

**Reassembling the Sacred:
The Murano Master and the Illuminated Choir Books of the
Camaldolese House of San Mattia di Murano.**



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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
December 2020

DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

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December 2020

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**Reassembling the Sacred:
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This dissertation presents a partial reconstruction of a now-dismembered series of lavishly illuminated and large-scale choir books made for the Camaldolese monastery of San Mattia di Murano ca. 1400–ca. 1445. These manuscripts are attributed to Cristoforo Cortese and the so-called ‘Master of the Murano Gradual,’ and now exist as two intact volumes and thirty-eight excised historiated initials found in public and private collections all over the globe. This thesis mines the dense, visual religious elements of these understudied images in order to investigate the use of monastic corporate iconography by the monks at San Mattia. In this thesis, I argue that the brothers at San Mattia commissioned these manuscripts, not only as necessary liturgical tools, but also as a means of expressing complex ideas about self-identity within both Benedictine monasticism and Christianity, more broadly.

This thesis also examines and compares the iconographic programme and stylistic features of the San Mattia volumes with choir books belonging to its nearby sister house San Michele in Isola, and with the lavish series owned by a third Camaldolese monastery: Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, whose manuscripts were a model for both the sets commissioned for the houses in the Venetian lagoon. The results of this analysis show that the monks at San Mattia appear to have wanted their choir books’ visual scheme to reflect spiritual values and ideas with specific significance for their own house and which deviate from the iconographic model of the Florentine series. This study also investigates

the San Mattia visual corpus within the framework of select examples of monumental painting, particularly frescos and altarpieces, as a means of probing the influences of other media on the work of the Murano Master. Ultimately, this study not only offers the first-ever reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books, but it also provides new insights into their significance in terms of the Camaldolese use of monastic corporate iconography within the context of early Quattrocento Venice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
INDEX OF FIGURES	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
‘Pray One Psalm with Compunction and Devotion’: A Benedictine Reform Order & their Choir Books	19
I. The Camaldolese Context: History & Heritage	19
II. Venetian Houses: San Michele & San Mattia	23
III. Lavish Liturgical Books	26
IV. Libraries & Shut Monasteries	35
V. Current State of the Manuscripts	39
VI. Dating the Choir Books	42
VII. Methodology & Challenges of the Partial Reconstruction	50
VIII. The Master Illuminator: Miniatore di San Michele a Murano	53
IX. Stylistic Hallmarks of the Murano Master & Monumental Art	62
X. Problematic Attributions to the Murano Master’s Oeuvre	69
XI. The (Other) Master Illuminator: Cristoforo Cortese	74
XII. Stylistic Hallmarks of Cristoforo Cortese	77
XIII. Conclusions	82
CHAPTER 2	
The Berlin Gradual	83
I. <i>Fenestra</i> Label & Provenance	85
II. Issues of Iconography, Issues of Style	87
III. How Many Hands? The Iconography of the <i>Resurrection</i> (Folio i verso)	89
IV. Evidence of the Murano Master at Work	96
V. Intimate Seeing: Reflexive Imagery	104
VI. Deciphering Judas	110
VII. Monumental Models: The Impact of Frescoes and Panel Paintings on the Murano Master	118

VIII.	Rendered in Cloth: Drapery & Fabrics	124
IX.	Frescoes & Fabrics	127
X.	Colour as Shape & Light	132
XI.	A Macrocosm Rendered Micro: Architecture in the Berlin Gradual	139
XII.	An ‘Oriental’ Inspiration? Traces of the Eastern World	142
XIII.	Conclusions	152
XIV.	Catalogue Entry: The Berlin Gradual	155

CHAPTER 3

The Milan Gradual: An Intact Counterpart to the Berlin Gradual?		163
---	--	-----

I.	A Second (?) Intact Manuscript & its Contents	166
II.	Folio 1r: A Trove of Camaldolese Identity & Ideology	170
III.	Monastic Portraiture	178
IV.	An Apocryphal Narrative: The Bathing of the Christ Child	189
V.	Camaldolese Lay Patrons in the Milan Gradual?	196
VI.	Conclusions	202
VII.	Catalogue Entry: The Milan Gradual	205

CHAPTER 4

A Mosaic of Pigments & Parchment: The Fragments		209
---	--	-----

I.	Issues of Identification & Methodology	211
II.	Types of Books	217
III.	Same Set?	220
IV.	For San Mattia di Murano?	221
V.	Monastic Corporate Iconography: Self-representation & Liturgy	229
Vi	A Rare Full Page & Its Iconographic Messaging	231
Vii	Rabbits, a Dove & Thirteen (?) Apostles	240
VI.	Romualdian Portraiture: Images of the Camaldolese Founder	251
VII.	Other Romualds?: Additional Images of the Founding Saint	260
VIII.	Camaldolese Portraiture: Enigmatic Figures	268
IX.	Unusual Narratives & Sacred Scenes	277
X.	Conclusions	298

CONCLUSION		301
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I.	The Eye of the Beholder: The Role of Reflexive Seeing	307
II.	Future Research & Next Steps	313

APPENDIX	323
I. Catalogue Entries: The Individual Cuttings	323
II. Reconstruction of the <i>Sanctorale</i>	335
BIBLIOGRAPHY	340

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

‘Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.’

~Edgar Degas

To say that this dissertation was a labour of love would be an understatement. This dissertation has been an all-consuming force that has occupied most of my waking (and sleeping) moments for the past four years. What began as an interest in illuminated manuscripts in an undergraduate seminar has blossomed into an unimaginable adventure. Doing this PhD has afforded me opportunities and experiences beyond my wildest dreams: I have travelled to incredible places, seen breath-taking art, and met extraordinary people from all walks of life. Cambridge has allowed me to nurture my love of medieval art and enabled me to explore more deeply how human beings understand their cultural and historical identities, and how they express those ideas.

This thesis has been written in posh hotels, medieval cloisters, Renaissance libraries, airport terminal waiting areas, and museum cafes in various countries on two different continents. I believe that the essence of this work has been shaped by this methodology, as have I. More than this, what has fashioned me into the scholar and person that I am today is the people with whom I have shared this journey. Like all massive undertakings, I could not have done this without the help of so many kind and generous souls, who gave of themselves intellectually, emotionally, personally, and professionally. For this, I will be eternally indebted.

Bryan Keene and Erica Loic are the two best intellectual running buddies that anyone could have. Thank you for always keeping me honest and making me laugh, in equal measure. Kate Rudy, your intelligence and wit are matched only by your amazing

heart, I simply adore you. Miri Rubin, and David Rundle, I could talk about art, history, and manuscripts with you all day long. James Marrow and Emily Rose, I am so very grateful for the wisdom of the ‘Pyjama Master Classes.’ Tessa Webber, your palaeography tutelage saved me numerous times in those archives. Oliver Marjot, who joyfully read multiple drafts of multiple things, you are a gem. Nicky Kozicharow, Katherine Reinhart, Melisa Trujillo, and Cinthia Willaman, thank you for sharing every step of this pilgrimage with me. Lorraine de la Verpillière and your amazing Parisian family, merci. Kamila Kocialkowska and Annie Thwaite, there are no sufficient words to express my gratitude for your love and support. Emma Murphy, thank you for all the laughs, reassuring chats, and long-distance film nights.

In the Department of History of Art, numerous individuals are due thanks: the beautiful Francé Davies for always being on my side, Stan Finney and his technical saavy, Nichola Tooke, and the lovely librarians in the faculty library. I am grateful to Deborah Howard for her gentle and reassuring advice over the years, and to Paul Binski and Christopher de Hamel who have been generous beyond measure. At Pembroke College, the community of post-grads, fellows, administrators, and staff has offered me kindness, security, and ample good cheer throughout my time here. Bless you all. In particular, Dr. Rebecca Coombs has helped me in numerous ways. My tutor Loraine Gelsthorpe has always been a steadfast and reliable source of support and for this I am supremely grateful. Francis Kentish has been a dear friend and confidant, always willing to throw me a lifeline. Pat Aske and Natalie Kent made Pembroke Library the best place in world to hide and work. To my dear friends, Jan Brighting, Barry Colfer, Irene Galandra Cooper, Léonie de Jonge, Lewis Graham, Myfanwy Hill, Sally Jennings, Shiva

Mihan, Naceim Nikkhah, Damien Pollard, Eleanor Russell, Jack Tavener, and Monica Wirz. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to Edward Cheese, Suzanne Reynolds and Nicholas Robinson in the Founder's Library at the Fitzwilliam Museum. I must also thank Suzanne Paul and Rosalind Esche at the University Library, and the entire West Room staff for fetching every book, regardless of how heavy or unwieldy. I am also so grateful to the generosity of other manuscript enthusiasts who happily pointed me in the right direction whenever curiosity struck: Beatrice Alai, Anne-Marie Eze, Peter Kidd, and Earle Havens.

I have been especially fortunate to have received support from the Cambridge Trust and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), thank you for enabling me to undertake this degree. The research for this thesis was also made possible by the generous financial support of Pembroke College, the History of Art Faculty and the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation. I am also hugely grateful to the myriad curators at museums all over Europe and North America who graciously facilitated my research at their institutions.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to many people across the sea, including my mother and father, who have always done their best to support and understand their wildest child. My sister, Samantha, has offered unwavering support since the beginning. Aunt Mary Ann, all those calls have kept me sane. Professor Giancarla Periti, my mentor and friend, your faith in me means the world. My love and my respect go to Vicky Dingillo, Margaret English, Sarah Keeshan, Louise Kermode, and Elizabeth Legge.

I reserve my final words of gratitude for my supervisors, Dr. Donal Cooper and Dr. Stella Panayotova, both of whom remained in the trenches, encouraging me right to

the end. Thank you for pushing me and guiding me, for helping me to see this amazing material with curious eyes and a critical mind. I am a better scholar for all your efforts.

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved great-aunt Sarah Josephine Azzarello whose wisdom, grace, and kindness were the foundation for this entire undertaking. This work is as much hers as it is mine.

INDEX OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Initial O with *Singing Monks*, Zanobi Strozzi. Florence, ca. 1441–1443.
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Corale 3, fol. 41v.
- Figure 2. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, the Berlin Gradual, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.
- Figure 3. Initial A with *God the Father Offering the Christ Child to the People of Faith* (Advent), the Milan Gradual, Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28), fol. 1r.
- Figure 4. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass, the Milan Gradual, Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28), fol. 47v.
- Figure 5. Initial D with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass, the Milan Gradual, Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, MS. AB. XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol. 40r.
- Figure 6. Initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18.
- Figure 7. Initial S with a *Seated Evangelist*, Unknown Artist. Venice? Early 15th Cent.?
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6039.
- Figure 8. Initial R with *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?)*, Unknown Artist. Venice? Early 15th Cent?
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6020.
- Figure 9. *Mission of the Apostles*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6030.
- Figure 10. Initial O with the *Dream of St. Romuald*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Boston, Boston Museum of Art, 1973.692.

- Figure 11. Initial O with *St. Romuald?* (Male Saint?), Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
London, Private Collection.
- Figure 12. Initial O? with *Two Bishops and Two Saints*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48:40.
- Figure 13. Initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (Camaldolese Nun), Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Cambridge, University Library MS Add. 4165 (10).
- Figure 14. Initial V with *St. John the Evangelist?*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–1440s.
Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Comites Latentes, MS 256.
- Figure 15. Initial N with the *Scene of Sacrilege* (Beirut Miracle), Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s
Paris, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22713.
- Figure 16. Initial B with the *Holy House of Loreto Floating on the Sea*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22712.
- Figure 17. Camaldolese Emblem, San Michele Missal. Venice, 1503
London, British Library, C. 24 f.8, fol. i.
- Figure 18. Calendar page from a Camaldolese psalter with inscription, made at Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, possibly for San Michele in Isola. Florence, 1368
Venice, Museo Correr, Ms Cl V 129, fol. 7r .
- Figure 19. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Inv. no. PE 2.
- Figure 20. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, Detail: Bas-de-page, left medallion with Christ embracing the Virgin, Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci
Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Inv. no. PE 2.
- Figure 21. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, Detail: Upper border, angels with instruments, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Inv. no. PE 2.

Figure 22. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, Detail: Upper border, angels with instruments, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 23. Auction sale for the collection of William Young Ottley, Catalogue page 11
May, 1838 Sotheby's, London.
London, British Library
'Catalogue of the of the very beautiful collection of highly finished and illuminated miniature paintings, the property of the late William Young Ottley, Esq., which will be sold by auction by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby on Friday 11 May, 1838 and the following day at one o'clock.'

Figure 24. Auction sale for the collection of William Young Ottley, Catalogue page 12
May, 1838 Sotheby's, London.
London, British Library
'Catalogue of the of the very beautiful collection of highly finished and illuminated miniature paintings, the property of the late William Young Ottley, Esq., which will be sold by auction by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby on Friday 11 May, 1838 and the following day at one o'clock.'

Figure 25.
Examples of decorated initials possibly related to the San Mattia series
1. Q, mcai2004
2. S, mcai20091
3. P, mcai20101
Venice? ca. mid fifteenth cent.?
Philadelphia, The Free Library

Figure 26. Initial D with the *Transference of Blame* (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia. Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 57v.

Figure 27. Initial D with the *Transference of Blame* (The Visconti Hours), Detail: Trees and angels, Belbello da Pavia. Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 57v.

Figure 28. Examples of floral border decorations from the oeuvre of the Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s
1. Upper border (detail) Initial R with *Resurrection* (Berlin Gradual), Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I.

2. Lower left margin (detail) Initial R with *Resurrection* (Berlin Gradual), Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I.

3. Bas-de-page (detail) *Mission of the Apostles*, Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6030.

Figure 29. Initial D with *St. John the Evangelist* (close-up), Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, ca. 1385–1397.

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Cor. 1, fol. 33r.

Figure 30. Initial D with a *Prophet*, Don Silvestro dei Ghrarducci. Florence, ca. 1392–1399.

London, Victoria and Albert Museum, D.217-1906.

Figure 31. Initial I(?) with *Holy Bishop with a Church*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Plzen, Západočeské Museum, inv. 2.972.

Figure 32. Initial ? with a *Holy Bishop*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6037.

Figure 33. Examples of garments (tubular folds) from the oeuvre of the Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–1440s

1. Initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (Camaldolese Nun). Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4165 (10).

2. Initial ? with *Two Bishops and Two Saints(?)*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48:40.

3. Initial ? with *St. Jerome Removing a Thorn from the Lion's Paw*. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum MS 96 verso.

Figure 34. Examples of figures (initials) from the oeuvre of Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, ca. 1395–1400.

1. Initial N with *Christ* (1395–1398). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Cod. Cor. 8, fol. 102.

2. Initial S with *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* (1395–1400). Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1958.8.105.

3. Initial S with *King David* (1396). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Cod. Cor. 1, fol. 63.

Figure 35. Initial B with *Archangel Michael Transfixing Satan*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS. M 1129.

Figure 36. Initial B with *St. Michael Fighting the Dragon*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci.
Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, No. 13.35.72.

Figure 37. Crucifix, Cimabue,
ca. 1267–1271.
Arezzo, Basilica of San Domenico.
Distemper and gold on wood. 336 × 267 cm.

Figure 38. *Cardinal-judge conducting a court hearing* (detail), Leaf from Iohannes
Andreae, Novella in Decretales, Niccolò di Giacomo di Nascimbene (Niccolò da
Bologna). Bologna, ca. 1365.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 331.

Figure 39. *Meeting of King Herod and the Magi* (fresco), Giovanni da Modena.
Bologna, Basilica of San Petronio, Chapel of the Magi, ca. 1420–1424.

Figure 40. *Council of King Herod* (fresco) (detail), Giovanni da Modena.
Bologna, Basilica of San Petronio, Chapel of the Magi, ca. 1420–1424.

Figure 41. Initial C with the *Last Supper*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca.
1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 96v.

Figure 42. Frescoes from the Chapel of the Magi, Giovanni da Modena.
Bologna, Basilica of San Petronio, ca. 1420–1424
1. *Paradise with Archangels and Soldiers* (detail).
2 & 3. *Prophets* (detail).

Figure 43. *The Ascension* (fresco) (detail), Maestro di Vignola.
Vignola, Rocca di Vignola, ca. 1410.

Figure 44. Initial I (?) with an *Apostle (Martyred Saint?)*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6022.

Figure 45. Initial S with an *Old Man in Prayer with a Youth Behind Him*, Master of the
Murano Gradual? Venice? Early 15th Cent.?
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6031.

Figure 46. Initial G with *St. Mary Magdalene*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca.
1400–ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6024.

- Figure 47. Initial R with *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?)*,
Detail: pseudo-Arabic script on edge of garment, Unknown Artist
Venice? Early 15th Cent?
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6020.
- Figure 48. Examples of pseudo-Arabic script from the oeuvre of the Master of the
Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
1. Initial M with an *Old Saint with a Book* (nimbus detail). Paris, Musée Marmottan
Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6038.
2. Initial C with *St. Margaret and the Dragon* (nimbus detail). Paris, Musée
Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6033.
3. Initial E with *Two Bishops and Two Saints* (garment detail). New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48: 40.
- Figure 49. Initial S with a *Seated Evangelist*, Detail: pseudo-Arabic script on garment
Unknown Artist. Venice? Early 15th Cent.?
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6039.
- Figure 50. Initial ? with *St. George (?)*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1420–
ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6023.
- Figure 51. Initial E with *St. Stephen*, Detail: Front teeth (close-up), Master of the Murano
Gradual. Venice, ca. 1420–ca.1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6027.
- Figure 52. Initial N with *St. Helena Finding the True Cross*, Detail: Teeth (close-up)
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1420–ca.1440s.
New York, Private Collection.
- Figure 53. *Burning of Achan, His Family, and His Possessions* (detail), (The Visconti
Hours), Belbello da Pavia. Milan, ca. 1422–1430s.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 136r.
- Figure 54. Initial A with *Young Christ Blessing* (Antiphoner P of San Giorgio Maggiore)
Detail: Front teeth (close-up), Belbello da Pavia. Venice, 1467–1470.
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum Ms. 96 verso.

- Figure 55. *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with St. John the Baptist and St. Ambrose*
Frontispiece from the Mariiegola of the Scuola di San Giovanni Battista e
Sant' Ambrogio, (Scuola dei Milanesi), Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1427–1428.
La Spezia, Museo Civico Amedeo Lia, Inv. no. 543.
- Figure 56. Initial A with the *Funeral of St. Francis* (detail), Cristoforo Cortese. Bologna,
ca. 1426.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection Inv. 6076.
- Figure 57. *Moses Slays an Egyptian* (detail) (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia.
Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finally 22, fol. 84v.
- Figure 58. *Moses and the Burning Bush* (detail) (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia.
Milan, ca. 1422–1430 .
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finally 22, fol. 85r.
- Figure 59. Initial E with the *Adoration of the Magi* (The Milan Gradual), Cristoforo
Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm
I.28), fol.62r.
- Figure 60. *Last Communion of St. Mary Magdalene*, (Laudario of Sant' Agnese), Pacino
di Bonaguida. Florence, ca. 1340.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 201.4.
- Figure 61. Registro dei beni di San Mattia di Murano (detail), Cristoforo Cortese. Venice,
1391.
Venice, Seminario Patriarcale di Venezia, b. 956, 17.
- Figure 62. Initial S with *St. Justus and St. Clement* (detail) (The Berlin Gradual),
Master of the Master Gradual. Venice, ca. 1420–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett MS 78 F. I, fol. 80r.
- Figure 63. Calendar page: June, Detail: Feast day of St. Justus and St. Clement
San Michele Missal. Venice, 1503.
London, British Library C. 24 f.8, fol. 8.
- Figure 64. Initial V with the *Ascension*, (The Berlin Gradual),
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 50r.
- Figure 65. Initial S with *Pentecost* (The Berlin Gradual), Schematic drawing
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 65v.

- Figure 66. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual), Detail: Risen Christ; Face (close-up), Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.
- Figure 67. Comparison of Christ in the Berlin Gradual
1. Initial C with the *Last Supper*. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 96v.
 2. Initial R with the *Resurrection*. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.
- Figure 68. Initial C with *St. Jerome, the Lion and Scholars*
Detail: Bas-de-page with the *Nativity, God the Father with Christ and the Resurrection*, (Epistolae di S. Girolamo), Michelino da Besozzo.
Venice, ca. 1390.
London, British Library, MS Egerton 3266, fol. 15r.
- Figure 69. Comparison of Christ figures
1. Epistolae di S. Girolamo (bas-de-page). Michelino da Besozzo. London, British Library, MS Egerton 3266, fol. 15r.
 2. Initial R with *Resurrection* (Berlin Gradual). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F.I, fol. i verso.
- Figure 70. Initial D with the *Entry into Jerusalem*, Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1410–1420.
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 20.
- Figure 71. Initials with *Prophets* (The Berlin Gradual), Master of the Murano Gradual
1. Initial D. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 14v.
 2. Initial A. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 108v.
- Figure 72. Initial V with the *Ascension*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M. 653.3.
- Figure 73. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual),
Detail: St. Mary Magdalene – Face (close-up), Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F.I , fol. i verso.
- Figure 74. *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, ca. 1400–1405.
Private Collection.
Tempera and gold on wood, 24 × 60 cm.

Figure 75. St. Mary Magdalene (details)

1. St. Mary Magdalene contemplates the empty tomb. Initial R with the *Resurrection*. Master of the Murano Gradual. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F.I, fol. i verso.

2. St. Mary Magdalene contemplates the feet of the dead Christ. *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*. Lorenzo Monaco. Private Collection.

Figure 76. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual),

Detail: St. Mary Magdalene holding her hair, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 77. Initial R with the *Resurrection*,

Detail: Monastic bust portraits,
Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Inv. no. PE 2.

Figure 78. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual),

Detail: Monastic bust portraits, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400 – ca. 1440s.

Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 79. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual),

Detail: Bas-de-page with three medallions
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s.
Berlin, Kuperfstichkabinett, MS 78F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 80. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual)

Detail: Left medallion with Christ and a Camaldolese monk,
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 81. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual),

Detail: Centre medallion with *Noli me tangere*
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 82. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual)

Detail: Right medallion with Christ and an old saint or prophet?
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. i verso.

Figure 83. Initial R with the *Resurrection*

Detail: Virgin in her blue mantle and gold nimbus
Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Inv. no. PE 2.

Figure 84. *Coronation of the Virgin*, Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, 1414.

Florence, Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 1890, no. 885.
Tempera on wood, 506 × 44.7 cm.

Figure 85. Initial C with the *Last Supper*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci.

Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
New York, Morgan Library & Museum M653.4.

Figure 86. Initial C with the *Last Supper* (The Berlin Gradual)

Detail: Judas (close-up), Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 96v.

Figure 87. *The Betrayal* (fresco), Pietro Lorenzetti. ca. 1316–1319.

Assisi, Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, Lower Church.

Figure 88. Bearded Judas (The Maestà), Duccio di Buoninsegna.

Siena, 1308–1311.
Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Tempera on panel, 50 × 53 cm.
1. *The Pact of Judas* (close-up).

2. *The Betrayal of Christ* (close-up).

Figure 89. *Balak Receives Balaam* (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia.

Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 126v.

Figure 90. *Balaam Speaks with God* (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia.

Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 127r.

Figure 91. *Balaam Blesses Israel* (The Visconti Hours), Belbello da Pavia.

Milan, ca. 1422–1430.
Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 127v.

Figure 92.

1. Christ (detail). Initial C with the *Last Supper*. Master of the Murano Gradual.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 96v.

2. King Herod (detail). *Council of Herod* (fresco). Giovanni da Modena. Bologna,
Basilica of San Petronio, Chapel of the Magi ca. 1420–1424.

- Figure 93. *King Ramiro Summons the Crown Council* (fresco)
Padua, Chapel of St. James, Basilica di San'Antonio, 1376–1379.
- Figure 94. *Adoration of the Magi*, Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, ca. 1420–1425.
Florence, Uffizi Gallery, inv. 1890 n. 466.
Tempera on wood, 115 × 183 cm.
- Figure 95. Initial M with *St. Andrew*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum, 36: 1953.
- Figure 96. *The Marriage of the Virgin* (fresco), Lorenzo Monaco.
Florence, Bartolini-Salimbeni Chapel, Santa Trinità, ca. 1420–1424.
- Figure 97. *Prophet* (Monte Oliveto Altarpiece), Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, 1410.
Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, Inv. 1890 no. 8458. Tempera on wood,
274 × 261 cm.
- Figure 98. Lion Polyptych, Lorenzo Veneziano. Venice, 1357.
Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, inv. 5
Tempera on wood, 432 × 258 cm.
- Figure 99. *Adoration of the Magi* (Strozzi Altarpiece),
Detail: Virgin's Mantle
Gentile da Fabriano, 1423.
Florence, Uffizi Gallery, inv. 1890, no. 8364.
- Figure 100. *Coronation of the Virgin* (Valle Romita Polypptych)
Detail: Garments of the Virgin and Christ
Gentile da Fabriano, ca. 1410 – 1412
Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera, Inv. 153 – 174; 178 – 179 – 1129; 1230 – 1231 – 123
Tempera on wood, 280 × 250 cm.
- Figure 101. *Madonna and Child*, Gentile da Fabriano, ca. 1420–1424.
New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1871.66
Tempera on wood, 91.8 × 62.8 cm.
- Figure 102. Initial D with *Pentecost*, Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, ca. 1385–1397.
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Rossiano 1192.2.
- Figure 103. Initial S with *Pentecost*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–
1399.
London, Victoria & Albert Museum, Inv. n. 3045.

Figure 104. Initial S with *Pentecost* (The Berlin Gradual), Schematic drawing
Detail: Windows with ogee arch panes
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 65v.

Figure 105. Examples of ogee arch windows.
1. & 2. Venice
3. Murano

Figure 106. Ca' d'Oro: façade to the Grand Canal. Venice, 1428–1430.

Figure 107. Example of arches, Palazzo Ducale. Venice, ca. 1340.

Figure 108. Initial S with *Pentecost* (The Berlin Gradual), Schematic drawing
Detail: Vaulted ceiling
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 65v.

Figure 109. Initial ? with *St. Jerome Removing a Thorn from the Lion's Paw*
Detail: Ogee arch structure and wall niche with book
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum MS 96 verso.

Figure 110. Initial C with the *Last Supper*
Detail: Window
Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
New York, Morgan Library & Museum M653.4.

Figure 111. Initial S with *Pentecost* (The Berlin Gradual),
Schematic drawing
Detail: Bottle glass window pane
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 65v.

Figure 112. Ca' d'Oro
Detail: Bottle glass

1. First-floor *cortile* window

2. First-floor window
Venice, 1428–1430

Figure 113. *Dream of St. Ursula*, Vittore Carpaccio. Venice, ca. 1495.
Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia
Oil on canvas, 273 × 267 cm.

- Figure 114. Initial S with *Pentecost* (The Berlin Gradual),
Schematic drawing
Detail: Alternating tiles
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 65v.
- Figure 115. Example of diaper patterned tiles
Palazzo Ducale
Close up of the Molo façade
Venice, ca. 1400.
- Figure 116. Initial T with a *Bishop Consecrating a Church*
Detail: Alternating black & white tiles around the front portal
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
London, British Library, MS Add. 60630, fol. 10.
- Figure 117. *The Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus*
Attributed to the Workshop of Gentile Bellini. Venice, 1511.
Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 100.
Oil on canvas, 201 × 175 cm.
- Figure 118. Domes, Basilica di San Marco. Venice, compt. 1071.
- Figure 119. Dome of the Rock. Jerusalem, 688–692.
- Figure 120. Ibn-Tulun Mosque. Cairo, compt. 879.
- Figure 121. Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute. Venice, 1631–1687.
- Figure 122. Chiesa di San Giorgio Maggiore. Venice, 1566–1610.
- Figure 123. Initial T with a *Bishop Consecrating a Church*
Detail: Domes
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
London, British Library, MS Add. 60630, fol. 10.
- Figure 124. Initial T with a *Bishop Consecrating a Church*, Don Silvestro dei
Gheraducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Cor. 2.
- Figure 125. Initial T with a *Bishop Consecrating a Church*
Detail: Lancet-style windows topped with an ogee arch
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
London, British Library, MS Add. 60630, fol. 10.

- Figure 126. Initial R with the *Annunciation*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci.
 Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
 London, British Library, Add. MS 35254 C.
- Figure 127. Arcade & crenellation, Palazzo Ducale. Venice, ca. 1340.
- Figure 128. Arcade & crenellation, Altinbugha al-Maridani. Cairo, ca. 1340.
- Figure 129. Initial P with the *Circumcision* (The Milan Gradual), Cristoforo Cortese.
 Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol.
 55v.
- Figure 130. Initial A with *God the Father Offering the Christ Child to the People of Faith* (Advent), Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1392–1399.
 London, Victoria & Albert Museum MS 424, no. I 30–A.
- Figure 131. Camaldolese emblem,
 Initial A with *God the Father Offering the Christ Child to the People of Faith*
 (Advent) (The Milan Gradual), Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol.
 1r.
- Figure 132. Madonna of Humility (Bas-de-page)
 Initial A with *God the Father Offering the Christ Child to the People of Faith*
 (Advent) (The Milan Gradual), Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol. 1r.
- Figure 133. Initial L with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Morning Mass (The Milan
 Gradual), Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense MS. AB XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol. 43r.
- Figure 134. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
 Detail: St. Gregory the Great
 Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
 fol. 47v.
- Figure 135. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
 Detail: St. Romuald
 Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
 fol. 47v.

Figure 136. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Jerome
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 137. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Benedict
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 138. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Ambrose
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 139. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Bernard
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 140. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Augustine
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 141. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: St. Francis
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB. XVII, 28 (formerly Arm. I.28),
fol. 47v.

Figure 142. *Coronation of the Virgin*
Detail: Virgin receiving her crown; wears a white garment
Lorenzo Monaco. Florence, 1414.
Florence, Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 1890, no. 885.
Tempera on wood, 506 × 44.7 cm.

Figure 143. *St. Benedict Enthroned with Eight Saints*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci.
Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gukbenkian Ms. 35 (B 17, 094).

- Figure 144. Initial O with *St. Romuald Enthroned with a bishop saint (prob. St. Augustine) and monastics saints John Gualbert, Maurus and Placidus*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
London, British Library Add. MS 37, 473, fol. 3.
- Figure 145. *Crucifixion* (fresco), Fra Angelico. Florence, San Marco Chapter Room, ca. 1438–1450.
- Figure 146. *Crucifixion* (fresco),
Detail: Monastic bust portraits (roundels). Fra Angelico. Florence, San Marco Chapter Room, ca. 1438–1450.
- Figure 147. Initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (The Milan Gradual)
Detail: Old Testament Prophets with scrolls
Cristoforo Cortese. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, MS. AB XVII (formerly Arm I.28), fol. 47v.
- Figure 148. *Mission of the Apostles*
Detail: Bas-de-page with three medallions
Left –Right: St. Romuald, the Virgin & Child, St. Benedict
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1440s
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6030.
- Figure 149. Initial D with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass, Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399.
London, Victoria and Albert Museum, M.966.
- Figure 150. *The Nativity* (with bathing scene), Maestà Altarpiece (back panels)
Duccio di Buoninsegna. Siena, 1310–1311.
Siena, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, MC-101487.
Tempera and gold on wood, 213 × 396 cm.
- Figure 151. *The Nativity* (with bathing scene)
North-East France or Flanders, c. 12th Cent.
London, British Library, Cotton MS Caligula A VII/1, fol. 5r.
- Figure 152. *Salome and the Midwife Bathing the Infant Christ* (fresco)
Detail: HMEA label next to figure of midwife
Cappadocia, Kranlik Kilise (Dark Church), late 11th cent.
- Figure 153. *Mary Washing Christ’s Clothing in a Fountain Beside a Date Pala and Balsam Tree*, (The Holkham Bible). England, ca. 1327.
London, British Library, Add. MS 47682, fol. 15v.

- Figure 154. Woodcut of the Matariya Legend, *Historia trium regum*
John of Hildesheim. Germany, ca. 1490.
New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M 53, fol. 4r.
- Figure 155. Women in contemporary clothing & headdress
Tacuinum Sanitatis (Book of Health)
15th century
1. Making silk clothing (fol. 95r)

2. Selling pigeons (fol. 69v)
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latine 1673.
- Figure 156. Initial R with the *Resurrection*, (Gradual of Gisela von Kerksenbrock)
Osnabrück, ca. 1300.
Osnabrück, Diözesanarchiv Osnabrück Inv-Nr ma 101, fol. 70r.
- Figure 157. Initial G with *St. Blaise*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum MS 73-1.
- Figure 158. Initial D with the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*, Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
London, Private Collection.
- Figure 159. Initial O (?) with a *Holy Pope?* Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Current location unknown.
- Figure 160. Initial I with *St. Matthew (?)* Master of the Murano Gradual
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Florence, Private Collection.
- Figure 161. Initial S with *St. Augustine (or possibly a Holy Bishop)*,
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1954.257.
- Figure 162. Initial D with *St. Lawrence*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice. ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Washington, National Gallery of Art, B-14, 842.

Figure 163. Catalogue page for the sale of cuttings belonging to William Young Ottley

Detail: Lot 31

11 May, 1838 at Sotheby's, London.

London, British Library.

'Catalogue of the of the very beautiful collection of highly finished and illuminated miniature paintings, the property of the late William Young Ottley, Esq., which will be sold by auction by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby on Friday 11 May, 1838 and the following day at one o'clock.'

Figure 164. Catalogue page for the sale of cuttings belonging to William Young Ottley

Detail: Lot 32 and statement of original provenance

11 May, 1838 at Sotheby's, London.

London, British Library

'Catalogue of the of the very beautiful collection of highly finished and illuminated miniature paintings, the property of the late William Young Ottley, Esq., which will be sold by auction by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby on Friday 11 May, 1838 and the following day at one o'clock.'

Figure 165. Initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint*, Master of the Murano Gradual.

Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

London, Private Collection.

Figure 166. Initial R with the *Resurrection* (The Berlin Gradual)

Detail: Monastic bust portraits

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, c. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F.I, fol. i verso.

Figure 167. Initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin*

Detail: Camaldolese monk

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18.

Figure 168. *Mission of the Apostles*

Detail: Rabbits playing in the bottom of the main miniature

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection M6030.

Figure 169. Initial B with the *Old and New Testament Trinity* (The Berlin Gradual)

Schematic Drawing

Detail: Rabbits playing

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Berlin, Kuperstichkabinett, MS 78F. I, fol. 101v.

Figure 170. St. Benedict and St. Romuald
Bas-de-page, San Michele Missal
Venice, 1503.
London, British Library, C. 24. f.8

Figure 171. Initial E with the *Mission of the Apostles*, Master of the Ashmolean Predella.
Florence, ca. 1390.
London, British Library, MS Add. 38896, fol. 1.

Figure 172. *Mission of the Apostles*
Detail: White dove/Holy Spirit
Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, Wildenstein Collection, M6030.

Figure 173. Examples of historiated initials with *Old Testament Prophets*,
Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Florence, ca. 1390–1399
New York, Morgan Library & Museum
1. Initial D, MS M. 718, fol. 1
2. Initial P, MS M. 478, fol. 13
3. Initial S, MS M. 478, fol. 16

Figure 174. Carmelite Madonna Altarpiece, Pietro Lorenzetti.
Siena, 1328–1329.
Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.
Tempera on wood, 169 × 148 cm.

Figure 175. *Dream of St. Romuald*, Anonymous Pisan Painter.
Pisa, ca. 1400.
Florence, Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 7325.
Tempera on wood.

Figure 176. The Holy Trinity with St. Romuald and St. Andrew Altarpiece,
Nardo di Cione. Florence, 1365.
Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia.

Figure 177. *Dream of St. Romuald* (predella), Trinity Altarpiece, Nardo di Cione.
Florence, 1365.
Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia.

Figure 178. Page for feast of St. Romuald
Detail: Initial R with the *Dream of St. Romuald*
San Michele Missal.
Venice, 1503.
London, British Library C. 24 f.8, fol. 229r.

- Figure 179. Calendar page: June
 Detail: Feast day of St. Romuald.
 San Michele Missal.
 Venice, 1503.
 London, British Library C. 24 f.8, fol. 8r.
- Figure 180. Catalogue page for the sale of cuttings belonging to William Young Ottley
 Detail: Lot 33, 11 May, 1838 at Sotheby's, London.
 London, British Library.
 'Catalogue of the of the very beautiful collection of highly finished and illuminated miniature paintings, the property of the late William Young Ottley, Esq., which will be sold by auction by Mr. S. Leigh Sotheby on Friday 11 May, 1838 and the following day at one o'clock.'
- Figure 181. Initial ? With *Two Bishops and Two Saints(?)*: reverse side with text and notation, Master of the Murano Gradual.
 Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48:40.
- Figure 182. Initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint*: reverse side with text and notation, Master of the Murano Gradual.
 Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Cambridge, University Library MS Add. 4165 (10).
- Figure 183. Initial G with the *Nativity of the Virgin*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
 Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 London, Private Collection.
- Figure 184. Camaldolese nun supplicating to St. Mary Magdalene (the *Last Supper*)
 Camaldolese gradual. Florence, ca. 1380.
 London, Victoria & Albert Museum MSL 1868/5836.
- Figure 185. Initial L with *St. Margaret Emerging from a Dragon* (with a supplicating Camaldolese nun), Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci.
 Florence, c. 1390.
 Milan, Private Collection.
- Figure 186. Initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin*
 Detail: Sky
 Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18.
- Figure 187. Initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin*
 Detail: God receiving Mary's soul
 Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18.

Figure 188. Initial N with *St. Helena Finding the True Cross*

Detail: Sky

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

New York, Private Collection.

Figure 189. Initial V with the *Ascension* (The Berlin Gradual)

Detail: Cloud

Master of the Murano Gradual. Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.

Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78 F. I, fol. 50r.

Figure 190. Initial V with *St. John the Evangelist*, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci.

Florence, ca. 1390–1399.

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. 8.

Figure 191. Berardenga Antependium, Tressa Master. Siena? 1215

Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Tempera on wood.

Figure 192. Beirut Miracle scene (second panel on left), Berardenga Antependium,

Tressa Master.

Siena? 1215.

Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 193. Calendar page: November

Detail: Feast of San Salvatore

San Michele Missal. Venice, 1503.

London, British Library C. 24 f. 8, fol. 13r.

Figure 194. *Our Lady of Loreto*. 1507.

Syracuse, Galleria Regionale di Palazzo Bellomo.

Figure 195. *The Translation of the Holy House of Loreto*, Santurino Giatti.

Abruzzi, ca. 1510.

New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973.319.

Tempera on wood, 84.5 × 54.9 cm.

Figure 196. *Holy House of Loreto* (fresco)

ca. mid-14th cent.

Jesi, San Marco

Figure 197. *Holy House of Loreto* (fresco), Pietro di Cola di Berto or Coleberti?

Gubbio, San Francesco, ca. 1420.

Figure 198. *Annunciation to Mary* (Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux)
Detail: Angel supporting architectural structure
Jean Pucelle
Paris, ca. 1324–1328.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 54.1.2, fol. 16r.

Figure 199. Calendar page: May
Detail: Feast day of Archangel Michael
San Michele Missal. Venice, 1503.
London, British Library C. 24 f.8, fol. 7r.

Figure 200. Calendar page: September
Detail: Feast day of the dedication of the Basilica of St. Michael
San Michele Missal. Venice, 1503.
London, British Library C. 24 f.8, fol. 11r.

Figure 201. Initial E with *St. Philip and St. James(?)*, Master of the Murano Gradual.
Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1440s.
Current location unknown.

Figure 202. Initial I with a *Prophet*, Circle of the Murano Master.
Venice? Ca. 1470?
New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1954.7.4.

Figure 203. Initial I with a *Prophet*, Circle of the Murano Master.
Venice? Ca. 1470?
Current location unknown.

INTRODUCTION

Sede in cella quasi in paradiso; proice post tergum de memoria totum mundum, cautus ad cogitationes, quasi bonus piscator ad pisces. Una via est in psalmis; hanc ne dimittas. Si non potes omnia, qui venisti fervore novicio, nunc in hoc, nunc in illo loco psallere in spiritu et intelligere mente stude, et cum ceperis vagare legendo, ne desistas, sed festina intelligendo emendare; pone te ante omnia in presentia Dei cum timore et tremore, quasi qui stat in conspectu imperatoris; destrue te totum, et sede quasi pullus, contentus ad gratiam Dei, qui, nisi mater donet, nec sapit nec habet quod comedit.

