristic in these depictions is the division of the scene into several levels: the Deesis, the *hetoimasia* that continue the notional axis of the composition under Christ, the Blessed and the Damned, and finally Heaven and Hell. As we will see, the composition of the fresco in Genoa follows the same principle. The painter situated the fresco in the traditional place for an Italian church – on the western wall inside the basilica, or more precisely, on the lunette of the nave above the entrance.³⁷ This meant that he placed the Byzantine scene in complex and multicomponent architecture, that is, in the half-round niche and the arch under the ceiling. And yet, he masterfully arranged the fresco dividing it into three levels.

The upper tier corresponds to the Deesis, although because of its rounded place under the arch, the composition resembles more the position of the angels around Christ in Panagia

³⁶ Miltiadis Garidis, *Études sur le Jugement dernier post-byzantin du XVe à la fin du XIX siècle: iconographie – esthétique* (Thessaloniki: Etaireia Makedonôn Spoudôn, 1985), pp. 22–30; Yves Christe, *Jugements derniers* (Saint-Leger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 1999), pp. 21–52; *Le jugement dernier: entre Orient et Occident*, eds Marcello Angeben and Valentino Pace (Paris: SERF, 2007).

³⁷ Just as the sculptor placed the same scene on the façade of the church – more traditional for France. Cf. Jérôme Baschet, *Les justices de l'au-delà. Les représentations de l'enfer en France et en Italie (XIIe–XVe siècle)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1993), p. 190.

Chalkeon or the traditional representation of the Pentecost. In Genoa, this curve forms the upper register of the typical Byzantine iconography of the Last Judgment: the apostles (usually with a row of angels behind) as well as the Virgin and John the Baptist gathered around Christ (see the above example from Sinai, fig. 117). However, this Genoese depiction has a ‘western’ interpretation with an emphasis on the Virgin’s veneration – she is sitting on the throne together with her Son and not bowing down as John the Baptist does. This status of equality is not possible in the Byzantine traditional portrayal of the Last Judgement.³⁸ The roots for this deviations can be found in the iconographies of the Coronation and Glorification of the Virgin which became especially popular after the *Golden Legend* of Jacopo da Varagine.³⁹ The closest iconographical example to the Genoese paintings is the reconstruction of Cimabue’s fresco at the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi (1280s).⁴⁰

In this manner, in Genoa, Christ and Mary become the centre of the Last Judgement scene. The other figures are situated on both sides and are placed on separated benches, and this way the symmetry of the Byzantine composition is also broken – there are six figures on the left side and seven on the right side. To balance this, the painter groups together the Apostles in such a way that at first glance it seems that the figure of John the Baptist is omitted. The latter is dressed in the same clothes as the Apostles, and the only detail that distinguishes him from the others is the scroll in his hands, while the disciples all carry open books with their names written in Greek. The books links the Apostles to the New Testament, whereas by giving the scroll to St. John the painter accentuates his connection with the Old Testament. It is also worth noting that the selection of Apostles is not Catholic, but Orthodox

³⁸ Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, pp. 189–90.

³⁹ Rentetzi (‘Gli affreschi bizantini’, 105–6) interpreted the scene not as a Deesis with the Glorification of the Virgin but as the Assumption, which is a close subject.

⁴⁰ Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, 562, pl. 23. On the relation between Cimabue’s fresco and the Golden Legend, see, for example, James H. Stubblebine, ‘Cimabue’s Frescoes of the Virgin at Assisi’, *Art Bulletin*, 49, 4 (1967), pp. 330–33.

(that is with the Evangelists and St. Paul).⁴¹ The placement of the Virgin on the throne with Christ reveals another detail that was crucial to the Genoese programme. As Volpera has argued, the new arrangement of the apostles and the Baptist highlights the importance of St. Peter, who is seated mirroring the position of St. John and dressed in the same colours.⁴² This will be important in the later discussion of the triptych on the north wall.

The second tier is the centre of the painting – the enthroned Christ showing the wounds on his hands while two angels are carrying the instruments of the Passion. As Nelson writes, ‘this emphasis on the sufferings of Jesus conforms to Latin theories of atonement’.⁴³ And this is the main divergence from the Byzantine Last Judgement: Christ in Eastern Christianity appears in glory, as a victor, while Western Christian culture emphasised compassion towards his suffering. Although this notion is believed to be the most ‘Catholic’ insertion within the whole scene (it resembles, for example, the fresco of the Oratorio di San Silvestro at Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome, mid-thirteenth century, fig. 118), I believe that the Eastern element is still strong in this scene if we look at it in combination with the rest of the images.

I would suggest that the lower tier is directly connected to the central group and combines several parts of the Byzantine tradition of depicting the Last Judgement. Unfortunately, only the right side (from the observer’s position) is extant, but the left can be easily comprehended (fig. 119). Starting from the right half, the female figure dressed in red is Eve. She is the representative of the human world which she connects to Christ through her supplication for the people. Her figure repeats the iconography found in the church of Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello (twelfth century, figs 120, 121), where Adam and Eve are in the same position inclined in front of an empty throne. In Genoa, we can see behind Eve,

⁴¹ Peter, Paul, Matthew, John, Mark, Luke, Bartholomew, James, Simon, Andrew, Philip, and Thomas. See Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, 557; Bacci, nn. 527–32, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, p. 358.

⁴² Volpera, ‘Proposta di lettura’, p. 143.

⁴³ Nelson, ‘Byzantine Icons in Genoa’, p. 79.

an angel dressed in white, who is driving away the sinners' souls that merge from the red flames. The other side can be mentally reconstructed: there should have been Adam kneeling with the souls of the Blessed behind him. As we see in Torcello, in one of the most extensive Byzantine compositions of the Last Judgement, the scene with Adam and Eve relates to the *hetoimasia* – the empty throne with instruments of the Passion prepared for the Second Coming of Christ. We also find it, for example, on an eleventh-century ivory panel from Constantinople (fig. 116). Scholars believe that in Genoa the throne would have been situated below the figure of Christ, between Adam and Eve, as it is seen in Byzantine examples, where the upper row is the Deesis, and below Christ is the *hetoimasia*.⁴⁴

However, I believe that in Genoa the Byzantine allegorical element (the *hetoimasia*) was reinterpreted to be a more literal Western image while keeping the whole Eastern structure of the scene. The empty throne, and sometimes even altar (as on the reverse of the famous icon of the Virgin of Vladimir, of the twelfth century, or at the Parekklesion of the Kariye Camii monastery, fig. 122) was seen in the Byzantine tradition as a representation of the mystic presence of God with an emphasis on the theme of the Passion.⁴⁵ In Genoa, it became the figure of Christ with wounds, and the angels were made to carry the instruments.⁴⁶ In a way, it became a combination of the upper figure of Christ in Majesty with the lower empty Throne of Preparation. The direction of Eve's gaze in the Genoese cathedral looking directly at Christ with her head back (not looking at something under him) speaks in favour of the theory on the absence of another throne under the feet of Christ (figs 114, 119). An additional detail is formed by the presence of the cherubim and seraphim on the intrados of the arch that forms the lunette (fig. 123). We find the iconography of the

⁴⁴ Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter', 556–57; Rentetzi, 'Gli affreschi bizantini', pp. 105–6.

⁴⁵ Annemarie Weyl Carr, 'Hetoimasia', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* <https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-2283?rskey=bxmyxj&result=2283> [accessed 17 June 2019].

⁴⁶ This thought was first expressed in Algeri, 'Tra Siena e Costantinopoli', p. 142; see also Volpera, 'Proposta di lettura', pp. 139–40.

hetoimasia with the seraphim and cherubim in many other examples of Byzantine-oriented works, for instance, in the manuscript Gr. 74 from the BNF, (fig. 44). But at the same time, Christ on a throne with the seraphim and cherubim is one of the canonical images of Christ in Majesty where the enthroned Saviour is depicted placed inside a mandorla that consists of flying seraphim and cherubim. This image was present to an equal extent in the East and in the West and was always tied to the Last Judgement. For example, in the tympana of the French Gothic cathedrals (and on the façade of San Lorenzo too, figs 124, 125) or as the main figure of the iconostasis in Russian medieval culture (for example, Theophanes the Greek's icon, of the last quarter of the fourteenth century, in the Annunciation cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, № 3232 соб/ж-1385).⁴⁷

Therefore, the Genoese fresco in the cathedral of San Lorenzo represents a mixture of Byzantine iconography and local taste. This is why we should examine another peculiarity of this fresco, which could not have been made in a strictly Byzantine scene of the Last Judgement but was created in Genoa when the painter decided to change the *hetoimasia*. Nelson writes: 'In the Byzantine Last Judgement, Christ never appears twice, for he is the focus of the whole unfolding drama and shares his majesty with no one, not even a second representation of himself'.⁴⁸ This repetition can be explained by the will to emphasise the themes that were more important for the local audience, such as the figures of the Virgin and St. Peter, and more significantly, the passion of Christ. As it was stated above, the last of these was also present in the Byzantine iconography of the Last Judgement, but applied in a more symbolic way through the *hetoimasia* image. So, if the central figure of Christ in San Lorenzo replaced the traditional *hetoimasia*, the distinction with the Byzantine iconography is not as radical as it seems initially.

⁴⁷ Shennikova, *Иконы в Благовещенском соборе Московского Кремля. Деисусный и праздничный ряды иконостаса: Каталог* (Moscow: Krasnaya ploshad, 2004).

⁴⁸ Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter', p. 558.

Furthermore, the fresco created by the Byzantine painter inside San Lorenzo mirrors the the composition of the traditional sculptural décor on the façade of the cathedral produced c. 1225 (fig. 124).⁴⁹ In the tympanum of the Portale Maggiore, there is a figure of Christ in Majesty with the four winged symbols of the Evangelists around him and a scene of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence beneath them. As it was already mentioned earlier, the use of the Apocalyptic theme is very common in sculptural decoration of portals in large Catholic cathedrals with a classic example being displayed on the Royal Portals of Chartres (middle of the twelfth century, fig. 125). In Genoa, the scene of the martyrdom of St. Lawrence on the architrave is also flanked with three figures on both sides, which are difficult to distinguish today as they were produced in mosaics and are only extant as engravings with traces of mosaic tiles (fig. 126).⁵⁰ On the left side, Justinus leads Trifonia.⁵¹ On the right, another angel carries a crown of a martyr with his hands covered as a sign of respect. But overall, the composition of the scene seems similar to the one on the inner side of the tympanum produced by the Byzantine painter: an Apocalyptic figure of Christ surrounded by angels or tetramorphs depending on the tradition and on the lintel beneath there are small figures of men kneeling or bending, flanked by two more separate scenes (the Byzantine angels blowing trumpets and Justinus with Trifonia and the angel with the crown).

Thus, the scene of the Apocalypse from the central tympanum on the façade of the cathedral is thematically and compositionally continued inside the church on the frescoes of the Byzantine painter. On the inner side of the western wall, we again find the Last Judgement but with more emphasis on the theme of the Passion of Christ. And if we accept that Christ at the centre of the fresco was painted with reference to the *hetoimasia* (i.e. the throne or the altar with the instruments of the Passion), then we could also say that this

⁴⁹ Di Fabio, *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, p. 176.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 186–87; Alexandre Gardini, ‘Le tessere musive in ceramica del portale maggiore’, in *Cattedrale e chiostro di San Lorenzo*, pp. 26–27.

⁵¹ See the attribution in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa*, vol. 2, pp. 92–93.

element connects both scenes of the Last Judgement with the physical altar of the cathedral. At the entrance, the visitor sees the sculptural Last Judgment, represented on the façade and which follows the traditional Western iconography of Christ in Majesty. Behind it in the inner part of the nave, there is a fresco that combines two iconographical types: the *hetomasia* and Christ in Majesty. Instead of the empty throne or altar as per the Eastern set of the Last Judgement, we see the actual figure of Christ surrounded by angels with the instruments of the Passion and, on the intrados, flanked by the seraphim and cherubim. Finally, as the worshipper walked into the main space of the church, the theme of the Passion was organically continued in the central altar as the summit of the Christian life, which awaits the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment.

While the iconography of the fresco is an elaboration of the Eastern tradition through Western thought, the style of the frescoes is purely Palaiologan: among its characteristic features, Nelson points out the emphasis on the line, the abundant decorative draperies, the low vantage point and a reversed direction in the movement of the figures.⁵² All scholars agree that this painting is an example of exquisite craftsmanship, but the origin and formation of the master in question is a matter of dispute. According to Nelson, the Genoese frescoes find no parallel in the artistic centres of Thessaloniki nor at the court of the Serbian king Milutin.⁵³ He believes that only Constantinopolitan churches of that time (Kariye Camii and Fethiye Camii) bear the same ‘gentle repose and linear refinement’. However, Bacci and Volpera see in the style of the frescoes similarities with the Serbian art of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Bacci compares the Genoese frescoes with the decoration

⁵² Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, p. 553.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 555, 559.

⁵⁴ Bacci, nn. 527–32, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, pp. 357–58; Volpera, ‘Proposta di lettura’, p. 146, especially footnote 29.

of the royal church of St. Joachim and Anna in Studenica (before 1312), and the church of the twelve Apostles (1310–1314) in the second city of the Byzantine Empire, Thessaloniki.

Although it is widely known that many of the best examples of late Byzantine art are not found in Constantinople, I believe that it is not enough to find stylistic similarities in the art of two regions of the ‘Commonwealth’ to claim their direct connection. In other words, the style developed in Italy, Serbia, Byzantium, or Russia inevitably had resemblances, but not necessarily because of some immediate link or direct cultural transmission between the countries. It is more likely that the similarities come from the fact that they were all under the influence of one cultural centre. This is especially true for the fourteenth century when there were numerous examples of artistic migration from Constantinople, for example, to the court of King Milutin in Serbia or to Novgorod in Russia. The story of the painter Marco in Genoa ties well with this trend.

And yet, this connection between Genoa and Serbia or Thessaloniki is possible. But in order to ascribe the frescoes to a painter from these lands, this link needs to be based on reliable documentary evidence. On the other hand, we have many examples of direct ties between Genoa and Constantinople. We know that bonds between the two cities were well established for a long time, that Genoa had territories in the capital of the Empire as well as churches where artists could exchange new approaches and inspiration. Additionally, there are documents that record the work of artists from Constantinople in the maritime republic and even contemporary examples in Constantinople that use the same artistic language as in the frescoes in Genoa. Finally, there is even evidence of a marital connection with the court in Constantinople, as Di Fabio pointed out.⁵⁵ In my opinion, stylistic similarities cannot be taken as the main evidence for the theory of the fresco’s Serbian origin in San Lorenzo, especially since such comparison can be very subjective and what seemed to Nelson as

⁵⁵ See p. 104.

dissimilar is described by other scholars as resemblant. I believe this only proves that the same ideas were translated from one artistic centre to different parts of the world.

While I agree with Nelson and Di Fabio that the frescoes in Genoa indeed look very similar to the style of the artists in the Kariye Camii (figs 127 and 128), I do not think that we can identify the painter in San Lorenzo as a painter from the Chora monastery. Again, stylistic comparison of such early and distant works of art is a very subjective matter, and the possibilities of more than one painter with similar training (one who worked the decoration of the Chora monastery and the other travelled from Constantinople to Genoa) are higher than the chances of this being one person working on both projects.

The Frescoes of the Side Aisles

Produced in the same Palaiologan style, the frescoes on the side aisles develop the themes that unite the iconographical “inaccuracies” (from the point of view of traditional Orthodox imagery) and local taste, namely the interest in the passion of Christ, the veneration of the Virgin, and the patronage of John the Baptist and St. Peter.

On the south wall, we find an image above the portal of San Gottardo, another example of early fourteenth-century decoration in the cathedral (fig. 129). It depicts the Virgin Mary with the Child in the classic iconographical type of *Eleousa* (the most characteristic detail is Jesus’ cheek touching his mother’s face). This fresco shows more emotion than most similar images: the Child’s two hands hold the red omophorion of the Virgin. This group of depictions continues the theme of the veneration of the Mother of God (seen in the upper part of the central fresco where the Virgin is depicted as an equal to Christ) as well as the subject of the Passion that we find in the Last Judgement and in the mirroring *imago pietatis* above the portal of San Giovanni on the northern side of the cathedral (fig. 137). The theme of the Passion was often tied to the *Eleousa* as this type of depictions should also express the anticipation of the sufferings that await Christ in the future. Because of this it was usual to depict Mary with a grave face as it was done in Genoa. Another example of the

connection of these two themes is found on the already mentioned twelfth-century icon of our Lady of Vladimir, where in the fourteenth century, a *hetoimasia* was added to the observe side.

Sts Nicolas and Lawrence, the patron of sea travellers and commerce and the saint of the city, surround the Virgin, as well as two small half-figures of angels that fly above – probably the archangels Michael and Gabriel.⁵⁶ The fresco shows the same traces of a red frame with a blue background as in the rest of the paintings of the Byzantine cycle, although the zigzag decoration around the scene has led some scholars to wonder if another painter from the same workshop had produced the fresco.⁵⁷ There does not seem to be any strong evidence supporting this argument, however, since the paintings on the portal of San Giovanni have not survived in a good enough condition to enable a proper comparison.

Initially, the saints that surrounded the Virgin with the Child were recognised as Sts Gottardo and Fruttuoso.⁵⁸ However, today scholars agree that these figures correspond to Lawrence and Nicolas. The choice of the saints corresponds to the dedication of the altars in the cathedral and the lateral apses.⁵⁹ Additionally, the inventory of the sacristy taken in 1549 mentioned a tabula ‘cum figuris sanctorum Laurentii et Nicolai, letteris grecis circumcirca et argentea’.⁶⁰ Moreover, the importance of St. Nicolas for Genoa is attested in the *Storia sive legenda translationis beatissimi Johannis Baptiste* by Jacopo da Varagine, based on an earlier and extant work of Sallustio, a chancellor of the Genoese bishop Airaldo (1097–1116).⁶¹ According to it, the Genoese went to Mira to find the relics of St. Nicolas, but they had been already taken to the city of Bari. Instead, the Genoese found the ashes of John the

⁵⁶ Rentetzi, ‘Gli affreschi bizantini’, pp. 108–9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 109.

⁵⁸ Luigi Augusto Cervetto, *La cattedrale di Genova* (Genova: Tipografia della gioventù, 1918), p. 15; Rentetzi, ‘Gli affreschi bizantini’, p. 109.

⁵⁹ Di Fabio, ‘Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi’, p. 263.

⁶⁰ Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, p. 59.

⁶¹ Stefania Bertini Giudetti, ‘Contrastare la crisi della Chiesa cattedrale: Iacopo da Varagine e la costruzione di un’ ideologia propagandistica’, in *Le vie del Mediterraneo. Idee, uomini, oggetti. Secoli XI–XVI*, ed. Gabriella Airaldi (Genoa: ECIG, 1997), p. 176, footnote 76.

Baptist, brought them to the cathedral and simply replaced St. Nicolas with John the Baptist as their patron saint.⁶² Finally, as Federica Volpera has shown, the adaptations of Byzantine depictions of the Virgin with the Child (either in the Eleousa type, or the Hodigitria or other variants) were widely spread in Liguria by this time;⁶³ and examples vary from the fresco in the church of San Donato (thirteenth century) to several icons in the museum of Sant'Agostino.

The main patrons of Genoa are pictured on the northern wall. Here we find the triptych of St. George flanked by two saints (fig. 130). Again, as in the Last Judgement, every scene is situated on a blue background and enclosed in a red frame. And as in the central fresco, the frame is not a strict limit for the figures and sometimes their feet, wings or arms cross the borders of the image. The triptych is badly damaged, especially on the right side where a later chapel of the De Marini was built into the wall. Still, it is easy to identify the figure that was damaged the most – it is John the Baptist dressed in camel fur and raising his right hand to the sky. His appearance on the wall of the cathedral is not only connected with the significant role that the prophet played in Christianity. He is one of the most important patrons of the city since his ashes were transferred to the cathedral in 1099. Soon after the creation of the fresco, in 1327, the Baptist was officially named *Patrono, Protettore e Padre del Comune*.⁶⁴

The second standing figure is more difficult to identify despite its relatively good condition. Following Ceschi, Nelson assumed that it could be St. Barnabas who was generally associated with the Milanese cathedra.⁶⁵ If this is the case, the building in his hands

⁶² 'Istoria sive legenda translationis beatissimi Johannis Baptiste', *ASLSP*, 10 (*Due opuscoli di Iacopo da Varagine*, eds Amedeo Vigna and Luigi Tommaso Belgrano) (1874), pp. 480–91.

⁶³ Volpera, 'Trace della retorica bizantina', pp. 100–27, especially pp. 100–7.

⁶⁴ Clario Di Fabio, 'Il Tesoro della cattedrale di Genova. Gli origini (XII–XIV)', in *Tessuti,oreficerie, miniature in Liguria XIII–XV secolo*, eds Mario Marcenaro, Clario Di Fabio and Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Bordighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 1999), p. 134.

⁶⁵ Nelson, 'A Byzantine Painter', p. 549.

represents an ideal model of the church with a central plan that follows the Byzantine tradition and in this cycle possibly symbolises the cathedral itself.⁶⁶ Still, there is another interpretation of this figure which, in my opinion, makes more sense, especially considering the complicated relations between the dioceses of Genoa and Milan. Following Di Fabio, some scholars claim that the figure is in fact of St. Peter with a model of the baptistery as a symbol of the whole Genoese community.⁶⁷ Jacopo da Varagine wrote about the apostolic origin of the Genoese bishop's see, which was founded by St. Peter himself, and contrasted this origin to the foundation of the dioceses in Milan and Venice: 'Et ideo satis credendum est quod beatus Petrus, qui erat papa quando audivit civitatem Ianue ad fidem Christi esse conversam, ad ipsam civitatem aliquem episcopum destinavit'.⁶⁸ The exact resemblance of the apostle in the Last Judgement and the figure on the triptych, as well as the position mirroring John the Baptist in both scenes also speaks in favour of this identification (figs 131.1, 131.2).⁶⁹ All the apostles in the tympanum of the central nave have very individualised portraits and are easily distinguished even if not all the inscriptions are legible today.

The central figure of the triptych is St. George on horseback defeating the dragon (fig. 132). Although originally eastern, this saint was equally common in Byzantine and European art.⁷⁰ In the West, the popularity of St. George as a warrior started to rise significantly with the beginning of the crusades. We later also find this connection in the *Golden Legend*.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Bacci supports the version of the ideal building attributing the figure to St. Peter, see nn. 242–46, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, p. 255.

⁶⁷ Di Fabio, 'Bisanzio a Genova', p. 57; idem, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi', p. 261; Bacci, nn. 242–46, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, p. 256.

⁶⁸ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, pp. 226, 435. See also Di Fabio, 'La scultura bronzea', 30–34; idem, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi', p. 261.

⁶⁹ This similarity was also noted by Rentetzi although she believes that the building in the hands of the apostle is the cathedral. See 'Gli affreschi bizantini', p. 108.

⁷⁰ Alexander Kazhdan, Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'George', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-2052?rskey=ayYz6p&result=2042> [accessed 17 June 2019]

⁷¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, pp. 321–22.

And since St. George was considered one of the patrons of Genoa,⁷² it is not surprising to see his image among the Byzantine decoration of the Genoese cathedral. The fact that his presence here is not unexpected and the poor state of conservation are probably the two reasons why scholars pay less attention to the fresco of St. George than the Last Judgement, and more precisely, scholars are usually more interested in explaining the male saint on the left of the scene.

The appearance of the legend of St. George defeating the dragon dates back to the twelfth century, but it very quickly spread over Christendom becoming the most famous episode of his life. The style of the fresco again points to the same Palaiologan painter who worked on the depiction of the Last Judgement. The curly hair of St. George, his young and austere face, the schematic yet very dynamic position of the cape, are the features typical for the image of this saint all over Byzantium, Georgia, Russia and other Eastern Christian territories. A close example to the Genoese fresco is a small round mosaic icon with St. George slaying the dragon from Constantinople from the early fourteenth century, in the collection of the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Département des Objets d'Art, № OA 3IIo, fig. 132).⁷³ The Genoese fresco seems more static (maybe because the composition of the Paris icon was inserted in a circle – a more dynamic figure), but the positions of St. George and the horse and even the twist of his horse's tail are the same. Eastern painters depicted the dragon either with legs (which was more common in the West) or without them, like a snake, as in the fresco in San Lorenzo.⁷⁴

A more significant distinguishing feature is the angel on the right upper corner who holds a white triangular shield, which is clearly visible on the photograph of the fresco before

⁷² Romeo Pavoni, *I simboli di Genova alle origini del Comune* (Genoa: Mondini & Siccardi, 1981); Domenico Cambiaso, 'L'Anno ecclesiastico e le feste dei santi in Genova nel loro svolgimento storico', *ASLSP*, 48 (1917), p. 137.

⁷³ *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), cat. 137, p. 230.

⁷⁴ Bacci, nn. 242–46, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, p. 255.

the restoration.⁷⁵ It is easy to decode this addition to the traditional scene: the angel as a messenger of God offers St. George divine protection by giving him a shield. Di Fabio suggests that the shield originally had a red cross on it following the official standard of the Genoese commune.⁷⁶ And indeed, Epstein describes an episode in the history of the Genoese rapport with Ventimiglia when, in 1218, Genoa used the pilgrim emblem as ‘a public mark to impress people with its power and perhaps to gain for its merchants and their possessions the protection armed pilgrims needed and deserved’.⁷⁷

The appearance of the angel on the fresco seems significant, given that this character was not often used in the depictions of St. George slaying the dragon in Byzantine art.⁷⁸ The direct intervention of Providence was accentuated in Eastern Christian legends and usually pictured as a hand of God (less often as a half-figure of Christ) blessing St. George from the mandorla in the corner of the icon (fig. 134). The angels were also often used to emphasise the theme of martyrdom when they crowned St. George, such as on the small Byzantine relief plate of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries from the Bode Museum, Berlin, or in later Russian icons (figs 135, 136). As mentioned above, in the Genoese mural, the angel is holding the shield of St. George. The act of giving the shield to St. George can be interpreted as a sign of the Divine protection of the saint, but also and more importantly in the political sense, as a symbol that the angel is offering St. George the Genoese commune for patronage.

The final work under discussion in this chapter is the tympanum over the northern portal of San Giovanni, which leads from the baptistery to the cathedral (fig. 137). Although

⁷⁵ Genova, Centro DocSAI, Archivio Fotografico, inv. 12382. See in Nelson, ‘A Byzantine Painter’, 551, fig. 4; Di Fabio, ‘La scultura bronzea’, p. 30, Bacci, nn. 242–46, in *La cattedrale di San Lorenzo*, vol. 2, p. 255, fig. 172.

⁷⁶ Di Fabio, ‘La scultura bronzea’, p. 31; idem, ‘Bisanzio a Genova’, p. 65.

⁷⁷ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 110.

⁷⁸ Georges Didi-Huberman, Riccardo Garbetta, Manuela Morgaine, *Saint Georges et le dragon: versions d’une légende* (Paris: Biro, 1994); Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

this is the worst-preserved fresco of the cycle and the half-length figures are barely distinguishable, it is comprehensible that it represents Christ as the Man of Sorrows flanked by two saints. Traces of red garments seem to evidence that the saint on the left is St. Mary, while on the right the painter depicted either St. John the Apostle (as he was present during the Crucifixion and can be seen on a small tryptich produced around 1300, now in a private collection, fig. 138) or John the Baptist following the name of the portal that led to the baptistery. The iconographical type of the Man of Sorrows originates in Byzantine art of the twelfth century and started to spread in Western art since the second half of the thirteenth century, mainly in Italy and Germany.⁷⁹ Yet, because of the loss in the fresco it is difficult to say how the painter chose to place the arms of Christ: hanging on the sides, as was more traditional in the East and in earlier Italian icons (fig. 138), or crossed in front of the body, as in the famous mosaic icon of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome produced around 1300 (fig. 139), but also found in Italy during the thirteenth century, for example, in the Man of Sorrows by the Master of the Franciscan Crucifixes kept in the National Gallery in London (fig. 140).

The possible presence of the Baptist is not the only detail in this scene that addresses the theme of christening. The iconographic type of the Man of Sorrows is closely connected to the Crucifixion as a subsequent episode in the narrative of the Passion of Christ. We can note that despite the lack of space the painter chose to keep the cross and even the upper horizontal bar with the abbreviation INRI (or INBI since all the inscriptions are in Greek). The connection of the baptism with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection was very common by the fourteenth century. It originates from the words of St. Paul: 'Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the

⁷⁹ Anne Derbes, Amy Neff, 'Italy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Byzantine Sphere', in *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, pp. 456-58; *New Perspectives on the Man of Sorrows*, eds Catherine R. Puglisi and William L. Barcham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2013).

dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life' (Romans, 6:3–4). After the Council of Tribur (895), the immersion in water was seen as the burial and resurrection of Christ. Di Fabio also ties the Genoese scene with a responsorial sung for the Holy Week:

‘O vos ómnes qui transítis per víam,
atténdite et videte si est dólor símilis sicut dólor méus’ (Lamentations I, 12)

and as the researcher continues, the characteristic sign that John the Baptist shows with his fingers on the triptych reflects the same idea. The position of his right hand illustrates him as the orator and the Precursor who is ‘*vox clamantis in deserto parate viam Domini rectas facite semitas eius*’ (Matthew, 3:3), thus again connecting the fresco with the theme of the processional path inside the cathedral. Di Fabio writes about the frescoes and their place on the way from the Baptistry to the altar as an ‘*immagine teatralizzata*’.⁸⁰ But as I would argue, the whole northern wall conforms to the same idea, while the choice of the saints for the triptych also reflects the theme of baptism and conversion of the non-Christians.

So in the northern wall we see a triptych of the Baptist and St. Peter surrounding St. George. And while I believe that the appearance of the latter as a patron of Genoa is a natural occurrence in the city’s cathedral, I also want to bring attention to the connection of the legend of the dragon and the theme of the baptism and conversion. In Greek and Russian literary sources, the miracle of St. George is directly connected with the baptism of the people that St. George is saving: the saint asks them several times who their gods are, and ultimately they convert to Christianity. We find this literary pattern in several manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries now kept in Paris and Venice and which were published at the beginning of the twentieth century by Rystenka: ‘Having heard that, the blessed George said to the girl: From now on do not be afraid. Who do your father and his companions worship? The girl said: Heracles and Apollo and the great goddess Artemis. St.

⁸⁰ Di Fabio, ‘*Sculpture, affreschi ed epigrafi*’, p. 263.

George said to the girl: Do not be afraid and regain your spirit.’⁸¹ We find the same idea in the *Golden Legend* when St. George says: ‘...dunque credete in Cristo, che ciascuno sia battezzato, e io ucidereò questo drago.’⁸² Thus, the choice of the episode from the life of St. George is not random, but rather directly tied to the place where this scene is depicted, that is the northern wall close to the baptistery and on the processional route to the altar. It would also make more sense in this context to assume that St. Peter was placed mirroring John the Baptist, while holding a model of the baptistery (and not an ideal church). Therefore, all three figures here are presented not just as the patrons of Genoa, but were also chosen to reflect the idea of conversion and baptism, essential for this precise place in the cathedral.

The Programme and the Commissioning of the Frescoes

The elaborate artistic programme makes one wonder if the decoration from the beginning of the fourteenth century followed a larger general idea that united all the frescoes in the cathedral. It seems that Bertolino Fieschi and the Byzantine painter went beyond a simple depiction of the principal patrons of Genoa and paid a lot of attention to the placement of the frescoes in specific areas of the cathedral as well as to the movement of the viewers inside the space of the building they were decorating. It is clear that one of the sources for the programme was Jacopo da Varagine’s *Legenda Aurea* and especially the *Chronica Civitatis Ianuensis*. The connection with the latter can be seen in the emphasis of the origins of Genoa, a theme which attracted particular interest from the Genoese commune during the thirteenth

⁸¹ Ἀκούσας δὲ ταῦτα μακάριος καὶ τρισμακάριος Γεώργιος, λέγει πρὸς τὴν κόρην. “μὴ φοβοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν. ὁ πατήρ σου καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ τίνα σέβονται; ἡ κόρη λέγει”. Ἡρακλῆν καὶ Ἀπόλλωνα καὶ τὴν μεγάλην θεὰν Ἄρτέμιν”. ἅγιος ὁ Γεώργιος λέγει πρὸς τὴν κόρην – “μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ θάρσει”. See Alexandr V. Rystenka, *Λεγὲνδα ὁ σβ. Γεωργίου καὶ δράκονε ἐν βυζαντινῆ καὶ σλαβονο-ρουσσοῦ λογιτεριαι* (Odessa: Ekonomicheskaya tipografiya, 1909), pp. 9–18, especially pp. 13–14. See also *Miracula S. Georgii*, ed. J. B. Aufhauser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913); *Жития византийских святых*, ed. Sophia Polyakova (Saint Petersburg: Corvus; Terra Fantastica, 1995), pp. 415–18. I thank Natalia Kolpakova for her help in the translation of these lines.

⁸² Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, p. 318

century.⁸³ As was discussed earlier, Jacopo's inspiration is seen most clearly in the myths of the three Januses which he described in the first part of the *Chronica* and which is reflected in the inscriptions inside the cathedral along the central nave and in the sculpted portrait of Janus.⁸⁴ The other theme that interested Jacopo the most with regard to the early history of the city was the dawn of Christianity. This is described in detail in the fourth chapter of the *Chronica*, and we find an illustration to this theme on the northern wall of the cathedral, with the images of the Man of Sorrows as well as the triptych of St. George slaying the dragon, and St. Peter with a baptistery as the saint who brought Christianity to Genoa mirroring John the Baptist himself.

There is one more important connection between the theme of christening and Jacopo's *Chronica* that could explain the reason for choosing a Byzantine painter to produce the décor of the cathedral. In the early history of the city, he writes about Janus the Italian King who arrived in Italy from the East: 'Primus igitur Ianus fuit quidam princeps qui de partibus Orientis ad Ytaliā venit.'⁸⁵ As we know, the second Janus mentioned on the walls arrived from the East too, more precisely from Troy. As Beneš writes, the aim of the inclusion of these characters in the history of Genoa is to claim the city's superiority over Rome and consequently over other Italian cities as well.⁸⁶ A few lines later, we read in Jacopo's chronicle a direct claim that Genoa was founded 600 years earlier than Rome: 'quia Ianus, rex Ytalie, per annos .DC. et amplius fuit antequam Roma edificaretur, sicut ex cronocis manifeste habetur.'⁸⁷ Moreover, when speaking about the christening of Genoa, Jacopo da Varagine writes that Christianity came to Italy from the Kingdom of Jerusalem through

⁸³ This theme was popular through the whole thirteenth century and reflected, for example, in the chronicle of Ursone da Sestri (early Duecento) or the annals of Jacopo Doria (1280–94), but the version of Jacopo da Varagine was the most developed.

⁸⁴ Di Fabio, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi', p. 263; Beneš, *Urban Legends*, pp. 69–82; Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 214–15.

⁸⁵ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 342.

⁸⁶ Beneš, *Urban Legends*, p. 77.

⁸⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 343.

Greece: ‘constat enim quod fides Christianorum ortum habuit in Syria Palestine, quia omnes apostoli et primitivi Christiani de regno Ierosolimitano fuisse noscuntur, deinde de Syria Palestine fides Christi in Greciam venit, de Grecia venit in Ytaliam.’⁸⁸ Since he dedicates so much effort to asserting that Genoa was the first (‘or almost the first’, as he modestly adds every time) city in Italy to accept Christianity, the appeal of the frescoes to an earlier visual language (necessarily closer and more understandable than the Syrian imagery as the ‘original source of faith’) could serve the same purpose of establishing the precedence of the Genoese in this question over Rome and other cities. Thus, in the *Chronica*, upon which the pictorial programme of the cathedral was clearly based, the antiquity of the city and its superiority are constantly linked back to the Eastern origins of its founders. Similarly, Byzantium and its pictorial style, the most obvious representative of Eastern Christianity at the beginning of the fourteenth century, was one more argument in the carefully thought-out programme of the cathedral that in all possible ways stated the pre-eminence of the Genoese commune. In this context, the frescoes on the northern wall become important not only as religious illustrations but also as the culmination of the commune’s political claims. By using the Greek pictorial style and developing on the theme of christening, the Genoese claimed political and cultural succession from Byzantium and superiority over other Italian cities.

