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Bachelor of Arts in Art History
Minor in International Affairs

A Journey through Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania: A Multimedia Decorative Program in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

The church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania is a fascinating, and paraphs unique, example of both Romanesque and Gothic art in central Italy. Carved reliefs of monstrous creatures characterize the Romanesque architectural sculpture of the church in both its exterior and interior. Grotesque figures are a standard iconographic presence in many surviving western Romanesque sculptural programs; however, they are usually relegated to the exterior of churches and other Christian spaces, in an effort to delineate the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. In Santa Maria Maggiore, instead, the steady reoccurrence of hybrid and monstrous creatures all over the church seems to suggest a thematic continuum between the outside and inside of the church, and thus of a program deliberately envisioned by the designers, the patron, and the local clergy. This visual interconnectedness culminates in front of an early 14th century Last Judgment fresco. Like the monstrous corbels placed within the sacred environment, the fresco is "dislocated" too as, instead of following the standard medieval location for this image-type on the West-end of the church -whether on the interior or the exterior-, it is located on the eastern sanctuary wall. Thus, it appears that the unusual, if not unprecedented, placement of the fresco on the East-end might have been dictated not only by architectonical exigences, but also by the pre-existing sculptural decoration of the church, in an effort to forge a thematic continuum encompassing the entire decorative program. This thesis will mainly explore the iconography and meaning of the Last Judgment fresco in its original 14th century context. However, because it is impossible to explore this context without taking into consideration the local history and the pre-existing Romanesque decorative program, this study will also consider the dialogue that would have accompanied 14th century viewers in their journey across the different phases and spaces of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

A Nonna Marisa,

che la passione in questi studi,

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Introduction

This thesis offers an iconographic interpretation of the decorative program of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania. By focusing on the 14th century Last Judgment fresco, located on the church's sanctuary wall, this research will also engage in a discussion about the earlier sculptural decorations surviving on both the façade and in the interior of the church. The ultimate aim of this combined multi-media iconographic analysis is to come to terms with how medieval viewers would have experienced and understood the imagery of the church's decorative program as an interconnected system of symbolic references.

The Romanesque architectural sculpture of the church as a whole is characterized by reliefs carved with depictions of monstrous creatures in both the exterior and interior. The iconography of monsters is standard in many surviving Romanesque sculptural programs in western Europe. However, it is usually relegated to either the (public) exterior of churches or to the (semi-private) cloisters and chapter houses of monks, nuns or canons. When it does appear in the interior of churches, it seems to mostly function as a "gloss" to biblical or hagiographic images. In Santa Maria Maggiore, hybrid and monstrous creatures are located on both the façade of the church and in its interior, suggesting that the patrons envisioned an iconographic, thematic continuum between the outside and inside of the church. The "dis-location" of the Last Judgment fresco, unusually placed on the eastern sanctuary wall instead of the more traditional West end of the church -whether on the interior or the exterior-, appears to have been motivated, at least in part, by the pre-existing sculptural decoration of the church, in an effort to create a coherent meaning and a thematic continuum within the whole church.

The organization of this thesis in three different chapters is meant to reflect the tripartite journey through the church undertaken by the faithful, from the exterior of the church, through its interior nave, and ultimately to the area in front of the main altar in the sanctuary. This physical but also metaphorical walk-through is a process happening in different steps that require the understanding of, and the engagement with, each one of them before proceeding forward. The three chapters are deliberately structured as a continuum, to inform one another in a linear fashion and to, hopefully, construct a clear pathway for the visualization of the church and its decorative program as a whole.

This thesis will begin with a review of the historical and art historical publications that have majorly contributed to this research by providing accurate historical notions as well as guidance for the interpretation of the church's decorative program as a whole.

Addressing the specific historical context within which the church of Santa Maria Maggiore evolved is, for the purposes of this thesis, a fundamental aspect in the conception of a comprehensive analysis, which aims to understand the church and its environment as a *unicum*. For this reason, the first chapter will critically discuss the extant evidence on the history of Santa Maria Maggiore from its first mention, in the late antique/early medieval period, to its subsequent -and more significant- evolution between the 12th to the 14th centuries.

The second chapter will provide a detailed visual analysis of the Last Judgment fresco. Its primary aim is, besides introducing the particularity of this fantastic medieval representation, to raise questions about the meaning of some of the specific figures depicted, including their relationship to the contiguous socio-political and religious context of 14th century Tuscania discussed in Chapter 1. The chapter also broadens into a larger discussion regarding the

representation of gender and social status. The goal is to show how the fresco not only resonates within the local context, but provides insights into late medieval constructs in Italy and beyond.

The third and final chapter may be defined as the culmination of the interpretative journey through the church. It is an attempt to reconstruct the spatial and visual experience of 14th century viewers as they moved from the exterior to the interior of the church. It relies on the historical information gathered in the first chapter and on the iconographical interpretations of the second chapter. The aim of this conclusive passage is to understand spaces and images, including isolated moments of transition, as part of a coexistent and cohesive whole. Moreover, by focusing on the importance of liminal spaces and their decoration, the chapter argues that depictions "at the edge" are catalysts of meaning and that they engender semantic transformation.

Despite its unique sculpted and painted decorative features, the church of Santa Maria Maggiore has been mostly ignored in Italian and international art-historical literature. Local authors and scholars from Northern Latium have managed, to a certain extent, to maintain alive a regional public interest in the church's cultural patrimony. For this reason, this thesis also aims to highlight the relevance of Santa Maria Maggiore as a pivotal example of medieval art beyond a local "curiosity". Hopefully, this research will promote further study to situate the church within the broader medieval artistic culture of Italy and western Europe.

Literature Review

Many diversified sources have informed this thesis on the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania and its Last Judgment fresco. However, a scarce national and international academic interest in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore has inevitably pushed this research towards local studies, whose majority, despite the few authors cited in the bibliography, is still composed of unacademic booklets. Nevertheless, despite the inherent need to funnel my research into pre-existing local channels, the finding and study of some reliable local authors, the scrutiny of civic archives and libraries, and the on-site research enriched this thesis on both a microscopic and macroscopic level, raising questions that exceed the local environment, reaching broader contemporaneous issues that insert Santa Maria Maggiore within the international discourse around medieval art. Looking at what local authors wrote about Santa Maria Maggiore ultimately served the aim of this thesis, which is to look at Santa Maria Maggiore as a multi-faceted local institution that not only functioned in the interest of the Christian Church, but also contributed to the functioning of a medieval town and its composite societal and cultural organs. Therefore, the apparent restriction posed by an essentially locally-based bibliography turns to be, instead, a rich tool for the proper contextualization of a church that evolved as an important institution within its adjacent environment.

Three main contemporary authors have contributed to carry forward an informed analysis and account on the church of Santa Maria Maggiore and, more broadly, on the city of Tuscania in its medieval times.

Professor Giuseppe Giontella is the foremost essential author in this project, contributing in the assessment of an accurate historical analysis. Giuseppe Giontella is a local historian who

spent most of his life studying and recuperating original and unpublished medieval texts from local archives. For this reason, he developed professional methodological skills in the production of an accurate local historiography, which can be praised for its rigorous scientific method. Therefore, publications by Professor Giontella have contributed to this thesis by providing original archival written material and objectively analyzed historical data. His approach, laudable for its objectiveness, set the bases for my research, allowing me to delve into local issues and giving me the material to extend my research further. *Tuscania Attraverso I Secoli* informed my studies of historical events around Tuscania, providing insightful details from the institutional, economic, social, political as well as cultural spheres. In this publication, he demonstrated to be a well-informed historian whit an anthropologic tendency, quality that ultimately contributed in the creation of a complete historical account. Giontella's scientific methodology is a recurrent quality in all his publications: in *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese* Giontella, in collaboration with his wife Anna Alberta Santi, he went through all the local forgotten archives and, working closely with manuscript conservators, managed to bring back to light texts that had been inaccessible for years. This text, together with *L'Ordine dei Minori Conventuali di S.Francesco a Tuscania* and *Cronotassi dei vescovi della diocesi di Tuscania* have been fundamental works for this thesis, providing transcriptions of primary sources such as official seals, civic documents, and other contemporaneous reports, which have been used to corroborate historical and iconographical hypotheses. For the purposes of this thesis, Giontella's scientific approach, although setting this research's bases, resulted limited as it does not engage in a holistic reading of all the rich material discussed. However, this comprehensive approach is not part of Giontella's research, as his work is already very much detailed and historically analytic.

Another main author is Fulvio Ricci. Compared to Giontella, he provided this thesis with a more art-historical oriented analysis, structured over a standard descriptive methodology. Ricci, a well-known art historian from Viterbo, expert on the artistic production of the *Tuscia Laziale*, wrote many books on different subjects, concentrating his studies on iconography and local artworks ranging from the Etruscan to the late Renaissance period. All of his studies are always supported by the collaborative presence of other historians that provide him data to validate his assertions. In both his publications on Santa Maria Maggiore - *Chiesa Di Santa Maria Maggiore* and *La decorazione pittorica di Santa Maria Maggiore* – he relies on archival documents and local historical sources mainly provided by Professor Giontella. His greatest contribution to this study is his hypothesis about the commission of the Last Judgment Fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore by Secondianus de Deutabive, a notary from Tuscania. By linking documents previously found and translated by Professor Giontella, Ricci was able to trace the origin of the patron *Secondianus,* and link his figurative presence on the fresco to his written one in manuscripts from the late 13th and early 14th century. The methodology used by Ricci basically combines historical data with iconographical interpretations, providing the reader a well-rounded analysis of the work examined. However, Ricci's work, contrarily to Giontella, appears sometimes biased by personal interpretations and opinions, interfering with what a proper objective analysis should include.

The third main contributor to this thesis, despite not being a local author, has scholarly contributed to the study of many artistic works, especially architectures, in the *Alto Lazio*. The art-historian Joselita Raspi Serra, through her work *Tuscania: Cultura ed espressione artistica di un centro medioevale*, adds to this study a professional artistic and architectural interpretation of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The author uses a comparative methodology in describing

the architectonical elements of the church, drawing examples that exceeds the liminality of the local context. Her descriptions and hypotheses are based on architectonical and historical evidence, as evident in her accurate and detailed compendium *Le Diocesi Dell'alto Lazio: Bagnoregio, Bomarzo, Castro, Civita Castellana, Nepi, Orte, Sutri, Tuscania*, which lists and catalogs the decorative and structural apparatus of medieval churches from the Northern Tuscia. Her studies have provided technical information on the structure of the church and of its supposed architectural evolution in two different building campaigns. Although her hypotheses have been questioned by authors like Ricci, she is a point of reference for other well-established Italian medieval art historians, such as Parlato and Romano, experts on the Italian Romanesque period, who instead rely on Raspi Serra's account in their publication *Roma E Lazio: Il Romanico.*

In addition to these three main authors, onto whose works the entire thesis relies, there are other three who have partly yet significantly contributed in the formation of a more comprehensive examination of Santa Maria Maggiore. First of all stands out the *Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli, 1889-1901*, edited by Giancarlo Breccola. This work systematically gathers the documents written by Mercurio Antonelli, local historian from Montefiascone interested in old medieval texts and local archival studies, at the end of the 19th century. This book informed this thesis with detailed archival reports and documents, which are not only properly contextualized by Antonelli, but also further explained by Breccola with insightful footnotes. This publication has supported and validated all the information by Giontella: it has been an instrument to find and corroborate historical events that interested Tuscania and the adjacent town of Montefiascone, where the French Vicars once dwelled.

Another important source is *Memorie Istoriche della Città di Tuscanella*, written by Francesco Antonio Turiozzi. Published in 1978, the work was written instead at the end of the 18th century, when Turiozzi was the Capitol Vicar of the city of Tuscania, still called Toscanella. Although being very dated, his account has improved this thesis with direct transcriptions of marble headstones no longer in loco.

Regarding the dating of the Last Judgment fresco, Pier Paolo Donati, *Per la pittura aretina del Trecento* has been the most important source. The author, a well-known Italian art historian, was the first one to attribute the Last Judgment fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore to the Tuscan painters Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo. His methodology is based on both historical and pictorial evidence: while historical documents and the existence of other works confirm the presence of the two artists in the area, a detailed stylistic analysis allowed him to recognizes stylistic traits and iconographic references influenced by Giotto. His analysis ultimately ascribes to the Last Judgment of Santa Maria Maggiore a prominent position in the Italian apocalyptic tradition.

As for the iconographical reading of the fresco, with the support of more specific publications on other examples of Last Judgments across Italy, two main works have accompanied my analysis from the very beginning until its conclusion. First of them is *La Sostanza dell'Effimero - Gli abiti degli Ordini religiosi in Occidente*. This book, the catalogue of the homonymous exhibition in the Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, starts with several articles about female and male monasticism and their garments; these introduce an widely illustrated catalogue that describes each religious order and its clothes until modern times. The thoroughly classified structure of the book eased the individuation and recognition of the religious figures within the fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Dressing for Heaven: Religious Clothing in Italy 1214-1545 provided this thesis with insightful thoughts, more than practical examples, on how to approach and evaluate clothing as well as nudity in the figures depicted in the Last Judgement fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore. Written by Cordelia Warr, professor at Manchester University, the generously illustrated book offers a wide range of images and sources that explicate the issue of clothing through composite case studies. However, acknowledging it not to be the author's aim, the detailed analysis of peculiar examples proposed by Warr does not specifically suit the purposes of this thesis; therefore, other sources, as the above mentioned *La Sostanza dell'Effimero- Gli abiti degli Ordini religiosi in Occidente*, have provided me with a more encyclopedic compendium. Despite this, the author's questions on clothing provide fertile soil to interrogate and insightfully understand the iconography of certain figures within the painting.

When interpreting the church's sculptural and pictorial decorative program as a *unicum*, three main authors have contributed to the articulation of a holistic reading. The greatest and foremost contribution comes from Micheal Camille, internationally renowned medieval scholar, who has been among the first to propose unconventional readings of medieval marginal art in his acclaimed book *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*. Camille's multifaceted approach does not limit the images' intrinsic narrative: his method corroborates the interpretation advanced in this thesis that sees Santa Maria Maggiore's monstrous corbels as active elements operating within a specific context. The scholar's focus on space as key aspect in the understanding of marginal images, especially his stress on the dichotomy between inner and outer limits, allowed the envisioning of a dialogue between marginal depictions and other non-marginal representations within the church, ultimately noticing a symbiotic narrative across different elements.

Lucy Freeman Sandler, prominent professor and expert on medieval manuscript marginalia, has been an important source of inspiration for the last chapter of this thesis, illuminating connections between marginal depictions and the context they are placed in. The article *The Study of Marginal Imagery: Past, Present, and Future*, informed this thesis not only of the academic debate behind marginalia, but especially of the unavoidable visual impact that marginal images imprinted on the beholder. Despite her research focuses mainly on manuscripts, her attribution of agency to such marginal depictions, perfectly adapts to the prepotent recurrence of monstrous corbels in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore. By highlighting the practical importance of observing the context around marginalia, Sandler's article promoted an iconographic analysis that has taken into account the particular circumstances under which the pictorial and sculptural elements of Santa Maria Maggiore have been produced and eventually consumed.

A similar impact has been provided to this thesis by Laura Kendrick, renowned medievalist whose research mainly focuses on the social function of medieval literature. In her article *Making Sense of Marginalized Images in Manuscripts and Religious Architecture*, she discusses the chronology of the most relevant Medieval studies on Marginalia. For the sake of this thesis, her article provides a clear analysis that highlights the variation of marginalia's interpretations over time. The strictly objective approach used by Kendrick helps situating this artistic phenomenon in its own historical context, and also to understand it through the use of critical tools. Her approach ultimately stresses the importance of contextualizing the analyzed artworks, in the attempt to be as critical, yet objective, as possible.

1. On the Chronology and Evolution of Santa Maria Maggiore

The status of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore has had alternate fortunes throughout its medieval history. Its importance varied with time on both a local and popular level, as well as on a regional and official one. The history of the church begins centuries well before the construction of the medieval monumental basilica (11th-12th centuries) and its decoration (11th-14th centuries) that we still see today.

Many scholars, including a significant number of local academics in Tuscania, have attempted to delineate a chronology for Santa Maria Maggiore since its earliest history.[1] Despite some gaps and inconsistencies, all of these accounts rely on the same document: a papal seal from 852 C.E.[2] The latter is a letter written by Pope Leone IV (847-855) to Virobono II, the bishop of Tuscania at the time. In this seal, the Pope confirms the episcopacy of Virobono II over the territory near Tuscania, providing a long list of the bishopric's holdings, as well as its precise territorial boundaries. The Pope mentions the church of Santa Maria Maggiore at the beginning of the seal:

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[1] The most relevant authors engaging in this discussion are: A. Aureli, *Tuscania ed i suoi monumenti, Guida storico-artistica del visitatore* (Viterbo, 1910); Secondiano Campanari, *Delle antiche chiese di S.Pietro e di S.Maria Maggiore della città di Toscanella (*Montefiascone, 1853); E. Duprè Theseider, *Roma dal Comune di Popolo alla Signoria Pontificia 1252-1377* (Bologna, 1952); Giuseppe Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli* (Grotte di Castro, 1980); F. Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., V book (London, 1897- 1909, 1897); P.F. Kehr, *Italia Pontificia*, II vol. (Berlin, 1906-1975); Enrico Parlato and Serena Romano, Santa Maria Maggiore a Tuscania, in *Roma E Lazio: Il Romanico*, 1st Ed. (Italianaed, Patrimonio Artistico Italiano, Italy: Palombi, 2001); Francesco Antonio Turriozzi, *Memorie Istoriche della Città di Tuscanella* (Roma, 1976); Giuseppe Di Lorenzo, *Antichi Monumenti di Religione Cristiana in Toscanella* (Rocca San Casciano, 1883).

[2] Papal seal reported in Secondiano Campanari, *Delle antiche chiese di S.Pietro e di S.Maria Maggiore della Città di Toscanella* (Montefiascone, c.1853), 92.

"[…]Ecclesiam S. Dei genitrices semperque Virginis Mariae, quae olim caput episcopii extitit, et nunc plebs facta est.[…]"

[…]The church of the holy mother of God and ever Virgin Mary, which once was the episcopal seat, and yet now is made a parish. […][3]

The church is addressed being the episcopal seat of the territory (*olim caput episcopii extitit)*, and, eventually, a parish (*nunc plebs fact est*). This seal, although attesting the existence of a church dedicated to Mary in the 9th century -presumably Santa Maria Maggiore- poses many questions about the history of the church: first of all, when did Santa Maria Maggiore stop being an episcopal seat? When did it become a parish? Is this shift coeval to the seal? And lastly, why did this shift happen? According to Giuseppe Giontella Santa Maria Maggiore lost its dignity as cathedral in the second half of the 8th century in favor of San Pietro, a church located just at the top of the hill from Santa Maria Maggiore.[4] Giontella, who chronologically organized the succession of bishops in the diocese of Tuscania, affirms that this transition happened under bishop Auriano (c.769) when the new cathedral of San Pietro, as well as the new episcopal palace, were being built on top of the hill.[5] His assessment of the evidence is useful as it allows to posit that *a* church of Santa Maria Maggiore existed and operated as an episcopal seat before the seal signed in 852. Thus, still according to Giontella, Santa Maria Maggiore was the cathedral of Tuscania at least from the 6th until the mid 9th century.[6] There is certainly evidence

[3] All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
[4] Giuseppe Giontella, "*Cronotassi dei Vescovi della Diocesi di Tuscania"*, *Rivista Storica del Lazio* 6 (1997), 11.
[5] Giontella, "*Cronotassi dei Vescovi della Diocesi di Tuscania"*, 10.
[6] Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 45.

of an "*Episcopus civitatis Tuscanensis"* -Virbono I (595-601)- who took part in the second Roman Council in 595 and, given the papal bull of 852, this suggests that this seat was precisely Santa Maria Maggiore.[7]

Francesco Antonio Turriozzi (1743-1882), archpriest of Toscanella and Vicar of the Diocese of Viterbo and Tuscania, argued a similar hypothesis in his *Memorie Istoriche della Citta di Tuscania che ora volgarmente dicesi Tuscanella*, published in 1778.[8] Using the papal seal as central document, he argued that the antiquity of the church was also proven by some of its structural and stylistic features: first and foremost, its orientation towards the east, which he claimed to be an architectural practice typical of Early Christian architecture.[9] Turiozzi also mentions the presence of an inscribed peperino headstone found *in situ* and dated to 300 A.D.[10] However, there is no evidence that this gravestone was part of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore when it was already consecrated as such -supposedly around the 6th century. It is

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[7] Giontella, *Cronotassi dei Vescovi della Diocesi di Tuscania*, 9.

[8] The town now known as Tuscania was, from the beginning of the 14th century onwards, called Toscanella. It maintained this name until September 11, 1911. On that date, under the pressure of the popular administration, king Vittorio Emanuele III re-established the name Tuscania, original and primordial name of the town. These two names will both appear in this thesis: Toscanalla will be used when referring to the city in its medieval times and Tuscania to its more recent times. For more see: Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 67-68. Antonio Turiozzi, *Memorie Istoriche della Città di Tuscanella* (Roma, 1976). For biographical reference on Francesco Antonio Turiozzi see: Enio Staccini, *Tuscania, Guida alla Scoperta (*Annulli Editori, Grotte di Castro, 2019), 164.