Sit in the cell as in paradise. Cast the memory of the world behind you, carefully attentive to your thoughts as a good fisher is to the fish. One way is in the Psalms: this, do not dismiss. If you who have come with the fervor of a novice are not capable of making use of everything, then first in this place and then in that psalmodize in spirit and understand with an attentive mind. And when your mind begins to wander while reading, do not desist, but hasten to correct yourself by applying the understanding. Above all, place yourself in the presence of God with fear and trembling, as one who stands in the sight of the emperor. Completely destroy yourself and sit like a little bird content with the grace of God. For unless its mother gives it something, it neither tastes anything nor has anything to eat.¹

When St. Romuald (ca. 951–1025/27) began his sojourn into the wilderness for solitary contemplation, he did not intend to midwife a reform movement within the Benedictine monastic world. What he desired was to redress the balance between the eremitic and cenobitic aspects of contemplative religious life. Founded in ca. 1012, and governed by the *Rule of St. Benedict* and the *Brief Rule of St. Romuald*, quoted in its entirety above, the Camaldolese order (*Ordo Camaldulensium*) adhered strictly to the trifecta of monastic values (poverty, chastity, and obedience), while embracing the new focus on

¹ The Brief Rule of St. Romuald was recorded in 1006 by St. Bruno of Querfurt. Translation in Bruno-Boniface of Querfurt, 'The Life of the Five Hermit Brothers,' P.-D. Belisle, trans. and ed. *Camaldolese Spirituality. Essential Sources* (Ercam Editions: Bloomingdale, 2007), pp. 39–103 (at p. 102).

eremitic prayer.² Today, the monks and nuns of the Camaldolese order continue to trace their spiritual and religious lineage directly back to St. Romuald, observing the religious model that he set for himself back in the eleventh century. Then, just as now, solitary prayer and contemplation was one prong of the two-fold path that the Camaldolese monastics walked: the other being communal engagement within their cloistered houses. These monks lived lives of intense austerity, practicing extreme fasting during the penitential seasons—even their snow-white robe was a statement about their rejection of material wealth, as white cloth does not require any dye unlike the black habits of the Benedictines, which Romuald saw as particularly lavish.³

Yet despite the firm austerity of this new order, the Camaldolese would eventually come to place great value on the visual arts as a vehicle for divine veneration, and throughout the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, Camaldolese scriptoria produced some extraordinary works, which were mainly illuminated manuscripts. In addition to decorated books, they also commissioned many altarpieces with complex visual programmes that reflected their spiritual needs. Camaldolese monasteries engaged the services of both monastic and lay artists from various Italian centres, particularly Florence, and appear to have spared little expense for the production of their illuminated manuscripts and panel paintings. Although the Camaldolese were encouraged to eschew material and worldly possessions, certain monasteries acquired considerable wealth and power, and became great centres of learning and artistic production as a result of their

² Although the practice of solitary contemplation is outlined in the *Rule of St. Benedict*, St. Romuald believed that there had been a shift placing greater emphasis on the cenobitic aspects of religious life.

³ C. Caby, 'Culte Monastique et Fortune Humaniste: Ambrogio Traversari, "Vir Illuster" de L' order Camldule,' *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen-Âge, Temps modernes* 108 (1996), pp. 321–54 (at p. 323).

impressive resources.⁴ Houses such as Santa Maria degli Angeli, located in Florence, developed a reputation for their active scriptorium, lavish library, and circle of highly skilled monastic painters, including Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci, Don Lorenzo Monaco, and Fra Angelico.⁵

This thesis centres on a sumptuous series of now-dismembered illuminated choir books made for the Camaldolese monastery of San Mattia di Murano, located in the Venetian Lagoon. It is thought that the multi-volume set was produced in the first half of the Quattrocento, although some scholars have suggested dates as late as the 1460s. Made for use during the celebration of the Mass and Divine Office and measuring 600 × 420 mm, these massive leather-bound books were intended to sit atop a lectern while being read by many monks at once (Fig. 1).⁶ Thus, the contents of the manuscripts—liturgical texts, neumes, and images—were required to be highly legible, which accounts for their large size. While visibility was a practical concern, the visual programme was to serve a spiritual function, and therefore needed to reflect Camaldolese values in addition to Christian dogma. The illuminated programme has been attributed to two artists:

⁴ P. Meneghin, *S. Michele in Isola di Venezia*, Vol. I (Stamperia di Venezia: Venice, 1962), p. 22.

⁵ B. Drake Boehm, 'The Books of the Florentine Illuminators,' in L. B. Kanter, B. Drake Boehm, C. B. Strehlke, G. Freuler, C. C. Mayer Thurman, and P. Palladino, eds., *Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300–1450* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 1994a), pp. 15–24.

⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Cor. 3, fol. 41v. M. Levi D'Ancona *The Choir Books of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence Vol. I: The Illuminators and Illuminations of the Choir Books from Santa Maria degli Angeli and Santa Maria Nuova in Florence* (Centro Di: Florence, 1994).

Cristoforo Cortese, usually considered to be the leading Venetian illuminator in the early fifteenth century,⁷ and the so-called ‘Master of the Murano Gradual.’⁸

It has been suggested that the San Mattia choir books were likely modelled upon another lavish set made in the late Trecento and early Quattrocento for the nearby Camaldolese sister monastery of San Michele in Isola.⁹ In turn, both sets drew iconographic and stylistic inspiration from the famous series made for Santa Maria degli Angeli, in Florence, which were begun in the late 1390s and added to well into the sixteenth century. This set is also now dismembered but likely remained in the Florentine monastery until the late nineteenth century, when the volumes were removed—either looted or purchased—and dismantled during the Napoleonic suppression of the city’s religious houses.¹⁰ The full-page illuminations and historiated initials were excised so as to be sold as ‘miniature’ paintings on the burgeoning art market, primarily in England, while the bindings, liturgical texts and musical notation were discarded. It was not until the late twentieth century that their contents were reassembled by Mirella Levi D’Ancona and published in a two-volume monograph.¹¹ The choir books of San Mattia, and San Michele, suffered the same fate as those of Santa Maria degli Angeli when the

⁷ S. Marcon, ‘Cristoforo Cortese,’ in M. Bollati, ed., *Dizionario Biografico dei Miniatori Italiani Secoli IX – XVI* (Edizioni Sylvestre Bonnard: Milan, 2004), pp. 176–80.

⁸ This artist shall be referred to as simply the Murano Master throughout the rest of this thesis. F. Lollini, ‘Maestro di San Michele a Murano,’ in Bollati (2004), pp. 699–701.

⁹ G. Freuler, ‘Gradual for San Michele a Murano,’ in Kanter et al. (1994a), pp. 155–176 (at pp. 155–56).

¹⁰ A.-M. Eze, ‘Abbé Luigi Celotti and the Sistine Chapel Manuscripts,’ *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura* 20 (2016), pp. 139–54.

¹¹ Levi D’Ancona, (1994); *The Choir Books of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence Vol. II: The Reconstructed ‘Diurno Domenicale’ from Santa Maria degli Angeli* (Centro Di: Florence, 1993).

Napoleonic decree to shut the Venetian houses was issued in 1810.¹² Shortly thereafter the contents of the library were dispersed and the choral manuscripts were dissected for their illuminations.

Following the methodology employed by Levi D'Ancona in her reconstruction of the Florentine series, this study is the first to attempt a partial reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books by first tracing the San Mattia material and then reassembling the findings back into their original liturgical context as much as possible given the fractured state of the evidence. Compared to the Florentine volumes, however, fewer cuttings have been traced from the San Mattia books. Thus certain illuminations that must have existed, such as the *Annunciation* and the *Presentation*, are at present lost. Additionally, Levi D'Ancona had copious archival records concerning the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books including artists' contracts, payment records, and material purchase orders.¹³ While there are numerous *buste* (files or folders) of documents and inventories of property, domestic items (utensils) owned by the houses, and monastic registries, for the house of San Mattia in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, these records do not shed light on the monastery's manuscript production during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Therefore, this partial reconstruction is based on the physical cuttings and the liturgical and spiritual history of both the Camaldolese order more broadly and San Mattia, more specifically.

This dissertation argues that the monks at San Mattia used monastic corporate iconography to express complex ideas about their own monastic identity vis-à-vis their liturgical practices in ways that differed from that of their sister houses San Michele in

¹² S. Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia X* (Naratovich: Venice, 1861), p. 446.

¹³ See: Levi D'Ancona (1993), Index.

Isola and Santa Maria degli Angeli, in Florence. This thesis also suggests that these ideas about identity were interpreted through the lens of the Murano Master's own creative intelligence, which resulted in unusual and innovative visual language. The primary aim of this partial reconstruction is to begin probing the ways in which Venetian Camaldolese spiritual identity may have differed from Florentine ideas about monastic identity during the early Quattrocento. The images that comprise the San Mattia corpus, which includes two intact volumes and a collection of individual fragments, will serve as the centre-point from which this investigation stems. The questions to be explored include: Did the monks at San Mattia view themselves as spiritually distinctive from their sister houses of San Michele and Santa Maria degli Angeli, despite all belonging to the same order? How was iconography used to communicate spiritual ideology and identity specific to San Mattia? Were there differences in the ways in which the Venetian Camaldolese viewed their place in Benedictine monasticism compared with the Florentine faction? Were there further disparities between the two Venetian houses concerning spiritual identity? By conducting close readings of the iconography of the San Mattia material, these are the questions that I will attempt to answer in the dissertation that follows.

A secondary goal concerns probing more deeply the oeuvre of the anonymous Murano Master, whose life and personality can only be interpreted through the works attributed to him. Unlike Cristoforo Cortese, about whom much more is known and who has been the focus of several dedicated studies, undertaken by such scholars as Giordana Mariani Canova and Silvia Fumian, the Murano Master has been largely

overlooked—likely due to the lack of concrete information about him.¹⁴ In 1987, Keith Christiansen stated that finding a foundation upon which to build a history of Venetian painting in the early fifteenth century was problematic, owing largely to the fact that few original works survive and documents are scarce.¹⁵ While that might have been true at the time of his statement, since then much work has been done on painting in Venice during the early Quattrocento, which has given art historians the necessary bedrock for pursuing a deeper investigation of fifteenth-century Venetian art.¹⁶ The work done by Mariani Canova, Fumian, Valentina Baradel and Cristina Guarnieri, over the past decade has expanded our art historical understanding of Venice during this period, mainly through focusing on single artists and then placing them within the contemporary creative context. In this thesis, while considering Cortese and his contribution to the San Mattia material, the emphasis will be placed on the work of the Murano Master in an attempt to further probe *his* place within the fertile artistic networks active in Venice during this

¹⁴ Mariani Canova wrote the dedicated catalogue entry about the Milan Gradual and was the first to suggest a link between it and the Berlin Gradual. Her contributions are discussed at length in Chs. 2 & 3. S. Fumian, *Cristoforo Cortese miniature veneziano: dottorato di ricerca in storia e critica dei beni artistici e musicali, ciclo 19*, PhD diss. (Università degli studi di Padova, 2007); ‘Attorno a Cristoforo Cortese: di due manoscritti conservati all’Archivio Capitolare della cattedrale di Traù,’ in F. Toniolo and G. Valenzano, eds., *Medioevo adriatico. Circolazione di modelli, opera, maestri* (Viella: Rome, 2010), pp. 159–75; ‘Cristoforo Cortese e i domenicani a Venezia: di alcuni manoscritti cateriniani,’ in V. Cantone and S. Fumian, eds., *Le arti a confronto con il Sacro. Metodi di ricerca e nuove prospettive d’indagine interdisciplinare, atti delle giornate di studio (Padova, 31 maggio – 1 giugno 2007)* (Cleuo: Padua, 2009), pp. 101–09.

¹⁵ K. Christiansen, ‘Venetian Painting of the Early Quattrocento,’ *Apollo* 125 (1987), pp. 166–77 (at p. 166.).

¹⁶ V. Baradel, *Zanino di Pietro. Un protagonista della pittura veneziana fra Tre e Quattrocento* (Il Poligrafo: Padua, 2019); G. Mariani Canova, ‘Miniatura a Vicenza tra Medioevo e Rinascimento,’ in G. Catiglioni, ed., *La parola illuminata: per una storia della miniatura a Verona e a Vicenza tra Medioevo e Età romantica* (Fondazione Cariverona: Verona, 2011), pp. 25–73; C. Guarnieri, *Lorenzo Veneziano* (Silvana: Milan, 2006).

period. This will involve making a closer examination of the possible influences of monumental art (frescoes and altarpieces) on the Murano Master's approach to manuscript illumination. Scrutinising the dynamics between the micro (book illumination) and the macro (monumental art) will be central to this aspect of the investigation.

Another important angle to consider will be the geographical aspect of the artistic style of the San Mattia material. Although nothing is known about the origins or formal training of the Murano Master, scholars have noted that he appears to pull together various styles from different regions, including Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany, and assimilate them into the local visual traditions of Venice. The presence of these stylistic elements may imply that he originated from one of these regions or perhaps had some formal training in one of these centres.¹⁷ At the very least, their presence in the San Mattia material could suggest that the Murano Master had some access to works produced in those places. This, combined with his use of both exotic imports, such as ultramarine, and local materials, such as smalt,¹⁸ suggests that he was a versatile member of the vibrant creative community in Venice and was interested in experimenting with various sources of inspiration. Although the influence of these regions is clearly evident in the San Mattia illuminations it remains an understudied aspect of these choir books.

¹⁷ S. Panayotova, 'Initial G with the Dormition of the Virgin,' in S. Panayotova, N. Morgan, and S. Reynolds, eds., *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam Museum and Cambridge Colleges. Part Two: Italy and the Iberian Peninsula* (Harvey Miller/Brepols: London and Turnhout, 2012), no. 81.

¹⁸ Smalt is a blue pigment produced by mixing cobalt with glass and is discussed in great depth in Ch. 4.

While the San Mattia series is no longer complete, it is thought that there are two volumes still intact: the so-called ‘Berlin Gradual’¹⁹ and the so-called ‘Milan Gradual.’²⁰ Their contents cover the *Temporale* portion of the liturgical year calendar, and the illuminated programme of the Berlin Gradual has been attributed to the Murano Master, while the Milan Gradual is the work of Cortese. As already mentioned, the remainder of the series exists today as fragments—the excised initials—found in public and private collections all over the globe. In this study thirty-eight cuttings belonging to the San Mattia series have been traced and reassembled back into their original liturgical order as accurately as possible given their fragmented state.²¹ It is important to note that although the Berlin Gradual is a key component of this study, there are a limited number of images included in this thesis due to the policy regarding photography at the Kupferstichkabinett, where the manuscript is currently held. The curators have declined numerous requests for images of the Gradual made by this author and by other scholars, thus the images included in this dissertation have been taken from previous publications and are limited in quality. This is also the case for the cuttings in the Musée Marmottan in Paris. The curators there have also refused numerous requests to remove the fourteen cuttings from the vitrines for closer examination and photography. Again, the images of the Marmottan initials have been taken from previous publications and are cited accordingly.

This thesis is also the first extensive study of the Murano Master’s oeuvre. Nothing is known about this artist’s formative years, training, personal life, or career and for many decades his identity was conflated with that of another painter from the fifteenth

¹⁹ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS F. 78 I. Discussed in Ch. 2.

²⁰ Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, Arm I. 28. Discussed in Ch. 3.

²¹ The cuttings pose several major challenges due to their highly fragmented state and these issues are addressed in Ch. 4.

century: Belbello da Pavia.²² What scholars do know about the Murano Master is based primarily on the style of the illuminations attributed to his hand. His corpus comprises the Berlin Gradual and the thirty-eight cuttings gathered together in this thesis. This study probes the unusual iconographic and stylistic choices made by the Murano Master and Cortese that appear to be unique to the San Mattia series, and therefore unlikely to have been inspired by the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes or the ones made for San Michele. As will become clear, based on the iconography of the San Mattia material, the Camaldolese monks at this Venetian house seemed particularly concerned about their place in both Benedictine monastic history and Christianity, more broadly. Many of the illuminations convey ideas about the possible dynamic between the Camaldolese order and their Benedictine ancestors as well as other monastic reformers and Church Fathers. In several of the images, the Murano Master and Cortese have designed visual programmes that put depictions of the monks within close physical, and thus spiritual, proximity to the Divine figures rendered in the scenes. Presumably, the illuminators made these choices based on instructions from the monastic authorities at San Mattia, which suggests that these iconographic elements held spiritual significance for the monks.

The investigation begins with a formal history of the origin and development of the Camaldolese order as well as a discussion of its cultural and artistic legacy. This critical aspect of the order's history is imperative for defining and understanding the creative dynamics of the triangulation formed by the three houses being considered: Santa Maria degli Angeli, San Michele, and San Mattia. This is followed by a careful parsing of the various sets of choir books belonging to the three monasteries, an integral

²² Lollini in Bollati (1994), p. 699.

but hitherto seldom-studied aspect of this multi-series corpus of Camaldolese choir books. For many years, certain volumes were assumed to belong to the Florentine house, specifically what Levi D’Ancona calls the ‘Diurno Domenicale.’²³ However, based on documentation including letters written by the prior of Santa Maria degli Angeli to the Sienese Dominican Tommaso d’Antonio Caffarini, Gaudenz Freuler has argued that the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ was intended for use by San Michele in Isola.²⁴

This thesis accepts Freuler’s argument and considers the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ to be part of the set for San Michele. This section of the first chapter also addresses the thorny issue of dating the San Mattia choir books. Unlike the volumes belonging to Santa Maria degli Angeli, which have dated archival records of payment and several illuminations with dates written on them, no such contemporary documentation remains in Venice. Therefore, the dating of the Venetian corpus is based on stylistic comparisons with known datable works, including the Florentine material and other illuminated manuscripts such as the portion of the Visconti Hours completed by Belbello da Pavia between ca. 1412 and the early 1430s.²⁵ This is followed by a discussion of the methodology used to reassemble the individual fragments and the particular challenges of this aspect of the partial reconstruction. The second half of Ch. 1 introduces the artists to whom the San Mattia series is attributed: the Murano Master and Cortese. Here, the current state of knowledge concerning their respective histories and oeuvres is outlined. While Cortese’s life and contribution to the San Mattia series is acknowledged, the primary focus centres on the Murano Master, specifically his stylistic hallmarks, which

²³ Levi D’Ancona (1994).

²⁴ Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155.

²⁵ M. Meiss and E. W. Kirsch, *The Visconti Hours. National Library, Florence* (George Braziller: New York, 1972), p. 27.

are used to attribute works to him, as well as a discussion of the problematic aspects of his work.

Ch. 2 is devoted exclusively to the examination of the Berlin Gradual, which is the first of the two intact volumes associated with the San Mattia set. As such, it forms the anchor to which the other intact volume and the individual fragments are tethered. This chapter begins with a discussion of the codicological features—both internal and external—that buttress a Venetian provenance, including the *fenestra* label, which also serialises the manuscript. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the stylistic features, beginning with the lavish and visually complex opening folio: the Initial R with the *Resurrection* for the Mass of Easter Sunday (Fig. 2). This folio appears to contain multiple different styles, which suggests the presences of various hands. In order to establish which iconographic features the Murano Master may have painted, it is necessary to first examine the style of these features then follow with a consideration of the iconography. The Murano Master's style for rendering visual features is examined with respect to other works in his oeuvre and to those of his contemporaries, including Cortese and Belbello. The Berlin Gradual's subsequent illuminations demonstrate a remarkable stylistic consistency, which are composed entirely of the stylistic features that comprise the Murano Master's oeuvre. This may suggest that he was mainly—if not completely—responsible for these images. There is also consideration of the Murano Master's use of particular painting techniques, such as *cangiante*. The discussion of the iconography is intended as a means of exploring the development of monastic identity within the house of San Mattia. The iconography and style of the images in the Berlin Gradual are compared with those in the San Michele and the Santa Maria degli Angeli

sets in order to explore the specific iconographic and stylistic choices made by the Murano Master and how these choices may have diverged from pre-existing models to accommodate the possible requests by the monks at San Mattia.

This chapter also delves into the academic discourse concerning the possible influence of monumental painting on the Murano Master's creative imagination when creating the San Mattia material. In the scholarship, two fresco cycles are of particular importance: one painted by Giovanni da Modena in the basilica of San Petronio in Bologna during the first two decades of the fifteenth century, and the cycle attributed to the so-called 'Master of Vignola' at the Rocca di Vignola, a fortress located in the foothills of the Apennine Mountains, southwest of Bologna. The Vignola frescoes are believed to be contemporary with those at San Petronio.²⁶ Both of these cycles are considered in relation to the San Mattia choir books specifically the possibility that the Murano Master drew on them for creative inspiration. In addition to wall paintings, altarpieces by Gentile da Fabriano and several made for Santa Maria degli Angeli by Lorenzo Monaco, are also incorporated into the discussion as possible models for the Murano Master. The topic of monumental art is woven into subsequent chapters and is considered when discussing the Milan Gradual (Ch. 3) and the loose cuttings (Ch. 4). Ch. 2 closes with a catalogue entry for the Berlin Gradual that consists of basic information followed by a codicological synopsis and a listing of the manuscript's liturgical contents.

As with Ch. 2, the third chapter focuses on a single object: the other intact volume of the San Mattia series. This chapter has the same structure as the previous one, in that it begins with a codicological analysis in order to determine the veracity of the claim that

²⁶ D. Benati and V. Vandelli, eds., *La Cappella Contrari nella Rocca di Vignola* (Jaca Book: Milan, 2007), p. 43.

the Berlin and Milan Graduals are related. This is followed by an examination of certain iconographic features in relation to the original research question of how the monks at San Mattia may have used monastic corporate iconography in order to define their identity within the larger Benedictine universe and also how certain images within the manuscript could have been used to foster a deeper sense of personal and communal devotion. Again, beginning with the opening folio: an initial A for the First Sunday of Advent (Fig. 3), various aspects of the visual programme are unpacked such as the Camaldolese emblem and the Madonna of Humility in the bas-de-page.

Although there are fewer historiated initials in the Milan Gradual than in the Berlin volume, the contents still offer a rich source of iconography that speaks to issues of Camaldolese spirituality and monastic identity. Following the discussion of the opening folio, the iconography of other images, including the initial P with the *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass (Fig. 4), is considered within the context of Camaldolese liturgy and ideology, as these illuminations contain important examples of monastic corporate iconography, such as the inclusion of bust portraits of various monastic reformers and church fathers. These iconographic aspects are unpacked as a means of probing more deeply the possible ways in which the monks at San Mattia understood their place in Benedictine monastic history. There are also aspects of these illuminations that do not appear to have iconographic parallels in other Camaldolese sources, either visual or textual, such as the unusual scene of the Virgin bathing the Christ Child after he is born in the initial D with the *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass (Fig. 5). This iconography is scrutinised and possible source models are considered. In the same image, Cortese has also included what appear to be three secular figures placed directly in the space of the

Holy Family. From this, a discussion ensues that attempts to examine the history of interactions between lay patrons and the monks of San Mattia. The chapter closes with a catalogue entry for the Milan Gradual.

Ch. 4 engages with the most complex portion of the partial reconstruction: the individual cuttings. As outlined in Ch. 1, the thirty-eight fragments lack any codicological context and therefore must be considered as both individual objects and pieces of a once larger whole. They pose several major problems, which are addressed in-depth in this chapter. The catalogue entries for all the cuttings can be found in the Appendix, which also includes the partial reconstruction of the fragments in the original liturgical order within the volumes. The catalogue was created by extracting information from the iconography and, when possible, from the text on the reverse side. In some cases the narrative is explicit and/or the liturgical context has been reconstructed in previous publications. A good example is the initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin* (Fig. 6): its iconography is clear, and the text, although fragmentary, is well preserved on the reverse side. This has allowed scholars to reconstruct the original liturgical context.²⁷ For a majority of the cuttings, the iconography is not obvious and the fragmentary text on the reverse is obscured or insufficient for identification.

In this thesis, the partial information collected from the iconography and/or the text on the reverse side of previously unidentified fragments has been cross-referenced against various Camaldolese liturgical texts, including a printed missal dated 1501 and belonging to San Michele. When a narrative scene or figure can be identified the cutting

²⁷ Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18. S. Panayotova, ed., *Colour. The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Harvey Miller/Brepols: London and Turnhout, 2016), no. 81.

has been placed into what might have been its original liturgical order using Levi D’Ancona’s reconstruction of the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books as a guide. Since all the known cuttings appear to exhibit stylistic features that are considered hallmarks of the Murano Master’s work, it might be likely that he did the majority of painting for the volumes to which these cuttings once belonged. The presence of these characteristics leaves little room for doubt that he was, at the very least, heavily involved in their creation and as such the conversation of the fourth chapter revolves entirely around him.

The chapter opens by delineating the problems of attempting to identify fragments and explains the methodology used in this thesis to assess and reassess these identifications. This is followed by a discussion of the types of liturgical books to which the cuttings may have originally belonged, either graduals (which contain the sung portion of the Mass) or antiphoners (which contain the sung portion of the Divine Office²⁸). It is crucial to ascertain as accurately as possible which books the cuttings might have come from in order to produce a partial reconstruction of greater accuracy. From here, the conversation considers whether all of the cuttings belonged to the same set and whether the whole set was intended for San Mattia. It is important to be mindful of the possibility that there might be books from different sets mixed together especially as the removal of the choir books from San Mattia, San Michele, Santa Maria degli Angeli and other monastic houses was done during a period of great political and religious upheaval.

²⁸ The Divine Office is comprised of the eight canonical hours of the liturgical day and mark the set times for prayers that comprise monastic life. See: J. Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1991).

Although the original number of loose cuttings belonging to the Murano Master's oeuvre has been set at thirty-eight, this thesis takes issue with several that are considered, by this author, to be problematic as they do not exhibit his stylistic characteristics or they appear to have been imitations of the Murano Master's style. Two cuttings, *Seated Evangelist* (Fig. 7) and *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua)* (Fig. 8) have been de-attributed in this thesis and are not considered to be part of the Murano Master's oeuvre.²⁹ Ergo, of the thirty-eight fragments originally listed in the catalogue entry for this chapter, only thirty-six are accepted as part of the Murano Master's corpus.

Of these thirty-six cuttings, eight have been chosen for deeper iconographic and stylistic analysis: *Mission of the Apostles* (Fig. 9), initial O with the *Dream of St. Romuald* (Fig. 10), initial O with St. Romuald? (*Male Saint?*) (Fig. 11), initial O? with *Two Bishops and Two Saints* (Fig. 12), initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (Fig. 13), initial V with *St. John the Evangelist?* (Fig. 14), initial ? with a *Scene of Sacrilege* (Fig. 15), and initial B with the *Holy House Floating on the Sea* (Fig. 16). Each one has been selected because of its unique or unusual iconography and stylistic elements, which can speak to concepts of Camaldolese monastic identity, and also about the creative sensibility of the Murano Master. The discussion concentrates mainly on eight cuttings although other fragments from the San Mattia corpus are referenced when contextually necessary. This chapter assesses the information gathered through a close reading of the fragments' iconography in light of the Camaldolese spiritual and historical context. This context is crucial for reinterpreting the curious iconography represented in the cuttings,

²⁹ While not being attributed to the Murano Master, whether they were still part of the San Mattia series remains an open question and is not considered within the scope of this dissertation.

such as the so-called *Scene of Sacrilege*, which this author suggests is a depiction of the relatively rare Beirut Miracle legend.

The Conclusion is divided into two portions. The first offers a summation of the work undertaken in this thesis but it also attempts to reconcile some of the conclusions drawn in the individual chapters, especially those pertaining to issues of Camaldolese spirituality and the use of monastic corporate iconography. Each chapter is reconsidered within the context of the close reading of the illuminations' iconography and the larger questions of monastic identity formation and the creative process of the Murano Master and Cristoforo Cortese. The second portion of the Conclusion strives to go beyond just presenting a summary and instead offers next steps for taking the investigation of the San Mattia choir books forward. One avenue for future research would be to complete a full reconstruction by following the formula used by Levi D'Ancona for her reconstruction of the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books. This type of work would include attempting to trace all of the missing fragments and reallocate them into their original liturgical order. An endeavour such as this one could greatly enhance the liturgical and religious understanding of Camaldolese spirituality in early Quattrocento Venice. It may also help to further the art historical knowledge of the mysterious Murano Master. In the thesis that follows, the splintered parts of the San Mattia choir books are reimagined, reconfigured, and returned to their fifteenth-century context.

**‘Pray One Psalm with Devotion and Compunction’¹:
A Benedictine Reform Order & Their Choir Books**

I. The Camaldolese Context: History & Heritage

An attempt to reconstruct the San Mattia choir books first requires that the history of the original monastic context in which these volumes were made be outlined. San Mattia di Murano was a religious house belonging to the Camaldolese Order, a reformed branch of Benedictine monasticism. Initiated by St. Romuald of Ravenna (ca. 952–1027) in ca. 1012, this reform was a precursor to the Gregorian Reform that occurred in the late eleventh century, and served as a model for other subsequent Church reformers.² St. Romuald was a particularly solitary monk, even amongst the most eremitic, and this became a defining aspect of his spirituality.³ According to the biography written by St. Peter Damian, although Romuald was a devoutly obedient Benedictine he [St. Romuald] began to feel that despite the prescription of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, the daily practice of monastic life was placing too much emphasis on the cenobitic facet of monasticism.⁴ As a result of his strong eremitic inclination, St. Romuald sought to renew the tradition of solitary prayer and contemplation and to better integrate it with the aspect of collective

¹ The full quotation is: ‘Better to pray one psalm with devotion and compunction than a hundred with distraction’ – St. Romuald.

² P.-D. Belisle, ed. and trans., *Camaldolese Spirituality: Essential Sources* (Ercam Editions: Bloomingdale, 2007), p. 1.

³ Rudolf of Camaldoli, ‘Book of the Eremitical Rule, no. 9 The Example of St. Romuald,’ in Belisle (2007), pp. 227–267 (at p. 235).

⁴ Petri Damiani, *Vita beati Romualdi*, G. Tabacco, ed. (Istituto Italiano: Rome, 1957), p. 15.

prayer.⁵ St. Romuald was also deeply concerned that monks return to a more rigorous adherence of the monastic vows: poverty, chastity, and obedience.⁶

St. Romuald did not intend to diverge from the Benedictine order but restore the original purity of St. Benedict's *Rule*. Even after the establishment of the Camaldolese order, the monks of this newly founded branch relied heavily upon St. Benedict's *Rule*, which was more textually comprehensive than the much briefer *Rule of St. Romuald*.⁷ Therefore, much like other Benedictine reform movements, the Camaldolese were governed by both Rules in addition to their own constitutions. St. Romuald wanted to bring a more balanced approach to the way in which Benedictine monks engaged in devotional and spiritual practice, with each other in congregation and as individuals. In this way, the Camaldolese are both a new stage of Benedictine monasticism, and yet still devout adherents of St. Benedict's *Rule*. Between 1023 and 1026, with the support of the bishop of Arezzo, St. Romuald officially founded the hermitage at Camaldoli in the Tuscan Apennines, and the church of San Salvatore, which would become a site of religious and political power for the Camaldolese.⁸ Aside from the important foundation date of 1012, there are two other dates of crucial significance for the development of the order: 1105 when Pope Pasquale II (r. 1099–1118) executed the first of two papal bulls, *Ad hoc nos*, and 1113 when he issued the second, *Gratias vobis*. These papal orders

⁵ P.-D. Belisle, 'Primitive Romualdian/Camaldolese Spirituality,' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 31:4 (1996), pp. 413–429 (at p. 417); G. Tabacco, *Spiritualità e Cultura nel Medioevo: Dodici percorsi nei territori del potere e della fede* (Liguori: Naples, 1993), p. 178.

⁶ Rudolf of Camaldoli, 'Eremitical Rule,' in Belisle (2007), no. 31, Avoiding Greed and Wealth, p. 245; no. 40, Obedience, p. 253.

⁷ See Introduction, p.1 for Rule written out in full. See also, p. 1, n. 1.

⁸ C. Caby, 'Du monastère à la cité: Le culte de Saint Romuald au Moyen Age,' *Revue Mabillon* 67 (1995), pp. 137–58 (at p. 138).

officially confirmed the congregation as an autonomous union of monasteries and hermitages under Camaldoli and granted it a great degree of autonomy.⁹

The origin story of Camaldoli¹⁰ is rooted in a myth based upon a dream that St. Romuald is alleged to have had at the site of the foundation. According to traditional Camaldolese sources, St. Romuald, exhausted from his spiritual sojourn in Tuscany, fell asleep and dreamt of a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven. In this vision he saw white-robed men ascending the ladder, which he interpreted as a divine message from God about returning to a truer way of living the Benedictine life.¹¹ Upon waking, St. Romuald decided to base the Motherhouse of this divinely inspired new branch of monasticism at the site of his miraculous dream.¹² The foundational site was gifted to St. Romuald by Count Maldolo, a wealthy patron who wanted to support St. Romuald's new endeavour.¹³ This secular figure would also become a part of the order's foundation legend causing some confusion concerning the dream aspect of the myth.¹⁴

In addition to the Motherhouse and the many other houses that were founded, re-founded or reformed by St. Romuald, the 'Romualdian' reform also included the houses

⁹ C. Caby, *De l'érémisme rural au monachisme urbain: les camaldules en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge* (École française de Rome: Rome, 1999), p. 461.

¹⁰ Although Camaldoli is now applied to a wide geographical area in the province of Arezzo, in the context of this thesis, the term 'Camaldoli' will also be used to refer to the Camadolese Motherhouse.

¹¹ This simple summation of the Camaldolese foundation legend is expanded and discussed in greater depth in Ch. 4.

¹² D. F. Lackner, 'The Camaldolese Academy: Ambrogio Traversari, Marsilio Ficino and the Christian Platonic Tradition,' in M. J. B. Allen and V. Reese, eds., *Marsilio Ficino: his theology, his philosophy, his legacy* (Brill: Leiden, 2002), pp. 15–44 (at. p. 17, n. 4).

¹³ Caby (1995), p. 140.

¹⁴ G. Benedictus Mitarelli and D. Anselmo Costadoni, eds., *Annales Camaldulenses ordinis Sancti Benedicti* (Prostant apud Jo: Venice 1755), Vol. IV, App. 359; U. Pasqui, *Documenti per la storia della città di Arezzo nel medio evo* (Deputazione di storia patria: Florence, 1916), p. 129–31.

that were founded or reformed by Peter Damian under the congregation of Fonte Avellana.¹⁵ The joint congregation of Camaldoli and Fonte Avellana required a monastic symbol that would identify this new order while reflecting the values and ideologies that were central to Camaldolese spirituality. Thus, the seal of the Camaldolese order is a chalice with two white doves, one on either side, each symbolizing the two lifestyles from which all Camaldolese monks are expected to draw spiritual strength and inspiration: eremitic and cenobitic (Fig. 17).¹⁶ The emblem also functions as a mark of Camaldolese ownership for their manuscripts, books, and documents.¹⁷

¹⁵ Fonte Avellana was established as a congregation by Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073 – 1085) in 1076 and was known as the ‘Congregation of the Dove.’ This congregation would eventually be suppressed by Pope Pius V (r. 1566 – 1572) and joined to the Camaldolese congregation. P.-D. Belisle, ed., *The Privilege of Love. Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, 2002), p. 15, p. 9, n. 20.

¹⁶ London, British Library, C. 24, f.8, fol. i.

¹⁷ The emblem is discussed at length in Ch. 3.

II. Venetian Houses: San Michele & San Mattia

Despite St. Romuald's strict prescription of monastic poverty, Camaldoli grew in its influence and material holdings during the twelfth century, as bishops and popes donated churches and monasteries to the developing congregation. Lay patrons also gave generous monastery gifts to the new Camaldolese congregations in Arezzo and surrounding areas.¹⁸ In the second half of the century, Camaldoli had to resist the episcopal interests of the bishops of Arezzo and affirm its privileged status under the protection of the Holy See.¹⁹ The sovereignty and influence afforded to Camaldoli as the Motherhouse, and site of St. Romuald's dream, would eventually wane during the thirteenth century and pass to other Camaldolese houses, including cenobitic ones.²⁰ Urban hermitages, such as the famous Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, seem like a contradiction in terms because although the brothers lived by strict enclosure, they soon became closely linked with the Florentine urban *communitas*.²¹ Eventually, Santa Maria degli Angeli became a centre of religious, economic and artistic activity and would hold great authority within the order. This is also true of San Michele in Isola, and to a lesser degree, San Mattia di Murano.

¹⁸ G. Tabacco, 'La data di fondazione di Camaldoli,' *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia* 16 (1962), pp. 451–55 (at p. 451).

¹⁹ Belisle (2002), p. 15.

²⁰ Tabacco (1962), p. 452.

²¹ C. Caby, 'Hermits for communes: Camaldolese in the service of the communes of central and northern Italy in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries,' in F. Andrews, ed., *Churchmen and Urban Government in Medieval Italy, ca. 1200–ca. 1450* (University of Cambridge Press: Cambridge, 2013), pp. 268–84 (at p. 282). This house commonly employed lay illuminators from around Florence to decorate their liturgical books and create panels for their altarpieces in addition to using monastic painters from within the monastery.

Although St. Romuald founded the first Camaldolese house in the mountains of Arezzo he was drawn to Venice, and in particular to the smaller islands in the Lagoon for their isolated locations, conducive to the eremitic aims of the order.²² The monastery of San Michele in Isola is thought to have been originally founded as a chapel or small church dedicated to the Archangel Michael, and used by the Briosi and Brustolani families who owned the island in the second half of the tenth century.²³ The original chapel was not Camaldolese, as its existence predates that of the order, but would become Camaldolese in 1213 when Pope Innocent III conferred the donation of the island to the hermits of Camaldoli on 25 September.²⁴ However, it was not until the early to mid thirteenth century that the hermitage of San Michele was transformed into a cenobium and began to house monks.²⁵ Slightly further north in the Lagoon is the archipelago of Murano where the hermitage of San Mattia was located. According to one source, the church, which had a convent attached, had already been inhabited by Benedictine nuns since 1220 and was granted to the administration of the Camaldolese order in 1243.²⁶ This institution became one of six convents that were placed under Camaldolese

²² P. Vittorino Meneghin, *S. Michele in Isola di Venezia*, Vol. I (Stamperia dei Venezia: Venice, 1962), p. 6.

²³ U. Fossa, 'Storia di San Michele di Murano dalle origini alla fine del VX secolo,' in M. Brusegan, P. Eleuteri, and G. Fiaccadori, eds. *San Michele in Isola: isola della conoscenza. Ottocento anni di storia e cultura camaldolesi nella laguna di Venezia*, (UTET: Torino, 2012), pp. 39–53 (at p. 40).

²⁴ Registro di Camaldole III, doc. 1528, Mitarelli and Costadoni, eds., *Annales Camaldulenses ordinis Sancti Benedicti* (Prostant apud Jo: Venice 1755), AC., IV, 230, Append., Col. 326, doc. 200.

²⁵ Meneghin (1962), pp. 8, 14.

²⁶ F. Corner, *Ecclesiae Torcellanae antiquis monumentis...illustratae* (Pasquali: Venice, 1749), p. 92. GG, IV, p. 1112; Da Mosto, II, p. 181.

jurisdiction in Venice and its lagoon, but unlike San Michele, which was made a cenobitic centre, San Mattia was immediately defined as a hermitage.²⁷

²⁷ E. Barbieri, 'Produrre, Conservare, Distruggere: per una storia dei libri e della biblioteca di S. Mattia di Murano,' *Ateneo Veneto* 185 (1997), pp. 13–55 (at p. 16).

III. Lavish Liturgical Books

In time both San Michele and San Mattia came to possess dynamic scriptoria and substantial libraries containing hundreds of volumes. San Michele thrived under the leadership of Abbot Paolo Venier (1392–1448), who actively sought to expand the monastery’s bibliographical holdings whilst developing a reputation for its manuscript production.²⁸ The manuscripts—and subsequently also the printed books—that belonged to San Michele and San Mattia were on a range on topics, with some written in the vernacular and others for liturgical use, such as the choir books.²⁹ Each house would have required its own set of choir books for use during the celebration of the Mass and Divine Office thus there are two distinct sets that concern this thesis and must be parsed out for clarity.

The creation of the San Mattia choir books appears to be the result of both the need for a series of liturgical manuscripts and a desire to have one that mirrored the lavish manuscripts belonging to their sister houses, San Michele and the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli.³⁰ San Michele and San Mattia had a close relationship with Santa Maria degli Angeli, which provided both pastoral and artistic support to the northern houses.³¹ Gaudenz Freuler has noted that a number of books were documented as having been sent from Santa Maria degli Angeli to San Michele but that

²⁸ Meneghin (1962), p. 111.

²⁹ Meneghin (1962), p. 257.