This brings to mind another question upon visiting San Lorenzo. Did Byzantine imagery and culture really influence the cathedral’s character to such a great extent, considering that this was the place where the self-identity of the Genoese commune was to be represented in its greatest splendour? Then why was San Lorenzo decorated with frescoes and not mosaics as the cathedrals in Venice and Pisa were? Because even if they are of exceptional quality, frescoes still do not (and are not supposed to) have as strong of an impact on a viewer as mosaics do. At this point, we can definitely say that it was not a question of a lack of artists in the fourteenth century – the Chora monastery in Constantinople is just one

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 221–22, 368.

of the examples of both first-class mosaic and fresco decoration, while Italian artists, such as Cimabue in Pisa (1302), were already producing mosaics at the time.

The most obvious reason to choose frescoes over mosaics is the financial aspect.⁸⁹ It appears, however, that at the beginning of the fourteenth century, money was not a problem for the Genoese. Although the apogee of the Genoese commerce happened in the 1290s, historians agree that the first half of the fourteenth century was still an extremely successful time for Genoa. It remained one of the main forces in the Mediterranean and, using the words of Van Doosselaere, was ‘the wealthiest city in the wealthiest part of Europe’ at the beginning of the century.⁹⁰ It is reasonable to believe that the income from the expansive trading network that the Genoese had built after the treaty of Nimphaeon in 1261 could have sponsored a more expensive decoration for the cathedral. But a closer look at the internal affairs of Genoa since the 1300s, reveals a much darker picture. As it often happened in the history of this city, the better and calmer that were international matters, the more unstable was the condition inside. The Genoese entered the new century devastated by factional strife between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines and, in 1311, invited Henry VII (c. 1275–1313) to rule the city.⁹¹ Moreover, according to Epstein, already at the beginning of the fourteenth century, due to internal fighting and the wars with Pisa and Venice, the public debt of Genoa was so high that the budget of the commune had to be restructured.⁹² But the worst was yet to come, and in 1314–1331 a civil war broke out again.⁹³

On the other hand, we know that almost every major Italian city during this period was involved in the Guelf-Ghibelline conflict, so Genoa was not unique in this respect. If we have a look at other cities, the strife did not stop the artistic patronage of wealthy families

⁸⁹ Catherine Diane Harding, ‘Economic Dimensions in Art: Mosaic versus Wall Painting in Trecento Orvieto’, in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein*, eds. Peter Denley and Caroline Elam (London: Westfield College, University of London, 1988), pp. 503–14.

⁹⁰ Van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements*, p. 62; Miner, Santchev, ‘The Genoese Economy’, pp. 404–5.

⁹¹ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 177–84.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 189–91.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–202.

that supported either the Pope or the Emperor.⁹⁴ Moreover, we learn from the poems of the Genoese Anonymous, written at the turn of the century, that the life of the wealthy merchants was prosperous and they enjoyed dressing expensively and acquiring new buildings for their families and businesses.⁹⁵ We even have an example of a private commissioning of a Byzantine mosaic in Genoa less than fifty years before the production of the frescoes in the cathedral: on the façade of the church of San Matteo (between 1278 and 1284).⁹⁶ The building belonged to the Doria family, which played an important role in the rivalry with Venice. They also decorated the whole square in front of the church with commemorations of their victories, using it as a propagandistic space.⁹⁷ It is also worth underlining again that the city had a special tax in order to finance the reconstruction of the cathedral.⁹⁸ Thus apart from the imperfect economic and political situation, could there have been other reasons for commissioning such a modest decoration of the Genoese cathedral?

It is quite probable that the reason for this is in the architecture and the arrangement inside the cathedral itself – mosaics look better in cupolas and domes, where light can have the fullest effect, with San Marco being one of the most famous examples. There are other cases when mosaics were purposefully used in decorating a basilica, for instance, on the façade of the church of San Frediano in Lucca (thirteenth century), again on the façade of San Matteo in Genoa and in the domed altar of the cathedral in Pisa. However, we do not have any evidence of the use of mosaics at the altar or the clerestory of the Genoese cathedral.⁹⁹ I have already established the importance of the frescoes placement in the exact

⁹⁴ Brendan Cassidy, 'Artists and Diplomacy in Late Medieval Tuscany: The Case of Giotto, Simone Martini, Andrea Pisano, and Others', *Gesta*, 51, 2 (2012), pp. 91–110.

⁹⁵ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 171.

⁹⁶ On the mosaic and the role of the political inscriptions on the façade of San Matteo, see Müller, '*Sic Hostes Ianua Frangit*', pp. 108–56.

⁹⁷ Di Fabio, 'Bisanzio a Genova', p. 41.

⁹⁸ See pp. 99–100.

⁹⁹ On the commissioning, political, economic and cultural situation around the mosaic in the cathedral of Santa Maria in Pisa, see *Cimabue a Pisa*. On the reconstruction of the altar of the Genoese cathedral: *Il restauro dell'Altare Maggiore della cattedrale di San Lorenzo in Genova*, ed. Claudio Montagni (Genoa: Colombo Grafiche, 2008), with the plan of the stages of the reconstruction during the Middle Ages on p. 83, fig. 4.

areas where they interact with the movements of the worshipers inside the cathedral. So if mosaics did not cover the altar or the clerestory, there was no need to place them on the flat shadowed surfaces that the Byzantine painter was commissioned to decorate. Again, the difference between the Genoese placement and the rest of contemporary Italian examples is noticeable – the Byzantine decoration of San Lorenzo is situated in a dimly lit area, where it could not have been appreciated in full were it made in the form of a mosaic, and hence it is a location better suited for a fresco.

Intentionally or not, the commissioners of the frescoes succeeded in making a political statement without spending too many resources during a time when communal money was limited. Moreover, in this way, the Byzantine décor was combined with the work of French and local artists and did not overwhelm the overall ensemble. Considering the civic and political meaning of the decoration and the representative function that the cathedral had in Genoa, the accentuated use of artists of diverse origins could also mirror the internationalism of the city and its tight connections with both the East and the West.

Conclusion

As any visitor of the cathedral can see, the Byzantine frescoes of the Duomo do not astound as much as one would expect. They occupy quite a humble place in the decorative space of the cathedral, often being in shadowy places and definitely not overpowering the rest of the building's decoration. But the frescoes from the beginning of the fourteenth century in the Genoese cathedral speak in unison with the rest of the decorative programme made around the same time and, therefore, put forwards a much more elaborated statement. However unexpected it may be for a commune whose main interest was trading, the message that we read today in the décor of San Lorenzo is not one of mere wealth. As researchers have shown, and as I have tried to emphasise in more details, the epigraphs, sculpture and pictorial decoration worked together to circulate and authenticate the myths of Genoa's origins, its

patrons, its superiority over other states in a period when the city's civic identity was still developing.¹⁰⁰ I have mentioned the head of Janus with the inscriptions that connect with the Byzantine frescoes, but there is also the marble gryphon commissioned as a copy of the bronze original from the first quarter of the thirteenth century that combines the papal symbolic animal (the lion) with the imperial eagle – an important civic metaphor at the time of the rivalries between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines.¹⁰¹ The use of different epochs, styles and cultures (local, French, Byzantine, Ancient), and the diversity of media involved, made the overall message more pronounced. The cathedral that was the centre of political and religious life was the best place to make such a statement.

¹⁰⁰ See the already mentioned Di Fabio, 'Sculture, affreschi ed epigrafi', p. 258–79 for the combination of pictorial and sculptural decoration and Gerevini, *Written in Stone*, pp. 216, 218 for the epigraphs.

¹⁰¹ On the use of the gryphon as a civic symbol, see Beneš, 'Civic Identity', p. 197.

Chapter 4. Communal Relics and Precious Objects from Eastern Christian States in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo

Before the appearance of the wall decoration in the fourteenth century, the relics in the cathedral were another way of glorifying the position of Genoa among other states, as well as calling on the protection of saints over the city. A lot of work has been done on the phenomenon of the relics in the Middle Ages and their religious, cultural and political importance.¹ Predictably, the Genoese took part in the hunt for relics that flourished in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages. Abulafia describes several episodes of acquisition of relics for Genoa as illustrations and important parts in the history of the region.² Most artefacts that I will describe in the following pages appeared in Genoa before the thirteenth century. However, as scholars have shown, their importance remained or even grew significantly with the strengthening of Genoese civic identity.

We know very little about the organisation of the relics and precious objects in the cathedral during the Middle Ages. Before the thirteenth century, the relics of the city were probably kept in the choir of the Duomo in closets, as Di Fabio suggests.³ Two documents from the *Liber Privilegiorum* attest that the sacristy of San Lorenzo was founded in 1204 close to the altar of St. Nicolas in the northern aisle.⁴ They also show the involvement of the commune in its construction: it was built ‘per domum, sine contradictione communis Ianue... Ideoque tamquam communis et publica camera, tanquam publicum errarium omnium

¹ To name just a few: Joseph Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1940); *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, eds Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein and C. Griffith Mann (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2010); *Matter of Faith: an Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, eds James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer and Anna Harnden (London: British Museum, 2014); *Saints and the Sacred Matter: the Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2015).

² Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, pp. 255–56, 269, 291, 329.

³ Di Fabio, ‘La chiesa di un commune senza “palazzo”’, p. 306.

⁴ Altavista, ‘Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno’, pp. 91–110; Gianluca Ameri, ‘Il tesoro di San Lorenzo nel Medioevo’, in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa*, vol. 1, pp. 157–66.

communiter et singulorum specialiter utilitatibus deservire probatur.⁵ Based on later evidence, Clara Altavista pointed to several places, where the precious objects could have been kept depending on who the possessors were (fig. 141). According to her, some of the chapels in the Duomo were allocated to the Chapter of the cathedral, other to the Republic of Genoa or to the Protetoria di S Giovanni Battista (founded in 1299) while the Sacristy was divided between the first two.⁶

The ashes of John the Baptist and the *Sacro Catino*

Returning to earlier times, due to the communal role that the cathedral of San Lorenzo played in Genoa, it also quite quickly developed the function of the city's reliquary. Just as the images of saints on the walls of the Duomo, many objects housed there were significant not only for devotional purposes, but also for their political meaning. The first and probably most characteristic example is the already mentioned ashes of John the Baptist, brought in 1099 from Mira.⁷ A relic of such importance for all Christians would compete for predominance with St. Mark in Venice (rediscovered in 1094) and St. Nicolas in Bari (transferred from Mira in 1087) raising the status of Genoa among other Italian maritime republics. The short *Istoria sive legenda translationis beatissimi Johannis Baptiste* by Jacopo da Varagine signals the high demand for such relics among Italian cities.⁸ According to Valeria Polonio (and following Jacopo's story on the aforementioned, somewhat-accidental appearance of the ashes in Genoa instead of St. Nicolas' relic), before 1099 there was no strong connection between Genoa and John the Baptist.⁹ This, however, changed in

⁵ *Liber Privilegiorum Ecclesiae Ianuensis*, pp. 38–39, docs. 21, 22. On the foundation of the sacristy, see also Di Fabio, 'La chiesa di un commune senza "palazzo"', p. 306.

⁶ Altavista, 'Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno', pp. 104–5, fig. 7. See also Ameri, 'Il tesoro di San Lorenzo', p. 158.

⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 483. See also Bertini Giudetti, *Potere e propaganda*, p. 87; Petti Balbi, *Una città e il suo mare*, p. 313.

⁸ *Istoria sive legenda translationis beatissimi Johannis Baptiste*, pp. 480–91.

⁹ Valeria Polonio, 'L'arrivo delle ceneri del Precursore e il culto al Santo in Genova e nel Genovesato in età medievale', in *San Giovanni Battista nella vita sociale e religiosa a Genova e in Liguria tra medioevo e eta*

the following centuries, when St. John became one of the main patrons of the city and part of its civic identity. During the Third Lateran Council (1179) Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) officially accepted the cult of the ashes of the Baptist, and in the middle of the thirteenth century, Pope Innocent IV Fieschi confirmed the essential role of the Genoese cathedral in safeguarding these relics.¹⁰ The patronage of John the Baptist eventually became so important that the cathedral was sometimes called *Santi Lorenzo-Battista*.¹¹

The fact of the official papal acknowledgement of the ashes became the subject of a major festivity in Genoa that was commemorated with a procession carrying the marble ark of St. John (produced in 1225) around the city.¹² Epstein also underlines several occasions when the ashes were used during events of high communal importance. In 1169, after several unsuccessful attempts to bring peace to the city, the archbishop and the clergy went to the *parlamento* bringing the relics of the Baptist with them and thus reuniting the commune.¹³ Later, in 1207, another procession with the relic took place after a storm sunk several ships returning from Oltremare and the Genoese were preoccupied about the fate of the rest of the fleet.¹⁴

Just a few years after the transfer of the ashes of John the Baptist to Genoa, another relic was brought to Genoa – the *Sacro Catino*, the vessel that Jesus used during the Last Supper, in other words – the Holy Grail (fig. 142).¹⁵ The first description of this event

contemporanea, ed. Claudio Paolocci (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca franzoniana, 2001), pp. 35–66.

¹⁰ Altavista, ‘Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno’, pp. 94–95.

¹¹ Petti Balbi, *Una città e il suo mare*, p. 313; Polonio, ‘L’arrivo delle ceneri del Precursore’, pp. 35–66; idem, ‘Devozioni di lungo corso: lo scalo Genovese’, in *Genova, Venezia e il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV*, eds Gherardo Ortalli and Dino Puncuh (Genoa: ASLSP, 2001), pp. 352–54.

¹² A map with the route of the procession can be found in Altavista, ‘Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno’, p. 100, fig. 4a.

¹³ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 81–82.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁵ Bertini Giudetti, *Potere e propaganda*, p. 92; Clario Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, pp. 125–26; Valeria Polonio, ‘Devozioni di lungo corso’, pp. 354–61; Daniele Calcagno, ‘Il Sacro Catino, specchio dell’identità genovese’, *Xenia Antiqua*, 10 (2001), pp. 43–112; Müller, ‘*Sic Hostes Ianua Frangit*’, pp. 61–68; eadem, ‘Il “Sacro Catino”. Percezione e memoria nella Genova medievale’, in *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 93–104; Gianluca Ameri, ‘Naturalia, mirabilia e acheropita. Il Sacro Catino del Duomo di Genova tra humana arte

belongs to William of Tyre (c. 1130–1186) and his *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* (written by 1184).¹⁶ The Genoese under the command of Guglielmo Embriaco either purchased or won it during the division of the conquered goods after the capture of Caesarea (1101). As Müller writes, it was most probably an early Islamic production that was captured in a mosque, but was never seen in its original context and instead was immediately introduced into the narrative as a Christian artefact.¹⁷ The vase looks very peculiar: it has a hexagonal form, and it is made of green glass, which was believed to be emerald. However, William of Tyre in his chronicle already doubted the material and origin of the object that he calls ‘vas’. As Polonio has argued, it appears that the religious nature of the *Catino* was not the main interest of the public.¹⁸ It was always described as a piece of great value and associated with civic authorities. However, Gianluca Ameri concluded that after the passage of William of Tyre, there was little attention to the relic in the other sources of the following years.¹⁹ Only nearly a century later did the *Sacro Catino* start to gain more attention as a precious *mirabilia* in the sacristy. The first voyager to describe the relic was the Nestorian monk Rabban Bar Šawma (c. 1220–1294) who visited the city in 1287, as an ambassador of Arghun Khan (c. 1258–1291).²⁰ Though the testimony of his arrival in Genoa was only documented in 1317 by a Syrian anonymous.²¹

However, already by the end of the thirteenth century, we see that the vessel becomes of greater importance to the city, because Jacopo da Varagine devotes to the *Sacro Catino* a

e divina virtute nella *Chronica civitatis Ianuensis* di Iacopo da Varazze’, in *Natura, artificio e meraviglioso nei testi figurativi e letterari dell’Europa medievale*, ed. Clario Di Fabio (Ariccia: Aracne, 2014); idem, “Tempore enim stoli Cesarie”: Guglielmo Embriaco, il Sacro Catino e altri tesori de Crociata’, in *Genova nel Medioevo: una capitale del Mediterraneo al tempo degli Embriaci*, ed. Loredana Pessa (Genoa: Sagep, 2016), pp. 78–83.

¹⁶ The text in *Récueil des historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, vol. 1, 1 (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1844), p. 423; Ameri, ‘Naturalia, mirabilia e acheropita’, pp. 22–23.

¹⁷ Müller, ‘Visual Culture and Artistic Exchange’, p. 297.

¹⁸ Polonio, *Devozioni di lungo corso*, pp. 355–56.

¹⁹ Ameri, ‘Naturalia, mirabilia e acheropita’, pp. 24–28.

²⁰ Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Genova medievale vista dai contemporanei* (Genoa: Sagep, 1978), pp. 74–75.

²¹ Ameri, ‘Naturalia, mirabilia e acheropita’, pp. 28–29.

large section in his chronicle. Ameri who analysed Jacopo's text on the *Catino* described the episode on the vessel as another myth concerning the origins of the Genoese identity.²² After an extensive description of the vessel's value, Jacopo da Varagine retells the traditional story according to which Christ had used the *Catino* during the Last Supper as a widely-spread version among the public, but the author himself doubted the truthfulness of this story. Nonetheless, he finished the large passage about the *Sacro Catino* directly naming it the Grail and 'Divina virtute productum', thus establishing a new tradition in the veneration of the object as another relic of the Passion.²³ A somewhat conflicting regard toward the *Sacro Catino* is also seen in the description of Genoa by Francesco Petrarca (1358): 'devotus si sic est alioquin suapte specie clarum opus'.²⁴ Perhaps, this ambiguity was one of the reasons why the object was never exhibited for the public view, except for on Ash Wednesday and later for the processions of the Corpus Domini. This latter festivity was instituted in 1264 by Pope Urban IV and finally established at the beginning of the fourteenth century.²⁵ Müller cites a study by Miri Rubin who determined that Genoa was one of the first cities to accept the new festivity, since in 1313 it was already included in the Missal, something that was also seen in the context of the rivalry with Venice.²⁶

In the words of Epstein, 'one of the oldest physical witnesses to Genoese history',²⁷ the *Catino* is a piece of great interest for many reasons. What is striking at first glance is that the vase does not look at all like the Holy Chalice or any object that Christ could have used during the Last Supper. Still, a common belief about this object seems to prevail from the

²² Ibid., pp. 29–30.

²³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, pp. 276–79, 467–69. Giorgio Stella follows this version: Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, p. 19. A thorough analysis of the text by Jacopo da Varagine in connection to the *Sacro Catino* was given by Ameri, 'Naturalia, mirabilia e acheropita'.

²⁴ Petti Balbi, *Genova medievale vista dai contemporanei*, p. 80.

²⁵ The route is in Altavista, 'Dalla città alla cattedrale e ritorno', p. 100, fig. 4b. See also Cambiaso, 'L'Anno ecclesiastico', 63–68; Edmund A. Bowles, 'Musical Instruments in the Medieval Corpus Christi Procession', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 17, 3 (1964), pp. 251–60.

²⁶ Müller, 'Il "Sacro Catino"', pp. 96–97. For the suggestion of the use during Ash Wednesday, see *ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

²⁷ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 31.

early twelfth century onwards, until it was anchored by Jacopo da Varagine in his chronicle. Thus, we can observe how oral narrative becomes included in the city's mythology to take part in the formation of its civic identity. Secondly, it is important to note that from the very beginning, the *Catino* was treated as a communal object that was obtained by the Genoese during the campaigns in the Holy Land. Despite being one of the most important objects in Christian history, it was rarely used for religious purposes.

This brings us to the question of the *Catino*'s worth, which was apparently one of the aspects that attracted most interest of the Genoese. Indeed, the view of the *Catino* as a treasure, the value of which can be measured, is present in many historical accounts. For instance, in the description of Jacopo da Varagine, we find that all the booty after the capture of Caesarea was divided in three parts. The first was the *Catino*, eventually chosen by the Genoese. The other two contained all the realty of the city and all its movables and treasures, respectively. No wonder, Jacopo da Varagine provides a long passage in which he aims to justify the association of such an expensive object with Christ's modest life: 'quomodo enim verisimile est quod supradictum lapidem smaragdinam ad valorem totius civitatis vel totius thesauri civitatis pro una parte equaliter possident, nisi eis pro certo contisset quod verissimus smaragdinus esset?... sicut igitur modo sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi in calice aureo vel smaragdino sumere non esset pompa aliqua, sed devocio et reverencia magna, sic agnum illum paschalem et sacramentalem in chatino aureo vel smaragdino comedere non fuisset nota vanitatis, sed exemplum divine reverencie et devocionis.'²⁸ Finally, there is an episode in the history of the *Catino* that directly points to a price that the Genoese were ready to pay for the object. In 1319, the precious dish was given to Cardinal Luca Fieschi as a pledge of a loan of 9500 *lire* that he gave to the commune. In 1327, the

²⁸ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, pp. 276–78, 468–77.

commune returned the *Catino* and established that in the future, it could no longer be taken out of the sacristy of the cathedral.²⁹

The relics of the Holy Cross

Another important group of devotional objects coming from the Christian East and kept in the sacristy of the Genoese cathedral were several fragments of the Holy Cross.³⁰ The veneration of this relic is closely connected with the crusades and the new European states in the eastern shores of the Mediterranean where it played the special role of military insignia and palladium.³¹ According to the tradition, Empress Helena (ca. 250–330), the mother of Emperor Constantine, who collected the most important relics of the Christian faith in Constantinople at the time, was the first to discover the Cross.³² However, when the crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099, they claimed to have found another piece of the True Cross which they would then display in battles and tie the military failures with the absence of this relic. According to Ligato, the Cross soon became a symbol of Christian rule in the Holy Land and was used in many religious and civic rituals.³³ During the twelfth century, the relic started to multiply in many smaller fragments and to be recorded in various western states. The larger piece of the Holy Cross that was found in Jerusalem was lost again during the battle of Hattin in 1187 when Sultan Salah ad-Din re-captured the city and

²⁹ Di Fabio, ‘*Ornamentum ministerium* e valenza civica. Il tesoro della Cattedrale fra XII e XIII secolo’, in *La Cattedrale di Genova nel medioevo*, p. 191, footnote 10.

³⁰ See Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, pp. 122–26; Bertini Giudetti, ‘Contrastare la crisi della Chiesa cattedrale’, p. 179; eadem, *Potere e propaganda*, pp. 93–96; Ameri, “‘Tempore enim stoli Cesarie’”, pp. 78–83.

³¹ I base my description on Giuseppe Ligato, ‘The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross among the Crusaders and in the Latin Kingdom’, in *Autour de la Première Croisade*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), pp. 315–30.

³² The history of the relic and its connection with Constantine and Helena is described, for instance, in E. Gordon Whatley, ‘Constantine the Great, the Empress Helena, and the Relics of the Holy Cross’, in *Medieval Hagiography*, pp. 77–95, with a translation of a section from Rufinus of Aquileia’s *Church History* and relevant bibliography. See also Holger A. Klein, ‘Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross in Constantinople’, in *Byzance e les reliqs du Christ*, eds Jannic Durand and Bernard Flusin (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004), pp. 31–59; John Wortley, *Studies on the Cult of Relics in Byzantium up to 1204* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

³³ Ligato, ‘The Political Meanings of the Relic’, p. 319.

confiscated the Cross. Of course, conversely the loss of the relic only promoted the diffusion of the many smaller pieces that have been miraculously found and brought to the West with the returning crusaders.

The history of the Genoese fragments fully mirror the intricate history of the relic. The oldest cross in the cathedral dated back to 1187, the year when the crusaders lost Jerusalem and the Holy Cross. Jacopo da Varagine calls it *Crux hospitalis Sancti Lazari*. He claimed that Conradus the marquis of Montferrat obtained the cross from Salah ad-Din in Damascus with the help of Genoese ships and donated it to the Genoese commune as a gift of gratitude: ‘Quam quidem civitatem dictus Conradus marchio, audivantibus Ianuensibus, potenter defendit, propter quod ipse Conradus marchio supradictam crucem, quam a Saladino predicto recuperaverat, communi Ianue pro magno munere destinavit.’³⁴ We also find the description of these events in Jacopo Doria’s *Brevis Historia* with the addition of the name Guglielmo Grasso, the Genoese who brought the relic to the city.³⁵ A second fragment of the cross is described to have arrived a few years later: its introduction to Genoa happened in 1195 after Genoese and Pisan pirates stole it from a ship that Salah ad-Din sent to the Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelos (1156–1204).³⁶ According to Jacopo da Varagine, Fortis, the Pisan man that protected the cross and then donated it to the Genoese commune, later received Genoese citizenship. The third fragment of the Cross has a different background: it came directly from Constantinople after the events of 1204. Both authors call it the *Crux sancta Helene*³⁷ or *crux Elene*³⁸ making a reference to the first legend of Empress Helena acquiring the Cross for the collection of the church of the Virgin of Pharos. The cross

³⁴ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 483.

³⁵ ‘Regni hierosolymitani brevis historia’, in Caffaro, *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de’ suoi continuatori*, vol. 1, p. 141.

³⁶ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 485; ‘Regni hierosolymitani brevis historia’, p. 141; Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, p. 124; Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, pp. 328–29.

³⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, p. 486.

³⁸ ‘Regni hierosolymitani brevis historia’, pp. 141–42.

was first taken by the Venetians, but intercepted and brought to Genoa by Dondedeus Bos, a member of the Genoese family de Fornari.³⁹

The later history of these relics is practically unknown. They were still kept in the cathedral of San Lorenzo at the end of the fourteenth century as Giorgio Stella mentioned in the *Annales Genuenses*.⁴⁰ Clario Di Fabio believes that the second Cross, the *Sancta Christi*, that appeared in Genoa in 1195 is mentioned in the inventory of 1386.⁴¹ Later we find a description of these relics based on Jacopo's chronicle in Agostino Giustiniani's *Annals* that were published in 1537.⁴²

There is another artefact from the same group that stands apart from the other relics – the so-called *Croce degli Zaccaria* (figs 143, 144).⁴³ It is also part of the relic of the Holy Cross, but unlike the pieces described earlier it has actually been preserved and can be seen today at the Museo del Tesoro in Genoa. In addition, it arrived in the city under very different circumstances and much later than the other three crosses. The *Croce degli Zaccaria* is a gilded silver reliquary covered with pearls of various sizes and other precious and semi-precious stones. It contains two pieces of the True Cross seen under a crystal on the front (fig. 143.1). Five medallions and an extended Greek inscription decorate the back side (fig.

³⁹ Ameri, 'Il tesoro di San Lorenzo', p. 159.

⁴⁰ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, p. 20.

⁴¹ See Di Fabio, 'Il Tesoro della cattedrale', p. 126.

⁴² *Castigatissimi annali con la loro copiosa tauola della eccelsa & illustrissima republi. di Genoa, da fideli & approuati scrittori, per el reuerendo monsignore Agostino Giustiniano...*, (Genoa: Antonio Bellono, 1537), libro II, car. LVIIv, LXIv, LXVr.

⁴³ Angelo Sanguineti, 'Iscrizioni greche della Liguria', *ASLSP*, 11 (1875), pp. 322–37; Gustave Schlumberger, 'La croix byzantine dite des Zaccaria (Trésor de la cathédrale de Gênes)', *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, 2, 1 (1895), pp. 131–36; Silvio Giuseppe Mercati, 'Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria nel tesoro del Duomo di Genova', *Collectanea Byzantina*, 2 vols (Bari: Dedalo Libri, 1970), II, pp. 520–33; Di Fabio, 'Il Tesoro della cattedrale', pp. 125–26; Polonio, 'Devozioni di lungo corso', pp. 392–93; Francesca De Cupis, 'Croce-stauroteca detta Croce degli Zaccaria', in *Mandyion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 264–67; Di Fabio, 'Bisanzio a Genova', pp. 51–56; Gabriella Airaldi, nn. 677–78, in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence*, vol. 2, pp. 393–94; Marina Cavana, Daniele Calcagno 'La Croce degli Zaccaria da Efeso a Genova (secoli IX–XIII)', in *Vie per Bisanzio*, eds Antonio Rigo, Andrea Babuin and Michele Trizio (Bari: Edizioni di pagina, 2013), pp. 975–96; Gianluca Ameri, 'La Croce stauroteca "degli Zaccaria" nel Tesoro del Duomo di Genova: una rilettura "archeologica"', in *Genova, una capitale del Mediterraneo tra Bisanzio e il mondo islamico. Storia, arte e architettura*, ed. Alireza Naser Eslami (Milan: Mondadori, 2016), pp. 139–55.

143.2). The upper roundel represents Christ holding the Gospel in His left hand and blessing with the right, beneath him is the Virgin Orans (fig. 144.2, 144.6). The archangels Michael and Gabriel are on the right and left ends of the cross (figs 144.1, 144.3). The lower figure is St. John the Evangelist (fig. 144.5). All the saints are named in Greek.

The history of this object's production and arrival is quite intricate. It has been reconstructed from the inscriptions written on the cross itself and based on another inscription that was on the casing which has not been preserved. This last is known to modern scholars primarily through the Latin translation in the *Annals* by Bartolomeo Sanarega, which was copied in the works of other authors in the subsequent centuries.⁴⁴ As will be discussed later, Spanish sources also provide some additional information on the history of the arrival of the cross to Genoa. So from the inscription on the back, we learn that *the Croce degli Zaccaria* was first commissioned by someone called Bardas.⁴⁵ It is very difficult to say when and where exactly this happened, but broadly speaking it was sometime in the ninth or tenth century in Asia Minor. Most probably the name 'Bardas' corresponds to the brother of Empress Theodora, who was at first regent to her son Michael III from 856 to 866 and later became *Cesare* (862–867).⁴⁶ We can say that the reliquary was then donated to the basilica of St. John the Evangelist in Ephesus, the location of the saint's burial and centre of pilgrimage. And we observe that the fifth saint on the lower medallion of the cross

⁴⁴ Mercati also found a transcription of the inscription on the casing of the cross inside MS Lat. 3086 from the BAV: 'Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria', pp. 526–27.

⁴⁵ The main inscription on the back of the cross on the vertical bar states: 'TOY/TO TO / ΘΕΙ/ΟΝ Ο/ΠΑΟΝ / ΒΑΡ/ΔΑΚ / ΜΕΝ/ ΕΤΕ/ΚΤΗ/ΝΑΤΟ ΕΦΕ/ΚΟΥ / ΔΕ ΑΡ/ΧΙΘΥ/ΤΗΚ' and on the horizontal bar: 'ΙCΑΑΚ / ΠΑΛΑΙΩΘ[ΕΝ] / ΑΝΕΚΑΙΝΙCΕΝ'. See Schlumberger, 'La croix byzantine dite des Zaccaria', p. 133; Mercati, 'Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria', p. 521; De Cupis, 'Croce-stauroteca detta Croce degli Zaccaria', p. 265.

⁴⁶ Though scholars usually name the Bardas as the commissioner, they agree that there could have been other variants later in the ninth and tenth centuries, such as Bardas Phocas (the elder or the younger) or Bardas Skleros. See Schlumberger, 'La croix byzantine dite des Zaccaria', p. 134; Mercati, 'Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria', pp. 522, 527. On Bardas, see Paul A. Hollingsworth, Anthony Cutler, 'Bardas' in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*

<<https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-0644?rskey=IkejSD&result=631>> [accessed 21 June 2019]

corresponds to this donation (he is labelled as ‘John the theologian’). If the version with the commissioner’s naming is right, then the cross should have been produced before 862, because the inscription mentions just the first name without the title *Cesare*. It would later have been donated probably closer to the end of Bardas’ life during his campaign in Asia Minor.

The next episode of the reliquary production corresponds to the years 1030–1040, when Metropolitan Kyriakos of Ephesus (c. 1018–1037) acquired a golden casing for the cross. As mentioned earlier, the casing is lost, but scholars found a description of it in later sources: the annals by Bartolomeo Sanarega and again for instance in the work of Agostino Giustiniano.⁴⁷ Finally, during the time of Patriarch Isaak (1260–1283), who according to the Genoese annalists mentioned above, arrived from Pera, the reliquary was restored due to its poor condition. This was also the time when the inscription on the back of the cross was produced because it mentions this last episode on the horizontal bar at the back of the cross.⁴⁸

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Seljuk Turks conquered Ephesus. The city had to give up the relic to the Genoese family of the Zaccaria, who were the Lords of Phocaea and Chios, in return for grain (fig. 145).⁴⁹ Most probably, this took place during the time of Admiral Benedetto I Zaccaria, the founder of the family’s success in the East, suzerain of the Byzantine emperors Michael VIII and Andronicus II, and husband of an unnamed woman from the Palaiologan dynasty (maybe, the sister of the emperor). In 1307, Benedetto II Zaccaria, Benedetto I’s grandson, decided to replace the governor of Phocaea Tedisio Zaccaria, nephew of Benedetto I. As a consequence, Tedisio asked the help of the

⁴⁷ Bartholomeo Senarega, ‘De rebus Genuensibus commentaria, ab anno 1488 usque ad annum 1514’, ed. Emilio Pandiani, in *Rerum Italicarum scriptores* 24, 8 (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1929–1932), pp. 55–57; Agostino Giustiniani, *Annali della Repubblica di Genova di monsignor Agostino Giustiniani*, vol. 2 (Genoa: Canepa, 1856), pp. 588–59. Both texts are also in Mercati, ‘Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria’, pp. 524–25.

⁴⁸ The text of the inscription is cited earlier, see footnote 45, p. 138. Analysing the form of the mounts that hold the stones, Ameri carefully suggested that they could be altered after the arrival to Genoa: ‘La Croce stauroteca “degli Zaccaria”’, p. 149.

⁴⁹ Mercati, ‘Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria’, p. 522.

Catalan Grand Company in Gallipoli. During the siege of Phocaea, three relics from the basilica of St. John in Ephesus were seized.⁵⁰ The chronicler Ramon Muntaner took possession of the cross and later passed it to Tedisio, as a sign of gratitude for his hospitality in Thasos.⁵¹ We lose track of the precious relic for the next several decades. The Byzantines regained the lands of the Zaccaria in the following years – Thasos in 1313 and Phocaea in 1336. The Zaccaria lost their influence in the region and a new Genoese family – the Giustiniani – came to power, first in Chios, then in Phocaea.

For some years there were two main versions of when the cross could have been transferred to Genoa and donated to the cathedral: in the fourteenth century or later when we find the first Genoese documents clearly mentioning the relic. Valeria Polonio and Francesca De Cupis wrote that the earliest document securely confirming the presence of the relic in the city dates to 1461.⁵² In that year, Goffredo Lomellino ordered *magister faber* Giovanni de Valerio to change the base of the cross: originally it was designed to be hung, but the Genoese used it for processions (on the days of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Corpus Domini and Anthony the Great).⁵³ In 1921, William Miller suggested that the relic was presented to the cathedral “by the bastard son of the last Prince of the Morea, when, in 1459, he begged the city of his ancestors to recommend him to the generosity of Pius II”.⁵⁴ Modern scholars found another earlier document that could be connected with the donation of the Cross to the cathedral – in 1448 the Genoese government expressed gratitude for a gift to Centurione Zaccaria.⁵⁵ According to Clario Di Fabio, this could be Centurione I who died in

⁵⁰ William Miller, ‘The Zaccaria of Phocaea and Chios (1275–1329)’, in *idem, Essays on the Latin Orient* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), pp. 283–98. On the capture of the cross, see *ibid.*, p. 288.

⁵¹ Ramon Muntaner, *Cronache catalane del secolo XIII–XIV*, ed. Filippo Moisé (Florence: Galileiana Editore, 1844), p. 520. See also Mercati, ‘Sulla croce bizantina degli Zaccaria’, p. 523; Di Fabio, ‘Bisanzio a Genova’, pp. 51–52.

⁵² See Polonio, ‘Devozioni di lungo corso’, p. 393; Francesca De Cupis, ‘Croce-stauroteca detta Croce degli Zaccaria’, p. 265.

⁵³ Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, p. 126.

⁵⁴ Miller, ‘The Zaccaria of Phocaea and Chios’, p. 288.

⁵⁵ Polonio, ‘Devozioni di lungo corso’, p. 393.

1383. In this case, the ‘*crux vera argenti aurati cum perlis que est in capsa corii*’ mentioned in the inventory of 1389 could be the *Croce degli Zaccaria*.⁵⁶ Still, Valeria Polonio believes that it was Centurione II, the last descendant of the family, who died in 1432.⁵⁷ Fortunately, a recent discovery brought clarity to this question. Calcagno and Cavana published an archival document that reports under the year 1342 the payment of 2175 *lire* from Simone Boccanegra and the council of the elders to Goffredo Zaccaria ‘*pro pretio vere Crucis*’.⁵⁸ Ameri explains the acquisition of the Cross for such an enormous sum with the desire of Simone Boccanegra to make the ceremony of the Doge’s elections more majestic as it was in Venice.⁵⁹ And this is partly confirmed with later sources because we know that from the end of the fifteenth century, the *Croce degli Zaccaria* started to be used for the blessing of the newly chosen Doge.⁶⁰

The *Pallio di San Lorenzo*

The last artefact that I am going to describe in this chapter is of a very different nature than all the other ones discussed in the previous pages.⁶¹ Firstly, it is not a relic. Secondly, unlike the other objects, it was not stolen or won in a battle or even bought by the state. It is the famous *Pallio di San Lorenzo* donated to the cathedral by the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (fig. 146). Its history is relatively well documented and has often been studied over the last years.⁶² Before the sixteenth century, it was mentioned in every

⁵⁶ Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, p. 126; idem, ‘Bisanzio a Genova’, p. 52.