[9] Turiozzi, *Memorie Istoriche della Città di Tuscanella*, 66: "Prova ad evidenza quanto da me si asserisce la struttura medesima del tempio, uniforme in tutto ai riti dei primitive secoli della chiesa." It is indeed true that, before the 12th century, churches were built following the constructive precepts established in the Apostolic Constitutions, religious texts written since the early developments of Christianity. The practice of orienting churches towards the east- *Versus Solem Orientem*- was representative of the Christian understanding of salvation "arriving" from the east, following the astronomical movement of the sun. However, this assumption might result problematic as there are examples of late antique churches -in Rome as well- that are not oriented following this rule. For examples of early Christian churches and their orientation see: Richard Krautheimer and Ćurčić Slobodan, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Fourthed, Yale University Press Pelican History of Art (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Hugo Brandenburg and Arnaldo Vescovo, *Ancient Churches of Rome from the Fourth to the Seventh Century: The Dawn of Christian Architecture in the West*, Bibliothèque de L'antiquité Tardive, 8 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005).

[10] Turiozzi, 66: "Qui si conserva una gentile iscrizione in peperino sotto il segno dell'ascia."

likely, rather, that it belonged to an earlier, much more rudimental Christian shrine discovered, together with ruins of a Roman bath, during a preservation campaign in 1966.[11] The remains of the Roman Bath (1st century BC- 1st century AD) are also discussed by Fulvio Ricci. He argues that given the increasing importance of the Via Clodia, Tuscania became a pivotal intersection in the connections between Rome and the areas to the North (Fig. 1-2).[12] Thanks to this strategic position, a bath complex was erected near the Via Clodia as a stop along the way for travelers. Later on, it also became popular among Christian pilgrims making their way to Rome. It is thus probable that the original shrine dedicated to Mary was built on top of or adjacent to this earlier complex, taking advantage of the water spring that still runs underneath the church's pavement.[13]

Turiozzi's arguments no longer bear the scrutiny of extant archaeological evidence or -on a more positive note- have led to a greater understanding of the historical mutations of a site whose origins are over two-thousand years old. Nevertheless, coming back to the origins of the church itself, it is not entirely clear why the episcopal seat was moved from Santa Maria Maggiore to San Pietro in the 9th century. Some plausible hypotheses may, however, be articulated. First of all, the transfer of the bishopric to the cathedral on the adjacent hill could have been motivated by safety reasons as the *colle* (hill) of San Pietro was easier to defend than the valley in which Santa Maria Maggiore is located.[14] Secondly, such transfer could have

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[11] For more about the finding of an early Christian shrine and a bath complex see: Luigi Leporini, "Lavori di verifica di consistenza e stabilita dei muri nel sottosuolo della chiesa di santa maria maggiore di Tuscania", in *Tuscania: Patrimonio d'arte,* Appendix, 59.

[12] Fulvio Ricci, La Decorazione Pittorica di Santa Maria Maggiore, in *Tuscania: Patrimonio d'arte,* Atti del Convegno di Studi sulla Storia di Tuscania, Centro Studi l'Unicorno, Tuscania (Edited by Stefano Brachetti, Penne & Papiri Edition, Tuscania, 20 October 2012), 12-13; Marta Giacobelli, *Via Clodia, Antiche Strade, Lazio, (Libreria dello Stato, 1992),* 8-9. Ruins of the Via Clodia crossing Tuscania are still visible today. They can be found below the Colle di San Pietro and going upward crossing the city center.

[13] Ricci, *Tuscania Patrimonio d'Arte*, 13.

[14] Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 45. In fact, the city needed to be cautious of the Saracen incursions that were devastating the Italian peninsula right in those years.

happened because a new episcopal palace meant to host the local bishopric had just been built next to the church of San Pietro.[15] Another alternative is that Santa Maria Maggiore was simply too old and worn down in the 9th century and, therefore, no longer suitable to hold the prestigious position of episcopal seat.

Moreover, together with the Papal seal signed by Pope Leone IV, another important historical event for assessing the earlier chronology of the church is certified by two marble inscriptions found *in situ* and transcribed by Turiozzi.[16] These record that the church was consecrated in honor of the Virgin Mary in 1206. Since this inscription does not refer to the church being an episcopal seat or a perish, it is assumed that the church maintained the role of perish, as stated in the papal seal from 852 A.D.[17]

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[15] Giontella, *Cronotassi dei Vescovi della Diocesi di Tuscania*, 11.

[16] Turiozzi, *Memorie Istoriche della Città di Tuscanella*, 64-65. First inscription: " VIRGINIS ET MATRIS REGIS CAELESTIC HONORE RAYNERIVS PRAESUL TVSCANVS CONVOFAT OCTO NONVS PONTIFEX TENVIT MORA NVLLA VOCATOS CONVENIVNT SACRANTQVE LOCVM SOLEMNITER ISTVM PETRVS SVTRINVS CASTELLANVSQUE ROMANVS ETNEPESINVS GIRARDVS ET VRBEVETANVS MATTHAEVS ORTANVSQUE IOANNES AC VIVIANUS ILLE SVANENSIS BVRGVNDIO BALNEOREGENSIS NEC ROLANDVS ABEST CASTRENSIS ET HI SIMVL OMNES CVM FIDE CONTINVA CONDISI PIETATE TONANTIS SANCTORVM MERITIS INDVLGENT OMNIBUS HIS QVI DE SIBI COLLATIS A CHRISTO PARTICIPARE ECCLESIAM DOMINAE FACIANT HANC QVATVOR ANNOS PRO PECCATORVM VENIA CVICVMQUE SVORVM SIT TAMEN IN CVRA POSITIS CONFESSIO PVRA ANNVS ERAT CHRISTI SEXTVS CVM MILLE DVCENTIS OCTOBRIS SEXTA SED NON DE FINE DIERVM TVNC CELEBRAT MANENT SCATRI TEMPORA FESTI HAEC PETRVS PRIOR ECCLESIAE CVM FRATRIBVS EIVS CAEPIT PERFECIT IN HONOREM DEI FENITRICIS HAEC EST VIRGO PIA IVVET ILLVM VIRGO MARIA. AMEN. FORTE TVOS OCVLOS LECTOR HAEC CARMINA LAEDENT PARCE PRECOR PECCANT SI PEDE LAPSA SVO."; Second inscription: "D.O.M. TEMPLVM HOC LICET PER DECM SECVLA CIRCITER ANTE IN HONOREM VERI DEI FVERIT AEDIFICATVM CONSACRA TVM TAMEN FVIT ANNO DOMINI MCCVI. DIE VI. OCTOBRIS A RAYNERIO HVIVS CIVITATIS EPISCOPO VNA CVM EPISCOPIS PETRO SVTRINO ROMANO FESCENNENSI FIRARDO NEPESINO MATTHAEO VRBEVETANO IOANNE ORTANO VIVIANO SVANENSI BVRGVNDIO BALNEOREGENSI ET ROLANDO CASTRENSI."

[17] This historical information is accepted and used in the chronological accounts of Raspi Serra, Parlato and Romano. See: Joselita Raspi Serra, *Tuscania. Cultura ed espressione artistica di un centro medioevale* (Roma: Banco di Santo Spirito, Torino, 1971); Enrico Parlato, and Serena Romano, Santa Maria Maggiore a Tuscania, in *Roma E Lazio: Il Romanico*, as well as in discussion below.

Only scattered information, a significant part of which is also problematic, documents the history of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania later in the middle ages (11th-14th centuries). Assessing the various building and decorative phases of the church as we now see it is, in other words, almost as difficult as assessing its earlier history. Therefore, it is a task that must be executed bearing in mind the intrinsic impossibility of ever finding absolute answers. However, the surviving structure extant today retains many of its 11th and 12th century structural and decorative features, in addition to the 14th century Last Judgment fresco, which will be discussed later in the thesis. These architectonical features not only raise many stimulating questions, but make it possible to at least decipher a probable history of the church in the context of its medieval contexts during the Central Middle Ages.

The medieval façade of Santa Maria is made of *nenfro* bricks with white marble insertions (Fig. 3).[18] It is divided into three sections, each with its own portal. A frame characterized by S-shaped corbels surmounted by a diamond-tip pattern runs along the horizontal borders of these three parts.[19] The highest and most prominent of these sections is the central one, which also projects slightly forward from the two shorter lateral ones. The portal itself is composed of a florally decorated marble archivolt sustained by four marble colonnettes tied one to another by marble rings. The archivolt frames the marble sculpted reliefs of the lunette, which represent the enthroned Virgin Mary, the Holy Lamb, and two scenes from the Old Testament: the angel blocking Balaam's donkey and the binding of Isaac. The two smaller lateral portals are made entirely of *nenfro*. Both their archivolts are decorated with floral motifs and both their

[18] Nenfro is a volcanic rock, a particular type of gray tuff with a softer but more compact structure. It is found in the area of the Tuscia, in Northern Latium. Its use dates back to the Etruscans.
[19] According to the local historian Fulvio Ricci, this decorative pattern is found in other churches in Tuscania up until the late 15th century. See: Fulvio Ricci, *Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore, Tuscania. Chiesa, Monumenti e Città*, (Betagamma Editrice, Viterbo, 1996), 11.

lunettes present hybrid monstrous figures in the center surrounded by an intricate ensemble of vegetation, which is also inhabited by more monstrous figures.[20] A marble loggia horizontally runs above the central portal. Its arches are supported by marble colonnettes and the loggia is framed on either side by a projecting griffon, a hybrid feline-lion creature. The cornice above the arcade has a continuous row of monstrous corbels. Above the loggia is a large marble rose window, composed of two concentric circles connected through thin colonnettes. The symbols of the four evangelists are set outside the window in a cross-like formation. The central part of the façade is thus subdivided vertically into three main parts: the portal, the loggia and the rose window.

The church is built with a typical basilica floor plan, composed of a nave, two aisles and a transept. The aisles are separated from the nave by an arcade of *nenfro* columns that supports the upper walls. Right above the arcade, a row of monstrous corbels, very similar to the ones above the loggia on the façade, intermittently stagger the walk of the faithful towards the altar.

There has been a lively debate concerning the chronology of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore as it survives today. Joselita Raspi Serra, whose publications have mostly concentrated on the artistic history of the Tuscia itself, argues that the church of Santa Maria Maggiore is the result of two building campaigns that happened in the course of almost a century.[21] She states that by the end of the 11th century the church was composed of a single nave and a tri-apsidal transept. By the second half of the 12th century, she claims that the church had been enlarged by two side aisles, a longer nave, and a new façade, ultimately becoming the cathedral we now can see. Her argument, as will become clear presently, is based on a number of structural and

[20] I will return to the description of these monstrous figures, and of the ones that will follow, in greater details in the third chapter.
[21] Raspi Serra, *Tuscania. Cultura ed Espressione Artistica di un Centro Medioevale*, 88.

sculptural features of the church. Indeed, Enrico Parlato and Serena Romano rely on and support the thesis of Raspi Serra. [22] However, Fulvio Ricci asserts that there are no archaeological nor documentative proofs to support Raspi Serra's hypothesis of a first T-shaped church and a second renovation that ultimately created the basilica we now see.[23] While Ricci does not absolutely refute the idea of two campaigns, he points out that the evident irregularities in the church's plan, structure, and sculptural decoration are to be connected with the practical problems encountered during the construction of the church over the pre-existing structures, which as we have seen are archaeologically attested.

Nevertheless, an examination of the interior of the church does suggest that there were two campaigns separated in time. A fracture separates the first two arches on both sides of the nave arcade on the west end from the remaining ones proceeding towards the altar (Fig. 4). This presence seems, in the first place, to indicate that the last two arches extending west had been added to the pre-existing ones in order to lengthen the older arcade, and therefore the whole nave.[24] In a lithography from 1842, it is possible to notice not only the fracture between the supposedly earlier and newest arcades, but also the different decorative pattern of their intrados: while there are quatrefoil flowers in the older ones, the supposedly later ones are completely unadorned (Fig. 5). Also, the spiked edging that surmounts the earlier corbels abruptly becomes a smooth one soon after the fracture that separates the older from the later arcades. Moreover, the

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[22] Parlato and Romano, Santa Maria Maggiore a Tuscania, 195.
[23] Ricci Fulvio, La Decorazione Pittorica di Santa Maria Maggiore, 15.
[24] Giambattista Sposetti Corteselli (Ed.), *Storia di Tuscania scritta nel secolo XVI da Francesco Giannotti* (Pro Loco di Tuscania: Tuscania, 2007), 25: The 16th century local historian Francesco Giannotti confirms both the addition of the last two arches to the pre-existing shorter nave and the renovation of the façade in a later moment: "[…]poiché non solo si conoscie la facciata dinansi dove sono alcune figure sante et vere, però molto antiche di rilievo et mezzo rilievo, quasi che fatte da mano tramontana, essere stato rimesso et rifatta di poi, ma anco a li capitelli che sono in una certa cornicetta che gira intorno dentro a detta Chiesa sopra gli archi de la navata di mezzo, che mostrano di essere di più primieva origine da li due primi archi in poi, che insieme con la detta facciata si conoscie essere stati rimessi."

corbels on top of the last two arches are closer in manufacture, style and iconography to the ones on the exterior façade, being dissimilar to the corbels that decorate the rest of the inner upper wall above the nave (Fig. 7-8-9).[25] This might suggest that, again as proposed by Raspi Serra, the lengthening of the church might coincide with the construction, or at least, a renovation of the exterior façade. However, despite the archaeological evidence of structures on site predating the 11th and 12th century monumental basilica documented by Ricci, these structural and stylistic incongruities do not provide direct evidence that could substantiate more precise and certain data on the church's building campaigns.

According to documentary accounts on Tuscania from the 10th century until the early 11th, the town was at the mercy, in fact subjugated, by the Aldobrandeschi Counts.[26] Throughout their hegemony, the papal court had repeatedly tried to eradicate the powerful presence of this family in the territory of Tuscania, resulting in conflicts that went on for the entire century.[27] This situation was not only contemporaneous to the first building campaign of Santa Maria Maggiore proposed by Raspi Serra, but it is quite likely to suppose that the papacy funded this project precisely in this moment as an attempt to re-establish its power among the people of Tuscania.

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[25] Unfortunately, the presence of scaffolding from an ongoing preservative campaign makes difficult to photograph all the corbels with clarity. I apologize for some pictures where scaffoldings appear.

[26] During the 10th century, the Papacy experienced a period of decay, losing control over its provinces. Taking advantage of this situation, the Aldobrandeschi counts managed to gain almost entire control over the territory of the *Maremma Grossetana*. There are, in fact, no traces nor mentions of bishops ruling over Toscanella up until the mid 11th century, a historical absence that ultimately confirms the dominance of the pro-imperial Aldobrandeschi family. For more details see: Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 45-47.

[27] Throughout this period, the city of Toscanella endured serious damages: the papal army razed the city walls and burnt popular houses. Despite few years of peace at the beginning of the century, during which the citizens started to rebuild the town, conflicts between those who supported the Papacy and those who instead supported the imperial power came back after 1082. Conflicts went on for the next century, preventing economic growth and social stability in Tuscania. For more details on this see: Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 37-79.

Similarly, the second campaign at the end of the 12th century, which according to Raspi Serra resulted in the church as we now see it, happened in an unstable moment of conflicts between Tuscania and a newly born power, the city of Viterbo, few kilometers away up north. In fact, while the second reconstruction of Santa Maria Maggiore was supposedly underway, Viterbo was developing at a rapid pace and so too increasingly asserting its dominance over the territory (1140-1190).[28] Originally, this town had simply consisted of a castle on the Via Cassia intended as a stop-over for the constant flux of popes, kings, bishops and (illustrious) pilgrims on their way to Rome from the North. But its strategic location, enhanced by the increasing popularity of the Via Cassia as the principal and safest connection to Rome, led to it being nominated and transformed into a city in 1176 by Federico Barbarossa, and subsequently into a diocese in 1192 by Pope Celestino III.[29] The rapid ascension of Viterbo, at any rate, was almost certainly a cause of rivalry between the older diocese of Tuscania and the newly affirmed one of Viterbo.[30] It is thus possible that the second and last campaign in Santa Maria Maggiore was motivated by a desire to re-establish and re-affirm the original power of the diocese of Tuscania over the cities and castles of the Papal Patrimony.

Remarkably, it was also in the early 12th century that the church of Santa Maria Maggiore enriched its status becoming domicile for the relics of twenty-three martyrs. The latter were deposited by Pope Lucius III as an epigraph carved on the altar located at the end of the left apse,

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[28] Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i secoli*, 53.
[29] Giuseppe Giontella, *L'ordine dei Minori Conventuali di S. Francesco a Tuscania* (Grotte di Catro, 2003), 27.
[30] Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 59. Giontella indeed specifies that the disputes between Tuscania and Viterbo did not decreased at any rate, yet these two towns were often fighting in improvised battle fields. "Il contrasto tra Tuscania e Viterbo, tuttavia, non tendeva a diminuire e, dal piano religioso, le reciproche invettive passavano spesso su campi di battaglia improvvisati".

referred to as "Altare dei Martiri", attests.[31] Giuseppe Giontella has discusses the possible reasons that could have motivated Pope Lucius III to deposit so many relics in Tuscania in un unpublished report from 2004.[32] The city of Viterbo had probably been the first stop of Lucius III's peregrinations in Latium, crossing the city during the first decade of June 1184.[33] However, while there is evidence from contemporaneous local historians of the Pope's passage from Viterbo, there is no written documentation of Lucius III coming to Tuscania. Nevertheless, the

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[31] Agostino Saba, *Storia dei Papi*, Vol I (Torino, 1966), 677-678. Pope Lucius III, called Ubaldo Allucignoli, was Pope from 1181 to 1185. Lucius III's papacy witnessed continuous conflicts against the Roman imperial State. Thus, after his consecration, happened in Velletri on the 6 September, 1181, the Pope resided in Rome for just 4 months, from November to March, as he had to leave "propter quasdam exigentias, quas Romani exigebant de Papatu et propter Tusculanum castrum". In order to not endanger his persona, he was forced to roam around different towns around Latium, eventually ending his wanderings in Verona in 1184, city where he will die one year later. For more on the local veneration of these martyrs see: Luigi Tei, *Secondiano, Veriano, Marcelliano. I Santi Protettori della Città di Tuscania. Da Persecutori a Martiri di Cristo* (Tuscania, 2018), 202-243. The epigraph on the Altar of the Martyrs is reported in Secondiano Campanari, *Delle antiche Chiese di S.Pietro e di S.Maria Maggiore della città di Toscanella (*Montefiascone, 1853), 325-327: " […] L'altare medesimo porta ancora il titolo di Altare dei SS. Martiri, per la raggione, che sotto di questo riposano i corpi dei seguenti martiri: Cornelio, ponziano papi e martiri, Concordio, Communio, Domiziano, Potito, Tisidio, Restituto, Secondo, Primo, Feliciano, Giustino, Agabito, Ginnesio, Semproniano, Cassiano, martiri, Giustina, Agape, Restituta, Savina, Canzia Vittoria, Colomba, vergini e martiri. Oltre a questi già detti vi fu anche il corpo di S. Cristina Vergine, e Martire, il quale fu rubbato, e trasportato in Palermo, in testimonio di che il nostro Capitolo ne conserva tuttora nel suo Archivio l'autentica colla seguente Iscrizione in marmo*: "HIC REQUIESCIT CORPUS SANCTAE CHRISTINAE V., ER M. FILAE URBANI DE CIVITATI TYRI."* Dell'esistenza di questi sagri pegni non può dubitarsene, giacchè di ciascheduno di questi il Clero addetto alla chiesa ne fa la festa, e l'officio proprio sotto rito doppio per concessione della Sagra Congregazione dei Riti, come ai dec. degli Otto Aprile 1628, dei 2 Luglio 1712, dei 20 novembre 1717, e dei 20 novembre 1736. Oltre a questo irrefragabile Testimonio vi è pure una lapide di marmo incisa in caratteri antichi, che stà collocata nel parapetto dell'altare suddetto del tenore che segue: *"HIC REQUIESCUNT CORPORA SANCTORUM CORNELII PAPE, PONTIANI PAPE, PRIMI ET FELICIANI, CONCORDII ET SECUNDI, AGAPITII, GENESII, GEMINIANI, SIMPRONIANI, TISIDII, COMUNII, IUSTINI, DOMITIANI, SAVINAE, VICTORIAE, RUFINAE, COLUMBAE, CANTIAE, POTITI, RESTITUTI, RESTITUTAE, AGAPES. HAEC TRANSLATIO FACTA EST TEMPORE DOMINI LUCII III PAPEA, MENSE MARTII DIE IIII IN DOMO BEATAE MARIAE MAIORIS."*

[32] Giuseppe Giontella, "La Venerazione di San Potito Martire a Tuscania" (unpublished manuscript, February 9 2004), typescript. I am extremely thankful to the author for having shared with me this unpublished material.