³⁰ The close relationship amongst these three Camaldolese houses, as well as the Venetian Dominicans, can be attested to in letters written by the prior of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Matteo Guidoni to other important figures that demonstrate this connection. See: G. Freuler, ‘Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci, Gradual for San Michele a Murano,’ in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155, nos. 3, 4.

³¹ L. Merolla, ‘Un Corale di San Michele di Murano,’ *Nuovi Annali della Scuola Speciale per Archivisti e Bibliotecari* 11 (1997), pp. 111–127 (at p. 117).

one surviving volume, in particular, evinces the connection between these religious institutions.³² In Venice, at the Museo Correr, there is an illuminated psalter that contains an inscription on the calendar page that reads: ‘*Completus est hoc psalterium anno domini MCCCLXVIII in loco sancte Marie de angelis de florentia*’ (Fig. 18).³³ While this manuscript does testify to the shared bibliographic holdings of San Michele and Santa Maria degli Angeli, it is unclear whether this psalter was commissioned by San Michele or was one of the books sent there from Florence in 1422.³⁴ Regardless, it stands as crucial evidence of the artistic and liturgical links between the Venetian and Florentine houses. Additionally, Abbot Venier purchased manuscripts from Santa Maria degli Angeli and from Venetian religious houses for San Michele’s own collection, thereby further strengthening San Michele’s association with different institutions and expanding the monastery’s network.³⁵

In addition to the Correr manuscript, the other extant volumes that demonstrate the artistic connections between San Michele, San Mattia and Santa Maria degli Angeli are the now-dismembered series of choir books made for the Florentine monastery. These volumes were produced in Florence, beginning in 1392 and spanning well into the sixteenth century. The monks at Santa Maria degli Angeli received funds to facilitate the creation of two sets of choir books, one for themselves and one for the neighbouring

³² In ASFi, Conventi Soppressi, 78, 95, fol. 67v in the margin: ‘Libri venduti al’abate di S. Michele. Vendemo adì 5 di lugl[i]o 1422 all’abate di Sancto Michele da Murano...’ For full inscription see: G. Freuler (1994), ‘Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci, Gradual for San Michele a Murano,’ in Kanter et al. (1994a), pp. 155–176 (at p. 165, n. 2).

³³ This psalter was completed in the year of our Lord 1368 in the place at Santa Maria of the Angels in Florence. Venice, Museo Correr, Ms Cl V 129, fol. 7r.

³⁴ Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155.

³⁵ Meneghin (1962), p. 258.

hospital of Santa Maria Nuova.³⁶ Among the artists involved in the manuscripts' lavish illumination programme was Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci, who was elected prior of Santa Maria degli Angeli in 1398, and died there one year later.³⁷ Most of the choir books' illuminations were completed by Don Silvestro between 1392 and 1399, while after his death Don Lorenzo Monaco (1370–1425) assumed Don Silvestro's place as head illuminator. Don Silvestro was an artist whose style and technique would heavily influence not only other artists working with him at Santa Maria degli Angeli but also Cristoforo Cortese and the Murano Master in their work on the San Mattia volumes.³⁸ These Florentine manuscripts appear to have functioned as crucial prototypes for the sets made for San Michele and San Mattia, both as creative examples and as liturgical models.

Although Santa Maria degli Angeli thrived from the earliest days of its foundation in 1295 through to the end of the eighteenth century, it did not survive the Napoleonic closure of the monasteries. In 1816 it was suppressed and its holdings were sold or looted, including its vast bibliographic collection.³⁹ The choir books were removed from their original liturgical environment, the volumes were separated, and the sumptuous illuminated initials were excised and dispersed. In the late twentieth century, Mirella Levi

³⁶ A document signed by the Baroncelli brothers, and dated 20 April 1382, states that the brothers of Santa Maria degli Angeli would receive 24 gold florins per year from 1382 until 1399 to support the production of these choir books, whereas Santa Maria Nuova would receive only 6 gold florins per year. Florence, ASFi. S. Maria Nuova, Vol. 67, Libro Giallo dei Testamenti 1377–1393, fol. 89. Levi D'Ancona (1993), p. 9, n. 7.

³⁷ Florence, ASFi, *Libro di Professioni, Conventi Soppressi 86, S. Maria degli Angeli*, Vol. 96, fol. 37 and Vol. 97, p. 34. Levi D'Ancona (1993), n. 18.

³⁸ The creative influence of Don Silvestro will be discussed further in this chapter in the section 'Stylistic Hallmarks of the Murano Master.'

³⁹ C. Campana, 'Manoscritti e incunabuli della biblioteche camaldolesi verso la Marciana,' in Brusegan et al. (2012), pp. 222–227 (at p. 224).

D’Ancona was able to ‘reconstruct’ the volumes by tracing many of the initials and putting them back into their original liturgical order.

According to Levi D’Ancona’s reconstruction, the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli consisted of twenty volumes, including a two-volume set that she refers to as the ‘Diurno Domenicale.’⁴⁰ These two volumes, now in various global collections, including the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, contain the introits for the Sunday Masses for the liturgical year, although not all of the illuminations have been traced.⁴¹ Volume I contains the introits from the first Sunday of Advent until the last Mass of the Passion, while the second reconstructed volume begins with the Easter Sunday Mass and finishes with the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost.⁴²

As the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ was illuminated by Don Silvestro and the so-called ‘Master of Songs,’ (with possible artistic contributions by Don Simone Camaldolese), Levi D’Ancona suggested that these two volumes were made as part of the set belonging to Santa Maria degli Angeli. However, Freuler has argued that the two codices were, in fact, part of a series of choir books commissioned by the Venetian house of San Michele in Isola.⁴³ The basis for Freuler’s suggestion rests on an observation made by Vasari in his *Life of Don Lorenzo Monaco*, wherein he mentions twenty choir books, which he claims were written by Don Jacopo and illuminated by Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Vasari also mentions several other choir books that he saw in the libraries of the

⁴⁰ Levi D’Ancona (1993).

⁴¹ Levi D’Ancona (1993), p. 7; Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), pp. 157–65.

⁴² Levi D’Ancona (1994), pp. 25–33.

⁴³ G. Freuler, *Tendencies of Gothic Art in Florence: Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci*, Sec IV, Vol. VII (Pt. II), M. Boskovits, ed., (Giunti Gruppo: Florence, 1997), p. 456.

Camaldolese monasteries in Murano—San Michele and San Mattia.⁴⁴ The use of Vasari as a reliable source of historical information should be considered within the context in which he was writing these artist biographies. Patricia Rubin has noted that since the first critical publication of *Lives of the Artists* in the eighteenth century the text has been treated as an inventory of factual accounts, which is not what Vasari had intended it to be.⁴⁵ Rubin cautions that the use and evaluation of *Lives*, as a source, depends on one's awareness of Vasari's intentions as a historian and author.⁴⁶ Although regarded as an important text for the study of Renaissance art, and to a certain degree late medieval art, the *Lives* has been heavily shaped by Vasari's own biases towards the artists. The *Lives* has remained a standard reference for studies of Renaissance art since its initial publication but the information should be scrutinized and its social/historical context kept in mind, particularly in regard to what Vasari would have known and how he knew it.⁴⁷ While Vasari's statements should not serve as factual evidence for the presence of the San Michele choir books on Isola, the explicit mention of San Michele and San Mattia in the Life of Don Silvestro could indicate that he did see illuminated manuscripts at these specific locations.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori*. G. Milanesi, ed. 9 Vols (G.C. Sansoni: Florence, 1878–1885) based on the 2nd ed. of 1568, Vol. 2 pp. 22–23.

⁴⁵ P. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (Yale University Press: New Haven/London, 1995), p. 4.

⁴⁶ Rubin (1995), p. 5.

⁴⁷ Rubin (1995), p. 7.

⁴⁸ '...e massimamente in San Michele e in S. Mattia di Murano, monasterio dell a sua religione Camaldolese...per quanto porto la condizione di que' tempi miniò i detti libri...' Vasari, (1568), pp.22–23. Additionally, the inscription inside of the Correr manuscript clearly suggests that manuscripts made at Santa Maria degli Angeli were sent to San Michele and San Mattia, thereby evincing the economic exchange amongst these monasteries.

A crucial source for scholars examining the library of San Michele is the inventory published in 1779 by Giovanni Benedetto Mittarelli, which listed all of San Michele's holdings at that date.⁴⁹ This valuable inventory is a comprehensive list of all the manuscripts and incunabula belonging to San Michele prior to its suppression in 1810.⁵⁰ Although other musical manuscripts are found on Mittarelli's inventory, the volumes of the 'Diurno Domenicale' are not listed. One possible theory for their absence from Mittarelli's list is that they were stored in the sacristy and not in the library.⁵¹ In her updated version of Mittarelli's inventory, published in 2010, Lucia Merolla noted that it was very likely that the cuttings, now in the Morgan Library & Museum, did originally belong to San Michele.⁵² Levi D'Ancona took issue with Freuler's suggestion that the volumes of the 'Diurno Domenicale' were commissioned for San Michele in Isola and not for use by Santa Maria degli Angeli. She published two additional articles on this topic and brought to light a document dated 1368 wherein it is recorded that monks at Santa Maria degli Angeli were given 100 gold florins to make a diurnal antiphoner in three volumes.⁵³ Levi D'Ancona expands on this document by suggesting that the three

⁴⁹ J.-B. Mittarelli, *Biblioteca Codicum Manuscriptorum Monasterii S. Michaelis Venetiarum prope Murianum una cum Appendice Librorum Impressorum Seculi XV* (Sumptibus Praefati Monasterii: Venice, 1779)

⁵⁰ E. Moni, 'I manoscritti greci di San Michele di Murano,' *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 1 (1958), pp. 317–43 (at p. 323).

⁵¹ L. Hamlett, 'The Sacristy in Renaissance Venice,' PhD diss. (University of Cambridge, 2007).

⁵² L. Merolla, *La biblioteca di San Michele di Murano all'Epoca dell' Abate Giovanni Mittarelli. I codici ritrovati* (Vecchiarelli Editore: Manziana, 2010), p. 64.

⁵³ Levi D'Ancona notes that this document was not included in her reconstruction of the 'Diurno Domenicale' (1994). M. Levi D'Ancona, 'Ancora a proposito del Diurno Domenicale di Santa Maria degli Angeli,' *Rara Volumina* 1 (1995), pp. 5–28 (at pp. 7–8).

volumes consist of the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ and *Corale 2*, today in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.⁵⁴

Much of the logic for Levi D’Ancona’s argument is based on her visual analysis of the initial R with the *Resurrection*, which accompanies the introit for Easter Sunday (Fig. 19), today in the Musée Condé in Chantilly.⁵⁵ She posits that the presence of the two Camaldolese monastic bust portraits that flank the stem of the R are grounds for giving the illumination—and thus the entire ‘Diurno Domenicale’—a provenance at Santa Maria degli Angeli.⁵⁶ This iconographic argument is insufficient evidence for her suggestion as bust portraits of monks feature quite prominently in Camaldolese illuminated manuscripts more generally.⁵⁷ Additionally, Levi D’Ancona argues that the Marian and angelic iconography further supports a provenance of Santa Maria degli Angeli: she notes the left medallion in the bas-de-page, wherein Christ is standing with a protective arm around Mary who kneels and kisses his side wound (Fig. 20), as especially evidentiary of this provenance, as well as the presence of angels playing lutes in the upper corners (Fig. 21). However, this iconography does not concretely link the *Resurrection* folio, and by extension the two volumes of the ‘Diurno Domenicale,’ to

⁵⁴ See: Levi D’Ancona (1993); Levi D’Ancona (1995), p. 11.

⁵⁵ Chantilly, Musée Condé. Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 160, Fig. 60.

⁵⁶ Levi D’Ancona (1995), p. 9.

⁵⁷ Examples of monastic bust portraits can be seen in the *Resurrection* folio for the Camaldolese Berlin Gradual (discussed in Ch. 2) and in the *Mission of the Apostles* cutting in the Musée Marmottan in Paris (discussed in Ch. 4). They are also found in the *Resurrection* image for San Michele, painted by Don Silvestro, and throughout a gradual made in Florence for another Camaldolese house, a nunnery. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, MSL 1868/5836. R. Watson, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: Manuscripts in the National Art Library, V&A, from the Eleventh to the Early Twentieth Century* (Victoria and Albert Museum: London, 2011), no. 24.

Santa Maria degli Angeli, as it can be found in other components of the San Mattia corpus.

The opening folio of the so-called ‘Berlin Gradual,’⁵⁸ an intact volume originally belonging to San Mattia di Murano, is also an initial R with the *Resurrection* as it corresponds to the Mass for Easter Sunday (see Fig. 2). Like the Chantilly *Resurrection*, there are also angels playing lutes as part of the iconographic programme (Fig. 22). Thus, the angelic iconography that Levi D’Ancona relies on as supportive evidence does not buttress her suggestion that the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ volumes were for the use of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Moreover, Levi D’Ancona also posited that the presence of the Virgin in the Chantilly’s bas-de-page indicates ownership of the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ to Santa Maria degli Angeli. However, although San Michele was dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, the house also adopted the Virgin Mary as another of its patron saints and sought her protection.⁵⁹ Given how ubiquitous a cult figure the Virgin was, the depiction of her in the bas-de-page of the Chantilly *Resurrection* (see Fig. 20) does not securely link the image to the Florentine monastery.

Furthermore, in a publication from 1999, Levi D’Ancona suggested that the ‘Diurno Domenicale’ volumes belonged to Santa Maria degli Angeli based on their measurements, which correspond to those of the other reconstructed choir books of the same house.⁶⁰ This is, however, a problematic argument, as the Berlin Gradual and the Milan Gradual (the other intact volume belonging to the San Mattia series) also have the same measurements as the Chantilly *Resurrection* and other full-page illuminations once

⁵⁸ This manuscript is discussed in depth in Ch. 2.

⁵⁹ Meneghin (1962), p. 22.

⁶⁰ M. Levi D’Ancona, ‘Il diurno domenicale mincato? Da Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci non fu esquiguito a Venezia,’ *Rara Volumina* 1 (1999), pp. 5–17 (at p. 6).

belonging to the Florentine volumes. This is likely the result of all the Camaldolese choir books having been made to the same codicological specifications.

In addition to Vasari's writings, Freuler also references a letter, written by Giovanni Dominici to the Venetian Dominican Mantellate of Corpus Christi, dated 15 February 1401. Giovanni was the leading Florentine Dominican and in his letter he advises the nuns at Corpus to base the illuminations for their graduals on the ones he had seen at San Michele on Murano.⁶¹ Freuler suggests that since Giovanni was in Venice from 1388–1399, and the letter was written in 1401, the graduals he saw must have been from the fourteenth century.⁶² Based on style, the two volumes of the 'Diurno Domenicale' are clearly the work of Don Silvestro, who died in 1399, and therefore must have been made no later than that date. Thus, it could be that those are the graduals that Giovanni saw at San Michele. It would have been completely reasonable for manuscripts to have been made and illuminated in the scriptorium at Santa Maria degli Angeli and sent to San Michele, as these two houses (as well as San Mattia) were in a close spiritual and administrative relationship and there are records of books having been sent to the Venetian houses from Florence.⁶³ Therefore, within the limits of this study the Diurno Domenicale will be discussed as part of the set of choir books made for San Michele and not for Santa Maria degli Angeli.

⁶¹ Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155; 'Dilectissime Sorores... Libros miniare potestis, quia bene operarmini satis et spatia magna pro nunc dimittatis; ne forte peteretis ab Abbate Santi Michaelis de Muriano Gradualia sua, in quibus sunt aliqua minia magna, facta cum penna, et maxime infra octaves Resurrectionis et Pentecostes et secundum illa exemplaria possetis et vos operari.' Dominici, G. *Lettere spirituali*. M. T. Casella and G. Pozzi, eds. (Edizioni Universitarie: Fribourg, 1969), p. 113.

⁶² Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155.

⁶³ See footnote 34 in this chapter.

IV. Libraries & Shut Monasteries

Like Santa Maria degli Angeli, San Michele and San Mattia were also suppressed in the early nineteenth century. Despite the issuing of closure decrees, both institutions continued to function until they were officially shut in 1810 during Napoleon's invasion of the Veneto.⁶⁴ The libraries of both monasteries were emptied of their contents and the manuscripts and incunabula were sold and/or stolen. While many collectors of Italian art took full advantage of the monasteries' closures by procuring the manuscripts belonging to the religious houses, two individuals are particularly prominent figures within the literature on this topic. Abbé Luigi Celotti (1759–1843) and William Young Ottley (1771–1836) were among the first to acquire illuminated manuscripts from the monasteries of Italy, France, and Germany, in order to bring them back to England and sell on the burgeoning art market in London. Celotti's landmark auction on 25 March 1825 at Christie's, London was the first-ever exclusive sale of 'cuttings' from manuscripts with Ottley compiling the catalogue.⁶⁵ In addition to writing the catalogue for this sale, Ottley also acquired many miniatures from it, which in turn were sold after his death in 1836 in a two-day sale at Sotheby's on 11–12 May 1838.⁶⁶

While the Ottley sale saw the dispersal of hundreds of cuttings, this thesis is specifically concerned with sixteen fragments sold in eleven lots that once likely

⁶⁴ The verbal decrees to suppress San Michele was issued on 28 July 1806 and on 16 November 1806 for San Mattia. M. E. M. Cataluccio and A. U. Fossa, eds., *Biblioteca e cultura a Camaldoli: dal medioevo all'umanesimo* (Editrice Anselmiana: Rome, 1979), p. 421.

⁶⁵ A.-M. Eze, 'Abbé Luigi Celotti and the Sistine Chapel Manuscripts,' *Rivista di storia della Miniatura* 20 (2016), pp. 139–154 (at p. 139).

⁶⁶ S. Hindman, M. Camille, N. Rowe, and R. Watson, eds., *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age* (Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art: Evanston, 2001), p. 53.

belonged to the original San Mattia series (Figs. 23 & 24).⁶⁷ Although lacking in descriptive details, the catalogue entries do indicate a provenance of ‘Murano,’ as in the case of Lot 31: ‘Two –The Annunciation and Presentation, *richly gilt and coloured from Murano.*’ The present location of some of the cuttings from this catalogue are known, including ‘The Nativity of St. John’ (Lot 32, 11 May), ‘a large letter T., with a Bishop and Monks kneeling before a Church’ (Lot 39, 11 May), and ‘The Death of the Madonna’ (Lot 191, 12 May).⁶⁸

It is unclear how Ottley came to acquire the fragments from the San Mattia choir books, nor is there any indication of how many of the set’s volumes he took away from the monastery. As noted by Anne-Marie Eze, little is known about the eight years he spent travelling and studying in Italy (1791–1799). Other than what is gleaned from a few letters written in the 1820s and 1830s, there are no established correspondences or journals in his hand from the late 1790s.⁶⁹ In a footnote from *The Bibliographical Decameron* (1817), Reverend Thomas Frognall Dibdin describes in unspecified fashion how his friend Mr. Ottley ‘...absolutely revels in the possession of the most splendid ancient fragments of books...obtained by him in Italy, from monasteries and other individuals.’⁷⁰

⁶⁷ London, British Library, *A Catalogue of the Very Beautiful Collection of Highly Finished and Illuminated Miniature Paintings, the Property of the Late William Young Ottley, Esq.* Sale catalogue 11–12 May 1838. Sotheby’s and Co. General Reference Collection, S. C. Sotheby’s 218. (3).

⁶⁸ See the Appendix for a complete list of all known cuttings and their present location.

⁶⁹ I am indebted to Dr. Anne-Marie Eze who graciously shared with me excerpts from her dissertation proposal. A.-M. Eze, *William Young Ottley in Italy (1791–1799): From Collector-Connoisseur to Dealer*. Research Proposal submitted as doctoral work to Prof. John Lowden and Dr. Scot McKendrick, May 2008, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Rev. T. F. Dibdin, *The Bibliographical Decameron*, Vol. I (Reprinted, Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. cxi.

One thing that remains ambiguous is the period in which Ottley obtained the manuscripts. It is noted that he was in Italy in 1799 but was back in England during the first decade of the nineteenth century. San Mattia was not suppressed until 1810, therefore if he did remove the choir books himself, it would have been prior to the official closure date. If this is so, then it raises potential questions about the removal of manuscripts from the monastery in the period before the suppression. It has been suggested that before 1799 Ottley acquired excised illuminated initials directly from the monks of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence where manuscripts had been ‘systematically dismembered.’⁷¹ It is also unclear as to whether the volumes were dismembered in Italy before Ottley and Celotti brought them back to England.⁷² In addition to the Florentine monastery, San Michele in Isola was listed explicitly as one of the religious institutions from which Celotti obtained manuscripts during the suppression, although there is no mention of San Mattia di Murano.⁷³

The main motivating force behind the actions of Ottley (and Celotti) to acquire fragments from the San Mattia volumes was to provide the London art market with ‘specimens’ of art that represented what Ottley described as the pinnacle of human artistic practice. Ottley—a connoisseur-cum-dealer—marketed the extracted initials as ‘miniature paintings’ that embodied the high level of artistic achievement found in late

⁷¹ Hindman, et al. (2001), p. 73.

⁷² Alan N. L. Munby has suggested that the British import duty (£6 10s/ hundredweight) on bound manuscripts and books printed before 1801 may have influenced the dismemberment of illuminated volumes coming from Italy and France. A. N. L. Munby, *Connoisseurs and Medieval Miniatures 1750–1810* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1972), p. 65.

⁷³ Hindman et al. (2001), p. 54.

medieval and early Renaissance Italian art.⁷⁴ Once the initials were excised from the volumes, they were sold as individual objects removed from any previous original context: codicological, liturgical, musical, or monastic.

⁷⁴ Hindman et al. (2001), p. 73.

V. Current State of the Manuscripts

Although some of the volumes were dismembered not every volume from the series was dismantled and the present state of the set is outlined below.⁷⁵ In Berlin, there is an intact volume—the ‘Berlin Gradual’—that can be linked to San Mattia with certainty because of a *fenestra* label on the back cover.⁷⁶ Despite the presence of this label, which indicates the ownership of the volume by San Mattia, many scholars have still referred to this manuscript as belonging to San Michele.⁷⁷ This manuscript contains the *Temporale* material from Easter Sunday until the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

The Berlin Gradual was originally attributed to the early fifteenth-century artist Belbello da Pavia, but in 1930, Pietro Toesca identified a hand different from that of Belbello’s, suggesting that another artist was responsible for the illuminations.⁷⁸ In the same year, Paul Wescher wrote a catalogue for the Kupferstichkabinett, which was the first instance in which the Berlin Gradual was subjected to very basic codicological and iconographical analyses.⁷⁹ Following this, in 1966, Helmut Boese wrote an additional—and brief—summary of the Berlin Gradual’s liturgical contents.⁸⁰ It was not until Serena

⁷⁵ Each component of the series is discussed in its own chapter following this one.

⁷⁶ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, MS 78. F. 1. See Ch. 2: The Berlin Gradual, for an in-depth discussion of this manuscript.

⁷⁷ This issue is discussed in greater depth in Ch. 2.

⁷⁸ P. Toesca, *Monumenti e studi per la storia della miniature italiana: La collezione di Ulrico Hoepli* (Ulrico Hoepli: Milan, 1930), pp. 93–94.

⁷⁹ P. Wescher, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Miniaturen Handschriften und Einzelblätter. Der Kupferstichkabinetts der Staatlichen Museen Berlin* (Verlagsbuchhandlung J. J. Weber: Leipzig, 1931), pp. 108–110.

⁸⁰ H. Boese, *Die lateinischen Handschriften der Sammlung Hamilton zu Berlin* (Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 14–15.

Padovani's article from 1978 that an analysis of the manuscript's illuminations was used to link the Gradual to other works that may have inspired the artist.⁸¹

For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Berlin Gradual was thought to be the only surviving intact manuscript that once belonged to the original San Mattia series. However, in 1988, Giordana Mariani Canova suggested that a gradual at the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, in Milan, might have been a companion volume to the one in Berlin.⁸² Mariani Canova based her suggestion on codicological evidence and on the book's liturgical contents, which she suggested likely preceded the contents of the Berlin Gradual, as it contains the *Temporale* from the first Sunday of Advent until the first Sunday of Lent.⁸³

The remaining components of the San Mattia series are the excised initials that have been removed from their original volumes. To date, the total number of cuttings that have been traced is thirty-eight⁸⁴ but there are presumably more whose present location is unknown. In addition to these thirty-eight cuttings that contain narrative scenes and portraits of saints and ecclesiastical figures, there are also thought to be over one hundred smaller decorated initials that may have once been associated with the dismembered San

⁸¹ S. Padovani, "Su Belbello da Pavia e sul "Miniaturista di San Michele a Murano"" *Paragone* 339 (1978), pp. 24–34. The link Padovani made concerned the relationship between the Murano illuminations and fresco cycles as possible sources of influence.

⁸² Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense di Brera, MS. AB. XVII 28 (Previously Arm I. 28). G. Mariani Canova, in M. Boskovits, ed. *Arte in Lombardia tra Gotico e Rinascimento* (Fabbri Editori: Milan, 1988), no. 65.

⁸³ Mariani Canova, in Boskovits (1988), pp. 232, 234.

⁸⁴ This thesis only recognizes thirty-six of these cuttings as attributable to the Murano Master and outlines the reasons for this in Ch. 4.

Mattia series (Fig. 25).⁸⁵ These ornate little letters are found in public and private collections and have not been studied in much depth. These initials will not be considered within the scope of this reconstruction as the project focuses solely on the initials with narratives and portraits. In the previously-mentioned sale catalogue for the Ottley auction, Lot 31 lists two cuttings: ‘The Annunciation’ and Presentation,’ however these two illuminations have never been traced beyond this sale in 1838. The extant initials and full-page illuminations are currently in public and private collections all over the globe, with the largest group of fourteen in the Wildenstein Collection at the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Philadelphia, Free Library, mcai20041; mcai20091; mcai20101. Unpublished. I am grateful to Dr. Bryan Keene and Peter Kidd for bringing these decorated initials to my attention.

⁸⁶ A full list of the cuttings with current locations can be found in the Appendix. This museum is henceforth referred to as the Musée Marmottan.

VI. Dating the Choir Books

The issue of dating the San Mattia material is a crucial yet problematic aspect of the partial reconstruction. In the Santa Maria degli Angeli corpus, some of the manuscripts originally included dates, such as Corale 1, an antiphoner from Easter to the Trinity, dated 1396 on fol. 28; Corale 2, a gradual with the Sanctorale, Proper of Saints for the whole year dated 1370/71 on fols. 161v and 207r; and Corale 5, an antiphoner from 29 August to the end of September, dated 1394 on fol. 35r.⁸⁷ Additionally, Levi D'Ancona has found numerous documents in the Archivio Storico della Biblioteca Laurenziana, including payment records, which further support the dating of the choir books.⁸⁸ The same cannot be said for the San Mattia material as neither the Berlin nor the Milan Graduals have any dates written within them; the cuttings in the corpus bear no information beyond the fragmentary liturgical text, and musical notation on the reverse side; and in terms of archival documents, what still exists for San Mattia and San Michele does not appear to concern the library holdings or liturgical books of either monastery.⁸⁹ This lack of records and documents has made the issue of dating the San Mattia choir books that much more challenging.

Due to this lacuna, all past attempts at dating the San Mattia material have been based primarily on stylistic comparisons with other dated contemporary works by artists with whom the Murano Master was very likely familiar. Figures such as Don Silvestro,

⁸⁷ Levi D'Ancona (1994), pp. 88, 89, 94.

⁸⁸ Levi D'Ancona (1994), pp. 161–162.

⁸⁹ The majority of documents for San Mattia concerned the later centuries. The extant material from the Quattrocento was badly damaged and largely illegible. What could be read consisted mainly of refectory inventories and other administrative lists. Venice, Archivio di Stato (Frari), Corp. Rel. Sopp., S. Mattia di Murano, buste 1, 2.

and Belbello have been suggested as the primary influences on the Murano Master's artistic development, as well as the illuminators at Santa Maria degli Angeli more broadly. The range of dates for the Murano Master's active period—and thus the possible production window for the San Mattia illuminations—has varied widely with some scholars positing a date as early as the 1410s. Others, such as Levi D'Ancona have suggested that the cuttings in the Wildenstein Collection are datable to ca. 1462.⁹⁰ In 1951, Mario Salmi suggested that the Wildenstein cuttings were the work of Belbello, not the so-called 'Murano Master,' and gave a window of ten years, from 1434–1444.⁹¹ This conflation of the Murano Master with Belbello has contributed to the majority of confusion about the San Mattia material, which (with the exception of the Milan Gradual) comprises the entirety of the Murano Master's known oeuvre.

For much of the twentieth century, the intermittent efforts to try and date the Murano Master's oeuvre hinged on a particular illumination from the Visconti Hours: an initial D with the *Transference of Blame* (fol. 57v) (Fig. 26).⁹² The Visconti Hours was produced in two discrete sections. The first campaign undertaken by Giovanni dei Grassi in the late Trecento for Giangaleazzo Visconti, despot of Milan. After his death in 1402, the work was halted completely and only resumed after 1412 when Giangaleazzo's son Filippo Maria became Duke.⁹³ Belbello completed the second campaign of the book's illumination and his work can be dated possibly as early as 1412 right through to 1462,

⁹⁰ M. Levi D'Ancona, *The Wildenstein Collection of Illuminations. The Lombard School* (Leo S. Olscheki: Florence, 1970), p. 37.

⁹¹ M. Salmi, 'Contributo a Belbello da Pavia,' *Miscellanea Giovanni Galbiati, Fontes Ambrosiani* 26 (1951), pp. 321–28 (at p. 325).

⁹² Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Banco Rari 397, Landau-Finally 22. M. Meiss and E. W. Kirsch, *The Visconti Hours. National Library, Florence* (George Braziller: New York, 1972), fol. 57v.

⁹³ Meiss and Kirsch (1972), p. 7.

primarily through documented correspondence with the Gonzaga family.⁹⁴ Some art historians have speculated that the Murano Master may have even assisted Belbello with portions of the Visconti Hours, in particular fol. 57v.⁹⁵ Scholars have used this speculation as the basis for trying to date the San Mattia materials, thus the focus of inquiry simultaneously becomes about trying to unravel the artistic and professional dynamics between Belbello and the Murano Master in addition to dating the manuscripts.

Although there are iconographic and stylistic features in fol. 57v that do resemble facets in the Berlin Gradual and some of the cuttings, such as the treatment of the trees in the background of the initial, and the design of the angels in the sky (Fig. 27), it would be impossible to speculate whether the Murano Master painted these details or if Belbello copied his approach. Moreover, the conversation about the Murano Master's possible involvement with the Visconti Hours has only ever revolved around fol. 57v, and focused on very specific stylistic aspects of the image, which begs the question: why would he only contribute small details to one single illumination?⁹⁶ The majority of the stylistic characteristics are not refined enough: the faces of the figures lack the subtle grace and precise lines of the Murano Master's approach; the flesh lacks the realism he achieved through focused modelling and layering of pigments; and the marginalia is crudely rendered when compared with the delicacy of floral motifs in his oeuvre (Fig. 28).

The problem of separating the artistic personality of the Murano Master from that of Belbello is what has hindered a general dating consensus for the San Mattia material.

⁹⁴ Meiss and Kirsch (1972), p. 26.

⁹⁵ See: Levi D'Ancona (1970).

⁹⁶ While this author understands that multiple hands can be present in a single work, this question is outside the scope of this dissertation but may warrant a more in-depth exploration in order to further probe the dynamics between Belbello and the Murano Master.

Looking at the style of illumination in these choir books is perhaps the more fruitful way of assigning an approximate window. Past scholars have stated that Don Silvestro was the greatest influence on the Murano Master, however, a closer examination suggests that there are other artists that may have provided greater inspiration for the development of his style and technique. The Murano Master's work demonstrates an embracing of the International Gothic Style⁹⁷ with his use of complex and delicately modelled forms, interest in texture and naturalism, and decorative aspects of drapery, foliage, and landscape. The International Gothic is not nearly as visible in the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli, whose illuminators appear to have been much more enamoured with the Sienese style. This Sienese style is evident in the work of Don Silvestro, Don Simone Camaldolese and the so-called 'Master of Songs.' These artists were still implementing stylistic features from the Trecento well into the fifteenth century, whereas the San Mattia material does not possess these particular visual aspects.⁹⁸

The close spiritual and professional relationship amongst San Mattia, San Michele, and Santa Maria degli Angeli would have provided opportunities for the Murano Master to see artistic products from the Florentine house's scriptorium in Venice.⁹⁹ While Don Silvestro was the leading illuminator in Florence—and within Camaldolese circles—there is visual evidence, in the San Mattia material, which suggests that the Murano Master may have been drawing inspiration from other artists at Santa Maria degli Angeli. Many stylistic features in his oeuvre appear to be similar to the works

⁹⁷ This author acknowledges the problematic nature of this stylistic term but uses it as it comes directly from referenced scholarly sources.

⁹⁸ The Milan Gradual attributed to Cristoforo Cortese does appear to emulate features from the Trecento and especially from the stylistic wheelhouse of Don Silvestro.

⁹⁹G. Freuler, 'Gradual for San Michele a Murano,' in L. Kanter et al. (1994a), pp. 155–177 (at p. 155).

of Don Lorenzo Monaco, who was active between 1399 and 1424.¹⁰⁰ Established facts about Lorenzo Monaco's life are few: his birth date is unknown and estimates range from 1367 to the mid-1370s.¹⁰¹ He was living in Florence by 1390 and entered Santa Maria degli Angeli in December of that same year. Like Don Silvestro, he quickly ascended the administrative ranks while undertaking projects in the scriptorium, leaving the monastery to operate his own workshop in 1395/96.¹⁰² After the death of Don Silvestro in 1399, Lorenzo Monaco took over all Florentine Camaldolese commissions, exercising an effective monopoly, as well as providing panel paintings for secular patrons and other monastic orders.¹⁰³

Some of these features include the monumental folds in the drapery of the figures' garments, as well as their highly emotive facial expressions. Although potential links between these two illuminators have been suggested, they have only been mentioned briefly and warrant a deeper investigation.¹⁰⁴ By looking at some of Lorenzo Monaco's datable works for the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books, and comparing those stylistic features with the ones found in the San Mattia material, it may be possible to approximate a dating window for the books' production. Lorenzo was charged with the completion of

¹⁰⁰ L. B. Kanter, 'Lorenzo Monaco,' in Bollati (2004), pp. 399–400.

¹⁰¹ M. Eisenberg, *Lorenzo Monaco* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1989), p. 4; H. D. Gronau, 'The Earliest Works of Lorenzo Monaco II,' *The Burlington Magazine* 92 (July 1950), pp. 217–222 (at p. 218).

¹⁰² It should be noted that although he physically left the cloister, Lorenzo Monaco retained his monastic vows, continuing to be known as 'frate degli Angeli,' thus his life outside the monastery was probably sanctioned by the order. L. B. Kanter, 'Don Lorenzo Monaco,' in Kanter et al. (1994), pp. 220–306 (at p. 220).

¹⁰³ Kanter (1994), p. 220.

¹⁰⁴ S. Panayotova, 'Two Historiated Initials from a Gradual,' in P. Binski and S. Panayotova, eds., *The Cambridge Illuminations. Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West* (Harvey Miller/Brepols: London & Turnhout, 2004), No. 60, pp. 150–52 (at p. 152).

the twelve-volume antiphonary series for Santa Maria degli Angeli (Cor. 1, 5, 7, 8, 13).¹⁰⁵ Three of the Florentine corali contain dates: Cor. 5–1394; Cor. 8–1395; and Cor. 1–1396, which have, in the past, been viewed as the completion date for both the text and the illuminations.¹⁰⁶ Laurence Kanter has shown that these dates are probably valid only as a terminus post quem for the illuminations, which he has suggested were likely produced in different phases between 1400 and 1406–1407.¹⁰⁷ Although only three manuscripts have dates written into them, all of the corali listed in parenthesis above are grouped together and under the same period of dating.

The Murano Master appears to have been inspired by Lorenzo Monaco's adoption of the incoming International Gothic Style, which may also assist with the issue of dating his oeuvre. By the middle of the first decade of the Quattrocento, Lorenzo Monaco was already producing illuminations and altarpieces that suggested a taste for the International Gothic, which was newly imported to Tuscany by Gherardo Starnina in 1403.¹⁰⁸ More specifically, Lorenzo Monaco was particularly interested in the way in which the International Gothic was used by sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, and as such Lorenzo Monaco developed a 'freely calligraphic' drawing style, and also employed a colour palette based on pastels, brighter primary colours and the use of *cangiante*, which as Laurence Kanter notes were unusual in the approach taken by Florentine painters during

¹⁰⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. The writing and illuminating of these books were begun in 1385 under Don Silvestro.

¹⁰⁶ P. Palladino, 'Lorenzo Monaco,' in S. Hindman, M. Levi D'Ancona, P. Palladino, M. F. Saffiotti, eds., *Illuminations in the Robert Lehman Collection, Vol. IV: Illuminations* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 1997), pp. 162–163 (at p. 163).

¹⁰⁷ Palladino (1997), p. 63.

¹⁰⁸ L. B. Kanter, 'The Illuminators of Renaissance Florence,' in Kanter et al. (1994), pp. 3–14 (at p. 12).

this time.¹⁰⁹ Lorenzo Monaco's interest in Ghiberti's incorporation of the International Gothic into his sculptural relief is evident in the manner in which Lorenzo Monaco sought to render the faces of his figures—many of which can be described as having a sculpture-like quality. This is also true of the Murano Master's figures.

The faces of male and female figures, both in manuscripts and on altarpieces were painted so as to convey a three-dimensional quality: the pigments appear to rise off of the parchment or wood, which makes them seem as if they are statues to be viewed in the round. In an initial D with *St. John the Evangelist* (Fig. 29),¹¹⁰ Lorenzo Monaco has rendered the saint's face with a great degree of modelling, especially around the nose and cheekbones, which gives a sense of depth to the face. He has also added lines in the forehead. These deep grooves further enhance the sculpture-like quality of the figure's visage. When this initial is compared with one attributed to Don Silvestro: an initial D with a *Prophet* (Fig. 30),¹¹¹ it becomes clear that the face of this figure lacks the same degree of modelling and therefore does not have the same sculpture-like trait as Lorenzo Monaco's saint. Looking at a couple of examples from the Murano Master's oeuvre, one can see the same attempt to render faces with a multi-dimensional aspect as opposed to a more flat, two-dimensional appearance. In an initial O(?) with the *Dream of St. Romuald*

¹⁰⁹ Kanter et al. (1994), p. 12.

¹¹⁰ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Corale 1, fol. 33v. M. Levi D'Ancona, *The Choir Books of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, Vol 1* (Centro Di: Florence, 1994), Fig. 26.

¹¹¹ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, D. 217–1906.

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O123934/historiated-initial-from-a-gradual-manuscript-cutting-gherarducci-don-silvestro/>

(see Fig. 10)¹¹² and in an initial I (?) with a *Holy Bishop with a Church* (Fig. 31),¹¹³ the Murano Master has carefully drawn in lines under the eyes, in the cupid's bow and on the forehead, which achieve this three dimensional element—the same kind seen in Lorenzo Monaco's work and in the wheelhouse of the International Gothic Style.

Ultimately, the San Mattia material displays a remarkable stylistic consistency and does not appear to stray widely from Lorenzo Monaco's sphere of influence and thus the International Gothic style of the early Quattrocento, which was believed to be the Murano Master's formative period.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest a dating window beginning in the early '00s of the fifteenth century. For a terminus ante quem, it may be that the latest date for the production of the San Mattia illuminations was somewhere around the late 1440s. This suggestion is based on the stylistic consistency seen in Murano Master's oeuvre, unlike that of Belbello, whose style changed dramatically over the course of the 1450s and post-1461 and saw a greater adoption of more monumental features. Thus, a dating between the 1400s and the 1440s seems like a reasonable timeframe for the San Mattia material as based on the stylistic features of the illuminations.

¹¹² Boston, Museum of Fine Art, acc no. 1973.692. J. Hamburger et al. eds., *Beyond Words. Illuminated Manuscripts in the Boston Collections* (McMullen Museum of Art: Boston, 2016), No. 34.

¹¹³ Plzen, Západočeské Muzeum, Inv. 2972.

¹¹⁴ Panayotova (2004), p. 52.