⁵⁷ Polonio, ‘Devozioni di lungo corso’, p. 393. For the genealogical tree of the Zaccaria, see Domenico Promis, *La zecca di Scio durante il dominio dei Genovesi* (Turin: Stamperia Reale, 1865), p. 7.

⁵⁸ Cavana, Calcagno ‘La Croce degli Zaccaria da Efeso a Genova’, pp. 992–94.

⁵⁹ Ameri, ‘La Croce stauroteca “degli Zaccaria”’, p. 150.

⁶⁰ Di Fabio, ‘Bisanzio a Genova’, p. 53.

⁶¹ As the next footnote demonstrates, the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* is an object that has been studied by many prominent scholars. This part aims to synthesise main research findings including the latest findings of the restoration presented on 1–2 February 2018 at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence.

⁶² Johnstone, ‘The Byzantine ‘Pallio’ in the Palazzo Bianco at Genoa’; Elena Parma Armani, ‘Nuove indagini sul ‘Pallio’ bizantino duecentesco di San Lorenzo in Palazzo Bianco a Genova’, *Studi di storia delle arte*, 5 (1983–1985), pp. 31–47; Peter Schreiner, ‘Zwei Denkmäler aus der frühen Paläologenzeit: Ein Bildnis Michels VIII. und der Genueser Pallio’, in *Festschrift für Klaus Wessel zum 70. Geburtstag: In memoriam*, ed. Marcel

inventory that survived to our time, of 1386,⁶³ 1521,⁶⁴ and 1549.⁶⁵ But what is especially rare, is that we also have a description of the object in Byzantine sources. The *Pallio* is a very large embroidered silk (1.28 × 3.74 m) which was kept at the treasury of the cathedral until the seventeenth century. Since 1663, it has been held in several Genoese *palazzi* and museums, and in 2010 it was transferred to the *Opificio delle pietre dure* in Florence for restoration. Recently, in 2018, it was finally returned to the Museo Sant'Agostino in Genoa.

After the conquest of Constantinople by the Venetians in 1204, the disposition of the forces in the Mediterranean zone changed drastically. The Latin Empire was established, while Byzantium broke down into several successor states: the Empires of Nicaea and Trebizond, and the Despotate of Epirus. The Genoese did not take part in the Fourth Crusade and were left with no access to these markets for several decades. The situation improved for them only in 1261 after the signing of the Treaty of Nymphaion with the emperor of Nicaea Michael VIII.⁶⁶ The economic and political outcome was already discussed earlier, but another important detail for the current examination has not yet been named in this work.

Restle (Munich: Maris, 1988), pp. 249–57; Carla Falcone, 'Il 'Pallio' bizantino di San Lorenzo a Genova: Una riconsiderazione', *Arte cristiana*, 84 (1996), pp. 337–52; Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, 'Considerazioni finali, con una noterella minima sul Pallio di 'San Lorenzo', in *Tessuti, oreficerie, miniature*, pp. 403–11; Andrea Paribeni, 'Il Pallio di San Lorenzo a Genova', in *L'arte di Bisanzio e l'Italia al tempo dei Paleologi 1261–1453*, eds Antonio Iacobini and Mauro Della Valle (Rome: Argos, 1999), pp. 229–52; Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, 'A Genova', in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 45; Cecily J. Hilsdale, 'The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)', *DOP*, 64 (2010), pp. 151–99; Ida Toth, 'The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio and the Silken Diplomacy of Michael VIII Palaiologos', in *Objects in Motion: The Circulation of Religion and Sacred Objects in the Late Antique and Byzantine World*, ed. Hallie G. Meredith (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2011), pp. 91–109; Gerhard Wolf, 'Genova, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco. Manifattura bizantina. Pallio con e storie dei santi Lorenzo, Sisto e Ippolito per la Cattedrale di Genova (1261)', in *The Cathedral of St. Lawrence in Genoa*, vol. 1, pp. 410–13; Cecily J. Hilsdale, 'The Imperial Image and the End of Exile', in *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*, ed. Cecily J. Hilsdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 31–87; Ioli Kalavrezou, 'The Byzantine Peplos in Genoa: "The Object as Event"', in *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean: Portable Archaeology and the Poetics of Influence*, ed. Alina Payne (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 211–45; Loredana Pessa, 'Tessuti d'oltremare a Genova', in *Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 95–103; Silvia Leggio, 'Seta e diplomazia al tempo di Michele VIII Paleologo: dal Pallio di San Lorenzo al perduto ricamo per il papa Gregorio X', in *Genova, una capitale del Mediterraneo*, pp. 125–38.

⁶³ Published in Cambiaso, 'L'Anno ecclesiastico', pp. 452–70, the pallio is mentioned on p. 457.

⁶⁴ ASG, filza 1, 1520–1526, sc. 184.

⁶⁵ Published in Alizeri, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. 1, pp. 64–82, especially p. 73.

⁶⁶ Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*, pp. 117–24.

The agreement with the Genoese compelled Byzantium to donate two *peploi* to Genoa each year: one to the city and another for the archbishop.⁶⁷ And from written sources, we know that in 1261, apart from the pallio discussed here, Michael VIII donated another pallio to the city with an image of the emperor, which unfortunately did not survive to modern times.⁶⁸ Both peploi were described in one of the orations of the Byzantine rhetor Manuel Holobolos (c. 1245–1310 or 1314).⁶⁹ Additionally, Clario Di Fabio believes that the embroidery mentioned in the inventory of 1386 right after the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* could be of Byzantine origin: ‘aliud palium parvum dicti panni cum ymaginibus Domini Nostri et Angelorum de auro laboratis’.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, the list does not include the provenance of the objects, and the descriptions are often very vague.

It should be noted, however, that the act of presenting pallii had a long tradition and in 1261 Michael VIII was repeating previous diplomatic agreements, for instance, the one of 1155 that promulgated overall much worse conditions for the Genoese.⁷¹ Back then, in the twelfth century, the Byzantine promised to pay 500 hyperpers a year and two pallia for the commune plus 60 hyperpers and one more pallium for the archbishop. As Epstein points out, agreeing with Origone, such gifts were used to show inequality between Byzantium and the receiver state.⁷² Although apparently, these peploi were never delivered.⁷³ Thus, the Genoese pallio seems an exceptional artefact that should be considered individually, and not as one of many presents from Byzantium. According to Hilsdale, it should be seen as a more

⁶⁷ The Genoese copy of the treaty in Latin is in ASG, Archivio Segreto, 2724 (B 5/39). See Camillo Manfroni, ‘Le Relazioni fra Genova, l’Impero bizantino e i Turchi’, *ASLSP*, 28 (1898), p. 795.

⁶⁸ Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*, p. 119.

⁶⁹ Toth, ‘The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio’, pp. 94–99; a translation of the text by Holobolos is also in Wolf, ‘Genova, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco’, pp. 410–11.

⁷⁰ Di Fabio, ‘Il Tesoro della cattedrale’, p. 110; Cambiaso, ‘L’anno ecclesiastico’, p. 457.

⁷¹ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 72–73. On the pallio that Michael VIII donated to the Pope in 1274, see Leggio, ‘Seta e diplomazia’, pp. 129–32. Leggio also suggests that such a repetition of the Komnenian traditions is important in the context of Michael’s need to legitimise his status. On this last issue, see Toth, ‘The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio’, p. 100.

⁷² Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, p. 72; Origone, *Bisanzio e Genova*, p. 57.

⁷³ Leggio, ‘Seta e diplomazia’, pp. 127–28.

significant and emphatically diplomatic present, part of the ceremonial conclusion of the treaty.⁷⁴

We do not know, however, the exact time when the pallio arrived in Genoa. In the city, the richly decorated silk was treated with respect: it was kept in the cathedral for special occasions. David Jacoby wrote that silks were used for liturgical purposes in Genoa already by the eleventh century.⁷⁵ And there are two main versions of how it could be employed. The silk possibly covered the altar during important ceremonies (as an antependium)⁷⁶ or it was stretched between the columns.⁷⁷

The origin of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* has also given rise to questions. The majority of modern scholars believe that it was commissioned in Byzantium (or, more precisely, in the Empire of Nicaea) for the commemoration of the treaty.⁷⁸ Even though the pallio bears some very rare for Byzantium details, most of them can be explained if we say that the pallio was produced expressly for Genoa. The main details that were not traditional for Byzantium are the long Latin inscriptions, the possible use of the Genoese units of measurement (15x5 palms), the titlature of the emperor and even the subject itself: it depicts the life of St. Lawrence, whose iconography and even appearance is extremely rare in the Eastern Christian tradition, together with St. Sixtus and St. Hippolytus.⁷⁹ I will review these issues below, but for now, let us say that this combination of an Eastern technique with Western

⁷⁴ Hilsdale, 'Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline', p. 49.

⁷⁵ David Jacoby, 'Genoa, Silk Trade and Silk Manufacture in the Mediterranean Region (c. 1100–1300)', in *Tessuti,oreficerie, miniature*, p. 11. A broader overview of the role of silk trading and interchange in the Mediterranean can be found in idem, 'Silk Crosses the Mediterranean', in *Le vie del Mediterraneo*, pp. 55–79.

⁷⁶ According to the paper on the latest restoration works by Cecilia Salvatore 'I fili del mistero. Il restauro del Pallio come strumento di conoscenza sia tecnica che storico-artistica' presented on 2 February 2018 at the workshop 'Il Pallio di San Lorenzo dopo il restauro e prima del suo ritorno a Genova' at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, this version does not contradict the conclusions of the restorers.

⁷⁷ Calderoni Masetti, 'Considerazioni finali', p. 407.

⁷⁸ An exception is, for instance, ibid., pp. 407–8; eadem, 'A Genova', in *Mandyllion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 45.

⁷⁹ Some Greek hagiographical sources in Alexander Koroliou, 'Ипполит', in *Православная энциклопедия* <<http://www.pravenc.ru/text/673789.html>> [accessed 17 June 2019]; *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1909), 976–78b; *Menologii anonymi byzantini saeculi X*, ed. Basilius Lathyšev (Saint Petersburg: Akademiya Nauk, 1912), vol. 2, pp. 263–66.

adaptations of Byzantine iconography and addressed to a local, Genoese viewer is similar to the example of the early fourteenth-century frescoes in the cathedral and suggests a deep understanding and interconnection between both cultures.

The detailed inscriptions have caused a lot of debate partly because they were written in Latin. This, however, does not seem like a solid argument against it being a Byzantine commission. Latin was not an unusual language to know among erudite Greeks. For instance, Holobolos who left us the only extant Greek description of the textile, names Latin works as source of his knowledge about Genoa.⁸⁰ Pauline Jonestone argued that the technique of the inscriptions is Western and Cecily Hilsdale noted that the inscriptions were added after the manufacturing of the figures; this is seen in the way they are positioned in between the figures.⁸¹ This could suggest that the artist of the inscription was trained in the West. On the other hand, Ida Toth has found an Eastern hagiography on St. Lawrence in a *Synaxarion* compiled in the tenth century that, she argues, was used as a source and even partially quoted in the inscriptions.⁸² Finally, there is the issue of the emperors' titlature on the pallio and the fact that Michael VIII is called *Altissimus Imperator Grecorum* in contrast to the standard 'Emperor of the Romans' (*βασιλεύς Ρωμαίων*).⁸³ While this title could be used because the audience of the pallio was Italian, Hilsdale believes that this title could also be in opposition to the ancient Roman emperor Decius, a character from the other scenes with the martyrs on the Genoese Pallio. All of these details suggest that the pallio was fabricated specifically for Genoa and was seen as an important gift to the Italian city.

⁸⁰ Toth, 'The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio', pp. 94–95; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, p. 84, footnotes 135 and 136.

⁸¹ Johnstone, 'The Byzantine 'Pallio'', p. 102; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, p. 83.

⁸² Toth, 'The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio', p. 101, appendix p. 109.

⁸³ Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, p. 76. She also writes about the rise of the use of the term "hellene" and the correlation of "Graikoi" with Orthodox Christians (pp. 84–86). On the ethnic self-identity of the late Byzantines, see the excellent study of Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204–1461* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016).

Let us now have a closer look at the pallio and its visual narrative. The story of St. Lawrence was well known since the age of the Church Fathers and reflected in the writings of, to name but a few, Ambrose and Augustine.⁸⁴ He came to Rome from Spain to become a deacon under Pope Sixtus II (died 6 August 258). One of his duties was taking care of the treasury and the money of the church. In accordance with the anti-Christian policy of Emperor Valerian (253–260 AD), all Christian leaders had to be executed. After the death of Pope Sixtus, the emperor asked Lawrence to return the money, but he distributed it among the poor. While being imprisoned, he converted Hippolytus, who was the prefect of the prison. The inscriptions of the Byzantine Pallio in Genoa name the emperor Decius (249–251), as he was known by the thirteenth century instead of Emperor Valerian, as we also see in Jacopo da Varagine's *Legenda Aurea*.

The story is inscribed on the pallio in twenty scenes grouped into two registers, ten in each row (fig. 147). The sequence, however, does not coincide with the order of the scenes. The most important scene is the image of St. Lawrence, the Byzantine emperor and his patron, the archangel Michael, in the centre of the upper register (1). The narration of the Pallio starts after this scene with five episodes in the row and one more at the end of the second: 2 – Sixtus orders to sell the possessions of the church, 3 – Lawrence sells the possessions, 4 – Lawrence distributes the goods among the poor, 5 – Sixtus argues with Emperor Decius, 6 – the execution of Pope Sixtus, and at the end of the next register 7 – the burial of Sixtus. Then the narration continues in the first four scenes of the upper row before the scene with Emperor Michael VIII: 8 – Lawrence argues with Emperor Decius over the golden vessels; 9 – Lawrence presents the lame and blind to the emperor; 10 – Lawrence is beaten; 11 – Lawrence is imprisoned. The rest of the story is on the second tier in a more ordered sequence: 12 – Lawrence in prison helps the ill, 13 and 14 – Lawrence converts and baptises his guardian, 15 – the martyrdom of Lawrence over a grill, 16 – Hippolytus buries

⁸⁴ Johnstone, 'The Byzantine 'Pallio'', p. 103.

Lawrence, 17 – Hippolytus argues with Emperor Decius, 18 and 19 – the torture of Hippolytus, 20 – the burial of Hippolytus.

At a first glance of the pallio, the viewer can locate the main scene among the many others (fig. 149).⁸⁵ In the centre of the upper register, the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII is led into the Genoese cathedral by St. Lawrence and the archangel Michael. Scholars have paid a lot of attention to the gestures of each figure in this group as they are shared signs of their interactions. The archangel, behind the emperor and the saint, lays his hand on Michael's shoulder thus demonstrating his protection. This gesture is emphasised with the position of the wing that, in a way, almost embraces the figure of Michael. At the same time, St. Lawrence shows the emperor the cathedral with his left hand and with the right – leads him by the wrist into the cathedral that bears his name (we have already seen this gesture on the ceramic mosaics of the cathedral's façade, fig. 126.1). As Ruth Macrides noted, the fact that St. Lawrence holds the emperor by the wrist is a sign of the emperor's superiority.⁸⁶ A very similar group was present on another Byzantine silk, that Michael donated to Pope Gregory X in Rome some years later, after the Second Council of Lion (1274): instead of St. Lawrence, the Pope leads the Emperor towards St. Peter.⁸⁷ The form of the Genoese cathedral on the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* also raises some questions. Though it is inscribed 'ecc[les]iam Ian[uensem]' it clearly represents an Eastern church. Hilsdale rightly pointed out that, although the artists possibly did not know that Catholic churches looked differently than Orthodox ones, this image evokes associations with Hagia Sophia.⁸⁸ So the scene can

⁸⁵ The inscription states: S[anctus] Laur[entius] induc[e]n[s] Altissimum Imp[er]atorem Gr[a]eco[rum] D[omi]n[u]m Mich[ae]l[em] Duca[m] Ang[e]l[u]m Co[m]nenu[m] Paleologu[m] in ecc[les]iam Jan[uensem] – after Johnstone, 'The Byzantine 'Pallio'', p. 99.

⁸⁶ The paper 'The Peplos Woven with Words: Manuel Holobolos' Oration for Michael VIII Palaiologos' presented on 1 February 201 at the workshop 'Il Pallio di San Lorenzo dopo il restauro e prima del suo ritorno a Genova' at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence.

⁸⁷ Leggio, 'Seta e diplomazia', pp. 129–31. See also Johnstone, 'The Byzantine 'Pallio'', p. 100.

⁸⁸ Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 66–67.

also be interpreted as St. Lawrence leading Michael VIII to Constantinople, which it easily could have been since the theme of restoration was of great importance for Michael VIII.⁸⁹

Looking again at the whole textile we can say that because the *Pallio* remains intact and the scenes were never produced separately or cut and sewn in again together later, the non-chronological arrangement of the images confirms the importance of the central scene as ‘episode zero’ after which the story begins. The arrangement of the images also demonstrates that the artists wanted to emphasise several common episodes in the lives of the martyrs. Firstly, two scenes have a privileged position under the central devotional group (1): the burial of Lawrence (16) and the argument of Sixtus with Decius (17, fig. 152.1). Additionally, we should pay attention to the scenes on the edges: on the right side, Lawrence argues with Decius and helps the ill (8 and 12, figs 148, 151.1), while on the left we find the execution and burial of Sixtus (6 and 7, figs 150, 152.3). As we can see, the artists wanted to emphasize the theme of the discussion with the Roman emperor (this episode is repeated for every martyr) and the tragic outcome. This interest in the saints’ relation with the Roman emperor might be explained through a wish to underline the otherness of the Byzantine emperor, who is giving money and expensive gifts (such as the *Pallio* itself) to the cathedral of San Lorenzo. The same wish was also underlined earlier in the different titles of both emperors.

Additionally, as Hilsdale has noted half of the episodes in the upper row and those on privileged positions are connected with the theme of selling and the distributing of belongings since these actions are seen as a virtue.⁹⁰ And this can be regarded again as a comparison to the actual deed of the actual Emperor Michael VIII, who in real life is donating the richly decorated pallio to the Genoese. I believe that we can see in these details

⁸⁹ Ruth Macrides, ‘From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile’, in *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th centuries*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), pp. 269–82.

⁹⁰ Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 78–79.

how the producers and the commissioners of the pallio thought when they were creating its programme. When describing the rhetorical narrative of Holobolos, Ida Toth writes that there is ‘equal emphasis on content and form’.⁹¹ In the same way, the pallio show a very complicated succession of scenes to emphasize the ones that are more important and to bring to the surface meanings that put special accents in the storylines in order to ultimately praise Michael VIII. For the same purpose, the pallio also uses the ‘wrong’ titlature of the emperor to contrapose it to the other ‘evil’ ruler in the story. Finally, researchers have been questioning why Decius has different headwear in similar scenes when disputing with the saints (5, 8, 17, fig. 148, figs 150, 152.1): in the upper row, he is wearing a Byzantine *epithalamion*⁹² and in the lower row – a smaller hemispherical crown.⁹³ Though Jonestone and Hilsdale have indicated several connotations associated with the larger headdress in the upper scenes, it seems that the choice of crowns for the scenes could also be a matter of visual symmetry and harmony.⁹⁴ The larger crowns are put in the far ends of the pallio and turned at each other, while the smaller crown in the lower row is in the middle of the other scenes.⁹⁵

One more detail that provokes great scholarly interest is the way small embroidered roundels cover the negative space of the textile. There are around 80 complete crosses and some more produced deliberately in half- or quarter-cut. For example, Elena Parma Armani described them as part of the background that was produced before the figures, Gerhard Wolf has suggested that these could be signs of the ‘sacred imperial seal’, while Andrea Paribeni stated that it could be the seal of the workshop.⁹⁶ However, the recent restoration of this

⁹¹ Toth, ‘The Narrative Fabric of the Genoese Pallio’, p. 94.

⁹² Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, pp. 68–70, pl. 77n.

⁹³ Similar to *ibid.*, pl. 31.

⁹⁴ Johnstone, ‘The Byzantine ‘Pallio’’, p. 107; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, pp. 77–78.

⁹⁵ I thank Cecily Hilsdale for sharing with me this idea during the workshop.

⁹⁶ Armani, ‘Nuove indagini sul ‘Pallio’’, p. 38; Wolf, ‘Genova, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco’, p. 412; Andrea Paribeni, ‘Focus sul Pallio di San Lorenzo’, in *Il potere dell’arte nel Medioevo. Studi in onore di Mario D’Onofrio*, eds Manuela Gianandrea, Francesco Gangemi and Carlo Costantini (Rome: Campisano, 2015), pp. 304–5.

textile has revealed that they were produced simultaneously with the figures and that their main purpose was to help carry the weight of the embroidery by providing extra support to the delicate bare silk.⁹⁷

As it has been argued, the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, as in the case of the Byzantine frescoes in the cathedral, demonstrate a combination of Eastern and Western imagery, taste and ideas. It is devoted to a specifically Western saint and the pertinent narrative, and although it is possibly based on Greek sources, it is addressed to Western viewers and written in Latin. At the same time, unlike the frescoes, it shows a much more complex relationship between the producers and the viewers and presents different ideas that were addressed to diverse audiences. On the one hand, as noted by many researchers, it conveys a truly pro-Byzantine message of the Emperor's supremacy, a message that undoubtedly was enclosed by the producers.⁹⁸ And I would like underline that in this respect it is extremely important that we have the description of the pallio by Holobolos whose intention was to praise the emperor at the court, not only because it is a rare account on the artefact. Most importantly the text of Holobolos demonstrates that the pallio was actually also addressed to a Byzantine cultured audience which would understand this pro-Byzantine part of the message. As an addition to the idea of a complex message addressed to different audiences, Ioli Kalavrezou has recently argued that the pallio was produced bearing in mind the features that were seen and desired by 'Westerners' as specifically Byzantine.⁹⁹ In my opinion, this makes the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* a unique artefact whose meanings could only be fully revealed with the transfer to a different place and context, as it was not merely an object that combined two diverse cultural traditions.

⁹⁷ Here again I rely on the talk of Cecilia Salvatori 'I fili del mistero. Il restauro del Pallio come strumento di conoscenza sia tecnica che storico-artistica'.

⁹⁸ Müller, 'Visual Culture and Artistic Exchange', p. 305.

⁹⁹ Kalavrezou, 'The Byzantine Peplos in Genoa', pp. 211–45.

On the other hand, we do not have any knowledge of what the Genoese reaction to the pallio was; as Di Fabio suggested, the Genoese most probably saw it simply as a sign of recognition and of their military success, one among many others, to the degree that already a few decades later, its importance significantly decreased.¹⁰⁰ So although it is very tempting today to look for any connections between the pallio and the Byzantine decoration of the cathedral, there is not enough evidence concerning the pallio's use to decisively attest to any special interrelation between these two main examples of Byzantine-style production housed in the city. Unfortunately, there are only several uncertain hypotheses on the pallio's placement inside the cathedral, which makes it hard to determine the extent to which the pallio interacted with the frescoes, let alone its possible impact on the decision to invite Byzantine artists to decorate the Duomo.

Conclusion

To sum up, the relics and precious objects of Eastern origin were kept in the cathedral of San Lorenzo, from the thirteenth century directly in its sacristy. Many of them were seen as sacral from the very beginning, and their importance was never questioned. Others on the contrary, gradually acquired their meaning over time, especially after the descriptions of Jacopo da Varagine at the end of the Duecento (as the *Sacro Catino*). Additionally, many of them changed their context and main functions after their arrival to Genoa and eventually were used in civic events and even became symbols of the commune and later of the Republic. Eastern objects became part of the ceremonial practices in the city: for instance, the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* was probably used during specific feasts, while new Doges were blessed with the *Croce degli Zaccaria*.

This means that most of the relics were often seen not only as objects of religious devotion. As with the Byzantine frescoes, they were also symbols of political prestige and

¹⁰⁰ Di Fabio, 'Bisanzio a Genova', p. 65; Müller, 'Visual Culture and Artistic Exchange', p. 306.

used in the rivalries with other cities. This tradition was established when Empress Helena started to accumulate the most significant Christian relics in Constantinople, marking the beginning of one of the largest collections of this kind in the history of Christendom. The Genoese, like many others, tried to bring pieces of particular importance to their cathedral. However, in contrast to, for instance, the church of the Virgin of Pharos – the palatine chapel of the Byzantine emperors, the cathedral of San Lorenzo was also a place of civic use, and the objects kept there were meant to glorify the whole Genoese commune, including in the secular sense.

As a consequence, part of the relics started to be seen (and publicly demonstrated) in relation to the military success of Genoa in the eastern Mediterranean. The history of the relics is usually accompanied by a detailed description of their capture as trophies. We can also recall that the walls of the cathedral before the fire of 1297 were at least partly covered with frescoes on a completely secular topic, that is, the glorification of the successful military campaigns of Genoa (we find details of these frescoes in the southern wall of the Duomo today, figs 103, 104). In combination with the actual objects brought from the campaigns, they made the Duomo the place of the city's demonstration of its military power. For example, several parts of the True Cross brought from the East during the crusades, were considered a military palladium.¹⁰¹ As part of political recognition and military luck, the cathedral also becomes a repository of diplomatic gifts. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Genoa gained proper access to the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean becoming a maritime force equal to Venice. Direct gifts from the Byzantine emperors to the cathedral, the city and individual Genoese citizens emphasised the role of Genoa on the international political stage.

Finally, an obvious reason to exhibit the precious objects in the Duomo was to demonstrate the prosperity of the commune. Prestige and respect were often associated with

¹⁰¹ Ligato, 'The Political Meanings of the Relic', p. 317.

wealth and richness and the *Sacro Catino* is the most obvious object that was treasured for its high value. Still, we should say that as in the decoration of the cathedral the Genoese chose not to use mosaics, which would be better to translate the message of wealth and prosperity, equally the *Sacro Catino* raised question of the authors that described it.

Chapter 5. Rome, Venice, Byzantium in Local Interpretation: the Canons' Cloister of San Lorenzo

The last case study of this part of the thesis is the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo. Though most scholars believe that it has no connection with Eastern imagery, this opinion has been presented. A closer study reveals that some elements of the decoration can indeed be connected to Byzantine artistic traditions. However, the question remains whether we should make such connection or these details are just part of the Genoese international visual vocabulary or whether they arrived through the links of Genoa with other cities. This becomes especially important since the simple style of the images as well as the choice of some subjects suggest that they were produced by a local painter.

The Thirteenth-century Decoration at the Canons' Cloister of the Cathedral

From 1176 to 1184, the Duomo was subjected to a reconstruction, which included a renovation of the canons' space. Unfortunately, we do not know when the works at the cloister were finished. Archival documents and archaeological evidence suggest that by 27 March 1177, there were two buildings for the canons.¹ One building was located next to the cathedral's portal of John the Baptist, possibly on the site of the baptistery, and the other, which is of most interest to us is the cloister that today hosts the Museo Diocesano and that is connected to the cathedral through a bridge above via Tommaso Reggio. This 'new' canons' building contains examples of early thirteenth-century paintings, which were discovered during the restoration works of 1986–1996.²

¹ Gianni Bozzo, 'Il chiostro dei canonici di San Lorenzo: Edificio', in *La città ritrovata. Archeologia urbana a Genova (1984–1994)*, ed. Piera Melli (Genoa: Tormena Editore, 1998), p. 226; Roberta Mantelli, Michela Ravera, 'Il chiostro nei documenti', in *Cattedrale e chiostro di San Lorenzo*, p. 210.

² On the archaeological and restoration works see A. Lavazza, P. Melli, A. Taddei, 'Le indagini archeologiche', in *La città ritrovata*, pp. 228–36.

What has been preserved of the paintings, which were made *al secco*, is situated in two rooms on the upper floor of the canons' cloister (fig. 153). The first room is decorated with imitations of hanging drapery and a pattern that looks like tiling (fig. 154). The second, apart from having a geometrical painting in vivid red, blue and ochre rhombs, also shows a frieze with a depiction of the months of the year (fig. 155). Unfortunately, the frieze is only extant in fragments. The pictorial surface is very fragile, and today we mainly see the preparatory sketch without any of the upper layers of paint.

One of the most difficult questions that remains unresolved concerning the frescoes of the cloister is the original purpose of these two rooms. According to Tommaso Negrotto, who wrote at the end of the eighteenth century, and some notarial documents, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the building of the cloister had ten rooms for the personal use of the canons on the first floor and five more rooms on the ground floor.³ Also on the ground floor, there were rooms for the guardian, the sacristan and some ancillary premises. Additionally, Roberta Mantelli and Michela Ravera published a sixteenth-century plan of the canons' cloister from the Archivio Capitolare, but because the archive remains closed, it has been impossible for me personally to analyse the original of the plan properly.⁴ Therefore, none of these very scarce pieces of information helps us truly understand how the rooms with the frescoes were used and why they contained lay decoration.

The paintings' secular theme is not that uncommon of an occurrence within clerical spaces. One can recall the preserved twelfth-century battle frescoes inside the cathedral of San Lorenzo or the numerous examples of calendar depictions in diverse Italian churches (fig. 104).⁵ Additionally, as Jill Caskey writes, 'in contrast to monasteries, cathedrals are

³ Mantelli, Ravera, 'Il chiostro nei documenti', p. 210.

⁴ Ibid., p. 211, figs 163–66.

⁵ See Chapter 3, p. 100. On the iconography of the months in Northern Italy, see Giovanni Romano, *Studi sul paesaggio: storia e immagini* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), pp. 10–17.

often characterized as urban monuments in which lay participation was prominent'.⁶ Therefore, profane subjects often formed part of a church's decoration. All the more so in the case of the paintings in Genoa that were not situated in a sacred space, but in the building that was used for the secular needs of the canons.

It has also been hard to precisely date the paintings. Overall, researchers attribute them broadly to the thirteenth century, since the *terminus ante quem* is the fire of 1297 of which they bear traces. In 1998, Gianni Bozzo suggested that the decoration of the first room should be related to the end of the twelfth or first half of the thirteenth century, while the calendar in the second room belongs to the end of the Duecento.⁷ Fulvio Cervini assumed that all the paintings were made in 1220–1240.⁸ Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti dated the entire body of the paintings back to the end of the thirteenth century.⁹ Finally, Anna De Floriani suggested that they are from the first quarter of the Duecento.¹⁰

Concerning the style of the images, researchers agree that the Genoese paintings can be easily inscribed in the contemporary and earlier examples of French and Italian frescoes and sometimes miniatures. Bozzo first compared the Genoese calendar with the decoration of the canons' house in Susa (fig. 156),¹¹ produced in the first half of the thirteenth century, and the illustrations of the *Annales Januenses*, BNF, MS. Lat. 10136 (fig. 159).¹² Anna De Floriani proposed several churches, signalling out in particular the Templar chapel of

⁶ Jill Caskey, 'Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon, and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art', in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, p. 199.

⁷ Gianni Bozzo, 'La decorazione pittorica del chiostro dei Canonici fra XII e XIII secolo', in *La cattedrale di Genova nel Medioevo*, pp. 203, 207.

⁸ Cervini, *Liguria romanica*, p. 96.

⁹ Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, 'Dal chiostro dei canonici alla mostra', in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 251.

¹⁰ Anna De Floriani, 'Narrazione e decorazione a Genova e nelle riviere', in *La pittura in Liguria*, p. 67.

¹¹ On the decoration of the canons' house in Susa, see Giovanni Romano, *Valle di Susa: arte e storia dall'XI al XVIII secolo* (Turin: Impronta, 1977), pp. 205–6; idem, 'Per un atlante del gotico in Piemonte', in *Gotico in Piemonte*, ed. Giovanni Romano (Turin: Casa di Risparmio di Torino, 1992), p. 30.

¹² Bozzo, 'La decorazione pittorica del chiostro', pp. 211–13. The black and white digitised version of the manuscript is available on Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9076701x/f1.planchecontact.r=Lat> [accessed 16 June 2019].

Cressac-sur-Charente in Angoulême and the crypt of the basilica in Aquileia, both dated to the twelfth century (figs 157, 158).¹³ The first is similar to the Genoese cycle in its linear style and layout: a white band under the ceiling with a continuous pictorial narrative. Paying attention to this typology of an uninterrupted narration on a white background, Clario Di Fabio recalled the Bayeux Tapestry.¹⁴ I would add that the margins of the manuscripts were often decorated in a similar way, for instance, the French early thirteenth-century breviary from the BL Yates Thompson 8 (1302–1303, Metz), where on the bottom of the pages we find scenes that are reminiscent the ones that decorate the second room (figs 160).¹⁵

Nonetheless, due to the poor state of preservation and partly to the basic simple style of the painter, it is very difficult to make any definitive conclusions about his origin or even his source of inspiration. Additionally, as we will see later, although the painter followed Western calendars, some parts of the paintings have no analogies in the traditional iconography of the labours of the months and show some unique local motifs. At the same time, the decoration in other parts of the calendar follows common Eastern Christian imagery, which, similarly to the frescoes of San Giovanni di Pré, could have somehow been inherited either through French and Italian art or less likely directly from the East. Here again, medieval Genoa, as a commercial crossroad, shows presence of very diverse cultures from all over the Mediterranean region. I believe that in the example of the canons' cloister, we see how originally foreign elements were already adapted by the thirteenth century and started to form part of local culture.

¹³ De Floriani, 'I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré', p. 23.

¹⁴ Clario Di Fabio, 'Aspetti della pittura decorativa a Genova fra XII e XIV secolo. La trave del tramezzo presbiteriale di San Matteo, le stanze dei canonici della Cattedrale, il soffitto di casa Turca', *Ligures*, 6 (2008), p. 10.

¹⁵<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8114&CollID=58&NStart=8> [accessed 18 June 2019].

First Room

Geometrical ornaments from different periods decorate the first room (figs. 154, 162). The larger part of the decoration, which covers almost two entire walls can still be seen in the original painting of the thirteenth century and consists of several tiers possibly drawn by more than one artist. The lower part depicts a hanging white drapery, embroidered with colourful gems (fig. 161). The painter has a schematic linear drawing in black colour with grey shadows and dedicates a lot of care to small realistic details – for example, the drapery seems to be attached with golden rings onto a thin wooden plank and tied with white ribbons. At the same time, his style is not very naturalistic, such as seen in the folds of the textile, which in the corner of the room appear chaotic (fig. 161). The largest surface (about three times the lower part) is covered with yellow, red and blue rectangles. A coral-red frieze with the simplest white flowers interrupts the masonry of the painted blocks (fig. 163). The upper part of the wall shows a much more elaborated ornament with geometrical and vegetable motifs outlined in black and coloured in green, red and blue. The simplicity of the decoration makes it very difficult to formulate any assumptions about the origin of the painter. On the other hand, it seems safe to assume that the upper frieze was produced by a much more skilled artist than the one who made, for instance, the white flowers.

As Bozzo first noted,¹⁶ the decoration of the room reminds of imitations of marble and hanging draperies that were typical in Byzantine art and that became an important part of the decorative system of Eastern Christian churches.¹⁷ Traditionally the interior of Byzantine churches was decorated with polished marble cladding that entirely covered the walls up to the level of the vaults and arches (Hagia Sophia, Hosios Loukas, San Marco in Venice and many others, fig. 164). Mosaic decoration was usually placed on vaulted ceilings and curved

¹⁶ Bozzo, 'La decorazione pittorica del chiostro', pp. 203–7.

¹⁷ For the classical tradition of the dado decoration and the Byzantine role in its appearance in Rome, see John Osborne, 'Textiles and Their Painted Imitations in Early Medieval Rome', *Papers of the British School of Rome*, 60 (1992), pp. 321–24.

surfaces. However, if a church was adorned with frescoes, the expensive marble cladding could be replaced by an imitation – a painted abstract geometrical pattern (fig. 165). It is easy to see that the painted colourful blocks in Genoa are much more simple than their Byzantine counterparts, but the dark or light blots, depending on the colour of the block, that the Genoese painter added to the masonry could be intended to create a more naturalistic imitation of the natural ornamentation seen in the stone (fig. 166). The hanging drapery on the lower part of the wall can also be often found in Eastern churches in very diverse regions and times (figs 167 and 168). The Byzantine empire and other Eastern-Christian states developed endless variations of this motif, but especially in provincial areas due to the shortage of money available to spend on marble decoration.