[33] For a more precise chronology on Lucius III itinerary see: Ph. Jaffé and S. Loewenfeld (Eds.), *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab condita Ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*, Vol. 2, 2nd Edition (Leipzig: 1885); Adriano Cappelli, *Cronologia, cronografia e calendario perpetuo*, (Milano: Hoepli, 1969), 259.

epigraph on the Altar of the Martyrs together with Tuscania being, at that time, episcopal seat, corroborate the hypothesis that, for the sake of a meaningful itinerary, the Pope stopped by Tuscania to meet the bishop before proceeding with his pilgrimage.[34] According to Giontella, once he reached Viterbo, the Pope realized he was encumbered by too many possessions for his long trip and so presumably decided to deposit his reliquary somewhere safe, with the intention of taking it back once done with his pilgrimage. Because the Pope died in Verona on the 25th November 1185, the temporary custody of the Pope's reliquary by Tuscania's bishopric, located in the *colle* of San Pietro, became definitive. This event motivated the permanent *translatio* of the relics, which had been definitively moved from the cathedral of San Pietro to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore on March 1186.[35] While bearing in mind that there are no specific documents to prove Giontella's reconstruction of the events -especially the reasons why Lucius III deposited the relics- it is a fact that the martyrs he deposited were worshiped with intense devotion by the people of Tuscania for centuries with a procession every 25th of March in remembrance of the *translatio*.[36]

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[34] Giontella, *La Venerazione di San Potito Martire a Tuscania*. The author specifies that it is not clear whether at that time the bishop of Tuscania was Cencio, whose office is attested only in 1179, or Giovanni VII, mentioned for the first time only in 1188. For more see: Giontella, "Cronotassi dei Vescovi della Diocesi di Tuscania".

[35] Giontella, *La Venerazione di San Potito Martire a Tuscania*: Despite the marble epigraph documents just the day "4th March" of the *translatio* and not the year, it is plausible to suppose that this date is subsequent to the death of Lucius III, happened the 25th November 1185 in Verona and, moreover, that the "4th of March" refers to the day of the definitive *translatio* from San Pietro to Santa Maria Maggiore. The gap of three months between the Pope's death and the relics' *translatio* confirms this hypothesis, as this period of time would have allowed Tuscania to establish its proprietary rights against any outside claim.

[36] There is no archival, neither archeological evidence reporting the earliest practice of this cult: however, it is a known fact that this procession has been performed for centuries, and that it stopped being celebrated only after the earthquake that destroyed Tuscania on the February 6, 1971. Luigi Tei, in *Secondiano, Veriano, Marcelliano,* 204-211, discusses the evolution of the cult mentioning old authors who refer to the procession. As also noted by Giontella in "La Venerazione di San Potito Martire a Tuscania", the date of the procession had been subsequently moved to the 12th of May. Luigi Tei, argues that this shift happened around the 18th century, when the Church of San Lorenzo in Tuscania was appointed collegiate (*Secondiano, Veriano, Marcelliano,* 205-206). This celebration has been passed on

There is fortunately more reliable extant documentation on the history of the 14th century Last Judgment fresco. Pier Paolo Donati convincingly attributes the fresco to the Tuscan painters Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo.[37] He not only examines distinctive and characteristic stylistic features for his attribution, but combines it with evidence that documents the presence of the two artists in the area of the Tuscia at the beginning of the 14th century. In 1315, Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo painted the tryptic in the Church of Santo Stefano in Bracciano, just North of Rome, as their signature on the work confirms.[38] Extant documents also record that the two itinerant painters were commissioned a painting of the Madonna and Child for the church of the Trinità in Viterbo. Donati dates Gregorio and Donato's work in Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania between 1315 and 1320, using as extremes the certain dates of the works in Bracciano and Viterbo. Such evidence debunks what had been stated years before by A. Aureli, local historian from the 20th century, who instead dated the fresco to the second half of the 12th century.[39] Nowadays, modern scholarship confirms the attribution to Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo as well as the dating proposed by Donati.[40]

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from century to century and it is reported being very popular among adjacent towns, which took part in the procession as well. Giontella ("La Venerazione di San Potito Martire a Tuscania") reports that Antonio Barbacci, vicar of the bishopric in Toscanella at the beginning of the 18th century, says that the procession took place "[…] *con l'intervento d'un popolo numerosissimo, anco de' contorni...".* Testimony of this intense veneration is underscored by 17th century fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore that depicts the procession and the busts of the twenty three martyrs. The fresco, now moved to the end of the right aisle after a restoration campaign, was commissioned by the canon Nicola Guerra at the beginning of the 17th century, precisely to reinstate the importance of this cult for Tuscania and its people. See Ricci, *Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore*, 38-40. Nowadays, the relics are preserved in the canons' rooms in the Cathedral of San Giacomo in Tuscania.

[37] Pier Paolo Donati, "Per la pittura aretina del Trecento", *Paragone Arte* 19, 1 (1968), 31.

[38] Donati, "Per la pittura aretina del Trecento", 24. Signature in lime on the tryptic recites: "Gregorius et Donatus de Aretio me fecerunt anno Domini MCCCXV mense augusti"

[39] Aureli, *Tuscania ed i suoi monumenti. Guida storico-artistica del visitatore, 23:* "Si può attribuire con certezza alla seconda metà del XII secolo."

[40] Raspi Serra, *Tuscania. Cultura ed espressione artistica di un centro medioevale*; Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*; Ricci, *Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore, Tuscania;* Parlato and Romano, *Roma E Lazio: Il Romanico;* Enrico Castelnuovo, *La Pittura in Italia*. Vol. , Il Duecento E Il Trecento (Milano: Electa, 1986).

A sequence of events that emerges from the study of Donati's timeline further explains what may have led to the commission of the Last Judgment fresco. Photographs antecedent to the 1971 earthquake in Tuscania, which highly damaged the church and its pictorial program, show a donor figure labelled as "Secondianus" kneeling in front of Christ (Fig. 6). Despite some traces of his depiction left on the fresco, today this figure is almost entirely illegible. But his privileged placement in a kneeling position by Christ identifies him as the patron of the fresco.[41]

The most likely identification of Secondianus is provided by extant written documentation which repeatedly chronicles the existence and life of a Secondianus de Deutabive, a prominent notary and politically involved citizen in Tuscania.[42] We know that in the first half of the 14th century Secondianus' career was seriously threatened by political and religious controversies that were unsettling not only for the city of Tuscania itself, but for neighboring towns as well. At the beginning of the 14th century the papacy had just transferred in Avignon (1309) and consequently the rule over Italian Church provinces was delegated to

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[41] For more on the depiction of patrons and donors in medieval art see: Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alexa Kristen Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Jordi Camps I Sòria, Manuel A. Castiñeiras, John McNeill, and Richard Plant (Eds), *Romanesque Patrons and Processes: Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018).

[42] Secondianus de Deutabive is mentioned in various documents preserved in the Archivio Storico Comunale di Tuscania; these have been classified by Giuseppe Giontella and Anna Alberta Santi, in *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese (XIV secolo)*, Vol II, Patrimonium, Studi di storia ed arte, 13 (Vecchiarelli Editore, Roma, 2017). Secondianus appears in: Parchment number 46, December 2, 1303 [Ser Secondiano is elected attorney in a trial between the cities of Tuscania and Guittuccio happened]; Parchment 48/2, June 18, 1308 [Secondiano is a testimony during Musignano's oath of allegiance to Tuscania, he is referred to as notary "et ser Secondiano domini Deutabive notario"]; Parchment 56, August 1, 1309 [Ser Secondiano in quality of ambassador of the city of Tuscania, request to the Roman senators to exonerate Tuscania from some onerous taxes]; Parchment number 65/2 [A], July 12, 1323 [Secondiano in 1323 is part of the public assembly taking place in front of the cathedral of San Pietro. After his proposal to elect six citizens to negotiate the bishop's requests, Secondiano himself will be nominated as one of these six men "*probi viri*"]; Parchement 65/8 [A], July 27, 1323 [Ser Secondiano is a testimony for the consignment of some properties from the notary Ser Vanne di Ser Marco to Bishop Angelo].

French officials. The latter were apparently mostly interested in the wealth of their newly acquired jurisdictions and took full advantage of their position to acquire power over these territories.[43]

The French vicar ruling over the territory of Tuscia perfectly corresponded to this description. His name was Bernard de Coucy, he hailed from Nerves and received the seat in Montefiascone in 1312, where he ruled as the new rector of the Church Patrimony until 1317.[44] He was well known for being interested only in enriching himself and his family, as a consequence he gained a bad reputation in Tuscania and its surroundings towns.[45] To make matters worse, despite being the only representative of papal authority in the province, he openly supported the Ghibellines, the pro-imperial party in the ongoing power dispute between pope and emperor that had characterized western Europe, and Italy in particular, for centuries, but which reached a climax at the beginning of 14th century.[46] The fervor of the Ghibellines in Tuscania and

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[43] This is best described by the local historian Mercurio Antonelli in the late 19th century. See: Giancarlo Breccola, *Opera completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, 1889-1901. Vol I (Montefiascone, December, 2001), 41: "È noto come durante il periodo avignonese il governo delle province ecclesiastiche in Italia fu quasi sempre affidato ad ufficiali francesi, gente avida di denaro che considerava l'Italia come terreno da sfruttare, e la carica che rivestiva come un mezzo per accumulare ricchezze."

[44] Bernardo de Coucy took the position of vicar in place of Galhardus de Falquières, bishop of Arles, who was unable to reach Italy and become new rector of the Church Patrimony. For more see: Breccola, *l'Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, 41; Giontella and Santi, *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese*, Document 12 Settember, 1312, 578; Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 95.

[45] Giontella, *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese*, Document 19-26 October, 1312, 579: already in October 1312, few months after he started his office, Bernardo de Coucy condemned the towns of Vetralla and Toscanella for not obeying to his law. Nevertheless, Toscanella did not accept the accusation and, by refusing to recognize the authority of the vicar, appealed to Pope Clemente V.

[46] For more on the local situation see: Breccola, *l'Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, 42. For more on the history of Guelfs and Ghibellines in 13th and 14th century Italy see: Sergio Raveggi, *Ghibellini, Guelfi E Popolo Grasso: I Detentori Del Potere Politico a Firenze Nella Seconda Metà Del Dugento*, Biblioteca Di Storia, La Nuova Italia, 23 (Firenze, 1978); Robert Davidsohn, *Guelfi E Ghibellini*, Superbiblioteca Sansoni (Firenze: Sansoni, 1972); Sergio Raveggi, *L'italia Dei Guelfi E Dei Ghibellini*, Il Medioevo Attraverso I Secoli (Milano: B. Mondadori, 2009).

environs had, in addition, been augmented in the years of Bernard's tenure by news of the imminent arrival of Henry VII of Luxemburg to Rome to receive the imperial crown.[47]

The oppression from the French vicar, combined with the ongoing conflicts between Guelfs and Ghibellines, pushed Orvieto, center of the Guelf power in the Papal Patrimony, to rebel against the tyranny of Bernard de Coucy. Guelfs from Orvieto besieged the fortress in Montefiascone where De Coucy dwelled. Their attack was sustained by all Guelfs from the Patrimony, among these, of course, there were the ones from Toscanella as well.[48] However, few days after the siege, Ghibellines mainly from Viterbo and Orvieto attacked the Guelfs in Montefiascone, and eventually managed to free Vicar Bernard de Coucy. The Patrimony condemned all the Guelfs rebels and all the cities that took part in the siege. Rebels were called to attend the trial in the *curia* headquarters in the palace in Montefiascone on December 24, 1315. Once there, they were charged for crimes against the Papal State.[49] Toscanella itself was heavily punished: 25.000 silver marks from the city itself plus 500 more for each Guelf of the city who took part in the revolt.[50] Among the accused, is Secondiano De Deutabive, the patron of the Last Judgement fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore, who is listed in the official document naming all the Guelf rebels from Toscanella.[51]

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[47] Toscanella was in very bad terms with the Vicar de Coucy and did not legitimize his office and his authority as he had not been actually appointed vicar by the Pope, but rather by the papal legate Arnaldo, bishop of Sabina (Giontella, *Tuscania attraverso i Secoli*, 95). It is therefore not without reason that in some documents from Orvieto and Toscanella Bernardo de Coucy is referred to as a "sedicente vicario", a "so-called vicar" (Campanari, *Tuscania e i Suoi Monumenti*, Vol.II, doc. 44). Furthermore, Di Coucy is called « lupus gregem sibi commissum devorans, . . . guerrarum et scandalorum plurium seminator » (Breccola, *l'Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, 54).

[48] Giontella, *Tuscania attraverso i Secoli*, 46-97. It must be specified that Toscanella, at that time, was not interested in helping Orvieto, as they were not in good relationships. Toscanalla decided to take part to the rebellion as it was ruled by the State of Rome, recognizing, from that time on, the roman *podestà* as unique authority.

[49] Breccola, *l'Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, 49.

[50] Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 99.

[51] Breccola, *l'Opera Completa di Mercurio Antonelli*, parchment 229,1315 December 24, Montefiascone, 454.

Conflicts continued in subsequent years. This resulted in the fact that nobody in Tuscania ever paid the penalties; this presumably included Secondiano. When Bernard de Coucy fell into disfavor under Pope John XXII in 1317, the latter nominated as new vicar Guglielmo Costa, who started his office from the 1st September of the same year. Needless to say, from that moment on, nobody felt required to respect the sentences promulgated by the ex-vicar de Coucy.[52] Moreover, on December 24, 1324, Pope John XXII officialized the nullity of all the punishments imposed by Bernard de Coucy since he had favored the Ghibellines, pro-imperial enemies, despite being Vicar of the Papal Patrimony.[53]

As Bernardo de Coucy was divested of his charge in 1317, the penalties he inflicted became practically invalid, allowing Secondiano de Deutabive to avoid great misfortune, not only saving his life, but also his career and economic and social standing in Tuscania. It is for this lucky fate that it is assumed that Secondiano de Deutabive commissioned the fresco cycle as an ex-voto to the Virgin Mary at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore.[54] While celebrating the

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[52] For evidence of the practical nullity of the sentence see: Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*, 99-101; Breccola, l'Opera completa di Mercurio Antonelli, 51, note number 32. "L'intrinseca nullità di tutti questi atti lesivi dei diritti della chiesa era evidente, e non v'era bisogno di un atto dell'autorità pontificia per dichiararla."; Giontella, *Tuscania Attraverso i Secoli*. It is worth knowing that on June 21, 1317, Bernardo de Coucy forgave the prior attacks and offenses he received from the city of Orvieto and from all the other towns that were its allies. However, excluded from this peace treaty were all the other cities that were not in good terms with Orvieto. Toscanella was one of those, as it was, first of all, not in good terms with Orvieto, and especially because it was administered and subjugated by the Roman Senate and thus considered itself exonerated from the Vicar' jurisdiction.

[53] Giontella and Santi, *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese*, Documneto 1324, Dicembre 13, Avignone, 546: "Bernardus de Cucuiaco, canonicus Nivernenss, erat rector dicti patrimonii, sub favore quorumdam rebellium et inimicorum ecclesie"

[54] Also, given the existence of documented historical evidence about the ongoing pro-papal and pro-imperial conflicts and on their impacts on the life of Secondiano de Deutabive, the dating of the fresco cycle proposed by Donati, 1315-1320, can be even more precisely moved to the end of 1317, when Benardo de Coucy lost his position, conflicts between the papal and imperial factions came to a, even if temporary, end and a new vicar was nominated.

avoided tragedy, he was also parading his triumph after years of misfortune before all of Tuscania. [55]

On May 15, 1324, the inter-diocesan synod succeeded in re-establishing a peaceful relationship between Tuscania and Viterbo, two chapters of the same diocese.[56] As already discussed, it is known that for two decades the two cities, even though belonging to the same diocese -or rather precisely for that- had been at odds with one another because of political-religious conflicts. In occasion of the 1324 synod, the Prior and the canons of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore also asked the bishop Angelo Tignosi to grant back the privileges that had once been bestowed to the church.[57] The synod did, in fact, granted the church its old privileges, and this ultimately symbolized an important turning point for Santa Maria Maggiore. This grant, together with the newly made sumptuous fresco cycle financed by Secondiano, re-enhanced the church's condition and status. In fact, the fresco and the synod grant should not be read separately: the first -even if we accept the later date of 1320- may be posited as having influenced the date and the outcomes of the second (1324). Once the apse wall and nave walls had been decorated, the church re-gained back its past authority thanks, also, to the figure of Secondiano, eminent citizen of Tuscania. It is not incongruous to think that such decorative program literally empowered the church which, in fact, soon after had its ancient rights granted back.

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[55] Ricci, *Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore*, 52. This hypothesis is the result of Fulvio Ricci's studies, all based on the extensive historical research of Giuseppe Giontella.
[56] Giontella and Santi, *Codice Diplomatico Tuscanese*, Documento 1323 Maggio 16, Viterbo, 68. The church of Santa Maria Maggiore is addressed in this document reported by Giontella, as an "antiquitus cathedralis ecclesia", literally, a church which "once was the old cathedral". Again, this stresses the important and powerful past of the church, which appears to have been neglected for the past centuries.
[57] These privileges included: decision-making powers, relevance of the church's prior during official ceremonies, and authority over neighboring churches.

2. The Last Judgment Fresco

The Last Judgment, or Apocalypse, is understood in mainstream Christianity as the unveiling of future last-day events as prophesized by John in the Book of Revelation. The imminent end of life on Earth entails the second coming of Christ in order to definitively and universally restore divine justice, as announced by John at the beginning of the book:

> *"The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him, to make known to his servants the things that must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified them through his angel to his servant John…. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand."*[58]

After revealing all the events preceding the Last Judgment, the book ends with the direct words of Jesus Christ, who guarantees the authenticity of the prophecies and promises their imminent realization: *"He who testifies to these things says, 'It is true, I come quickly.' "*

The Book of Revelation has been artistically interpreted in a number of ways, starting with more general and symbolic visual references in the late antique period, arriving to more precise and clearer visual narratives in the central middle Ages. The evolution of this iconography in the Italian context is discussed in more details in Appendix 1. However, before turning to the description of the Last Judgment fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore, it is useful to

[58] Rv 1:1-2 (Revised Standard Version)

discuss one key early 14th century precursor: Giotto's Last Judgment fresco in the Scrovegni chapel in Padua (Fig. 16).

Giotto's interest in three-dimensional representations in painting, fully explored in the Paduan chapel, became part of the Italian painting strategies from the early 14th century on, not least because Giotto traveled frequently and so disseminated works in important centers such as Rome, Assisi, Padua, Rimini, Florence, Pisa and Naples. When compared to the bi-dimensionality of earlier medieval paintings, Giotto's new conventions made earlier works look old-fashioned and so engendered a wide-spread acceptance.[59] Giotto's Last judgment was in fact completed only about a decade before the fresco by Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo in Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania. The Aretinian painters appear to invariably participate -as many other painters in the Italian Trecento- in Giotto's pictorial innovations. If Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo could not avoid the influence of the *stile giottesco* in general, it is likely that they actually saw Giotto's fresco from the Cappella degli Scrovegni, and deliberately imitated not only its style, but also its iconography, presumably, if not exclusively, in an attempt to be part of the nationally recognized and acclaimed new artistic trend. For instance, they interestingly duplicated the river of fire emerging from Christ's *mandorla*, a detail that is entirely absent in earlier Italian depictions. Perhaps even more importantly, the iconographic structure of the overall composition in the Last Judgment in Tuscania is indebted to Giotto's Scrovegni fresco. Moreover, not only is Tuscania's Last Judgment structured in three main sections, but these

[59] Although an almost cohesive academic consensus praises as innovative Giotto's visual solutions, the *Questione Giottesca* interrogates whether he was the first one to engage in this stylistic challenge, and consequently, to what extent artists like Pietro Cavallini, operating at the end of the 13th century, influenced Giotto's work. For more about this issue see: John White, "Cavallini and the Lost Frescoes in S. Paolo." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (1956): 84-95; Guglielmo Matthiae , *Pietro Cavallini* (Rome: De Luca, 1973); Paul Hetherington, "Pietro Cavallini, Artistic Style and Patronage in Late Medieval Rome," *The Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 826 (1972): 4–10.

smoothly transition from one another, in accordance with the plasticity of Giotto's composition. The reception of Giotto's contributions was not only rapid, but also diversified, stimulating new reconfigurations and refinements on what Giotto himself had introduced, as happened in Santa Maria Maggiore's fresco.[60]

Unlike the traditional placement of the Last Judgment painting on the counter façade, which spatially reflects the appearance of God from the West at the sound of the Last Trumpet,[61] the fresco in Santa Maria Maggiore is unusually placed on the sanctuary wall (Fig. 19).[62] It is bordered by a geometrically-patterned frame that also runs along the upper walls of the nave, as extant traces and fragments indicate (Fig. 20). These were depicted with episodes from the life of the Virgin Mary, in accordance with the Church's dedication. However, all that remains of this Marian cycle are the first and the last scenes only: the Annunciation and the Nativity on the right, and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on the left. The Last Judgment fresco on the apse wall is,

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[60] For more on Giotto's influence and contribution to the evolution of 14th century Italian Art: Enrico Castelnuovo, *La Pittura in Italia*, Il Duecento E Il Trecento, 55-76 (Milano: Electa, 1986).

[61] J. Alexander, "The Last things: representing the unrepresentable", in Frances Carey, *The Apocalypse and the Shape of Things to Come* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 49. Other theories mentioned by Alexander, explain the presence of the Last Judgment on the counter-façade with a metaphorical reading, which associates the rays of the setting sun reaching the west façade with the journey of the faithful who, after their terrestrial death, will experience eternity for the first time.