VII. Methodology & Challenges of the Partial Reconstruction

The methodology employed for the partial reconstruction of the San Mattia series adopts and adapts the one used by Levi D'Ancona for her reconstruction of the Florentine series. Unsurprisingly, it was much easier to undertake the various necessary analyses—codicological, iconographic, liturgical, and textual—of the intact volumes. Additionally, they offer a much more robust view of the artists' style and technique, and a wider ranging sense of Camaldolese iconography because of the greater number of images. By contrast, the loose cuttings present a variety of challenges that inhibited the reconstruction process and are addressed below.

One of the main obstructions of working with the fragments has been gaining physical access to the objects, as some of the cuttings are restricted even within public collections. The largest group of San Mattia fragments, at the Musée Marmottan, is displayed in a gallery behind large vitrines, however the curators are disinclined to remove the cuttings—even temporarily—to facilitate closer examination.¹¹⁵ In addition to this type of impediment, in some instances, the cuttings have been pasted down onto card thus preventing access to any visible text and/or musical notation on the reverse side. This often occurs with the cuttings that have been sold to private collectors who want to mount and frame the initial.

Sometimes the text on the reverse side is visible but is so fragmented that there may only be one or two partial words, as evident in this example of a historiated initial

¹¹⁵ The Musée Marmottan, under the direction of the Wildenstein Family, has refused multiple requests from various scholars and institutions asking to see the cuttings outside of the vitrine display. As a result, scholars are reliant on the Marmottan's object files, and Mirealla Levi D'Ancona's monograph (1970) for measurements and other material data.

with *Two Bishops and Two Saints* (see Fig. 12).¹¹⁶ The two partial words do not reveal enough information for one to easily discern to what liturgical text they may have once belonged. This cutting is doubly problematic because not only is the reverse text inscrutable but the iconography on the front side does not clearly convey who these figures are as there are no explicit saintly emblems or distinguishing iconography.¹¹⁷

When the text and/or musical notation on the reverse side are inaccessible only the iconography remains a means of analysis. However, this does not always provide the crucial information required to identify the cutting. This may be the result of damage to the image, as is the case with a fragment from the Wildenstein Collection of a *Holy Bishop* (Fig. 32).¹¹⁸ The cutting's burnished gold ground is badly deteriorated but the figure's mitre is still visible as well as what appears to be the remains of a crosier, thus signalling that this figure is probably a bishop. In her monograph on the Wildenstein Collection, Levi D'Ancona postulated that this figure appears to be holding his chasuble with his right hand as if something is gathered within it. She has suggested that if, originally, there had been three golden balls, he would likely be St. Nicholas of Bari, whose emblem is three gold balls.¹¹⁹ However, since there does not appear to be anything visible in the figure's garment, Levi D'Ancona's suggestion remains speculative, but it does demonstrate the conjecture that can result from a lack of iconographic information.

¹¹⁶ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48.40. The reverse side has not been published.

¹¹⁷ An attempt at identifying these figures is made in Ch.4 along with a discussion of the iconography.

¹¹⁸ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6037. M. Levi D'Ancona, *The Wildenstein Collection of Illuminations. The Lombard School* (Leo S. Olschki Editore: Florence, 1970).

¹¹⁹ Levi D'Ancona (1970), p. 48.

Another issue that can arise when working with excised initials is that in many instances the initial has been trimmed so closely that the original letter shape is now indistinguishable. In the same example from the Wildenstein Collection, the entire letter has been cut away leaving only the figure in a rounded ‘frame.’ The historiated initial corresponds to the first letter of the first line of text for—what is typically—the introit for a liturgical feast, but when this first letter is obscured it can make any textual cross-referencing extremely difficult. This is especially true with such generic iconography as the *Holy Bishop*.

VIII. The Master Illuminator: Miniatore di San Michele a Murano

The artist at the centre of this thesis is an enigmatic, anonymous painter whose formative years, training trajectory, and artistic activity prior to, and after, the creation of the San Mattia volumes remain a mystery. The current understanding of this illuminator is based on ensuing layers of scholarship produced over the course of the twentieth century and concerns the continuous re-discovery and re-attribution of miniatures to his hand. Until now, these scholastic examinations have been brief, often lacking in detailed analysis of iconography and style. Many of the San Mattia cuttings have never been discussed. Thus, in this way the current understanding of the Murano Master's style and technique is inadequate because it has only been considered in isolation and not within the larger context of the whole choir book series, or in relation to Cortese's contribution to the set.

In addition to the Berlin Gradual—the Murano Master's eponymous manuscript—the loose fragments of the set have been attributed to him based on the presence of distinct stylistic features that have collectively come to define his style. These elements will be discussed in greater depth shortly but first it may be helpful to address the network of artists active in Venice during the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, with whose work the Murano Master may have been familiar. Unpacking these dynamics might help to clarify and elucidate the stylistic characteristics of the Murano Master's hand, especially when exploring issues of creative influence. Some of these potential artistic relationships have been extremely problematic for the discourse on this artist, particularly the one concerning another important Quattrocento painter: Belbello da Pavia.

Belbello was active in Lombardy and Venice from ca. 1425 until the mid-1460s.¹²⁰ The name ‘Belbello’ was mentioned in correspondences of the Gonzaga family as the illuminator of part of a missal, later completed by Girolamo da Cremona for Barbara Gonzaga, Marchioness of Mantua.¹²¹ Although Belbello was removed from his role as illuminator of the Mantua Missal, the dated correspondence that accompanied the project has allowed scholars to establish a timeline for his work in Lombardy and in Venice. Two other works of great significance have been attributed to Belbello: the aforementioned Visconti Hours¹²² and the Bible of Niccolò III d’Este.¹²³ In 1912, Pietro Toesca recognized a stylistic link between the Visconti Hours and the work on the Mantua Missal, prompting him to suggest that the same artist (Belbello) was likely responsible for both works.¹²⁴ Edith Kirsch has noted that Belbello’s painting, as evident in the Visconti Hours, was likely indicative of his early style, which evolved from a mode characterized as compact, detailed and ‘gem-like’ to one that demonstrates a more broad and chromatically bolder vocabulary as seen in the Mantua Missal.¹²⁵ Kirsch’s assertion was the first attempt at creating a timeline of Belbello’s career based on the dated documentation and the changes that she observed in his style.

Belbello’s identity and style are important facets of any discussion about the Murano Master because for much of the twentieth century these two artists have been

¹²⁰ F. Lollini, ‘Giovanni Belbello da Pavia,’ in Bollati (2004), pp. 273–276 (at p. 273).

¹²¹ F. Carta, *Codici, corali e libri a stampa miniati della Biblioteca Nazionale di Milano* (Presso i principali librai: Rome, 1891), p. 153.

¹²² Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Banco Rari 397, Landau-Finally 22. Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

¹²³ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms Barb. Lat. 613. P. De Vecchi and E. Cerchiari Necchi, eds., *Il tempi dell’arte*, Vol. II (Bompiani: Milan, 1999).

¹²⁴ P. Toesca, *La pittura e miniatura nella Lombardia: dai piu antiche monumenti alla meta del Quattrocento* (U. Hoepli: Milan, 1912), pp. 535–549, 582 (at pp. 536, 582).

¹²⁵ Meiss and Kirsch (1972), p. 26.

conflated, with some scholars suggesting that the “Murano Master” was not a distinct individual but rather was Belbello at an earlier stage in his career.¹²⁶ In 1926, Amédée Boinet first published *La Collection de miniatures de M. Edouard Kann*, wherein he suggested that a full-page miniature depicting the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, now referred to as the *Mission of the Apostles* (see Fig. 9) was the work of Belbello.¹²⁷ Boinet ascribed the eleven other Kann cuttings—now all in the Wildenstein Collection in the Musée Marmottan—to the generalized ‘Lombard school’ of the mid-Quattrocento. He also suggested that these, plus the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, once belonged to the same manuscript on the basis of stylistic similarities, thus giving these illuminations a common origin.¹²⁸

In 1930, Toesca published Ulrico Hoepli’s collection of manuscript cuttings wherein he recognized the ‘common authorship of a handful of miniatures’ and identified the artist of these illuminations as ‘... a Venetian follower of Belbello.’¹²⁹ This was the earliest publication to acknowledge the possibility of a different artistic personality involved in the corpus of stylistically related cuttings. In 1931, Toesca’s observation received further support when Paul Wescher ascribed a Venetian provenance to the Berlin Gradual, the Wildenstein cuttings, and three fragments then in the Holford Collection.¹³⁰ Although Wescher did not suggest a name for the artist responsible for this

¹²⁶ Levi D’Ancona (1970).

¹²⁷ This cutting is one of the fourteen in the Wildenstein Collection in Paris. Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6030. Levi D’Ancona (1970), pl. IV.

¹²⁸ A. Boinet, *La Collection de miniatures de M. Edouard Kann*. (Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, 1926), p. 27ff., pls. XXVII-XXXIII.

¹²⁹ Toesca (1930), pp. 93-94.

¹³⁰ Wescher (1931), p. 110; R. Benson, ed., *The Holford Collection, Dorchester House*, Vols. 1–2 (Oxford University Press: Oxford/London, 1927), Vol. 1 nos. 27a-c.

corpus, he did not assign the work to Belbello, thus supporting a shift away from an automatic attribution to Belbello's hand.

In the early twentieth century, Toesca and Wescher raised the possibility that an artist other than Belbello was responsible for the cuttings, yet by mid-century the discourse had returned to a Belbello-centric narrative. In 1951, Mario Salmi suggested that the Wildenstein cuttings were in fact attributable solely to Belbello and posited the idea that these folios showed the influence of Lorenzo Monaco on Belbello.¹³¹ Mirella Levi D'Ancona accepted Salmi's theory, and in 1970 when she published her monograph on the Wildenstein Collection, she too attributed the cuttings to Belbello.¹³² In the same publication, Levi D'Ancona also suggested that the Wildenstein cuttings that had been part of the original Ottley sale must have come from the Camaldolese monastery of San Michele, based on the 'Murano' provenance listed in the Sotheby's sale catalogue.¹³³

The attribution of the Berlin Gradual and the Wildenstein cuttings to Belbello was not universally accepted, however, and in 1970, Jonathan Alexander ascribed these works to 'an anonymous artist?' possibly Venetian,' returning to Toesca's idea from 1930.¹³⁴ It was not until 1978 that this 'anonymous' artist was given a name when Serena Padovani, while discussing the artistic relationship between Belbello and the anonymous painter referred to this other personality as the 'Miniatore di San Michele a Murano.'¹³⁵ The link that Padovani made between this mysterious illuminator and San Michele a Murano was based on Wescher's attribution of the Berlin Gradual to his hand. However, the

¹³¹ Salmi (1951), p. 325.

¹³² Levi D'Ancona (1970), pp. 35–38.

¹³³ Levi D'Ancona (1970), p. 42.

¹³⁴ J. J. G. Alexander, review of *The Art of Illumination* (D'Ancona and Aeschlimann), (Phaidon: London, 1969), *The Burlington Magazine* 112 (April 1970), p. 247.

¹³⁵ Padovani (1978), pp. 24–34.

connection of the Berlin Gradual with San Michele is inaccurate. As the *fenestra* label and the liturgical content of the gradual reveal, the manuscript can be associated directly with the monastery of San Mattia di Murano, not San Michele in Isola.¹³⁶ Regardless of Padovani's inaccurate allocation of this manuscript to San Michele, she was the first to suggest a name for this illuminator, which has been vital for later efforts at constructing an identity for him. Padovani also deconstructs the previous scholarship on the Berlin Gradual and other related cuttings.¹³⁷ Although scholars have vacillated between these two different theories, today it is widely acknowledged that the Murano Master has a distinctive artistic identity with a style that can be visually compared with that of Belbello.

Whilst the Murano Master's relationship to/with Belbello acts as a crucial hinge upon which analysis of the Murano Master's oeuvre rests, there were likely other artists with whom he may have had contact and whose work may have served as a source of inspiration for the development of his own style. Unsurprisingly, the scriptorium at San Mattia's Florentine sister house, Santa Maria degli Angeli, likely offered the Murano Master access to illuminated manuscripts of the highest quality and to their creators.¹³⁸ Among these artists were Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci and Don Lorenzo Monaco, both of whom have widely influenced the Murano Master and Cristoforo Cortese, especially the way in which the latter artists rendered faces and bodies.¹³⁹

Without doubt, Don Silvestro's role in the production of the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli and those that likely belonged to San Michele should not be

¹³⁶ This will be discussed at greater length in Ch. 2.

¹³⁷ Padovani (1978).

¹³⁸ P. Palladino, 'Cristoforo Cortese,' in Hindman et al. (2012), pp. 175–180 (at p. 176).

¹³⁹ Palladino in Hindman et al. (2012), p. 176.

understated. Don Silvestro entered Santa Maria degli Angeli as a young novice in 1352 and in 1398 he was made prior, dying a year later on 5 October 1399.¹⁴⁰ During his time at the Florentine monastery he was actively engaged with the production¹⁴¹ of the lavish series of choir books, as his name appears in the record for one of several payments made to Santa Maria degli Angeli for the production of choir books.¹⁴² These manuscripts, perhaps more so than his altarpiece panels, demonstrate the high degree of skills and stylistic sophistication that characterized Don Silvestro's abilities, in particular his handling of lines, use of vivid jewel tones, and rendering of figures in space. Freuler has noted that Cod. Cor. 2, now in the Laurenziana in Florence, demonstrates an artistic maturity defined by '...a spontaneity and a greater freedom of design and handling' than his earlier panels.¹⁴³

Another stylistic commonality between Don Silvestro's work and that of the Murano Master is that Don Silvestro's illuminations for the Santa Maria degli Angeli Choir Books have an obvious sense of monumentality in their conception. The saints completely fill the space of the initial, nearly bursting forth from their borders.¹⁴⁴ Miklós Boskovits observed that the manner in which Don Silvestro integrates figures and scenes

¹⁴⁰ Florence, ASFi, Conventi Soppressi 86, S. Maria degli Angeli Vol. 96, fol. 37 and Vol. 97, p. 34. Levi D'Ancona (1994), p. 14, n. 18.

¹⁴¹ In 1992 George Bent reinterpreted some of the archival documents concerning the payments made to Santa Maria degli Angeli for the choir books, and posited the theory that Don Silvestro was not a painter but acted in more of an administrative role. This theory has not been widely accepted. G. R. Bent, 'The Scriptorium at S. Maria degli Angeli and Fourteenth Century Manuscript Illumination: Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci, Don Lorenzo Monaco, and Giovanni del Biondo,' *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 55 (1992), pp. 507–523.

¹⁴² M. Levi D'Ancona, 'I corali di S. Maria degli Angeli ora nella Biblioteca Laurenziana e le miniature da essi aspartate,' *Miscellanea di studi in memoria di Anna Saitta Revignas* (Leo S. Olschki: Florence, 1978), pp. 461ff.

¹⁴³ Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 135.

¹⁴⁴ Freuler in Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 155.

into the initial's frames reflects his training as a panel painter, and in many ways the manuscripts' images can be seen as miniature panel paintings.¹⁴⁵ The Murano Master has adopted a similar approach in his negotiation of figures in space, whereby he uses all of the areas available to him, allowing the figures to expand out in every direction, and not appear bound by the border of the initial. Unlike Don Silvestro, however, the Murano Master seems to have placed a great deal of importance on the figures expressing movement and dynamism, which is much closer to the approach taken by another Camaldolese artist at Santa Maria degli Angeli: Don Simone Camaldolese.¹⁴⁶

Don Silvestro's technique was marked by a refinement of the Sienese Gothic style, adapting elements that can be traced back to Simone Martini. The French Gothic style that inspired Simone Martini's use of harmonious colours, and delicately rendered graceful lines, which eventually became the 'Sienese' style, was appropriated by Don Silvestro. This is evident in how the physiognomies of his earlier panels, with their dark modelling and severe light were now polished through his application of gradated tones.¹⁴⁷ He drew on 'types'—such as holy popes or bishops—established and favoured by Simone Martini but would simplify the design, apply jewel tones, and emphasize the inner psychological state. This approach harkened back to later generations of Sienese Trecento illuminators such as Bartolo di Fredi.¹⁴⁸ Don Silvestro also appears to have become concerned with the inner emotional state of the figure, and sought to convey this

¹⁴⁵ M. Boskovits, *Pittura fiorentina alla vigilia del Rinascimento, 1370–1400* (Edam: Florence, 1975), p. 68.

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of the works of Don Simone Camaldolese, see: L. B. Kanter, 'Don Simone Camaldolese,' in Kanter et al. (1994a), pp. 187–219.

¹⁴⁷ Freuler (1994), p. 136.

¹⁴⁸ G. Freuler, 'Pope Saint Clement in an Initial D,' L. Kanter et al. (1994a), No. 16j, p. 154.

in an understated way, hence the delicate facial features. Similarly, conveying the internal psychology of the figures was crucial for the Murano Master, but he expressed their emotional state in a much more pronounced way.

It is in these deeply expressive figures that the influence of Don Lorenzo Monaco may be detected. As mentioned in the section on the dating of the choir books, the Murano Master may have relied more heavily on Lorenzo Monaco as a source of inspiration than has previously been explored. Lorenzo Monaco seemed to be keenly aware of the new International Gothic, and followed closely in the artistic tradition of Lorenzo Ghiberti and Gherardo Starnina—both of whom are credited with ushering in this style.¹⁴⁹ Most notably, Lorenzo's paintings no longer demonstrate what Kanter calls the 'restrained, artificial solemnity' of his early attempts to compete with other successful artists of the late Trecento.¹⁵⁰ His approach to contours, especially those of draperies, become characterized by broad, sweeping curves, taking on a somewhat idiosyncratic quality, which can be detected in the large, voluminous loops of the Murano Master's garments (Fig. 33). Additionally, Lorenzo's figures assume swaying postures, possess elongated proportions, and mirror the curved borders of his unusually shaped initials and picture fields (Fig. 34).¹⁵¹ A similar approach is taken by the Murano Master where he fills the whole interior space of the initial and often has the figure mirroring the shape of the letter as seen in the initial B with *St. Michael Transfixing Satan* (Fig. 35). Here, the arm and sword of the avenging angel is completely curved above his head, filling the

¹⁴⁹ S. Rossi, *I pittori fiorentini del Quattrocento e le loro botteghe: da Lorenzo Monaco a Paolo Uccello* (Tau Editrice: Todi, 2012), p. 134.

¹⁵⁰ L. B. Kanter, *Italian Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts. Boston Vol. I, 13th – 15th Century* (Northeastern University Press: Boston, 1994b), pp. 37–38.

¹⁵¹ Kanter (1994a), p. 221.

upper bow of the B. When this is compared with the same initial, made for the Florentine volumes and attributed to Don Silvestro, the figure of St. Michael does not mirror the shape of the lower bow in which he is depicted (Fig. 36). Rather his body appears almost to have been inserted into the initial as opposed to the more harmonious merging of the figure with the initial seen in the Murano Master's version.

The possible stylistic influence of Lorenzo Monaco on the work of the Murano Master was first raised in Section VI: Dating the Choir Books, where this link was used to try and establish a possible timeline for the production of the San Mattia volumes. However, this stylistic connection, detected in the faces of Lorenzo Monaco's figures and those of the Murano Master may also have served another function. The deeply pensive faces of both his male and female figures may suggest that the Murano Master was interested in expressing the inner psychological states of the characters he created for San Mattia's choir books. The female figures possessing serene and whimsical faces while their male counterparts often wore fierce, pensive, questioning expressions.¹⁵² The facial expressions of Don Silvestro's figures are much more emotionally muted, whereas, inner emotion was much more overt and pronounced in the figures painted by the Murano Master. The various saints, monks, and holy figures in the Berlin Gradual and the cuttings possess highly emotive expressions that the Murano Master has rendered through the use of furrowed brows, downturned mouths, and pensive eyes, thus the individual features become the vehicle for conveying the inner condition. This in turn was also seen in figures belonging to Lorenzo Monaco's oeuvre.

¹⁵² Panayotova (2005), p. 152.

IX. Stylistic Hallmarks of the Murano Master & Monumental Art

While he clearly draws upon the oeuvres of other illuminators and painters, including the three mentioned above, the Murano Master marshals their distinctive features to forge his own creative path and develop his particular style. He was not interested in merely mimicking the great illuminators of Florence but sought to express his own talent and artistic curiosity. Thus, the Murano Master's style cannot be neatly defined through direct comparisons with other artists, which instead offer a useful framework through which to distinguish his approach and practice.

As previously stated, the visual characteristics of the Murano Master's style have been identified by scholars through an examination of the Berlin Gradual and loose fragments, and would appear to demonstrate an awareness on his part of stylistic trends from other artistic centres in Italy. The visual influences of Lombardy had an impact on the Murano Master's work, which may suggest that he received some training there. The Lombard influence is seen specifically in the rich ornamentation of the fabrics lined with contrasting colours and the gilt emulsion rinceaux on the burnished gold backgrounds and nimbi.¹⁵³ The voluminous, tubular folds of the figures' garments, mentioned previously in relation to Lorenzo Monaco's approach to drapery, display a monumental quality often engulfing the figures and dwarfing them slightly.¹⁵⁴ He also tends to employ both hatching and cross-hatching on the fabrics (and on the faces), which creates a subtle textured appearance in the creases of the fabrics. Additionally, pseudo-Arabic script, as a

¹⁵³ G. Toscano, 'Per Belbello in Laguna,' *Arte Veneta* 52 (1998), pp. 6–27 (at p. 12); T. Franco, 'Attorno a un corale di Capodostria e al Maestro di San Michele di Murano,' *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 4 (1998), pp. 161–168 (at pp. 163–164).

¹⁵⁴ The possible influence of monumental art (frescoes) on the Murano Master's work is discussed in Ch. 2.

decorative embellishment on the garments, is a ubiquitous feature of the Murano Master's work and is also considered to be a hallmark of his style.¹⁵⁵ While the Murano Master does experiment with various iconographic and stylistic techniques, including *cangiante* and the technique of stippling,¹⁵⁶ pseudo-Arabic script is a feature he used with great frequency throughout the Berlin Gradual and in the majority of the cuttings. Its presence in the San Mattia material could perhaps suggest that the Murano Master was aware of pseudo-Arabic as a decorative device in Italian paintings beginning as early as 1265–1268 when Cimabue reproduced Islamic textiles in his crucifix at San Domenico in Arezzo (Fig. 37).¹⁵⁷ In the fifteenth century, the use of pseudo-Arabic inscriptions was derived from the reproduction of Islamic textiles in panel paintings and manuscripts as a separate decorative element, used on garments and halos.¹⁵⁸

The San Mattia material also demonstrates the Murano Master's awareness of compositional trends in the Emilia-Romagna region, particularly the work of Niccolò da Bologna.¹⁵⁹ Many of the scenes in the Berlin Gradual and the loose fragments depict groups of figures painted in tightly compressed arrangements, such as in the initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin* (see Fig. 6), today in the Fitzwilliam Museum in

¹⁵⁵ Pseudo-Arabic script can also be seen on the burnished halos of figures and as decoration on the historiated initials in the Berlin Gradual and the cuttings.

¹⁵⁶ The Murano Master's use of *cangiante* and stippling is discussed in Ch. 2.

¹⁵⁷ A. Contadini, 'Artistic Contacts: Current Scholarship and Future Tasks,' in C. Burnett and A. Contadini, eds., *Islam and the Italian Renaissance* (The Warburg Institute: London, 1999), pp. 1–60 (at p. 4).

¹⁵⁸ Contadini (1999), p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Niccolò di Giacomo di Nascimbene, doc. 1349–1403. F. Pascut, 'Niccolò di Giacomo di Nascimbene,' in Bollati (2004), pp. 827–832.

Cambridge.¹⁶⁰ Here, the Murano Master has created a lively composition animated by the figures' active gesticulations and deeply expressive faces. This combination of stylistic features is evident in Niccolò's illuminations, which are characterized by their high degree of liveliness and great amount of quotidian detail,¹⁶¹ as seen in this image of a Cardinal-Judge presiding over a court in the *Novella in Decretales*, also in the Fitzwilliam Museum (Fig. 38).¹⁶² The Murano Master drew on Niccolò's crowded compositional style and brought this approach into the early decades of the Quattrocento, which was unlike the types of compositions seen in the works of his contemporaries such as Cortese and Belbello. Although inspired by Niccolò, the Murano Master adapted the model to reflect his own style by using red pigments (vermillion, red lead, etc.) and eschewing grey tones for his figures' flesh, resulting in more naturalistic skin.

Realistic, luminous flesh is another highly distinctive hallmark of the Murano Master's style.¹⁶³ Unlike Cortese, whose figures tended to exhibit either a chalky, grey complexion or an overly ruddy one, the Murano Master preferred to use red tones and to build up the flesh with fewer layers. He also avoided using a green under-layer on the figures' faces in order to achieve their characteristic sun-kissed appearance.¹⁶⁴ He often complemented the bronzed skin with eyes that are highlighted with white, creating a stark

¹⁶⁰ Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18. S. Panayotova, ed., *Colour. The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Harvey Miller Publishers/Brepols: London and Turnhout, 2016), no. 81.

¹⁶¹ F. d'Arcais, 'Per Niccolò di Giacomo da Bologna,' in *Studi di storia dell'arte in memoria di Mario Rotili* (Banca Sannitica: Benevento, 1984), pp. 273–282 (at p. 276).

¹⁶² Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 331. Panayotova (2016), no. 79.

¹⁶³ This stylistic aspect will be discussed in-depth as it relates to illuminations in the Berlin Gradual (Ch. 2) and the individual cuttings (Ch. 4).

¹⁶⁴ S. Panayotova and N. Turner, in Panayotova (2016), no. 81, p. 288.

contrast between the two tones.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the most distinctive feature is the plasticity of the figures' faces, which the Murano Master achieves through shading around the nose, eyes and lips, and this careful modelling creates a facial bone structure that seems to rise off the parchment.¹⁶⁶ All of this culminates with figures that exhibit a more three-dimensional quality, as if one is not looking at a painted image but at one sculpted in relief.

While there is obvious Lombard influence present in his work, the Murano Master may also have been inspired by Bolognese painters such as Giovanni da Modena, in particular his frescoes for the church of San Petronio in Bologna. This complex and elaborate cycle of frescoes was painted in ca. 1408–1410, in the Bolognini Chapel and reflected the Gothic style dominant in Bologna at this time.¹⁶⁷ According to Gennaro Toscano, Giovanni da Modena was enriching the Bolognese tradition that had flourished a century before with Vitale and Pseudo-Jacopino by engaging directly with the triangulated artistic dialogue of various Po Valley territories, Tuscany, and the Veneto.¹⁶⁸ The iconography of the frescoes includes a depiction of heaven and hell, with rows of angels and prophets; the coronation of the Virgin; Archangel Michael defeating the Dragon; various prophet bust portraits; and the story of the Magi, including scenes of King Herod.¹⁶⁹ Some scholars have speculated that the Murano Master drew most heavily from the iconography in the Magi cycle, particularly the various scenes involving King

¹⁶⁵ S. Panayotova, in P. Binski and S. Panayotova, eds., *The Cambridge Illuminations. Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West* (Harvey Miller Publishers/Brepols: London and Turnhout, 2005), no. 60b, p. 151.

¹⁶⁶ Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 151.

¹⁶⁷ Toesca (1912), p. 194.

¹⁶⁸ Toscano (1998), p. 12.

¹⁶⁹ For images see: D. Benati and M. Medica, eds., *Giovanni da Modena: un pittore all'ombra di San Petronio* (Silvana Editoriale: Milan, 2015), pp. 150–166.

Herod, such as the *Meeting of King Herod and the Magi* (Fig. 39) and the *Council of King Herod* (Fig. 40).¹⁷⁰ While this theory has held for the past few decades, this thesis would like to offer a new possibility for the way in which frescoes may have inspired the Murano Master.

Serena Padovani first proposed the possible link between the Murano Master's work and the San Petronio frescoes based on visual similarities between the figures.¹⁷¹ According to Padovani, the Murano Master appears to have borrowed several compositional features, such as the arrangement of figures and the design of bodies and faces, for his work in the Berlin Gradual.¹⁷² Padovani cites the two frescoes, mentioned above, as being particularly influential on the Murano Master, and has posited that the circular arrangement of the Berlin initial C with the *Last Supper* (Fig. 41) with Christ seated upright mirrors the arrangement of the figures in the *Council of Herod fresco*.¹⁷³ Toscano supported Padovani's theory and expanded on it by further probing the link between the Berlin Gradual's illuminations and the San Petronio frescoes. Toscano has suggested a visual similarity between the serious, grave faces of the Murano Master's figures and those of the prophets in Giovanni's *Paradise* fresco (Fig. 42).¹⁷⁴ As a result of these perceived links, which indicate that the Murano Master combined features from other regions and media, his visual language has often been described as 'violently expressive'.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Padovani (1978), p. 30; Toscano (1998), pp. 12–13; Franco (1998), p. 165.

¹⁷¹ Padovani (1978), p. 30.

¹⁷² Padovani (1978), pp. 30–31.

¹⁷³ Padovani (1978), p. 30

¹⁷⁴ Toscano (1998), p. 12.

¹⁷⁵ Franco (1998), pp. 163–164.

The San Petronio frescoes were not the only group of monumental paintings that Padovani linked to the Murano Master: she also suggested that he might have been influenced by the frescoes in the Rocca di Vignola near the Po River in Emilia-Romagna.¹⁷⁶ This fresco cycle with scenes from the life of Christ is attributed to the so-called ‘Master of Vignola’ in the first decades of the fifteenth century, thus making it contemporary with both the San Petronio wall paintings and the San Mattia volumes.¹⁷⁷ She suggests that the Murano Master mimicked some of the postures of the Vignola figures, such as a haloed apostle from the *Ascension* (Fig. 43) and an *Apostle (Martyr Saint?)* in the Wildenstein Collection (Fig. 44).¹⁷⁸ This specific example is particularly problematic because other than the upturned head, these two figures have little else in common in terms of visual characteristics. While there are some visual commonalities between the Murano Master’s work and the fresco cycles, particularly those at San Petronio, the more complex issue is whether it is viable to suggest that the Murano Master was inspired by them. Since the frescoes could only be experienced in situ, he would have had to be there physically, which could imply an Emilian origin or training for him. It could also suggest the possibility of an extended sojourn in Bologna and the surrounding environs, which would explain the influence of the San Petronio frescoes. Another plausible option is that the Murano Master was able to absorb the imagery through mobile works such as panel paintings and manuscripts that carried the influence of the fresco cycles from Bologna to Venice. While there are some clear stylistic parallels

¹⁷⁶ Padovani (1978), p. 32.

¹⁷⁷ D. Benati, ‘Il “Maestro di Vignola,”’ in D. Benati and V. Vandelli, eds., *La Cappella Contrari nella Rocca di Vignola* (Jaca Book: Milan, 2007), pp. 61–83 (at p. 69)

¹⁷⁸ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6022. Levi D’Ancona (1970); Padovani (1978), p. 31.

between certain works attributed to the Murano Master and the San Petronio frescoes by Giovanni da Modena, this author is not entirely convinced that there is a concrete link.

X. Problematic Attributions to the Murano Master's Oeuvre

Although the Murano Master's oeuvre displays distinctive salient stylistic hallmarks, some works have still been attributed to him despite completely lacking these features, or possessing ones that are markedly different. In her monograph on the Wildenstein Collection, Levi D'Ancona lists fourteen cuttings as belonging to the Murano Master's body of work.¹⁷⁹ Although eleven clearly demonstrate the Murano Master's stylistic and technical approach to figure and landscape painting, three cuttings do not appear to the present author to be part of his oeuvre. Levi D'Ancona refers to the problematic ones as an initial S with a *Seated Evangelist* (see Fig. 7), an initial R with *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?)* (see Fig. 8), and *An Old Man in Prayer with a Youth Behind Him* (Fig. 45).¹⁸⁰

Of these three cuttings, *St. Catherine (St. Justine of Padua?)* exhibits virtually none of the key stylistic features of the Murano Master's oeuvre, which becomes more pronounced when compared with other works from his oeuvre that do. The initial G with *St. Mary Magdalene*, also in the Wildenstein Collection, offers the best comparison since these are both renderings of female figures (Fig. 46). Although the *St. Catherine* has similar features to the *St. Mary Magdalene*, there are subtle differences that collectively suggest that the *St. Catherine* was not painted by the Murano Master but perhaps more likely another illuminator possibly working at San Mattia. *St. Catherine's* face lacks the heavy modelling seen in the cheekbones and forehead of the *St. Mary Magdalene*, which makes these features appear to rise off of the parchment. Additionally, the *St. Mary*

¹⁷⁹ Throughout this monograph Levi D'Ancona uses the name Belbello because she never believed that the Murano Master was a separate personality. See above for full discussion.

¹⁸⁰ These three fragments are listed in the Appendix.

Magdalene's face, neck, and hands have the realistic looking flesh tones that are a hallmark of the Murano Master's work. The use of red and orange pigments layered over the lead white result in a sun-blushed appearance, that creates the illusion of blood under the flesh. St. Catherine's skin is too fair and the use of red lead on the forehead and cheeks is too subtle and does not achieve the same effect of realism. Additionally, St. Catherine's fingers lack the white nails that have come to define how the Murano Master renders the extremities of his figures, and is a feature found on nearly every single one.

The stylistic hallmark that is the best evidence for excluding the St. Catherine from the Murano Master's oeuvre is the pseudo-Arabic script on her garments. Running along the collar of her green tunic and along the edges of her pink mantle are strokes of gold pigment designed to resemble Arabic script (Fig. 47). The use of pseudo-Arabic script as a decorative element is present in nearly every illumination in the Murano Master's oeuvre. He favoured it as an ornamentation on fabrics, nimbi, and the initials themselves. On the tunic, mantle, and nimbus of the St. Mary Magdalene, he has used it generously. His style of pseudo-Arabic script is identical in every instance in which it is present, as is seen in this comparison of a select few examples from the San Mattia corpus (Fig. 48). Rosamond Mack has noted that Italian artists who were using pseudo-scripts tended to develop their own personal style of rendering imitation Islamic letters that was distinctive from one another.¹⁸¹ When the pseudo-Arabic script on the garments of the *St. Catherine* is compared with that of the St. Mary Magdalene, it does not share the same style or visual characteristics. Nor does it appear similar to the larger sampling

¹⁸¹ R. E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art 1300–1600* (University of California Press: Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1992), p. 16.

of the Murano Master's use of this decorative element. Based on the above analysis, the initial R with *St. Catherine* should be excluded from the Murano Master's oeuvre.

Similarly, although the *Seated Evangelist* (See fig. 7) exhibits pseudo-Arabic script as a decorative feature on the edge of his mantle, like in the *St. Catherine* initial, it does not resemble the Murano Master's distinctive approach to this stylistic element. As is evident from the extracted examples of the Murano Master's use of pseudo-Arabic script—all of which clearly resembles a similar pattern of strokes and 'letter' shapes—the Wildenstein *Seated Evangelist* does not share these similarities and was very likely the product of a different artist (Fig. 49). Additionally, there also appears to be an attempt at mimicking the Murano Master's approach to flesh, wherein the apples of the cheeks are made rosy to contrast with the bronze of the face. However, the face of the *Seated Evangelist* appears to have too much yellow and the features—the eyes, nose, and lips—are not as highly refined as is more typical of the other San Mattia figures.

The cutting showing the *Old Man in Prayer with the Youth Behind Him* (See fig. 45) is most 'Murano Master-esque' of these three problematic fragments, however, the unusual rendering of his stylistic features may suggest that it is not the Murano Master's work. The depiction of the flesh—especially that of the *Youth*—resembles the flesh of figures in other Wildenstein cuttings attributed to the Murano Master, such as the initial with *St. George* (?) (Fig. 50).¹⁸² Yet the hair of both figures and the beard of the *Old Man* are undefined: they are masses of brown and white, highly uncharacteristic of the

¹⁸² Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection, M6023. Levi D'Ancona (1970), pl. XIV.

Murano Master, whose method of painting hair was similar to the approach of Don Silvestro with both artists defining the individual hairs.¹⁸³

Jutting out from the lips of the *Youth* are two prominent front teeth. In this example, the teeth are large and widely spaced and are similar to the teeth seen on other figures attributed to the Murano Master. In an initial E with *St. Stephen*, in the Wildenstein Collection, one can see two bright white teeth—matching the whites of his eyes—resting on the saint’s lower lip (Fig. 51).¹⁸⁴ The cutting of an initial N with the *Finding of the True Cross*, in a private collection, also shows two female figures displaying teeth: the female in the blue and gold mantle and St. Helena, kneeling by the cross (Fig. 52).¹⁸⁵ These teeth have an almost aggressive appearance and are so widely spaced they almost appear comical. This type of representation of teeth can be seen in the work of Belbello. In the Visconti Hours, there is one folio in which this feature appears: *Burning of Achan, His Family, and His Possessions* (Fig. 53).¹⁸⁶ The tortured face of Achan, who prays with his neck arched towards heaven while flames engulf his family, reveals an open mouth and two white dots for teeth. This is the only example of Belbello employing this feature in the Visconti Hours but it appears with greater frequency in his later works, such as in an initial A with a *Young Christ Blessing*, once belonging to an

¹⁸³ G. Freuler, ‘Presenze artistiche toscane a Venezia alla fine del Trecento: lo scriptorium dei camaldolesi e dei domenicani,’ in M. Boskovits, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Trecento*, Vol. II. (Electa: Milan, 1992), pp. 480–502 (at p. 482).

¹⁸⁴ Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection M6027. Levi D’Ancona (1970), pl. IX.

¹⁸⁵ London, Private Collection.

<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/western-manuscripts-and-miniatures-and-the-korner-sale-l09740/lot.109.html>

¹⁸⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 136r. Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

antiphoner from San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice (Fig. 54).¹⁸⁷ This unusual manner of depicting teeth makes it a highly recognizable visual trait of the Murano Master's oeuvre yet is not considered a hallmark of his style. It has therefore received insufficient attention but could be helpful for identifying his work.

¹⁸⁷ Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 96, verso.
<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/225265/belbello-da-pavia-leaf-from-antiphonal-p-of-san-giorgio-maggiore-italian-about-1467-1470/>

XI. The (Other) Master Illuminator: Cristoforo Cortese

The illumination of the second intact volume associated with San Mattia has been attributed to Cristoforo Cortese, based on stylistic grounds.¹⁸⁸ Unlike the Murano Master, more is known about Cortese's life and career, due to surviving documents including several versions of his last will and testament, property rental agreements, and written references about his familial lineage.¹⁸⁹ He was active as an illuminator, panel painter, and xylographer from ca. 1399 until his death on 16 November 1445.¹⁹⁰ Yet despite Cortese's prolific career, only three signed works are known to survive: a full-page illumination of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with St. John the Baptist and St. Ambrose* dated to ca. 1422 (Fig. 55);¹⁹¹ an initial A with the *Funeral of St. Francis*, datable on a stylistic basis to ca. 1426 (Fig. 56);¹⁹² and an initial G with *St. Francis Enthroned Among the Angelic Orders*, preserved in Hungary, and associated with the *Funeral of St. Francis* initial at the Marmottan.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ G. Mariani Canova, 'Cristoforo Cortese, No. 65. Graduale,' in M. Boskovits, ed., *Arte in Lombardia tra Gotico e Rinascimento* (Fabbri Editori: Milan, 1988), pp. 232–239.

¹⁸⁹ Cortese is listed as the son of Marco, a painter and illuminator and is himself described as a 'miniator' in a register compiled between 1367 and 1399. Venice, Museo Correr, MS IV, 118.

¹⁹⁰ L. Humphrey, 'Cristoforo Cortese's Signed Frontispieces in the Museo Civico Amadeo Lia, La Spezia and the Mariiegola of the Scuola dei Milanesi of Venice,' *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura* 12 (2008), pp. 81–94 (at p. 81; n.1).

¹⁹¹ This illumination was the frontispiece for a Mariiegola belonging to the Scuola Giovanni Battista e Sant' Ambrogio. La Spezia, Museo Civico Amadeo Lia, inv. n. 543. 'La Spezia. Museo Civico Amadeo Lia: Minature,' in F. Todini, ed., *I cataloghi del Museo Civico Amadeo Lia* (Commune della Spezia, Servizio Musei: La Spezia, 1996), no. 24.

¹⁹² Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection, inv. 6076. Y. Brayer, *La collection Wildenstein. Le Musée Marmottan* (Musée Marmottan: Paris, 1980), no. 68.

¹⁹³ Székesfehérvár, Diocesan Library, Inc. 464, fol. 1v. A. Tóvizi, 'Some Newly Discovered Quattrocento Illuminations in Székesfehérvár,' *Arte Cristiana* 96 (2008), pp. 307–312, fig. 2.