We should note, however, that most of these elements can also be found in Western art. A similar, though more elaborate, decoration was designed in some Italian castles, as in Castelvecchio in Verona (fourteenth century, fig. 169). Other very close stylistic examples are present in the art of central Italy from the thirteenth century: the fourth bay of the church of San Saba in Rome (fig. 170),¹⁸ and in the *stanza della Falda* at the Vatican Palace,¹⁹ the oratory of San Pellegrino in Bominaco (1263, fig. 172)²⁰ or the church of Santa Maria ad Cryptas in Fossa (ca 1265–85, fig. 171). The latter two and especially the Aula Gotica of the Cardinal Palace of the Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome (1240s) also show some bands with three-dimensional geometric and intricate flat vegetal ornaments, which, in combination with the simple colours, seem of a very similar styling to the decor in Genoa (compare figs 173 and 174). The strong ties between Genoa and Rome seem very likely in the mid-thirteenth century since several cardinals and two Popes originated from the Genoese clan

¹⁸ Irene Quadri, 'La decorazione pittorica della "quarta navata" di San Saba', in *La pittura medievale a Roma. Vol. 5: Il Duecento e la cultura gotica (1198–1280 ca.)*, ed. Serena Romano (Milan: Jaca Book, 2012), pp. 367–73 (371).

¹⁹ Irene Quadri, 'Il palazzo Apostolico Vaticano. Prima fase', in *ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁰ Although this oratorio is not in Rome, it is connected to the Roman art. On this, see Irene Quadri, 'Il perduto calendario di Santa Maria de Aventino', in *ibid.*, p. 240.

of the Fieschi that played a central role in the history of the cathedral and were known for their artistic patronage.²¹ However, the dado decoration was also quite common in the North where Genoa also had many bonds. For instance, the southern apse of the Benedictine church in the monastery of St. John in Müstair (paintings of the twelfth century) shows this element too (fig. 175) and was already brought as a possible source of comparison in connection to the church of San Giovanni di Pré.²² In addition, Di Fabio suggested comparing the heart-like ornaments on the upper frieze with the sculptural decoration of the cathedral of San Lorenzo produced before 1217.²³

Second Room

The second room with the depiction of the months has received more attention from scholars. The frieze presents a typical subject for the Middle Ages: the labours of the months. Standing at the doorway from the first room, the viewer sees the painting on the left short wall and on part of the long wall in front (fig. 176, green areas). The yellow area on the diagram shows traces of painting that cannot be perceived due to their poor condition of conservation (fig. 177). However, the remaining outlines give us an idea that there were some paintings of the same style on this wall too.

Although it is often difficult to understand where each month starts (even on the parts where all the figures are extant), we can say for certain that there were four months on the short wall: starting from January, which is represented by the god Janus, to April, which is labelled (fig. 155). Presumably, May and possibly June continue the frieze on the next wall, but overall there seems to be no consistency in the division. Additionally, at first sight, it is

²¹ Alessandra Sisto, 'Genova nel Duecento: il capitolo di San Lorenzo', *CSFS*, 28 (1979); Julian Gardner, 'The Artistic Patronage of the Fieschi Family, 1243–1336', in *Le vie del medioevo*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan: Electa, 2000), pp. 309–18.

²² See Chapter 1, pp. 52–54.

²³ Di Fabio, 'Aspetti della pittura decorativa a Genova', p. 11.

obvious that some of the months are represented with two scenes that are not always easy to reconcile: January – hunting and feasting, April – feasting and shearing of the sheep.

The best-preserved parts indicate that architectural depictions divided the scenes: for instance, at the beginning of April and May (figs 178). A closer look reveals that there was also a blue building behind the right shoulder of Janus. The fact that January and May, the first months on two of the walls, start with an architectural drawing indicates the importance for the painter to separate the scenes with a building even when their division is clear by their position on the wall; from the point of view of the spectator, the physical start of the wall should show the start of a new scene but in both extant corners the painter nevertheless adds a drawing of a building.

This strict division between the months is combined with a very different approach when it comes to the separation of two scenes that correspond to one month. As noted earlier, it is certain that two subjects represent January and April, and so it seems that the painter followed the same principle for the depiction of the other months too. I suggest that the scenes were divided in the following way:

- 1) January – feasting of Janus and hunting (fig. 179);
- 2) February – most likely completely lost;
- 3) March – trimming the tree and fishing (fig. 180);
- 4) April – feasting and shearing the sheep (fig. 181);
- 5) May – procession with the king of May and probably coronation of the King (fig. 182).

If we observe more closely, the first and the second scenes of each month often interact with each other. Janus receives food from the hunters, a man with a catch of fish is found before the man trimming the tree, a lamb is killed to be offered at the feasting of April and, as we will analyse later, the King of May ('Re di Calendimaggio') is crowned after the procession

in his honour. But these crossovers and interactions differ from month to month. Sometimes they interpenetrate (March) while in other cases they stay strictly separated (April).

We find a similar approach in the *Supplicationes variae* (Plut. 25.3), a Genoese manuscript of the late thirteenth century from the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence.²⁴ The calendar in the manuscript occupies fols 16r – 21v; each month fills one page, so the scenes of the months are clearly separated. But again similarly to the wall decoration of the canons' cloister, the months are presented with several scenes that together form a decorative frieze that follows on the bottom of the pages. The structure of this frieze always remains the same: there are two medallions and some figures with vegetal ornaments around them (fig. 183). Still, the distribution of the scenes inside the months differs from page to page. For example, February (fol. 16v) is illustrated with four scenes, while March (fol. 17r) with only two or three. While the medallions provide strict borders to the scene inside, the figures outside them form additional scenes that take place before and after on both sides of the medallions. Moreover, we see that one medallion does not necessarily mean one separate scene. April (fol. 17v) is represented with two images linked inside the frames: one of a horseman and the other of a horsewoman. Finally, to make things even more complicated, some topics are repeated for different months. For instance, hunting represents both January (fol. 16r) and February.

Returning to the Genoese wall-painting, it is very tempting to look for strict divisions between the scenes and I believe that sometimes they are clearly separated, as in the example with the buildings. In a way, they play the role of the medallions from the *Supplicationes variae* – strict dividers and margins. But again, this strictness, however, does not mean that some scenes representing the same month do not merge into each other as it is seen in March.

²⁴ Some black and white images of the calendar in the *Supplicationes variae* are reproduced in Neff, 'Byzantium Westernized, Byzantium Marginalized', pp. 81–102.

Some Additional Observations on the Iconography of the Extant Months

January

The first preserved month is January, which is depicted on top of the door that leads to the courtyard (fig. 179). It is represented by the Roman god Janus, the patron of time, doorways, beginnings and endings. Despite the fact that it is usual to depict Janus for the month that bears his name,²⁵ it is especially significant to find this image in Genoa, the city that believed Janus to be its founder. As discussed many times in the historiography, the connection between the Roman god and the city appeared due to the Latin spelling of the word ‘door’ (*ianua*) and the medieval Latin name of Genoa – *Janua*. According to Beneš, starting from the twelfth century, Genoa used this symbolic connection with the Roman god to reinforce its civic union.²⁶ An image of gates is represented on Genoese coins and on the city seal of 1130 kept in the Montpellier archive,²⁷ and in primary sources, Genoa is often referred to as the ‘city of Janus’.²⁸

The Roman god on the frieze of the canons’ cloister of San Lorenzo is depicted with two faces as it is traditional. Although the painting is in very poor condition, it is possible to distinguish that Janus is sitting on a throne and holds a round object (an orb?) in his left hand and a long object difficult to recognise in the right hand. A woman dressed in blue stands next to him. Four people, apparently hunters, approach the god holding their catch as an offering. All the figures are of different sizes, and the head of the seated god rises above the group. The last extant figure of a huntsman faces the other way and is not approaching the god like the others are. The man is in motion, pulling his bow ready to shoot. Though generalisations about the representations of the labours of the months in specific regions are

²⁵ See, for example, the chapel at Pritz near Laval, Mayenne, the cathedral of Ferrara or the Aula Gotica at Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome (all from the thirteenth century).

²⁶ Beneš, *Urban Legends*, p. 69.

²⁷ Clario di Fabio, ‘Le sepolture episcopali a Genova’, in *L’évêque, l’image e la mort: identità et memoire au Moyen Âge*, ed. Nicolas Bock, Ivan Foletti and Michele Tomasi (Rome: Viella, 2014), p. 138, fig.6.

²⁸ Beneš cites an early Duecento chronicle of Ursone da Sestri in *Urban Legends*, p. 69.

hard to make, the scene of hunting is easier to find in relation to January (and also December) in Eastern calendars.²⁹ French calendars for January usually show scenes of feasting, while Italian calendars focus on more conceptual subjects, such as the process of warming one's self during cold weather.³⁰

The first half of the month, on the other hand, can be compared with the frescoes from the Aula Gotica at the monastery of Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome where Janus also represents January (fig. 184).³¹ Here he is sitting on a throne and a man on the right is giving him a bowl with food, cooked in a big pot by a smaller man near him. Upon closer observation, this motif can also be seen in the paintings at the canons' cloister – the first man to approach the god does not bring animals, but a bowl. Moreover, the large round object located in front of the figures may also be a cauldron, as seen in Rome, partly hiding the figure of the man. Further examples of January represented as a feast with Janus can be found in the cathedral of Fidenza (reliefs on the apse, twelfth century, fig. 185), or in several French Books of Hours made in the second half of the thirteenth century and today housed in the PML in New York.³² We should also notice that the *Supplicationes Variiae*, famous for combining Eastern and Western imagery, also depict a man shooting from a bow in January (fig. 183).³³

²⁹ Henri Stern, 'Poésies et représentations carolingiennes et byzantines des mois', *Revue Archéologique*, 45 (1955), p. 168; James Carson Webster, *The Labors of the Months in Antique and Medieval Art* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1938), p. 87. A comparison of diverse Western and Eastern traditions in Guido Tigler, *Il portale maggiore di San Marco a Venezia: aspetti iconografici e stilistici dei rilievi duecenteschi* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1995), for January as feasting and hunting in Byzantium, see *ibid.*, p. 169.

³⁰ As it was, for example, in the thirteenth-century lost calendar from Santa Maria de Aventino in Rome: Irene Quadri, 'Il perduto calendario di Santa Maria de Aventino', pp. 238–41. For the twelfth century labour of the months, see comparative tables in Webster, *The Labors of the Months*, pp. 175–80.

³¹ See first of all: *Gli affreschi dell'aula gotica del Monastero dei Santi Quattro Coronati: una storia ritrovata*, eds Andreina Draghi, Claudio Noviello, Francesca Matera and Giuseppina Filippi Moretti (Milano: Skira, 2006); Andreina Draghi, *Il Palazzo cardinalizio dei Santi Quattro a Roma* (Milan: Skira, 2012).

³² Colum Hourihane, *Time in the Medieval World: Occupations of the Months and Signs of the Zodiac in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2006), pp. 63, 65.

³³ Neff, 'Byzantium Westernized, Byzantium Marginalized', pp. 93–95.

According to my theory of a possible direct link between the paintings in the canons' cloister and Rome during the height of power of the Fieschi family in the middle of the thirteenth century, I should also draw attention to the stylistic similarity of the Genoese paintings with the mid-thirteenth-century decoration of a palazzo on piazza Lovatelli in Rome (fig. 186).³⁴ In both cycles the elongated figures are depicted in simple, but dynamic black outlines. The similarity is especially visible in the images of the hunting dogs with elegant thin bodies (fig. 186.2). The Roman decoration also occupies a white frieze and uses very simple six-petal flowers in the background, resembling the ones found in the first room of the canons' cloister in Genoa.

March

Six fishermen pulling a net full of catch represent the main part of the scene of March (fig. 180). The picture is notable for the dynamic curve of the net and the figures' poses. The men stand in different positions that accentuate the great force they need to apply to draw-in the net. Although the theme of fish and fishing was extremely popular in the Christian tradition, the Genoese scene appears to be an example of a local occupation (fishing with a rod is also depicted for February in the *Supplicationes Varias*, fig. 183). The depiction of fishing with nets in Christian art could be related, for example, to the calling of Simon and Andrew or the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. The iconography of the Christian scenes, however, differs greatly from the ones in the Genoese calendar. In other representations the men fishing are always sitting in a boat, and the net with the fish is hanging down from that boat.

According to James Carson Webster, fishing is never depicted for the month of March in the twelfth century, although the zodiac sign of *pisces* coincides with this month and we find it in an example of the labour of March in the twelfth-century pavement calendar in the

³⁴ Rossella Motta, 'La decorazione pittorica in un edificio in piazza Lovatelli', in *Il Duecento e la cultura gotica*, pp. 131–32.

crypt at San Savino, Piacenza.³⁵ Earlier zodiac examples include the Martyrology of Wandalbert of the ninth century (BAV, MS. Reg. lat. 438).³⁶ However, it seems unfounded to explain the appearance of the theme of fishing in the Genoese canons' cloister through the zodiac, as there is no signs of astrology in any other part of the cycle. The pruning of the tree is much easier to explain since the majority of manuscripts listed in the Index of Christian Art use the scene of pruning as an illustration of March.³⁷

We can find, however, the motif of fishing as a labour of this month in literature. Fishing is associated with March in the *Sonetti dei mesi* by Folgore da San Gimignano in the early fourteenth century:

Di marzo sí vi do una peschiera
d'anguille trote lamprede e salmoni,
di dèntali dalfini e storioni,
d'ogn'altro pesce in tutta la rivèra;
con pescatori e navicelle a schiera,
e barche, saettie e galeoni,
le qual se portino tutte stagioni
a qual porto vi piace a la primèra:
Che sia fornito di molti palazzi,
d'ogni altra cosa, che vi sie mestiero,
e gente v'abbia di tutt'i sollazzi;
chiesa non v'abbia mai né monastero,
lassate predicar i preti pazzi,
ch'anno troppe bugie e poco vero.³⁸

Sure enough, fish played an important part of the Genoese diet during March. Diagrams 4 and 5 of Franco Cazzola's research data on the subject show the drastic increase in fish sale during this month in Ferrara in 1498 and 1521.³⁹ Moreover, the fifteenth-century *Breviarium Fratrum Minorum* illustrated by Sano di Pietro for the Santa Chiara di Siena

³⁵ Charles E. Nicklies, 'Cosmology and the Labors of the Months at Piacenza: The Crypt Mosaic at San Savino', *Gesta*, 34, 2 (1995), pp. 111–12.

³⁶ Webster, *The Labors of the Months*, pp. 175–78; 41, pl. 11.

³⁷ Hourihane, *Time in the Medieval World*, pp. 80–92.

³⁸ *I sonetti di Folgore da San Gimignano*, ed. Ferdinando Neri (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1914), p. 36.

³⁹ Franco Cazzola, 'La città e il pane: produzioni agricole e consumi alimentari a Ferrara tra medioevo ed età moderna', in *A tavola con il principe: materiali per una mostra su alimentazione e cultura nella Ferrara degli Estensi*, eds Jadranka Bentini et al. (Ferrara: Corbo, 1988), p. 32. See also Alfredo Cattabiani, *Lunario: dodici mesi di miti, feste, leggende e tradizioni popolari d'Italia* (Milan: Mondadori, 2015), p. 82.

convent (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS. X IV 2, fol. 2r) demonstrates the following scene for March: on the right two Clarissan nuns pray in front of an altar and on the left outside the chapel a man works in the vineyard.⁴⁰ At the gateway, a basket full of fish symbolizes Lent, which occurred at this time of the year. Even though it is from a different period and region, I presume the situation in Genoa would have been similar, because Lent still coincides with this month most of the years.

Since some similarities between the ornamental decoration in Genoa and the cycle of the Aula Gotica at Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome have been brought up, I would like to suggest one more possible reading of this episode of the labours of the year in the canons' cloister of San Lorenzo. We do not know where January ends and how February was represented because of an extensive gap in the painting that surrounds the niche on this wall. But according to Bozzo and De Floriani, the only figure that survives from February is a man trimming a tree (fig. 187).⁴¹ At first sight, this can be contested given the presence of an almost monochrome figure of a man carrying a big fish on the left side of the man pruning. The man with the fish clearly belongs to the scene of fishing in March that comes after the pruning. Moreover, in French and Italian art (for example, in Carolingian cycles⁴² and manuscripts⁴³) the pruning of vines is very often regarded as an attribute of March.⁴⁴

However, if we look at the month of February at Santi Quattro Coronati, it is easy to notice that this is the only month that occupies an intermediate position with January and March (and the months that follow) being depicted in their own separate arches. February interrupts this architectural unity by being placed in front of the arch's column (fig. 184). It

⁴⁰ Cf. Raffaele Argenziano, 'L'iconografia del Breviarium Fratrum Minorum miniato da Sano di Pietro per il convento di santa Chiara di Siena', in *Le immagini del francescanesimo* (Spoleto; Perugia: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2009), p. 86.

⁴¹ De Floriani, 'Narrazione e decorazione a Genova e nelle riviere', p. 65; Bozzo, 'La decorazione pittorica del chiostro', p. 207.

⁴² Stern, 'Poésies et représentations carolingiennes et byzantines des mois', p. 149.

⁴³ Hourihane, *Time in the Medieval World*, pp. 80–92.

⁴⁴ Andreina Draghi states, however, that this depiction of March is not very common in Italy and that it was elaborated from Byzantine art: Andreina Draghi, 'L'aula "Gotica"', in *Il Duecento e la cultura gotica*, p. 174.

is also presented in a very similar position to the pruning man of the Genoese paintings, and even the plants that are being pruned in both cycles look alike and do not resemble the trees from the other scenes of the cycles in Rome and Genoa. Scholars do not offer any reasonable explanation to this intermediate position of February at Santi Quattro Coronati and suggest that it was a mistake of the painter.⁴⁵ But there seems to be a consistency in this phenomenon at least in Rome (and possibly, in Genoa) because in a calendar of the same period from Santa Maria de Aventino, now lost but reconstructed from later copies, the first three months do not have frames that divide them, while the extant scenes of April to July do (fig. 188).⁴⁶ The reason for such perception of February as a ‘transitional’ month might be explained through the number of days.⁴⁷

April

The next month is the only one named, with the word ‘Aprilis’ being inscribed on the upper red edge of the frieze (fig. 181). On the left side, there are three men sitting at a table inside a building. They wear red and white clothes and foliated wreaths. Each of them has a very specific appearance: the first is young, the second looks older (he seems to be wearing glasses⁴⁸ and has a beard), while the last one is middle-aged. A man of smaller stature offers food to the three characters under the roof and in a sense breaks the space of the building that would otherwise have been enclosed, and thus connects it with the next scene.

⁴⁵ *Gli affreschi dell’aula gotica del Monastero dei Santi Quattro Coronati*, pp. 115–16

⁴⁶ Quadri, ‘Il perduto calendario di Santa Maria de Aventino’, pp. 239–40.

⁴⁷ The Aventino calendar originally painted on the walls contains the dates of months and lists only 28 days, demonstrating that February was a shorter month already in the thirteenth century.

⁴⁸ Although many scholars have been pointing out the fact of the picturing of glasses, it is unclear if the man is actually wearing them, as the early examples were clumsier and similar to a *pince-nez*. The image in Genoa has earpieces but does not show any trace of a bridge on the nose. Thus, the picture can be either a poor drawing of the face or one of the earliest recorded images of glasses. The first, however, seems more likely. See Chiara Frugoni, *Medioevo sul naso: occhiali, bottoni e altre invenzioni medievali* (Rome: Laterza, 2001), pp. 3–27. Anna De Floriani in her paper on the calendar of the canons’ cloister of San Lorenzo also believes that the painter did not mean to draw glasses: De Floriani, ‘I più antichi affreschi della chiesa di San Giovanni di Pré’, p. 30, footnote 49.

Nothing has yet been written regarding the strong resemblance between the first scene of April and the Byzantine iconography of the Hospitality of Abraham. The subject is of particular importance in Eastern Christian art as a manifestation of the Holy Trinity. The scene is inspired by an episode of Genesis (18:1–16) recounting that Abraham was sitting by the Oak of Mamre when he saw three men. Abraham showed great hospitality, fetched a calf, sent Sarah to make cakes and a servant to prepare the calf. ‘And he took curd, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.’ The angels came to announce the birth of Isaac. The scene from San Lorenzo resembles the iconography of the Hospitality of Abraham where three men sit at a square table as seen in many examples starting from the famous fifth-century mosaics in San Vitale in Ravenna (sixth century) to many other medieval icons and monumental paintings (fig. 189). In some cases, the table is covered with a fringed tablecloth, as it is in Genoa and in the cathedral of the Assumption in Monreale, twelfth century (fig. 190). The small man holding a round object in the calendar of San Lorenzo corresponds to Abraham, who is often depicted in a diminutive size in front of the table serving food to the sitting angels. However, several details in Genoa do not fit into the classic iconography of the Old Testament Trinity. First, there are the features of the three men’s appearance and the foliage wreaths they wear instead of halos; traditionally, the three angels were depicted as identical to show that they are the three hypostases of one God. The composition, where all the characters sit in a row and on the same level, serves the same idea of the equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Secondly, the men sit inside a building and not under the tree of Mamre. Therefore, although some details of the Genoese painting do not follow the traditional Byzantine iconography, the uniqueness of the Genoese scene and its similarity to the famous Eastern Christian image is remarkable.

I should stress, however, that I am not suggesting that the Genoese painter included an image of the Eastern Trinity to this cycle. There is no notional correspondence between the

calendar and the feast of the Holy Trinity celebrated on a Sunday roughly two months after Easter (so definitely not in April). The men in the scene also do not look like the angels of the Trinity. On the contrary, the scene depicts lay figures (most possibly feasting on Easter) found also in two manuscripts produced in England during the eleventh and twelfth centuries and kept in the BL (Cotton MS. Julius A. VI, fol. 4v and Cotton MS. Tiberius B V/1, fol. 4v, figs 191 and 192) and in a later Italian cycle at the Torre Aquila in the castle of Trento, decorated c. 1400 and partly repainted in the sixteenth century (fig. 193).⁴⁹ The miniatures show three men sitting on an intricately decorated bench with goblets in their hands as illustrations of April. The fresco from Trento depicts a scene of feasting among the labours of May, which is more similar to the one in Genoa: we see two couples sitting around the table at some sort of picnic outside the city and by a fountain.

As a result, the Genoese scene of April becomes a tricky methodological case. It is definitely not an example of direct use of the iconography of the Trinity that existed in Eastern Christian cultures, so it is possible that the similarities are coincidental. The scene is very simple, which makes it almost archetypal to depict three men feasting, while a less significant, and smaller in size, character brings them more food. On the other hand, the painters of the English miniatures and the fresco in Trento provide a different composition for the same subject. Moreover, as we have seen in the first part of this thesis and especially in its first chapter, even though direct contacts with Byzantium were rare in the first half of the thirteenth century, Eastern Christian imagery had already existed in the Genoese visual range, so it is not impossible that a local painter could have seen the famous and widely-spread iconography of the Trinity. I therefore assume that the Genoese canons' cloister demonstrates the ways in which typical religious scenes were adapted for secular

⁴⁹ Enrico Castelnuovo, *Il ciclo dei mesi di Torre Aquila a Trento* (Trento: Museo provincial d'arte, 1987), pp. 56–57; idem, *I mesi di Trento* (Trento: Temi Editrice, 2018), p. 110.

narratives.⁵⁰ Elements of Byzantine imagery are mixed with more habitual Western subjects, while the usage of Eastern models in the calendar shows only a superficial knowledge of popular Eastern pictorial prototypes, but at the same time reveals that the painter did not belong to this culture.

The right half of the Genoese scene of April shows the theme of the shepherd, an antique theme that was adapted in Byzantine calendars (for example, the pavement of the villa of the Falconer, now at the Archaeological Museum of Argos⁵¹). In the West, the tradition was to depict a man carrying branches of flowers, but the theme of the shepherd can be found on the reliefs of San Marco in Venice and at Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome (figs 194–196). Guido Tigler ties the appearance of the shepherd in San Marco in the representation of April with a Byzantine prototype,⁵² while in Rome this scene most probably follows the Antique tradition. Although until now the Genoese scene has been interpreted as the sheepshearing, I would like to argue that the shepherds are actually killing the animals to provide food for the feast of Easter (compare figs 194 and 195).⁵³ The upper man in Genoa completely repeats the pose of the man from the portal of San Marco, while the position of the sheep's head in the lower scene reveals that the animal is already dead. The association of the lamb with the East that Tigler has proposed is clearly pronounced in Genoa.⁵⁴ The last element of the scene is a man riding a horse loaded with an excessive burden of grass to feed the sheep.

⁵⁰ On a similar adoption of biblical iconographies for the décor of San Marco, see Marc Rosen, 'The Republic at Work: S. Marco's Reliefs of the Venetian Trades', *The Art Bulletin*, 90, 1 (2008), p. 65.

⁵¹ Gunilla Åkerström-Hougen, *The Calendar and Hunting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer in Argos: a Study in Early Byzantine Iconography* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1974).

⁵² Tigler, *Il portale maggiore di San Marco a Venezia*, p. 183.

⁵³ See, for instance, De Floriani 'Narrazione e decorazione a Genova e nelle riviere', p. 65.

⁵⁴ Tigler, *Il portale maggiore di San Marco a Venezia*, p. 183.

May

The first scene on the next wall depicts the month of May (fig. 182). This is one of the best-preserved scenes of the whole decoration. The drawing seems more accurate and bright, especially the face of the man on the horse. By comparing it with other parts of the frieze, it would seem that several artists of diverse level of skill worked at the canons' cloister in Genoa, although the better quality of this part can also be explained by the better conservation state of the painting.

The scene of May begins with a picture of a building, seen from the outside (in April we saw the interior). The main character is a man riding a horse and wearing a floral wreath. As already mentioned, he has been associated with the King of May – a very traditional Western iconographical example for the fifth month of the year, which is directly linked with the festivities at the beginning of the month.⁵⁵ There is a man on foot behind him holding a branch of flowers, another traditional representation for the spring months (though usually April). A group of musicians leads the procession. Most of the instruments they are playing are typical for both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean:⁵⁶ a long white trumpet made in short sections, a dark red shawm, a short sort of pipe or a single *aulos*, a prototype of a violin – a four-string fiddle or a rebec with a bow, and finally a psaltery.⁵⁷ Because of their diverse power of sound, these instruments were rarely played together in one band. But the painter groups the *instruments hauts* and the *instruments bas*.⁵⁸ The loud instruments (trumpets,

⁵⁵ See Hourihane, *Time in the Medieval World*, pp. 118–25.

⁵⁶ On Byzantine instruments, see: Fernanda de Maffei, 'Gli strumenti musicali a Bisanzio', in *Bisanzio e l'ideologia delle immagini*, ed. Claudia Barsanti et al. (Naples: Liguori, 2010), pp. 323–48; on instruments and music at the court of Frederick II: Pierfranco Moliterni, '“Legere, scribere et cantare sciebat et cantilenas et cantiones invenire”: musica e danza al tempo di Federico II', in *Federico II: imagine e potere*, eds Maria Stella Calo Mariani and Rafaella Cassano (Venice: Marsilio, 1995), pp. 95–99.

⁵⁷ Jeremy Montagu, *The World of Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments* (London; Vancouver: David and Charles, 1976), pp. 21–51; Anthony Baines, *The Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁵⁸ Montagu, *The World of Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments*, p. 51.

shawms etc) were more often used outdoors in joyful or solemn processions,⁵⁹ while the softer instruments were usually employed for indoor intimate music. In the Genoese paintings, all the musicians are outside, but the wind instruments are closer to the King of May, while the string instruments continue the procession to accompany the dancing and resting women.

It is difficult to say where the scene ends. The whole frieze is disrupted after the detail of a man on a throne with a red cushion sitting under a canopy with a curtain tied to a pillar. This canopy above the throne is the first construction from the start of the depiction of May, which can be taken as an architectural detail, so it could potentially mark the start of the next scene. However, the character on the throne most probably was not the representation of the next month, since we find no similar figure for June anywhere else. It seems that the next scene could be the personification of the year, like there is on the pavement mosaics of the basilica of San Michele Maggiore in Pavia (twelfth century, fig. 197).⁶⁰ Another more likely possibility, though, is that the Genoese canons' cloister had a very extended scene of May, because we find a similar representation of this month in the calendar of San Marco, that also possibly follows Byzantine iconography, according to Tigler (fig. 198).⁶¹

Conclusion

The remaining cycle of the months in the canons' cloister of the cathedral of San Lorenzo displays, a mixture of visual traditions, as in San Giovanni di Pré. The sources of inspiration of the Genoese painters could come from Rome, Northern Italy, France, or Byzantium. In my opinion, its strongest resemblance is not with earlier Northern cycles, but with Roman art from the middle of the thirteenth century when the relationship with Rome was very

⁵⁹ As, for example, in the procession coming out of Constantinople at the Luttrell Psalter (BL, Add 42130, f. 164v), East Anglia, c. 1340.

⁶⁰ Alberto Arecchi, 'Il labirinto celeste. Note sui simboli nella Basilica e nel mosaico di San Michele', *Bollettino della Società Pavese di Storia Patria*, n.s., 56 (1994), pp. 71–96; Gillian Elliott, 'Representing Royal Authority at San Michele Maggiore in Pavia', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 2 (2014), pp. 145–74.

⁶¹ Tigler, *Il portale maggiore di San Marco a Venezia*, p. 188.

strong, especially at the time from 1243 to 1254 during the papacy of Sinibaldo Fieschi.⁶² I find clear visual affinity between the two cities in the ornamental decoration of the first room and some stylistic and iconographical concurrency in the calendar of the second room. Some striking similarities with the relieves of San Marco, produced at the same time, which Tiegler connects to the Byzantine tradition, can be explained either because Rome also housed some excellent examples of Byzantine imagery or because these similarities were actually inherited from the classical tradition (such as the sheep for April), which was of course widely present in Rome. Thus, although any attribution of the Genoese cycle is very subjective because of the state of preservation and the simplicity of the images, it seems to me that the decoration of both rooms was produced in the middle of the thirteenth century by a local painter familiar with contemporary Roman art.

In comparison with other cases of the adaptation of Eastern-Christian imagery, the decoration of the canons' cloister shows another type of the assimilation of Eastern elements. By the thirteenth century, many of them can be found in Western art and already part of the *lingua franca*. In other cases, I believe, the painter combined Western and Eastern iconographies of the months of the year as in the calendar on the façade of San Marco. Finally, I suppose that the artist used some examples of imagery very common in the East to illustrate unrelated topics (such as the scene of April). After all, we have examples of Eastern art being copied and transferred to the West in drawings that other painters could use for their work (such as the 'Freiburg leaf' from the Augustinermuseum, Freiburg im Breisgau, possibly produced around 1200 in Acre⁶³) or examples of manuscripts that were produced in cooperation with Byzantine painters (as the *Supplicationes Variæ*, end of the Duecento). The very common image of the Eastern Orthodox Trinity could also have been copied and

⁶² If the connection with Rome through the Fieschi existed in the images of the canons' cloister, I believe it was more likely to happen in the middle of the century (rather than later), when the influence of the family on the canons of the cathedral was not as strong: Gardner, 'The Artistic Patronage of the Fieschi Family', pp. 310–11.

⁶³ Folda, *Crusader Art*, p. 77.

brought to Italy. With its significant contacts with the Christian East, Genoa seems to be a likely place for the circulation of such information in the thirteenth century.

Part III. Bearers of a Different Cultural Identity: around the Church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni

This part will deal with different manifestations of Armenian culture in Genoa. Although Armenia is often named as a trading partner of Genoa in the East, and the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni is widely known in scholarship as the place that keeps one of the versions of the Mandylion, to my knowledge, surprisingly little has been done to deepen the understanding of the relations between Genoa and Armenia. In general works on medieval Genoa, Armenia and in particular Cilicia are usually only mentioned as one of the many Genoese markets in the East.¹ The situation is similar in studies mainly focused on medieval Armenia, where Genoa and Venice appear briefly as trading partners in the Western-oriented political life of Cilicia.² Surprisingly, the two extensive volumes on the Genoese Mandylion leave the question of the Armenian church almost completely out of focus.³ Finally, although some research has been done on the presence of Armenians in Italy, Genoa usually occupies a very small part in these works.⁴

In this following chapter, I intend to gather the available published information on the interactions between Genoa and Armenia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,

¹ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 189, 191; Sandra Origone, ‘Colonies and Colonisation’, in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, pp. 511–13.

² *Armenia Sacra: Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (VI–XVIII siècle)*, eds Jannic Duran, Ionna Rapti and Dorota Giovannoni (Paris: Somogy Éditions d’Art, 2007); *Armenia: Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages*, ed. Helen C. Evans (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018), pp. 88–89, 136–37.

³ *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto, da Bisanzio a Genova*, eds Gerhard Wolf, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Milan: Skira, 2004); *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli 11–14)*, eds Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2007).

⁴ Boghos Levon Zekiyian, ‘Le colonie armene del Medio Evo in Italia e le relazioni culturali italo-armene (Materiali per la storia degli armeni in Italia)’, in *Atti del I Simposio Internazionale d’arte armena* (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1978), pp. 803–946; *Gli Armeni in Italia*, ed. Boghos L. Zekiyian (Rome: De Luca, 1990); ‘Gli Armeni nell’Italia Medievale (VI–XV secolo)’, in *Roma – Armenia*, ed. Claude Mutafian (Rome: De Luca, 1999), pp. 195–234. Perhaps the most useful work today is Krzysztof Stopka, *Armenia Christiana: Armenian Religious Identity and the Churches of Constantinople and Rome (4th–15th Century)* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2017).

focusing in particular on the scarce testaments of an Armenian presence in the Ligurian city before the arrival of Armenian monks around 1308. A large part of the examination will be devoted to the history of the Bartholomites and the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. I will also analyse two important artefacts that are connected with this church: the practically unknown manuscript V3–834 from the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and the intensively-studied Mandylion. Concerning the latter, I will mostly focus on its possible links with Byzantine and Armenian history and providing a comparison with other Genoese relics from the East.

Chapter 6. Genoa, Armenia and the Bartholomites:

Dynamics of Cultural Interactions

Armenian Interactions with Genoa in the East

When it comes to the role of the Armenians in Italy, Venice is usually named first because the diaspora's presence there is widely known with regard to the foundation of the Mekhitarist monastery in 1717. However, the cultural exchange between the Armenians and Italians started a long time before the eighteenth century. The existence of Armenians in Italy can be traced back to Antiquity, to the time when Roman emperors wanted to conquer Armenia and make it one of the eastern provinces of the Empire. Since 20 CE, Armenian kings were crowned in Rome – the first time when Tiberius laid a crown upon the head of Tigran III.⁵ A more constant presence of Armenians in Italy is attested later and coincides with the rising influence of Byzantium in the sixth century. According to Zekiyan, by this time the Armenians were perceived as part of the Byzantine culture rather than on their own.⁶ A large Armenian population could be found in Ravenna and in other Byzantine territories

⁵ Giovanni Guaita, *1700 Years of Faithfulness: History of Armenia and its Churches* (Moscow: FAM, 2002), pp. 46–47.

⁶ Zekiyan, 'Le colonie armene', p. 806.

in Italy. A few centuries later written sources and toponyms indicate that Armenians were differentiated from other cultural groups.⁷ Due to their strong bonds with the East, the South of Italy had a long history of the Armenian presence, and today we find there churches with Armenian ties, for example, in Bari (San Giorgio degli Armeni, eleventh century) and in Matera (Santa Maria de Armenis, eleventh century).⁸

With the rise of the Cilician Kingdom in the eastern Mediterranean during the twelfth century, the connection with the Latin West becomes more direct and independent from Byzantium.⁹ For the next two centuries, western merchants, crusaders and mendicant friars made a great impact on the culture of Cilicia, the so-called Lesser Armenia, establishing an immediate contact with this state.¹⁰

After long struggling with Byzantium, Antioch, and the crusaders, Levon II (1150–1219) received in 1198 the crown from the hands of a representative of the Holy Roman Empire and became the first king of Cilicia as Levon I. In order to avoid conflict with Byzantium, he was later crowned again by the Byzantine emperor. However, the future the pro-Western policy of his kingdom was already perceptible in the mentioned previous event. The first ceremony was held in Tarsus and was attended by a Roman legate, Armenian nobility, as well as Latin, Syrian and Greek clergy.¹¹ As a consequence of Levon's foreign affairs, Armenia granted trade privileges to Genoa (March 1201) and Venice (December

⁷ For instance, the 'Rock of the Armenians' or the Qal' at' al-'Armanin in Sicily conquered by the Arabs in 861: see Gaiane Casnati, 'Presenze armene in Italia', in *Gli Armeni in Italia*, p. 28.