[62] Italian examples of Last Judgement frescoes placed on the counter-facade: Torcello cathedral, Venice lagoon; Cappella degli Scrovegni, Padua; Chapel of san Silvestro in Santi Quattro Coronati, Rome. Although leaving the church surmounted by an apocalyptic scene might have been an intense and hard-to-forget vision, the peculiar placement of Santa Maria Maggiore's Last Judgment in the sanctuary arch might have impressed its viewers similarly, confronting them with a terrific yet salvific vision that asserted its presence throughout the entire celebration, ultimately working not only as a reminder but as an incentive for a deeper reflection. However, Marjorie Reeves, ("The development of apocalyptic thought: medieval attitudes", in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions*, edited by C. A Patrides and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, 42-73, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), writes that "The practice of depicting the Last Judgment over the chancel arch or on the west wall of a church or in the tympanum of its west door soon became widespread. With its gaping mouth of Hell, awful Judge and saints rising to Heaven, this was a constant and vivid remainder to all." Last but not least, the decision to depict the Last Judgment on the apse wall might have been motivated by the simple architectonical impossibility to have it on the counter façade, where the large rose window obstructs the wall.

on the other hand, quite well preserved. Besides some relatively small areas where the stucco collapsed following the 1971 earthquake, the scene is still entirely readable, rewarding the viewers with a great richness of details.

In order to facilitate a clearer understanding, the fresco will be described following its three-tier arrangement, beginning from the centrally placed T-shaped section dedicated to Christ. After the *Arma Christi* located right in the center of the wall, the analysis will proceed upwards towards Christ in the *mandorla*-glory, finally considering the angels and the apostles sitting on the thrones surrounding Christ on both sides. The visual account will then turn to the left vertical portion of the wall, featuring the resurrection of the dead in the lower and narrower part of the arch and, going upwards, the Elect being introduced to Christ by John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary. The third and last part of the description will be entirely dedicated to Hell and the damned souls, located on the right side of the arch.

Christ

Right in the center of the composition, on the top part of the arch, is a depiction of Christ surrounded by angels. He is shown seated within a radiant *mandorla*, an almond-shaped aureola that surrounds the totality of his figure. His body rests over a horizontal curved band, and his legs over a sort of feet rest, that emerges directly from the bottom part of the *mandorla*. These two seats are composed of three bands of colors -red, yellow and green- that match with the inner decoration of the *mandorla*. The exterior of the *mandorla* is instead delineated by a thick, bright ovoidal contour composed of many small rhomboids, whose white clarity fades into a darker red towards the exterior. The plastic curvature of this frame, which almost seems to make the *mandorla* come out in relief, reflects the three-dimensionality of Giotto's pictorial style,

ultimately suggesting his great influence on the Aretinian painters. Christ is depicted wearing a red piece of fabric that partially covers his body, leaving naked the left side of his chest in order to show his bleeding side wound. His arms are slightly extended to show the stigmata on his palms. Stigmata are also visible on Christ's feet protruding from the drapery beneath. He is clean-shaved and has blond hair lightly falling on the back of his neck in small locks. His linear facial features conceal any expression, yet his gaze is slightly turned towards the right, as if deliberately avoiding to look towards the Hell to his left. His head is framed by a golden halo, divided into four sections by a red cross decorated with green gems. A group of seven angels emerges from behind the *mandorla* on both sides; their wings and robes are colored in a succession of red, green and yellow, matching the three colors of the *mandorla*'s interior. Emerging from the lower part of the *mandorla*, the last two angels are blowing the apocalyptic trumpets.

Both spaces to the left and right of Christ present the same structural and iconographical composition: six male figures sit on a continuous bench on either side -the twelve apostles- and above them, two groups of three and four angels respectively fly towards Christ following the diagonal cut of the sanctuary wall. These two groups of angels reflect in style and physiognomy the ones framing the outside of the almond.

The twelve apostles themselves sit "on thrones as judges of the twelve Tribes of Israel".[63] The first apostle depicted on the left side with a red book in his left hand is S. Peter, recognizable because he holds keys in his right hand. He wears a green tunic and a golden cloak and has white hair and beard. The face of the apostle next to him is deteriorated; he does not hold any specific attribute besides a green book. He wears a green tunic and a red cloak. Next to him, still

[63] Lk 22:30 (RSV).

proceeding towards the left, is an apostle with a long white beard, wearing a red tunic and a read cloak, and holding a scroll and a paint brush; in all likelihood he is Saint Luke, whose legend recounts that he painted the very first image of the Virgin Mary. To his left are three younger apostles holding books or scrolls and respectively wearing a white, red, and an orange tunic. Due to the lack of precise iconographical elements, they may not be individually identified. On the right side, the first apostle is Saint Paul, recognizable thanks to the unfurled scroll (presumably his epistles) and his receding hairline. He wears a green robe and a red tunic. Next to him to the right, there are two bearded elderly apostles. The first wears a green robe and holds a red book; the second wears a white robe and holds a rolled up scroll. To the right of these two, three young apostles are shown. The first one wears a golden tunic, holds a red book with his left hand and frontally raises his right hand. The second one wears a white robe and holds a green book with both hands. The last third one wears a red robe and holds a yellow book. Like the young apostles on the right, the lack of specific attributes makes it impossible to identify them specifically.

The Arma Christi

The instruments of the Passion of Christ, or the *Arma Christi*, are placed directly beneath Christ's *mandorla*. Painted over an intense blue sky, they occupy a relatively small area of the fresco; yet, their placement is quite eloquent as they literally, visually divide Heaven from Hell. Christ’s wooden cross is placed right in the center, symmetrically dividing the space. The Flagellation column is located underneath the cross’ right horizontal shaft. On either side of it are beams draped with whips painted in white. Despite being highly damaged in its vertical

component, it is still possible to see that the column was painted in red.[64] Under the cross' left shaft are two other instruments: first on the right, the Holy Lance with which Longinus pierced Christ and that appropriately points perpendicularly towards Christ's side wound.[65] Secondly on the left, the Holy Sponge that was mockingly dipped in vinegar when Jesus said he was thirsty.[66] Beneath the Lance and the Sponge, a small male figure kneels down and, with his hands joined in a prayer gesture, looks up towards Christ. Unfortunately this image is highly damaged: however, from a photo taken before the 1971 earthquake, this figure is identifiable as the patron of the fresco, the notary Secondianus discussed in the previous chapter (Fig. 6). [67] He wears a long green tunic with large sleeves and a tight white collar.[68] His head is covered with a peculiar hat: the front bends downward and slightly projects forward, the back is instead larger, and the base is delineated by a tight embroidered band.[69] This specific attribute presumably referred to Secondianus' office, ultimately allowing the audience to recognize in his depiction his public office and so too his important social standing in the community.

Lastly, above the cross on the left, there is a representation of the crown of thorns shown as a thin golden circle framed by elongated green spines. The right side is instead empty, leaving

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[64] This color might either suggest the natural color of the stone, presumably red porphyry, or also that it is the blood of Christ that turned the stone red.
[65] Jo 19:31-37 (RSV)
[66] Mt 27:48; Mk 15: 36; Jo 19:29 (RSV)
[67] The above mentioned Secondianus refers with almost no doubt to Secondianus Deutabive, the notary involved in the fights between Guelphs and Ghibellines at the beginning of the 14th century. As discussed in the previous chapter, he is mentioned in many local documents.
[68] Viviana Cerutti, "Gli Abiti Di Una Corte Celeste Del Quattrocento: L' Iconografia Del Paradiso Nel 'Giudizio Universale' di Giovanni Di Paolo" *Iconographica* 1, (2002), 114. The author notes that large sleeves indicated the nobility and importance of a person who, indeed, did not engage in practical and laborious activities for which the large sleeves would have been just of disturbance, in other words, of a person who would not get his hands dirty.
[69] Loredana Imperio, *Vestire Nel Medioevo: Moda, Tessuti Ed Accessori Tratti Dalle Fonti D'epoca*, prima edizione Media Ætas, (Tuscania: 2013), 17. There is no specific mention to the figure of the notary, however, such peculiar hat and tunic most likely identify an important figure who dealt with administrative and public affairs.

space for the red river emerging from Christ's *mandorla* to flow and ultimately flare up the Hell on the right side.

It is noteworthy that in the Byzantine and medieval western European iconographic tradition the space depicting the *Arma Christi* is often occupied by a *psychostasia*, or the weighing of the souls, scene.[70] This is the case, for example, in the famous late 11th century mosaic in the cathedral of Torcello in the Venetian lagoon (Fig. 15). However, the *Arma Christi* "substitution" at Santa Maria Maggiore, does not engender any kind of narrative or semantic inconsistency. Not only is the *psychostasia* itself not an iconographical *necessity* in Christian eschatological iconography, but it may justifiably be argued that the cross in Santa Maria Maggiore serves the same symbolic function of the *psychostasia*, providing a spatial and emblematic division between Heaven and Hell. That said, the lack of a *psychostasia* image does provide interesting insights into how the temporal elements of the Last Judgment narrative at Santa Maria were visualized, consequently providing an insight into how the fresco constructed meaning for its medieval viewers. It is perhaps natural to ask what precise moment from the Apocalypse the fresco portrays. Is the viewer, for example, to assume that the weighing of the

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[70] For more see S. G. F. Brandon, "The weighing of the soul," in Kitagawa; Long (eds.). *Myths and symbols: Studies in honor of Mircea Eliade*, Chicago University Press, (1969): 91–110. According to Brandon, the theme of the weighing of the souls after the death of the body can be traced back to Christian apocryphal literature from the 2nd century AD. Though, the author stresses that this scene is not a scriptural theme and that draws elements from a much older pagan tradition. Laura Pasquini, "Il Diavolo Nell'iconografia Medievale", in *Diavolo Nel Medioevo*, Centro Italiano Di Studi Sul Basso Medioevo (Accademia Tudertina, 479-518, 2013), asserts that "L'iconografia, di lontana ascendenza egizia, giunta al medioevo cristiano per il probabile tramite dei cristiani copti d'Egitto, è attestata all'inizio del X secolo in tre Giudizi universali dalle caratteristiche estremamente divergenti: due dei quali (Yilanli Kilise in Cappadocia e Santo Stefano di Kastoria, nel nord della Grecia) testimoni di un impianto iconografico tipicamente bizantino, il terzo, invece, in un contesto di indiscutibile Occidentalità, si staglia su una delle facce della croce di Muiredach nel cimitero del monastero Irlandese di Monasterboice". Most early medieval European examples come mainly from France: Eardrum from Cathedral of Saint-Lazare d'Autun, 1120-1146; Eardrum from Notre-Dame D'Amiens, 1220-1296.

souls already happen? Yet this question arise from the modern penchant to place events on a chronologically arranged or linear axis in order to facilitate a purportedly coherent reading. Establishing this kind of temporality was not, however, the prerogative of visual communication in the 14th century; instead, the goal was to maximize visual communication. Moreover, trying to place this Last Judgment in accordance to the temporal sequence of events narrated in the Book of Revelation goes against the internal narrative of the fresco, where events are instead deliberately conflated in one single, legible event. The medieval viewer was not wondering when did the weighing of the soul happened. And this was not only because s/he might not have been aware of this iconographic tradition and its meaning, but because the painting lacks nothing: it depicts an eminently clear image of God having already made his decisions.

The Resurrection of the Dead

The lower left side of the fresco is dedicated to the resurrection of the souls who are depicted as naked figures rising from their graves at the sound of the trumpets.[71] On the very bottom part of the right wall, the one which runs along the lower part of the apse curvature, three rows of naked figures resurrect from coffins. In the first one, three bodies stand naked looking towards Christ. These figures come out from a single rectangular coffin, painted in light brown and so presumably made out of wood. The figures' hands, joined in a praying gesture, point towards Christ. The first figure on the right must be a man; his very short haircut emphasizes the marked spherical shape of his head. Behind him, a figure presents longer hair knotted under the nape. A slightly swollen belly suggests that this figure might be a woman. Behind her stands another figure who is taller than the previous two: wavy hair reaches the end of the figure's neck,

[71] The seven trumpets appear in Rv 8, 6-9:19 and 11:15-19 (RSV).

the bust is delineated by some lines that indicate pronounced abdominals, suggesting that he too is a man. Right above this first coffin, there is a second one, this time horizontally oriented. It is identical in structure to the previous one, geometric in its shape and sallow in its color; yet, this one is covered with a wooden lid that is being lifted by two figures as they come out from the coffin. Four figures are depicted within it: the first one on the right, has short hair braided over the nape and a slightly swollen belly, yet the gender is unclear. This figure gives his or her back to the center of the composition while lifting the grave's lid with both arms. In front of this figure, another body is lifting the grave's lid. Even though there are no clear signs to identify this figure's sexual identity, and given the delicate facial features and a quite curvy waist, the figure can probably be identified as a woman. However, compared to her companion, she is more interested in getting out of the tomb rather than lifting the lid: in fact, while holding the tomb's lid with her right arm, she is stepping outside the coffin with her left foot, facing the viewer frontally with her naked torso. In between the two standing figures, two heads appear from the edge of the tomb. Their mouths are open and they look toward the lid with a confused expression, suggesting that they have just woken up. Above this group of coffins, on the left corner, the bust of a seemingly male figure emerges directly from a crack in the ground. This chthonic rising is visually indicated through a darker shade of soil that circumscribes the figure's body. He is looking towards Christ in a gesture of prayer.

At this point the pictorial field starts to widen: the triumphal arch starts to become larger following the shape of the apse underneath. Taking advantage of the broader pictorial space, a group of five bodies emerges from two coffins while two other bodies emerge directly from fissures in the earth. Inside the first coffin on the far left, a standing male figure holds the coffin's lid in order to allow another figure, likely a woman, to get out of it. The figure who is

stepping out of the coffin, despite walking towards the center of the composition and having her hands joined in a gesture of prayer, turns her head towards the other figure, as if speaking to him: in fact, her mouth is depicted slightly open, as if uttering some words to the neighbor. Still within this tomb, a figure sits and looks downward. The tonsure on his head suggests his identity as monk or cleric. The second tomb, which is placed partially in front of the other one, adds a sense of depth to the otherwise bidimensional composition. The iconography is similar: while one figure holds the tomb's lid, another one gets out of it. The standing figure who holds the lid of the tomb seems a male, given his short hair. The other figure is probably a woman given the hair knotted on her nape. Right next to the tomb, towards the center of the composition, two bodies emerge directly from the ground with their hands joined in a prayer gesture: the one on the left, probably a woman given her long blondish hair, faces the Elects above her on the left; instead, the other figure, a man with a short haircut, prays towards Christ.

Following the arch curvature, right on top of the center of the arch, many other bodies emerge from their tombs. Here, a total of seven coffins and five people emerging from two holes in the ground mark the limit between Heaven and Hell. Despite depicting the same resurrection scene, these figures appear different from the ones in the lower part of the arch in terms of style. Although still minimalistic in their physiognomy, they are way more plastic in their bodies, their faces are delineated by strong contours and voluminously shaped through different shades of skin tones. In particular, their facial features makes it easier to identify their gender. Yet, the most remarkable feature of their bodies is that many of them are not naked, but rather clothed in long light tunics. Furthermore, despite the larger numbers -or precisely because of that- these figures are smaller than the companions on the left edge. The space where they happen to

resurrect is more crowded, indicating the rare exclusiveness and the higher value of being closer to Christ.

The first coffin on the left side is partially deteriorated; yet, it is still possible to see that it is filled up with seven people orderly arranged in two rows of fours and threes. The figures are all looking towards Christ: their heads slightly bent upwards and their hands joined once again in prayer. The first row is composed of four people. The first figure on the right is a woman with blonde hair knotted on her nape and marked red lips; behind her a man with short light brown hair is followed by another woman with hair knotted on her nape as well; at the end of this first row, a man with a tonsure. While it is possible that all the figures in the first row are wearing a white robe, the bodies of the ones in the upper row are invisible: still, they can be recognized as two women with knotted hairstyles on both sides and a man with short hair in the center. Above this large group of resurrected bodies, a naked man is lifting the lid of his grave in order to get out. Proceeding towards the center, another naked man is getting out of his grave; however, he is not alone as there is another man within the same coffin who is standing upwards praying towards Christ. Right in front of this grave, a single man emerges from the soil, praying Christ as well. Above him, a white rectangular coffin contains seven people, divided again in two rows of fours and threes. Despite being partially ruined at the top, it is clear that the figures featured in this scene are still recognizable: they probably belonged to the same religious order as they all feature a tonsure; presumably they are intended to depict members of a religious order, possibly of the same community. In front of this coffin, another one is occupied by six people. In its center, a dressed male figure holds the tomb's lid. Below him, still sitting in the grave, three figures whose sexual identity is unclear are looking upwards. Behind him, instead, stands a woman with long hair and a man with short brown hair. Moving to the right, a group of four

dressed figures emerges from one large hole in the ground, they are all looking towards the left where the elects and saints are. The upper right corner of this group is ruined. However, the figures appear to be two men and two women. Lastly, in front of this group, are two other coffins. The one in the lower left corner features three naked bodies within a small white coffin who are looking towards the center. A male figure in the center with a tonsure is flanked by a woman with long blond hair on the left and by another figure whose sexual identity is unclear on the right. Above them, a naked man gets out of the tomb by lifting its lid.

As evident from the description above, despite their supposedly dead biological status, all resurrected bodies engage in quite lively activities: they devotedly pray, they speak to each other, they move with agility, and also help each other to get out from their graves. Hypothetically, they should show, at least, some "symptoms" or "side-effects" from their long burial; and yet, not only they are depicted performing activities, but they are also quite "fleshy" in their appearance, as if all the years spent being buried and waiting for the resurrection did not alter their bodies' conditions. Even if they are likely depicted in such an optimal shape for the sake of a symbolic representation, this representation of the scriptural scene of resurrection of the *body* shows literally and unmistakably, a very "alive" resurrection of the *bodies*. Even if not congruous with the natural decomposition process, their "fleshy" appearance perfectly fulfilled the church's didactic interest of instructing medieval viewers on what would take place on the last day.

The Elect

Above the resurrected bodies, on the left side of the central horizontal band of the fresco, there are the Elect guided by the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. Compared to the figures

previously described, proportions increase, figures become bigger and more stylistically elaborated, ultimately indicating a hierarchy and a crescendo in importance. The Elect are organized in a big crowd, which stands above the two parallel coffins depicted at the top of the left edge. The group is geometrically ordered in 5 rows that horizontally overlap each other slowly raising to the top. This visual strategy allows to see the head of all figures on the back, ultimately creating a sense of depth to the overall composition. In addition to the five clearly visible rows, the hint of rounded heads and halos within the multitude suggests the presence of many more people behind each row. It is worth noticing that figures increase in scale and grow bigger each row as going towards the top. Among the Elects, stand out a variety of figures such as monks, nuns, friar, lay people and other members of the clergy.

The first row at the bottom is composed of eleven figures. The costume of the first two male figures suggest a prominent religious status. The first, shown with a fully-grown grey beard, is a pope as he not only wears a white papal *tiara*, pointed in shape and decorated at the bottom with a golden crown, but also a long red cloak framed with a golden embroider on top of a white tunic, red and white being the two official colors of the Roman Catholic Church.[72] The second figure is a bishop as he wears an episcopal *mitria*, still pointed and white, but decorated with two intersecting horizontal and vertical golden bands. He wears a long green cloak with golden edges and presents a short white beard. Both the pope and the bishop wear white gloves, called *chiroteche*, as they pray facing the Christ above.[73] Behind them there is a tonsured man who, because he is not wearing a cowl, should probably be identified as a cleric rather than a monk. This kind of attention to costume, and so differentiation between the saved in the fresco, is underscored by the next male figure: a clean shaven young figure wearing a long white tunic

[72] Cerutti, *Gli Abiti Di Una Corte Celeste Del Quattrocento*, 113.
[73] Cerutti, 113.

and white a cowl that readily identifies him as a monk, rather than a cleric. [74] While the cowl makes it difficult to see if he has a tonsure or not, the vertical cut of the bangs emerging beneath suggests the presence of a tonsure.