Cortese's name was first discovered by nineteenth-century antiquarian Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna (1789–1868) in the register of the Venetian confraternity of the Scuola di Santa Caterina dei Sacchi a Venezia.¹⁹⁴ Cicogna published the artist's name in 1853, bringing Cortese to the attention of scholars.¹⁹⁵ Cortese is documented mainly in Venice but he also worked as a miniaturist in Padua and Bologna.¹⁹⁶ According to a version of his wife Zanina's will dated 15 August 1420, their place of residence was listed as the parish of San Silvestro in Venice but in a later version of his own will dated 23 September 1426, it states that he had moved to Bologna intending to remain there. He did eventually return to Venice, where a final version of his will, dated 25 February 1440, listed him as once again living in the parish of San Silvestro.¹⁹⁷

The first signed work to come to light was the *Funeral of Saint Francis* initial published in 1926 by Lucien Auvray, who was able to connect the signature with the name published by Cicogna in 1853. This cutting served as the primary means of attributing newly emerging unsigned works to Cortese.¹⁹⁸ In 1948, Otto Pächt and Jonathan Alexander noted that Cortese was one of several illuminators who had worked

¹⁹⁴ 'Xpofalo cortexe miniaor.' Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, Cl. IV 118.

¹⁹⁵ E. A. Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane raccolte ed illustrate*, Vol. 6 (Giuseppe Orlandelli editore: Venice 1824–1853), p. 112.

¹⁹⁶ Humphrey (2008), p. 81.

¹⁹⁷ I. Chiappini di Sorio, 'Documenti per Cristoforo Cortese,' *Arte Veneta* 17 (1963), pp. 156–158 (at p. 156).

¹⁹⁸ Seymour de Ricci, ed., *Exposition du livre italien, mai-juin 1926: catalogue des manuscrits, livre imprimés, reliures* (Bois-Colombes: Paris, 1926), no. 234. Lyle Humphrey has argued that Auvray's catalogue entry is significant for two reasons: firstly, it is likely the earliest published reference to Cortese's signed work, and secondly, it is earlier than Pietro Toesca's *Quelques miniatures vénitiennes*, who is normally credited with having discovered Cortese's signature in the Wildenstein illumination.

on a fifteenth-century Venetian antiphoner now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.¹⁹⁹ In 1978, Norman Land focused on trying to identify the different hands in the Bodleian antiphoner, especially that of Cortese.²⁰⁰ While this scholarship helped to establish Cortese's presence in various Italian cities in connection with different projects, it would also serve as the foundation upon which a characterisation of Cortese's style could be built.

¹⁹⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce a. I (21970), O. Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, eds., *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, vol II: The Italian School*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1970), no. 468.

²⁰⁰ N. E. Land, 'Cristoforo Cortese and an Important Antiphonary in the Bodleian Library, Oxford,' *The Burlington Magazine* 120, no. 906 (1978), pp. 584–591 + 593.

XII. Stylistic Hallmarks of Cristoforo Cortese

Cortese's artistic style is slightly more difficult to categorize, owing largely to the lack of stylistic and technical consistency of works attributed to him. According to Simona Cohen this problem is the result of the multiplicity of styles and copious illuminations attributed to Cortese, which has produced a deceptive image of this painter.²⁰¹ Cohen has suggested that colour is a much more fruitful—and overlooked—means of accurately identifying works for which Cortese was responsible, and that by analysing modifications in his palette, a chronology can be established.²⁰² In 1974, Carl Huter linked Cortese to the Novella Master—an illuminator active in Padua from ca. 1396–1410—whom he suggested may have heavily contributed to the development of Cortese's style.²⁰³ Huter also suggested that the foundation of Cortese's individual style owed a great deal to his familiarity with the art of Bolognese Trecento illuminator Niccoló di Giacomo.²⁰⁴ Land stressed that Cortese was the first important artist to practice the late Gothic style in Venice, and as a result Cortese's style directed the course of early fifteenth-century illumination in that city.²⁰⁵ Thus, just as with the Murano Master, Cortese was drawing stylistic inspiration from the artistic contexts of different regions and applying them to the art he was producing in Venice.

²⁰¹ S. Cohen, 'Cristoforo Cortese Reconsidered,' *Arte Veneta* 39 (1985), pp. 22–31 (at p. 22).

²⁰² Cohen (1985), p. 22.

²⁰³ Huter suggests that Cortese collaborated with the Novella Master in 1405 and this appears to have influenced Cortese's decoration of a volume of Petrarch's *Canzoniere and Other Poems* ca. 1400 (London, British Library, King's Ms. 321). Huter noted that some of Cortese's stylistic features: freer brushwork, richer use of impasto, etc. which distinguish him from the Master of the Paduan Bible, can be found in the Novella Master's work. C. Huter, 'Panel Paintings by Illuminators. Remarks on a Crisis of Venetian Style,' *Arte Veneta* 28 (1974), pp. 9–16.

²⁰⁴ Huter (1974), p. 11.

²⁰⁵ Land (1978), pp. 586–587.

Giordana Mariani Canova posited that Cortese's initial moments of artistic development, combined with the stylistic beginnings of the Quattrocento, provide information about the shift in Venetian illustrative language and that these shifts can be seen in his decoration of literary codices.²⁰⁶ Cortese's oeuvre features a large number of literary works, including an illuminated version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*,²⁰⁷ Aristotle's *Ethics*,²⁰⁸ and *De natura deorum* by Cicero,²⁰⁹ in addition to choir books and books of hours. Although Cortese's style lacks the visual cohesion of the Murano Master's, Cortese's technical versatility with various media is impressive, which may account for the vast number of projects accredited to him and his workshop.

Unlike the Murano Master who had an inventive approach to rendering flesh through the use of only a few pigments combined with careful modelling of the cheeks, nose, and mouth, Cortese seems to have been less concerned with such aspects of illumination. He may have favoured a colour palette similar to what Belbello da Pavia used for his figures in the Visconti Hours, resulting in an ashen-toned complexion, as seen in *Moses Slays an Egyptian* (Fig. 57),²¹⁰ and *Moses and the Burning Bush* (Fig. 58).²¹¹ Belbello appears to have used a dark grey-brown under-layer likely composed of lead white, iron, and gall ink.²¹² He then highlighted the cheeks and nose area with white

²⁰⁶ G. Mariani Canova, 'Appunti per Cristoforo Cortese,' in R. Varese, ed., *Studi per Pietro Zampetti* (Lavoro Editoriale: Ancona, 1993), pp. 123–127 (at p. 126).

²⁰⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Ital. 105.

²⁰⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Canon. Misc. 251.

²⁰⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. G. 194.

²¹⁰ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 84v. Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

²¹¹ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Landau-Finaly 22, fol. 85r. Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

²¹² For pigment mixture, see: Panayotova and Turner, in Panayotova (2016), no. 79, p. 284.

and added a bright red—likely red lead and vermillion—as an accent to the figures’ cheeks. The faces of the figures in the Visconti Hours typically lack the naturalism of the blushing effect seen in the figures of the Berlin Gradual. In the Milan Gradual, Cortese’s figures possess ashy-grey skin tones, much closer in colour to those of Belbello.

In the initial E with the *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 59), the faces of the holy family and the Magi exhibit a grey complexion and appear to have much flatter, two-dimensional visages that lack the sculptural quality of the Murano Master’s figures. The flesh tones appear to consist of a green under-layer—which as mentioned previously the Murano Master did not employ—that was likely composed of lead white, green earth, and azurite.²¹³ Cortese appears to have accented the cheeks of St. Joseph and the Magi with a mixture of white lead and vermillion to create a pink flesh colour, with traces of the green under-layer still visible. This approach, however, appears to be one of several that Cortese took when rendering the flesh of figures in the Milan Gradual, ultimately resulting in a lack of technical consistency through the manuscript.²¹⁴

According to Simona Cohen, Cortese’s artistic strength was found in his skill as a draughtsman and that his application of pigments was not overly sophisticated. In her article from 1985, Cohen examines Cortese’s skill as a painter and draughtsman in the context of his *Funeral of St. Francis*²¹⁵ (see Fig. 56), which has been dated on stylistic grounds to ca. 1426, and a manuscript of Petrarch, now in Paris.²¹⁶ Of the *Funeral of St. Francis*, Cohen writes:

²¹³ Panayotova and Turner in Panayotova (2016), no. 78, p. 282.

²¹⁴ The various technical approaches to rendering figures in the Milan Gradual are discussed in greater depth in Ch. 3.

²¹⁵ Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection, Inv. 6076. Cohen (1985).

²¹⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. ital. 549. Cohen (1985).

The fine quality of Cortese's draughtsmanship contrasts with the mediocrity of his painting. His method of painting involved the application of solid color areas in thick impasto followed by overpainting with fine brushes. Simple folds on garments were added in both lighter and darker tones of the same pigment, white lines were superimposed on white headdresses and lighter pigments were added over pastel flesh tones. Many of the overpainted areas appear stereotyped and tedious.²¹⁷

Cohen then goes on to suggest that Cortese's use of colour in works dated only slightly later than the *Funeral of St. Francis*, show a turn towards decorative rather than naturalistic colouring.²¹⁸ This technique also appears to be the painting method outlined by Cennino Cennini in his instructions for fresco painting in 'Il Libro dell'Arte'.²¹⁹ According to Cennini, any artist who did not work using this approach demonstrated a 'lack of knowledge about the profession.'²²⁰ The complexion of figures in the Milan Gradual's *Adoration* folio find stylistic parallels in the work of early Trecento artists such as Pacino di Bonaguida (doc. 1303–1330). An image of the *Last Communion of St. Mary Magdalene*, painted for a Florentine laudario exhibits nearly the same mixture of pigments in the figures' faces (Fig. 60).²²¹

The stylistic characteristic mentioned above are certainly present in the Milan Gradual, for which Cortese was responsible. Unlike the Berlin volume, which has codicological and technical evidence that links it with San Mattia and grounds it in the Lagoon, the Milan Gradual lack this type of data. However, the manuscripts can be connected in other ways, primarily through their corresponding codicology and their

²¹⁷ Cohen (1985), p. 22.

²¹⁸ Cohen (1985), p. 24.

²¹⁹ Panayotova and Turner in Panayotova (2016), no. 78.

²²⁰ Thompson (1954), p. 46.

²²¹ Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 201.4. Panayotova (2016), no. 78.

liturgical content, and additionally, Cortese was known to the monks at San Mattia. In ca. 1407, he illustrated a register of possessions for the monastery (Fig. 61), today in the Seminario Patriarcale di Venezia.²²² Thus, the monks may have given him a further commission by asking him to produce their choir books. Through the investigation that will unfold in Ch. 3, a case will be made for connecting the Berlin and Milan Graduals through codicological, liturgical and iconographic features.

²²² Venice, Seminario Patricale, ms Busta 96. R. Pallucchini, ed., *Storia di Venezia Temi L'Arte* (Treccani: Rome, 1994–1995), p. 795, Fig. 21.

XIII. Conclusions

The now-dismembered series of choir books made for a Camaldolese monastery nestled on an island in the Venetian Lagoon presents many challenges for the task of attempting a partial reconstruction. While only one intact volume can be concretely linked to the house of San Mattia, the other components—another intact volume and over forty individual leaves—are placed in proximity to the series through the use of other methodologies, including codicological analysis, iconographic examination, historical research, and the application of logic. If the measurements of the Berlin Gradual match those of the Milan Gradual identically, would common sense not suggest that these two manuscripts maybe be linked? Ultimately, however, one must look to the extant physical evidence to draw such conclusions and in the proceeding chapters, each facet of the San Mattia corpus, the two intact volumes and the fragments, will be considered both as individual objects and in relationship to each other. This first chapter has outlined the history of the Camaldolese order so as to provide context for the choir books' purpose and to hopefully clarify the relationship between San Mattia and the sister houses of San Michele in Isola and Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence. This chapter also provided an introduction to the artists to whom the San Mattia series has been attributed: an anonymous illuminator the so-called Master of the Murano Gradual, and his better-known counterpart, Cristoforo Cortese. It has also been important to outline the state of the choir books as they exist today and the methodology used in this partial reconstruction, as well as making explicit the complexities and challenges of such an undertaking. With the historical and methodological contexts having been delineated, the contents of the San Mattia corpus can now be examined in detail.

CHAPTER 2

The Berlin Gradual

The first chapter of this thesis outlined the physical state in which the San Mattia choir books exist today. Although it is believed that two volumes remain intact, only one can be linked directly to the monastery of San Mattia without any ambiguity. Preserved on the back of the Berlin Gradual's fifteenth-century binding is a *fenestra* label¹ that clearly identifies it as belonging to this monastery and provides a sense of the serialisation of the volumes.² The presence of this label also makes the Berlin Gradual the principal piece of evidence for the existence of the entire series. The present chapter focuses on the key aspects of the Berlin Gradual: its liturgical contents and codicology as well as the iconography, style, and the painting techniques used by the artist in the illuminations. The analysis and discussion that follow will act as the anchor for the subsequent discussion of the other complete volume that has been linked to the Berlin Gradual as its counterpart, as well as for the discourse in Ch. 4 on the individual leaves and fragments.

As previously addressed in the Introduction, due to the Kupferstichkabinett's stringent restriction on photography, only a very limited number of photographs of the images from the Berlin Gradual are reproduced in this thesis. More specifically, all of the images included have been gathered from extant publications and have been cited accordingly. There are two instances, in the following chapter, where the discussion centres on illuminations from the Berlin Gradual that have never been reproduced in any

¹ See below, Section I.

² Berlin, Kuperferstichkabinett, MS F. 78.1.

publication.³ The first instance concerns an initial S with *Pentecost* (fol. 65v), and the second centres on iconographic details from an initial B with the Old and New Testament Trinity (fol. 101v). Although, photography was not allowed during the two-day examination of the Berlin Gradual at the Kupferstichkabinett, pencil sketches allowed for the overall composition of the images and layouts of pages to be recorded. These sketches were then turned into schematic drawings thus enabling them to be included as visual evidence for the points being made in this thesis and their inclusion will hopefully buttress the arguments being posited herein.

This chapter begins to delve into two important facets of this dissertation: the first is examining more acutely the unusual ways in which the Murano Master has rendered biblical narratives through a combination of iconographic choices and illumination techniques including the use of *cangiante* and the layering of pigments to render flesh. These are the points of discussion that form the basis of the assertion that the Murano Master used extant stylistic and iconographic tropes from various geographical regions and filtered them through the lens of his own artistic intelligence to create a visual language unlike what his contemporaries were doing. The second facet is the investigation of how monastic corporate iconography was used in the San Mattia choir books to convey powerful messages and ideas about the spiritual and historical identity of the monks who commissioned and used these manuscripts during the liturgical rites. As the ‘anchor’ of the San Mattia set, the Berlin Gradual serves as the logical starting point for beginning the larger investigation of the San Mattia material.

³ As far as this author’s knowledge can tell.

I. *Fenestra* Label & Provenance

*Gr[aduale] a Pasca usq[ue] ad vigesi[m]am t[er]ciam d[omini]cam S[ancti] Math[ee]
III⁴*

Located on the upper part of the back cover, the *fenestra* label is significant for two reasons: firstly it provides firm evidence for original provenance as it is written on parchment contemporary with the rest of the folios, and secondly it helps to clarify the serialisation of the manuscript. According to the label this codex is the fourth volume in a set belonging to San Mattia, and based on the liturgical content it appears to be the second gradual. In addition to this valuable inscription, the Berlin Gradual contains textual evidence that supports a provenance from the Camaldolese order. On folio 92v is the Litany in which the last two male saints listed are St. Benedict and St. Romuald. Furthermore, the Berlin Gradual contains liturgical content that provides a strong link with Venice, as the petitions, also in the Litany, include prayers for the protection of the city.

While the codicological and liturgical evidence mentioned above supports the provenance of San Mattia, there is additional liturgical and iconographic material, within the manuscript, that further buttresses the suggestion that the Berlin Gradual belonged to the Camaldolese order of San Mattia near Venice. On folio 80v, there is a historiated initial with the portrait of two specific saints, Justus and Clement (Fig. 62), who are identified by the accompanying rubric: *In s[an]c[t]orum iusti et clementis*. This is somewhat of an iconographic anomaly as they are the only specifically identified figures depicted in the historiated initials (not including the Christological scenes) within the

⁴ ‘The fourth gradual of San Mattia from Easter continuously to the twenty-third Sunday’

entire *Temporale* volume; the other initial portraits are generic prophets. St. Justus and St. Clement are typically associated with the city of Volterra in Tuscany and their feast day is celebrated on 5 June.⁵ This date corresponds approximately to where in the liturgy fol. 80v can be found in the Berlin Gradual, thus suggesting that the monks at San Mattia honoured St. Justus and St. Clement at this time during the liturgical year because they saw spiritual importance in venerating these specific figures. There is additional liturgical evidence that supports this idea, which can be found in a printed missal belonging to San Mattia's sister house, San Michele in Isola. The missal is dated to 1503, and in the calendar, the names St. Justus and St. Clement correspond to the celebrations of their feast day on 5 June, written in black ink—denoting a minor feast (Fig. 63). The presence of these two specific saints in the San Michele missal reinforces their relevance to Camaldolese worship but may also be linked to the church of Santi Giusto e Clemente in Volterra, which had been an important Camaldolese house since 1113.⁶ Moreover, the fact that their names and images are found in manuscripts for houses in Venice suggests that the spiritual importance of these two saints must have extended beyond Volterra.

⁵ G. Kaster, 'Justus und Klemens von Volterra,' in *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, Vol. 7 (Herder: Rome/Fribourg/Basel/Vienna, 1974), pp. 258–259.

⁶ L. Consortini, *La badia dei SS. Giusto e Clemente, presso Volterra, notizie storiche e guida del tempio e del cenobio* (S. Paolino: Lucca, 1915), p. 16.

II. Issues of Iconography, Issues of Style

The current literature on the Berlin Gradual consists mainly of shorter catalogue entries that contain technical analyses primarily of the codicology with a brief acknowledgment of some of the iconography.⁷ Serena Padovani and Gennaro Toscano have each addressed issues concerning the Murano Master's style in relation to the Berlin Gradual but little else has been written that offers an in-depth exploration and discussion of key aspects of the iconographic content of the manuscript.⁸ Although many of the Berlin Gradual's historiated initials display typical depictions of various Christological narratives, including the Resurrection, the Last Supper, and Pentecost, there are certainly iconographic aspects that are highly unusual and do not find visual parallels in other works, either produced earlier or contemporary with the gradual. This chapter will seek to examine these peculiar iconographic elements as a means of probing more deeply the spiritual significance that could underlie them. In addition to the iconography, the Murano Master's artistic style will also be considered in order to investigate the ways in which he used his own creative intelligence to convey complex ideas about Camaldolese monastic identity. His use of various painting techniques to achieve a heightened sense of realism; the composition and design of the full-page historiated initials; and the potential influence of monumental art such as frescoes and altarpieces will be at the centre of this discussion.

The Berlin Gradual's five historiated initials with Christological scenes and forty-three historiated initials with prophets represent some the Murano Master's finest work,

⁷ Wescher (1931); C. H. Weigelt, 'Lombardische Miniaturen im Kupferstichkabinett,' in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 44 (G. Grote'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung: Hamm, 1923), pp. 37–52.

⁸ Padovani (1978); Toscano (1998); Franco (1998).

as they evince his consummate technical skill and innovative approach to rendering monastic corporate iconography for expressing broader ideas about Camaldolese spirituality. The illuminations also suggest that he was interpreting Camaldolese ideology through the lens of his own creative intelligence while working in the fertile cross-media context of early fifteenth-century Venice. While the majority of the illuminations demonstrate a remarkable stylistic consistency evident in the figures, initial-designs, architecture, and landscapes throughout the codex, the opening folio, which contains an initial R with the *Resurrection*, displays a confluence of styles as well as some extraordinary iconography and it is here that the investigation will begin.⁹

⁹ It is worth noting that despite the *fenestra* label indicating that the Berlin Gradual was the fourth volume in the series, this does not automatically imply that it was the fourth volume to be made.

III. How Many Hands? The Style and Iconography of the *Resurrection* (Folio i verso)

The first folio of the Berlin Gradual is the luxurious full-page initial R with the *Resurrection*, which accompanies the introit for the Easter Sunday Mass (see Fig. 2).¹⁰ This illumination is one of the most visually complex within the whole manuscript and contains a kaleidoscopic array of iconographic (and stylistic) features. Unlike subsequent historiated initials, such as the initial C with the *Last Supper* (see Fig. 41), initial V with the *Ascension* (Fig. 64), and initial S with *Pentecost* (Fig. 65), which all exhibit an artistic coherence and possess many of the Murano Master's stylistic hallmarks, the *Resurrection* initial exhibits a lack of stylistic uniformity, which may suggest multiple different hands.¹¹ It also contains certain uncommon iconographic elements that appear to have no artistic parallel in the other Camaldolese models, such as the Florentine choir books. Additionally, all of the aforementioned initials do share approximate codicological measurements: the *Last Supper* (302 × 225 mm), the *Ascension* (300 × 210 mm), and *Pentecost* (250 × 230 mm). The *Resurrection* image, however, is a full page.

The most obvious example of stylistic incongruence is seen in the faces and bodies of the figures in the *Resurrection* initial. Christ, standing triumphantly in the bow of the 'R' with his hand raised in a blessing gesture, does not approximate figures typical of the Murano Master's oeuvre (Fig. 66). The faces that have been attributed to his hand tend to share the same stylistic features, regardless of whether they are male or female.

¹⁰ The Kupferstichkabinett does not currently allow photography of the Berlin Gradual, therefore only a limited number of images are available. All images provided are reproductions taken from two other printed sources: Padovani (1978) and R. Pallucchini, ed., *Storia di Venezia, Temi*, Vols. 1–2 (Rome: Enciclopedia Italiana, 1994), vol. 2, p. 799.

¹¹ For a comprehensive list of the Murano Master's stylistic features and for bibliography on the subject see: Ch. 1, sec. IX.

The Murano Master has a unique approach to depicting faces so that although they do have features in common they are still highly individualized. Yet, the manner in which the Murano Master represents human faces is one that results in exaggerated features such as the noses, lips, and cheeks. The heads can be quite rounded with fleshy cheeks and a sculpted bone structure that creates the illusion of the flesh protruding off of the parchment. Even with figures whose faces are slightly elongated, because of the high degree of modelling, their visages tend to appear rounder, particularly the cheeks and forehead. The figures also often have soft, supple lips and large, bulbous noses. An excellent example can be seen in the array of faces belonging to the apostles in the initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin* (See fig. 6).

The figure of Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection* does not exhibit visual features typical of the Murano Master's style (see Fig. 66). Nor does he resemble other examples of Christ attributed to the Murano Master, such as in the *Last Supper* from the Berlin Gradual (Fig. 67).¹² When these two figures are compared, there is an evident stylistic gap between them: the face of Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection* is much more linear and angular, lacking any modelling of the bone structure; the eyes are small and almond shaped and the mouth has a severe, downturned appearance. The figure of Christ in the Berlin *Last Supper*, although also having a long face has protruding, highly rounded cheekbones—a result of the deep modelling; his eyes are far less almond shaped and more open, revealing the whites of his eyes; and the mouth on this Christ is small, pursed,

¹² Although Christ is featured in three of five illuminations with historiated initials, his face is only visible in two of them: the *Resurrection* (fol. i verso) and the *Last Supper* (fol. 96v).

and the lips exhibit a more evident pout.¹³ Based on this initial stylistic comparison, it would seem unlikely that the Murano Master was responsible for the Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection*.

Padovani has suggested that the Berlin *Resurrection* folio was a faithful copy of Don Silvestro's *Resurrection* initial, today in Chantilly, and made for the choir books of San Michele (see Fig. 19).¹⁴ This suggestion is unsurprising given that Don Silvestro heavily influenced the Murano Master and Cortese, both of whom sought to recreate the stylistic features and motifs of the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes in San Mattia manuscripts.¹⁵ Yet, while there are certainly stylistic similarities between these two initials, the figure of Christ in the Chantilly initial is quite different from that of the one in the Berlin version. The face of Don Silvestro's Christ has a soft and gentle gaze accompanied by a supple, rounded face. It has long, soft features, which, according to Levi D'Ancona, are due to the influence of the late Gothic period, and are typical of Don Silvestro's work.¹⁶ The face of the Berlin Christ is composed of sharper lines that result in more angular features; it lacks the softness that is visible in Don Silvestro's figure of Christ. Moreover, the way in which Don Silvestro has rendered Christ's body is also markedly different from how Christ is depicted in the Berlin *Resurrection*. In the Chantilly initial, the figure is much more linear and static, standing upright, with arms compact and close to the torso. By comparison, the Berlin Christ is much more animated

¹³ Due to the limited quality of the reproduction, these features are best viewed under a magnifier glass, if possible.

¹⁴ Padovani (1978), p. 31.

¹⁵ G. Mariani Canova, 'La miniature a Venezia dal Medioevo al Rinascimento,' in R. Pallucchini, ed. *Storia di Venezia. Temi. L'arte*, Vol. II (Istituto Treccani: Rome, 1995), pp. 769–843 (at pp. 801–802).

¹⁶ Levi D'Ancona (1994), pp. 14–15.

with his contorted body, open arms, and tilted head. The artist has painted this figure with a greater degree of anatomical definition as Christ's ribs and breastbone are quite pronounced.

The Christ in the Berlin Gradual does not truly follow Don Silvestro's model, and instead the artist may have borrowed from a different example altogether. In the British Library in London, there is an illuminated copy of St. Jerome's 'Letters (Epistolae di S. Girolamo),' which is attributed to several artists including Cristoforo Cortese, the Master of the Brussels Initials and Michelino da Besozzo.¹⁷ In the bas-de-page of folio 15r, there are three quatrefoil medallions, each one containing a key scene from the life of Christ: the *Nativity*, *God the Father with Christ*, and the *Resurrection* (Fig. 68).¹⁸ The figure of the risen Christ, in the far right medallion, stands in a nearly identical posture to the one seen in the Berlin *Resurrection*, with hips jutting out, arms open and raised in a blessing gesture, and head bent to the right (Fig. 69). Both figures are depicted wearing plain white tunic-like garments that expose the upper torso and side-wound, in the same manner. Don Silvestro has, instead, painted his Christ wearing an elaborate diaper-patterned two-toned garment. Furthermore, the Berlin and London Christ each possess flowing locks of blond hair that extend out behind their head, unlike the more subdued hair of Don Silvestro's Christ, which rests calmly on his shoulders.

Mariani Canova has suggested, based on the date of the 'Epistolae di S. Girolamo' (1414) and on the stylistic characteristics of the figures more generally, that it was likely Michelino da Besozzo who illuminated fol. 15r.¹⁹ Michelino was active in

¹⁷ Mariani Canova in Pallucchini (1995), p. 794.

¹⁸ London, British Library, Egerton 3266, fol. 15r. Pallucchini (1995), p. 796, fig. 22.

¹⁹ Mariani Canova in Pallucchini (1995), pp. 794–797.

Venice from ca. 1404 to ca. 1418 and was heavily influenced by the Lombard school, whose delicate style of painting he brought with him to the Veneto.²⁰ Thus, Michelino's work was likely known to the artists working on the San Mattia volumes and especially to Cortese, as he himself worked on the 'Epistolae' manuscript. The strong stylistic parallels found in the London image and in the Berlin *Resurrection* may suggest that the artist who painted the latter was familiar with the former.

The visage of Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection* also appears to bear a close stylistic resemblance to that of Christ in a cutting from another choir book: the initial D with the *Entry into Jerusalem* (Fig. 70), by Cristoforo Cortese, today in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.²¹ Both figures possess long oval faces that narrow along the side, extremely pointed chins, long pointed noses, and a mouth that is downturned and severe looking. Although Don Silvestro followed the typical Trecento-style of linear painting, the Christ figure in the Chantilly *Resurrection* (see Fig. 19) does have a rounder face with softer features, making it dissimilar to both the Berlin *Resurrection* and Cortese's *Entry into Jerusalem*. Based purely on stylistic grounds, there appears to be a closer visual similitude between the Fitzwilliam cutting and the Berlin *Resurrection* than there is between the Berlin *Resurrection* and the Berlin *Last Supper*.

The depiction of Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection* and the *Entry into Jerusalem* cutting share many similarities and while it cannot be asserted that they were both painted by the same artist, at minimum they do appear to have been created in the Trecento

²⁰ J. T. Paoletti and G. M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (Laurence King: London, 1997), p. 196.

²¹ Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 20. Panayotova (2016), no. 47.

Sieneese style favoured by Don Silvestro and emulated somewhat by Cortese.²² Cortese was active in Venice during the period in which the Berlin Gradual was likely to have been made, and he was also the main illuminator of the Milan Gradual thought to be a companion volume to the Berlin Gradual.²³ Cortese's potential involvement with the Berlin Gradual's *Resurrection* illumination might also help to explain the nearly identical depictions of Christ in both the Berlin image and the 'Epistolae' manuscript in London.

Since the production of illuminated manuscripts typically involves numerous hands, it is not unusual to see a variety of figure types in one volume, which can sometimes result in the 'christening' of new artistic personalities.²⁴ What is peculiar about the Berlin Gradual is that the opening folio appears to be the only example in the manuscript in which multiple hands are present. The *Resurrection* folio is the only full-page illumination in the entire volume; the other miniatures are historiated initials that contain Christological narratives, such as the *Last Supper* (see Fig. 41) and the *Ascension* (see Fig. 64), and portraits of prophets (Fig. 71), all of which occupy a fraction of the page as they mark the opening of a new introit and must accommodate music and text. After folio i verso, the subsequent illuminations demonstrate a consistent style, which buttresses the suggestion that they were produced primarily by only one hand: the Murano Master. However, although different artists may have worked on the Berlin

²² G. Mariani Canova, 'Di alcuni corali superstiti a S. Guistina in Padova. Cristoforo Cortese e altri miniatori del Quattrocento,' *Arte Veneta* 24 (1970), pp. 35–42 (at pp. 38–39).

²³ Mariani Canova (1988), p. 233. The 'Milan Gradual' is discussed in Ch. 3.

²⁴ B. Keene, 'Anonymity and Choir Book Illumination. The Case of the Master of the Antiphonary of San Giovanni Fuorcivitas,' *Rivista di storia della Miniatura* 20 (2016), pp. 76–86 (at p. 81).

Resurrection, there are still visual features that do exhibit the Murano Master's approach to style and iconography, specifically the figures in the lower half of the initial.

IV. Evidence of the Murano Master at Work

The figure of St. Mary Magdalene, standing before the open tomb in the lower part of the 'R,' is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, she displays the greatest number of stylistic features typical of the Murano Master's oeuvre of any figure in the Berlin *Resurrection*. Her lush, pale pink garment exhibits deep, voluminous folds that convey a sense of depth and three-dimensionality in the fabric, resulting in a higher degree of naturalism. This way of rendering textiles is a departure from the Trecento style, which was flatter, more linear, and seen in the works produced by Don Silvestro for the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli. In an initial V with the *Ascension* (Fig. 72), the mantles worn by the apostles, and especially the Virgin, lack the same degree of depth and weight visible in the garment of the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene.

The Berlin St. Mary Magdalene also has a face that is conspicuously different from that of Christ above. The Murano Master has painted her in profile and has layered soft red pigment—as a shading technique—in order to create a sense of depth around her eyes, nose, and above her mouth (Fig. 73). He has built up the flesh tones using a mixture of vermilion, red lead, lead white, and red earth pigment.²⁵ This is the painting technique that the Murano Master often applied to the faces of his figures in order to achieve the naturalistic quality that their flesh exhibits. He also applied a great degree of modelling to the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene's face, which has produced cheekbones that are so defined and raised that her face appears to protrude out from the parchment. The Berlin St. Mary Magdalene has a soft, somewhat-dreamy expression as she gazes into the empty tomb, allowing the viewer a glimpse into her inner emotional state. Through her

²⁵ Panayotova and Turner, in Panayotova (2016), p. 288.

expression, the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene appears to convey a sense of concern, confusion, perhaps even anxiety over finding the tomb empty. The Murano Master's work has been characterized by his sophisticated ability to express the inner psychological condition, often giving his male figures tense, pensive expressions, while his female figures typically possessed calm, introspective faces.²⁶

St. Mary Magdalene's flesh has been rendered in a similar fashion to that of figures painted by the great Camaldolese artist Don Lorenzo Monaco, who oversaw all major commissions at Santa Maria degli Angeli's scriptorium after Don Silvestro's death in 1399.²⁷ Active from ca. 1392 to ca. 1411, Lorenzo Monaco's highly distinctive style reflected his move away from the more traditional approach to illumination that was practised in the Florentine monastery. He was primarily concerned with issues of naturalism and seemed particularly interested in the effects of luminosity—the ways in which light modelled mass and highlighted surfaces.²⁸ These traits are consistent with the stylistic dynamics found in the majority of the Murano Master's work—particularly the Berlin Gradual, and in the individual cuttings that comprise the remainder of the San Mattia series.²⁹ Like the Murano Master, Lorenzo Monaco's figures possess highly emotive expressions: his female figures having rounded, softer faces, while his male figures often appear 'tormented.'³⁰

²⁶ Toscano (1998), p. 12; Franco (1998), p. 164.

²⁷ P. Palladino, 'Lorenzo Monaco,' in S. Hindman, et al. (2012), pp. 162–168 (at p. 162).

²⁸ M. Levi D'Ancona, *I Corali del Monastero di Santa Maria degli Angeli e le loro Miniature Asporatate* (Centro Di: Florence, 1995), p. 147.

²⁹ The cuttings associated with the San Mattia choir books are discussed in Ch. 4.

³⁰ Levi D'Ancona (1995), p. 147.

When the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene is compared with Lorenzo Monaco's St. Mary Magdalene from his *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* panel (Fig. 74),³¹ it would seem that both figures wear highly pensive expressions: the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene contemplates the empty tomb, whilst Lorenzo Monaco's saint contemplates the dead Christ's feet (Fig. 75). Painted in the early 1400s, this panel, today in a private collection, was likely part of the predella of a larger altarpiece.³² Here, St. Mary Magdalene exhibits a quiet, pensive face as she leans over the feet of the dead Christ, almost as if meditating upon them. Gaudenz Freuler has noted that she is representative of the types of psychological expressions, seen on Lorenzo Monaco's figures, which are intended to convey internal states of emotion.³³ This is very similar to the complex expression on the face of the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene. Unlike Don Silvestro, there is no evidence to suggest that Lorenzo Monaco worked for or at the Venetian monasteries in the early Quattrocento—the formative period for the Murano Master.³⁴ However, the three Camaldolese houses—Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, San Michele, and San Mattia in Venice—had exceptionally close ties during the early decades of the fifteenth century, therefore, it is very likely that the Murano Master was familiar with Lorenzo Monaco's work and could have been inspired by it.

The Murano Master has also depicted St. Mary Magdalene making a most unusual gesture: she raises her left hand and in it clutches strands of her own hair (Fig. 76). This is the second reason that this figure is remarkable. The Murano Master has

³¹ Private Collection, tempera and gold on panel. See: Kanter et al. (1994), pp. 249–250.

³² Kanter (1994), p. 250.

³³ G. Freuler, 'Lorenzo Monaco, Lamentation over the Dead Christ,' in D. Garstang, ed., *Master Paintings 1400–1800* (P. & D. Colnaghi & Co.: London/New York/Paris, 1993), pp. 10–13 (at p. 12).

³⁴ Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 152.

depicted her with long strawberry-gold locks that flow down past her chest and with twisted bands of hair encircling her head almost like a crown. The eye of the viewer is drawn immediately to St. Mary Magdalene's hair for both its colour and style. In her right hand she holds a burnished gold container, which corresponds to the gospel accounts of Mark and Luke, in which the three Marys go to Christ's tomb after the Sabbath to anoint his body.³⁵ Exceptionally, St. Mary Magdalene holds her hair in her other hand, as if she is offering it to the empty grave. In the Chantilly *Resurrection*, Don Silvestro gave St. Mary Magdalene the ointment jar but has not incorporated the hair into her other hand, thus this is an iconographic feature that the Murano Master appears to have included independently of the Florentine model.

This unusual *Resurrection* iconography may have had a deeper symbolic meaning, perhaps making visual reference to the gospel account in which St. Mary Magdalene is said to have washed and anointed Christ's feet. In two of the four gospels, a woman³⁶ is recorded as having anointed Christ's feet and then washed and dried them with her hair: Luke 7:37–38 and John 12:3.³⁷ Although the washing of Christ's feet is mentioned in all four gospels, the use of hair to dry them is only in Luke and John. In

³⁵ 'And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus.' Mark 16:1 'And returning, they [the women] prepared spices and ointments: and on the Sabbath day they rested...' 'And on the first day of the week...they came to the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared.' Luke 23:56; 24:1. All biblical passages are taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible.

³⁶ In Luke, it is an unnamed female sinner, and in John, it is Mary, possibly of Bethany.

³⁷ 'And behold a woman who was in the city, a sinner, found out that he was reclining at a table in the house of the Pharisee, so she brought an alabaster container of ointment. And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head...'

'Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard...and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.'

addition to holding a jar and her hair, the Berlin St. Mary Magdalene appears to be somewhat hunched over, as if humbling herself to offer what is in her hands to the empty tomb. According to Teresa J. Hornsby, while the anointing of Christ's feet is mentioned in other literature contemporary with the gospels, the use of long hair to dry them is not and should be regarded as an exceptional gesture.³⁸ This depiction of St. Mary Magdalene finds no iconographic parallel in the Florentine choir books or in other representations of her from illuminations associated with the San Mattia series. Nor is this iconography typical for depictions of her in North East Italy more broadly.³⁹ This lack of a visual model or prototype may suggest that the Murano Master might have been familiar with the written accounts in which she uses her hair to dry Christ's feet. If so, he may have drawn on these textual sources as opposed to visual ones when composing this image, thus making the Berlin *Resurrection* an example of how this illuminator interpreted biblical narratives through his own artistic lens, thereby creating a distinctive iconography.

The idea that the Murano Master adopted and adapted biblical and Christological narratives and motifs for the Berlin Gradual speaks to the larger issue of these themes being adapted to the specific spiritual needs of the Camaldolese at San Mattia—for whom the Berlin Gradual was made. While this thesis argues that the Murano Master was interpreting liturgical ideologies through his own creative intelligence, it must also be recognized that he would have been under the direction of the monks at San Mattia.

³⁸ T. J. Hornsby, 'Anointing Traditions,' in A.-J. Levine, D. C. Allison Jr., and J. D. Crossan, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2009), pp. 339–342 (at p 339).

³⁹ G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Paintings of North East Italy* (Sansoni: Florence, 1978), no. 202, St. Mary Magdalene, col. 708.

Regardless of whether it was a monastery or a secular entity commissioning art,⁴⁰ a similar process was followed in that the subject matter was prescribed by the individual or corporate body that requested the work.⁴¹

Additionally, other aspects of the commission, including size, location, realization of time, special colour and gilding requirements were represented in the contract between patron and artist.⁴² Like other monastic orders, the Camaldolese engaged the services of both monastic and secular illuminators. Cristoforo Cortese was not an avowed monk yet undertook many commissions for monastic orders, including the Camaldolese and the Franciscans.⁴³ Similarly, Lorenzo Monaco (ca. 1370–1423/24) joined Santa Maria degli Angeli as a novice in 1390 but left after taking full vows to operate his own workshop nearby.⁴⁴ Lorenzo Monaco continued to be referred to as ‘frate degli Angeli’ and maintained his vows throughout his career.⁴⁵ Regardless of whether the work was undertaken by a lay painter-illuminator or a monk-artist, the spiritual and liturgical needs of the specific monastic order would have to have been considered when conceiving the visual programme, and although the Camaldolese were highly cognizant of their duty to practice humility as modelled by St. Romuald, they were also keenly aware of the economic practices of commissioning manuscripts and altarpieces. Thus, it may be fair to

⁴⁰ It is also important to recognize that the choir books were made primarily to serve a crucial liturgical/spiritual function. Whether or not the monks defined the codices as ‘art’ is a larger question outside of the scope of this dissertation.

⁴¹ M. Shapiro, ‘On the Relation of Patron and Artist: Comments on a Proposed Model for Scientists,’ *American Journal of Sociology* 70/3 (1964), pp. 363–369 (at p. 363).

⁴² F. Brotto, *The Relationship Between Patrons and Artists in Renaissance Italy* PhD diss. (Maastricht University, 2012), p. 7.

⁴³ In addition to the Milan Gradual, Cortese also illuminated a register for San Mattia di Murano. See: Canova in Pallucchini (1995), p. 793.

⁴⁴ L. B. Kanter, ‘Lorenzo Monaco,’ in M. Bollati, ed., *Dizionario Biografico dei Minatori Italiani* (Sylvestre Bonnard: Florence, 2004), pp. 399–401.