⁸ Claudine Delacroix-Besnier, 'I monaci basiliani in Italia', in *Roma – Armenia*, p. 208.

⁹ On the history of the kingdom of Cilicia, one of the main works is Claude Mutafian, *Le royaume arménien de Cilicie, XIIe–XIVe siècle* (Paris: CNRS, 2002). The map of the region: *ibid.*, fig. 1.

¹⁰ See 'Itinerarium fratris Willielmi de Rubruquis de ordine fratrum Minorum, Galli, Anno gratie 1253, ad partes Orientales', in Richard Haklyut, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London: George Bishop, Ralph Newberie and Robert Barker, 1599–1600), vol. 1, pp. 72–92.

¹¹ On the coronation of Levon I, see Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (13e–15e siècles)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1977), p. 49; Mutafian, *Le royaume arménien de Cilicie, XIIe–XIVe siècle*, pp. 41–43.

1201), and later to Pisa, Florence and other Italian cities.¹² This allowed the Italians to build on Armenian soil houses, churches and *fondaci* – special buildings that were used as shops and hotels for merchants. Additionally, they received tax exemptions, protection of goods and people in case of a shipwreck, and juridical independence in conflicts inside the community.¹³ Before the middle of the thirteenth century, the main cities of Genoese presence in the region were Sis and Tarse. After the arrival of the Mongols in the 1230s¹⁴ and of the Mamelukes in the 1260s,¹⁵ commercial routes were transferred to Ayas (or Laiazzo, today Yumurtalik, Turkey) and Famagusta in Cyprus.¹⁶ In Ayas, the Genoese constructed a church consecrated to St. Lawrence, while the Venetians built one dedicated to St. Mark. In 1320, the see of the Latin archdiocese was also moved to this city, and the Genoese church took on the role of a cathedral. According to Krzysztof Stopka, the bishop in Ayas was to minister to the ‘Armenians and Latin-rite Catholics living in the city and the diocese, but as suffragan to the Catholicos of Armenia’.¹⁷ The Genoese also had special notaries in each city that left extensive juridical and commercial acts now considered an invaluable source for the reconstruction of the socio-political life of the region.¹⁸ The

¹² Ghewond M. Alishan, *Sissouan ou l’Arméno-Cicilie. Description géographique et histoire* (Venice: S. Lazar, 1899), pp. 463–65. For the Genoese privileges, see ‘Liber Iurium Reipublicae Genuensis, I’, eds Cornelio Desimoni and Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, in *Historia Patriae Monumenta*, vol. 7 (Turin: Regia Deputazione sopra gli studi di Storia Patria, 1854), col. 468–70; *Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*, vol. 1, 2, ed. Dino Puncuh (Genoa: SLSP, 1996), № 344, pp. 164–66. Another privilege was granted in 1215, see *ibid.*, № 346, pp. 168–71.

¹³ Catherine Otten-Froux, ‘Le commerce cilicien du XIIIe au XIVe siècle’, in *Arménie, entre Orient et Occident: trois mille ans de civilisation* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1996), p. 134.

¹⁴ Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220–1335)* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011).

¹⁵ Angus Donal Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks: War and Diplomacy During the Reigns of Het’um II (1289–1307)* (Leiden; Boston; Cologne: Brill, 2001).

¹⁶ The Genoese notarial documents from Ayas with an extensive introduction in Laura Balletto, *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: atti rogati a Laiazzo da Federico di Piazzalunga (1274) e Pietro di Bargone (1277, 1279)* (Genoa: Università di Genova, Istituto di medievistica, 1989).

¹⁷ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 202–3.

¹⁸ Catherine Otten-Froux, ‘L’Aïas dans le dernier tiers du XIIIe siècle d’après le notaires génois’, *Asian and African Studies*, 22 (1988), pp. 147–71.

interdicts of the Popes that banned any deals with the infidels at the end of the Trecento made the Armenians even more desirable trade agents.¹⁹

Predictably, we can also trace the Armenian presence in the Genoese eastern colonies. Genoese notarial documents in Caffa (today Feodosia, Crimea) record Armenians of diverse professions in the thirteenth century: furriers, bakers, fishmongers and moneylenders.²⁰ During the Trecento, in Pera, there were at least two Armenian churches: the church of the Virgin Mary, which remained to the middle of the fourteenth century, and the church of St. Gregory the Illuminator, which was founded in 1389.²¹ Catholic Armenians were appointed by the Pope to take important positions in the eastern clerical hierarchy: for instance, in 1342 Clement VI made the Armenian monk Alexander bishop of Pera.²² We find an even wider Armenian presence in Caffa, where they formed a large part of the population and played an active social role.²³ According to Genoese sources, the Armenians had at least three churches here, devoted to St. Serge, St. George and the Trinity.²⁴

Armenians in Genoa before the Fourteenth Century

Although Armenian diasporas were present in Italy from very early times, and the Genoese lived side by side with Armenians in the eastern Mediterranean, it seems that the contacts in Genoa were limited up to at least the very end of the thirteenth century.²⁵ According to Zekiyan, the appearance of a large Armenian diaspora in the city is closely connected with the growth of the Basilian (or Bartholomite) order in the fourteenth century and the

¹⁹ Otten-Froux, 'Le commerce cilicien', p. 135; Stefan K. Stantchev, *Spiritual Rationality: Papal Embargo as Cultural Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 125–28.

²⁰ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, p. 173, footnote 120. More on the professions took by the Armenians in Genoese strongholds in Balard, 'La Romanie génoise', pp. 284–85.

²¹ Quirini-Popławski, *Sztuka Kolonii Genuenskich*, p. 117.

²² *Ibid.*; Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 278–79.

²³ Khvalkov, *The Colonies of Genoa in the Black Sea Region*.

²⁴ Balard, 'La Romanie génoise', p. 284.

²⁵ See Michael Balard, 'Le minoranze orientali a Genova (sec. XIII–XV)', in *La storia dei Genovesi*, vol. 3 (Genoa: Centro internazionale di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova, 1983), pp. 71–90.

establishment of their mother-church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni in 1308.²⁶ However, there are several other accounts that sometimes appear in scholarship as evidence of an earlier Armenian presence. For instance, as it was mentioned with regard to Santa Maria del Carmine and the origins of the Carmelites, since the early twentieth century it has been noted that in Genoa the consecration of churches, monasteries, chapels and altars to St. Bartholomew, the Armenian patron saint, can be sign of a link with Cilicia especially in the places that were connected with the Fieschi family.²⁷

To my knowledge, Arturo Ferretto was the first scholar to propose this idea at the beginning of the twentieth century. He based his theory on the fact that Jacopo da Varagine (whom he calls *Jacomo*) in the *Legenda Aurea* described St. Bartholomew as the patron of Armenia, as well as on the fact that Pope Bonifazio VIII (1294–1303) issued a decree in 1298 to celebrate the feast of St. Bartholomew in both rites, issued in 1298.²⁸ Daniele Calcagno repeated Ferretto's passage at the end of the century and concluded that 'a volte' the consecration of a place in Genoa to this saint could imply its association with the Armenian presence and that it is worth finding places founded by the Fieschi and consecrated to this saint.²⁹ In the article devoted to Opizzo Fieschi (first half of the thirteenth century – 1292³⁰), patriarch of Antioch, Calcagno described the important role that he played in the interactions between the papacy, Armenia and Genoa. However, in an article from the same volume written by Paola Bertolina, his words became a testimony that, for instance, the arrival of the Cistercian monks from Cilicia at the beginning of the fourteenth century was

²⁶ Zekiyan, 'Le colonie armene del Medio Evo in Italia', p. 275.

²⁷ See Chapter 2, p. 87. For the churches that scholars have associated with the Armenians in Genoa, see fig. 199.

²⁸ Arturo Ferretto, 'Giovanni Mauro di Carignano: rettore di S. Marco, cartografo e scrittore', *ASLSP*, 52 (1924), pp. 39–41.

²⁹ Daniele Calcagno, 'Il patriarca di Antiochia Opizzo Fieschi, diplomatico di spicco per la Santa Sede fra Polonia, Oriente Latino e Italia del XIII secolo', in *I Fieschi tra Papato e Impero*, ed. Daniele Calcagno (Lavagna: Comune, 1997), pp. 243–45.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

the result of ‘political, diplomatic and pastoral actions of Opizzo Fieschi’.³¹ Since its publication, the connection between St. Bartholomew, the Fieschi, Genoa and the Armenians became basically a fact, and researchers used it to prove the existence of an Armenian presence in Genoa before the documented arrival of the Bartholomite monks in 1307.³² For instance, Ferreto’s theory was used as one of the arguments to suggest that the church of San Salvatore in Lavagna, a stronghold of the Fieschi near Genoa, followed some Armenian architectural examples.³³ In 2011, Clario Di Fabio turned to this idea again in the context of the history of Santa Maria del Carmine and of its land donors’s professional connection with Armenia, and considered the depiction of St. Bartholomew as possible evidence of the arrival of the Genoese Carmelite friars from the Black Mountain in Cilicia.³⁴

I would like to underline that Ferreto’s original words should be used with great caution. Truly, the connection between the Apostle Bartholomew and Armenia in the *Golden Legend* is demonstrated: Jacopo described the preaching of Bartholomew in India as well as his death in Armenia, and mentioned his consequent patronage of Armenia.³⁵ He named Greater Armenia several times as the place where the saint preached and was martyred, though often being much more interested in the way that he was killed. And although Jacopo did not call St. Bartholomew the patron of Armenia directly, he followed Theodore’s story of God’s will to send him to preach in these lands.³⁶

However, the problem of this theory is that there are many other churches in Genoa that have been consecrated to St. Bartholomew and that do not have any connections with

³¹ Paola Bertolina, ‘Servizi di strada armeni e percorsi fliscani’, in *I Fieschi tra Papato e Impero*, pp. 380–81.

³² Colette Dufour Bozzo, ‘Trent’anni dopo: misteri svelati, misteri da svelare’, in *Mandyllion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 38–39.

³³ Paola Bertolina, ‘Elementi di architettura armena nella ‘basilica’’, in *San Salvatore dei Fieschi: un documento di architettura medievale in Liguria*, eds Marina Cavana, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Costanza Fusconi (Milan: Silvana, 2000), pp. 205–6.

³⁴ Di Fabio, ‘Gli affreschi di Manfredino’, pp. 100, 102–3, footnote 72.

³⁵ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, pp. 666–74.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

Armenia.³⁷ As proof of the connection between the Fieschi and St. Bartholomew and thus a sign of the Armenian presence, researchers have been naming churches, altars and chapels devoted to the saint, such as the small altar in the church of San Marco al Molo and the chapel of St. Bartholomew in the demolished church of San Francesco di Castelletto.³⁸ Though these places had indeed some general ties with Eastern cultures and a much stronger connection with the Fieschi, to my knowledge, there is no direct evidence to link them with Armenia apart from their consecration to St. Bartholomew which is not enough to label them ‘fondazioni armene’.³⁹ On the other hand, as far as I know, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni is directly linked to Cilicia but does not have any documented connections with the Fieschi, while Santa Maria de Iubino, a now non-existent church which also certainly had origins in Cilicia, was not consecrated to St. Bartholomew. Thus I believe that the connection between St. Bartholomew and Armenia was not more special in Genoa than in any other Christian place, and the veneration of the Armenian patron saint can be traced in the consecrations of the buildings connected with the Fieschi.⁴⁰ However, these links seem to me too vague to be considered as any solid proof of the Armenian presence in Genoa.

Paola Bertolina, introduced another site in the city that, as she claimed, demonstrates the Armenian presence there: the church of Santo Spirito in the quarter of San Vincenzo (today a secular building – fig. 200).⁴¹ As the main argument for the church’s Armenian

³⁷ The other medieval churches that I searched: the abbey of San Bartolomeo del Fossato (before the thirteenth century), San Bartolomeo di Promontorio (beginning of the twelfth century), San Bartolomeo di Staglieno (1130), San Bartolomeo della Certosa (end of the thirteenth century), and San Bartolomeo dell’ Olivella (1305) near Santa Maria del Carmine. See Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle Chiese*; Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, MS. 835–846; Giuseppe Marcenaro, Francesco Repetto, *Dizionario delle Chiese di Genova*, vol. 1 (Genoa: Edizioni Tolozzi, 1974); *Chiese di Genova* (Genoa: Sagep, 1986); *Le chiese genovesi*, eds Luigi Alfonso and Aldo Padovano (Genoa: De Ferrari, 2014). I should note, however, that many of them are outside and sometimes far from the medieval contour of Genoa.

³⁸ Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia Opizzo Fieschi’, p. 245, Di Fabio, ‘Gli affreschi di Manfredino’, pp. 102–3.

³⁹ Bertolina, ‘Servizi di strada armeni’, p. 381.

⁴⁰ But also most possibly not to the extent that researchers often want to believe: see Gardner, ‘The Artistic Patronage of the Fieschi Family’, p. 315.

⁴¹ Bertolina, ‘Servizi di strada Armeni’, pp. 382–83; Massimiliano Spinola, Giovanni Cristoforo Gandolfi, *Descrizione di Genova e del Genovesato*, vol. 3 (Genoa: Ferrando, 1846), p. 181.

connection, Bertolina named the frescoes of the sacristy. According to her, the clothes of the saints whom she called Armenians differ from the traditional Greek clothing, though the inscriptions are written in Greek and the depicted saints do not seem to have been particularly venerated in Armenia: Sts Basil, Anastasius of Antioch, John Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianzen. Unfortunately, although the church was founded in the twelfth century, the frescos were produced in the second half of the sixteenth century and cannot be considered, especially by themselves, as proof of an earlier presence of the Armenians in Genoa.

However, an important differentiation that Bertolina made concerns the presence of Armenian pilgrimage as opposed to a whole stable diaspora. She dates their appearance to at least 1210, when the church of San Pietro degli Armeni is first documented in Pontecurrone (c. 80 km from Genoa).⁴² And though this date can seem vague, the researcher analysed the road that connected Genoa with diverse religious and political centres. Stopka also suggests that pilgrimage from Armenia to Europe was a regular occurrence and connected the appearance of the Armenian monasteries in Pontecurrone, Genoa and other Italian cities with their location on the roads used by pilgrims from Greater Armenia and Cilicia.⁴³ This interaction seems to me more plausible with regards to the first half of the thirteenth century, also because it seems that the Armenians did not have much interest in travelling to the West if it was not for religious purposes. They did not have a fleet, all the contacts happened in the markets of Cilicia or in Genoese colonies, while the Armenian Church was often in opposition to Western influences and tried to stop the spread of Latin language in its lands.⁴⁴

The situation changed however in the second half of the thirteenth century and especially after 1292 when the Mamelukes invaded Cilicia. During this time, we find

⁴² Bertolina, 'Servizi di strada armeni', p. 386.

⁴³ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 156–57.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 155–56.

evidence of an intensified correspondence between the Papacy and Armenian monasteries asking for help against the conquerors. In the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Armenian churches are being founded throughout Italy after a wave of immigration from Cilicia and especially from the monasteries of the Amanus mountains.⁴⁵ Although sources often give the name of the area from where the monks arrived – as the ‘Black Mountain’, it is hard to determine a precise location where the monasteries were originally situated.⁴⁶ According to Gregorio Bitio, before ‘the Turks and Saracens’ came to these lands, there were nine thousand monks that followed the rule of St. Basil.⁴⁷ The fleeing monks could head either to Caffa or to the West in hope of gaining the attention of the Pope to their sufferings and to get some help against the invaders. Genoa, as one of the greatest naval forces of that time, was one of the most obvious destinations.

Santa Maria dello Zerbino, or *di Iubino* as it was named originally, was a church that was founded in Genoa by Cistercian monks who escaped the Mamelukes’ arrival in the Black Mountain.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, there is not much evidence about this church since it has not survived today. According to Jean Richard and Valeria Polonio, several Cistercian monks⁴⁹ left the Black Mountain in Cilicia (after 1256), travelled through Cyprus (1269) and came to Genoa (between 1294 and 1297) to establish the monastery Santa Maria de Iubino in 1308.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ On the correspondence and the foundation of Armenian churches in Italy, see *ibid.*, pp. 180–83.

⁴⁶ *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, 31 vols, ed. Luc Courtois (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1912–2015), VI (1932), col. 1038. In more detail about the names of the mountains, see Ghewond M. *Alishan, Sissouan*, p. 482.

⁴⁷ Gregorio Bitio, *Relazione del principio e stato dela sagra regione de’ Frati di San Basilio degli Armeni in Italia* (Pavia: n.a., 1640), p. 18.

⁴⁸ Lagomarsino, ‘Collezione e notizie intorno alle chiese di Genova’, ASG, MS. 556, pp. 360–89; Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, MS. 840, fol. 129–46; Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, ‘Illustrazione del registro arcivescovile’, *ASLSP*, 2, 1 (1873), p. 425, footnote 1; Jean Richard, ‘L’abbaye cistercienne de Jubin et le prieuré Saint-Blaise de Nicosie’, *Επετηρίς Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, 3 (1970), pp. 63–74; Leopold Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium* (Vienna: Hoelder, 1877), vol. 1, pp. 217–18; Maria Teresa Maiolino, C. Varaldo, ‘Diocesi di Genova’, in *Liguria monastica, Italia benedettina*, 43 vols (Cesena: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1977–2018), II (1979), pp. 131–32; Valeria Polonio, ‘I cistercensi in Liguria (secoli XII–XIV)’, in *Monasteria nova*, ed. Colette Dufour Bozzo and Anna Dagnino (Genoa: Donati, 1998), pp. 36–39; Di Fabio, ‘Gli affreschi di Manfredino’, p. 100.

⁴⁹ On the reasons why since the beginning of the thirteenth century many monasteries of Cilicia became Cistercians, see Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude*, p. 133.

⁵⁰ Jean Richard, ‘L’abbaye cistercienne de Jubin’, p. 72; Polonio, ‘I cistercensi in Liguria’, pp. 36–39.

Researchers have been trying find the exact monastery of origin in Cilicia. Leopold Janauschek and Ghewond M. Alishan have named two Cistercian monasteries in the Black Mountain which have the addition *de Iubino* in their names: St. George and St. Sergius.⁵¹ According to Janauschek, the monastery of St. George could have been the one from whence the friars came to Genoa, while Polonio has suggested a third option, the one of the monastery of the Virgin Mary on the Black Mountain, stemming from the fact that the monastery in Genoa was devoted to the Virgin too.⁵² Scholars have also traced some information regarding the presence of these monks in Cyprus: there is a notarial copy (1456) of two earlier documents that claim the right of the Genoese Cistercian monastery to some realty in Cyprus.⁵³

We do not know much more about Santa Maria dello Zerbino in Genoa, because no material trace has survived to our time and its exact location is unknown. But the toponyms of the city use the vulgarised name *Zerbino* and give us an idea of its approximate location. It seems that it was located in the same region of Multedo, where the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni was founded later, in 1308 (fig. 201). And it seems that many details concerning the early history of the monastery of Santa Maria dello Zerbino are similar to those of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. Both were men's monasteries, had the same region of origin, time of foundation, consecration, and location in Genoa. Due to the very scarce evidence left about the Zerbino monastery, it could seem that it was actually the same church mentioned in later sources but under two different names. However, several documents state both churches together suggesting that indeed, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, two separate churches were founded in Multedo by monks that arrived from Cilicia. The first document is the act of Archbishop Porchetto Spinola concerning the foundation of the church

⁵¹ Alishan, *Sissouan*, p. 491.

⁵² Polonio, 'I cistercensi in Liguria', pp. 37–38, footnote 61.

⁵³ Belgrano, 'Illustrazione del registro arcivescovile', p. 425, footnote 1; Jean Richard, 'L'abbaye cistercienne de Jubin', pp. 63–74; Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium*, pp. 217–18; Maiolino, Varaldo, 'Diocesi di Genova', pp. 131–32; Polonio, 'I cistercensi in Liguria', pp. 36–39.

of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni that also gives us a *terminus ante quem* for the time when the Cistercian monastery already existed. At the end it names the witnesses of the act, among whom the first one is ‘Beltrame abate monasterii de Zerbino Ianuensis Diocesis’.⁵⁴ We also find representatives of both churches mentioned as participants of the Council in Pisa (1409): ‘R. vir F. Dominicus prior prioratus S. Bartholomæi prope Ianuam’ and ‘D. . . . ab. monast. S. Mariae de Iubino, ord. . . . Ianuensis dioec’.⁵⁵ The presence of both monasteries in the same region raises several questions concerning the presence of an Armenian community in these suburbs of Genoa, but, as discussed earlier, there is not enough evidence to conduct a comprehensive study on this subject yet.

One more historical episode which was linked to the immigration from Cilicia at around the same time. It is a description of an Ethiopian diplomatic mission in Genoa in 1306 that we find in the eighteenth-century *Annali Ecclesiastici della Liguria* by Agostino Schiaffino: ‘in quest’anno passarono per Genova li Ambasc[iatori] del [Prete Giovanni] Imperatore dell’Etiopia, mandati da esso al Re di Spagna, i quali, essendosi condotti in Avignone, ove con la corte Romana risiedeva il Pontefice Clemente, di quindi si inviarono a Roma a Visitare la Chiesa de Santi Pietro e Paolo, fecero qualche dimora in Genova nel ritornarsi nel suo paese per aspett[are] la comodità del tempo atto alla Navigazione, molte cose in questa città riferirono della Religione loro e de loro costumi, che furono raccolte in un suo volume, che ne scrisse un certo Prete Preposito della Chiesa di S. Marco’.⁵⁶

The ambassadors stopped in Genoa to wait for better nautical conditions on their way from Avignon to Rome. According to Ferretto, together with the Ethiopian ambassadors,

⁵⁴ For example, in Laura Beretta, Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, ‘Il secondo registro della curia arcivescovile di Genova’, *ASLSP*, 18 (1887), pp. 485–60.

⁵⁵ Philippe Labbé, Gabriel Cossart, Etienne Baluze, *Sacrosancta Concilia ad regiam editionem exacta ... ab anno M.CC.LXXXV. ad annum M.CCCC.XIII* (Paris: Societas Typographica Librorum Ecclesiasticorum, 1671), vol. 11, 2, col. 2221, 2227.

⁵⁶ Agostino Schiaffino, ‘Annali ecclesiastici della Liguria del Reverendo Padre Fra Agostino Schiaffino Genovese’, vol. 3, *ASCG*, MS. Ricci, 79, pp. 27–28. Also cited in Ferretto, ‘Giovanni Mauro di Carignano’, p. 34.

there was also a group of Armenians who came to the West to ask for the Pope's support in their struggle with the Turkish invasion. The researcher drew this conclusion from the bull of Pope Clement V of July 1306 where an Armenian mission is described and the Pope promises indulgence to anyone who help these refugees.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, we do not have evidence whether the Armenians that were mentioned in the Papal bull were in fact part of the Ethiopian mission as the latter is not mentioned in this document.⁵⁸

The matters that I briefly touched upon here require further separate investigations. The connection of Italy and Armenia in the Middle Ages has been studied by many scholars, but the question of Armenian presence in Genoa before the fourteenth century has yet to be properly addressed. However, we can already say that the Armenian-Genoese relations were indeed close as many researchers point discussing the Mandylion or other artefacts that connect Genoa with Armenia. But it appears that most of the interaction up to at least the beginning of the fourteenth century occurred in the Genoese eastern colonies or in Cilicia, and so the Armenian presence in Genoa before the invasion of the Mamelukes was not as strong as it was in other Italian cities. In the following parts I will discuss the history of the Bartholomites, a congregation of originally Armenian monks that was formed in Genoa during the Trecento and quickly spread to many other Italian cities and two artistic objects that mirror the interaction between Genoa and Armenia: a manuscript produced in San Bartolomeo degli Armeni and the famous Mandylion donated to this church.

⁵⁷ Ferretto, 'Giovanni Mauro di Carignano', 34–35; Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient*, p. 197.

⁵⁸ Bull of 2 July 1306 in CICO, VII/1, n. 9, pp. 15–16.

The Question of the Basilian Order

There is a confusion with regards to the name of the Armenian monks that appeared in the fourteenth century in Genoa, and what the term ‘Basilian order’ entails.⁵⁹ The first sense suggests that these are the monks that follow the rule of St. Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea who lived in the fourth century. Along with Sts Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Basil is considered one of the three Cappadocian Church Fathers, who formed the doctrine of the Eastern Christian Church. In 356, he founded a monastery in Cappadocia and composed its rules that he addressed to the members of this monastery. In order to prepare these rules, St. Basil travelled to observe the life in several monasteries in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria. The Lesser and Greater Asketicon by St. Basil became equally significant in for the formation of Eastern monasticism, parallel to the rule of St. Benedict in the West.⁶⁰ However, it is very important to note that Byzantine monasteries never formed proper Orders (as it became typical in the Catholic church) and did not have special written rules or constitutions.⁶¹ The Asketicon was a religious direction, but not a code, composed in the form of responses to questions about ascetic life. Thus, all the monks of the Eastern Greek and Slavonic churches in practice are followers of St. Basil, but never call themselves ‘Basilians’.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, ‘Monaci Armeni Basiliiani di Genova’, in *Dizionario d’erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da San Pietro sino ai nostri giorni*, 13 vols, ed. Gaetano Moroni (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1840–1861), IV (1840), pp. 180–81; *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, VI (1932), col. 1038–1039; Delacroix-Besnier, ‘I monaci basiliani in Italia’, pp. 208–11.

⁶⁰ Ernest Frederick Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule: A Study on Early Monasticism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1912).

⁶¹ On St. Basil, his “rule” and the Basilians, see J. Pargoire, ‘Basile de Césarée et les Basiliens’, *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 30 vols, ed. Fernand Cabrol (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907–1953), II, 1 (1910), col. 504–6. On the organisation of Eastern monasteries, see Clemente Pujol, ‘Il monachesimo bizantino nella Legislazione del MP. “Postquam Apostolocis Letteris”’, *Il Monachesimo Orientale, Orientalia christiana Analecta*, 153 (1958), pp. 58–76 and Giovanni Rezac, ‘Le diverse forme di unione fra i monasteri orientali’, *ibid.*, pp. 99–135.

In the broad sense, a ‘Basilian’ monk is usually a follower of the rite of St. Basil within the Catholic Church.⁶² In Italy, the ‘Basilians’ had a very long history starting from the sixth century, when Justinian I invaded the peninsula and reached Rome and Ravenna. From that time onwards, and later intensified with the Byzantine restoration during the reign of Basil I in the ninth century, some Italo-Greek monasteries would follow the directions of St. Basil as opposed to the rule of St. Benedict. After the Great Schism (1054), some of them became part of the Eastern Orthodox Church, while others decided to remain in communion with the Catholic church.⁶³ However, after a short rise in their prestige during the first half of the fifteenth century that coincided with the time of the Council of Florence (1431–1449), the reforms of cardinal Bessarion in 1446, and the migration of Greeks following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the monasteries of the Basilian rite started to lose popularity and gradually declined in number.⁶⁴ In 1608, Gregory XIII founded a Basilian congregation and divided it into three provinces: Sicily, Calabria, and Rome. Today, the only monastery that belongs to this long tradition is the abbey of Santa Maria di Grottaferrata near Rome founded in 1004 by Nile of Rossano.

The Armenian friars in Genoa, who were Catholics and followed the rite of St. Basil, formed part of this intricate ‘Basilian’ phenomenon. However, since the Basilian Order never existed as a single organisation in the Middle Ages and is still today a source of endless confusion, it is more accurate and logical to call them the ‘Bartholomites’ (after the patron saint of their first church), despite the fact that in primary sources and secondary literature they are commonly labelled as the ‘Basilians’. For instance, we find this term in the first

⁶² ‘Basilian Monks’, in *Encyclopædia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Basilians> [accessed 27 June 2019].

⁶³ See a series of articles by Kirsopp Lake, ‘The Greek Monasteries in South Italy’, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 4, 15 (1903), pp. 345–68; 4, 16 (1903), pp. 517–42; 5, 17 (1903), pp. 22–41; 5, 18 (1904), pp. 189–202.

⁶⁴ On Bessarion and the Basilians, see Denis Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century: The Birkbeck Lectures, 1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 59; J. Pargoire, ‘Basile de Césarée et les Basiliens’, col. 510.

document that concerns the order, namely the bull of Pope Clement V in 1307,⁶⁵ and later in the work of Gregorio Bitio, an Armenian monk, who published the first history of the Bartholomites in 1640, shortly before the dissolution of the congregation.⁶⁶ But it should be remembered that since the Middle Ages until the present days, Western authors often name all Eastern monks, especially those from Byzantium, Greece, and Armenia as ‘Basilians’.⁶⁷

The Bartholomite Monks in Genoa and Italy

The history of the Bartholomites in Italy dates back to the very end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries and is connected with the already mentioned Mameluke invasion of Cilicia.⁶⁸ Marc Antoine van den Oudenrijn supposes that they could originate from the monastery of St. Basil, one of the largest monasteries in the area of the Black Mountain.⁶⁹ The suggestion is based on the worship of St. Basil by the congregation

⁶⁵ CICO, VII/1, n. 13, pp. 19–20.

⁶⁶ Although difficult to find, this still remains one of the main sources on the history of the order, providing detailed information and referring to documents that are often reproduced in the text: Bitio, *Relazione del principio e stato della sagra religione dei Frati di S. Basilio degli Armeni in Italia*.

⁶⁷ *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, VI (1932), col. 1180. See also CICO, VII/1, n. 30, pp. 51–52, where the monks of San Vito di Pizzo are also labelled as the Basilian Order.

⁶⁸ On the Bartholomites and their history, see: Agostino Calcagnino, *Dell'immagine edessena libri due con osservazioni storiche* (Genoa: n.a., 1639), pp. 224–31; Bitio, *Relazione*; Schiaffino, *Annali ecclesiastici*, vol. 3, pp. 34–36; Pierre Helyot, *Histoire des ordres monastiques, religieux et militaires*, 8 vols (Paris: J.B. Coignard, 1714–1719), I (1714), pp. 243–48; Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, pp. 52–63; Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, 2, 2, pp. 948–67; Cirill Korolevsky, ‘Bartholomites’, in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, VI (1932), coll. 1038–39; Marcus Antonius van den Oudenrijn, ‘Les constitutions des frères arméniens de saint Basile en Italie’, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 126 (1940); idem, ‘Die Messe des hl. Basilius bei den “Frati Armeni” in Italien’, *Handes amsorya*, 66 (1952), pp. 91–96; idem, *Linguae haicanae scriptores ordinis Praedicatorum Congregationis Fratrum Unitorum et FF. Armenorum Ord. S. Basilii citra Mare Consistentium quotquot huc usque innotuerunt recensebat ...* (Bern: Francke, 1960), pp. 245–95; Enrico Cadamuro, *L'immagine di Edessa ovvero Il Santo Sudario di Genova* (Udine: n.a., 1962), pp. 108–10; Zekiyan, ‘Le colonie armene del Medio Evo’, pp. 875–80; Alberto Carlo Scolari, ‘La chiesa di San Bartolomeo degli Armeni di Genova’, in *Atti del Primo Simposio di Arte Armena* (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1978), pp. 641–45; L. A. Redigonda, ‘Bartolomiti armeni’, in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, eds Guerrino Pelliccia and Giancarlo Rocca, 10 vols (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 1974–2003), I (1979), coll. 1073–75; Marcenaro, Repetto, *Dizionario delle chiese di Genova*, pp. 311–26; Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia’, pp. 250–56; Casnati, ‘Presenze armene in Italia’, p. 30; Delacroix-Besnier, ‘I monaci basiliani in Italia’, pp. 208–11; *The Oxford Dictionary of Christian Church*, eds Frank Leslie Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 165–66; Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 274–78.

⁶⁹ Van den Oudenrijn, *Les constitutions des frères arméniens*, p. 8. We find the same version, although very shortly mentioned, in Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia’, p. 256. On Armenian monasteries of the region and the monastery of St. Basil, see Alishan, *Sissouan*, pp. 487–88. On Catholic Armenian Orders, see Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 271–91.

in Italy: there is still today a bust of St. Basil in the narthex of the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni in Genoa (fig. 202), and he is called *beati Basilii patris nostris* in its constitutions, which date back to the middle of the fourteenth century.⁷⁰ But considering that the monks were labelled ‘Basilians’ starting from the earliest documents and the fact that all the evidence we have comes from a later time when the Bartholomites were already much Italianised, this theory is difficult to prove as there is no possibility to understand to which extent the first Armenian monks in Genoa associated themselves with St. Basil. It is important to highlight that the monks who arrived from Cilicia were Catholics, which also became a source of misinterpretation since the Bartholomites have often been confused with another congregation, the Uniate Friars of Armenia who were also Catholics.⁷¹

Although due to the lack of documents, it is difficult to say where the first monks appeared in Europe, it is clear that Genoa played one of the leading roles in the spreading of this congregation in Europe. Three monks who were leaving Cilicia – brothers Martino di Sagaritio, Guglielmo and Simone – received the instructions to go see the Pope, tell him about the oppression of the Armenian people, and then go *to any city* in Italy.⁷² Consequently, they embarked a Genoese ship in Ayas to escape the Mamluk invasion and to seek help for their brothers left behind.⁷³

After arriving in Europe, the two brothers went to see the Pope. The exact year of their first appearance in Genoa is unknown. Bitio states that it happened in 1307, but this seems somehow late considering that the Papal bull of 20 February 1307 granted them authorisation

⁷⁰ Van den Oudenrijn, *Les constitutions des frères arméniens*, p. 29.

⁷¹ Redigonda, ‘Bartolomiti armeni’, col. 1073. See also van den Oudenrijn, ‘Uniteurs et dominicains d’Arménie’, *Oriens christianus*, 40 (1956), pp. 94–112; 42 (1958), pp. 110–33; 43 (1959), pp. 110–19; 45 (1961), pp. 95–108.

⁷² In 1306, Constantine, archbishop of Mamistra also travelled to Avignon to ask for help of the Pope. See CICO, VII/1, n. 9, pp. 15–16.

⁷³ Bitio, *Relazione*, p. 21; Delacroix-Besnier, ‘I monaci basiliani in Italia’, p. 208.

to establish a new church in Genoa.⁷⁴ Schiaffino dates their arrival in the city to 1306, which I believe is more accurate.⁷⁵ A few months after granting permission to build a church, in the act dated 10 June, Clement V promised indulgence to anyone who would help the Armenian monks.⁷⁶ This led to the quick flourishing of the new monastery. In the beginning, its organisation resembled other Eastern monasteries: it kept its own rule and was governed by its own Ordinary. Fra Martino was the first monk appointed to this senior position. The Armenian monks went on to construct their own church: along with a hundred *lire*, a Genoese merchant Oberto Purpureio gifted them a piece of land in the quarter of Multedo, outside the city gates.⁷⁷ In return for this donation, the friars had to put his name on the walls among the founders. On 6 May 1308, Porchetto Spinola, Archbishop of Genoa, laid the first stone of the future church. The document that commemorates this event also mentions a third monk that came from the Black Mountain, a certain *frater Symonis*, as well as Fra Martino as the head of the friars.⁷⁸ The foundation of the church was then followed by a festivity. The Armenians dedicated their new church to the Virgin Mary and St. Bartholomew.⁷⁹

During the following years, the congregation continued to receive favours from Avignon. Pope John XXII (1316–1334) promised indulgence to anyone who would attend all the main celebrations for one year at the Armenian church.⁸⁰ This explains why the

⁷⁴ Bitio, *Relazione*, p. 21. There is also evidence of the presence of the Armenian monks in Bologna in 1303; see *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, vol. 1, col. 1074. But more likely it is just an example of an earlier presence of Armenians in Bologna, that later became part of the ‘Basilian’ order in Genoa, as in many other cities, for example, Perugia, discussed later in this chapter: see footnote 88. The Papal bull in CICO, VII/1, n. 13, p. 19–20; the text is also cited in Bitio, *Relazione*, pp. 22–23; Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia’, pp. 250–51.

⁷⁵ Schiaffino, *Annali Ecclesiastici*, vol. 3, p. 34.

⁷⁶ CICO, VII/1, n. 16, pp. 24–25.