The next figure is also male: a young boy with a bowl-cut wearing a red tunic. Behind him are three female figures. One is wearing a long grey tunic and a white loose veil that covers her head and leaves her neck partially exposed, this may be a nun, possibly even a member of the Franciscan order of the Poor Clares.[75] Behind her is a woman wearing a tight black bonnet and

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[74] The white tunic and the white cowl are traditional attributes of two orders: the Dominican and the Carthusian monks. According to the dressing canons of both orders, monks were required to wear a black pectoral cloak, *cappa* for the Carthusians and *scapolare* or *cotta* for the Dominican. However, both these clothing attributes did not become part of the iconographic identities of the orders. In this specific example, the absence of any specific clothing attribute like a belt or a pectoral cloak (*scapolare*) makes it difficult to affirm with certainty whether this figure is a Dominican or a Carthusian Monk. Giovanni Leoncini, speaking about the Carthusian order in Rocca, *La sostanza dell'Effimero: Gli Abiti Degli Ordini Religiosi in Occidente* (Roma: Edizioni Paoline, 2000), 156, scheda 13, notes that "Lo scopo di questa cappa, oltre a quello di fungere da soprabito, è anzi quello di celare il vero e proprio abito religioso, che non deve essere ostentato, anche in ragione della sua rozzezza. La cappa non entra dunque di regola nella rappresentazione iconografica dei certosini". Similarly for the Domenican order, the *scapolare* was not a fundamental part of the monks clothing tradition; as noted by Elio Montanari in Rocca*, La Sostanza dell'Effimero*, 305, "la cotta non fece mai parte dell'abito domenicano strettamente inteso, ma fu solo un'aggiunta, una specie di complemento apportato in un secondo tempo, il cui uso è attestato solo in Francia." Nevertheless, what might suggest that this monk belongs to the Dominican order is the absence of the beard. In fact, as explained by Pietro Lippini in Rocca, *La Sostanza dell'effimero*, 307, the earliest depictions of Saint Domenico's tomb show the bearded Saint surrounded by shaven monks: "Anche in questo caso dobbiamo fidarci delle più antiche rappresentazioni. La tomba di S. Domenico, che lo raffigura sempre con la barba, ci mostra gli altri frati sempre senza." Moreover, he specifies, "La bolla di Onorio III, Ex parte vestra, del 17.03.1226 (cf Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum I, 17) destinata ai frati missionari in Marocco, li autorizza a portare la barba: segno evidente che i frati dell'ordine ordinariamente non la portavano."

[75] As reported by Giontella in *L'ordine dei Minori Conventuli di S. Franceso a Tuscania*, we know that the Urbanist Poor Clares were the only female religious order dwelling in Tuscania at the beginning of the 14th century. Servus Gieben in Rocca, *La Sostanza dell'Effimero*, 362, reports that the Urbanist Poor Clares wore a grey tunic. However, there were some differentiations in regards to the veil wore by novices and the abbesses. The rule promulgated by Pope Urbano VI in 1263 regarding the clothing of the Urbanist Poor Clares stated that "[…] si coprano il capo con uniformità e modestia, con bende o veli di panno comune, del tutto bianchi, non però preziosi o ricercati, di modo che rimangano coperti la fronte, le guance il collo e la gola, come si addice alla loro onestà e religione; ne osino comparire altrimenti davanti alle persone estranee. Abbiano anche un velo nero, però, ne prezioso ne ricercato, steso sulla testa, così ampio e così lungo che scenda fino alle spalle da entrambe le parti e dietro scenda un poco oltre il cappuccio della tonaca. Le sorelle novizie, invece, devono portare un velo bianco della stessa misura e qualità. Le sorelle serviziali, invece, portino in capo, a modi di velo, un panno bianco, non prezioso o

an orange robe; given the stylishness of the wardrobe, she may be identified as a noblewoman. The third woman, whose face is partially ruined, seems to wear a green hat that matches with the color of her tunic.

Unfortunately, the remaining figures in the first foreground row are unidentifiable as the fresco is highly damaged. What might be discerned is that the entire group holds their hands up in prayer as they intensely look towards Christ in the center. Similarly, these other saved figures are gazing towards the center of the composition. What differentiates the figures of the first row from the ones behind them is that none of the figures in the first row have a halo. The first row is thus set apart. While they may not have received sainthood, and so been depicted with haloes, their placement in the foreground suggest that they are important. As Fulvio Ricci has suggested, they may perhaps be identified as representative of the most piously pro-active, even militant, living members of the local Christian community.[76]

The second row, arranged both above and behind the first, is composed of nine figures. Starting from the right there is a young man with a tonsure followed by a man with short blonde hair and a woman with a pink veil that covers both her head and her neck. From the color of her veil, it is possible to confirm she is a lay woman. Behind her is another man with a tonsure and a sparse beard wearing red drapery, suggesting he is a lay person too. Standing next to him an older man wears a flat blue hat from which emerges his white hair. Completing the row are four women. The first woman wears a white veil that covers part of her head and her neck, leaving her forehead and part of her hair outside. The next female image is partially ruined, but clearly

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ricercato, di tanta lunghezza e ampiezza che possa coprire le spalle e il petto, specialmente quando escono." According to this description, the woman with the white veil might be a young novice into the Poor Clares order.

[76] Fulvio Ricci, *Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore, Tuscania. Chiesa, Monumenti e Città,* (Betagamma Editrice, Viterbo, 1996, 35.

she wears a green veil that completely covers her head. The woman behind her wears a blue veil with a white border covering her head, but leaving exposed her long, pink neck. The last is a young woman with long blonde braided hair, presumably a noblewoman.

The third row is partially ruined toward its end, yet it begins with five male characters. The first one is very similar to the first man of the first row: he wears a green tunic, a papal tiara and a fully-grown white beard. His luxurious clothing, although now in Heaven, still refer to the pontifical role he held in life. Behind him, are two old male figures characterized by long white beards divided into two locks. The first man wears a blue cloth that covers his head in a cowl. The second man, instead, wears a white tunic and a white cowl, which identifies him as a Carthusian monk, an order founded by Saint Bruno of Cologne in 1084.[77] A tonsured Franciscan monk follows wearing the traditional brown tunic and cowl of his own order. [78] Behind him is a

[77] F. Bonanni, Catalogo degli Ordini Religiosi, Tav CVIII, quoted in Cerutti, "Gli Abiti Di Una Corte Celeste Del Quattrocento", 112: " Bruno founded the first monastery and prescribed such way of dressing: to wear on top of the naked flesh a hair shirt (*cilizio)*, on top of which a tunic of white wool, with a rounded cowl, and on top of it, with patience, a rounded black cloak." (= "Brunone fondò il primo Monastero, e prescrisse questo modo di vestire: cioè di vestire su la nuda carne un cilizio, sopra di esso portano tonaca di apnno di lana bianca, con cappuccio tondo, e patienza, alla qual veste si soprapone un mantello tondo di colore nero"). The black cloak tha completed the dress does not appear in the depiction of the monk in the Last Judgment in Santa Maria Maggiore. This migth be due to a lack of space. But, as also noted by Cerutti in "Gli abiti di una corte celeste del Quattrocento", the black cloak was not a distinctive attribute of the Carthusian order. Leoncini in Rocca, *La Sostanza dell'Effimero*, 156, scheda 13, notes in fact that the purpose of this cloak was to simply cover the traditional religious garment, and that it is not part of the standard iconography of Carthusian monks. "Lo scopo di questa cappa, oltre a quello di fungere da soprabito, è anzi quello di celare il vero e proprio abito religioso, che non deve essere ostentato, anche in ragione della sua rozzezza. La cappa non entra dunque di regola nella rappresentazione iconografica dei certosini".

[78] Rocca, *La Sostanza Dell'effimero*, 46. From Rocca's account on the colors of Franciscan clothings it can be confirmed that the monk with this brown cloth is indeed a Capuchin monk, *Frate Cappuccino* :" In ambito francescano le discussion furono ancora più vivaci. Dal preferito color bigio o grigio, con il diversificarsi delle ossercanze si mutarono anche i colori dell'abito, i Conventuali orientandosi verso il nero artificiale (quindi nero assoluto che non era possibile avere dalla lana delle pecore: cf scheda n. 75) e Frati Minori (cf scheda n 93) e Cappuccini (cf scheda n. 88) verso il marrone-castagno, per cui oggi si può dire che il colore originale dell'Ordine è scomparso".

bishop wearing a *mitria*. The last two figures of the row, interrupted from the others due to a great lack on the fresco, are a bishop wearing a *mitria* and an old bold man.

The fourth row begins with four religious people all wearing a red tunic decorated with a golden collar. The first man has a tonsure and three ovoidal white spheres over his head. He can be recognized as the figure of S. Stephen through the three spheres over his head, an iconographical attribute reminiscent of his death through by being stoned to death, the spheres are therefore meant to be understood as rocks. Behind him, a man with tonsure is followed by two religious figures respectively wearing the papal *tiara* and the episcopal *mitria*; while the first one is shaven, the second one has a thin red beard. Behind these two, a shaven young boy with a voluminous head of blonde hair. Behind him, a big portion of the fresco is gone, leaving only the traces of two halos, suggesting the presence of two figures. Behind this two there is a woman with a long blond braid. The fifth and last row is composed of ten figures, notably, all men. Yet, none of them wears any headdress. The first three elderlies have a long white beard divided into two long locks. Behind them there is a young boy with short bangs over his forehead and a blonde bowl cut. His appearance and his attributes highly resemble the ones of the boy in the first row.[79] He is the only young figure of the row, he is in fact followed by two white-haired men. Behind these two, a man with long reddish hair and beard is followed by other three old men, all presenting white beards.

Four figures step out from the upper crowds; they are walking towards the *Arma Christi* and looking upwards towards Christ. This ensemble, organized into two groups of two people, stands out from the crowd also for its scale, evidently bigger compared to the other figures. The first pair is composed of two men: the first man on the left is an elder with a long white beard

[79] Probably this might indicate the presence of recognizable types within the group that have been taken from traditional costumes in order to facilitate popular understanding.

and a receding hairline. He wears a light red tunic and has his hands folded in a praying gesture. The figure next to him, much younger, introduces him to Christ. He is wearing a brown tunic and presents a long beard and untidy brown hair. With his right arm he encourages the old man to walk towards the center. It is precisely from his role and his appearance that he can be identified as John the Baptist.[80]

The foremost couple features two women. The taller one, recognizable as the Virgin Mary, wears a green tunic and a red cloak that covers her shoulders and her head. In front of her an old woman, her aged marked by deep wrinkles on her neck and face. With a gentle touch over the shoulder, the virgin Mary leads this woman towards Christ. Local scholars have engaged in various debates to identify this old woman.[81] Together with the individuals in the first row, she is the only figure among the Elects being depicted without a halo. While the local tradition wants her to be Secondiano's wife, Ricci identifies her with a nun because of her veil.[82] However, Ricci's identification does not match with the representation of nuns within the painting. The woman introduced by the Virgin Mary wears a red tunic and all the other women that may be identified as nuns in the fresco wear instead a white tunic and a white veil. In addition, as demonstrated by Giontella, the Poor Clares were the only female order in Tuscania and they did not wear any red garment, in fact, no female order is known to have worn red.[83] However, whether this figure is Secondiano's wife or another lay woman, her old age was probably meant

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[80] Typical rudimental and rough garments and appearance of the character. He cannot be misplaced for John the evangelist who is always portrayed shaved.
[81] Fulvio Ricci and Giuseppe Giontella.
[82] Ricci, *Tuscania Patrimonio d'Arte*, 50-51. Thanks to informal communication with prof Ricci, it is assumed that the woman might be a nun who took care and helped Secondiano escape the condemn received from Bernardo de Coucy. Therefore, her presence is a homage to the woman who helped him during such hard years. However, it is important to mention, that there are no historical sources nor documents referring to this event and that it is only a speculation arisen from insights on the local context.
[83] Giontella, *L'ordine dei Minori conventuali di S. Francesco a Tuscania*, 41-52.

to allude to her wisdom and, certainly, her sponsorship by the Virgin was intended to highlight her importance.

Hell

Located in the lower right corner of the composition, Hell grows up from the narrow area next to the arch towards the larger horizontal band in the center of the wall. Compared to the gracefully organized ranks of the blessed and the placid realm of Heaven, the depictions of monstrous demons, screaming bodies and contorted punishments are admittedly visually more interesting; they must have also been more challenging for both the painters and the medieval viewers of Santa Maria Maggiore.

Starting from the top part of the composition, right below the row of the six apostles on the right, a rank of five red and green clothed angels flies horizontally in the blue sky: they hold long pitchforks with both their hands to forcefully push the damned bodies into Hell. The entire composition is contained and set against a blood-red cloud that emerges as a small red river from the bottom right-hand corner of Christ's *mandorla*, and then enlarges itself into a rectangular shape to the right of the the *Arma Christi* and of the resurrected bodies. This depiction follows the prophecy written in the Book of Daniel (7.10): "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him [...] the judgment was set and the books were opened."[84] Compared to the heavenly realm of the saved, where the space is not restricted by boundaries or limits, the representation of

[84] This image clearly takes example from Giotto's depiction of Hell in the Cappella degli Scrovegni: yet, while Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo chose to depict a single river of fire, Giotto depicted four rivers which, as noted by Brendan Cassidy, "Laughing with Giotto at Sinners in Hell" *Viator* 35, 355-86 (2004), it might ironically refer to the four rivers of Eden described in Genesis 2.10-12. Still, the single river of fire in Santa Maria Maggiore matches with the Last Judgement scene in Torcello. For more on the latter example see: R. Polacco, La cattedrale di Torcello (Venice 1984). Also see Appendix to Chapter 2.

Hell is contained within a sanguine domain. If on one hand this reassures the viewer of Hell as a self-enclosed space, on the other it highlights the dramatic perspectives of a potentially inexorable constriction.

The red flux coming from Christ's *mandorla* transforms itself into flames, eternally burning many groups of naked figures on the top of the composition. They are all naked, marching in four regular groups towards the right with their heads down, presumably overwhelmed with shame for their sins. Flames emerging from the ground burn their bodies at every step they make. Among this multitude of both men and women, two figures stand out from the second and third group: while their companions are all naked, these two figures wear a white episcopal *mitria*, the same headdress worn by some prominent figures from the clergy amongst the Elect. And it is noteworthy that these two bishops are naked like all the others; besides their hats, they are identical to the other damned. The coherent visual identification of the damned as naked signals nudity as a statement of shame and sin. Yet, the presence of the episcopal hats draws attention to clothing as a socially recognizable attribute and a statement of religious office, underscoring from a Christian perspective the doubly shameful status of these figures. The clearly recognizable *mitriae*, sticking out from the red background with their white brightness, were universally recognizable attributes of those entrusted with nothing less than the pastoral care of their communities, entrusted with leading the lay person towards eternal salvation in Heaven. The utter failure to accomplish their mandate deserved the opprobrium of public scorn and universal punishment. Moreover, the presence of popes and bishops amongst the Elects highlights that the Last Judgment is not only fair, but that it established harmony and balance in human affairs: regardless of your role and status in life, Jesus Christ will ensure that in the afterlife everyone will be judged according to his or her true merits, or some such. The image is

thus speaking to a living earthly audience that has not yet experienced firsthand the glory of God and so needs to be informed of what awaits them.

Costumes and attributes also give agency to the viewers making them active participants in the reading of the image; in this case, the *mitria* enabled the faithful to identify specific figures and draw clear, exemplificatory conclusions on their sinful, or virtuous, lives.[85] Clothing allows for earthly recognition, ultimately instructing the viewers on the "type" of figures that should expect either salvation or damnation.

In the depiction of Hell in the Scrovegni chapel, Giotto's souls are grouped according to whether they committed sins of the flesh or sins of the purse (Fig. 21). Similarly, in the cathedral of Torcello sinners are neatly divided into distinct compartments that highlight the diverse nature of their sins (Fig. 18). Instead, in Santa Maria Maggiore, sinners are all punished indistinctively, with a range of composite atrocities being inflicted onto them by small demons.[86] Below the groups of sinners forked by the angels, there are, chaotically placed, many groups of people being eaten, beaten and burnt by some human-sized demons. They are monstrous creatures covered with thick dark grey hair. Their talons, composed of four sharped claws, are used by some demons to vehemently grasp and harass bodies. They all have a bristly pointed beard, prominent lips, and hooked noses. Their wild and feral aspect is enhanced through their long, hairy and pointed ears, ultimately making them similar to goats. In addition, their large eyes look

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[85] Cordelia Warr, *Dressing for Heaven: Religious Clothing in Italy, 1215-1545* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 205.

[86] Cassidy, *Laughing with Giotto*, 360. According to Cassidy, the "vast, dark and chaotic place" of Hell was inspired from the so-called *Visions*, popular legends from those who claimed to have been to Hell. These legends provided imageries and examples of bizarre tortures and cruel punishments. However, if this might be the case for Giotto's depiction of Hell and of the big variety of cruel, sometimes ironic, punishments inflicted on the sinners, it is less applicable to Santa Maria Maggiore, where demons treat with "equality" all the sinners. There is, in fact, less fantasy in the punishments inflicted on the sinners, they are just being harassed by demons and burning in groups. It is as if the legends visually transcribed by Giotto had not been taken into consideration by the Aretinian painters.

even more aggressive due to the insertion of red contours. All these demons are busy harming the damned who are frightened yet also resigned to receive their punishments. Some of them are being coiled by red snakes. Others, instead, have decided to do it their selves: a man with short blonde hair and a woman with long blonde hair are hung on a thin red bush, slightly taller than them. The singularity of this iconic depiction, visually sticking out from the overall confusion, might want to denounce adultery and exemplify its consequences. As in Dante's *Legge del Contrappasso*, sinners are punished through a process that either contrasts or resembles the sin they are condemned for. In this case, the fact that the man and the woman are hung together might stand in analogy for their impossibility to stay away from each other in earthly life. As they were together in life, they kept being together in Hell.

The pivotal figure of the entire composition is Satan, locally known as *Cacanime* (literally souls-shitter), located in the lower corner of the right side.[87] Being the biggest figure of the entire scene, its body takes part of the upper wall and goes down in the narrower rectangular portion of the fresco. It is portrayed as a monstrous creature whose human-like body is, similarly to the other smaller demons, covered with thick grey hair. Its monstrous appearance reflects the ambiguous nature of the devil itself who, by refusing God, cannot be in his image. *Cacanime* is portrayed squatting with its two paws spread-eagle and its talons clinging onto the ground with sharped claws. It holds a man in between its arms and brings him closer to its mouth in order to devour him (Fig. 22); by voraciously eating the human body, the devil personifies a violent and insatiable greed, the same one that is now rewarding it of a lustful carnal pleasure. The man being eaten up by Satan raises his hands close to his face in a gesture of fear, in the same

[87] Local nickname, which literally means "souls-shitter" devil. The name *Cacanime* is a word created by the popular culture that does not anchor on any reliable evidence but the iconography that characterizes and enliven its figure.

moment, a green snake twirls around his body and bites the man's right cheek. The devil's face is characterized by a big protruding nose and large black eyes, next to which emerge a pair of goat ears. On top of its head, two curved horns frame a red anvil which is tied to the horns through a metal chain.[88] Its ferocious mouth takes half of the lower part of its face as it is open in order to ingurgitate the bodies of the damned. Five sharp and long teeth emerge from the upper lip, the lower part of the mouth is instead covered with red splattered blood. While eating the poor damned human, the squatting grey devil defecates three bodies from an inflamed groin.

Cacanime's gender identity might appear closer to a sort of male hybrid figure; however, its ambiguous and disgusting groin, even if located in the biologically recognizable reproductive area, does not clarify the figure's biological sex identity. In fact, the visual confusion and unclarity around Satan's groin questions whether it is defecating the bodies or actually giving birth to them. Nevertheless, the impossibility to attribute a gender to this monstrous representation of Satan must not be considered a limit, but rather a marker of its own hybrid and therefore non-human, non-divine, identity. Yet, precisely for this reason, the representation of *Cacanime* raises unconventional gender readings that draw from the duplicity of its indefinite nature, indicative of the ambiguous nature of the devil itself who, by refusing God, cannot be in his image.

The epithet *Cacanime*, genderless in its acceptation, is fruit of a medieval thought that visually associated *Cacanime*'s performance with a defecation act, probably attributing a male gender to the powerful, yet profane, monster. In fact, the idea of a female Satan, as well of a

[88] This iconographic detail refers to the biblical passage in Rv 20: 1-3 (RSV):"1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time."

female God, would have threatened the stability of the patriarchal medieval society. However, why coming to the conclusion that the bodies are definitively being defecated when they can be given birth, coming, indeed, from the same inguinal area? The attribution of such popular nickname comes from intrinsically rooted gender stereotypes within medieval culture that happen to coin this term, probably unconsciously, in an attempt to relegate and vulgarize the female act of giving birth. While *Cacanime*'s monstrous appearance kept being read as more male-like powerful representation, the insertion of an act very prone to gender misreading would have alluded to the repugnance of the human, naturally female, generative act. This interpretation implies not only the subjugated vision of the female sex -belief still rooted in medieval society-, but also the fear of its generative power able to give birth even to damned souls. The visually confusing depiction of the hypothetical defecation can therefore represent a birth, action that would allegorically symbolize the souls' last birth in the eternal death. Therefore, the devil's gender ambiguity is confirmed by the multiple interpretations that can be made over its abnormal groin, whether it being a vagina or an anus. Nevertheless, the act of *emitting of a body from the groin* is an action biologically performed only by the female sex. The equivocal, monstrous and objectively horrid depiction of such bodies' emission attributes to the female generative power an evil and misogynist connotation, which underrates the female act of giving birth.

If the presence of red flames around *Cacanime*'s inguinal area contributes to underrate the female sex, it also highlights the medieval fear of such orifice and its generative ability. This representation is reminiscent of the *vagina dentata*, namely "vagina with teeth", a form of monstrosity incarnated in the female sexual organ:

"Its bite, rooted in the female sexual organ and aimed at the male sexual organ, transforms sex, which is an amalgam of pleasure and vulnerability, into a dangerous, bloody, deadly affair. The object of pleasure becomes the agent of violence, the passive pleasurable body becomes the active punishing body, and that slippage of meaning is horrifying."[89].