⁴⁵ Kanter in Bollati (2004), p. 400.

propose that the monks sought to find a balance between articulating their spiritual needs—as then represented in their choir books—and allowing the illuminators some creative freedom. Therefore, any special iconographic changes would likely have been reviewed by the monks at San Mattia but they also seemed to embrace the unusual approach to painting taken by the Murano Master.

If the hair, held in St. Mary Magdalene’s hand, was intended to make a direct visual reference to the rarely depicted foot washing, then the incorporation of it into the *Resurrection* was perhaps intended to convey the importance of humility as a means of attaining holiness. The Gospel of Luke states: ‘Because everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.’⁴⁶ Humility was a crucial virtue, not only to Benedictines generally, but to the Camaldolese, especially. St. Romuald was particularly known for his profound sense of personal humility. Humility has long been considered the ‘mother’ of virtues, which holds a central place within the tradition of monasticism.⁴⁷ For St. Romuald, and thus the Camaldolese order, solitude was a most integral aspect of monastic life and from solitude came humility. Humility was so important for St. Romuald that it became a tenet of his very brief rule: ‘...and sit like a chick, content with the grace of God, for unless its mother gives it something, it tastes nothing and has nothing to eat.’⁴⁸ Thus, having a visual reference to the virtue of humility in a Camaldolese liturgical book makes spiritual sense within the context of

⁴⁶ Luke 14:11.

⁴⁷ P.-D. Belisle, ‘Golden Solitude,’ in P.-D. Belisle, ed., *The Privilege of Love, Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville, 2002), pp. 129–144 (at p. 141).

⁴⁸ St. Bruno-Boniface of Querfurt, *St. Romuald’s Brief Rule*.
<http://www.liturgies.net/saints/romuald/rule.htm>

their fundamental ideologies. The Murano Master may have incorporated the biblical act of foot washing into this image as a means of expressing this important aspect of Camaldolese life.

V. Intimate Seeing: Reflexive Imagery

For the Camaldolese order, solitude was the bedrock upon which other spiritual virtues were based. Humility, servitude, contemplation and introspection were born from spending time alone. However, the cenobitic aspect of monastic life was also a key tenant and the monks were also encouraged to spend time together as a means perusing divine experiences. The images contained within the Berlin Gradual were intended to foster both a sense of communal religiosity and individual spirituality and it is likely that the visual programme was designed to support this aim. The way in which the Murano Master approached the physical pages of the manuscript may also convey ideas about how corporate iconography was used by the brother at San Mattia to support their sense of self and to reaffirm their belief about their role in the larger Christian cosmos. In particular, the hierarchy of space within an image is a particularly fruitful departure point for this line of inquiry.

In the Chantilly *Resurrection*, Don Silvestro has included two Camaldolese monastic bust portraits in roundels on either side at the base of the R's stem (Fig. 77). Painted in profile, both wear white robes and are clearly tonsured with their tiny hands clasped in prayer as they look upwards towards the scene at the tomb. These bust portraits function as markers of Camaldolese ownership of the image, and the book to which it once belonged, but in a way they also act as 'witnesses' to the events taking place in the upper half of the page. They are, however, relegated to their appropriate stratum on the parchment: below the main event and relegated to the secular realm. These monks are also securely enclosed within the roundels that are fused to the base of the initial and are incorporated into the lush foliage. These roundels function as frames, which convey the

boundary between the worldly space of the monks and the hallowed space of the divine figures, thus adhering to the hierarchy of space.⁴⁹

In the Berlin *Resurrection*, the Murano Master has also included two monastic bust portraits but has treated their placement within the image in a different way. Instead of having them in the lower half of the page, he has incorporated the monks into the foliage on the same horizontal plane as the figure of the risen Christ, near the top of the initial (Fig. 78). Although still outside the boundary of the lozenge-patterned frame that surrounds the initial R, these monks are on the same visual plane as Christ and stare directly at him. In the Chantilly *Resurrection*, the monks are able to ‘watch’ the event that is unfolding in the scene above (the discovery of the empty tomb and the Resurrection), yet they must do so from their allotted place outside and *below* the main miniature. They straddle the ‘dividing line’ between human and divine.⁵⁰ In the Berlin *Resurrection*, the Murano Master has abandoned this sense of hierarchy and instead placed the monks on the same visual plane, within the same horizontal tier of the spatial hierarchy. In this way, the Murano Master has moved beyond what Don Silvestro did in the Chantilly image as the monks in the San Mattia initial ‘witness’ the resurrected Christ in a more direct manner than the monks that worship from below. The Murano Master’s approach with these portraits is also markedly different from his approach in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, where the monks are obviously set within a complex framing device, along the left margin, that clearly articulates a hierarchy of space (see Fig. 9).

⁴⁹ J. F. Hamburger, ‘Openings,’ in G. Kratzmann, ed., *Imagination, Books & Community in Medieval Europe* (MacMillan: Melbourne, 2010), pp. 51–133 (at p. 67).

⁵⁰ M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Reaktion Books: London, 1992), p. 11.

The intricate corporate iconographic programme of the Berlin *Resurrection* continues in the bas-de-page, wherein there are three ornate medallions, each one containing a scene involving Christ interacting with another figure (Fig. 79). The left medallion features Christ blessing a kneeling figure in a white robe (Fig. 80); the central medallion depicts the *Noli me tangere* scene when Christ appeared to St. Mary Magdalene in the garden after his resurrection (Fig. 81); and the right medallion contains Christ blessing another kneeling figure, who is much older, wears a bright yellow and blue tunic and robe, and has a burnished gold nimbus (Fig. 82). The figures wear garments with deep tubular folds and the use of linear hatching is visible. Their faces bear the pronounced cheekbones and deep-set eyes of other figures attributed to the Murano Master.⁵¹ If the bas-de-page is the work of the Murano Master, then he has taken the same approach as with the main miniature: he has borrowed certain iconographic aspects from Don Silvestro's model, and has dramatically altered others. In the Chantilly *Resurrection*, the medallion on the left contains Christ standing triumphantly while embracing the Virgin Mary who kneels beside him (see Fig. 20). In the Berlin *Resurrection*, the Murano Master has replaced the Virgin kneeling in the left medallion with a Camaldolese monk (see Fig. 80).

This visual departure from Don Silvestro's model reinforces the Camaldolese ownership of the Berlin Gradual, but more significantly, it emphasises the importance of the Camaldolese presence within the image's iconographic programme. The choice to replace the Virgin with a monk may have been rooted in a desire to facilitate a more personal devotional experience for the monks who were using this manuscript during

⁵¹ As previously stated, first-hand photographs of illuminations from the Berlin Gradual have not been granted by the Kupferstichkabinett. See nt. 10.

Mass. The size of the Berlin Gradual, and that it was placed atop of a lectern, clearly indicate that the manuscript was intended to be used by many monks at a single time, thus fostering a communal religious experience. However, each monk would also have been encouraged to cultivate their own individual religious practice.⁵² By inserting a monk receiving a blessing from Christ, the Murano Master was offering the brothers a ‘mirror’ that reflected back to them an image of themselves. More specifically, it reflected an image of the ultimate spiritual encounter: a direct interaction with Christ.

Speculation—the act of looking—has long been a key tool for monastic contemplation.⁵³ Whether used in private lay devotion, or in a monastic context, reflexive imagery has the power to draw the viewer into the narrative in a personal and profoundly meaningful manner.⁵⁴ This is also not unlike the practice of immersive devotion, where the supplicant wanted to be inserted into the sacred narrative or included in the life of holy figures. A good example is the popularity of the late-medieval text ‘Meditations on the Life of Christ,’ which offered the devout the opportunity to be privy to the more intimate aspects of Christ’s life and to engage in empathetic piety.⁵⁵ By seeing themselves incorporated into the books that they used during Mass and the Divine Office, the monks may have been able to forge a deeper spiritual connection during their prayer

⁵² According to Peter Damian of Fonte Avellana, St. Romuald desired that monks find a more harmonious balance between the cenobitic and eremitic aspects of monastic life. This was outlined and codified in the Constitutions and the Book of the Eremitical Rule. See: G. Tabacco, ed., P. Damiani, *Vita Beati Romualdi* (Palazzo Borromini: Rome, 1957).

⁵³ Hamburger (2010), p. 100.

⁵⁴ E. Sears, “‘Reading’ Images,” E. Sears and T. K. Thomas, eds., *Reading Medieval Images. The Art Historian and the Object* (The University of Michigan Press: Michigan, 2002), pp. 1–9 (at p. 6).

⁵⁵ H. Flora, *The Devout Belief of the Imagination. The Paris ‘Meditationes Vitae Christi’ and Female Franciscan Spirituality in Trecento Italy* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), pp. 17, 83.

practices. These kinds of reflexive images may have functioned as an important spiritual supplement to the other images and the liturgical texts in these choir books. As noted by Jeffrey Hamburger, although the words of the liturgy offered direct access to the divine, the images contained within the manuscripts could act as both a didactic device and a vehicle for certain types of intuitive experiences.⁵⁶ The combination of chanting the liturgical texts and gazing upon images of themselves engaging directly with Christ and other holy figures may have facilitated a means of creating a holistic spiritual experience. Perhaps, in this way, the left medallion in the bas-de-page of the Berlin *Resurrection* folio becomes an ‘owner portrait.’ Moreover, the iconographic change that the Murano Master has made by switching the Virgin with a Camaldolese monk emphasizes what Alexa Sand has termed the sensitivity of the reflexive mode of representation—the depiction of the self to the self.⁵⁷

In the Chantilly *Resurrection*, Don Silvestro has painted Christ with his arm gently wrapped around the shoulder of his mother in a protective manner while holding her close to his side. She is identifiable by her blue mantle and the gold nimbus (Fig. 83).⁵⁸ By contrast, the Murano Master painted Christ standing slightly away from the kneeling monk with his hand outstretched on the monk’s forehead. Since this monk is a generic one and not a particular member of the Camaldolese community, it could be possible for him to function metonymically and represent the entire order. Thus, the most obvious interpretation of this iconography is that Christ is blessing the Camaldolese order

⁵⁶ J. F. Hamburger, ‘The Use of Images in the Pastoral Care of Nuns: The Case of Heinrich Suso and the Dominicans,’ *The Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), pp. 20–46 (at p. 45).

⁵⁷ A. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2014), p. 151.

⁵⁸ Levi D’Ancona has also identified this kneeling figure, in the Chantilly cutting, as being the Blessed Virgin Mary. Levi D’Ancona (1993), p. 10.

through this one figure. This type of iconographic messaging—that conveys divine sanctification—is commonly seen in the artwork produced at Santa Maria degli Angeli, particularly in the choir books and altarpieces. Don Silvestro, Lorenzo Monaco, and others would often depict St. Benedict wearing a white robe to signal his allegiance with the reform branch of the Camaldolese.⁵⁹

The *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece, housed today in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, was made for Santa Maria degli Angeli by Lorenzo Monaco in 1414 (Fig. 84).⁶⁰ On the wings to either side of the central scene, Lorenzo Monaco painted the figures of St. Benedict and St. Romuald, both of whom are dressed in white robes. According to George Bent, St. Romuald's designation as Benedict's ideological heir resulted in pictorial compositions that emphasised the two white-clad monastic founders appearing in images as 'brackets' for the entire ensemble.⁶¹ The white robe, worn by St. Benedict, conveys the founder's approval of the new reform branch. In the Berlin *Resurrection*, the Murano Master has gone beyond St. Benedict's authority and sought to depict Christ bestowing *his* approval onto the Camaldolese order, which would have been the highest level of sanctification possible because the sanctification come directly from God.

⁵⁹ G. Bent, *Monastic Art in Lorenzo Monaco's Florence. Painting and Patronage in Santa Maria degli Angeli, 1300–1415* (The Edwin Mellen Press: Lampeter, 2006), p. 406.

⁶⁰ The altarpiece is dated February 1413 in the Florentine calendar (begins in March), which corresponds to the year 1414.

⁶¹ Bent (2006), p. 383.

VI. Deciphering Judas

In addition to the monastic corporate iconography that the Murano Master has incorporated into the Berlin *Resurrection*, he has also used other forms of iconography to convey particular messages about biblical figures. In the Berlin *Last Supper* (see Fig. 41), which accompanies the introit for the feast of Corpus Christi, the Murano Master has complied with the standard iconography for this scene, following faithfully the model of Don Silvestro for the San Michele *Last Supper* (Fig. 85).⁶² However, he has rendered one figure in particular in such a starkly distinctive manner that the eye is drawn almost immediately to him: Judas (Fig. 86). Unlike Don Silvestro's image, where Judas is sat opposite Christ at the bottom of the table, in the Berlin Gradual, the Murano Master has placed Judas on the left side⁶³ of the rounded table, five apostles down from Christ. The majority of the figures in the Murano Master's oeuvre typically have light hair and eyes: most often shades of blond but also sometimes red or light brown with blue or hazel eyes, and this is consistently seen throughout the Berlin Gradual with one notable exception: Judas. Instead of the honey-toned coifs and rosy-cheeked complexions of the other apostles around the table, the Murano Master has depicted Judas with dark, thick hair and a swarthy complexion.

By giving Judas thick, dark, long hair; a curly dark beard; and flesh that is deeply tanned, the Murano Master has immediately distinguished Christ's betrayer from the other apostles, all of whom are fair-skinned and light-haired. The flesh of these apostles, and of Christ, exhibits the Murano Master's preference of foregoing a green under-layer

⁶² New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, M 653.4. Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 175.

⁶³ This is the viewer's left; right side of Christ.

and building up the flesh tones with only a few layers of paint.⁶⁴ This technical approach results in the same style of complexion as seen in the other Berlin Gradual illuminations: sun-blushed cheeks with a dewy luminous skin. With Judas, however, the Murano Master has instead layered red and orange tones resulting in a tanned, nearly brown flesh.

The darkness of Judas's skin, especially compared with his lighter-skinned apostolic counterparts, was likely the result of the Murano Master using more yellow pigments (possibly oxide yellow or an organic yellow) blended with the lead white and red lead. Additionally, he may have also utilized some carbon black and/or umber to create a golden glow visible on Judas's cheeks and nose. The Murano Master has still used the red lead and vermilion pigments to 'blush' Judas's cheeks, which highly emphasises the underlying circulatory system. For Judas's hair, the Murano Master appears to have used some carbon black and iron gall to achieve the deeply dark colour of his hair and beard, both of which are long, thick, and somewhat curly. This technical and stylistic approach to hair differs greatly from how the hair of the other apostles was created, which ranges from light brown to white.

In addition to Judas's dark hair and complexion, his physiognomy is markedly different not only from the other figures in the *Last Supper*, but also from other figures in the rest of the Berlin Gradual, and in the Florentine examples. The Murano Master has painted Judas with pronounced, supple lips—ones that possess a rather sensual quality. He has also given Judas a long, sloping nose that is both wide at the base and pointed at the end, and very dissimilar to the rounder, more bulbous noses of the other apostles. Representations of Jews in Christian art during the Middle Ages often depicted them with

⁶⁴ See: Ch. 1, n. 164.

specific features that were believed to express a Jew's distinctive look. Thick lips, heavy lidded eyes, and large, thick noses were among these features.⁶⁵ The pointed beard also became a sign of the Jews, and a closer look at Judas's beard shows that it curves upward into a point.⁶⁶

When compared directly with Don Silvestro's Judas from the *Last Supper* initial for San Michele's choir books, it is obvious that the Florentine master has not indicated Judas as the betrayer with any stylistic device other than the black halo, which is typical iconography for Judas.⁶⁷ Nor does Don Silvestro paint Judas with darker pigments for flesh or hair: he looks exactly like the other apostles. Thus, the Murano Master's choice to depict Judas in an obviously different mode may have been intended to convey specific ideas about this figure and his relationship to Christ. In many ways, the Murano Master has stressed Judas's Jewish origin, emphasising the 'otherness' of both his character (for having betrayed Christ) and his ethnicity.⁶⁸ Janet Robson has noted that for the entirety of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Judas's physical appearance did not change in Italian art. He was always depicted as clean-shaven with short hair often wavy and brown, parted in the middle and swept back behind his ears.⁶⁹ Suddenly, however, around the end of the thirteenth century, the images of Judas change, and he was given a light beard, a beaky nose, and a prominent chin, as seen in the example of Pietro Lorenzetti's fresco

⁶⁵ S. Lipton, *Dark Mirror. The Medieval Origin of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company: New York, 2014), p. 105.

⁶⁶ Lipton (2014), p. 173.

⁶⁷ Another common iconographic device is for Judas to have no nimbus. K. Paffenroth, *Judas. Images of the Lost Disciple* (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville/London, 1982), p. 51.

⁶⁸ I thank Professor Miri Ruben for sharing this idea with me during a conversation about this image in July 2018.

⁶⁹ J. Robson, *Speculum Imperfectionis: The Image of Judas in Late Medieval Italy*, PhD diss. (The Courtauld Institute of Art, the University of London, 2001), p. 69.

of the *Betrayal* from the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (Fig. 87).⁷⁰ Lorenzetti's betrayer is clean-shaven, but Duccio had already painted Judas with a pointed goatee in the *Maestà* and a bearded Judas would become standard throughout most of Italy (Fig. 88).⁷¹ While these examples depict Judas with lighter hair, representations of him with dark hair and a dark beard are being created by such artists as Taddeo and Agnolo Gaddi, in Florence; by Vitale and Niccolò di Giacomo, in Bologna; and by Paolo Veneziano, in Venice.⁷² From around 1340 onwards his beard gets heavier and his hair, longer.⁷³ This is precisely the rendering seen in the Berlin *Last Supper*, with Judas having dark, heavy hair and beard (see Fig. 86).

A further iconographic feature that sets Judas apart from the other figures in the Berlin *Last Supper* is his attire, more explicitly his hat. While the rest of the apostles have burnished gold halos, the Murano Master has depicted Judas wearing a large brimmed fedora (see Fig. 86). The hat sits in a jaunty manner on the top of his head and is adorned with gold tassels that dangle along the edge of the brim, which suggests that this could be a contemporary style of headwear in Venice. When discussing various attributes of Judas, a black or dark halo is typical of art from Italy during the mid-late fourteenth century.⁷⁴ Another common means of identifying Judas was through the absence of a halo, where the other apostles or holy figures (depending on the scene) had them and he did not.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Robson (2001), p. 70.

⁷¹ Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, MC-101487. Robson (2001), p. 70.

⁷² Robson (2001), p. 70

⁷³ Robson (2001), p. 70.

⁷⁴ J. Robson, 'Judas and the Franciscans: Perfidy Pictured in Lorenzetti's Passion Cycle at Assisi,' *The Art Bulletin* 86 (2004), pp. 31–57 (at p. 47).

⁷⁵ Robson (2004), pp. 34, 47.

Representations of Judas in a black hat are exceptionally rare and scholars have failed to recognise this anomaly. Nor does this iconographic feature find a visual parallel in any other San Mattia illumination, in the Florentine corpus, or in depictions of Judas by other artists in Italy. A close approximation exists in three illuminations by Belbello in the Visconti Hours: *Balak Receives Balaam* (Fig. 89), *Balaam Speaks with God* (Fig. 90), and *Balaam Blesses Israel* (Fig. 91).⁷⁶ In each of these images, the figure of Balaam wears a large brimmed blue fedora with gold detailing and chin-straps. The presence of these hats in both the Berlin Gradual and the Visconti Hours may speak to the creative dynamic between the Murano Master and Belbello, and the influence that they might have had on one another. Although Belbello began his work on the Visconti Hours in 1412 the campaign stretched well into the next decade and his style appears to have become more robust and indicative of the International Gothic style.⁷⁷ Thus, it cannot be speculated that the Balaam illuminations were painted before the Berlin *Last Supper*, which may have been produced in the 1420s and beyond. While Judas's hat does not function as a means of dating the Berlin Gradual, the link between this feature and the Visconti Hours is worth noting because of the hat's unusual style, which may speak to the nature of the artistic dynamic between the Murano Master and Belbello.

This distinctive depiction of Judas in the Berlin *Last Supper* is seen in another cutting assigned to the Murano Master's oeuvre, and now in the Musée du Cluny in Paris (see Fig. 15).⁷⁸ Described as a 'Scene of Sacrilege' the unidentified figure standing with

⁷⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Landau-Finaly 126v, Landau-Finaly 127r, Landau-Finaly 127v. Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

⁷⁷ Meiss and Kirsch (1972).

⁷⁸ Paris, Musée du Cluny (Musée national du Moyen Âge), CL. 22713. Boskovitz, (1988), pp. 104–109.

his vexillum⁷⁹ raised to an altarpiece of the Crucifixion has been rendered in the same style as that of Judas in the Berlin *Last Supper* (see Fig. 86). This figure also has lush, dark hair; a long beard; and a darker complexion. This figure appears to be preparing to strike the altarpiece in what some scholars have suggested is an act of sacrilege.⁸⁰ Judas has been historically labelled as Christ's betrayer and thus it is perhaps not a coincidence that these two figures are rendered with a physiognomy very disparate from other figures in the Murano Master's corpus.⁸¹ While this discussion is outside the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting the existence of the Cluny figure and its stylistic similitude to the Berlin Judas. The Murano Master's choice to paint Judas using these much darker pigments and markedly different physiognomy, may have had tacit implications about the role of Judas in the Christological narrative, and how Judas was viewed by Christian in early Quattrocento Venice.

The use of dark pigments—both for Judas's flesh and hair—may have been a visual means of conveying the 'darkness' of his soul, and of his actions. According to Sara Lipton, Christian theological writings had long associated evil with darkness but it was art that made the link between normal dark hair and skin, and the darkness of evil.⁸² Thus, art became a means of assigning judgments of someone's moral character based on their physical attributes: that the inner soul was reflected in the outer body, an idea that

⁷⁹ A Roman military standard or flagpole.

⁸⁰ K. Benešová, 'Une représentation de l'iconoclasme(?) au Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge a Paris,' in K. Stejskalá, ed., *V Zajetí Středověkého Obrazu. Kniha Studií k Jubileu* (Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny: Prague, 2011), pp. 119–120.

⁸¹ The significance of the stylistic and iconographic links between Judas and the figure in the Cluny cutting are discussed in greater depth in Ch. 4.

⁸² Lipton (2014), p. 10.

had its roots in medieval theology.⁸³ Within the specific context of the Jewish population, the theological writings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries would typically malign the moral, spiritual and intellectual qualities of Jews but the anti-Jewish invective did not address their physical characteristics.⁸⁴ However, by the mid-thirteenth century, there developed, for the first time, assertions that Jews have a distinctive appearance.⁸⁵

The combination of the ‘distinctive’ features of Jews and the idea that morality and physical appearance were directly correlated resulted in Jews being depicted as dark, especially when compared with Christians. In medieval iconography and manuscript illuminations from the thirteenth century onward, Jews were increasingly depicted with dark skin tones, bulbous eyes, and a malevolent countenance, yet these representations were shaped by theological expectations rather than empirical observation.⁸⁶ The metaphor that Jews were seen as enemies of the Christian faith, and thus made dark and ugly by sin arose out of a complex conflation of theological and social ideas in medieval Europe.⁸⁷ There is persuasive evidence, found in Jewish sources, that confirms that there was a growing perception in Europe, beginning in the thirteenth century, that if Jews were not converts from Judaism then they were ‘dark’ or distinct in their appearance.⁸⁸

⁸³ I. M. Resnick, *Marks of Distinction. Christian Perceptions of Jews in the High Middle Ages* (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, 2012), p. 67.

⁸⁴ Lipton (2014), p. 109.

⁸⁵ Albert the Great [pseud.], *Commentarii in secundam partem psalmorum*, E. Borgnet, ed., (L. Vivès: Paris, 1895), pp. 445–536.

⁸⁶ Resnick (2012), p. 268.

⁸⁷ Resnick (2012), p. 292.

⁸⁸ See: D. Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (The Jewish Publication Society of America: Muhlhausen, 1978); R. Yom Tov Lippmann, *Disputatio adversus Christianos ad Jeremie, Ezechielis, Psalmorum et Danielis libros institute*, M. Sebaldu Snellius, trans. (Typis Viduae Balthasar Scherffi: Altdorf, 1645); Resnick (2012), p. 291.

The Judas in the Berlin *Last Supper* appears to be reaffirming the theological link between dark skin and the blackness of sin.

VII. Monumental Models: The Impact of Frescoes and Panel Paintings on the Murano Master

The Berlin *Last Supper* (see Fig. 41) is also the first illumination in the manuscript in which it may be possible to see the iconographic and stylistic parallels with other media, particularly monumental wall painting. As mentioned, Serena Padovani had posited that the Murano Master drew influence from the fresco cycles in the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna, painted by Giovanni da Modena in the early Quattrocento.⁸⁹ In particular, she noted that the Herod frescoes seemed to provide the linchpin for this possible connection. For Padovani, the Berlin *Last Supper* appears to mirror the *Council of Herod* scene, with Christ assuming the position of Herod at the head of the table, and also resembling him physically (Fig. 92).⁹⁰ Padovani has also suggested that the Murano Master constructed the arrangement of the figures in the Berlin *Last Supper* (see Fig. 41) in a similar fashion as those in the *Council of Herod* fresco (see Fig. 40).⁹¹ Gennaro Toscano echoes Padovani's idea when he also notes the iconographic and stylistic similitudes between the Berlin Gradual and the frescoes at San Petronio. He suggests that whoever illuminated the Berlin Gradual demonstrates a 'direct knowledge of the cycle in Bologna.'⁹² Toscano argues that the San Petronio frescoes represent a critical influence for the Murano Master and as such could imply that he is an artist with Emilian origins.⁹³

If the Murano Master did borrow iconographic motifs from the San Petronio frescoes, this suggestion would assume—or at least imply—that the Murano Master had been to Bologna in order to view the frescoes in situ. While this is a possibility,

⁸⁹ Padovani (1978), p. 34.

⁹⁰ Padovani (1978), pp. 32–33.

⁹¹ Padovani (1978), p. 32.

⁹² Toscano (1998), p. 12.

⁹³ Toscano (1998), p. 13.

especially since he does incorporate Bolognese-style artistic approaches within his own work, perhaps a more likely—and obvious—visual source is closer to home: Don Silvestro's *Last Supper* illumination, which was likely made for the choir books of San Michele in Isola (see Fig. 85). In this version, Don Silvestro has placed each of the twelve apostles around the circular table, clearly articulating the bodies of each one within the closed counter of the initial⁹⁴ Christ sits in the centre with his right hand raised in a blessing gesture while resting his elbow atop of St. John the Evangelist. In a similar fashion, the Murano Master has created nearly the same iconography with only a few minor differences such as putting Judas on the left side of the table, and resting both of Christ's arms upon St. John. While Don Silvestro does not appear to have made Christ physically larger or more prominent than the other figures in the scene, the Murano Master has rendered Christ with an elongated body, which makes him appear noticeably larger than the apostles around him.

The figure of King Herod in the San Petronio frescoes is also larger than his advisors, which Padovani has suggested supports the link between this scene and the Berlin *Last Supper*.⁹⁵ However, the exaggerated size of Christ—as seen in the Berlin Gradual initial—can be a typical way of depicting Christ and is a commonly employed visual device intended to convey his spiritual superiority.⁹⁶ Thus, this shared stylistic feature does not necessarily support the suggestion that the San Petronio frescoes were used as models for the Berlin Gradual. Alternatively, the *Council of Herod* at San

⁹⁴ Fully enclosed interior white space of a letter.

<https://www.canva.com/learn/typography-terms/>

⁹⁵ Padovani (1978), p. 30.

⁹⁶ A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London and Henley, 1980), pp. 89, 95.

Petronio is not entirely unlike another fresco scene found in the Cappella di San Giacomo in the Basilica di Sant'Antonio in Padua: *King Ramiro Summons the Crown Council* (Fig. 93).⁹⁷ In this image, painted by Altichiero da Verona between 1376 and 1379, King Ramiro is seated on a raised throne engaged in consultation with his advisors, not unlike King Herod in the San Petronio fresco. This is not to suggest that the Murano Master was inspired by the Paduan frescoes but rather to say there were extant monumental wall paintings closer to Venice, which share some iconographic features with the frescoes in San Petronio. Perhaps a more relevant question might be whether Giovanni da Modena was, himself, inspired by '*Last Supper*' iconography more generally. If so, this may explain the visual similarities and give them a common origin. Although this line of investigation is well outside the scope of this project, it may be worth reconsidering the pre-assumed notions concerning possible sources of inspiration amongst artists at this time.

Another observation that has occurred repeatedly throughout the literature regarding a possible connection between the Murano Master's work and the San Petronio frescoes concerns the expressive nature of the figures' faces. Padovani first suggested that this aspect of the Murano Master's style likely came from the intensity seen in the faces of Giovanni da Modena's figures in the San Petronio paintings.⁹⁸ Other scholars agreed with her assertion positing that the Murano Master drew from the faces of the figures in Giovanni da Modena's *Paradise and Inferno* frescoes (see Fig. 42) for the

⁹⁷ I am grateful to Professor Louise Bourdua for bringing this fresco cycle to my attention.

⁹⁸ Padovani (1978), p. 30.

Berlin *Last Supper*.⁹⁹ While the faces of the Murano Master's figures are instantly recognizable for their immensely expressive and emotive quality, the Murano Master may have been culling inspiration from more familiar sources, such as the Florentine manuscripts from Santa Maria degli Angeli that may have already found their way to the Camaldolese houses in the Lagoon. Although Don Silvestro had a clear iconographic and stylistic impact on both the Murano Master and Cortese, there are striking artistic parallels between the work of the Murano Master and Lorenzo Monaco who dominated Florentine illumination during the early decades of the Quattrocento.¹⁰⁰

Recognized as the 'most important Quattrocento painter in Florence,'¹⁰¹ the strong similarities between the work of Lorenzo Monaco and the Murano Master suggest that this great artist deeply inspired the latter. Some of the stylistic parallels between their paintings include the plasticity and modelling of the figures' flesh; the animated compositions; and the use of vibrant colours.¹⁰² When looking at Lorenzo Monaco's *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 94),¹⁰³ the above-mentioned features become instantly recognizable: the Magi bend and twist before the holy child while the onlookers are themselves composed of contorted forms resulting in a dynamic and lively composition. The garments are rendered in bright colours: purple juxtaposed with orange and blue with green. In the cutting of an initial M with *St. Andrew* (Fig. 95),¹⁰⁴ the Murano Master

⁹⁹ Franco (1998), p. 164; Toscano (1998), pp. 12–13.

¹⁰⁰ Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 152.

¹⁰¹ M. Levi D'Ancona, 'Some New Attributions to Lorenzo Monaco,' *The Art Bulletin* 39 (1958), pp. 175–191 (at p. 175).

¹⁰² Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 152.

¹⁰³ Florence, Uffizi Gallery, inv. 1890 n. 466. A. Tartuferi and D. Parenti, eds., *Lorenzo Monaco. A Bridge from Giotto's Heritage to the Renaissance* (Giunti: Florence, 2006), No. 41.

¹⁰⁴ St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum, 36:1953. Catalogued but unpublished.

appears to have incorporated some of the same features: the body of St. Andrew is angled against the middle arm of the initial, which functions as his saltire, with his arms outstretched conveying a sense of movement to his still body. The figures in the crowd crane their necks and twist their bodies to see the saint, further enhancing the dynamism of the composition. Finally, the colour palette is rich with bright tones that pair green with orange, blue, and red. This is but one example of a work attributed to the Murano Master that exhibits iconographic and stylistic links with the paintings of Lorenzo Monaco.

Perhaps the most profound artistic similitude between the works of these two illuminators can be seen in the faces and expressions of their figures. As noted by several scholars, the calm, serene expressions of the Murano Master's figures can find parallels with those of Don Silvestro, yet the intense, almost hostile, faces appear to have roots in the work of Lorenzo Monaco.¹⁰⁵ The deeply furrowed brows and downturned mouths of certain figures in the Murano Master's oeuvre can find a match in prophets and saints painted by Lorenzo Monaco for the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli, in particular his initial D with *St. John the Evangelist* (see Fig. 29).¹⁰⁶ Lorenzo Monaco's career has been divided into three periods: a formative one prior to 1400; a second period, from 1400 to 1413; and a final period, from 1413 until his death ca. 1425.¹⁰⁷ The types of faces represented by the *St. John the Evangelist* initial fall into the first period, according to Levi D'Ancona, which seems quite early for this style in this oeuvre.¹⁰⁸ This thesis,

¹⁰⁵ Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 152; Levi D'Ancona (1958), p. 182.

¹⁰⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Corale 1, fol 33r.

¹⁰⁷ M. L. Ciaranfi, 'Lorenzo Monaco miniature,' *L'Arte* 35 (1932), pp. 285–317; 379–399 (at p. 288).

¹⁰⁸ Levi D'Ancona (1958), pp. 184–185.

however, is not concerned with the dating of Lorenzo Monaco's work, but rather the possible influence it may have had on the Murano Master's illuminations for the San Mattia series. The intensity of the face of *St. John the Evangelist*, can be seen in numerous other figures by Lorenzo Monaco, and not only related to the Florentine choir books. The fresco with the *Marriage of the Virgin* in Santa Trinità in Florence, in the Bartolini Chapel (Fig. 96), datable to 1422–1423, clearly demonstrates a deepening of the outer expression of the figures' inner psychology. The grave, pensive faces of the figures with their downturned mouths are juxtaposed with soft hair and beards—a treatment of the hair seen often in the Murano Master's figures. If Lorenzo Monaco's work inspired the Murano Master as deeply and as obviously as it did, perhaps the Murano Master was not looking at the frescoes in San Petronio but at things much closer to home. Although the intense expressions of the figures in Giovanni da Modena's monumental paintings do exhibit many of the same stylistic and iconographic features found in the Murano Master's work, it may be more plausible that the Murano Master was drawing on the work of Lorenzo Monaco to inspire the faces in the San Mattia choir books.

VIII. Rendered in Cloth: Drapery & Fabrics

The drapery and fabrics depicted by the Murano Master are additional features of his oeuvre that mark his work as instantly recognizable. The immense tubular folds that convey depth and volume also create a sense of movement, and in many instances the garments mirror the shape of the initial. One such example is folio 50v of an initial V with the *Ascension* (see Fig. 64). This unusually shaped letter is nearly completely closed at the top and is not immediately recognizable. Contained within are the twelve apostles gathered around the Virgin, who kneels in the centre of the composition. She has her fingertips gently touching, in prayer, and looks directly at the viewer while the apostles stare up at the feet of Christ as he ascends into a billowy cloud. The tightly compressed scene is reminiscent of the vibrant and active scenes painted by Niccolò da Bologna in the Trecento.¹⁰⁹ The Murano Master skilfully infuses his composition with many of the salient features that characterize Niccolò's work, including the dynamism of the composition, the animated interaction between the figures, and their graceful, expressive faces, often condensed into compressed spaces.¹¹⁰

The garments worn by all of the figures in the Berlin *Ascension* exhibit the deep, tubular folds that have come to define the manner in which the Murano Master renders fabrics. The mantles appear heavy as they envelope and hang off the limbs and bodies of the Virgin and the apostles; an effect achieved through the use of deep shading. By using linear hatching and cross-hatching, the Murano Master has given the fabrics a highly textured quality—much like the one seen in the figures' faces— which further enhances

¹⁰⁹ Panayotova and Turner in Panayotova (2016), p. 287.

¹¹⁰ G. Schmidt, 'Andreas me pinsit,' *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 26 (1973), pp. 57–73 (at pp. 62–63).

the three-dimensional effect.¹¹¹ Unlike in works by Niccolò da Bologna, and even Cortese, where the garments tend to be static, the Murano Master designed the edges of the figures' mantles to curl and flow, almost like water, creating a sense of movement and animism. This movement mirrors the circular shape of the initial V, in which the scene is enclosed, as well as the shape of the cloud into which Christ ascends above. The robust nature of the tunics and mantles also give the initial a sense of fullness; the entire inner space is filled to capacity.

This approach to the garments is found in all the other illuminations in the Berlin Gradual, both the group compositions and the individual prophet portraits. If one looks to the obvious models of the Florentine manuscripts, the garments painted by Don Silvestro and other illuminators in the Santa Maria degli Angeli scriptorium tend to reflect the flatter, more courtly style of Sienese-influences painting in the Trecento.¹¹² Thus, these do not offer a satisfying model; however, turning once again to the corpus of Lorenzo Monaco, a possible link may be found. Even in works from his earliest period one can see that the garments possess folds and creases in the elbows and around the torso, giving the fabric a sense of movement and realism. In the *St. John the Evangelist* cutting (see Fig. 29), the fabric bunches in the crook of the saint's arm, gathering in a naturalistic manner.

It is not only in manuscript illuminations that Lorenzo Monaco renders the tunics and mantles of his figures in this fashion: he also applies that same iconographic approach to those in his altarpieces and frescoes. In the Monte Oliveto polyptych, dated 1406–1410, the prophets are layered in fabric that looks weighted against their bodies,

¹¹¹ Franco (1998), p. 163.

¹¹² B. Cole, *Sienese Painting. From its Origins to the Fifteenth Century* (Harper & Row Publishers: New York, 1938), p. 26; Levi D'Ancona (1994), p. 22.

such as in this example from one of the panels (Fig. 97).¹¹³ The prophet raises his right hand and holds a scroll in the other while looking down at the Coronation of the Virgin below. He wears a mantle that is draped across his chest but hangs low as if being affected by gravity. This altarpiece was made during the second period of Lorenzo's career, as was the *Coronation of the Virgin* from Santa Maria degli Angeli, which is signed by the artist and dated.¹¹⁴ These large-scale panel paintings may not have been unknown to the Murano Master, especially given that they were made in a Camaldolese context, and that there was a strong connection between the Florentine house and its sister monasteries in the Venetian Lagoon.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze, Inv. 1890 n. 468.

¹¹⁴ The *Coronation of the Virgin* is dated February 1413. Levi D'Ancona (1958), p. 175, n. 5.

¹¹⁵ Levi D'Ancona (1958), p. 175; Freuler (1992), p. 481; Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), p. 152.

IX. Frescoes & Fabrics

Although panel paintings may offer a possible source of inspiration for the Murano Master's style of rendering fabrics, they remain an underexplored question in the literature. The principal debate over the San Mattia material revolves around the potential influence that he may have drawn from frescoes. As discussed above, the link between the faces of the Murano Master's figures and those found in the frescoes at San Petronio may not be as strong as once thought. Although Padovani and other scholars believe that these monumental wall paintings serve as a crucial source of inspiration for the Murano Master, as stated before, this argument is predicated on the assumption that he would have had access to them.¹¹⁶ Since the formative years of the Murano Master are unknown, the links between the San Petronio frescoes and the Murano Master's work are based on stylistic grounds. While this author is not entirely convinced that the Murano Master was imitating iconographic elements in the San Petronio frescoes, perhaps another hypothesis can be offered: that he was borrowing from the *Marriage of the Virgin* fresco by Lorenzo Monaco in Santa Trinità (see Fig. 96).

This fresco, painted in the Bartolini Salimbeni Chapel, is part of a cycle depicting life events of the Virgin and was commissioned by the Bartolini-Salimbeni family.¹¹⁷ The *Marriage of the Virgin* is also thought to be the only fresco in the chapel that was painted entirely by Lorenzo Monaco without assistants.¹¹⁸ Although suffering some damage much of the scene is still visible as are the fine details of the figures' faces and garments. St. Joseph wears a floor-length yellow robe with a sash draped across his shoulder and

¹¹⁶ Padovani (1988), p. 34; Toscano (1998), p. 12.

¹¹⁷ G. Tigler, 'La Cappella Bartolini Salimbeni a Santa Trinita,' in M. Bellini, ed., *Cappelle del Rinascimento Firenze* (Giusti: Florence, 1998), pp. 11–22 (at p. 14).

¹¹⁸ Tigler in Bellini (1998), p. 22.

under his neck. The garment bunches and gathers at the saint's feet and appears heavy and weighted. The fabric around his neck is composed of overlapping lines that create a three dimensional quality. This is precisely how the Murano Master has depicted the garments of the vast majority of figures in the Berlin Gradual. In the *Resurrection* initial, the figures of St. Mary Magdalene and Mary in the blue robe are dressed in the same heavy-looking fabrics as those seen in the *Marriage of the Virgin*. The deep tubular folds of St. Mary Magdalene's garment strongly resemble those of St. Joseph's tunic. The same observation can be made about the tunics, robes and mantles in the Berlin *Ascension*. The apostles, Mary and Christ all wear clothing composed of curvilinear lines, which gives the garments a sense of dynamism. Additionally, the fabrics appear heavy, almost overwhelming the bodies of the figures. Similarly, in Lorenzo Monaco's *Marriage* fresco, St. Anne, standing behind Mary, is enveloped by her red and yellow garment as it droops over her shoulders and drags on the ground. The garments worn by the figures in the Gradual's initials strongly resemble the work of Lorenzo Monaco, including his manuscript illumination, the altarpiece for Monte Oliveto and the fresco(s) in the Bartolini Salimbeni Chapel. Although these works are not in Venice, it would not have been unreasonable to think that he was familiar with Lorenzo's painting in Florence, and more likely that he saw these pieces first-hand.