⁷⁷ There is an inscription in the nartex of the church commemorating the event, and Calcagnino refers to a notarial document in *Dell’immagine Edessena*, p. 226; see also Bitio, *Relazione*, pp. 21–24; Michele Giuseppe Canale, *Storia civile commerciale e letteraria dei Genovesi*, vol. 3 (Genova: Gio. Grondona Q Giuseppe, 1845), p. 518; Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia’, pp. 252–53, footnote 422.

⁷⁸ Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, pp. 52–53; Calcagno, ‘Il patriarca di Antiochia’, p. 253, footnote 423.

⁷⁹ Scolari, ‘La chiesa di San Bartolomeo degli Armeni di Genova’, p. 641. The researcher refers to the documents from the Archivio di San Bartolomeo degli Armeni: MS. c., A2, n. 1, n. 3.

⁸⁰ CICO, VII/2, n. 5, 129, pp. 8–9, 240–41.

monastery continued to regularly receive alms. Soon, it started attracting other Armenian immigrants and pilgrims.⁸¹ After settling in Genoa and establishing the ‘mother church’ of the congregation, the Bartholomites began to expand through Tuscany and other regions of Italy (fig. 203). Bitio describes how in 1318, father Guglielmo founded new churches in Parma (San Basilio), Lucca (San Paolo),⁸² Siena (Santi Simone e Giuda), Pisa (Dio e di Sant’ Antonio), Florence (San Basilio, Santo Spirito), Rome (Santa Maria de Armeni), Forlì (Santa Anna), Faenza (San Sebastiano), and finally Ancona (Santo Spirito).

Bitio pointed out that several Armenian monks joined the congregation soon after the foundation and that the monastery ordered some Armenian books from Genoese merchants, who travelled to the East.⁸³ However, as quickly as with the second and third generations, the Bartholomites began to get assimilated with the local population. This was due to the difficulty of the Armenian language and the particularities of their rite, which prevented new people from joining the congregation in Italy. By the mid-fourteenth century, they adopted a new dress: instead of a red tunic with a black cape, they brought from the East, the Bartholomites started wearing a white tunic and a black scapular.⁸⁴ Moreover, they replaced their original rule with that of St. Augustine, while Latin took the place of the Armenian language in the liturgy, first in Milan and later in other cities. It has also been noted that in the documents of the congregation, the monks’ names became increasingly Italian.⁸⁵ Unlike later the Mekhitarists in Venice and Vienna, the constitutions of the Bartholomites allowed them to receive Italian monks into the Order. Due to the growth of the congregation, partly because of the acceptance of new members of non-Armenian origin, its expansion continued

⁸¹ See the history of the creators of the manuscript of 1325 from the Hermitage Museum in Chapter 7, especially p. 213.

⁸² Michele Bacci, ‘An Armenian Pilgrim in Medieval Italy: Cult and Iconography of St. Davinus of Lucca’, in *Armenian Studies Today and Development Perspectives* (Yerevan: Hayastani Hanrapetut‘yan Gitut‘yunneri Azgayin Akademia, Erevani Petakan Hamalsaran, 2003), pp. 548–58.

⁸³ Bitio, *Relazione*, pp. 26 and 28.

⁸⁴ Calcagnino, *Dell’immagine edessena*, pp. 227–28; Giscardi, *Origine e successi delle chiese*, p. 53.

⁸⁵ Van den Oudenrijn, *Les constitutions des frères arméniens*, p. 10.

(fig. 203); by 1356, Bartholomite monasteries were also found in Milan (Santi Cosmo e Damiano), Naples (Santo Spirito), Perugia (San Matteo fuori della porta di Sant' Angelo), Ferrara (San Benedetto), Bologna (Santa Maria Carmelata), Pistoia (San Onofrio), Padua (Santa Anna), and Pontecurone (San Pietro).⁸⁶ It should be noted however that some of the monasteries that at the time were under the jurisdiction of the Bartholomites, were, in fact, founded earlier, often in the mid-thirteenth century.⁸⁷ This indicates that the Pope assigned the existing scattered Armenian monasteries to the Bartholomites in order to bring administrative perspicuity and build a clear system in which the oriental friars would become a unified order, as it was usual in Latin West.⁸⁸

With the expansion of the congregation, its original organisation needed to be changed. Initially, as Bitio has pointed, the Basilians did not have a *Capo Generale*, and every new member had to promise obedience to the *Generale d'Oriente*.⁸⁹ But as Stopka has shown, by 1348, there was an internal need for organisation among the many Armenian monasteries which have been asking the Pope for several years to appoint a prior general for their congregation.⁹⁰ Finally, in the bull of 30 June 1356, Innocent VI incorporated the Bartholomites into the Dominican Order, putting them under the rule of the Master of the Order of Preachers.⁹¹ This event became another source of confusion for later historians because it almost coincided with a similar act addressed to the Uniate friars of Armenia, that

⁸⁶ Bitio, *Relazione*, pp. 32–33 and 36. See also Francesca Luzzati Lagana, 'Fondazione e prime vicende del monastero armeno di S. Antonio di Spazziavento in Pisa (XIV secolo)', in *Ad limina Italiae: in viaggio per l'Italia con mercanti e monaci armeni*, ed. Boghos Levon Zekiyan (Padua: Editoriale Programma, 1996), p. 130; Delacroix-Besnier, 'I monaci basiliani in Italia', p. 208.

⁸⁷ Alishan, *Sissouan*, p. 446, footnote 1, Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*, pp. 250–71.

⁸⁸ See, for example, the history of the Armenian monks in Perugia: their monastery was founded at the beginning of the 1270s and then passed under the rule of the Genoese Bartholomites. Cf. Zekiyan, 'Le colonie armene del Medio Evo', pp. 865–68, Giusto Traina, 'Materiali sulla presenza armena nella Perugia medievale', in *Ad limina Italiae*, pp. 97–114; Giovanna Casagrande, 'San Matteo degli Armeni nel contesto insediativo-religioso di Perugia (secc. XIII – XV)', in *Ad limina Italiae*, pp. 115–29, especially p. 120.

⁸⁹ Bitio, *Relazione*, p. 47.

⁹⁰ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, p. 275.

⁹¹ CICO, IX, n. 77, 78, pp. 140–44; *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, vol. 1, col. 1074; *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 74 vols (Rome: Angelicum University Press Romae, ad S. Sabinae; Institutum Historicum F.F. Praed., 1932–2004), XII (1942), pp. 206–8.

was issued on 31 January of the same year, and also affiliated them to the Dominican Order.⁹² But unlike the Genoese Bartholomites, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the Uniates already followed the Dominicans in habit, rule and constitutions.⁹³ The parallel assignation of the Armenian Catholic Orders under the Dominicans finally brought a structure to the Eastern congregations and monasteries under the rule of the Pope *extra* and *citra mare*.

Still, the administration of the Dominicans did not mean the dissolution of the Armenian congregation. The Papal bull of 1398 calls them *fratres ordinis Armenorum citra Mare consistentium, sub regula sancti Augustini et secundum instituta Fratrum Praedicatorum viventium*.⁹⁴ And although, as noted above, Latin became their main language, the Armenian language was still in use by the middle of the fourteenth century: the main example is the new Dominican constitutions that were translated into Armenian.⁹⁵ According to Claudine Delacroix-Besnier, General Chapters assembled in the largest churches of the congregation: Genoa (1356, 1389, 1452, 1489), Florence (1409, 1463, 1476, 1483), and Milan (1486, 1492, 1501, 1507, 1518).⁹⁶ In 1430, Marco Spinola donated a relic of St. Bartholomew to the monastery in Genoa – an inscription commemorating this gift can be seen in the narthex of the church (fig. 202).⁹⁷

From the middle of the fifteenth century, however, some of the Bartholomite monasteries were ceded to other Orders, mainly to the Dominicans. The whole congregation was suppressed in a bull dated to the 29 October 1650 by Pope Innocent X.⁹⁸ According to the document, by that time, there were only around forty monks who received 40 *scudi* for

⁹² CICO, IX, n. 73, pp. 128–30; Van den Oudenrijn, *Les Constitutions des frères arméniens*, p. 9.

⁹³ Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*, pp. 32–33; Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 272–74.

⁹⁴ Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*, p. 245.

⁹⁵ *Idem*, *Les Constitutions des Frères Arméniens*.

⁹⁶ Delacroix-Besnier, 'I monaci basiliani in Italia', p. 210.

⁹⁷ Calcagnino, *Dell'immagine edessena*, pp. 229–30.

⁹⁸ *Bullarum privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum: amplissima collectio cui accessere pontificum omnium vitae, notae, & indeces opportuni*, 14 vols. ed. Charles Coquelines (Rome: Typis S. Michaelis ad Ripam, sumptibus Hieronymi Mainardi 1733–62), VI, 3 (1760), pp. 216–17. See also Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, 2, 2, p. 966; Delacroix-Besnier, 'I monaci basiliani in Italia', p. 210.

the suppression of their monasteries in four cities: Genoa, Pontecurrone, Milan and Pavia. In 1656, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni passed under the rule of the Barnabites.⁹⁹

Very little remains of the medieval monastery of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni because of the drastic restructuring that took place in the following centuries (fig. 204).¹⁰⁰ Today only the eastern side with a chapel of St. Mary in the north-eastern corner belongs to the original medieval building. The construction stages of the church during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are difficult to follow, as no notarial evidence has been found regarding this matter. The chapel of St. Mary, however, still bears traces of some Quattrocento frescoes on the vault (fig. 205). At the end of the sixteenth century, the three medieval aisles with an octagonal cupola that are still seen in the eastern side were restructured into one large nave (fig. 206.2). The chapel of the Mandylion was constructed at the beginning of the sixteenth century while the relic was displayed in the cathedral of San Lorenzo.¹⁰¹ Several more large reconstructions were undertaken during the next centuries when the whole monastery was expanded, and the church was redecorated. Finally, in the nineteenth century, the church was integrated into a palazzo, which resulted in the loss of the façade and of the southern exterior as well as the demolition of the southern chapel of San Pantaleo.

Van den Oudenrijn and later Zekiyan have signalled out a passage from Bitio that, according to them, described two more churches in Genoa that belonged to the Bartholomites at the time of Pope Paul III (1534–1549): SS Antonio e Pantaleone and S Bernardo.¹⁰² The

⁹⁹ Calcagno, 'Il patriarca di Antiochia', p. 251. A very detailed description with references to original documents, see in manuscript 'Relazione dell'aquisto di San Bartolomeo delli Armeni', ASG, MS. 246.

¹⁰⁰ I base the following description of the different stages of reconstruction on Rita Cavalli, 'San Bartolomeo degli Armeni', in *Medioevo restaurato*, pp. 53–70.

¹⁰¹ It is connected with the episode of the robbery discussed on p. 230.

¹⁰² Bitio, *Relazione*, p. 37; Van den Oudenrijn, *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores*, p. 249; Zekiyan, 'Le colonie armene del Medio Evo', p. 880. On the churches that passed to the Bartholomites in the sixteenth century in Genoa and the routes that connected them, see Bertolina, 'Servizi di strada armeni e percorsi fliscani', pp. 383–85.

original passage, therefore, deserves closer attention. It states: ‘Ebbero anco sotto il pontificato di Paolo III. le Chiese de SS. Antonio, e Pantaleone, e la Chiesa di S. Bernardo dalli Signori Canonici del Duomo’. Because Bitio was of Genoese origin, we can presume (as Van den Oudenrijn and Zekiyan do) that he most probably meant here the Duomo of Genoa. But more importantly, in this sentence, he is describing three churches, and not two, as modern researchers believe. This is confirmed by Alizieri’s *Guida artistica* in which he names the churches that depended of San Bartholomeo degli Armeni: ‘la Chiesa di S. Bernardino, di S. Pantaleone e di S. Antonino di Casamavari’, while writing about the last years of the Bartholomites (he calls them Basilians).¹⁰³

Today these churches are easily found though they are not always connected with the Armenian monastery. The first is officially called Chiesa di Nostra Signora di Lourdes e S. Bernardo, but is widely known as S. Bernardino (fig. 207).¹⁰⁴ It is situated on the hill Peralto in the region of Castelletto, the same where San Bartolomeo degli Armeni is (fig. 199). In the thirteenth century, it belonged to the canons of San Lorenzo and suffered serious damage during the rivalry between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines at the beginning of the fourteenth century. During the next 100 years, it was destroyed and rebuilt again. The churches of San Pantaleone and di San Antonino di Casamavari are often grouped together because of their vicinity (figs 208, 209, 199).¹⁰⁵ They are both situated in the quarter of Staglieno, adjacent to the mentioned Castelletto. As the inscription above the main entrance states, the church of San Pantaleone (or Pantaleo) was constructed in 1451 according to the will of the community, the Doge (Pietro II Fregoso) and the archbishop (Giacomo Imperiale).¹⁰⁶ The church was abandoned in the second half of the twentieth century, which resulted in its

¹⁰³ Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, vol. 2, 2, p. 966.

¹⁰⁴ Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, MS. 841, pp. 390–407; *Monasteria nova*, pp. 253–54.

¹⁰⁵ Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, pp. 230–37; Angelo Remondini, *Parrocchie dell’Archidiocesi di Genova* (Genoa: Tipografia delle Letture Cattoliche, 1882), pp. 69–73, 78–82.

¹⁰⁶ Ad honore. Dei. et. Beati. Pantaleonis. m. // Hanc Capella. fecerunt. Construi. Cives. // Ianuenses. in Casemaveri. rurantes // Ut. ex decreto Ill.^{mi} et. Exel.^{mi} D. Ducis // Ian. et Mci Consilii Dnorum // Antianoru die. secunda. Apr. mccccli .

current poor state. Reconstruction works started in 2010. The second church of San Antonino di Casamavari is in better condition, even though it is much older; it was founded before the twelfth century. According to the act dating to 3 August 1538, all three churches passed to the monks of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni and remained under their rule until the suppression of the order in 1650.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

It seems that although the ties between Genoa and Armenia were indeed quite close during the Middle Ages, it has become evident that before the end of the thirteenth century, they mostly interacted in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean, in Genoese colonies and Cilician trading centres. Before the appearance of the monasteries of Santa Maria de Iubino and San Bartolomeo degli Armeni outside the walls of the medieval city, in the region of Multedo, Genoa seems to have been a transitional point for the pilgrims that travelled to Rome or possibly diplomatic missions aiming to see the Pope. After the arrival of the monks from the Black Mountain, however, the situation changed, and Genoa became the centre of dissemination of the newly founded Order of the Bartholomites over other Italian cities. At the same time, the question of the monks' Armenian identity is not very clear after the middle of the fourteenth century, when they changed their rite to Latin and quite quickly assimilated with the local population, even though the titles of the Order and many of its churches continued to stress their Armenian origin.

¹⁰⁷ Perasso, *Memorie e notizie*, MS. 841, fol. 397; MS. 842, col. 232; Remondini, *Parrocchie dell'Archidiocesi di Genova*, pp. 73, 79.

Chapter 7. The Genoese Gospel Book V3-834 from the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

An important addition to the history of the Bartholomites in Italy is the manuscript housed in the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg (V3-834). It was transferred there in 1940 from the National Gallery of Armenia¹, and has never become widely known in modern scholarship. There are several studies by Soviet scholars partly devoted to the manuscript, but because they were written in Armenian and Russian, they have remained practically unknown outside the post-Soviet states.² In 1961, Tatiana Izmaylova published an article with the only detailed stylistic and iconographical analysis of the Genoese Gospel. Although Genoa is mentioned as the place of its production, the author did not make any links between the manuscript and the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni and the newly founded congregation. Most of the stylistic and iconographic prototypes that Izmaylova noticed were of Eastern origin, while the manuscript's Italian element was presented as very insignificant. Western scholarship is familiar with this Gospel Book through its mention in the footnotes of the already cited here article by Scolari concerning the Armenian church in Genoa. To my knowledge, this was the first time the manuscript was connected with the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.³ In 1987, Jean-Michel Thierry included the Genoese Gospel Book from the Hermitage in the list of manuscripts produced in Armenian monasteries in Italy. He also very briefly suggested a similarity between its miniatures and the productions of the Tatew school.⁴ Additionally, the manuscript also took part in the 1999

¹ It was kept there under the number 94.

² Garegin Hovsep'yan, *A Page from the History of Armenian Art and Culture* (Aleppo: n.a., 1930), pp. 36–46; Tatiana Izmaylova, 'Армянская рукопись, написанная в Генуе в 1325 году, и ее серебряный оклад 1347 года', *Византийский временник*, 20 (1961), pp. 243–56. On the silver binding: Valentina Abramyan, *Ремесла в Армении IV–XVIII вв.* (Yerevan: Hayastani petakan patmakan t'angaran, 1956); Alexander Kakovkin, 'Серебряный переплет 1347 года работы Григора', *Вестник общественных наук*, 3 (1976), pp. 79–84.

³ Scolari, 'La Chiesa di San Bartolomeo degli Armeni', p. 642, footnote 6.

⁴ Jean-Michel Thierry, *Les arts arméniens* (Paris: Mazenod, 1987), p. 303.

exhibition ‘Roma – Armenia’ at the BAV.⁵ Recently, two incipit pages of the Gospels were also included in a publication on Crimean architecture and miniatures.⁶ Thus, this brief presentation of existing scholarship demonstrates that the Genoese Gospel from the Hermitage Museum has not attracted the attention it deserves with relation to the Armenian manifestations in the art of medieval Genoa. Soviet researchers did not tie the miniatures with the Genoese tradition, while in recent scholarship the manuscript is usually only named.

Description of the Manuscript and Its Colophons

The manuscript contains the four Gospels and was produced in Genoa in 1325 by an Armenian scribe named Astvazatur. The main text is divided into two columns and written in Bolorgir, a cursive Armenian script used since the eleventh century (fig. 211). 27 parchment gatherings (26x18 cm) numbered in Armenian letters contain six leaves each. The manuscript has two colophons: one made by the scribe in 1325 and the other commemorating the purchase of the manuscript by a certain monk Sargis in 1384 in Armenia. The manuscript is covered with leather and a silver gilded binding that also has inscriptions naming its producers (fig. 210). Each side has an incuse: on the front there is the scene of the Crucifixion and on the back – a sitting Hodegetria with the four Evangelists in the corners. The front cover of the manuscript also shows traces of two clasps.

The colophon at the end of the Gospel of Mathew (fol. 93v, 94r/v) is easily distinguished from the rest of scripture – the text here is not divided into two columns and takes up the whole page (fig. 212).⁷ According to this inscription, the manuscript was composed by the scribe Astvazatur who wrote it *in the land of the Franks, in the city of*

⁵ Cf. the exhibition catalogue: *Roma – Armenia*, pp. 218–19.

⁶ *Armenische Buchmalerei und Baukunst der Krim*, eds Heide Buschhausen, Helmut Buschhausen and Êmma Korxmazyan (Erevan: Edition Nairi, 2009), pl. 173, fig. 811, 812.

⁷ I have consulted Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480: A Source for Middle Eastern History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013) to establish how the current colophon fits the usual tropes of Armenian colophons. Overall, it does follow some common patterns, but there are some details that stand out and will be further discussed.

Genoa, under cover of St. Bartholomew. In this colophon, Astvazatur describes the life of a blessed man Antony from Neokaisareia who went to Jerusalem and later to Rome on pilgrimage. There, probably at the church of Santa Maria de Armeni that belonged to the Bartholomites, he saw the Armenian friars working and commissioned this manuscript. Astvazatur continues with the commemoration of his closest people, including *a priest Martiros*. While Izmailova has interpreted the words *under cover of St. Bartholomew* in a more broad sense as the protection of the Armenian patron, the mention of fra Martino,⁸ the head of the newly-founded congregation, directly points at the church of San Bartolomeo in Genoa.⁹

According to the translation of Izmaylova, Astvazatur also names *the elder monk Toros* who helped with the binding. This could have given us an indication that there was a small scriptorium in the Genoese monastery in which Armenian manuscripts could have been produced, but unfortunately this is not the case, and merely the result of Izmaylova's misreading of the passage. In the colophon, Astvazatur asked the reader to remember 'the elder monk Toros and the priest Martiros, who provided a home and helped with the binding'. Just as Van den Oudenrijn and Zekiyan have miscounted the late Bartholomite churches in Genoa, Izmailova has suggested that the help to Astvazatur referred to both Toros and Martiros. However, the colophon states that it was only fra Martino who helped him with the binding, though we do not know if the scribe meant the binding of the manuscript or a more abstract connection with other friars.¹⁰ Additionally, in regarding the colophon we understand that, although Astvazatur was a scribe, he also produced the illuminations. This gives me a reason to believe that there was no proper scriptorium in the

⁸ A verification of my version that the name Marino is an Italianized version of the Armenian name Martiros can be found in Alishan's *Sissouan*, p. 491, where the author briefly describes some moments of the history of the transition of the Armenian monks to Genoa calling the future head of the congregation of the Bartholomites "Mardiros".

⁹ Izmaylova, 'Армянская рукопись', p. 244.

¹⁰ I would like to thank Professor Levon Hakobian for his generous help in transcribing and translating the colophons of the manuscript.

Armenian monastery in Genoa at least in 1325, and this Gospel seems to be the sole example of an Eastern production preserved today.

According to Izmaylova, the last three lines of this part of the colophon were devoted to the place where the monk donated the manuscript after it was finished, but they were erased from the page (fig. 213). This part starts with the words: ‘So, I gave it to...’, and finishes: ‘Whoever decides to take away, or steal, or sell the holy gospel, will be judged by It’. Izmaylova suggested that the place of the original donation was erased in order to avoid God’s punishment when the manuscript was transferred to Armenia.¹¹

We learn about the later move of the manuscript to the East from the donative inscription on the silver binding (fig. 210). In the period after 1325 (the year in the first colophon) and before 1347 (year of the production of the silver cover) the manuscript was brought to the eastern regions of Armenia and gifted to the monastery of Horomos near Ani the capital of the Bagratid Armenia. We read in the inscription of the cover: ‘...I, Jajur, and my son Amir Smbat gave the Gospels to the holy [monks] of Horomos, who reads this remember [us]’. The year of the production is on the back of the silver cover. The name of the artisan who produced it is Grigor, as is preserved at the bottom of the back side of the binding. We also know from the second colophon inside the text of the Gospels (fols 315r – 317r) that in 1384, a monk Sargis bought the manuscript for 500 *dahekan*. The mention of the Georgian king Bagrat V (1360-1396) and his son George in this colophon, leads to the conclusion that the manuscript was kept in the eastern parts of Armenia.¹²

Illumination of the Manuscript. Composition and Iconography

The manuscript follows the traditional Armenian decorative elements. It starts with the *Epistula ad Carpianum* and the canon tables (figs 214, 215). The first part is framed with

¹¹ Izmaylova, ‘Армянская рукопись’, p. 244.

¹² Ibid.

thin columns on the sides and an ornamental frieze on top of them. The canon tables are decorated similarly, but with the difference of having either only one column in the middle of the page or three of them. The drawing is of low quality, inconsistent, and poorly coloured with a dull colour palette in green and brown. The same hand can be recognised throughout the manuscript in the title pages of each Gospel and in the marginal decorations (figs 211, 217). The quality of the pictures allows to attribute them to the scribe, who, according to his own words, was ‘not very skilful in the art of ornamentation’.¹³

The incipit pages of the Gospels attract the most attention due to their richer decoration (figs 217–220). Unlike many manuscripts that often were cropped and rebound, the Genoese Gospels retains not only the silver binding but also the original margins. This allows us to analyse the full layout of the page. As was traditional in Armenian manuscripts, the composition of these pages is not symmetrical. On the top, there is an ornamental headpiece in green and brown, sometimes with several figures of birds on the upper margins. Underneath it, the page divides into two halves; on the left of each of these pages, there is the symbol of the Evangelist (a man for Matthew, lions for Mark, an ox for Luke, and a half eagle for John). The symbol is followed with one or more zoomorphic letters in the form of birds and fish (this script is called *pharagir*) that are all on the right half of the page. The left side is occupied with the continuing text of the Gospel, arranged in three or four lines written with purple ink. An ornamental band with a cross fills the right margin. The literal and ornamental sections of the page are often depicted very closely and can even touch each other and overlap. For instance, on the incipit page of the Gospel of St. John, the eagle touches the second tier of the zoomorphic letters (fig. 218), while on the page with the sign of St. Matthew, the lateral band overlays the text (fig. 219).

¹³ Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, MS. V3–834, fol. 93v. These words can be seen as part of the tradition of the scribes to describe themselves ‘with a series of deprecatory epithets regarding his scribal qualifications and his unworthy and sinful life’ (see Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*, p. 7). Still, it is not common for the scribe to attest that he was also the producer of the miniatures.

Even a quick look at the miniatures makes it clear that there was a second painter, who produced the signs of the Evangelists. His painting is much more nuanced, with a fine lining, a varied colour palette, and a better understanding of light and shadow. The second painter also shows knowledge of Armenian illumination, though some of the iconographical choices seem very surprising. Although we do not know anything about him, because he is not mentioned in the colophons, I presume that he worked in Italy close to the time of the production of the rest of the manuscript. After a closer examination of the illuminations, it becomes obvious that the signs of the Evangelists are also capital letters. This means that Astvazatur purposefully left blank spaces to include them in the text. And it probably should have been executed quite quickly after the production of the text with the less important decorations by Astvazatur, so that the manuscript would not travel unfinished to Armenia.

Since the first letter of each Gospel and the symbols of the Evangelists are always the same, this iconography is quite easy to follow.¹⁴ We find the fusion of the two elements from the end of the twelfth century in Cilician manuscripts – for example, in the Gospels of Lvov (after the place of its possession, also known as the Gospels of Lemberg or Skevra), produced in 1198 in the monastery of Skevra by Grigor Mlchetsi and kept today in the National Library of Poland (MS. Akc. 17680, fig. 221) and during the following centuries, as seen in another Cilician manuscript by Sargis Pitsak (MS. 7631) from the Matenadaran in Erevan produced in 1352 (fig. 222). Helen Evans has argued that the zoomorphic letters appeared in Armenian miniature at the end of the twelfth century in Skevra during the translation of Benedictine manuscripts into Armenian. Thomas F. Mathews followed the iconography of the evangelists' symbols as the Gospels' initials to Carolingian times.¹⁵ In this case the Genoese Gospels demonstrate an exciting case of a double-transfer of imagery: in the twelfth century,

¹⁴ On this Armenian iconography of the initials, see Helen Evans, *Manuscript Illumination at the Armenian Patriarchate in Hromkla and the West* (Ph.D dissertation, New York, University of New York, 1991); *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*, ed. Thomas F. Mathews (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1991), pp. 179–81.

¹⁵ *Armenian Gospel Iconography*, p. 180.

it travelled to Cilicia where it became part of the iconographical tradition by the fourteenth century, and then it was commissioned in Genoa to an Italian painter being perceived as an Armenian example of miniature painting.

The symbols of St. Mark (fol. 95 r., fig. 220) and St. Luke (fol. 155 r., fig. 217) of the Genoese Gospels seem more traditional than the symbols of the other two Evangelists. The first represents the Armenian letter U [s] formed of two lions – one dark grey and the other cream-coloured. They are followed by another decorated zoomorphic letter made by Astvazatur. Together they do not form a whole word, which instead is finished with a simpler script in purple ink underneath and on the right side. Two lions looking at each other in this almost heraldic position are easily found in Cilician and Gladzor miniatures of the thirteenth century: for example, in the Constable Smbat's Gospels (MS. 7644) produced in 1260–1276 (fig. 223),¹⁶ and in the famous Gospels of Gladzor (UCLA, Arm. MS. 1, fig. 224).¹⁷ As we see in these manuscripts, a possible iconographical variation was the addition of wings on the lions and of a codex that the symbols could carry.

St Luke in the Genoese Gospels is represented by a winged ox in the form of the letter Ք [k'] (fig. 217). We should also note that the lions of St. Mark do not have wings, even though the ox does. In the Armenian pictorial tradition, we can find many examples of both winged and unwinged symbols representing the same letters. Izmaylova explained this phenomenon through two diverse traditions: one more ancient and terrestrial, which was apparently preserved in Syria and went from there to Armenia, and the other with wings and nimbus, which was more traditional.¹⁸ However, by the fourteenth century, these differences were not that obvious, and painters could use either option. In the Genoese Gospels we see

¹⁶ *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries from the Matenadaran Collection*, eds Emma Korkhmazian, Gravard Akopian and Irina Drampian (Leningrad: Aurora, 1984), pl. 107.

¹⁷ *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor: The Life of Christ Illuminated*, eds Thomas F. Mathews and Alice Taylor (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2001), pl. 30.

¹⁸ Tatiana Izmaylova, 'Рукопись М 7737, ее датировка и локализация', *Византийский временник*, 50 (1989), pp. 156–58.

a combination of both. The initials of St. Mark and St. Luke show that the painter preferred to add wings only to those symbols that represent a more complex letter. The wings help to achieve more variation of movement while preserving the natural pose: note how the Genoese painter sacrificed the clarity of the letter in order to keep the right anatomy of the ox (compare fig. 217 with figs 222 and 225).

The finest miniature that is usually chosen to represent the Genoese Gospels is the symbol of St. Matthew (fol. 8 r, fig. 219). The letter here is not as easy to read as in other examples of similar miniatures – it is Q [g] formed by a man with a bird on his shoulder. I could not find any other examples of such a peculiar iconography, but I would again explain it through the will to make a more natural-looking pose while also forming the upper round part of the letter. Other Armenian painters used the wings of the angel in different positions for this purpose (as in the Gospels from Gladzor¹⁹ and in the Four Gospels and the Vision of Isaiah, 1295, BL, inv. no. Or. 10960) or even a head with a nimbus (BL, inv. no. Or. 5626, 1282).²⁰ The painters of the fourteenth-century Gospels from the Matenadaran (MS. 4060, fig. 226) and the thirteenth-century Gospels from Trinity College in Dublin (MS. 10992, fol. 25r)²¹ use the hands of the angel and a piece of drapery.²² However, the Genoese painter finds a different solution: he omits the wings and instead presents a man with a beard and dressed in a dark robe. His left hand is extended while naturally bending in the elbow. If we remember that Astvazatur used birds and fish as parts to assemble the letters (so did the painter of the Gospels of Gladzor and many others), the choice of a bird by his colleague seems natural. And we find other examples of manuscripts that use the same method. For instance, in a Gospel book from the PML (MS. M.620, fol. 188r) produced in the thirteenth

¹⁹ *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor*, pl. 8.

²⁰ Vrej Nersessian, *Treasures from the Ark: 1700 Years of Armenian Christian Art* (London: British Library, 2001), pp. 208–9, pl. 141 and pp. 210–11, pl. 143.

²¹ Nersessian, *Treasures from the Ark*, p. 78.

²² *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, pl. 36.

century, the ox of St. Luke is presented with a bird that helps to finish the round part of the letter and appears to bear no other sense (fig. 227).

While I believe that the form of the letter was the principal reason for the depiction of the bird in the initial of the Gospel of St. Matthew produced in Genoa, the image is very naturalistic, and the white bird is seen whispering in the man's ear. Thus, the image probably gained the additional meaning of representing the Holy Spirit whispering to St. Matthew the future Gospel. We find this detail in many other Western examples throughout the Middle Ages and later: in the legend of Gregory of Nissa and in many images of saints, such as in a ninth-century miniature depicting St. Jerome (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 389, fig. 229) and on the polyptych from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Roccalbegna by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c. 1340, fig. 228). Here the Sienese painter pictured St. Paul writing while listening to the dove.²³

The symbol of St. John is even more surprising. It represents a fantastic figure – half eagle, half man – in the position of the Armenian letter Ի [i] (fig. 218). The pose of the bird is very typical in Armenian miniatures and we can even compare it with the second letter from the page of St. Matthew, where Astvazatur drew the letter in the form of a less intricate bird, but in the same position (fig. 219), or for instance, with the Gospels of Gladzor.²⁴ This also explains the rather dramatic pose of the figure, which on first sight seems to be a hanged man.

The fantastic creature attracts the most attention. To my knowledge, this joining of the Evangelist with his symbol could also be the result of a Western elaboration, and Izmaylova as well states that this zooantropomorphic figure could not be found in the tradition of Armenian illumination.²⁵ I have found a similar depiction of the Evangelists in the scene of

²³ *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, eds Alessandro Bagnoli, Roberto Bartolini and Max Seidel (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2017), pp. 316–21, cat. 25c.

²⁴ *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor*, pl. 52.

²⁵ Tatiana Izmaylova, 'Армянская рукопись', p. 248.

Maiestas Domini.²⁶ Similar examples are spread through time, media and space. The combination of symbols with bodies of men (either angels or the Evangelists) appear in the corners of the composition of Christ in Glory. We find this for example in the twelfth-century frescoes of the Royal Pantheon of the Kings of Leon in the church of San Isidoro in Spain (fig. 231) and in Lombard miniatures from the middle of the fourteenth century (MS. II.D.2.32, fol. 137v from Biblioteca del Capitolo Metropolitano in Milan, fig. 230 and MS. Pal. Lat. 506, fol. 114B v from the BAV, produced in 1347 in Lombardy).²⁷

An earlier but more difficult to find group of images is in Spanish cycles of illuminations to the *Commentary to the Apocalypse* by St. Beatus of Liébana (c. 730 – c. 800, *Commentary* written in 776).²⁸ In the decoration of these manuscripts, every Evangelist has a page divided with architectural settings in two parts. At the top, there is a symbol of the Evangelist, often depicted with a human body, while in the lower half there are two angels holding a book (probably Christ and the Evangelist). We find such examples with St. John in the PML in a tenth-century manuscript MS. M.644 fol. 4r (fig. 232). In some versions, the iconography could expand onto two pages. The left upper part was then occupied with the symbol with no wings, repeated on the next page with wings (*Apocalypse de Saint-Sever*, BNF, MS. Lat. 8878, middle of the eleventh century, fig. 233) or with the body of an angel (PML MS. M.429 produced in 1220 in Toledo, St. John is on fol. 5v-6r, fig. 234). The painter of the latter thirteenth-century *Commentary* also used the same

²⁶ On the symbols of the Evangelists, their meanings and modifications, see, for example, Alexander V. Podossinov, *Символы четырех Евангелистов, их происхождение и значение* (Moscow: Iazyki russkoj kul'tury, 2000).

²⁷ *La miniatura in Italia: dal tardoantico al Trecento con riferimenti al Medio oriente e all'Occidente europeo*, eds Antonella Putaturo, Donati Murano and Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 2006), fig. 156–57.

²⁸ Peter K. Klein, 'L'illustrazione dei Beatus', in *Alfa-Omega: Il Giudizio Universale tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Valentino Pace (Castel Bolognese: Itaca, 2006), pp. 39–42; Richard K. Emmerson, *Apocalypse Illuminated: The Visual Exegesis of Revelation in Medieval Illustrated Manuscripts* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press), pp. 47–82.

iconography of the half-men symbols of the Evangelists in the corners of the *Maiestas Domini*.

To sum up, as we can see, the context of all these images (both the *Maiestas Domini* and the *Commentary*) is very similar: they are all connected to the Apocalyptic theme.²⁹ The origin of the iconography comes from the Book of Revelation by St. John where he describes his Apocalyptic visions on the island of Patmos (4: 6-8): ‘In the centre, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings’. The symbols here are not animals, but creatures with wings and eyes that were best illustrated in the aforementioned *Apocalypse de Saint-Sever* from Paris (fig. 233).

Returning to the Genoese painter of the initials, his image of the man with a head of an eagle for the incipit page of St. John (and only him)³⁰ now can be easily explained. And there are other examples of such representation of St. John as seen in the Genoese Gospels. I found it in several Italian manuscripts of the second half of the thirteenth century: in the four-volume Bible from the Biblioteca Capitolare in Vicenza produced in 1250–1252 by a copyist Manfredo (MS. U.VIII.1-4, fol. 60r, fig. 235)³¹ and the Franciscan Bible of Cesena from the Biblioteca Malatestiana illuminated around 1270 by Maestro di Bagnacavallo (MS. D.XXI.4, fol. 95r, fig. 236). Although the style is very different, the iconography is the same – it also represents the first letter of the text and coincidentally it is even of the same sound, though, of course, the language and the alphabet are different.

²⁹ See also Frederick Edward Hulme, *The History, Principles and Practice of Symbolism in Christian Art* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1891), pp. 132–36.

³⁰ In the Armenian Book of Gospels produced in Rome in 1310 (New Julfa, MS. 38), all the Evangelists are presented as angels with the heads of the symbols – see Thierry, *Les arts arméniens*, p. 430, pl. 465.

³¹ Giordana Canova Mariani, ‘Miniatura a Vicenza tra Medioevo e Rinascimento’, in *La Parola illuminata: per una storia della miniatura a Verona e Vicenza tra Medioevo ed età Romanica* (Verona: Fondazione Cariverona, 2011), pp. 251–53.