In *Cacanime*'s iconography this resemblance stresses, again, the religious fear of female sexuality that was condemned, and thus repressed, through frightening depictions of the female organ. Miller defines the vagina dentata as a slippage between the normative and the monstrous.[90] However, in *Cacanime* this slippage is taken even further, transforming the monstrous groin in an abhorrent feminine-alluding depiction with bodies coming out from the naturally predisposed, yet dangerous, site for childbirth. Therefore, *Cacanime*'s threatening and repulsive inguinal depiction becomes an emblematic illustration for the repression of the erotic desire and vulgarization of female procreative power.

Continuing with the description of the fresco, just below the three bodies emerging from *Cacanime*'s groin, two demons are pushing with long pitchforks three nuns down into the ferocious gaping jaws of a red dragon. [91] The monster is depicted with sharp white canine teeth that grow bigger towards the front and large reddish eyes. Its skin is of an intense brown color. The dragon emits red flames from its throat while it ingurgitates the women. Its vertical placement follows the narrow rectangular space of the lower corner. Its peculiar location, while fulfilling the spatial requirements of the wall, complies with the narration from the Book of

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[89] Sarah Alison Miller, "Monstrous Sexuality: Variations on the Vagina Dentata", in A. Mittman and P. Dendle, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*: Ashgate Research Companion (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012), 312.
[90] Miller, Monstrous Sexuality: Variations on the Vagina Dentata, in Mittman, 312.
[91] As the nuns among the Elect, their white veils and tunics might suggest they belonged to the Order of the Poor Clares.

Revelation 11, which refers to a beast coming up from the abyss.[92] While the two nuns on the sides have a quite calm and resigned expression, the one in the center has her hands close to her face in an expression of despair. As for the two members of the clergy recognizable through their *mitria* among the naked damned bodies, these three women are uniquely punished with such emphasis precisely for being nuns. Out of the entire Hell, they are the only ones wearing complete garments: this peculiarity specifically appointing them as the worst sinners. It is not absurd to hypothesize that such brutal and tragic condemn could have referenced current local events, or at least mimic the contemporary social and religious context. Despite the lack of definite historical evidence, speculations assumed from those being years of political and religious fervor in Toscanella can be articulated.

At the beginning of the 14th century, the only order of nuns in Toscanella was the one of the Poor Clares.[93] Coming from Cortona, they got their initial dwelling in the convent of Santa Maria del Cavaglione, and then moved to the convent of San Paolo, where they still live nowadays.[94] In that century, as amply discussed by Giontella in his publication *L'ordine dei Minori Conventuali di S. Francesco a Tuscania*, the Franciscan order had an influential presence in Tuscania. In fact, it is documented that they were asked to sign private and governmental contracts, they intervened in local disputes to promote concord, and they were also called to give

[92] Rv 11: 7 (RSV): "Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them." The dragon can also be a personification/ animalization of the abyss itself given the perfectly matching vertical space. Indeed, we can only see its head.

[93] The Poor Clares were the enclosed female branch of the Franciscan Order. They are called after Chiara of Assisi (1193/94-1253), who is considered the founder of the Order together with Saint Francis (1181/1182-1226)

[94] Giontella, *l'Ordine dei Conventuali*, 47. The moving from Santa Maria to San Paolo probably happened before 1247.

testimony in public trials. [95] Also, while heresies were proliferating, local Franciscans inquisitors carried out trials and personally condemned citizens suspected of heresy.[96] However, while there are documents proving the authority over political and religious affairs and the influence over the people of Toscanella of the Franciscan Order, there are not enough information to identify patterns and trace specific events in regards to the Poor Clares.[97] However, from documents that indirectly refer to the Poor Clares in Tuscania, it emerges that, starting from 1340 AD, they were going through some economical disputes over some of their properties against the bishopric.[98] Opposingly to the Franciscan order, the Poor Clares did not have enough authority, was it both religious and social, to assert themselves and allege their rights. These latent conflicts between the Poor Clares and the bishopric eventually ended in 1460, when Pope Pio II Piccolomini (1458-1464) ordered to close the monastery of San Paolo and transfer the five nuns who lived there in another monastery, probably the one of Santa Rosa in Viterbo.[99] Despite the lacking evidence of clashes and contrasts between the Poor Clares and the bishopric at the beginning of the 14th century, it is indicative to mention that problems kept occurring throughout the century, and that they probably developed from pre-existing oppressions. Also, it is known that the Poor Clares, being the first female Franciscan order, experienced vicissitudes with the higher male orders and with both religious and public institutions precisely for their gender and "ambitious"

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[95] Giontella, 65-69. Giontella talks about the Franciscans from Tuscania intervening in the peace agreement between Tuscania and Musignano. For more details on this event see Giontella, *Tuscania attraverso I secoli*, 89-90.

[96] Giontella, 60-63. There is evidence of the presence of heretical groups in Tuscania until 1235, and then back again in 1268, when documents from trials in Orvieto mention a certain Benincasa Serenelle, citizen from Toscanella who converted people in Orvieto to the *Pataria* heresy. For these two dates see Cesare Pinzi, *Storia Della Città Di Viterbo*, Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei deputati, 1887, 344, note 1. For more on the heretic groups see Giontella, *l'Ordine dei Conventuali,* 65-71.

[97] This historical blank might refer to the dissolution with which such order was treated. Yet, it might also denote the discretion of their lives and engagements with public and popular affairs.

[98] Giontella, l'Ordine dei Minori conventuali di S. Francesco a Tuscania, 40.

[99] Giontella, l'Ordine dei Minori conventuali di S. Francesco a Tuscania, 154-159

aspiration to equate their male counterpart of the Franciscan order.[100] Therefore, it is likely to assume that, despite scarce information at the beginning of the century, the situation of the Poor Clares in Tuscania was not much different from that of the other Poor Clares in Italy, struggling to affirm their authority in a male-dominated religious environment.

This historical excursus on the religious orders in Tuscania is meant to highlight the contrast between the active presence of the Franciscan order and the "non-presence" of the Poor Clares. Although it must be recognized that these nuns were living accordingly to seclusion precepts, their voice was not taken into account as much as their Franciscan brothers. The iconographical reading of the nuns burning in the mouth of the dragon must be contextualized in an environment that was intrinsically and stereotypically misogynous, even if those women "chose" to give up their femininity for the greater good of a religious life.

[100] Female Encyclopedia, Poor Clares, p 656 "Clare's insistence that women could follow Francis's spiritual ideals, including apostolic poverty, conflicted with the papal curias's intention to standardize women's religious life. Their efforts to impose stability initially produced a monastic order that consisted solely of women prior to its incorporation into the Franciscan order. Thus, it is somewhat ironic that the Order of Saint Clare and the identification Poor Clares, terms created by papal legislation in 1263, honor a woman whose spiritual ideals challenged traditional female religious life."

3. A Visual Journey through Santa Maria Maggiore

As discussed in chapter one, the Last Judgment in Santa Maria Maggiore may be dated between 1315 and 1320.[101] Combined with the timeline that hypothesizes a major renovation of the church's architecture at the end of the 12th century, it emerges that the new façade and the extended nave were in place since more than a century before the completion of the Last Judgment fresco.[102]

This time gap between the last architectonical campaign and the completion of the painted cycle suggests that the church was possibly undecorated (at least) from the late 12th century until the beginning of the 14th century, an hypothesis also confirmed by the lack of earlier paint fragments on site. The absence of a decorative program on the walls may be explained by the unstable political and economic climate: regional conflicts between the Papal State and the Imperial government, and local disputes between Tuscania and Viterbo -which was slowly becoming the pivotal center of the Church patrimony in the Northern Latium- certainly did not promote a fertile social and economic environment for the completion of an ambitious decorative program between the late 12th and early 14th centuries.

That said, it should not be assumed that the presence of ongoing regional conflicts entailed a loss of interest in the local cult centered around Santa Maria Maggiore. In fact, it may

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[101] Donati dates the fresco reconstructing the artistic itinerary of the two Tuscan painters in Norther Latium. For more see: Pier Paolo Donati, "Per la pittura aretina del Trecento," *Paragone Arte* 19, 1 (1968), 31.

[102] Joselita Raspi Serra, *Tuscania: Cultura Ed Espressione Artistica Di Un Centro Medioevale* (Tr. i Venezia, 1971), 88.

be posited that, rather, it incentivized it. As we have seen, it is precisely at the beginning of the 12th century that the relics of 23 martyrs, "donated" by Pope Lucius III, were deposited in the church.[103] Considering the popular resonance and attractiveness of relics in medieval Christendom, Lucius III's reliquary -even while presumably a temporary loan- was an extremely important addition to Santa Maria Maggiore and, during times of strife, must have ensured the centrality of the church to the local community.[104] The *translatio* of 1186 must have also been a major empowering event for the local bishopric, who now had a new public fulcrum for the cult of relics. Indeed, the fact that the relics were a papal "gift" could not but have enhanced its status. Last but not least, the apparently odd decision to permanently translate the relics from S. Pietro, the actual cathedral of Tuscania and so also seat of the bishopric of Northern Latium, to Santa Maria Maggiore suggests the pivotal role this church may have had; the church was invested with an authority and legitimacy that had no parallel in the area.

The absence of a pictorial decoration of the interior before the early 14th century may have simply reflected a lack of economic means, combined of course, with the absence of local political stability able to sponsor an extensive project. If we posit, moreover, that precisely in this "low" period, the church may have been revitalized by a cult of relics established by the papacy, it is difficult to imagine that Santa Maria Maggiore was not a perfect candidate for a lavish commission by an eminent citizen such as Secondiano de Deutabive. The church's new painting

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[103] See Ch. 1, 9-10.

[104] For more on the cult of relics in the middle ages see: James Robinson, Lloyd De Beer, and Anna Harnden, (Eds.) *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*. British Museum Research Publication, 195 (London: British Museum, 2014)*;* Cynthia Hahn, "Objects of Devotion and Desire: Relics, Reliquaries, Relation, and Response" in *Objects of Devotion and Desire: Medieval Relic to Contemporary Art* (New York: Hunter College of the City University of New York, 2011); Patrick J. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

decoration also constituted a major boost for the church's perception and status in Tuscia. In other words, it did not only benefit Secondiano's, but also Santa Maria Maggiore's reputation. The church's new painting decoration symbolized a major shift for the church, transforming its perception, its importance and thus its recognition over the territory; in other words, with the support, or "intercession", of its relics, Santa Maria Maggiore re-asserted the religious authority it lost throughout years of conflicts between the Papal and the Imperial states.

The fresco program was designed in relation to the older sculptural program in Santa Maria Maggiore, ultimately creating a synergic dialogue between two different media coexisting in a single space. The almost 100-years that separate the last architectonical campaign and the fresco cycle, in other words, not only did not hinder, but instead enhanced a visual and allegorical unity in the church. It may even be said that the newly painted fresco cycle was the culmination of an iconographical program that started long before its completion, probably during the first architectural campaign in the late 11th century. Representations of monstrous and bizarre figures on the church's façade, are followed by other similar "profane" sculptural depictions within the church. This interest in representing both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic monstrous figures creates a visual narrative that is impossible to miss, and which impressively culminates in the representation of the Last Judgment on the apse wall. A spatial journey through the church will hopefully make this visual rhetoric evident, even if it is clearly determined by an "art-historical" perspective.

The odd proximity of the bell tower to the church does not allow to observe the façade in its entirety from a distance. This forces the viewer to have a very intimate, close-up, encounter with the sculptural decorations on the exterior. A horizontal row of monstrous corbels, just underneath the centrally placed rose window, welcomes the faithful. These architectural

elements depict grotesque heads of both animals and humans; yet, regardless of their biological nature, they all present altered and deformed facial features (Fig. 7-8-9). Each corbel is different from another, showcasing the curious and manifold imagination of medieval sculptors. Peculiarly, they all share an evident emphasis on the mouth: there are figures screaming, pulling their lips, or grinding their teeth. The insistent prepotence on such facial orifice suggests the apparent physical pain and frustration of such figures, while also inducing fearful sentiments in the beholder who may feel threatened by their "profane" maliciousness.

Among the crowd of seemingly male sculpted figures, stands out one recognizable female figure (Fig. 23). She not only has long hair, but while all her male companions feature just their heads, she is depicted in full-body length. Her lower body consists of a fish tail, identifying her as a mermaid. The standard medieval interpretation of these hybrid creatures was as an allegory of lust and sexuality, drawing on epic poems such as the *Odyssey*, where sirens, the ancestress of mermaids, were represented as temptresses and seductresses of valiant men. The placement of mermaids and other monstrous creatures in liminal zones of churches -such as exteriors- was meant to separate secular from holy spaces, ultimately alluding to the temptation that the faithful should eschew to not be damned.[105] The desire, whether conscious or not, to characterize the only discernible female figure as a specific mythological character can hardly be

[105] Other sculptural examples of mermaids in Christian Medieval churches are attested in St. Nicholas, Tavant, France,12th century; St. Laurence Church, Ludlow, England, 15th century; but also in earlier depictions such as the two-tailed mermaid mosai in the cathedral of Pesaro, Italy, 5th century. For more examples and further readings see: Jan M. Zidkowsky, Mermaids and Sirens, in *Woman and Gender Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, Schaus Margaret, Routledge, 2006; Sax, Boria. *Imaginary Animals: The Monstrous, the Wondrous and the Human*. London: Reaktion Books, Limited, 2013; Ruth Berman, ''Mermaids'' and ''Sirens'' in *Mythical and Fabulous Creatures: A Source Book and Research Guide*, edited by Malcolm South, New York: Greenwood Press, 1987, 133–145 and 147–153; Siegfried de Rachewiltz, *De sirenibus: An Inquiry into Sirens from Homer to Shakespeare*, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987; Gwen Benwell and Arthur Waugh. *Sea Enchantress: The Tale of the Mermaid and Her Kin*, 1st Americaned, (New York: Citadel Press, 1965). This last book dedicates an entire chapter (127-39) to the documentation of mermaids as ornaments in Christian churches.

thought of as inconsequential. Equally impossible to ignore is the fact that she alone is shown full length. Her body was deliberately depicted because the female body was considered to be the source and the physical locus of her sinful lasciviousness and hence monstrousness. Her sexual connotation is, moreover, enhanced by her exposed breasts, as well as her long hair. It is interesting, of course, that mermaids are considered sexual temptresses even if they lack, given their hybrid physical conformation, the most basic female attribute that biologically denotes them as such. But mermaids represent *"an alternative gender category based not on their genitalia, but on their function as seducers*."[106] This reading confirms the subjected and stereotypical view that medieval society constructed around the female gender, attributing to a hybrid female creature who lacks sexual capacity, a female alluring yet monstrous deceptive power. In contrast, the male monstrous corbels contributed to reinforce the idea of a masculine power that, scarier in its appearance and higher in numbers, was the one to be really afraid of. Mermaids were inserted among monstrous figures for their enticing sexual power which, even if -sort of- dangerous for men, was undermined as the single and bland power of the female gender. Lacking of more socially-determined masculine powers, mermaids presented less of a threat as being, first of all, women. This misogynistic view, while increasing the fascination with these sea-creatures, was also meant to clearly undermine women because of their sexuality.

The lunettes decorating the two lateral portals depict two monstrous figures surrounded by intricate vegetation. In the center of the left lunette, a standing male demon holds two wine branches that intricately expand all over the lunette; underneath these branches, a variety of smaller monstrous creatures voraciously eats the fresh fruits hanging from the branches,

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[106] Dana Oswald, "Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages", in Mittman, A. and Dendle, P. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*: Ashgate Research Companion (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012), 352.

ultimately re-creating a composition reminiscent of the Dionysiac thiasos (Fig 24). The lunette on the right portal presents a similar composition, featuring instead a hybrid figure, with a human bust and a fish tail (Fig. 25). It is unclear whether this figure is a mermaid or a man with a fish tail as it does not present any explicit female attribute. Similar to the other lunette, hidden amid twisted branches, there are some hybrid monsters: two creatures with a bird body and a human head are regurgitating the same branches onto which they are standing. Although the nature of many of these monsters is not clear -not that it should be otherwise- their presence and recurrence is hardly insignificant: they confront the viewer with crude and bestial acts that incite the faithful to go inside the church to find, supposedly, divine relief.

However, the hope to step into the church and find a safer space quickly vanishes: instead of being reassured with heavenly representations, the faithful continues his or her journey within the church finding more monstrous corbels all along the nave. As discussed in Chapter 1, the corbels above the first two arches upon entering the nave from the central portal are close in style and iconography to the exterior corbels. While justifiably supporting the hypothesis that both the architectural extension of the nave and the renovation of the façade happened at the end of the 12th century, it is near impossible to not consider them as a "monstrous" extension into the church. The corbels above the first two arches are expressive of a monstrous symbology that was deliberately maintained, incentivized and supported with the expansion and renovation of the church. The corbels further along the nave dating -at least- to the 11th century have a different iconographic schema. While they admittedly still depict animals and non-sacred figures such as odd human faces, some zodiac signs, and animal heads, they are shown not engaging in revolting acts such as a number of the later corbels do (Fig. 26-27-28-29-30). Obviously, the older corbels are also not part of a "sacred" iconographic repertoire and as such do warrant attention for their

placement within the interior of a church. Nevertheless, the later corbels at the end of the nave and on the façade are charged with an intensified repugnancy, which allowed them the indiscreet and unashamed performance of obscene acts.

The repertoire of hybrid and monstrous creatures at Santa Maria Maggiore is common in western medieval art. For many decades these marginal representations were dismissed in the art historical literature as far less important to our understanding of medieval visual culture than religious iconography proper. This scholarly tradition dates back at least to the 19th century, when many scholars considered most of these images as simple decorations completely detached and unrelated to the religious iconography they often accompanied. *Émile* Mâle, a sustainer of the purely ornamental function of this repertoire, supported his thesis by quoting Saint Bernard of Clairevaux's famous passage inveighing against marginal sculptures:

> *"To what purpose are those unclean apes, those fierce lions, those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those striped tigers, those fighting knights, those hunters winding their horns? Many bodies are there seen under one head, or again, many heads to a single body?"*[107]

Mâle glossed the passage by asserting that:

> *"The great mystic, the interpreter of the Song of Songs, the preacher who spoke only in symbols, admits that he does not understand the bizarre creations of the artists of his time… such a testimony decides the question. It is obvious that the flora and fauna of the Middle Ages, real or fantastic, usually have only a decorative value."*[108]

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[107]Bernard of Clairvaux, "St. Bernard's Apologia to Abbot William", in Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art*, 1- 27 (New York: G. Braziller, 1977)

[108] Emile Mâle, *L'art Religieux du XIII siècle en France: Etude sur l'iconographie du moyen âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration*, vol 1 (8th edition edn. Paris, 1958), 124.

Choosing Saint Bernard as a medieval authority speaking for all his contemporaries is an intrinsically misguided decision, as clearly Bernard's religious role as the leader of the austere Cistercian order made him a very biased example. In fact, the Cistercian monk also states:

> *"In short, so many and so marvelous are the varieties of divers shapes on every hand, that we are more tempted to read in the marble than in our books, and to spend the whole day in wondering at these things rather than in meditating the low of God."*[109]

His words reflect his fear for these profane marginal depictions, which he regarded as dangerous spiritual detractors that could lead the monks -and by extension the faithful as a whole- away from religion. Choosing the Saint's interpretation as a canonical and universal demonstration for the purely decorative function of marginalia limits the variety of perceptions experienced by different viewers in the composite variety of religious and non-religious settings all across Europe.

Following this thread, early local scholarship carefully avoided to engage in a discussion over the monstrous sculptural apparatus of the church, either diminishing its function or directly avoiding them from their accounts.[110] At the end of the 14th century, archpriest of Toscanella Giuseppe di Lorenzo, when describing the façade of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, for the sake of a truthful visual analysis, superficially and uninterestedly mentioned the corbels, limiting

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[109] Bernard of Clairvaux, "St. Bernard's Apologia to Abbot William", in Shapiro.

[110] Fulvio Ricci, most productive author on Santa Maria Maggiore, engages in this discussion by simply explaining the presence of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures as a peculiar medieval fascination meant to instruct lower classes. However, his explanation is limited to a general overlook on this type of artistic expression, not considering the latter as integral part of the church's narrative. The fact that it is a recurrent medieval motif should not undermine the reading of these visual evidences in their specific context. See: Ricci, *La chiesa di santa Maria Maggiore*, 22.

his report to "corbels depicting animal heads and monstrous faces".[111] When delving into the description of the inside of the church, Di Lorenzo adopts the same insouciant approach. The corbels decorating the nave are, again, simply mentioned and described as being composed of *"animal heads and other extravagant figures".*[112] His account reflects the unconcerned attitude of past scholars in the study of these marginal and non-sacred depictions. Not that Di Lorenzo must have had carefully analyzed the meaning of each corbel -especially in the 14th century-, but his lack of interest is clearly indicative of a deliberate ecclesiastical avoidance towards these figures, being himself a member of the local clergy too. More dismissive and frank is instead the account posited by Francesco Giannotti, local historian from the 16th century. He writes that *"[…]it seems that the heads of some obscene animals are not even appropriate for a place of true religion".*[113] While his few words still suggest unwillingness in the description of such sculptural works, he presents a more subjective reading that suggests the inappropriateness of these depictions within a religious environment. Yet, the interpretations of both authors are to be justified because of the centuries they come from.