In terms of monumental art in Venice, another possible model may be found in the work of Lorenzo Veneziano, active from 1356 until 1372, and credited with creating an important impact on Venetian painting in the last decades of the Trecento.¹¹⁹ Lorenzo

¹¹⁹ C. Guarnieri, 'Lorenzo Veneziano,' in Bollati (2004), pp. 401–404; C. Guarnieri, *Lorenzo Veneziano* (Silvana Editoriale: Milan, 2006), p. 33. R. Van Marle, *The*

Veneziano set the standard for Venetian painting during the second half of the fourteenth century, which influenced the subsequent generation of painters active in the city, including Gentile da Fabriano.¹²⁰ The Lion Polyptych (Fig. 98), named for the donor, Domenico Lion, is a multi-panel altarpiece made for the main altar of Sant'Antonio di Catello in Venice in 1357.¹²¹ The drapery of the garments worn by the various saints in the Lion Polyptych immediately call to mind the tunics worn by the figures in the Berlin Gradual. Lorenzo Veneziano has used light and shade to create the illusion of depths in the folds; the garments gather and bunch in naturalistic places, such as by the waist and in the crooks of the arm; and they have a weighted appearance. The garments in the Berlin *Resurrection*, the *Ascension* and the prophet portraits resemble the fabrics in Lorenzo's Lion Polyptych much more closely than those in the San Petronio frescoes, potentially signalling Lorenzo's work as a possible source of inspiration for the Murano Master. Moreover, if Lorenzo Veneziano's Lion Polyptych did inform the development of the Murano Master's approach to illumination, it likely would have been far more accessible to him than frescoes to which he would have to travel to see. The clear presence of Emilian stylistic features in the Murano Master's corpus does not necessarily indicate that he was influenced by work from that region. It certainly raises this possibility but if stylistic and iconographic parallels can be found in Venice, it would be far more logical to propose that he may have borrowed from local sources.

Development of the Italian School of Painting, Vol. 4 (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1934), p. 52.

¹²⁰ V. M. Schmidt, 'Moda e pittura tardogotica,' in A. di Marche, ed., *Nuovi studi sulla pittura tardogotica. Intorno a Gentile da Fabriano* (Sillabe: Livorono, 2007), pp. 11–18 (at p. 13); Guarnieri (2006), pp. 33–34.

¹²¹ Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia, inv. 5. Guarnieri (2006), No. 9.

The high degree of realism in the garments worn by figures in the Berlin Gradual may have also had its roots in the art of Gentile da Fabriano, whose work embodied the vibrant International Gothic style. The fusion of ornamentation and naturalism was characteristic of painting produced in northern Italy during the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, and this effect could easily be seen in the simulation of textures and materials.¹²² In many works by Gentile, made at the same time as the Berlin Gradual, the garments have been simulated so realistically that they appear to have a visceral tactile quality. According to Andrea De Marchi, the local Trecento Venetian tradition of Paolo Veneziano emulated the tactile virtuosity of Byzantine craftsmen.¹²³ Thus, Gentile and the Murano Master had inherited a local tradition, which, in part, aimed to mimic the practices of other cultures and media. Although none of Gentile's original works produced in Venice during the early Quattrocento survive, such as the frescoes in the Ducal Palace, a visual comparison between his painting technique and that of the Murano Master may still be possible—and worthwhile—given the degree of Gentile's influence on the local artistic community during this period.

In the *Adoration of the Magi*, from the Strozzi Altarpiece in Florence, the blue mantle of the Virgin hangs heavily around her body and gathers in deep pools of fabric at her feet (Fig. 99).¹²⁴ Gentile rendered the fabrics, worn by his figures, so as to convey a sense of weight and texture that functioned to enhance the realism of the garment, and

¹²² Cohen (1985), p. 22.

¹²³ A. De Marchi, 'Angels Stippled in Gold: The Perugia Madonna,' in L. Laureati and L. Mochi Onori, eds., *Gentile da Fabriano e l'altro Rinascimento* (Electa: Milan, 2006), pp. 94–99 (at p. 94).

¹²⁴ Florence, Uffizi Gallery. A De Marchi, *Nuovi studi sulla pittura tardogotico: intorno a Gentile da Fabriano* (Sillabe: Livorno, 2007).

also to also give the flesh a yielding softness, in contrast.¹²⁵ This effect can be seen in the robes and mantles of Joseph and of the attendants standing behind the Virgin, resulting in their bodies appearing whole and firm underneath. Although speculative, could he have also painted garments in this manner in works he produced in Venice, which are now lost? If so, could these have functioned as models for the Murano Master's approach to depicting fabrics on a two-dimensional plane? While the figures in the Berlin *Ascension* are slightly more enveloped by the copious tubular folds, the Murano Master has also sought to give their bodies suppleness, furthering augmenting the degree of animism.

¹²⁵ K. Christiansen, 'L'arte di Gentile da Fabriano,' in L. Laureati and L. Mochi Onori, eds., *Gentile da Fabriano e l'altro Rinascimento* (Electa: Milan, 2006) pp. 19–53 (at p. 29).

X. Colour as Shape & Light

In addition to the use of light and shadow to create the illusions of weight and texture, the Murano Master has employed colour and ornament to render the fabrics brilliant and unusual. It may have been that for this aspect of his work, the Murano Master borrowed from the local Trecento tradition of fusing naturalism with ornamentation, which he then merged with his own developing style. In the Berlin Gradual, the initials with *Prophets* are salient examples of the ways in which the Murano Master experimented with colour and various other painting techniques. It is in these initials that one can also see elements drawn from both manuscripts and monumental art. The initial Q with a *Prophet* (fol. 25v) shows a remarkable use of the stippling technique, which enhances the visual effect of the prophet's garment. The Murano Master has layered blue pigments over top of lead white and applied the stippling in a diagonal downwards direction, beginning at the prophet's right shoulder and ending mid-waist. The blue pigment becomes increasingly darker in tone as it progresses away from its point of origin (the right shoulder), moving towards the figure's mid-section. He has then applied tiny dots of paint, clustered in a wave of points to highlight the fabric. The resulting effect is twofold: the dots collectively function as ornamentation on the garment, giving it a textured quality; secondly, the mantle appears raised from the parchment creating an impressive three-dimensional effect, on a two-dimensional plane.

What is unusual is that despite executing the stippling technique with a high degree of sophistication, the Murano Master did not repeat stippling in any of other illuminations in the Berlin Gradual. It is unlikely that the Murano Master saw a direct model in the Florentine choir books, as Don Silvestro did not use stippling in those

illuminations, thus looking to sources beyond the Florentine monastery, the legacy of Gentile da Fabriano may again provide some insight into the Murano Master's use of stippling. Gentile consistently used gold for the stippling on many of his panels, which according to Andrea De Marchi reflected his interest in the craft of the goldsmith.¹²⁶ Gentile was also instrumental in bringing the stippling technique to Venice.¹²⁷ In the centre panel of the Valle Romita Polyptych, dating ca. 1410–1412 and housed today in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, Gentile has applied stippling, or 'flecking' as it has been referred to by painting conservators.¹²⁸ Gentile has applied tiny gold dots to the mantle worn by Christ as he places a crown upon the Virgin's slightly bent head. The 'flecking' highlights the delicate folds of the fabric as it hangs and gathers around Christ's knees and arm (Fig. 100).¹²⁹ The Murano Master has approached the Berlin *Prophet's* garment in much the same manner: the tiny dots cascade in clusters to highlight the progressively darkening tones of the blue pigment, while emphasising the deep folds of the prophet's tunic.

Gentile repeats the use of flecking in the Yale *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 101), which dates to approximately the same period as the Berlin Gradual, ca. 1424.¹³⁰ Tiny dots of gold have been applied in a rather ordered fashion, so as to illuminate and

¹²⁶ De Marchi in Laureati and Onori (2006), p. 94.

¹²⁷ De Marchi in Laureati and Onori (2006), p. 96.

¹²⁸ C. Slottved Kimbriel and P. Joannides, 'On the unorthodox origin and Byzantine journey of the Lavenham Madonna,' *Hamilton Kerr Institute Bulletin* 6, (2016), pp. 104–115 (at p. 109).

¹²⁹ Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera, Inv. 153–174; 178–179–1129; 1230–1231–123. Slottved Kimbriel and Joannides (2016).

¹³⁰ New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1871.66. Slottved Kimbriel and Joannides (2016).

emphasise the folds in the Virgin's robe.¹³¹ While this is not to suggest that the Murano Master used either of the above works as a direct model, it seems likely that he was familiar with Gentile da Fabriano's technique, and may have applied it himself to fol. 25v in the Berlin Gradual. However, although he may have been inspired by Gentile's technique, the Murano Master engaged his own creativity curiosity by executing 'flecking' using blue pigment not gold, which resulted in a considerably different effect from that seen in Gentile's altarpiece. The sudden and singular appearance of stippling on folio 25v raises questions as to why the Murano Master chose to apply it in an illumination one-third of the way into the volume, and only in that one instance.

Cangiante is another painting technique found in the Berlin Gradual's illuminations, which like the stippling technique also appears to have been applied in a somewhat experimental capacity. In the historiated initial C with a *Prophet* (fol. 34v), the Murano Master has managed to create a striking visual effect on the figure's garment by using shades of blue, green, and yellow-green on the *Prophet's* mantle, to achieve the highlighting effect first seen in works as early as those of Giotto, such as his Arena Chapel frescoes. As with stippling, the Murano Master has only used cangiante in this one initial in the Berlin Gradual, yet unlike stippling, the Murano Master has applied cangiante more widely and with greater frequency to other cuttings associated with the San Mattia choir books.¹³²

The illuminations painted by Don Silvestro and other artists for the Florentine choir books series do not demonstrate much use of the cangiante technique. Although

¹³¹ Slottved Kimbriel and Joannides (2016), p. 111.

¹³² The presence of the cangiante technique in the fragments belonging to the San Mattia choir book series will be discussed in Ch. 4 of this dissertation.

highly skilled at applying other colour techniques, Don Silvestro did not engage with this particular approach in his works for this series, but rather preferred to use primarily jewel tones. According to Marcia Hall, *cangiante* was a colour technique particularly embraced in Florence during the Trecento, as well as by Paduan artists, but not by Venetians.¹³³ Although Don Silvestro did not seem to make use of this painting technique, Lorenzo Monaco did, applying it in many of his illuminations and altarpieces, such as his *Coronation of the Virgin* panel.¹³⁴ Since the *cangiante* effect was not commonly used in Venice, the Murano Master may have learned of the technique from other sources, perhaps from the works of Lorenzo Monaco. In this initial D with *Pentecost* (Fig. 102), painted by Lorenzo Monaco to accompany the second responsory of the first nocturne for this feast, the garments of the figures clearly exhibit his liberal application of the *cangiante* technique.¹³⁵ Thus, the work of Lorenzo Monaco may have functioned as a direct model from which the Murano Master might have drawn inspiration for the application of this painting technique. However, as mentioned, he only utilized *cangiante* in the single instance of folio 34v.

Although the Murano Master used *cangiante* once in the Berlin Gradual, it became ubiquitous in the illuminations of the other volumes belonging to the San Mattia series. This is somewhat remarkable, as Venetian painters rejected *cangiante* entirely perhaps as they felt the resulting effect was too artificial and garish.¹³⁶ The Murano

¹³³ M. Hall, *Color and Meaning. Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1992), p. 21.

¹³⁴ Florence, Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 1890, no. 885. G. Fossi, *Uffizi Gallery* (Giunti: Florence, 2004), No. 7.

¹³⁵ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Rossiano 1192.2. Kanter et al. (1994).

¹³⁶ Hall (1992), p. 21.

Master, however, may have wanted to exploit the full range of colour possibilities that cangiante offered, as it provided considerable variety, especially when working with a limited colour palette, as the Murano Master often did.¹³⁷ He appears to have been using this painting technique in Venice, during a time when the majority of Venetian artists did not. Even Cristoforo Cortese, who painted the companion volume to the Berlin Gradual, kept today in Milan, only applied cangiante in a few instances in the manuscript's illuminations.¹³⁸ The single example of the use of cangiante in the Berlin Gradual differs from the other San Mattia-related illuminations in which this technique was used because the garment of the Berlin prophet exhibits a vivid application of it. In the other illuminations, the Murano Master appears to have subdued his use and applied it as more of an accenting device, such as just on the shoulder of a figure's mantle, or as a highlighting technique on the elbows of the garment's sleeves. However, he also has applied it to the surrounding landscape of several of the San Mattia fragments, using it on mountains, on celestial objects such as the sun, and on architecture. Thus, the Berlin Gradual may have functioned as a means of experimenting with this painting technique wherein the Murano Master could fine tune his application of it, ultimately producing images that were unlike what Lorenzo Monaco was painting for Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Folio 34v also marks the first appearance of another stylistic feature—one that is considered to be a hallmark of the Murano Master's oeuvre generally: pseudo-Arabic

¹³⁷ Hall (1992), p. 21.

¹³⁸ Discussed further in Ch. 3.

script.¹³⁹ Although not a technique, this decorative element has been included in the discussion of visual effects that the Murano Master employed in his work on the San Mattia choir books. Unlike the cangiante effect, the use of this fictitious script as a decorative element is commonly found on the garments and nimbi of figures throughout the Berlin Gradual. In folio 34v the beautiful cangiante-coloured mantle of the prophet is draped around his shoulders and reveals underneath a pale pink tunic decorated with white pseudo-Arabic writing. In subsequent illuminations, this feature is found repeatedly as an ornamental element on various parts of the figures' garments, including along the edges of mantles, on the cuffs and sleeves, and as an embellishment on the already-elaborate halos. The *Ascension* initial demonstrates the profuse application of this fictive script on the nimbi of the Virgin and apostles, and signals its first appearance on halos in the Berlin Gradual. The use of pseudo-Arabic script is not only limited to garments in the manuscript's illumination, as the *Ascension* folio is also the first instance where the Murano Master has applied it decoratively to the initial itself, perhaps demonstrating an interest in exploring its versatility as an embellishing element.

While it would appear that the use of pseudo-Arabic writing as ornamentation was widely practiced in manuscript illumination in Italy during the period in which the Berlin Gradual was produced, there are no stylistic parallels in the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli, nor in the volumes made for San Michele. Don Silvestro instead appears to have favoured such decorative elements as circles and tendrils composed of tiny dots punched into the burnish gold of the nimbi, while his figures' garments are often detailed

¹³⁹ Rosamond Mack has cautioned against the use of the term 'pseudo-Kufic' to define all instances of Arabic-like script in Italian art. She has suggested instead the use of such terms as 'pseudo-Arabic' and 'pseudo-script(s)'. Mack (2002), p. 51.

with geometric shapes composed of simple pigments such as lead white. Thus, the Murano Master must have been looking at other manuscripts or media that did use pseudo-Arabic script as a decorative feature. Rosamond Mack has speculated that Jacopo Bellini may have set the local standard for the use of pseudo-Arabic in Venice ca. 1450 with his ‘half-length’ Madonna paintings, but due to the uncertain dating of the works in his oeuvre, it is difficult to be sure.¹⁴⁰ Although Mack discusses the use of pseudo-Arabic script in Venice beyond 1450, she makes no mention of its application in art in the early Quattrocento.

Gentile da Fabriano’s *Adoration of the Magi* (Strozzi Altarpiece) presents an early example of the use of pseudo-Arabic writing as a decorative element on garments and halos (see Fig. 99). The approximate dating of the Berlin Gradual to ca. 1400 to ca. 1445, and the presence of pseudo-Arabic script in the illuminations, suggests that the Murano Master was employing this technique as early as the 1410s or ‘20s in Venice.¹⁴¹ According to Mack, the use of pseudo-Arabic script on the holy figures’ halos was a practice that disappeared by 1350, and was revived in Florence around 1420 when its use finally spread to northern Italy by 1450.¹⁴² The presence of pseudo-Arabic script in Gentile’s work and in the Berlin Gradual as early as 1410, in Venice, might suggest that either the Murano Master had some exposure to the use of it in Florence, or that he was consciously archaizing with an ‘outmoded’ style of decoration during the early Quattrocento—a period in which it was no longer utilised by Venetian painters.

¹⁴⁰ Mack (2002), p. 67.

¹⁴¹ For a discussion of dating, see: Ch.1, Sec. VI.

¹⁴² Mack (2002), p. 65.

XI. A Macrocosm Rendered Micro: Architecture in the Berlin Gradual

While the drapery and figures, in the Berlin Gradual, demonstrate the Murano Master's capacity to incorporate iconographic and stylistic motifs from various Italian regions into his work, the architecture appears to convey a different source of inspiration: contemporary Venice and, thereby indirectly, the Arabic world. Two, of the five, historiated initials contain scenes that occur within an architectural structure: *Pentecost* and the *Last Supper*. In both examples the Murano Master has created architecture that mirrors Byzantine-style structures, likely inspired by the eclectic Venetian architecture around him. The presence of this Arabic-style architecture further strengthens the argument for a Venetian provenance for the Berlin Gradual, and for the entire San Mattia series. Of the two initials that contain architecture, the scene of *Pentecost* has the more elaborate design, demonstrating the Murano Master's interest in depicting both the interior and exterior of the building, and is important for analysing this artist's approach to painting.

Before proceeding, it is important to discuss the methodology that will be used for evaluating the *Pentecost* initial in the discussion that follows. As mentioned, the Kupferstichkabinett has repeatedly refused requests to photograph the Berlin Gradual. Of the five initials with Christological scenes, only three have ever been reproduced: initial R with the *Resurrection*, initial C with the *Last Supper*, and initial V with the *Ascension*.¹⁴³ The other two: initial S with *Pentecost* and initial B with the *Old & New Testament Trinity* have not, to this author's knowledge, been reproduced. While these images are not lost, they are not easily accessible for inclusion in the scholarly discourse

¹⁴³ Of these three images, only *The Resurrection* has been reproduced in colour. See: R. Pallucchini (1995), Vol. 2, p. 799.

on the Berlin Gradual or any works connected with it. While the Kupferstichkabinett has not allowed photographs, they did grant rare access to see the manuscript first-hand and during this time I was able to make sketches of the initials. Therefore, rather than omit all discussion of this image, I will use a computer-enhanced schematic version of the sketch to provide visual evidence for the analysis of its architectural features (see Fig. 65).¹⁴⁴ In addition to the iconography of the illumination, this drawing also reflects the style and colour palette used by the Murano Master, as accurately as is possible. Additionally, all arguments will be further buttressed by stylistic evidence drawn from the fragments, which comprise the majority of the Murano Master's oeuvre, as many of them include architecture.

The folio for the feast of Pentecost opens with the text: 'Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum...', which is the introit for this Mass.¹⁴⁵ The Murano Master has followed the same design trajectory as Don Silvestro with his version of *Pentecost* for the San Michele choir books, by using the large letter form 'S' as a frame for the architecture in which the scene occurs (Fig. 103).¹⁴⁶ In Don Silvestro's initial, the folio is divided into two halves with the Virgin and apostles gathered in the upper open counter of the 'S,' which is likely intended to represent the space in which Pentecost occurred.¹⁴⁷ Below, he has painted the front exterior of the building, including entrance portals and additional

¹⁴⁴ I would like to thank Dr. Erica Loic for her advice on navigating the problem this lack of photography has posed and also for producing the schematic drawing.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/Feasts/I08081000.htm>.

¹⁴⁶ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 3045. Kanter et al. (1994a), p. 162, Fig. 62.

¹⁴⁷ There are no textual sources that give a precise location for Pentecost. Some scholars have suggested it could have been the Upper Room referred to in Acts 1:13: '...et cum introissent in cenaculum ascenderunt...' or possibly the Cenacle in Jerusalem. See: M. Ma'oz and S. Nusseibeh, eds., *Jerusalem: Points of Friction – And Beyond* (Brill: Leiden, 2000).

figures. This layout conveys the visual notion that the Virgin and apostles are in an upper portion of the house or temple but the Murano Master has taken a different approach to design of the initial. He has placed the main scene—the Virgin and apostles—in the lower half of the initial and placed the external architecture above. By doing this, the Murano Master has made the Pentecost event the main focus as the eye is drawn to it immediately because of the visual plane on which it sits. He also disregards the inclusion of any additional figures as in Don Silvestro's illumination and in Lorenzo Monaco's initial for Pentecost.

XII. An ‘Oriental’ Inspiration? Traces of the Eastern World

A closer visual examination of the architecture in the Berlin *Pentecost* reveals a clear Venetian aesthetic vis-à-vis the strongly Byzantine-inspired features, specifically the arches, tile design on the windows, and bottle-glass panes. Deborah Howard has noted that, from as early as the ninth century, Venice had looked to the East for cultural inspiration, and the direct influence of classical prototypes began to be replaced by decorative and structural traditions borrowed from the Islamic and Byzantine worlds.¹⁴⁸ In the Berlin *Pentecost*, the Murano Master has painted windows and arches that appear to have been drawn from the buildings on both Murano and the Venetian mainland. He focused much attention on the windows creating double windows, composed of bottle-glass panes, inside of ogee arches (Fig. 104). The emphasis on these elaborate and large windows may be explained by the importance of windows for Venetian Gothic palaces in the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, wherein the identity of the building was defined through the framing of windows, not the entrance portals.¹⁴⁹ The building in the initial with *Pentecost* by both Don Silvestro and Lorenzo Monaco contain no windows, only large or somewhat elaborate doors. This is in complete opposition to the Berlin *Pentecost*, which has no doors. Thus, it may be reasonable to suggest that the Murano Master was being influenced by a Venetian architectural aesthetic and not a Florentine one, like his monastic brothers.

It is not only the presence of, and emphasis on, the windows in the Berlin *Pentecost* but also the style, which could suggest that the Murano Master was consciously

¹⁴⁸ D. Howard, *Venice & The East. The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2000), pp. 2–3.

¹⁴⁹ Howard (2000), p. 154.

replicating contemporary Venetian architectural features. The two windows, on either side of the centre one, have the distinctive ogee arch shape, which is one of the most recognizable Islamic decorative shapes and is found on numerous buildings in Venice and also on Murano (Fig. 105).¹⁵⁰ Howard has noted that the ogee arch has been a feature of Venetian palaces since the thirteenth century, and is unmistakably a feature of Venetian architecture.¹⁵¹ Its presence is seen clearly on such building façades as those of the Ca' d'Oro (Palazzo Santa Sofia), ca. 1428–1430 (Fig. 106), and the Doge's Palace (Fig. 107). The Murano Master has not limited his use of the ogee arch to just windows in the Pentecost initial: he has used it as part of the vaulted ceiling that joins the two halves of the initial (Fig. 108). He also does this in the cutting with *St. Jerome and the Lion* (Fig. 109)¹⁵² where he uses the ogee arch to create the architectural frame as part of the ceiling, as well as to create a small niche, which holds a book, as part of the wall at the back of Jerome's study. Similarly, in the initial G with the *Dormition of the Virgin* (see Fig. 6), the arcade, in the background, is composed of three large ogee arches.

The use of the ogee arch finds no stylistic parallel in the illuminations for the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books or for those created for San Michele. These volumes tend to rely more heavily on Florentine-style architectural, which includes fewer curvilinear shapes and takes more of a linear approach. In the initial C with the *Last Supper*, by Don Silvestro, the window in the upper left corner is a perfect square (Fig. 110). Moreover, the room in which the scene is set is composed entirely of straight lines

¹⁵⁰ Photos by the author, November 2016.

¹⁵¹ Howard (2000), p.133.

¹⁵² This cutting was cropped, presumably when it was excised from its original codicological context in the choir book, so closely that the tip of the ogee arch is no longer visible.

and right angles, giving the image a rather flat appearance. In both Don Silvestro and Lorenzo Monaco's *Pentecost* illuminations, the architectural features (the walls, doors, and ceiling) that are visible are extremely linear and also convey a flatness, especially in Lorenzo Monaco's painting (see Fig. 102). It is therefore unlikely that the Murano Master was drawing much inspiration from the Florentine corpus of choir book illuminations, or from Florentine architecture, more broadly.

Even the corpus of illuminations produced by Belbello—an artist with whom the Murano Master has been historically linked—shows no use of the ogee arch. In the Visconti Hours, Belbello appears to have adopted an almost French-Gothic style of architecture in such illuminations as *Balaak Receives Balaam* (see Fig. 89) and *Balaam Blesses Israel* (see Fig. 91). Additionally, there does not appear to be a stylistic link between the Murano Master's use of the ogee arch in the Berlin Gradual and the works of Cristoforo Cortese, Gentile da Fabriano or Michelino da Besozzo. Thus, the Murano Master's choice to use the ogee arch, as a key architectural feature in the San Mattia illuminations, might more logically be a recreation of his contemporary, urban surroundings. The ogee arch as a window frame is ubiquitous on the Venetian architectural landscape. They are also a common feature on buildings on Murano, where San Mattia was located (see Fig. 105). This is not to suggest that the ogee arch window frame was not found in Florence or other Italian cities during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but rather to emphasize the ubiquity of this shape in Venice. Although clearly adopted from Islamic architecture, according to Peter Draper, by the time Western Europeans had been exposed to Islamic structures, Islamic architects had already extended their experimentation with arch forms to include a variety such as horseshoe,

ogee, shouldered, four-centred *muqarnas*, all of which stemmed from the pointed arch.¹⁵³

The pervasiveness of the ogee arch in Venice may suggest that they were especially visually appealing as not all of the different types of arches found in Islamic architecture, and mentioned above, are as apparent in Venetian buildings. Moreover, the presence of the ogee arch in the Berlin *Pentecost* and in several of the San Mattia cuttings may lend further credence to the suggestion that these volumes were made in Venice for a Venetian monastery.

The ogee arch, unlike the pointed arch, has a much more curvilinear shape—the two semi circles culminating together in a point. The shape is much more graceful, certainly than the straight lines of Florentine architecture, as depicted in the Santa Maria degli Angeli images. It could even be argued that the shape of the ogee arch mirrors the ripples of water, which itself is ubiquitous in Venice. Robert Hillenbrand has suggested that in certain contexts, the arch is less of an architectural structural necessity and more of a ‘decorative framing device.’ He continues by saying that the popularity and use of particular arches is linked with the development of a ‘*jeu d’esprit*,’ and thus is purely decorative.¹⁵⁴ The Venetians may simply have liked the aesthetic quality of the ogee arch.

Additionally, in the Berlin *Pentecost*, the Murano Master has recreated bottle glass windowpanes in the centre window (Fig. 111). This is the only instance in the Berlin Gradual in which bottle glass windowpanes are depicted but it is significant because there are no examples of these types of panes in the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books. Nor can a visual correspondence be found in the San Michele illuminations

¹⁵³ P. Draper, ‘Islam and the West: The Early Use of the Pointed Arch Revisited.’ *Architectural History* 48 (2005), pp. 1–20 (at p. 11).

¹⁵⁴ R. Hillenbrand, ‘Studying Islamic Architecture: Challenges and Perspectives.’ *Architectural History* 46 (2003), pp. 1–18 (at p. 15).

or in works attributed to Belbello. Perhaps even more significantly, these types of windowpanes are not present anywhere in the Milan Gradual, which is the companion volume to the Berlin manuscript. Thus, the Murano Master appears to have been making an independent iconographic choice by including the bottle glass windowpanes, which may simply have been a recreation of the world around him. The use of bottle glass for window panes was especially popular in Venice and although most of the original panes have been replaced with plate glass, some still exists, such as in this example from the Ca' d'Oro (Fig. 112).¹⁵⁵ The extensive use of glass, for windows, in Venice impressed foreign visitors especially because it facilitated the maximal amount of natural light to be admitted into cramped spaces.¹⁵⁶ A clear example can be seen in Vittore Carpaccio's *Dream of Saint Ursula* (Fig. 113), which according to Deborah Howard gives a realistic impression of a fifteenth-century Venetian bedroom.¹⁵⁷ Although Carpaccio's painting is later than the likely production date of the Berlin Gradual, the use of bottle glass predates both works and thus the Murano Master likely had ample opportunity to see this type of window in everyday architecture.

Augmenting the bottle glass panes and ogee arch windows is a black and red alternating tile pattern that frames each of the three windows (Fig. 114). The tiles are composed of squares, rectangles, and pseudo-lozenge shapes—especially those nearer the top of the window (due largely to the arch shape). The use of tiles in this way was also very typical of Venetian architecture, the inspiration for which was drawn from the Islamic world. The Doge's palace was covered in inlaid marble, usually in a diaper

¹⁵⁵ S. Quill and D. Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice. Revised and enlarged edition* (Yale University Press: New Haven/London, 2004), p. 62.

¹⁵⁶ Quill and Howard (2004), p 62.

¹⁵⁷ Quill and Howard (2004), pp. 62–63.

pattern that harkened back to the lozenge shape of the brickwork found in Seljuk architecture (Fig. 115).¹⁵⁸ Although the Murano Master has chosen to alternate red and black stones for the frames around the windows in the Berlin *Pentecost*, it is not the only example in the San Mattia corpus, where the alternating stonework frames are found. The Murano Master has also replicated this style of alternating stones in another cutting: the initial T with *A Bishop Consecrating a Church* (Fig. 116).¹⁵⁹ Here, he has created a frame around the entrance and frieze composed of black and white stonework. A nearly identical example of alternating light and dark stonework can be seen in the oil painting *Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus* (Fig. 117).¹⁶⁰ Although painted nearly one hundred years after the San Mattia choir books were likely made, this painting shows that this style of architectural decoration was present in the East where Venetians who travelled to the Levant would have seen it. Often, these travellers brought rough sketches back to Venice, which inspired the incorporation of an ‘oriental’ architectural language to the Venetian cityscape.¹⁶¹ The windows of buildings, in Venice, were significant aspects of the architecture, and in many cases demonstrate the architectural influences drawn from eastern models directly experienced through travel to the East. The ubiquitous Islamic and Byzantine-style architecture would have been easily available for the Murano Master to draw upon when creating the San Mattia illuminations.

¹⁵⁸ D. Howard, ‘Venice and Islam in the Middle Ages: Some Observations on the Question of Architectural Influence,’ *Architectural History* 34 (1991), pp. 59–74 (at p. 67).

¹⁵⁹ London, The British Library, MS Add. 60630, f. 10.

¹⁶⁰ Attributed to the workshop of Gentile Bellini. 1511; Venice; oil on canvas 118 × 203 cm; Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. 100

¹⁶¹ Howard (1991), p. 67.

Bottle glass windowpanes are not the only example of Venetian-style architecture seen in the Berlin *Pentecost*: the Murano Master has also included a large dome, which caps the entire structure. The dome was a common architectural feature on the Venetian cityscape and has its roots in a Byzantine and Islamic building tradition.¹⁶² An obvious example is the domes on San Marco, added to the church in the thirteenth century (Fig. 118).¹⁶³ According to Howard, the double domes of San Marco seemed to have their roots in Persian architectural practice and these massive, bulbous domes would have been a common feature on the buildings in Egyptian cities, as well.¹⁶⁴ Although domes are not unique to Venetian architecture—Brunelleschi’s dome on the Florence Cathedral or the dome of Santa Maria Assunta Cathedral in Siena are called to mind—it is undeniable that they are a key feature of buildings in Venice and are a defining characteristic of the Venetian Gothic style. The domes in Venice tend to share stylistic similarities with domes in Byzantium and the Middle East, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Fig. 119), and the Ibn-Tulun mosque in Cairo (Fig. 120).¹⁶⁵

The dome in the Berlin *Pentecost* also shares aesthetic qualities with the above-mentioned domes and has a smaller dome on top (just visible in the drawing) like the ones on San Marco. More specifically, the *Pentecost* dome resembles the dome found on Santa Maria della Salute, in Venice (Fig. 121). The large dome caps the entire structure and is a central focal point of the building, and although Santa Saulte is dated much later than the San Mattia volumes, it clearly demonstrates the continued presence of such

¹⁶² T. Allen, *Five Essays on Islamic Art* (Solipsist Press: Sebastopol, 1988), p. 13

¹⁶³ Howard (1991), p. 63.

¹⁶⁴ Howard (1991), p. 63.

¹⁶⁵ Howard (1991), pp. 62 – 63; See also: S. Lane-Poole, *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (Chapman and Hall: London, 1888); O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture and Sculpture* (Dumbarton Oaks: Washington, 1960).

domes in Venice during the subsequent centuries. The dome in the Berlin *Pentecost* also closely resembles the single dome on San Giorgio Maggiore (Fig. 122). Again, this is not intended to suggest that either of these churches served as the visual inspiration for the Berlin *Pentecost* but rather to offer visual evidence that the style of dome in the illumination has visual parallels with the architecture of Venice.

The style of Venetian architecture seems to have influenced the Murano Master more generally, as domes can be found in other examples from the San Mattia corpus. In *Bishop Consecrating a Church*, the Murano Master has painted a double dome and used burnished gold as ornamentation (Fig. 123). These golden double domes strongly harken back to the double domes of San Marco, which may have been a model for this cutting, and could further support a Venetian provenance for the series of choir books. Another example of domed architecture can be seen in the initial B with the *Holy House of Loreto Floating on the Sea*, which is held in the Musée de Cluny in Paris (see Fig. 16). This dome is the same colour as the one in the Berlin *Pentecost* (see Fig. 65) but much smaller with windows and capped with a Latin cross. Despite the slight stylistic variations, these illuminations demonstrate that the Murano Master appears to have been interested in depicting Venetian architecture within the context of the choir books. This may also be logical, especially as the volumes were made for a Venetian monastery and perhaps speaks to the larger theme of reflexive seeing, where the monks may have wanted to see their own familiar world reflected back to them when using the volumes.

The recreation of Venetian-inspired architectural features is not found in the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books, whose artists were clearly looking to their own Florentine cityscape for models to emulate. For the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes,

Don Silvestro painted an initial T with *A Bishop Consecrating a Church* (Fig. 124).¹⁶⁶ When this folio is compared with the corresponding Venetian example, the stylistic differences in the architecture are evident. The work by Don Silvestro lacks the domes, the Islamic-inspired alternating stonework, and the windows are composed of rounded arches, whereas in the London folio, the lancet-style windows on the church are topped by an ogee arch (Fig. 125). The building in the Florentine initial follows a highly linear composition and is a simple structure that lacks the ornamentation seen in the Venetian example. In another work attributed to Don Silvestro, for the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes, the initial R with the *Annunciation*, shows his attempt at exterior and interior architecture (Fig. 126).¹⁶⁷ Although slightly more decorated than the church in the other Don Silvestro illumination, the Virgin's house still resembles more closely the type of Florentine architecture seen throughout the Santa Maria degli Angeli corpus with its rounded arch windows, straight ceilings and roof, and its tall, narrow walls, which gives the illumination a rather flat, two-dimensional appearance.

The 'flatness' seen in many of the Florentine choir book illuminations is something that the Murano Master appears to have been intentionally trying to avoid. There are numerous examples—from the Berlin Gradual and the corpus of loose fragments—that suggest he was interested in creating a greater sense of visual depth and three-dimensionality on the two-dimensional surface of the parchment. In addition to the faces and garments of the figures, the Murano Master also used the architecture in the illuminations as a way of exploring and expressing greater visual realism. In the Berlin

¹⁶⁶ Initial T with the *Consecration of a Church by a Bishop and Two Deacons*. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Cod. Cor. 2.

¹⁶⁷ London, The British Library, MS Add. 35254C.

Pentecost, he has included a vaulted ceiling under which the figures stand. He has created this by depicting wooden beams that curve towards a point in the centre of the ceiling and which connect to vertical wooden panelling that comprises the walls of the room. The same approach can be seen in the fragment *A Scene of Sacrilege* (see Fig. 15).¹⁶⁸ By having the ceiling vaults curve towards a central point, the Murano Master has created the illusion of depth as the domed ceiling appears to recede upwards. The small arcade, which resembles an umbrella is likely intended to convey the interior of a dome that is on the exterior of the building—just as is seen in the Berlin *Pentecost* (see Fig. 65).

The interior-exterior ‘double view’ of the Berlin *Pentecost*, is recreated by the Murano Master in several other illuminations but on a smaller scale. In the Berlin *Last Supper*, Christ and the apostles are seated around a table under a wood-beamed ceiling and visible is an arcade and crenellations. He has done the same thing in the *Dormition of the Virgin*, except he has included the unmistakable ogee arch shape for the arcade. This architectural combination of an arcade and crenellations can be found on buildings all over Venice, but most prominently on the façade of the Doge’s Palace (Fig. 127). This façade has been linked to the mosque of Altinbugha al-Maridani in Cairo, which is contemporary with the Venetian Ducal palace (Fig. 128). Thus, the Islamic-Byzantine architectural influence—seen in the Doge’s Palace—is clearly evident in illumination attributed to the Murano Master, which helps strengthen the argument for a Venetian provenance for the San Mattia choir books and related cuttings.

¹⁶⁸ This fragment is discussed in-depth in Ch. 4 and is reattributed by this author as depicting the Beirut Miracle Legend.

XIII. Conclusions

The Berlin Gradual is the most important manuscript in this partial reconstruction because it is the only volume that can be linked directly and concretely to San Mattia. The *fenestra* label on the outside back cover is a crucial piece of evidence that leaves no ambiguity about the choir book's original ownership. It provides the most cohesive corpus of illuminations attributed to the Murano Master, which may allow for an examination of an evolution of his style and technique. The Berlin Gradual is also an extant example of manuscript illumination produced in early Quattrocento Venice. Yet, as has been clearly demonstrated, this masterwork remains understudied, due largely to the lack of available reproductions of the images and highly restricted access. Working within these limitations, this thesis has aimed to present iconographic and stylistic analyses of certain visual features in some of the manuscript's illuminations as a means of trying to explore the depth and breadth of the Murano Master's visual creativity. Contained within this manuscript are images that could speak to the complex nature of Camaldolese spirituality and identity, and offer a possible avenue for examining more closely the dynamics between these two concepts.

The chapter began by attempting to address the issue of style because, although the manuscript is attributed to the Murano Master the opening folio, initial R with the *Resurrection*, clearly exhibits the presence of other hands. While this is not unusual, the subsequent illuminations demonstrate a remarkable stylistic consistency that would suggest that no other illuminator contributed to their content. The multitude of hands seen in the *Resurrection* initial also speaks to another theme of this dissertation, which is the professional relationships that may have existed between the Murano Master and other

artists, not only in Venice but also in surrounding environs. His work was also compared with other media including monumental works such as the Giovanni da Modena's frescoes in San Petronio and those by the so-called Maestro di Vignola. While there were some stylistic parallels, there were also clear discrepancies that made such comparisons perhaps more unlikely than had previously been thought.

The objective behind beginning to unpack the Gradual's complex iconography has been so that certain visual 'peculiarities' could be examined through the framework of Camaldolese monastic identity as a means of understanding the Murano Master's artistic choices. The Gradual's salient monastic corporate iconography was considered within the context of Camaldolese liturgy as well as the iconographic content of the *Diurno Domenicale*, which some scholars, and this author, believe were made for San Michele in Isola. The iconography of the volumes made for Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence were also used as a comparative framework, with the intention of trying to ground the imagery of the Berlin Gradual within early Quattrocento Venetian Camaldolese spirituality. The Berlin Gradual exhibits some unusual iconography that differs from the Florentine volumes, and from the two volumes likely made for their sister house on Isola. This divergent visual programme speaks to the nature of Camaldolese spirituality specifically at San Mattia.

A second objective of closely examining the iconography and stylistic features of the Berlin Gradual was to begin shedding light onto the Murano Master's creative decisions. Much of his style differs from that of his contemporaries but he also has drawn inspiration from the nodes in his artistic network. When rendering the flesh of his figures, the Murano Master appears to have used relatively fewer tonalities and instead chose to

combine one or two pigments in a way that used them to their full potential. This resulted in flesh that was life-like in both appearance and texture. This innovative technique further evinces his high creative aptitude and stresses what may have been an inherent curiosity in replicating the natural world. The manner in which the Murano Master rendered flesh is but one aspect of the stylistic innovations found in the Berlin Gradual. Other facets that reflect his artistic intelligence include the depiction of massive, tubular folds in the figures' garments as a means of creating movement and dynamism within the initial, and the use of particular decorative elements, such as pseudo-Arabic script and painting techniques like *cangiante*. All of these elements combined to make the Berlin Gradual a marvel of Venetian illuminated art, in which the Murano Master mirrored the contemporary Venetian world around him.