Style of the Initials

While the iconography and the composition of the pages in the Hermitage manuscript show some close acquaintance with the Cilician and Gladzor schools of illumination, as well as knowledge of medieval Western imagery, the style of the second painter has already been associated with Italian miniatures. Since it was first suggested by Hovsepyan in 1930, scholars have been discussing to what extent the Italian tradition influenced the production of this manuscript. Without putting this cultural connections in doubt, Soviet scholars did not put forth any specific comparisons or prototypes.³² Indeed, the figures in the incipit pages show the will to make a naturalistic image instead of taking a more schematic and decorative approach, characteristic for the Armenian illuminations.

It seems tempting to ascribe the Genoese Book of Gospels to the tradition of Armenian miniatures made in Italy. There are several examples of such manuscripts produced around the same time: the Bible from Bologna (late thirteenth century, Matenadaran, MS. 2705, fig. 237), the Gospels from Rome (1310, New Julfa, MS. 38, fig. 238) and from Perugia (1331, Matenadaran, MS. 7628, fig. 239), and the Lectionary from Bologna (1324, Matenadaran, MS. 4553).³³ The style of these manuscripts is not uniform and they owe a lot to the Italian schools of illumination in the cities where they were produced, while also having some Armenian features and some traces of Byzantine imagery. This makes a stylistic comparison all the more difficult because we would need to distinguish every cultural borrowing, which is not always possible.

We should remember that none of the scholars that actually held the manuscript in their hands looked at it in the context of Genoese art history. Otherwise they would have

³² Hovsepyan, *A Page from the History of Armenian Art and Culture*, p. 37.

³³ Thierry, *Les arts arméniens*, p. 430, pl. 465–68; *Armenian Miniatures of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, p. 31, pl. 158–59, 164.

noted the resemblance of the fine watercolour miniatures in the Hermitage Gospels to the *Cocharelli Codex*, the most famous Genoese manuscript of that time (figs 240, 241).³⁴

Without going into an in-depth discussion of this complex manuscript, which has been studied over the decades by many prominent scholars, I should say, however, a few introductory words about its main features. The codex *Cocarelli* or *Cocharelli* (after the name of the commissioner, a member of a Genoese family) had a unique concept. It was intended as an educational and moralising treatise for the children of the commissioner. It consists of two parts: the first presents the seven vices and the second is the history of Sicily. Despite the fact that only a few pages from this manuscript have survived and that they are scattered over several countries, the lavish decoration of this codex makes it one of the best examples of Genoese illumination of the 1320–1340s. The majority of the pages are found today in the BL (Add. 28841 and 27695, Egerton 3127 and 3781), while the rest is divided between the Museum of Art in Cleveland (J.H. Wade Fund n. 1953.152)³⁵ and the Museo del Bargello in Florence (inv. 2065, Carrand 69).

The preserved pages of the *Cocharelli codex* are richly decorated with bright colours and lavish golden ornaments, unlike the relatively subtle style of the second painter in the Gospels in the Hermitage. But there are several details that seem to coincide. The first is the style of painting human figures. If we compare the initial of St. Matthew with the men from Add. 27695 fol. 2v (figs 219, 240), we will see that both painters use a combination of fine

³⁴ *British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1854–1875* (London: British Museum, 1887), pp. 346, 565; *British Museum Reproductions from Illuminated Manuscripts, Series 4*, ed. Eric G. Millar (London: British Museum, 1928), p. 13, pl. XXXI; *British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1931–1935* (London: British Museum, 1967), no. Eg. 3127; *Europa und der Orient: 800–1900*, eds Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde (Berlin: Bertelsmann Lexikon, 1989), no. 5/2; Francesca Fabbri, ‘Il “Cocharelli”: osservazione e ipotesi per un manoscritto genovese del XIV sec.’, in *Tessuti,oreficerie, miniature*, pp. 305–20, fig. 1; Robert Gibbs, ‘Antifonario N: A Bolognese Choirbook in the Context of Genoese Illumination between 1285 and 1385’, *ibid.*, pp. 247–78; Margaret Scott, *Medieval Dress & Fashion* (London: British Library, 2007), pl. 51, 54.

³⁵ See catalogue of the auction in Berlin in 1930: *Eine Wiener Sammlung, zweite teil, Alte Gemälde ..., alte Skulpturen ..., eine kleine erlesene Sammlung von Renaissance-Plaketten ..., kostbare alte Miniaturen ... : am 12. Mai 1930*, lot 3, p. 4, pl. II. 3. <<https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.5404#0003>> [accessed 1 August 2019].

linear drawing with a light wash of colour. I would like to emphasise that I am not suggesting a direct adoption or connection between the two, but rather noting a similarity in thinking.

The realistic details of the miniatures of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John of the Hermitage manuscript has drawn me to take a closer look at the depicted clothing in order to find something that might tell about the origin of the painter. The costumes are quite simple and could be typical of any region or even a social class. I have seen similar clothing in both Cilician and Italian manuscripts from that time.³⁶ But the Cocharelli codex shows some closer similarities, which become more obvious in the manner in which the details of the clothing are depicted. The dark dress of Matthew seems flat at first sight, but after a closer examination, one can see the lighter and darker lines of the drapery. We can find a similar effect in the blue clothing of the central young man from the aforementioned page of the *Cocharelli codex* and in the depictions of Avarice (Add. 27695, fol. 8) and Gluttony (Add. 27695, f. 14, fig. 241). Additionally, the light dress with red stockings in the symbol of St. John can be compared with the salmon pink costume of the far left man in the latter page.

Finally, the very characteristic shoes of both symbols from the Hermitage Gospels, although common all over Europe (I have found examples in Padua, Bologna and even Barcelona), find the closest similarities in the Genoese codex. The main difference is in the way the black straps form diverse patterns in the front, back and middle of the foot. The shoe consisted of two parts that were tightened together. We find a similar lacing in the miniatures of the first half of the manuscript of the Cocharelli family.

The second half of the precious codex usually attracts a lot of scholarly attention as a source testifying the medieval scientific approach to nature. The pages of this part are filled with abundant decorations of insects, animals, birds and other forms of wildlife placed in the

³⁶ Robert Gibbs uses the clothing in the Cocharelli codex as one of the arguments to date the manuscript no later than 1330–40: Robert Gibbs, 'Early Humanist Art in North Italy: Two Manuscripts Illuminated by Gregorio da Genova', *The Burlington Magazine*, 134 (1992), p. 640, footnote 6.

manuscript's margins. The connection with Southern Italy and Frederick II (1194–1250) is evident: it follows the naturalistic interest of the emperor, which found reflection in his famous treatise *De arte venandi cum avibus* composed in the middle of the thirteenth century.³⁷ The most famous manuscript (BAV, MS. Pal. Lat. 1071) is richly decorated and contains the Emperor's treatise. It dates back to the time of Frederick's son Manfred of Sicily (1258–1266) and was very well-known across Europe due to its refined illumination.³⁸

Remembering that the themes and the painters' intentions are very different in the three manuscripts in question, I would say that the creator of the initials in the Hermitage Gospels shows a similar tendency to naturalism. We have already seen this in the addition of the bird to the symbol of St. Matthew. But the initial of St. Luke is probably even more characteristic in terms of the differences of style and interpretation of the figures by Armenian and Italian painters. Because of the round upper part of the letter L the neck of the ox in Armenian illuminations would often receive a very unnatural curve, as for instance in the already mentioned twelfth-century Gospels of Lvov or in the later Cilician MS. 7631 from the Matenadaran produced in 1352, fol. 175r (fig. 222).³⁹ On the contrary, the Genoese painter of the initials chose not to interpret the symbol of Luke as one of the decorative schematic elements, but as an animal with correct anatomy and even muscles.

This brings us back to the origin of the second painter. Although the symbols of the Evangelists are also Armenian capital letters, from the interpretation and the style, as well

³⁷ There is an abundant amount of literature about the scientific interests of Frederick II and his court: Ferdinando Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli. 1266–1414. E un riesame dell'arte nell'età fridericiana* (Rome: Ugo Bozzi, 1969); David Abulafia, *Frederick II: a Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Piero Morpurgo, *L'idea della natura nell'Italia normanno-sveva* (Bologne: Clueb, 1993); *Federico II e le scienze*, eds Agostino Paravicini Bagliani and Pierre Toubert (Palermo: Sellerio, 1994); *Intellectual Life at the Court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen*, ed. William Tronzo (Washington, D.C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1994); *Federico II. Immagine e potere*, eds Maria Stella Calo Mariani and Raffaella Cassano (Venice: Marsilio, 1995), especially pp. 124–62; Salvatore Tramontana, *Il Regno di Sicilia: uomo e natura dall' XI al XIII secolo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2015); Alessio Monciatti, *L'arte nel Duecento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2013), pp. 93–102, pl. 27.

³⁸ Frederick II, *De arte venandi cum avibus*, ed. Anna Laura Trombetti Budresi (Rome: Laterza, 2016).

³⁹ *Матенадаран: армянская рукописная книга VI – XIV веков*, eds Vigen O. Kazarian and S. S. Manukian (Moscow: Kniga, 1991), p. 215, pl. 402.

as from smaller details (like shoes and clothing), it is obvious that these illuminations were made by a local Genoese painter. Moreover, the fact that the symbols are also Armenian letters does not contradict this: it should have been quite easy for an Italian painter to repeat the specific form of every symbol just by having an example of the required letters of the Armenian script before him.

How can the appearance and the origin of the second painter be included in the history of the manuscript production that we learned from the colophons? I suppose that these last miniatures were commissioned after the manuscript had been finished, and this could explain the lack of information about the second painter in the colophons.

Still, it is also possible that the colophon actually had the name of the second painter and that the words of the inscription before the erased part: ‘So, I gave it to...’, relate not to the place where it was donated (as researchers believed), but to the place where the manuscript was completed and the person that produced the initials. This also makes sense if we remember that the commissioner of the manuscript only went to Italy for a pilgrimage and was originally from New Caesarea – most probably the Cilician city of Anazarbus. So it is very possible that it was Anthony himself who took the Gospel Book to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean soon after it was finished. And then twenty years after its production, the manuscript was donated to the monastery of Horomos in Armenia.

Conclusion

The Genoese Gospels from the State Hermitage Museum is an exceptional piece of testimony of a collective work by an Armenian and an Italian artist. As such, it demonstrates the transfer of ideas and images in the Mediterranean region during the Middle Ages. Comparison of its initials with other Armenian manuscripts of diverse times and regions demonstrates that by the fourteenth century the symbols of the Evangelists in the form of the first letters of respective Gospels (a detail that originated in the West) became part of the

established tradition in Armenian illumination. So while producing the Genoese Gospels, the Armenian commissioner had to explain to the Genoese painter how he was required to position the symbols in order to form the letters of the Armenian alphabet. We see that although the Italian painter did follow the indications, even using many traditional Armenian details (such as the bird to finish the letter of Matthew), the result ended up being very different.

Finally, if we accept the version with the invitation of a local artist to finish the work of an Armenian scribe, we should say again that there was no scriptorium in the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. This means that the Gospel book from the Hermitage museum was the sole example of this production in the Genoese monastery, at least in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Still, the history of its production demonstrates an important aspect in the interaction of Genoa with the East and coincided with the movement of Armenian pilgrims in Italy during the fourteenth century. Stopka describes how active was the pilgrimage from Armenian lands to the West during the thirteenth century, and that monastic communities settled along on the routes to the important religious centres of Europe and hosted pilgrims.⁴⁰ The manuscript that I described connects New Caesarea, Rome, Genoa and the monastery of Horomos, and thus presents evidence that the process continued into the fourteenth century, and that Genoa and the Bartholomites played an important role in these movements of people, images and ideas.

⁴⁰ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, pp. 156–57.

Chapter 8. The Mandylion: a Relic that the Commune did not Need

The second object that is connected with the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni is the Mandylion that appeared in Genoa between 1362 and 1388 and was donated to the Armenian monks by the dying Doge Leonardo Montaldo. Except for some short time, the relic did not leave the monastery and is still found there. Unlike the manuscript from the Hermitage museum, this is one of the best-studied topics in my work, and hundreds of pages have been written by prominent scholars, analysing diverse aspects of this object, its creation technique, history and cultural significance.¹ It is not my goal to provide a complete presentation of the existing scholarship on the Mandylion, so I will instead focus on some details that have either been left out of scholarly interest or can be analysed in the context of the earlier Eastern Christian artefacts in Genoa (namely of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* and the relics of the Holy Cross). I will start with a brief description of the object and its history in order to pay more attention to the possible reasons why the Mandylion ended up in the possession of the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni as well as to its connection with the Armenians.

Description of the Mandylion

The Genoese Mandylion is a Byzantine icon that presents Christ with a dark face, pointed beard and hair² on a golden background with red Greek inscriptions (28,7 x 17,3 cm, fig. 242.1) inserted in a larger wooden board that serves as the base for the silver revetment (38

¹ On the Genoese Mandylion, see Colette Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova* (Rome: Istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte, 1974); *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto, da Bisanzio a Genova*, eds Gerhard Wolf, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Milan: Skira, 2004); *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Genova, Bisanzio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI–XIV)*, eds Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti, Colette Dufour Bozzo and Gerhard Wolf (Venice: Marsilio, 2007).

² This type of iconography became established in the Russian tradition in the fifteenth century and is named 'Saviour with wet beard' (Спас Мокрая Брада). See Andrea Nicolotti, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin: The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), p. 171.

x 28 cm, fig. 243).³ The latter was originally produced in a Palaeologan workshop⁴ with additions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵ The radiocarbon analysis of the wooden base revealed that the icon was painted after the 1210s while the revetment that is mounted on the larger board is an addition from the fourteenth century.⁶ The back of the icon is decorated with a red blossoming cross (fig. 242.2).

The silver revetment is mostly produced in the technique of filigree. As a result, the shimmering golden space around the dark face of the icon has a similar effect to the golden background of the Byzantine mosaics (fig. 243). The traditional Greek inscriptions 'IC XC' and 'TO AGION MANΔHΛION' surround the image of Christ, while three insertions (also in filigree but with a larger pattern) create the cross that differentiates the halo of Christ from the other saints.⁷ Though there is no traditional round halo on the revetment, I suggest that the whole golden surface represents the light that surrounds the head of Christ, which is the definition of a nimbus.⁸ This mystical radiance produced by the filigree technique around the image, raises it to the status of a relic, that of the actual imprint of Christ's face that appears in light in front of the worshipper. This is also enhanced in the structure of the

³ Franca Carboni, 'Il Mandylion, struttura e stato di conservazione', in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 107–8.

⁴ A comparison to the silver bindings of the Cod. Gr. I, 53 and, possibly, also I, 55 from the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, allowed to trace other works that could be produced at the same workshop. See Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova*, pp. 29–30; Francesca Dell'Acqua, 'La legatura del Cod. Gr. I, 53 della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Confronti tecnico-stilistici con la cornice paleologa del Mandylion e altri oggetti affini', in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 175–89.

⁵ There are also signs of a previous revetment. See Colette Dufour Bozzo, 'Il Sacro Volto di Genova: Mandylion e mandylia, una storia senza fine?', in *Genova e l'Europa mediterranea*, pp. 69–71.

⁶ Mario Milazzo, 'Osservazioni sul metodo di datazione con il radiocarbonio', in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 117–19.

⁷ Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, 'Christ: Types of Christ', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* <https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-1048?rsk=c2b0sm&result=1041> [accessed 21 June 2019].

⁸ Annemarie Weyl Carr, Alexander Kazhdan, 'Nimbus', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* <https://0-www-oxfordreference-com.pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046526.001.0001/acref-9780195046526-e-3830?rsk=RURoQ&result=3821> [accessed 21 June 2019].

artefact that consists of the older icon (the relic) being inserted inside some sort of a reliquary: a newer larger board covered with a silver revetment.⁹

There are ten scenes also with Greek inscriptions on the margins of the revetment that were originally in colour as traces of enamel suggest. As in the case with the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*, the scenes should be read generally speaking from left to right from top to bottom but with interruptions in the sequence, which are again far from being random. As Gerhard Wolf has shown, these ‘misplacements’ serve for the interrelation of the compositions and the subjects of the small episodes as well as for the accentuation of the scenes that are in strategically ‘stronger’ positions (for instance, on top of the central image and at the start and end of the whole narration).¹⁰ The scenes represent the following episodes from the history of the Mandyllion’s acquisition until its transfer to Constantinople, making it also one of the most complete cycles on this theme: ¹¹

- 1) King Abgar in bed sends Anania to Christ;
- 2) Anania tries to depict the portrait of Christ;
- 3) Christ washes his hands while another man pours water from a vessel;
- 4) Christ gives Anania a towel with the imprint of his face;
- 5) Abgar kisses the Mandyllion while Anania gives him the letter from Christ;
- 6) An idol falls when Abgar places the Mandyllion outside the walls of Edessa in the bishop’s presence;
- 7) The bishop covers the Mandyllion with a tile to protect it during the rule of the non-Christian nephew of Abgar and the face of Christ gradually appears on the tile (it does not have the cross-halo yet);

⁹ Herbert L. Kessler, ‘Le funzione della cornice’, in *Mandyllion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 61.

¹⁰ Gerhard Wolf, ‘Il Volto che viaggia: premessa a un incontro’, in *ibid.*, pp. 12–15.

¹¹ Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova*, pp. 16–17; Kessler, ‘Le funzione della cornice’, pp. 62–63.

- 8) The Mandyllion is discovered years later during the Persian attack, the bishop brings the Keramion (clearly imprinted and with the cross-halo) to Edessa where a citizen is waiting;
- 9) The Mandyllion protects Edessa again and the bishop is pouring burning oil on the Persians;
- 10) Two old men and one young man are transferring the Mandyllion to Constantinople, the Mandyllion exorcises a demon from the youth.

Looking at the compositions of the scenes and how they are placed around the central image, it can be noticed that the Mandyllion reminds of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* and its ‘rhetorical’ visual language, which many researchers have compared with the orations of Holobolos.¹² The artists that created the pallio used various methods to reach visual harmony (fig. 146). For example, scenes with similar structure occupy determined positions on the pallio without considering the chronological order of the narration (fig. 147). Similarly, Decius wears hats of diverse heights depending on the placement of the episode on the pallio (higher and symmetrical by the ends, and a smaller one in the centre).

The history of the Mandyllion is divided into two parts because of the interruption between episodes 5 and 6: the first half corresponds to scenes 1–5 that should be read in a clockwise direction. The narration continues with episode 6 which is under scene 1 and then the story continues in a counterclockwise direction. As a result, we can mentally draw a diagonal from the top left to the right bottom (fig. 244). And I believe that the main principle of the composition of the Mandyllion’s revetment follows the direction of this line between scenes 1, 6 and 5, 10. We can see it in the layout of the scenes with similar compositions. For example, the lying and standing men of scene 1 are duplicated in scene 5. Additionally, the massive drapery of the beds in both episodes resonate with scene 10, which is directly

¹² For the comparison of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* with the rhetoric of Holobolos see Chapter 6, pp. 143–150

under episode 5: the vertical waves are very similar to the folds of the bedding. Additionally, if we look on the sides of this diagonal, we can notice that the remaining images can also be easily grouped. Scenes 2–4 play together with slightly different relations of the two sole figures. Scenes 6–9 all have the active vertical of the pillar where the Mandylyon is being exposed, and the crowded right half with the image of the city. Moreover, some of the scenes emphasize this diagonal scheme repeating it in their inner compositions, especially the ones of the second half of the narration: the falling idol (6), the ladder (7, 8) and the direction of the bishop's gesture (9) conform to the same direction.

As a result, we can say that the Palaiologan revetment is a perfect addition to the icon of the Mandylyon. It not only guards it as a precious relic but also represents the miraculous light around Christ's head and intricately narrates the story of the relic's transfer between several cities of the Mediterranean.

The Topography of the Mandylyon (Edessa, Constantinople, Genoa)

In this part, I intend to focus on the place and role of the Mandylyon in the cities where it was kept in its history. At first sight, the fact that the icon in Genoa was left in a monastery outside the city walls appears surprising. However, the history of the Mandylyon and the way it was venerated brings sense to the fact that the Genoese decided to leave the Mandylyon at San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, a monastery that was outside the limits of the city.

There are several versions of the history of King Abgar from the kingdom of Osroene. The most famous was recorded in the fourth century by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, who, in his own words, had found several letters exchanged between the king and Christ in the archives of Edessa and translated them from Syrian.¹³ Eusebius narrates that Abgar suffered from a disease that was 'beyond the power of human skill to cure' when he heard about the

¹³ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols, trans. Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926–1932), I, 13.

deeds of Jesus and decided to ask the Son of the Lord to heal him. In return Abgar promised shelter in Edessa. Jesus answered with a letter refusing the invitation and promising to send one of his disciples in place of himself. This happened after the Resurrection when Thaddeus came to the court of Abgar to cure him and tell about the life and teaching of Christ. Eusebius mentions that Thaddeus was one of the Seventy.

The second main source on this subject has been preserved in a single Syrian manuscript of the fifth or sixth century and is known under the name of the ‘Teaching of the Apostle Addai’.¹⁴ The most important addition of this text to the version of Eusebius is the mention of the image of Christ. According to it, Abgar sent his scribe Anan to make a portrait of Christ, which eventually he would keep in his palace. In the early tradition, the Mandylion does not have any miraculous nature; on the contrary, this element was developed in the later, mostly Byzantine tradition. In Syria, the letter of Christ and the text of the legend itself had held much more importance than the image.¹⁵ During the fourth century, a new line was added at the end of the letter of Christ: ‘Your city shall be blessed, and no enemy shall ever master of it’.¹⁶ This phrase gave Edessa a documented blessing and protection of God. Later, during the attacks of the Persians, the citizens would read the text of the letter from the gates to guard the city. In the sixth century, Procopius of Caesarea states that the text was inscribed on the gates.¹⁷

On 16 August 944, the Mandylion was transported from Edessa to Constantinople by Romanos I Lekapenos, the Armenian co-regent of Emperor Constantine VII

¹⁴ *The Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle*, ed. George Phillips (London: Trübner & Co, 1876); *Doctrina Addai / De imagine Edessena*, ed. Martin Illert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

¹⁵ Elena N. Mesherskaya, *Легенда об Авгаре – раннесирийский литературный памятник* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), pp. 56–68.

¹⁶ Judah Benzion Segal, *Edessa “the Blessed City”* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 73. See also Alexei Lidov, ‘Holy Face, Holy Script, Holy Gate: Revealing the Edessa Paradigm in Christian Imagery’, in *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 145.

¹⁷ Procopius of Caesarea, *History of the Wars, Volume I*, trans. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), XII, 26.

Porphyrogenetos.¹⁸ Since then, this is the day of the celebration of the Holy Face in the Eastern Orthodox church. The icon was placed in what was probably the most sacramental place of Constantinople – the Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, where the Byzantine emperors collected the most significant relics of Christendom from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.¹⁹ In 1204, during the conquest of Constantinople, it was completely destroyed and never restored again. Even the place of the building is subject of debate between modern scholars. It was located in the ‘sacred palace’ or the ‘Boukoleon’ within the Great Palace, a very significant space in which all official imperial ceremonies were performed, and which was close to the imperial apartments and the treasury.²⁰ Among other relics, the church of Pharos kept the evidence of the Passions of Christ, i.e. the most important relics of Christian faith (the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail, and the Holy Lance among others).²¹

Although the first mention of the image of Christ comes from a Syrian source, it was fully developed in the Byzantine world. It is significant that in 944, the Byzantines requested the Mandyllion and not the letters of Christ to be transferred to Constantinople.²² One of the reasons for this was that Pope Gelasius in 494 declared the correspondence of Christ and Abgar to be apocryphal.²³ In the late sixth century, the image started to acquire miraculous features when Evagrius Scholasticus first described how the Mandyllion saved Edessa from

¹⁸ I stress the ethnicity because it coincides with the theme, but I would not make any conclusions about the connection of the Mandyllion as a relic specifically important in Armenian culture and the reigning Macedonian dynasty. I believe they did not feel their ethnicity so strongly at this point of time.

¹⁹ Paul Magdalino, ‘L’église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople (VIIe / VIIIe – XIIIe siècles)’, in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds Jannic Durand and Bernard Flusin (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004), pp. 15–30; Alexei Lidov, ‘A Byzantine Jerusalem. The Imperial Pharos Chapel as the Holy Sepulchre’, in *Jerusalem as Narrative Space – Erzählraum Jerusalem*, eds Annette Hoffmann and Gerhard Wolf (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 63–105.

²⁰ Lidov, ‘A Byzantine Jerusalem’, p. 64.

²¹ In the twelfth century, Nicholas Mesarites left a description of the relics, which included the Mandyllion: *Nikolaos Mesarites. Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, ed. August Heisenberg (Würzburg: Stürtz, 1907), pp. 29–32. The fullest list is found in the work by “anonym from Terragon” (end of the twelfth century): Krijnie N. Ciggaar, ‘Une description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55’, *Revue des études byzantines*, 53 (1995), pp. 117–40.

²² Lidov, ‘Holy Face, Holy Script, Holy Gate’, pp. 146–47.

²³ Segal, *Edessa “the Blessed City”*, p. 73.

enemy troops.²⁴ From that moment on, in the Byzantine tradition, the Mandylion becomes a palladium to protect the city. Considered to be some sort of a self-portrait left by Christ to the people, it gained maximum extent and popularity as one of the main arguments against iconoclasm during the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.²⁵

Despite the fact that it is believed that by the twelfth century the Mandylion was kept with other relics in the church of the Virgin of Pharos, Sysse Engberg has suggested that originally it was intended to be stored in a chapel above the Chalke gate of the Great Palace.²⁶ Additionally, the place of the relic inside the Church of Pharos and the depiction of the Holy Face in the programme of the decoration of Orthodox churches continued the connection with gates and borders that began in the early history of its veneration. Following the description of the church of Pharos left by Robert de Cleri at the time of the capture of Constantinople by the crusaders, Alexei Lidov has presumed that the two vessels with the Mandylion and the Keramion²⁷ hung from the two arches that supported the dome.²⁸ This was probably the start of the tradition of painting the Mandylion and the Keramion on the eastern and western arches under the dome of Orthodox churches, along the main line of movement inside the building, and above the passageways.²⁹ The placement of the Mandylion also brings to mind the words of Christ: 'I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved' (John 10:9). Furthermore, the tradition to use the Mandylion to protect the

²⁴ Mesherskaya, *Легенда об Авраме*, p. 70; Glenn Peers, 'Magic, the Mandylion and the Letter of Abgar: on a Greco-Arabic Amulet Roll in Chicago and New York', in *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 163.

²⁵ Averil Cameron, 'The Mandylion and Byzantine Iconoclasm', in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, eds Herbert L. Kessler and Gerhard Wolf (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1998), pp. 33–54.

²⁶ Sysse Engberg, 'Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa', in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, pp. 123–42.

²⁷ An imprint of the Holy Face left on a tile after the contact with the Mandylion, while the cloth was hidden in the gates of the city. It was discovered together with the Mandylion on the gates of Edessa.

²⁸ Lidov, 'A Byzantine Jerusalem. The Imperial Pharos Chapel as the Holy Sepulchre', p. 90.

²⁹ Eleventh-century cave church Sakli Kilise in Cappadocia; cathedral of Saint Sophia in Ohrid, Macedonia, eleventh century; Myrozhn monastery in Pskov, Russia, twelfth century; Church of the Annunciation, Gradac, Serbia, twelfth century. On other examples of the use of the Mandylion in the decoration of the Orthodox churches always in connection to gates, see Engberg, 'Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa', p. 127.

boundaries of a city continued in Constantinople, where it was taken on a boat around the city as a palladium to protect its frontiers.³⁰

Taking into account this strong and very common connection between the Mandylicon and the limits of the city it is protecting, the placing of the relic in a church outside the gates of Genoa seems more logical than keeping the Holy Face in the cathedral of San Lorenzo in the city centre. Moreover, it seems that the Genoese were aware of this tradition to connect the Mandylicon with the gates, as they had a tondo with the icon on the Porta Santa Caterina (or Acquasola, see map fig. 201), produced in the sixteenth century by Gian Giacomo della Porta and kept today in the Museo di Sant'Agostino.³¹ On the other hand, there is, of course, a difference between keeping the relic on the gates or the border as opposed to outside the walls (map on fig. 201 shows that San Bartolomeo was actually quite far from the medieval limits of the city). So it is possible that the city walls were not a clear identifier of 'the city', as elsewhere, since the ashes of John the Baptist were also originally placed outside the city walls in 1098. However, unlike the Mandylicon, the ashes were quickly transferred to the cathedral to become highly venerated.³²

In any case, although the small images on the history of the Mandylicon on the Palaiologan revetment depict the icon on a pillar outside the walls, and we have accounts on how the Mandylicon was carried around Constantinople to protect the city, the Genoese situation seems different and more probably there should be another explanation as to why the relic was left in the Armenian church.

³⁰ Engberg, 'Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa', p. 135.

³¹ Bertolina, 'Servizi di strada Armeni e percorsi fliscani', p. 383.

³² Valeria Polonio even believes that the account on the arrival of the ashes first to San Giovanni di Pre could be a later addition to the history of the relic invented to elevate the status of the Hospitaller church: Polonio, 'L' arrivo delle ceneri del Precursore', p. 10.

The Mandyllion and Leonardo Montaldo

One of the most important episodes in the history of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni was the donation of the Mandyllion by the dying Doge Leonardo Montaldo in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Though this event became widely known in later sources, we have very little accurate information to rely on. To begin, Montaldo's will was lost already in the seventeenth century.³³ Secondly, we do not know how Montaldo received the Mandyllion in the East in the first place nor when the Mandyllion actually arrived in Genoa. Additionally, Eastern sources left no mention of these events while the earliest Genoese testimony belonged to Giorgio Stella (born c. 1370) and was written some decades after the death of Leonardo Montaldo (1384).

The literary tradition that was fully formed in the sixteenth century narrates that after 1384, the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni received the Mandyllion, one of the most important relics of the whole Christendom. According to this tradition, the Byzantine emperor John V Palaeologus (1341–1391) donated it to Montaldo in return for Genoese loyalty and help against the Turks. Although the exact date of this donation was unknown to the early modern authors, according to them, Montaldo should have gotten it at the beginning of the 1360s while being Podestà in Pera. The episode with the imperial donation reminds one of the history of the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* that the Genoese received from Michael VIII and kept in the cathedral, the religious and civic centre of the city together with other relics and precious artefacts.³⁴ However, the Mandyllion, probably the most precious of them all, was hidden by Leonardo Montaldo, and only after his death by inheritance it was gifted to the Armenian monks. The reasons for this donation and the possible connections between Montaldo, the Mandyllion and the Armenian monks became the questions that interested me

³³ Calcagnino, *Dell'immagine Edessena*, pp. 266–67.

³⁴ See Chapter 4, pp. 141–51.

most during this research.³⁵ In order to find possible answers, I will first address Montaldo's biography and the circumstances around his arrival in Genoa from Pera; secondly, I will focus on the role of the Mandylion in Armenian culture.

The scarce accounts on Leonardo Montaldo's biography show him as an extremely active and successful diplomat, as well as a wise and experienced governor, who unfortunately did not have enough time to implement his plans.³⁶ He was born in 1319 in San Martino di Paravanico, in the family of a lawyer that was close to Simone Boccanegra during his first period in office (1339–1344). Leonardo received his first public post in 1351 when the Doge Giovanni II da Valente (1350–1353, died 1360) appointed him consul to Caffa in Crimea. Five years later, with the return of Simone Boccanegra to power in Genoa, he was sent to the court of Castile. Following several successful diplomatic missions to Corsica and the Holy Roman Empire, in the late 1350s, the emperor Charles IV (1316–1378) granted Montaldo the title of Count Palatine. Leonardo's career continued in Florence and Venice. In 1361 or 1362, he was promoted to Captain General of the Genoese in Romania and later became Podestà in Pera.³⁷

There is surprisingly little information about this period of his life and authors of different times have been trying to find any possible accounts of the Genoese help to the court of Constantinople to justify the donation of such a precious object as the Mandylion. According to some versions, while in Constantinople he helped the Byzantines against the

³⁵ These problems were also addressed in Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova*, pp. 64–66; Gabriella Airaldi, “‘Ad mortem festinamus...’” Genova, il Mandylion e Leonardo Montaldo’, in *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 275–81, especially 280–81; Sandra Origone, ‘Giovanni V Paleologo e i Genovesi’, in *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 105–15; Giovanna Petti Balbi, ‘Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato: Leonardo Montaldo Doge di Genova tra il 1383 e il 1384’, in *Intorno al Sacro Volto*, pp. 117–22.

³⁶ Apart from the articles mentioned in footnote 35, the biography of Leonardo Montaldo can be consulted in Federico Donaver, *La storia della Repubblica di Genova*, vol. 1 (Genoa: Editrice Libreria Lanterna, 1970), pp. 364–68 (first published in 1912); Antonio Cappellini, *Dizionario biografico di Genovesi illustri e notabili* (Bologna: Forni, 1932), pp. 97–98; *Rosso Doge. I dogi della Repubblica di Genova dal 1339 al 1797*, eds Sergio Buonadonna and Mario Mercenaro (Genoa: De Ferrari, 2007), p. 26.

³⁷ Calcagnino, *Dell'immagine Edessena*, pp. 321–22. Origone, ‘Giovanni V Paleologo e i Genovesi’, pp. 108–10.

Turks either in the battle of Sinop³⁸ or while heading to Tanais.³⁹ Unfortunately there are no definitive documents that can prove the presence of Montaldo in any of these events. However, as Sandra Origone demonstrated, there is a mention of a galley heading to *Romanie et Syrie* in 1262 that was led by Leonardo's brother Gregorio Montaldo.⁴⁰ Additionally, Eastern sources mention Montaldo's presence in Pera up to April 1363, which is the *terminus post quem* for the arrival of the Mandyliion in Genoa.⁴¹

The silence of Byzantine sources about the donation of the icon seems suspicious. But we should remember, that in Byzantium, traces of the Mandyliion that was kept in the chapel of Pharos, were already lost by the fourteenth century: after the Fourth Crusade, its route leads to Rome or Paris.⁴² The fact that such a precious donation was not mirrored in any Eastern source can be of course explained with the disappearance of written sources over the centuries. But it could also mean that the Byzantines did not consider the icon to be the original image from Edessa and thus did not see the present as worth mentioning. However, this scepticism on the origin of the Mandyliion was never the case in Genoa, where the icon was always perceived as the true image of Christ.

Returning to Montaldo's biography, following the death of Doge Simone Boccanegra in March and after being seen in Constantinople in April 1363, he returned to Genoa, where Gabriele Adorno, one of his main political rivals, was chosen as the next ruler. In 1365, supported by the Dorias and the Del Carrettos, Montaldo ineffectively attacked the Palazzo Ducale to make Adorno abdicate but instead had to flee to Pisa. His exile continued in Asti after another attempt at seizing power, in April 1366. It was only in 1371, when Domenico

³⁸ Cappellini, *Dizionario biografico di Genovesi*, pp. 97–98; *Rosso Doge*, p. 26.

³⁹ Cadamuro believes that the battle was to capture Tanais, but Giustiniani writes that the battle happened on the way to this Genoese city. See Giustiniani, *Annali della Repubblica di Genova*, pp. 159–60; Cadamuro, *L'immagine di Edessa*, pp. 95–96.

⁴⁰ Origone, 'Giovanni V Paleologo e i Genovesi', p. 110.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁴² Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: a History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 238; Engberg, 'Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandyliion of Edessa', p. 127.

Fregoso came to govern Genoa, that Leonardo Montaldo was allowed to return to the city. The new Doge had better relations with Leonardo and brought him to the council of elders in 1375. Owing to his long years in the East, Montaldo was sent to Turin in 1381 to sign a peace treaty with Venice and Constantinople after the war of Chioggia.⁴³

In 1383, the 64-year old Montaldo finally came to power, after Domenico Fregoso escaped from Genoa and his successor Federico Pagano was quickly displaced by the council of elders. Although the Genoese supported Antoniotto Adorno, the council chose Montaldo to be Doge. One of his first acts was to release James I, King of Cyprus captive in Genoa, in return for new commercial privileges in this region. At the end of the fourteenth century, Giorgio Stella wrote about Leonardo Montaldo and his short rule: ‘Nam dux urbis nostre Leonardo de Montaldo a cunctis prudentissimus habebatur et erat sui que capitis acutissimo spectu, absque nimia studii assiduitate, talis fuit reipublice moderator, quod totum territorium Ianuense a sui ducatus principio usque adhuc et scissure turbinisque expers et tutissimum erat; cauto etiam ordine commode urbis augebat ipse magnificus et ab urbis principibus colebatur’.⁴⁴

On 11 June 1384, Montaldo came down with the plague and died three days later at his villa near the monastery of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. During these three days, he made a will to pass the Mandylion to the vicinal church together with 300 *lire* as a perpetual endorsement, witnessed by the notary Raffaele de Guasco.⁴⁵ Bartolomeo Ardimento inherited the rest of his possessions, and the next day Antoniotto Adorno was chosen Doge. The archbishop Giacomo Fieschi and all the canons attended the funeral of Montaldo.⁴⁶ He was buried in the choir of the cathedral of San Lorenzo, and his statue was positioned in the

⁴³ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, pp. 239–42.