Fortunately, there have been a considerable number of studies, especially from the 1990s onwards, that have provided new important insights into the function and meaning of marginalia in medieval art. Laura Kendrick and Lucy Freeman Sandler, for example, have not only shown

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[111] Giuseppe Di Lorenzo, *Antichi Monumenti di Religione Cristiana in Toscanella* (Rocca San Casciano, 1883), 16: "Occupa lo spazio di mezzo della facciata un portico coperto di volta sostenuta da nove colonnette di marmo con archi a tutto sesto, sopra dei quali si stende un cornicione pure di marmo ornato a modo di mensole, ti testi di animali e di faccie mostruose."

[112] Di Lorenzo, *Antichi Monumenit di Religione Cristiana in Toscanella*, 17: "La chiesa è divisa in tre navi distinte da due ordini di belle colonne di peperino, sulle quali si appuntano altrettanti archi a tutto seste e fanno sostegno ad altissime pareti, che hanno per solo ornamento una cornice, la quale sotto le imposte delle finistre gira leggiermiente inorno ad esse, e a cui fanno officio di mensole teste di animali e altre stravaganti figure."

[113] Text reproduced in Giambattista Sposetti Corteselli (Ed.), *Storia di Tuscania scritta nel secolo XVI da Francesco Giannotti* (Pro Loco di Tuscania, Tuscania, 2007), 25: "Hanno detti capitelli di rilievo alcune teste di animali obsceni, che non pare convenghino in luogo di vera religione."

the “centrality” of marginalia, but argued that these depictions should be understood as directly connected to the religious iconography they often accompany.[114] Margins are interpreted as able to create a dialogue between the ‘periphery’ and the ‘core’ of the work, transforming an apparent contrasting relation into a coherent and non-alien discourse. Therefore, the concept of marginality becomes relative as the role of such images is no longer restricted and limited by their peripheral location, but it is instead enhanced by their marginality itself.

In the majority of medieval architectural examples, the repertoire of horrific representations is typically constrained to the external boundaries of the religious space, an area thought to be contaminated by the sinfulness of the exterior world.[115] The ‘outer’ part of a church was considered an area excluded from God’s supervision; it was, indeed, the lack of divine control that could justify the presence of grotesque animals and hybrids creatures on the exterior boundaries. This is obviously not the case in Santa Maria Maggiore, where monstrous corbels populate both the outside and inside of the church. In fact, it is questionable whether the "profane" corbels at Santa Maria Maggiore should be considered marginal representations at all. While, as we have seen, marginal imagery in medieval art was obviously meant to be seen and certainly played an important semantic role, the repetitiveness, and even insistence of the corbels on both the exterior and interior of the church in Tuscania seem to undermine their function as liminal, subsidiaries, and subservient. They are, in fact, more “eloquent” and dominant than other non-marginal pictorial elements within the church. In Santa Maria Maggiore, the concept of

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[114] Their studies delve in multi-media marginal representations in both manuscript and religious architecture. Laura Kendrick, “Making Sense of Marginalized Images in Manuscripts and Religious Architecture”, in C. Rudolph and B. Kurmann-Schwarz (Eds.) *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, 274-90, (Blackwell, 2008); Lucy Freeman Sandler, “The Study of Marginal Imagery: Past, Present, and Future.” *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997): 1–49.
[115] Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, ed, Essay in Art and Culture, (London: Reaktion books, 2015), 58: “*In ‘official’ Romanesque representations such figures are always placed ‘outside’ the sacred area.”*

marginality seems to be not a matter of smaller scale or location, but rather of subject matter or at least of an iconographic repertoire that art historians have defined as liminal.

The peculiarity of Santa Maria Maggiore comes precisely from its free iconographic expression, which welcomed these monstrous and profane creatures within the sacred environment. In Santa Maria Maggiore, grotesque depictions are an uninterrupted presence, which oversees and guides the viewers from the exterior façade, along the nave, to the altar. The visual and thematic resemblance of the exterior corbels to the interior ones connects all these marginal sculptures in a bigger dialogue, where marginalia are elevated to a prominent and central role within the whole church. Their monstrous appearance seems to fiercely negotiate boundaries between what stays under God's supervision and what shifts under the devil's side. Usually, a *"boundary separates two zones of social space-time which are normal, time-bound, clear-cut, central, secular, but the spatial and temporal markers which actually serve as boundaries are themselves abnormal, timeless, ambiguous, at the edge, sacred."*[116] Yet, in Santa Maria Maggiore, the sacred space is contaminated. The two zones of social space-time, where the exterior corrupted world meets the sacred territory of God, are not clear-cut. The supposed spatial and temporal markers, which are indeed *abnormal, timeless, ambiguous, at the edge and sacred*, no longer function as boundaries. Contrarily, they merge with the entire architecture, consequentially becoming an essential part of the whole church and transforming the peripheral in the central, the religious in the secular and vice versa.

The unending dialogue between the liminal and central zones is created and conveyed through visual references that connects elements across different areas of the church. In addition to the corbels along the nave, profane images are disseminated on the aisles as well. They do not

[116] Edmund Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse", in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, (ed. E. H. Lennenberg, Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 23-63.

follow a precise order, rather they casually appear to the eyes of the attentive viewer: intertwined in florally ornated capitals, demoniac figures and screaming faces emerge (Fig.31-32). The almost oppressive repetitiveness of the grotesque images depicted all over the church proves the intentionality in introducing abnormal figures inside the sacred space, underrating the possibility of a disinterested decorative function.

One example worth highlighting is a scene sculpted on the last pillar of the arcade that separates the left aisle from the nave in front of the altar. Here, a two-bodied beast with a single head ferociously eats what looks like a screaming human head (Fig 33). The proximity of this scene to the sanctuary suggests interesting connections with the act of eating, metaphorically performed through the sacrament of the Eucharist on the altar, just few meters away from the capital. The linkage between the monstrous anthropophagic scene on the capital and the theophagic religious act, apex of the entire liturgy, appears evident when both scenes are thought as visual and metaphoric representations of the natural act of eating. While the location of the relief by the altar was presumably meant to highlight the moral differences between the anthropophagy and the theophagy, suggesting to fear the first and embrace the other, Christ's nature must be remembered as both humane and divine, a duplicity that questions the teaching imparted by the sculpture.[117] Yet, the majestic presence of Christ as the divine Judge emerging from behind the altar may highlight Jesus' divine nature more than his terrestrial (and temporal) one.

[117] In regards to the act of chewing, in Latin *Ruminatio*, Camille, in *Image on the Edge: the Margins of Medieval Art*, proposes a parallel with the act of reading. By metaphor, the act of eating could symbolize the "mastication" of the word of God by the reader, who consequentially can spiritually merge with God. However, in the instance of the capital in Santa Maria Maggiore, even if the act of reading is not being directly referenced, the human's head being eaten by the two-bodied beast resembles the Eucharist act with the head symbolizing the body of Christ and the animal the sinful human, who only after receiving the Eucharist can spiritually merge with God.

All the marginal sculptures in Santa Maria Maggiore must be analyzed in function of a dialogue between the periphery and the core, which guides the faithful from liminal sculptural impressions towards the church's iconographic peak: the Last Judgment. Reaching the altar, the distress accumulated from the very beginning of one's journey through the church is not alleviated: the majestic representation of the Last Judgment, with a terrific and dreadful depiction of Hell, awaits the faithful to be observed during the entire liturgy. By progressing within the space, images are stored in the brain, and sentiments of fear and discomfort are accumulated. The Last Judgment, crowning the sanctuary, represents the culmination of a visual narrative intended to be a didactic spiritual experience that, together with the marginal grotesque depictions, teaches its observers that the evil is always lurking, even where it is not expected to be.

Medieval apocalyptic thought understood the Last Judgment as the moment of disclosure of an unknown divine plan. The natural human cycle of birth, growth, and death was put to an end, and it was replaced with the concept of life being the completion of a foreordained journey premeditated by God himself.[118] The path towards the altar, therefore, functioned as a visual training and a mental preparatory route that predisposed the viewers to the vision of the Last Judgment and the understanding of its deeper divine realization. The faithful, walking from the entrance, through the nave, till the apse, is metaphorically performing a walk towards his or her own divine fulfilment, metaphorically proceeding through the carnal temptations of life and ultimately reaching the safety of the universal justice imposed by Christ the Judge at the center of the composition. In this case, if experienced with true faith, all the distress accumulated could be then finally relieved.

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[118] More on this issue in: Marjorie Reeves, "The development of apocalyptic thought: medieval attitudes" in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussion,* Edited by C. A Patrides and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, 42-73, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984).

The unusual placement of the Last Judgment at the end of the nave unexpectedly becomes more reassuring than the traditional placement on the counter-façade.[119] While leaving the church with the last sight of the Last Judgment would have instilled in the faithful only fear for leaving the safe sacred realm before going back into the sinful world, Santa Maria Maggiore's majestic fresco would have represented the awaited culmination of all those faithful who had survived the sinfulness of the outer world, metaphorically represented through the sculptural implantations. Therefore, the oppressive presence of monstrous figures and sinful allusion must be not simply interpreted as a sign of the outer-world taking over the sacred space, but rather, as the creation of a space where the faithful is an active being, blessed of freewill and able to overcome through his or her actions the evil. The fear provoked by the composite profane corbels and capitals fed the hope for divine salvation through a fair Last Judgment, promoting good behaviors in the faithful. In other words, fear of such visions fed the hope to be redeemed, and the Last Judgment was precisely meant to await the faithful and instruct them on how to behave in order to achieve divine redemption.

The duality between fear and hope is Santa Maria Maggiore's central motif, and it is expressed through its entire decorative program. The addition of the Last Judgment fresco to the pre-existing "decorative" sculptures is the proof of the deliberateness in continuing a program based on the fear for monstrous depictions and the consequential motivation they provoke to redeem oneself. When choosing to paint the Last Judgment, it appears evident that those in charge of its design paid attention to the pre-existing sculptural program, with the intention of not only maintaining the popular aura around the church's monstrous depictions, but also of enhancing its power and structuring its meaning onto a larger scale. It is in fact not without

[119] Examples provided in Chapter 2.

reason that the earlier sculptural program matches the new painting program. While the bipartite narrative of the Last Judgment, based on fear to be damned and hope to be saved, enhanced the expressive power of the sculptural program, the fresco cycle of the life of Mary above the nave's upper walls ultimately acknowledged the power of the divine realm to fight the evil. The Marian cycle is in fact placed just above the corbels that run along the nave's arcades. Its positioning, while remembering again that the evil is always lurking, even in a sacred space, symbolically highlights the dominance of the Virgin Mary who, by visually and metaphorically stepping over the evil corbels, infringes their territory and ultimately asserts the power of the Christian Church.

The cycle of the life of the Virgin Mary and the Last Judgment are legible proofs that fighting the evil and its entrenched presence is possible. In the Last Judgment, virtuous human examples are drawn directly from the local context: priests, monks, nuns, pious men and women are part of the Elect, inspiring the faithful observers to behave accordingly; yet, the same people, priests, monks, nuns and normal men and women, are placed in Hell as well, warning the viewers that, despite your role in earthly life, you can still be damned. The coexistence of Heaven and Hell, elect and damned in the Last Judgment reflects not only the coexistence of good and evil in earthly life, but also of monstrous and sacred figures within the church. This dualistic rhetoric, composed of tensions between external and internal spaces, virtuous and sinful figures, reverberates itself in a message that is both visual and spiritual. The sculptural program becomes a *unicum* with the painting program, symbiotically functioning in the creation of a recurring symbolism that transformed the church into an interconnected and intermingled visual and spiritual experience.

Allegorical references suggested by marginal sculptures are reinstated through central depictions: corbels and capitals depicting hybrid figures eating, screaming and opening their

mouths are all reminiscent of the central depiction of *Cacanime* who engages in similar disturbing activities. All demonic and grotesque figures, both marginal and central ones, are moved by an insatiable gluttony that emphasizes their lustfulness and profaneness. They are part of a bigger discourse that permeates the whole church, starting from its outer boundaries and reaching its most intimate and sacred space. It is thus possible that Santa Maria Maggiore's iconographic program aimed to warn the faithful against sins and lustfulness not only by confronting them with explicit examples of a consequential damnation, but also by instilling in them the hope for a divine redemption.

Despite the speculative character of this journey, which does not and cannot aim to recreate the same effect it had on a medieval viewer, the material context within which it takes place still exists, and it is still available for modern viewers to be experienced. The physical presence of these figures in Santa Maria Maggiore is still indicative of a carefully thought system for the reiteration of Christian values and their effects on the audience. Not without reason, the fact that the devil has been literally nick-named *Cacanime* by the locals, becoming a symbol of the town, underlines the high degree of involvement such image created, and still creates, on its viewers. When receiving this nickname, *Cacanime* was recognized as a living entity, not only as a figurative element of the church, but as a member of the community and of its popular narrative. When visiting the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, people were directly asked by such images to actively engage in their observation. All of them have been repeatedly looked through, and as a consequence, they developed a relationship with their observers that is now shared by the entire community.

Conclusions

This research started with an historical account on Santa Maria Maggiore, unfolding its chronology and contextualizing its activity and reception in medieval times. Together with the iconographic description of the Last Judgment fresco, this historical evidence aims to unravel the interwoven duality between the local context and material evidence that characterizes this church and its decorative program. This interconnectedness impregnates the whole church, with depictions that, by speaking a common language, create an overarching dialogue that encompasses the whole church.

The political vicissitudes undergone by the town of Tuscania endangered the stability of this local church; however, the *translatio* of the 23 relics in 1186 definitely was a turning point for Santa Maria Maggiore. Even if not attested, it is plausible to envision a growing local cult that relied on the relics to cope with those hard times. Thus, in defiance of the political and social insecurity altering the equilibrium of the town in the 12th century, the relics left by Pope Lucius III functioned as stable markers of devotion, reassuring people with the hope for intercession and salvation.

The addition of the Last Judgment fresco at the beginning of the 14th century marks another climax for Santa Maria Maggiore. Not only Secondiano de Deutabive could honor his avoided misfortune, but the entire town could finally rejoice for the end of ongoing conflicts against the French vicar Bernardo de Coucy.

Santa Maria Maggiore's decorative program epitomizes the deliberateness of an iconographic theme that, in spite of contiguous social and political instabilities or, perhaps, precisely for that reason, remained faithful to its original "monstrous" character. The permanence

of this theme throughout different architectural and painting campaigns suggests the making of a deliberately interconnected decorative program, whose communicative power was ultimately enhanced by the presence of a rich reliquary.

Ultimately, a picture of a church functioning as an interconnected organism will emerge, speaking and educating its audience through a precise decorative program that, by warning from earthly sins, appealed to salvation and redemption. Hopefully, this thesis will highlight the prominence of marginal images. The analysis of the environment in which such images appear can, in fact, shift standard perspectives and reveal the arbitrariness of the latter. Ultimately, this thesis hopes to promote a higher academic interest in those provincial and unfortunately neglected cultural sites that, as Tuscania, have a lot to offer to the national and international art-historical field.

Appendix to Chapter 3: The depiction of the Last Judgment in Early Christian and Medieval Italy (4th-13th century)

In order to better contextualize the Last Judgment in Santa Maria Maggiore, a brief chronological and descriptive account of other extant Italian examples of Last Judgments is needed for providing historical information and iconographical insights on the evolution of this scriptural scene.[120]

The Last judgment by Gregorio and Donato D'Arezzo draws from the Western, specifically Italian, Apocalyptic iconography, traceable in other earlier representations with the same subject.[121] Nevertheless, what may appear as a scarce patrimony of Last Judgment images in Italy, speaks instead of a long-term and thoughtful development of apocalyptic iconography that culminated between the 11th and 14th centuries in Last Judgment imagery.[122] While there are no Italian

[120] For the sake of this thesis' topic, the description of the older examples of apocalyptic and Last Judgment scenes is not meant to be a universal compendium, but rather an introductory account to help the reader chronologically and stylistically contextualize the Last Judgment in Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania.
[121] Monastery of S. Giovanni, Val Mustair, Alto Adige, 830; Abbey of S. Pietro al Monte, Civate, Lombardia, XI century; Cathedral of Torcello,Venice, Last Judgment, counter-façade, end XI century; Basilica of S. Angelo in Formis, Capua, Last Judgment, counter-façade, 1072-1087; Santi Quattro Coronati, Cappella di S. Silvestro, Rome, Last judgment, 1246; Gentile da Rocca, S. Maria ad Cryptas, counter-facade, Fossa, Aquila 1264-1283; Pietro Cavallini, Santa Cecilia, Roma, Last Judgment, counter-façade, 1293/end of XIII; Giotto, Cappella Degli Scrovegni, Padova, Last Judgment, 1304; Pietro Cavallini, Donna Regina, Napoli, 1317-1318.
[122] Christe Yves and Maria Grazia Balzarini, *Il Giudizio Universale Nell'arte Del Medioevo*, Complementi Alla Storia Dell'arte Europea (Milano: Jaca Book, 2000), 7: "Esso (il giudizio Universale) appare tardivamente, nell'IX secolo, e conquista una posizione preminente soltanto nel XIII secolo con la fioritura dell'arte gotica. Il ruolo fondamentale che il Giudizio ricopre sulle facciate occidentali di Notre Dame a Parigi, di Notre Dame ad Amiens, di Saint'Etienne a Bourges o della cattedrale di Leòn, non deve far dimenticare la sua assenza nella Sainte Chapelle di Parigi, nella Basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi, sulla facciata occidentale di Notre Dame a Reims e nella maggior parte delle grandi basiliche di Roma. Ancora nel XII secolo, nell'arte romanica e nella prima arte gotica, la sua presenza non veniva giudicata indispensabile."

examples of Last Judgment scenes as such before the 9th century, some apocalyptic motifs were being included in Christian representations from the 4th century onwards.[123] In other words, the visual representation of last-day events initially developed from a pre-existing nucleus of apocalyptic images.[124] Examples of this early iconography are the holy lamb on the mountain Sion, the scroll with the seven seals, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the alpha and the omega.[125] However, distinct examples of Last Judgment scenes started to appear only around the 9th century.[126] One major example is the mosaic in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna from the 6th century (Fig. 10). The mosaic, located on the nave's right upper wall, depicts Jesus dividing the sheep from the goats, a scene that metaphorically alludes to the division of the virtuous from the sinners, of the saved from the damned.[127] The lack of clear references to the Last Judgment might link this depiction with a broader apocalyptic concern, if not just as the representation of the parable narrated by Matthew.[128]

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[123] Selected motifs depicting a theophany either merged with pre-existing Christian iconography or created entirely new types of imagery. For more see: Peter K. Klein, Introduction: the Apocalypse in Medieval Art, 159-199, in Richard Kenneth Emmerson; Bernard McGinn, *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[124] Around the 5th and 6th century Apocalyptic motifs appear in Rome featuring Christ, or the Lamb, by the twenty-four Elders. Examples include: 5th century triumphal arch of S.Paolo Fuori le Mura and the triumphal arch of SS. Cosma e Damiano dated to 526-530 A.D. For more on early medieval representations of the Last Judgment see German authors: Beat Brenk, *Tradition Und Neuerung in Der Christlichen Kunst Des Ersten Jahrtausends: Studien Zur Geschichte Des Weltgerichtsbildes*, Wiener Byzantinistische Studien, 3 (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966); Willibald Sauerländer, "Über Die Komposition Des Weltgerichtstympanons in Autun", *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 29, 261-294 (1966).

[125] Biblical scenes correspondingly narrated in Rv, 14:1-2; 5:1-7; 21:2; 22:13, (RSV).

[126] The fresco at San Giovanni in Val Müstair is, by now, considered the first and earliest example.

[127] Mt, 25:31-46 (RSV) "separat[ing] people . . . as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats". This parable is interpreted by Christian exegesis to be, together with the parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13) and of the talents (Mt, 25:14-30), the most explicit eschatological anticipation of the Last Judgment in the Old Testament. The scene of Christ separating the sheep from the goats is also attested in a late 3rd - early 4th century sarcophagus lid now at the Metropolitan Museum: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/466583

[128] Yves Christe and Maria Grazia Balzarini, *Il Giudizio Universale nell'Arte Del Medioevo*, Complementi Alla Storia Dell'arte Europea (Milano: Jaca Book, 2000), 7. The auhtors specify that late antique art is not interested in the Last Judgment, this is why there are only few examples from that age: "l'arte cristiana della tarda antichità non è interessata al Giudizio universale. L'altissimo medioevo ne ha prodotto qualche incerto esempio. Nessuna opera può essere però propriamente letta come Giudizio universale prima del IX secolo."

It is fair to say, in fact, that clear visual references to the scriptural event are absent in extant Italian representations until the fresco in the Monastery of San Giovanni in Val Müstair, located on the counter façade and dated to c. 830 (Fig. 11).[129] Although highly damaged, it is still possible to recognize a horizontally tripartite scheme that features the resurrection of the bodies, the annunciation of the second coming of Christ, and the angels playing the trumpets in the upper register. The central section features Christ the Judge surrounded by the apostles; the third and last section is instead almost completely gone; however, it must have been decorated with the saved and the damned respectively on the left and right corner.