⁴⁴ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, p. 190.

⁴⁵ Giustiniani, *Annali della Repubblica di Genova*, pp. 159–60; Calcagnino, *Dell'immagine Edessena*, pp. 266–67; Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, vol. 2, 2, pp. 955–56.

⁴⁶ *Rosso Doge*, p. 26.

tympanum of the central nave right in front of the Byzantine early-Trecento frescoes (fig. 245).⁴⁷ According to Bitio, the Bartholomites received the Mandylicon on 2 October 1388.⁴⁸

It is important to stress again the fact that the imperial donation is only described in Genoese sources of a much later period. As Dufour Bozzo has shown, the first time that we find this detail is in a document of 17 December 1607 and, thirty years later, with the inclusion in the annals of Agostino Giustiniani it became widely known.⁴⁹ The researcher connects the appearance of this important detail in the history of the relic with the theft of the Mandylicon that took place on 8 December 1507 when it was transferred to France. It was only returned to San Bartolomeo degli Armeni in 1509, after having spent several months in the Genoese cathedral.⁵⁰ The document of 1507 is a letter written 9 days after the theft and addressed to the King of France asking to return the Mandylicon.⁵¹ It seems very plausible that the Bartholomites would want to elevate the value of the stolen icon to attract attention and return it. Additionally, it is easy to notice that the church profited from the fame: I believe, this could also have been one of the reasons why several smaller churches were later given under its patronage in 1538, only one year after Giustiniani described in detail the connection of the Mandylicon with the Byzantine emperor.⁵²

Nonetheless, the fact of an imperial donation does not seem impossible. Modern researchers find several other aspects of this donation suspicious, but explanations can be proposed. The first argument against this present is the fact that the Constantinopolitan court of John V was far from being wealthy to make expensive donations like this, as we see from

⁴⁷ Petti Balbi, 'Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato', p. 117.

⁴⁸ Bitio, *Relazione*, p. 53.

⁴⁹ Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova*, p. 64.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

⁵¹ Marina Montesano, 'Da Genova a Parigi, da Parigi a Genova: il furto e il ritorno del Mandylicon nel primo Cinquecento', in *Mandylicon: Intorno al Sacro Volto*, p. 287; Petti Balbi, 'Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato', p. 120.

⁵² The importance of the story around the church and the relic during the sixteenth century is also mirrored in the fact that since 1600 the topography of this quarter in the city has used the names of Leonardo Montaldo and San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.

the descriptions of Nicephorus Gregoras (c. 1295–1360).⁵³ But Origone rightly argues that the Western allies of Byzantium always profited from the exchange to provide help and often the price was much higher, such as new territories to rule. Additionally, she describes that in 1395, the Venetians received the tunic of Christ in exchange for similar help against the Turks.⁵⁴ More importantly, Petti Balbi mentions an imperial donation of the body of St. Anastasia to Rosso Doria in 1345, that was described by Stella.⁵⁵

Another obvious fact that raises questions is that Montaldo kept the icon to himself in secret for a long time and only revealed its existence before dying. This is especially strange since there is evidence that after he arrived in Genoa, he brought several objects to the cathedral of San Lorenzo. As we read in Alizeri's 'Guida Artistica': 'Giunto a nostri lidi il Montaldo depositò nella Cattedrale due corpi di santi che facean parte di que doni ma tenne per sè la venerabile ef figie e la ripose nel suo domestico oratorio'.⁵⁶ Bozzo Dufour interpreted the exclusion of the Mandylion from the donations to the cathedral as a sign that Montaldo stole the icon. And although I also admit that this is a very probable scenario of how Montaldo gained possession of the Mandylion, I do not think this would have made a difference nor that a troubled conscience would have stopped Montaldo from exposing the icon. After all, the stories of the acquisition of various segments of the Holy Cross are full of episodes of piracy and theft and still the relics were kept with pride in the cathedral.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the fact of a private adoration could mean that he regarded it as his own property.⁵⁸ Additionally, I suggest that another possible reason to keep the relic to himself was his wish to sell the Mandylion to the commune. Similarly, the Zaccaria family sold their famous Cross in 1342, that is only around twenty years before Montaldo brought the Holy

⁵³ Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova*, p. 64.

⁵⁴ Origone, 'Giovanni V Paleologo e i Genovesi', pp. 110–11.

⁵⁵ Petti Balbi, 'Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato', p. 121. See Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, p. 183, lines 15–20.

⁵⁶ Alizeri, *Guida artistica*, vol. 2, 2, p. 955.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 4, pp. 132–34.

⁵⁸ Petti Balbi, 'Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato', p. 120.

Face to Genoa.⁵⁹ If this was his intention, we can assume that the Podestà refused to buy the Mandyllion in the 1360s either because of economic restrictions or political conflicts that forced Montaldo to leave the city. Moreover, if we look at the time after his arrival to the city and the death of Simone Boccanegra until his own death in the early 1380s, it seems that the whole political situation in the city had changed. The weakness of the Doges and the constant political revolts lead to a ‘lack of enthusiasm for the symbols, images, and narratives of that regime’, as it was formulated by Beneš.⁶⁰ And if we remember that even at the peak of the relations between Genoa and Byzantium, in the 1260s, the gift of Emperor Michael VIII was not praised in a way we would expect today, hence it is not surprising that in the second half of the fourteenth century, when these relations weakened,⁶¹ the commune did not show much interest in the new imperial gift.⁶² In this respect, the acquisition of the Mandyllion in order to place it in the cathedral as another symbol of civic or religious identity was no longer of interest to the commune in the second half of the fourteenth century.

One more reason for Montaldo’s illogical behaviour (as it seems today) could be hidden in his biography. It is hard to reconstruct the motivation and thoughts of a person, who apart from living in the long ago fourteenth century, left no writings.⁶³ However, there is one motive that seems to predominate in the turbulent life of Leonardo Montaldo. For many years, this ambitious man tried to attain control of Genoa: he outlived many Doges and made two unsuccessful attempts to seize power. As Gabriella Airaldi has pointed out, it seems as if he waited to become the ‘principe’ to donate the relic.⁶⁴ Indeed, Giorgio Stella describes the three days of illness⁶⁵ during which Montaldo should have had the time to

⁵⁹ See Chapter 4, p. 138.

⁶⁰ Beneš, ‘Civic Identity’, p. 213.

⁶¹ On the Genoese expansion to Northwestern Europe during the last quarter of the fourteenth century, see Miner, Santchev, ‘The Genoese Economy’, pp. 407–8.

⁶² See Chapter 4, pp. 150–151.

⁶³ Petti Balbi writes that the documents left on Montaldo do not give much information on the cultural, religious and private demeanour: Petti Balbi, ‘Una lunga carriera, un breve dogato’, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Airaldi, “‘Ad mortem festinamus...’”, p. 281.

⁶⁵ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, p. 190.

realise the imminence of death. So, perhaps like the Byzantine emperor had the right to donate the priceless relic to whomever he chose, Montaldo, regretting that he had such a short period to rule, made his last will as a person in power and donated the Mandylicon to a small church instead of the cathedral, as a Doge should have done.

Lastly, there is still the question of why the relic ended specifically in the Armenian monastery. The first reason was, of course, the vicinity of the latter to the suburban villa where Montaldo was dying. But there is also a very long Armenian tradition of connecting the legend of King Abgar and his correspondence with Christ with the history of the state's christening, a fundamental episode for Armenian identity. From Montaldo's biography, we see that he experienced many contacts with Eastern Christian cultures during his numerous administrative and diplomatic missions. Though Giorgio Stella has characterised him as 'absque nimia studii assiduitate', Montaldo should have had some interaction with Armenian friars and merchants during his stays in Caffa in the early 1350s and in Pera at the beginning of the 1360s, where they played a significant role.⁶⁶ Therefore, I would like to proceed with further and more direct connections between the Mandylicon and Armenia, which will require a closer look at the Armenian version of the legend.

Abgar V the Black and the Mandylicon in the Armenian Tradition

We find another early version of the history of Abgar and the acquisition of the Mandylicon in the *History of Armenia* by Movses Khorenatsi, an author of the fifth century who composed one of the most famous sources on early Armenian history, which had a significant impact on the historiography of the region.⁶⁷ Being taught in Alexandria where he learnt Greek and Syrian, Movses Khorenatsi based his work on the Syrian version of the legend as well as on several Greek sources including the *Church History* by Eusebius, as he

⁶⁶ Stopka, *Armenia Christiana*, p. 278.

⁶⁷ Segal, *Edessa "the Blessed City"*, p. 16 and in other parts shortly touches the matter of Armenian sources.

mentions it in Chapter X of the second Book.⁶⁸ From Movses' own words, we also know that he worked in the archives of Edessa as he points to having seen the letters of Christ while visiting this city.⁶⁹

The main addition of Movses to the sources he used was the constant mentioning of the Armenian origins of Abgar, the assignation of Edessa to the Armenian lands and the substitution of the Jew Tobias who sheltered the Apostle Thaddeus in Edessa with a Bagratid prince, an ancestor of Movses' patrons. Regarding the first two matters, Edessa was, indeed, part of Armenia, but for a short period and much earlier than Jesus was born. This happened for the first time from 83 to 66 BCE when the Kingdom of Osroene was conquered by Tigran II the Great. Later Edessa became part of Armenia again only in the eleventh century. There are different versions of why Movses made this misreading that became widely popular in Armenia and is accepted even nowadays.⁷⁰ The first deals with the idea to enhance the role of Armenia and the Bagratids among other Christian states.⁷¹ There is, however, another argument that explains how this confusion could have happen in the first place. The answer could be in the similarity of the second name of Abgar⁷² – translated as 'the Black' – and a popular name of Armenian kings. In Syrian, the name of Abgar sounds like 'Ukkāmā, which was transformed by Eusebius into Arjama and in Syrian into Arshama, which Movses probably confused with the names of two Armenian kings Arsham (Arsames). That is how 'Abgar the Black' became 'Abgar, son of Arsames'.⁷³

⁶⁸ Mikhail V. Krivov, '«Церковная история» Евсевия Кесарийского как источник Мовсеса Хоренаци', *Византийский временник*, 59 (2000), 108–15.

⁶⁹ Movses Khorenatsi, *History of the Armenians*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Thomson (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1978), III, 62.

⁷⁰ Today the portrait of Abgar V is on the 100000 Dram banknote. See also Giuseppe Cappelletti *L'Armenia* (Florence: Stamperia e Fonderia Fabris, 1841), pp. 21–37; Giovanni Guaita, *1700 Years of Faithfulness: History of Armenia and its Churches* (Moscow: FAM, 2002), pp. 50–51; Krivov, 'Церковная история', p. 109.

⁷¹ Robert W. Thomson, 'Commentary on the Literary Sources', in Movses Khorenatsi, *History of the Armenians*, p. 39.

⁷² Abgar is a family name of several kings of Osroene and means "powerful".

⁷³ Movses Khorenatsi, *History of the Armenians*, ed. S. Arevshatyan, trans. G. Sarkisyan (Yerevan: Hayastan, 1990), pp. 242–43.

The work of Movses soon became one of the most important sources on the early period, authoritative for every later composer of a History of Armenia. The episode with Abgar and his correspondence with Christ is often omitted in later sources that provide very sketchy information on this earlier epoch and do not go into much detail. However, it appears again, for example, in the late ninth century in the work of Thovma Artsruni, written for the Artsruni royal family. Thovma added a very important detail, which already existed in Greek sources: the miraculous appearance of the image on the cloth through the imprint of Christ's face.⁷⁴ Movses' version did not describe the act of imprinting the face, only the fact that Anania had brought the image with Christ's reply.

We find another instance of the use of Movses' version in the tenth century when Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, the Armenian Catholikos, diplomat and historian, repeats it word for word. Abgar is again called the son of Arjam. Moreover, Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi adds an Armenian etymology of his name: 'After twenty years of his reign, Arjam was succeeded by his son Abgar, whom the ancients called Awag ["noble"] Ayr ["man"] because of the excellence of his wisdom. But as the Syrians could not pronounce it properly in our tongue, they called him Abgar'.⁷⁵ More importantly for us, Draskhanakerttsi also includes the detail about the Mandylion into his story: 'The messenger Anan brought the letter of the Saviour to Abgar, and, with it, he also carried the impression of the divine image, which is still to this day preserved in Edessa'.⁷⁶

The tradition is followed by Stepanos Asoghik Taronetsi in his three-volume *Universal History* written in the eleventh century.⁷⁷ Finally, Vardan Areveltsi in his thirteenth-century

⁷⁴ Robert W Thomson, 'Preface', in Thomas, Artsruni, *History of the House of Artsrunik*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Thomson (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), p. 26.

⁷⁵ Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, *History of Armenia*, ed. Krikor Vardapet Maksoudian, VI, 1/2. <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/ydh1b.htm#6>. [accessed 2 August 2019]

⁷⁶ Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi, *History of Armenia*, VI, 13.

⁷⁷ Asoghik Stepanos Taronetsi, *Всеобщая история Степаноса Таронского – Асохика по прозванию, писателя XI столетия*, ed. Mkrtich Emin (Moscow: Типография Lazarevskogo instituta vostochnykh yazykov, 1864), pp. 31–32.

Compilation of History again gives the Armenised version of the name Abgar. Furthermore, he emphasises the role of Edessa in the Armenian kingdom by calling it ‘Urha’ and comparing it with Tigranakert, the capital of the empire of Tigran II the Great, the greatest apogee in the history of the Armenian Kingdom.⁷⁸ And again, Vardan Areveltsi mentions the episode concerning the Mandyllion, providing additional information on how it was later transferred to Constantinople.⁷⁹ It is also important to note that Vardan Areveltsi was born in Cilicia, studied in Greater Armenia and later returned back to fight against Western influences brought by the crusaders. This gives us an idea of the wide dissemination of Movses Khorenatsi’s version in both parts of Armenia during the thirteenth century.

Finally, we find a mention of Abgar as an Armenian king in the canons and hymns of the Armenian church (called ‘sharakan’) that were established in their final form by the thirteenth century.⁸⁰ The canon of the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew praises them as the baptisers of the Armenians:

‘You those who through Saint Thaddeus have received the Heavenly Father in His Son
Praise and eulogise the Lord, glorify Him for ever and ever.

You those who through Bartholomew, the Saint Apostle, have beheld the light of the
divine knowledge

Praise and eulogise the Lord, glorify Him for ever and ever.

<...>

With the hands of the blessed Apostle Thaddeus, You cured Abgar, the king of the
Armenians, from an evil illness’.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Vardan Areveltsi, *Всеобщая история Вардана Великого*, ed. Mkrtych Emin (Moscow: Emin, 1861), 1, 16 <http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/rus11/Vardan/frameset1.htm> [accessed 2 August 2019].

⁷⁹ Vardan Areveltsi, *Всеобщая история Вардана Великого*, 1, 44.

⁸⁰ A translation with a theoretic introduction and commentaries: *Шаракан: каноны и гимны Армянской церкви*, ed. Levon Hakobian (Erevan: Sargis Sachenc, 2017).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 404 (my translation).

Thus, although the connection of Abgar V and the Armenians is the result of a misunderstanding, it had a long and extremely widespread tradition in Armenia, which, I believe, should not be ignored in the discussion of the Mandylion and the Armenian monastery in Genoa. The question of the veneration of the Mandylion as opposed to the letters of Christ can rise because the Armenians did not have a very strong tradition of using icons in the decoration of their churches. However, as we have seen from the written sources, the image of Christ is mentioned in the majority of the histories from Movses Khorenatsi onwards. Additionally, the Mandylion has received a special veneration as a relic and prototype of all icons in many cultures that traditionally do not use icons.⁸²

Apart from being one of the most important relics of Christendom, the image of Edessa, connected with the mythical story of Edessa, was perceived by the Armenians as a visible piece of evidence that Armenia was the first nation to embrace Christianity on a state level. This idea shines through Movses Khorenatsi's narrative. Following the Syrian sources, he inserts five letters between Abgar, the Roman emperor Tiberius, the Persian king Artaxias and his brother Nersekh. The letters constantly repeat "Abgar, king of Armenia" and show the will of Abgar to call the attention of the powerful rulers to the Son of God and his doctrine. And although we do not have any evidence that Leonardo Montaldo knew about this connection, we can say that he spent a part of his life in the lands where Armenians had a strong presence and daily interacted with the Genoese. Thus, it is not impossible that he could have heard this common version of the relic's history and decided to donate it to the Bartholomites. Especially since the Genoese did not show much interest in this imperial present.

⁸² André Grabar, *La Sainte Face de Laon: le Mandylion dans l'art orthodoxe* (Prague: Seminarium Kondakovianum, 1931); Christine Chaillot, *Rôle des images et vénération des icônes dans les Églises orthodoxes orientales: Traditions syriaque, arménienne, copte et éthiopienne* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2017).

Conclusion

The history of the Mandylicon in connection with San Bartolomeo degli Armeni raises new questions about the relations between Genoa, Armenia and Byzantium. This especially concerns the possibility of an imperial gift, its later appearance in Genoa and, most importantly, the reasons why it was never transferred to the cathedral to be kept with other important communal relics and artefacts. I believe the answer to the last one is that the Genoese commune was no longer interested in such objects by the second half of the fourteenth century as it was earlier when it was collecting signs of wealth, power and God's protection. Another problem is the choice of the Armenian church to donate the Mandylicon to. Leonardo Montaldo himself could have had several private reasons. First, we should take into account that it could be a coincidence that the Armenians received the relic just because their monastery was close to Montaldo's villa. Secondly, as Airaldi suggested, this could be a sign of his last will as a person with power to donate the relic to whomever he wanted, and he preferred to donate it to the Armenians specifically. Additionally, the Popes promised salvation to those people who supported the Armenian monastery, so this could also have been a gift to the church, hoping for the forgiveness of sins before death. Finally, as I have shown above, among the Armenians, the Mandylicon was perceived almost as a national relic tied with the christening of the country by the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. Montaldo could have known about this connection, which also might have been another reason for him to donate the Mandylicon to the church of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. This is of course impossible to prove, but it should be taken into account given the fact that Montaldo spent several years in the Genoese eastern colonies and should have been familiar with the special attitude Armenian culture had towards the Mandylicon.

Conclusion

At the beginning of my research, during my first trip to Genoa in Spring 2016, I was struck by the relative lack of medieval imagery connected with Eastern Christianity in the city. It seemed to me that a city so tightly bonded with the Eastern Mediterranean had to be full of marvellous mosaics, centralised domical architecture and icons. At first glance, the reality was very different, as the material I was searching for was scattered all over the city. Looking back today, I can say that I was misled in my early impressions, and the material presented in this thesis, which in its final version could not include all the examples of Eastern Christian imagery, is evidence that Genoa has a lot to show in this respect.

So to answer the first question that was put in the introduction, we should admit that the city had quite a lot of important examples of relics, frescoes, manuscripts, textiles, and other works of art either produced by Eastern craftsmen or brought from the distant shores of the Mediterranean by members of diverse communities. This is especially fair if we take into account the objects that were not preserved to our times. Still, the Eastern visual element did not overwhelm the decoration of the city and had an equivalent extent to the presence of other cultures in Genoa, such as, for instance, the Gothic style arriving from France.

The Agents and the Mechanics of Cultural Transfer

As one of the main transporting centres of the Mediterranean, Genoa was at the crossroads between diverse Eastern and Western countries. Among the agents who contributed to the movement and dissemination of objects or any type of ideas and knowledge about the East, we should name first of all the Genoese themselves. The roles of the citizens in the Eastern Mediterranean ranged from the representatives of the Republic or the Pope (for example, Doge Leonardo Montaldo or Patriarch of Antioch Opizzo Fieschi) to simple traders and

warriors (as Guglielmo Embriaco and his troops) who brought home exotic products and sometimes pieces of Eastern craftsmanship.

We can also distinguish a different group formed of external agents. Firstly, Genoa was seen as an important stronghold in the net of major organisations that operated between the Holy Land and Europe, such as, for instance, the Hospitallers who built the large complex of San Giovanni di Pré. Later, the Ligurian capital became a safe destination for people fleeing from the unstable circumstances that constantly occurred in the Middle East: the Carmelites and the Bartholomites. Moreover, we know of several accounts of individuals or small groups that were either invited to Genoa to work there (as the painter of the frescoes in the cathedral) or used the Genoese fleet to travel the Mediterranean, predictably made stops in the city and thus left some track of their own presence: these are the commissioner and the scribe of the Armenian manuscript, as well as several diplomatic delegations from Eastern countries. Finally, objects from the East could have been sent as diplomatic presents, as the *Pallio di San Lorenzo*.

Therefore, trying to summarise how the cultural transfer happened, we should distinguish two main mechanisms. The first involved a direct dissemination of knowledge and objects from travelling people that gained them overseas and brought to their homeland. This transfer was usually one-way, meaning that it only distributed ideas in the city in which travellers arrived. The second type of cultural dissemination occurred through enclaves of exchange. It implies that arriving people first established, for instance, churches or monasteries, which soon became centres of intercultural exchange. In this case, we often see the results of a combination of ideas typical for diverse traditions. In my thesis, such examples are the decoration of San Giovanni di Pré and Santa Maria del Carmine. In the first case, we find evidence of multiple artists that clearly belonged to the Eastern and Western traditions working on the same premises. In the Carmelite church, eastern elements, while being blended into Sienese style, still played an important and separate part in the overall

message of the decoration (that of the antiquity of the Order's roots). Another instance of a combination of ideas that happened in a centre of foreign culture in Genoa is the Genoese Gospel Book V3-834 from the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, produced in 1325 in San Bartolomeo degli Armeni.

The Paleologan frescoes of the Duomo that the Genoese ordered themselves to display as part of their religious and civic identity is another telling example. In this case, a centre of cultural exchange was created by the citizens who commissioned the work to a foreign artist and worked with him to adapt the alien visual language to their needs. This mechanism was also used by the Dorias in the decoration of their family-church of San Matteo. Finally, I believe that the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* is the object that was intended to demonstrate the complexity of cultural exchange most manifestly. It contained a dual message. For the Byzantine audience, it was supposed to glorify the emperor and, at least in part, undermine the Genoese. The Western audience should have read it, first, as an expensive gift in turn for Genoa's help in restoring the Empire, and, second, as a tribute to St. Lawrence, the patron saint of the commune. However, it is worth remembering that the reaction of the Genoese was far less intense than we could have expected today.

The pallio leads us to the question of how the objects or ideas changed their semantics after being placed in a new location. This differs from case to case, and upon the transfer, some of the objects could have received new meanings and roles often losing their original narrative. For instance, after moving to Europe from the East, the Carmelites had to fight for survival in the second half of the thirteenth century. What they intended to demonstrate in the decoration of their church in Genoa responded to the new demands of the Order and was achieved through the appropriation of their Eastern origins. Similarly, the *Croce degli Zaccaria* was brought to Genoa and changed its designation by being introduced in the communal ceremonies. Eastern elements were adapted to gain new meanings in the case of the frescoes in the cathedral. For example, a small redistribution of the figures in the upper

tier of the western wall transformed a typical Byzantine Deesis into the Glorification of the Virgin, a theme important for the commissioner. Furthermore, the decoration of the Duomo emphasised the themes of the Passion and the patronage of particular saints. The invitation of a highly-skilled Byzantine artist was by itself a clear demonstration of power and wealth of the state. As I argue, the decoration programme in the Duomo strived for attesting to the Genoese primacy among other Italian cities (namely Rome and Milan). Finally, the *Sacro Catino* completely lost any of its original meaning after being placed in a new context and perceived as a holy relic in the chronicle of Jacopo da Varagine.

External Agents and Their Memory

From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, Genoa became home of several religious Orders that arrived in the city from the East. The Hospitallers brought the memory of their house in Jerusalem and built the complex of San Giovanni di Pré as a transitional point between Western Europe and the Crusader East. The use of Eastern elements in its architecture and decoration aimed to demonstrate their presence and key role in the Holy Land. They replicated the original hospital and two-storied church in Jerusalem and possibly used it to venerate the place of the first arrival of the ashes of the Baptist to Genoa. For the decoration of the lower church, they invited several artists of different backgrounds, most possibly including one from the Levant who was well familiar with the tradition of Byzantine mural decoration.

The Carmelites arrived in Genoa under different circumstances: they had to flee from the Levant in order to secure a more stable position within the Catholic Church at a time when other mendicant Orders had already been well-established in Italy. In the altar chapel, their created a very didactical programme that included their mythical founders, saints that demonstrated their connection with eastern territories and, to a lesser degree, their loyalty to Rome and Genoa. Thus, first of all, the church of Santa Maria del Carmine aimed to publicise

their Eastern origins. 'Eastern', in their rhetoric, meant not only 'coming from the Holy Land', but most importantly 'ancient'. Thereby, both these Orders brought to Genoa the memory of their place of origin that they demonstrated through the use of eastern imagery but enclosed very different messages in their decoration.

The third described Order showed another way of dealing with its Eastern origin and past. The future Bartholomites arrived as a small group of monks from a single monastery in Cilicia and ended up being the founders of a large congregation with houses all over Italy. At the beginning, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni was the nucleus of Armenian culture that housed pilgrims and used their native language in the rite and books. At the same time, while the Bartholomites were the most obvious bearers of a different cultural identity (and possibly because of this), they quickly assimilated. It seems that after the middle of the fourteenth century, when they were reorganised under the rule of the Dominicans, they gradually came to the point when all their connections with the East were mostly remembered from the outside: their origin was reflected in the name of the Order and its churches, and in the relics that people donated to the monastery (the Mandylion and the foot of St. Bartholomew). Simultaneously, possibly because they were foreigners and needed to become part of a new society, all their internal attributes became Italian: the clothes, the rite, the language and the origin of the majority of the members.

The three examples show the extent to which Jan Assmann's theory of communicative and cultural memory could be applied to the case of medieval Genoa. I argue that the Hospitallers demonstrate an example of a fully formed and easily transferred cultural memory. By duplicating in Genoa the church and hospital of St John in Jerusalem, the Hospitallers virtually brought with them the cultural memory of their place of origin in the Holy Land, which by itself is one of the classic examples of a cultural object, a carrier of cultural memory with its highly symbolic topography connected to the most important events of Christian history.

The second case, that of Santa Maria del Carmine, asserts that in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Carmelites were in the process of the transition from communicative to cultural memory, and the formation of its canon. The critical points of transferring the congregation to the west and becoming a mendicant Order were still fresh in the minds of the friars by the time they arrived in Genoa. The frescoes were created some forty years later and pursued the same goal as the *Rubrica Prima*: they fixated the past of the Order to assert its present and future. Finally, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni shows how communicative memory failed to get transformed into cultural memory. This occurred mostly because the Order deliberately got rid of all the elements that had formed its Eastern identity: language, rite and clothes.

The Genoese Perception of the East and Its Dynamics

As previously discussed, Genoa housed many Orders, relics and precious objects that had arrived from the East, and while it is hard to say to what extent the majority of the Genoese saw them as of Eastern origin, we can trace some dynamics in the way they were perceived. During the crusades, the *Sacro Catino* and several pieces of the Holy Cross were brought to the city (often as a result of ‘non-Christian’ acts) and were included in the group of objects that attested the glory, power and wealth of the republic. Similarly, after a short stay in the Commenda di Pré, the ashes of John the Baptist were transferred to San Lorenzo. Some of these acquisitions consequently played an important role in the formation of the Genoese civic identity. The most contradictory is possibly the *Sacro Catino*, which, although sometimes reluctantly recognised as authentic, was described in numerous written sources and demonstrated to significant foreigners. Seemingly, after capturing Caesarea, troops of Guglielmo Embriaco found a spoil that seemed produced of pure emerald. On the basis of its beauty, they believed that it had been connected to Christ’s Passion. It seems that the ‘vase’ was not perceived as an object of a distant culture but rather as material evidence of

the Last Supper and a part of the whole Christian tradition. The Genoese did not delve much into the history of the object: it was never connected with its possible Islamic origin and, although the *Catino* does not look like the Holy Chalice, it got very quickly associated with the Holy Grail. This becomes especially important since the thirteenth century, when the *Catino* was described as such by Jacopo da Varagine in his chronicle and thus included in the main narrative that formed the city's civic identity.

The interest towards Eastern relics continued through the first half of the fourteenth century, as we learn that Doge Simone Boccanegra purchased another relic of the Holy Cross from the family of the Zaccaria. Though apparently this was Boccanegra's personal decision, the *Croce degli Zaccaria* was eventually introduced into the official ceremonies of the Genoese commune. However, the relation towards representative objects from the East soon changed, as is evident from the history of, possibly, the most precious of all the relics that the city had ever possessed, the Mandylion. It appeared in Genoa in the second half of the fourteenth century and remained in the suburban monastery of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni. Although it was traditional to keep the icon close to the city borders for protection, I believe that the main reason why the Mandylion was not transferred to the cathedral was simply the lack of interest in such objects from the East in the second half of the fourteenth century.

We can apply Assmann's theory on the objects from the sacristy as well as on the fourteenth-century decoration of the cathedral. Collected beginning in the twelfth century, the objects from the sacristy were supposed to reveal the city's celestial protection, wealth and power. As we learn from written sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an oral narrative is formed around them from very early times: William of Tyre and Jacopo da Varagine base their accounts of the Sacro Catino on popular stories. At this point, we can say that this is the communicative memory being passed through generations. In 1295–1297, Jacopo da Varragine composed the chronicle of the city aiming to place the Genoese history

withing the context of universal history. From that moment on, objects from the sacristy of the cathedral became included in the mythical narrative of the city and thus turned to form part of the Genoese cultural memory and identity.

The Paleologan decoration of the cathedral achieved the same effect. By using specific style, themes and smaller iconographical details, it promoted Jacopo da Varagine's idea of the Genoese superiority over other Italian cities. At the same time, the Byzantine element in the cathedral did not overwhelm taking a reasonable place among objects of art produced in other styles. This delicate use of Byzantine imagery by itself endorsed the ideas of cultural and ethnic pluralism, characteristic of a city with numerous international connections. Finally, it should be mentioned that as is typical for bearers of cultural memory, these complex messages in the frescoes of the cathedral were not necessarily easy to understand for a broader audience. Herein, the cathedral is an example of how cultural memory is kept and reproduced by elected cultured people: it was brought together by Jacopo da Varagine and was then visually anchored, by the Paleologan painter and the commissioner of the frescoes.

Alongside ideas, images and objects, this thesis also touched upon the main saints that the Genoese venerated. Many of them bore ties with the East, but it is hard to state explicitly whether the Genoese recognised them as of eastern origin, and whether their appearances in the decoration always signaled Eastern culture for all their viewers. For instance, although the patron saint of the city, John the Baptist, was of eastern origin, he was perceived differently in diverse places in Genoa. The cathedral kept his ashes in a special chapel and demonstrated his image paired with St. Peter as part of the decoration that indicated the Baptist's patronage and proved the dominance of Genoa over other Italian cities. For the Hospitallers, the consecration to St. John meant the continuing tradition and connection to their first house in Jerusalem. For the Carmelites, the Baptist was a witness of their history, a prophet directly tied to Elijah, their mythical founder. Another group of saints was linked

with the crusades: this includes one more Genoese patron – St. George – also seen in the cathedral. Additionally, we find St. Margaret in San Giovanni di Pré and, possibly, St. Catherine in the church of the Carmelites. Finally, there is a debated example of the figure of St. Bartholomew, who was, to some extent, regarded as a representative of Armenia, and who had a separate local veneration, for instance in the family of the Fieschi.

This brings us to the topic of a narrower, that is, individual or domestic perception. Most of the discussed material has so far demonstrated that we are not sure to what extent the Genoese, as a group, recognised the Eastern connections that we make today. However, there are several accounts concerned with individuals or families that had tighter bonds with the East and were more aware of the Eastern Christian context. Thus, with respect to the veneration of St. Bartholomew, it is important to understand how much the Genoese knew about the Armenians. Scholars have suggested some connection between the Fieschi and St. Bartholomew, who was the patron saint of Armenia. Although the conclusions that these three ‘elements’ (Fieschi, Bartholomew, Armenia) are always interconnected and can be used to prove each other’s presence are not entirely convincing, the Fieschi, as one of the most powerful families in the city, show at least two examples of close acquaintance with Eastern cultures. These are the life of Opizzo Fieschi, Patriarch of Antioch, and the commission of the Duomo’s decoration by Bertolino Fieschi, canon of the cathedral. Another case that attests to an individual knowledge is the donation of the Mandyion to San Bartolomeo degli Armeni by Leonardo Montaldo. Although this action might be the result of a mere coincidence, Montaldo’s numerous travels to the East during which he could have learned about the connection of the Armenians with the legend of Abgar can also demonstrate that this was a deliberate donation. Finally, the manuscript V3–834 from the Hermitage similarly reveals that after the establishment of San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, there were contacts and interchanges of ideas between Armenians and Italians in Genoa.

The Attitude Towards the Personal and Communal

The possible reason towards the unobtrusive part that Eastern elements played in the decoration and narrative of the city could lie in the value of the personal and the communal in medieval Genoa. It seems that the Genoese did feel unity with regards to some events and they did have a sense of civic identity, but at the same time, personal interests often played a greater or at least equal role. This dual attitude we find, for instance, in the decoration of San Lorenzo: on the one hand, it was sponsored by the community and produced for it. On the other hand, the frescoes demonstrate many ideas that were probably not recognised by the majority of the Genoese and seem a result of the cooperation of the commissioner and the painter. Additionally, I believe this opposition of the individual and communal is mirrored in the choice of frescoes instead of mosaics for the decoration of the city's cathedral. Built as a basilica, traditionally it should have been decorated with mosaics in the altar, clerestory or façade. It is improbable that had it been covered in mosaic that no evidence of this have been preserved in some form today. This is why I think that the frescoes were the only Eastern-style décor that the Genoese had wanted to cover the walls of their cathedral. And while we know that the political and financial situation in the city at that time was not perfect, it also seems that individual families could have definitely afforded to donate more for the decoration of a space of such importance for communal representation. Beneš formulated this in the following passage: 'Genoa's highly competitive commercial culture meant that even more than in most places, and even in Caffaro's day, Genoese civic identity was predicated on individual benefit. <...> However, unity and concord were desirable not on philosophical grounds, for the benefit of some nebulous "common good," but specifically as and when they enabled Genoa's citizens to achieve their own ends. In this sense Epstein's titular "Genoa and the Genoese" is an apt formulation, since it encourages

us to recognize that the goals and priorities of “Genoa” did not always accord with those of the Genoese.’¹

As a result, multiculturalism became one of Genoa’s main features and the place of Eastern imagery depends on this, too. We see the full range of inclusion of broadly speaking Eastern elements. French or Central-Italian stylistic features completely predominate in the calendar of the canons’ cloister. We find some typical Byzantine characteristics as compound elements in the works of the crusader artist in the lower church of San Giovanni di Pré. The Carmelites followed the trends set by other mendicant Orders and invited a follower of Cimabue to adorn their church. And as a culmination, a true example of the Palaeologan style is introduced into the decoration of the cathedral being adapted to a local programme. At the same time it is easy to notice that the rare examples of truly Byzantine production (the *Pallio di San Lorenzo* or the Mandyllion) often did not attract as much interest from the Genoese, as we would expect.

It seems that this is the main difference between the attitude towards Eastern imagery in Genoa and, for instance, in Venice, which is the most obvious city to make such a comparison. As Müller highlighted, the relations of the latter with Byzantium seems to be ‘much more characterized by imitation and competition’.² In Genoese visual art, Eastern imagery of diverse origins was part of the Genoese multiculturalism, while the objects from the East were perceived as signs of their predominance in the sea; however, as this thesis has shown, Eastern Christian elements changed their original meaning and role in Genoa and ended up being adapted to the local needs and tastes.

¹ Beneš, ‘Civic Identity’, p. 214.

² Müller, ‘Visual Culture and Artistic Exchange’, p. 309.

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