The visual arrangement of this early norther Italian example evolved in other representations that maintained the tripartite division, a feature that will be, more or less, a constant in the majority of all Last Judgment depictions, included the one in Santa Maria Maggiore. One exception to this tripartite structure is the Last Judgment depicted on the narthex of the Basilica of San Pietro al Monte in Como dated to the 11th century (Fig. 12). This example is particularly interesting and unique as it seems to attempt to meticulously follow the scriptural description of the Last Judgment as narrated in the Book of Revelation. There is an image of the *"woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars"*, the male child she brings forth, the *"one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron"*, the *"huge red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven royal crowns on his heads"*, and lastly the Archangel Michael and his angels who *"fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back"*.[130] All these figures are organized in one single composition that follows the horizontal configuration of the narthex.

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[129] Jürg Goll, Matthias Exner, and Susanne Hirsch, *Müstair, Le Pitture Parietali Medievali nella Chiesa dell'Abbazia*, (Amici dell'Abbazia San Giovanni di Müstair, Zurigo, 2007), 212.
[130] Rv 12:1,9 (RSV).

Also noteworthy is the larger compartmented organization of the Last Judgment in the Abbey of Sant'Angelo in Formis, Capua, from 1072- 1087 (Fig. 13). Painted in the counter-façade, the fresco is divided in three horizontal bands decorated with the rows of angels at the top, the disciples in the middle, and lastly, the Elect. Christ stands enthroned in the center of the composition within the *mandorla*; his arms are stretched outside, one points to the saved in the lower left corner, and the other points to the damned in the lower right corner. Above him, three arched windows are framed by four angels playing the trumpets announcing the imminent Apocalypse. Right underneath these winged figures, the resurrection of the dead: bodies clothed in white garments emerge from red capsules resting on s-shaped blue and brown lines, which probably allude to the sea and the earth, places from which these bodies come from.[131] This scene, while absent in the narthex fresco of San Pietro al Monte, matches the upward placement given to the resurrected bodies in San Giovanni in Val Müstair. Later, the scene of the resurrected bodies will be placed in the lower registers of stacked compositions, closer to the actual floor of the sanctuary, motivated, perhaps, by an interest in depicting the distance between the elevated in Heaven and the lower humane realm.

Perhaps even more important for the evolution of the eschatological theme on the Last Judgment in Medieval Italy is the mosaic in the counter-facade of the Cathedral of Torcello (Fig. 15). Although there is no surviving documentation for the date of the mosaic, it has been stylistically dated to the last half of the 11th century, making it contemporaneous to the Last Judgment in Sant'Angelo in Formis. However, given its peculiar combination of the Crucifixion,

[131] Rv 20:13 (RSV): "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged, everyone according to their works." For more on the Byzantine style of this fresco see: Irina Anatolyevna Oretskaia, "Byzantine Traits in the Wall Paintings of the Church of Sant'Angelo in Formis", *Известия Уральского Федерального Университета, Серия 2: Гуманитарные Науки* 19, no. 2 (2017: 56–67).

the Anastasis and the Last Judgement all in one single composition, this full height gold-glass mosaic in the Venice lagoon is a *unicum*.[132] Divided in 5 horizontal registers, the traditional iconography encountered in earlier examples is here expanded with an image of the *Psychostasia*, the moment when each soul was weighted before being allocated to either Hell or Heaven. On the extremes of the third horizontal band, where some angels are preparing the throne for Christ's second coming, resurrecting bodies are depicted: those who are resurrecting from the earth are either regurgitated by some animals or coming out from their tombs, while those resurrecting from the sea are being regurgitated by fish and sea-monsters.[133] This detailed representation, analyzed in light of the uplifted placement of the dead bodies in Sant'Angelo in Formis and San Giovanni in Val Müstair, as well the absence of the resurrected bodies in older representations such as in San Pietro al Monte, might indicate a developing Last Judgment iconography, which was increasingly becoming more complex and detailed. In Venice -at least- this must have been under the impact of new iconographic formulas developed in the Byzantine world.

Moving forward in time, another important example of Italian Last Judgement iconography is the fresco painted by Pietro Cavallini in Santa Cecilia in Rome dated to the end of the 13th century (Fig. 14). The fresco is often said to have influenced Giotto's famous masterpiece in the Scrovegni Chapel, painted at the beginning of the 14th century and thus completed only about a decade before the fresco by Gregorio and Donato d'Arezzo in Santa Maria Maggiore in Tuscania. (Fig. 16). An introductory discussion on the influence of Giotto on the Italian *Trecento* and presumably, on the work by the two Aretinian painters can be found in Chapter two of this thesis.

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[132] For more on the Eastern influence on this Byzantine Mosaic see: Patrick Martin, "The Last Judgement Mosaic at Torcello, Venice – Exploiting the Resources of Byzantium," *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*: 2016.
[133] Rv 20:13 (RSV).

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Figures

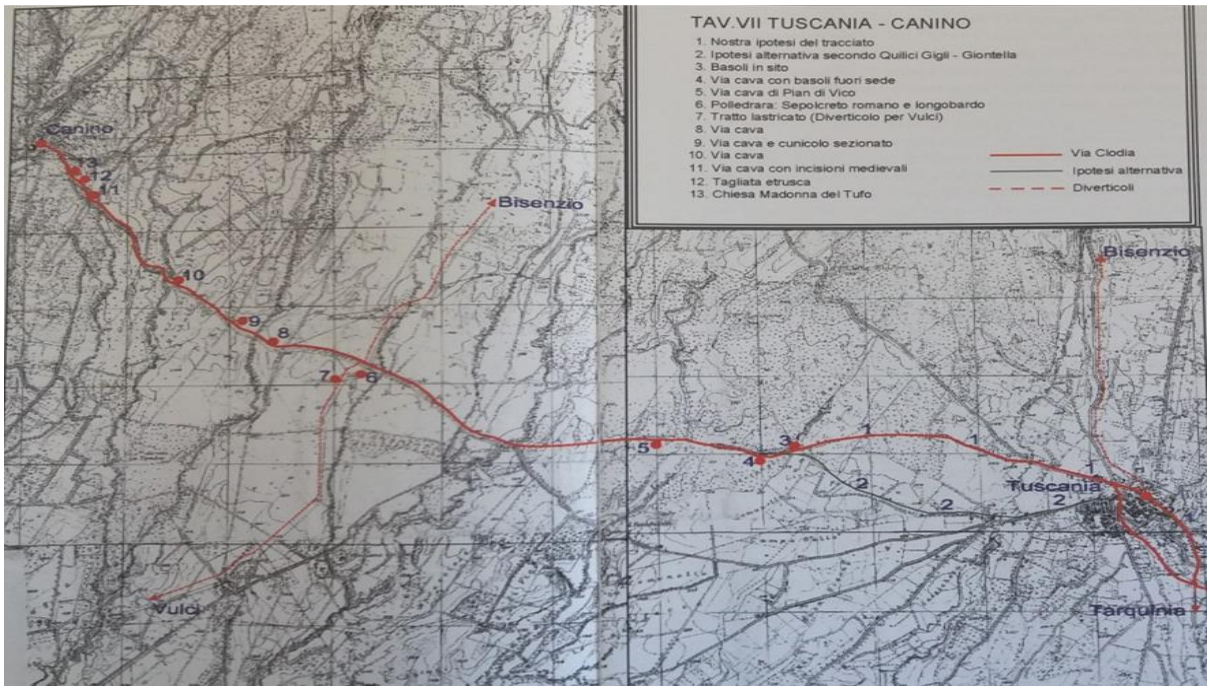

Figure 1 *Mario Sanna and Luciano Proietti, La via Clodia, Ricognizioni archeologiche nel cuore della Tuscia, Viterbo: Archeoares, 2019, tav. VII.*

Figure 2 *Regione Lazio, Assessorato alla Cultura, Le vie consolari, Roma, 2003, 27.*

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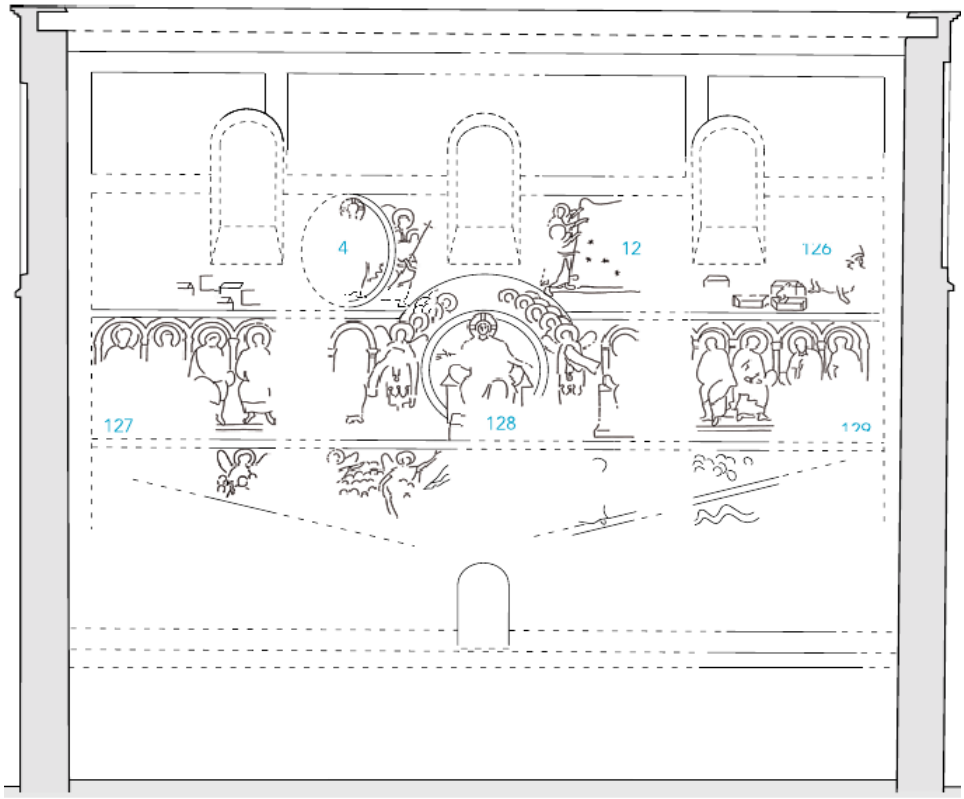

Figure 11 *Jürg Goll, Matthias Exner, and Susanne Hirsch, "Schematic representation of the Last Judgment on the west wall of the Monastery of San Giovanni in Müstair", Le Pitture Parietali Medievali nella Chiesa dell'Abbazia, Zurigo, 2007.*

Figure 12 *Last Judgment, Narthex, Basilica di San Pietro al Monte, Como, 11th century, 2006.*

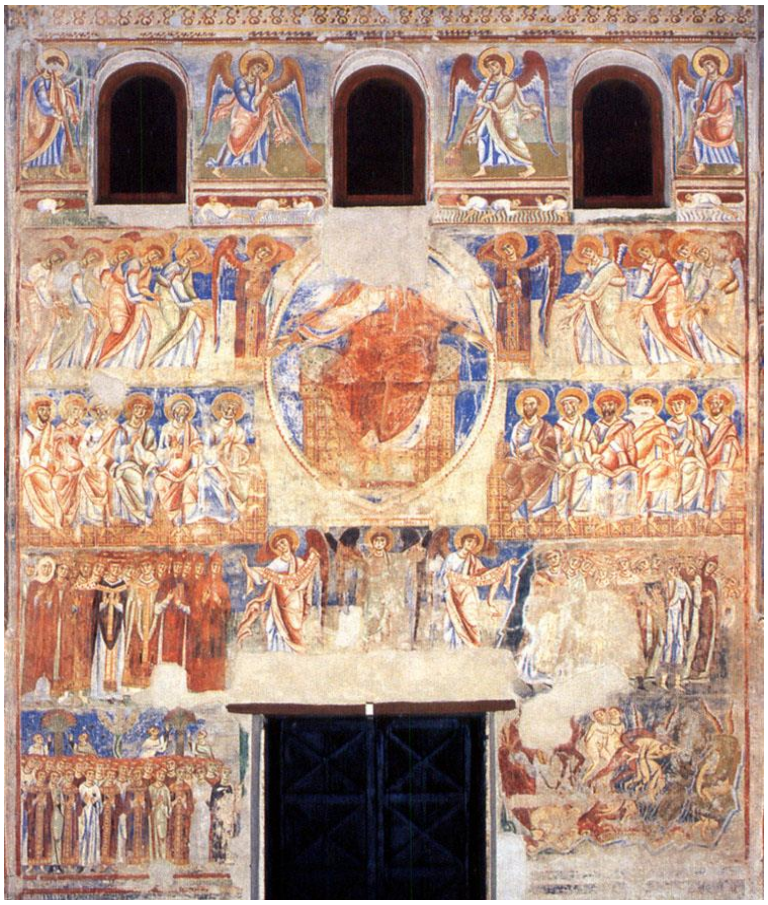

Figure 13 *Last Judgment, Sant'Angelo in Formis, Capua, 1072-1087.*

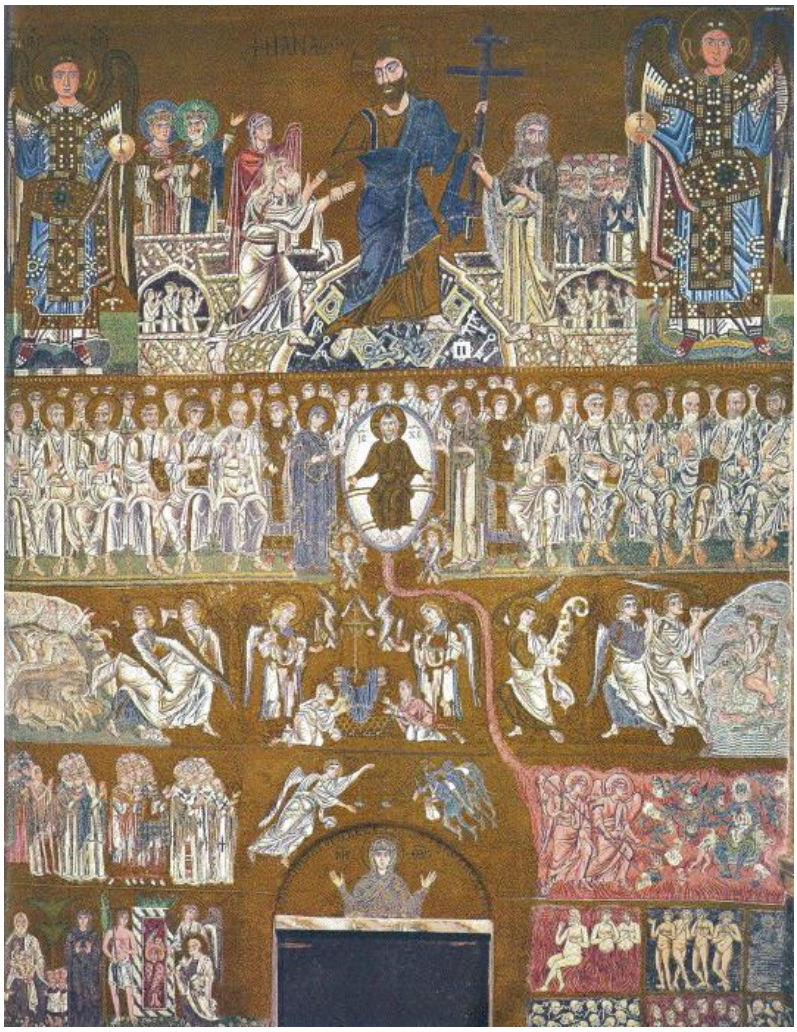

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Figure 25 *Lunette from the right portal, Santa Maria Maggiore. Enio Staccini, 2018.*

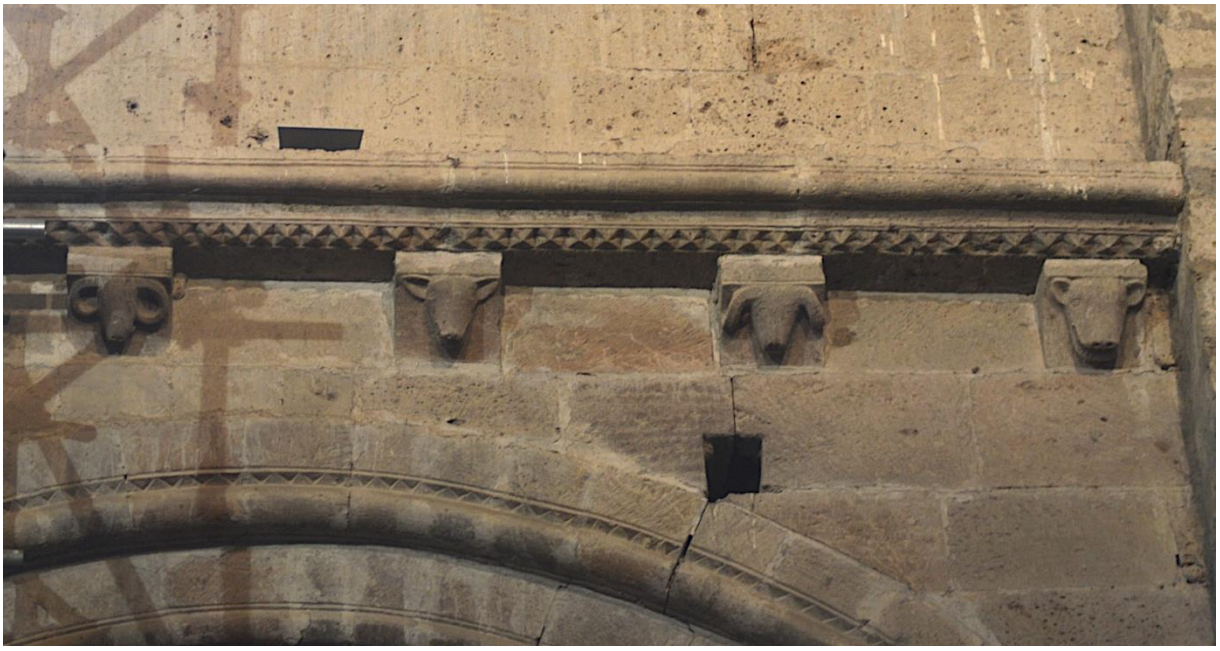

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Figure 27 *Twin-heads corbel, right side of the nave, part of earlier arcades, Santa Maria Maggiore. Photo by Viviana Calvagno, 2020.*

Figure 28 *Man sticking his tongue out, right side of the nave, part of earlier arcades. Photo by Viviana Calvagno, 2020.*

Figure 29 *Barrel-man, right side of the nave, part of earlier arcades. Photo by Viviana Calvagno, 2020.*

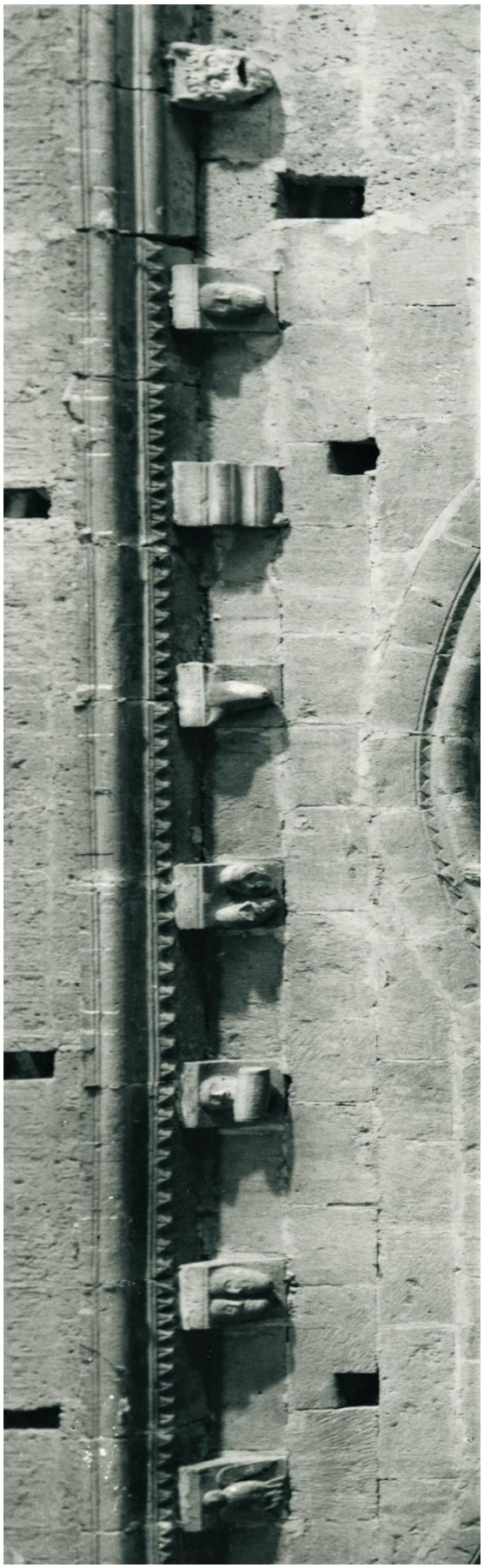

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Figure 42 *Exterior of Santa Maria Maggiore, lithography from Henry Gally Knight, The ecclesiastical architecture of Italy: from the time of Constantine to the fifteenth century (London: Henry Bohn, 1842).*