The exploration of the Berlin Gradual's iconography and style has been bounded by the above-mentioned issues and by the limited space of this thesis. What is needed now is a concentrated study in which the complex pictorial programme is considered within the framework of not only Camaldolese liturgy but also their foundational history and the cultural structure of Venice's artistic network at this time. A study of this nature could truly open a dialogue around issues pertaining to the artistic context of Venice in those first few decades and add to the growing body of knowledge on this topic. The next chapter takes a similar approach of investigation with the focus being on the other intact choir books suggested to be part of the original San Mattia series: the Milan Gradual.

XIV. Catalogue Entry: The Berlin Gradual

Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett

MS. F. 78.1

Gradual

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400– ca.1445

Script: Gothic bookhand (Southern textualis)

Artist: The Master of the Murano Gradual

Provenance: 1882 Sotheby's London (Hamilton Collection), sold to the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; 1889 Berlin, sold to a private collector; 1903 sold back to the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin

I. Physical Description

Parchment, 600 x 420 mm; ruled spaces 435 x 293 mm. i modern paper flyleaf 217 folios + i contemporary parchment leaf. Three sets of modern foliation: 2 in ink, 1 in crayon. First ink foliation runs fol. i (verso) – fol. 217r; the second ink foliation begins on fol. 106r and runs until fol. 217r; the third foliation (in crayon) begins on fol. 106r (along with the second ink foliation) and runs until fol. 217r.¹⁶⁹ This chapter will use the first ink foliation (i verso) – 217r since it runs consistently from the beginning until the end of the manuscript.¹⁷⁰

6 four-line music staves ruled in red ink and 6 lines of text ruled in brown ink. Stave height: 40 mm; space between staves: 35 mm; text line height: 13 mm; space between text lines: 62 mm; width of double ruling on either side of ruled space: 10 mm.

Catchwords in formal *textualis* on ruled lines, guide text in cursive at lower edge, guide letters inside minor initials, guide text for rubrics in cursive in outer margins. Musical notation was penned before the ornamental initials were painted (e.g. fol. 13r). Most of the historiated initials with prophets are covered with silk curtains. Where the curtains have been lost, sewing holes are visible. Some of the full-page initials also have a protective curtain

Codicology

Regular collation structure: quaternions, except fols. 89–100.

¹⁶⁹ The second ink foliation, beginning on fol. 106r, begins C5 and runs in numerical order (fol. 106r = C5, fol. 107r = C6, fol. 108r = C7, etc.) until fol. 199r = C98, where it no longer begins with C but simply continues to run in numerical order (fol. 200r = 99, fol. 201r = 100, fol. 202r = 101, etc.)

¹⁷⁰ All three foliations will be indicated in the catalogue entry for this manuscript in the Appendix of this dissertation.

Binding:

The binding is contemporary with the manuscript; it is brown leather over oak boards, sewn on 9 supports (re-backed), 1 metal centrepiece and 4 metal corner pieces with bosses on each cover, remains of magenta skin beneath them (chemise?), 4 metal studs on head and tail edges, traces of two leather straps on outer edge and of one leather strap each at head and tail of upper cover, remains of 3 metal pins and traces of a fourth one on lower cover, contemporary parchment label and nails from *fenestra* (horn lost) on lower cover.

The following inscription is found on the label:

***Gr[aduale] a Pasca usq[ue] ad vigesi[m]am t[er]ciam d[omini]cam S[ancti] Math[ee]
III***

‘The fourth gradual of San Mattia from Easter continuously to the twenty-third Sunday’

II. Text & Decoration

The gradual contains one full-page historiated initial: the *Resurrection* (fol. i verso); four historiated initials with Christological scenes: the *Ascension* (fol. 50r), *Pentecost* (fol. 65v), the *Last Supper* (fol. 96v), and the *Holy Trinity* (fol. 101v); and forty-five smaller historiated initials with Prophet portraits. The manuscript also includes four anthropomorphic and zoomorphic initials: fols. 10r, 144r, 159r, 184v.

The Berlin Gradual contains the feasts of the *Temporale* from Easter Sunday until the twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, therefore to just before the beginning of Advent. The full-page initials mark the major Christological feasts, while the other feasts of the *Temporale* for this period are marked with an historiated initial.

Fol. i verso – R with *Resurrection* – [Easter Sunday]

Resurrexit

full page, incl. 1 stave and 1 text line beneath image

Fol. 4v – I with *Prophet* – *feria secunda introitus*

Introduxit vos dominus ad terram fluentem lac et mel

155 x 80 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 8r – A with *Prophet* – *feria tertia introitus*

Aqua sapientie potavite eos

160 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 10r – one-line I initial formed of angel with open book for offertory

Intonuit de caelo do[minus]

Fol. 11r – V with *Prophet* – *feria quarta introitus*

Venite benedicti patris mei percipite regnum

145 x 125 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 14v – V with *Prophet* – *feria quinta introitus*

Victricem manum tuam domine laudaverunt pariter

155 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 18v – E with *Prophet – feria sexta introitus*
Eduxit eos dominus in spe
160 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 22r – E with *Prophet – Sabbato introitus*
Eduxit dominus populum suum in exultatione
150 x 125 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 25v – Q with *Prophet – Dominica prima post Pasca*
Quasimodo geniti infantes
145 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 28v – M with *Prophet – Dominica IIa post pasca introitus*
Misericordia domini plena est terra
145 x 145 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 31v – I with *Prophet – Dom. IIIa post pasca intro[itus]*
Iubilate deo om[nis terra] – fol. 32r
145 x 90 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 34v – C with *Prophet – Dom. IIIa intro[itus]*
Cantate domi[no canticum novum] – fol. 35r
130 x 125 mm, 1 stave and 1 text ll. (initial extends in lower border)

Fol. 38v – V with *Prophet – Dom. Va post pasca intro[itus]*
Vocem jucunditatis annuntiate et audiatu[r] alleluia
155 x 132 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 43r – E with *Prophet – In letaniis ad missam*
Exaudivit de templo sancto suo vocem meam
75 x 80 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l.

Fol. 46v – O with *Prophet – In vigilia ascensionis*
Omnes gentes plaudite manibus
100 x 92 mm, 1 stave and 2 text ll.

Fol. 50r – V with *Ascension – In die ascensionis introitus*
Viri galilei quid admiramini aspicientes in ca[elo] – fol. 50v
300 x 210 mm, 4 staves and 4 text ll

Fol. 54v – E with *Prophet – Dominica post ascensionem*
Exaudi domine vocem [meam qua clamavi ad te] – fol. 55r
150 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 65v – S with *Pentecost*

Spiritus

250 x 230 mm, 4 staves and 4 text ll., 2 staves and 2 text ll. Below

Fol. 70r – C with *Prophet – feria secunda introit[us]*

Cibavit eos ex adipe frumenti

160 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 73r – A with *Prophet – feria IIIa introitus*

Accipite iocunditatem glorie vestre

155 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 76v – D with *Prophet – feria IIIa introit[us]*

Deus dum egredereris coram populo tuo

85 x 85 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l.

Fol. 80r – S with *Saints Justus and Clement – In s[an]c[t]orum iusti et clementis*

Sancti tui domine benedicent te

Fol. 83r– feria quinta abbreviated to opening words of versicles, offertory and communion, no initial

– R: ornamental initial like all minor initials – feria sexta. ad missam intro

Repleatur os meum

1 stave and 2 text ll.

Fol. 91r – K: ornamental initial for Litany drawn in ink, no gold or pigments

Fol. 96r – S: ornamental initial drawn in ink, God and priest with censer added in pen and ink later, some motifs painted in metallic yellow pigment.

Text penned on 5 ll. (with 5 staves) by a diff. hand: *Sacerdotes incensum domini et panes offerunt deo et ideo sancti erunt deo suo et non polluent nomen eius* (same text penned by original scribe on fol. 99r-v)

Fol. 96v – C with *Last Supper – In festo corporis Xpi intro[itus]* (fol. 96r, on 6th text line)

Cibavit eos ex adipe frumenti alleluia. Et de petra i[m]melle – fol. 97r]

302 x 225 mm, 4 staves and 4 text ll., 2 staves and 2 text ll. beneath image

Fol. 101v – B with *Trinity behind altar above, OT Trinity with Abraham below*

Benedicta sis Sancta trinitas atque indivisa unitas con[f]itebimur – fol. 102r]

285 x 220 mm, 4 staves and 4 text ll., 2 staves and 2 text lines beneath image

Fol. 106r – D with *Prophet – Dominica prima post octavam pent.*

Domine in tua misericordia speravi exultavit cor meum in sa[lutari] tuo – fol. 107r]

157 x 143 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 109v – F with *Prophet* – *Dominica IIa intro[itus]*
Factus est dominus protector meus et eduxit me in la[titudinem] – fol. 110r
150 x 115 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 113v – R with *Prophet* – *Dominica tertia intro[itus]*
Respice in me et miserere mei domine quoniam unicus et pauper sum ego
150 x 120 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 118r – D with *Prophet* – *Dominica IIIa introit[us]*
Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea quem [timebo] – fol. 118v
150 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 122r – E with *Prophet* – *Dominica quinta intro[itus]*
Exaudi domine vocem meam qua clamavi ad te adiutor meus esto ne derelinquas me
145 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 125v – D with *Prophet* – *Dominica VIa intro[itus]*
Dominus fortitudo plebis
145 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 128v – O with *Prophet* – *Dominica VIIa introit[us]*
Omnes gentes [plaudite manibus. Iubilate deo in voce exultationis] – fol. 129r
165 x 145 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 132r – S with *Prophet* – *Dom. octava post pentec.* (fol. 131v)
Suscipimus deus misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui
140 x 120 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 135v – E with *Prophet* – *Dominica nona introit[us]*
Ecce deus adiuvat me et dominus susceptor est animae mea
160 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 138r – C with *Prophet* – *Dom. X introitus*
Cum clamarem ad dominum exaudivit vocem [meam] – fol. 139r
150 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 143r – D with *Prophet* – *Dom. Xia intro[itus]*
Deus in loco sancto suo
158 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 144r – one-line I initial formed of red angel in prayer for *Gloria* (*In deo speravit cor*)

Fol. 148r – D with *Prophet* – *Dominica XIIa intro[itus]*
Deus in adiutorium meum intende
162 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 153r – R with *Prophet – Dominica tertia decima intro[itus]*
Respice domine in testamentum tuum
155 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 156v – P with *Prophet – Dominica XIIIa intro[itus]*
Protector no[ster aspice deus et respice in faciem Xri tui] – fol. 157r
140 x 125 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 159r – one-line I initial formed of angel holding flower for offertory
Inmittit angelus domini in circuitu timentium

Fol. 160r – I with *Prophet – Dominica XVa intro[itus]*
Inclina domine aurem tuam ad me et exaudi me
180 x 80 mm, 2 staves and 3 text ll.

Fol. 163v – M with *Prophet – Dominica XVIa intro[itus]*
Miserere michi domine quo[niam ad te clamavi] – fol. 164r
150 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 167v – I with *Prophet – Dominica VII*
Iustus es domine et rectum iudicium tuum
160 x 85 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 171v – E with *Prophet – feria quarta intro[itus]*
Exultate deo
80 x 80 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l.

Fol. 176r – L: *Prophet – feria VI int[roitus]*
Letetur cor querentium dominum
85 x 130 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l.

Fol. 179r – V with *Prophet – Sabbato intr[oitus]*
Venite adoremus deum et procidamus ante dominum ploremus ante eum
78 x 80 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l.

Fol. 184v – one-line B ornamental initial with green eagle inside for versicle
Benedictus es in templo sancto glorie tue

Fol. 189v – D with *Prophet – Dominica XVIIIa intro[itus]*
Da pacem domine su[stinentibus te ut prophete tui fideles inveniantur] – fol. 190r
145 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 194v – S with *Prophet – Dominica XIX intr[oitus]* (fol. 194r)
Salus populi ego sum dicit dominus
150 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 199r – O with *Prophet* – *Dominica XX intr[oitus]* (fol. 198v)
O adiua que fecisti nobis domine in vero iudicio fecisti
150 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 203r – I with *Prophet* – *Dominica XXI intr[oitus]*
In voluntate tua domine universa sunt posita
160 x 75 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 208r – S with *Prophet* – *Dominica XXII intr[oitus]*
Si iniquitates observaveris domine domine quis sustinebit
150 x 110 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 213r – D with ornamental initial – *Dom. XXIII* (fol. 212v)
Dicit dominus ego cogito cogitationes pacis et non afflictionis
145 x 150 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 217r = 216 ink = 219 crayon – E: red and blue parted initial – *In rogationibus ad
iniciu[m] processionis d[icitu]r h[oc] ant.*
Exurge domine adiua nos et libera nos propter nomen tuum
NB Space (1 stave and 1 text l.) left for initial, parted initial supplied later

III. Liturgical Analysis

From Easter Sunday (fol. i verso) until fol. 90v the content is standard to the *Temporale*;

fols. 91r–95v contains the Litany. Fol. 96r contains a supplication/prayer for the priest offering incense and bread to the Lord: *Sacerdotes incensum domini et panes offerunt deo et ideo sanctierunt deo suo et non pollutent nomen eius*

Fol. 96v is the full-page illumination for the feast of Corpus Christi, with the introit ending on fol. 97r. Fol. 101v is the full-page historiated initial for the feast of Trinity Sunday, with the introit ending on fol. 102r. This is problematic as these two major feasts are in the wrong liturgical order: Trinity Sunday should precede Corpus Christi. In 2016, the Berlin Gradual was examined and a codicological analysis suggested that the binding

was contemporary with the manuscript.¹⁷¹ The anomaly in the order of these two feasts may instead be evidence of a restructuring that occurred after the illuminations were painted, ca. 1420 to ca. 1445. This restructuring may have impacted the order of the quires, if they were rearranged when the volume was rebacked in modern times.

¹⁷¹ This examination was undertaken by Dr. Stella Panayotova, Keeper of Manuscripts and Printed Books, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, and the present author over four days in April 2016.

In the previous chapter only a fraction of the complex iconographic programme, present in the Berlin Gradual, was considered within the context of Camaldolese spirituality and history, and in relation to other related illuminated manuscripts, frescoes and panel paintings. In this chapter, a similar approach will be taken with another intact volume, one which Giordana Mariani Canova has previously suggested is connected to the San Mattia series: the so-called ‘Milan Gradual.’¹ Although this author agrees with Mariani Canova’s assertion that these two volumes are linked, in this chapter, her idea will be probed more thoroughly through an in-depth investigation of the Milan Gradual’s codicology and liturgical contents, done for the first time herein. Unlike the Berlin Gradual—which has codicological and liturgical features that link it directly with both San Mattia and Venice—the Milan Gradual possesses no such evidence. In light of the lacuna, other facets of the manuscript will become the focal point of the analysis, in particular the previous scholarship on the codex beginning with Giordana Mariani Canova’s catalogue entry where she first raises the possibility that the Milan and Berlin Graduals are connected. This is followed by a more focused consideration of the Italian literature on the libraries at San Michele and by extension San Mattia, as an attempt to possibly trace the journey of the Milan Gradual from Venice. In addition to the literature, the codicology of the manuscript will also be scrutinized and compared with that of the Berlin volume: the measurements of the parchment, initials, and music staves. The

¹ This manuscript has previously, in the literature, been referred to simply as “a gradual.” For the purposes of this thesis, it shall be called the ‘Milan Gradual.’ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988).

measurements may serve to be especially helpful for understanding the potential relationship between the two graduals.

The following portion of the chapter will focus on particular iconographic elements that lend strong support for a Camaldolese origin beginning on the opening folio of an initial A for the First Sunday of Advent (see Fig. 3). Key iconographic elements on this page include: the Camaldolese monastic emblem, a Madonna of Humility in a gold mantle, and various bust portraits of Church Fathers and monastic reformers, including St. Romuald, St. Benedict, and St. Francis. These features will be probed as potential signifiers of veiled monastic self-messaging incorporated into the Milan Gradual—and the San Mattia series more broadly—as a means of constructing their self-identity.

In addition to the monastic corporate iconography of the opening page, the Milan Gradual also contains another folio that presents unusual iconography: an initial D with the *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass (see Fig. 5). Firstly, Cortese has included a group of secular figures, most probably donors. While the presence of donors and patrons in devotional materials is not unusual in and of itself, these figures have been intimately inserted into the biblical scene and are sharing the sacred space with the Holy Family. This will be explored within the context of Camaldolese history, particularly the financial and patronal origins of San Mattia. Another unconventional iconographic element, on this folio, is the depiction of the Virgin bathing the Christ Child. Generally in the infant bathing narrative, Christ is washed by midwives while the Virgin convalesces after the birth. Instead, in the Milan Gradual *Nativity*, she is leaning over a wooden washtub bathing the baby herself. This iconographic choice will be investigated within the literary

and visual history of the infant bathing narrative and will then be considered within the framework of Camaldolese spirituality more generally.

I. A Second (?) Intact Manuscript & its Contents

The Milan Gradual contains the liturgical material for the period from the first Sunday of Advent until the First Sunday of Lent, and as with the Berlin Gradual the major feasts are accompanied by lavish and large historiated initials with Christological scenes.

Additionally, there are ten initials with prophet portraits and six decorated initials consisting of colourful foliate designs. The illuminated programme has been attributed to Cristoforo Cortese and his workshop.² This manuscript, like the Berlin Gradual, remains intact and although it has suffered damage over time the illuminations remain largely in good condition, although they are not as pristine as those in the Berlin volume. The nineteenth-century binding of the Milan Gradual does not preserve any evidence as to the original provenance. Giordana Mariani Canova first suggested a link between these two volumes in 1988 when she noted that the liturgical content of the Milan Gradual precedes that of the Berlin Gradual and that they shared codicological features.³ Mariani Canova listed the dimensions of the manuscript as 590 × 410 mm.⁴ During an in-depth examination of the Milan Gradual this author found that the precise measurements were 600 × 420 mm.⁵ These measurements are close to those of Mariani Canova but what is more important to note is that these dimensions are identical to those of the Berlin Gradual.⁶

Additional codicological information further connects these two manuscripts, as the measurements of the ruled spaces on the parchment are 435 × 293 mm for the Berlin

² Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 232.

³ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 233.

⁴ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 232.

⁵ The examination of the Milan Gradual by this author took place in November 2016. The full details are found in the Catalogue Entry at the end of this chapter.

⁶ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 235.

Gradual and 430 × 290 mm for the Milan manuscript. The stave heights for both manuscripts are identical: 40 mm, as is the space between the staves: 35 mm. The height of the text line is also the same: 13 mm, with the space between the text lines measuring: 62 mm. These measurements confirm that the two volumes were made as parts of the same series.

The liturgical contents of the two graduals also indicate that they were originally part of the same set, as Mariani Canova posits. Her argument is that the Berlin Gradual is the fourth volume—based on the *fenestra* label—and that this numbering corresponds to the contents, which are for the latter half of the liturgical year.⁷ Therefore, the Milan Gradual must come before the Berlin manuscript based on its liturgical contents.⁸

Additionally, there may be a bibliographical trace for these two manuscripts that could link them back to the Murano house. In 1791, French soldiers are thought to have entered San Mattia, as part of Napoleon's monastic closure campaign, and removed many of the codices (both printed books and manuscripts), some of which arrived in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris between 1797 and 1798. After the fall of Napoleon, the manuscripts with a Venetian provenance were eventually returned to the Austrian delegation in 1815 and so the recovered volumes ended up at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice.⁹ According to Edoardo Barbieri the group of books taken from San Mattia should have included: 'Due tomi corali in fol. atlantico, con pitture e miniature a oro d'insigne

⁷ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 234.

⁸ Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), p. 232.

⁹ E. Barbieri, 'Produrre, Conservare, Distruggere: Per una Storia dei Libri e della Biblioteca di S. Mattia di Murano,' *Ateneo Veneto* (1997), pp. 13–55 (at p. 43, n. 129).

artefice.’¹⁰ While it cannot be known for certain, the two large ‘tomi corali’ (choral tomes) may likely have been the Berlin and Milan Graduals, especially as the description refers to two ‘atlantico’ (large format) books with paintings and gold of eminent workmanship.

Although this could be a promising link there are concerns that need to be considered such as the fact that there is no mention of a volume—or volumes—from which the individual cuttings may have come. A second issue is that these two large volumes are not, nor have they ever been in the possession of the Marciana. Moreover, if they initially arrived at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, there does not appear to be a record of them in that institution either.¹¹ Whether or not the inventory of books appropriated by the French from San Mattia in 1791 does refer to the Berlin and Milan volumes, at the very least this source indicates that there were two large choir books in the possession of San Mattia that were removed.

The Milan Gradual shows evidence of belonging to the Camaldolese order and may have functioned as a liturgical counterpart to the manuscript in Berlin.¹² The Milan Gradual contains six large-scale historiated initials, of varying sizes, depicting scenes from the life of Christ, and each pertaining to a different liturgical feast. The iconography of most of these initials closely follows the common subject matter associated with those specific Christological events, such as the *Adoration of the Magi* (see Fig. 59) and an initial P with the *Circumcision* (Fig. 129). However, there are also iconographic elements that invite a closer examination, such as the inclusion of monastic bust portraiture, the

¹⁰ Barbieri (1997), pp. 43–44, n. 134; L. Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Vol. II (Imprimerie Nationale: Paris, 1875), pp. 33–36.

¹¹ Delisle (1874), pp. 33–36.

¹² Mariani Canova in Boskovits (1988), pp. 233–234.

depiction of figures that may be lay patrons, and unconventional Marian imagery. These deliberate iconographic choices, made by Cortese, were likely the result of specific requests from the monks based on their specific spiritual needs.

II. Folio 1r: A Trove of Camaldolese Identity & Ideology

On fol. 1r (See fig. 3) is a historiated initial A for the Mass celebrated on the first Sunday in *Advent*. Inside the initial, God the Father is presenting the Christ Child to a crowd of observers below, which includes a bishop wearing a papal crown. Cortese has followed the example found in the reconstructed volume from the series made for San Michele, attributed to Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci (Fig. 130).¹³ In the lower right margin of the Milan *Advent*, Cortese has prominently placed the emblem of the Camaldolese order, which consists of two doves, one on either side of a burnished gold chalice (Fig. 131). The emblem functions in a two-fold capacity: firstly, it serves as a mark of Camaldolese ownership of the manuscript, and secondly it has deep monastic symbolic value. The seal conveys the order's foundational ideas about monastic life and Christian worship as the two doves represent the two paths of monastic life: eremitic (contemplative) and cenobitic (active). The chalice symbolizes the single source from which both types of monks draw their spiritual sustenance: Christ. It is also a Eucharistic allusion.¹⁴

Camaldolese institutions, most notably Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, possess firm tendencies towards the affirmation of their own identity within the production of images and the development of their unique visual culture.¹⁵ At the base of this Camaldolese visual culture is the fundamental importance of the Word and Sacred texts, the Eucharistic Mystery, the Psalter, and contemplation as the vehicle for

¹³ Levi D'Ancona lists the illuminator of this cutting as the 'Master of Songs,' however, Gaudenz Freuler believes that it was painted by Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci. Levi D'Ancona, (1993); Freuler, in Kanter et al. (1994). London, Victoria & Albert Museum, MS 434 (I.1). Levi D'Ancona (1993).

¹⁴ G. Cacciamani, 'Camaldoli,' in G. Pelliccia and G. Rocca, eds., *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* vols. 1–3 (Edizioni Paoline: Rome, 1974), col. 1726–1728.

¹⁵ R. Melis, 'Lorenzo Monaco, Santa Maria degli Angeli and the Camaldolese Visual Culture,' in Tartuferi and Parenti (2006), pp. 33–38 (at p. 36).

asceticism and elevation towards spiritual perfection.¹⁶ Although these motifs and themes are not unique to the Camaldolese, they serve as the crucial underpinning of their religious practices, and form the basis for the visual culture of the order. While Santa Maria degli Angeli is the most well-known Camaldolese house, the Venetian monasteries of San Michele and San Mattia would have also valued these same principles of religious practice and therefore these visual themes would have also likely held deep significance for the monks of those houses. Thus, it is reasonable that the Venetian monasteries shared the same spiritual ideologies concerning images and their uses.

For the Camaldolese, as with many Christian monastic groups, the Word Incarnate is a vital concept—at the core of their belief system. The mystery of the Incarnation provided a spiritual focal point for all of the Camaldolese’s religious endeavours: ‘Whatever the individual monks or the community may add to their spiritual and ascetical practice...it must serve to lead them more deeply into the mystery of God’s Word made flesh in human history, of Christ crucified and risen...’¹⁷ It would, thus, seem logical that the monks wanted images that would enable them to meditate upon this profound spiritual idea. In the bas-de-page of the Milan *Advent* folio, there is a depiction of the Virgin and Child that may have been intended to communicate certain ideas about the Word Incarnate. Running along the bottom of the folio is an ornate collection of multi-coloured acanthus leaves, embellished with mosaic gold detail. Mosaic gold is an

¹⁶ Melis (2006), p. 36.

¹⁷ T. Matus, trans., *The Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of Saint Benedict. The Constitutions and Declarations to the Rule of Saint Benedict*. Ch. 4, 94.

imitation gold pigment that is composed of an artificial tin sulphide and is stable enough to be unaffected by light or other compounds.¹⁸

In the centre of this kaleidoscopic ornamentation is a quatrefoil medallion, which somewhat resembles Byzantine-style metalwork. Contained within this frame is a Madonna of Humility who affectionately embraces the Christ Child sitting on her lap (Fig. 132). Cortese has not painted Mary in her conventional blue mantle but instead has rendered her in a mantle of mosaic gold that envelops her entire body, revealing only a simple tunic beneath. It has been speculated that mosaic gold was first used in Europe in the thirteenth century and references to this material are common in fifteenth-century technical painting treatises.¹⁹ Although the Virgin could be depicted in other colours, the pigment traditionally used for her garment was blue, which has been considered the hue most appropriate for Mary since the twelfth century.²⁰ This is the only instance—in the Milan Gradual (or in any of the other San Mattia material)—where the Virgin is represented in a mantle of gold, thus clearly indicating that this was a conscious artistic choice.²¹ It also raises questions about the possible intention behind such a lavish iconographic decision: was Cortese trying to convey a message about the Virgin's purpose in this image? Could he have been trying to stimulate a particular spiritual experience for the monks through this representation?

¹⁸ J. L. Ross, 'A Note on the Use of Mosaic Gold,' *Studies in Conservation* 18, 4 (1973), pp. 174–176 (at p. 175).

¹⁹ D. V. Thompson, *The Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting* (Dover Publications: New York, 1956), p. 182.

²⁰ D. Jackson, 'Colour and Meaning,' in Panayotova (2016), pp. 345–375 (at p. 345).

²¹ On fol. 40r, Cortese has depicted the Virgin in a tunic of mosaic gold but her mantle overtop is blue. This initial is discussed in depth later in this chapter.

One possibility may be that the intention was to try and create a visual link between the Virgin and other aspects of the initial, such as the burnished gold chalice of the Camaldolese emblem in the lower right margin. Within Camaldolese visual culture the Word Incarnate was portrayed mainly as the holy child with the Virgin.²² The Virgin's body has often been perceived as a vessel, a container for the incarnation of God. The term 'vessel' tends to have an 'internal' connotation as it is technically defined as 'a hollow container,'²³ and thus calls to mind the idea of something being inside of something else. The ideology of Virgin-as-vessel has been connected to different icons such as the *Nikopoia* and *Sedes sapientiae* (Seat of Wisdom), wherein the Virgin is honoured for her role as the God Bearer.²⁴ The term 'seat' tends to have an 'external' connotation as its various definitions link it with physical objects such as chairs, stools, and other means of resting one's body.²⁵ Despite the 'internal'/'external' dichotomy of these two terms, I would posit that, in the context of this argument, they are not mutually exclusive and that the interior and exterior of the Virgin's body are both vessel and seat for the Christ Child. This idea, however, reduces the Virgin to merely an object that performs a function and she is not to be understood as the maternal, human mother of God, but rather as the means by which he became flesh.

Much like the burnished gold chalice of the Camaldolese emblem, which is intended to be both a container for the Word of God and for the wine (blood) of the Eucharist, the Virgin's body encompassed the word made flesh; her body was a

²² Melis (2006), p. 36.

²³ This is the first definition listed in the Oxford English Dictionary.

²⁴ I. Forsyth, *Throne of Wisdom. Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1972), p. 24.

²⁵ See Oxford English Dictionary for definition of 'seat.'

‘Container of the Uncontainable.’²⁶ In this way, Mary’s gold-clad body could be viewed as a chalice that contained the Word of God Incarnate and the literal blood of Christ as his body was made flesh in her womb. During her pregnancy, the Virgin’s body functioned like a throne for the second person of the Trinity: the Logos, wisdom itself.²⁷ If Mary’s body could be a throne, why then not also a chalice? Mary’s physical motherhood was already linked to the Eucharist, particularly through the narrative of the Presentation at the Temple, for which the corresponding text and images served to reinforce this connection.²⁸ By using gold for both the emblem’s chalice and the Virgin’s mantle, Cortese has created visual link between these two features as they mirror one another, and each approximates the other in shape and colour.

Yet, the Madonna of Humility trope is significant on another level as it alludes to a future Christological event. The opening folio is not the only page in the Milan Gradual on which a Madonna of Humility can be found. Cortese has painted one in the *Adoration of the Magi* (see Fig. 59) and in the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (see Fig. 4). In the *Adoration of the Magi*, Cortese has depicted the Virgin seated on a rock, cradling the swaddled baby tenderly against her cheek, while the Magi look on. Images of the Madonna of Humility contain allusions to Christ’s Passion, and thus foreshadow the

²⁶ This term is the English translation of the Greek ‘Chora tou Achoretou’ which is a Byzantine icon. J. Erdeljian, *Chosen Places: Constructing New Jerusalem in Slavia Orthodoxa* (Brill: Leiden, 2017), p. 140.

²⁷ S. M. Guérin, “‘Tears of Compunction’ French Gothic Ivories in Devotional Practice,” PhD diss. (University of Toronto, 2009), p. 8; Forsyth (1972), p. 16

²⁸ Beth Williamson discusses in depth the historical and visual relationship between the text and images of the Presentation and the Virgin’s motherhood as Eucharistic symbol. B. Williamson, ‘The Virgin Lactans and the Madonna of Humility in Italy, Metz, and Avignon in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries,’ PhD diss. (Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1996), pp. 202–203.

Crucifixion.²⁹ This is also true of Nativity scenes in which a Madonna of this type is present, specifically when the Child is held in Mary's arms or lies naked on her lap.³⁰ This is precisely the type of Madonna that Cortese has painted in the *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass, with the baby lying against the Virgin's knee wearing only a pale pink tunic below his waist, arms folded across his chest. Despite the joyful nature of this scene, there is an allusion to Christ's future sacrifice, and in a similar manner, the inclusion of a Madonna of Humility in the bas-de-page of the *Advent* folio could have been intended to create a mental juxtaposition between the beginning of the season leading up to Christ's birth and his eventual death on the cross.

Another possible interpretation for the Madonna of Humility's presence in the Milan *Advent* folio is as a metaphor for the relationship between the faithful and the Church. Several metaphors are used to explore the relationship between Christ and the Church, such as the one centred on Christ as the head of the Church, and the Husband as the head of the Wife.³¹ In the context of this metaphor, Christ is granted a dominant role—as the Husband—with dominion over his wife—the Church: 'Therefore as the church is subject to Christ: so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things.'³² The 'Church' is understood to be the individuals that comprise the congregation, and while the exploration of the dynamic between Christ and his followers is outside the scope of this thesis what is important to note is that the Church (the faithful) is submissive to

²⁹ G. Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst, Band I: Inkarnation – Kindheit – Taufe – Versuchung – Verklärung – Wirken und Wunder Christi* (Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn: Gütersloh, 1966), p. 93.

³⁰ Schiller (1966), p. 93.

³¹ 'Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of his body.' Ephesians 5:23.

³² Ephesians 5:24.

Christ.³³ The Madonna of Humility is not *more* of a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the Church, but rather, as posited here, a *different* one. The emphasis in the Madonna of Humility trope centres on her as ‘mother’ not as ‘wife.’

While, the precise iconographic origins of the Madonna of Humility are unclear there is speculation that it arose in the circles of the Italian painter Simone Martini and reflected a new emotional dynamic between mother and child.³⁴ It was a powerful image that existed in a variety of formats and was therefore suitable for numerous functions, and had a variety of associations.³⁵ The close relationship between Mary and the Christ Child was more than the expression of a maternal bond or of emergent artistic style. At a deeper level of meaning the exchanged looks, the mother’s embrace, and the Child’s blessing of his mother are all allusions to the union of Christ and the Church since from the thirteenth century Mary was often viewed as a metaphor for the Church, itself.³⁶ In the Camaldolese constitutions, the monks are instructed to contemplate Mary’s inseparable union with Christ’s saving works. Statute 83 reads: ‘Monks too, in union with the Church, venerate Mary with the devotion of sons, as their fathers did before them.’³⁷ For the Camaldolese,

³³ For a deeper study of the ‘Church as submissive wife’ discussion, see: A. Rebecca Scolevåg, ‘Marriage Symbolism and Social Reality in the New Testament Husbands and Wives, Christ and the Church,’ in L. C. Engh, ed., *The Symbolism of Marriage in Early Christianity and the Latin Middle Ages* (Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 91–110.

³⁴ M. Meiss, ‘Madonna of Humility,’ in M. Meiss, ed., *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1951), pp. 132–165 (at p. 147). The earliest dated example is by Bartolomeo da Camogli from 1346 in the Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo and is inscribed: ‘N[ost]ra D[on]na de Humilitate.’ B. Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility: Development, Dissemination and Reception, c. 1340–1400* (The Boydell Press: Woodbridge, 2009), p. 15.

³⁵ Williamson (2009), p. 149.

³⁶ Schiller (1966), p. 58.

³⁷ Matus, *The Constitutions and Declarations to the Rule of Saint Benedict*. Ch. 3. 83.

Mary is both Church and Mother. The Madonna of Humility is thus an ideal symbolic representation of their spiritual understanding of her.

III. Monastic Portraiture

While the visually powerful Madonna of Humility motif may have been intended to provoke deeper spiritual contemplation by the monks at San Mattia, the presence of monastic bust portraits was likely to have been intended to communicate specific ideas about Camaldolese identity and place within the larger Benedictine history. The Milan Gradual contains three initials for the Nativity cycle: fol. 40r is an initial D with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass (see Fig. 5);³⁸ fol. 43r is an initial L with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Morning Mass (Fig. 133);³⁹ and fol. 47v, is an initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (see Fig. 4).⁴⁰ This last initial is the most ornate of all three Nativity images and here Cortese has used the entirety of the parchment, leaving no space empty or unadorned. Inside of the initial, he has painted the Virgin and St. Joseph kneeling just outside of the cave where Christ was born. The Virgin sits on the ground—a Madonna of Humility type—with the baby lying across her lap, golden rays emanating from his entire body. Angels gather in prayer and animals graze behind. The entire initial is composed of lush jewel toned acanthus leaves with other various decorative motives functioning as symbolic embellishments. Filling the entire bas-de-page and the right margin are seven star-shaped medallions, each one containing a bust portrait of a significant member of the Latin Church. From counter-clockwise beginning on the bottom left corner, the figures are: St. Gregory the Great (Fig. 134), St. Romuald (Fig. 135), St. Jerome (Fig. 136), St. Benedict (Fig. 137), St. Ambrose (Fig. 138), St.

³⁸ ‘Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.’ M. Soldi and A. M. Triacca, eds., *Missale Romanum. Editio Princeps* (1570) (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican City, 1998), p. 21

³⁹ ‘Lux fulgebit hodie super nos: quia natus est nobis Dominus...’ Soldi and Triacca (1998), p. 22.

⁴⁰ ‘Puer natus est nobis...’ Soldi and Triacca (1998), p. 24.

Bernard (Fig. 139) and St. Augustine (Fig. 140). In the upper left corner, Cortese has added an eighth medallion with St. Francis (Fig. 141). Four Church Fathers are alternated with four founders of different reformed monastic orders: Camaldolese, Benedictine, Cistercian, and Franciscan.

By having Cortese include the Church Fathers with founders of various branches of Christian monasticism, the monks of San Mattia may have been trying to express their sense of identity—as Camaldolese—within the Benedictine lineage and within Christianity, more generally. In this image, St. Romuald functions metonymically as he represents the entirety of the Camaldolese order. Unlike in other illuminations from the San Mattia choir books series—specifically the corpus of cuttings—and auxiliary material, such as the missal belonging to San Michele,⁴¹ in the Milan *Nativity* image, only St. Romuald is depicted in the white habit of the Camaldolese order. As mentioned earlier, in several instances both St. Romuald and St. Benedict are rendered in the white robe, which has been suggested indicates that St. Benedict sanctioned the reform branch of the Camaldolese and perhaps even shifted his spiritual allegiances to them.⁴² The depiction of St. Benedict in the white robe of the Camaldolese order is not the only example of sacred figures being rendered in this way. The *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece, painted by Lorenzo Monaco in 1413 for Santa Maria degli Angeli, conveys the significance of this approach to the Camaldolese in a most obvious way. In addition to St. Romuald and St. Benedict, both of whom flank the central panel, the Virgin is also wearing a voluminous white garment as she receives her crown from Christ (Fig. 142).

⁴¹ London, British Library, C.24.f.8.

⁴² Bent (2006), p. 406.

One could suggest that, just as with St. Benedict, by depicting the Virgin in a white robe, Lorenzo Monaco was also conveying the notion that the Virgin sanctified the Camaldolese order by wearing white. By depicting both St. Romuald and St. Benedict in white robes and the Virgin, Lorenzo Monaco has created a visual triangulation amongst these figures, who each function metonymically: St. Romuald represents the Camaldolese order, St. Benedict represents Benedictine monastic more broadly, and the Virgin symbolizes Christianity vis-à-vis her direct relationship with Christ. The use of the white robe as a marker of holy sanctification appears to have been an important aspect of Camaldolese visual culture, and although the Virgin is not depicted in the white habit in any of the San Mattia material, she is rendered in a gold mantle, which was discussed at length earlier. Thus, for the Camaldolese it would seem that looking at depictions of various sacred figures, depicted in ways that mirrored their own physical appearance, played a role in their spiritual practices. Returning to the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass, through the layout of this specific corporate iconography, Cortese has embedded the Camaldolese into the larger narrative of Christian monastic history, creating an image that would encourage the Camaldolese viewers to contemplate their monastic heritage. Since this application of monastic corporate iconography occurs on such an important folio, the monks at San Mattia appear to have been concerned about understanding—and communicating—their place within Benedictine monastic history to themselves. In the context of the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass, the presence of the monastic bust portraits is not primarily for liturgical purposes but rather for spiritual ones as the monks of San Mattia wanted to see their monastic identity reflected back to them from within the larger framework of Christian history.

The desire to affirm their sense of identity within larger contexts can be seen in many works produced for Camaldolese institutions, namely Santa Maria degli Angeli. A key example is Lorenzo Monaco's *Coronation* altarpiece, which functioned like a '...large liturgical "machine" conceived mainly for the monastery's needs and also to symbolize the role of the Camaldolese monks within the social and urban context.'⁴³ Yet, while the monks at San Mattia likely looked to their Florentine house as a model for the conception and use of images, they seemed more concerned with articulating their sense of identity within the context of monastic historical time and not within a social or urban context. Each monastery had its own way of depicting the visual dynamic between St. Benedict and their founding saint—each wanting to convey different ideas about this dynamic. In the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli there is a cutting that depicts St. Benedict enthroned surrounded by various saints and monastic figures (Fig. 143).⁴⁴ Painted by Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci to open the introit for the Mass of St. Benedict's feast day on 21 March, the seated saint wears the white, voluminous robe of the Camaldolese order. Don Silvestro also painted a historiated initial O with St. Romuald enthroned for the opening introit of St. Romuald's feast on 19 June (Fig. 144).⁴⁵ Much like St. Benedict, St. Romuald sits on an elaborate, semi-enclosed raised throne surrounded by a bishop, perhaps St. Augustine, and three monastic saints: John Gualbert, Maurus and Placidus, all of whom wear the Camaldolese habit. These two images—

⁴³ A. de Vries and V. M. Schmidt, 'The Coronation of the Virgin for the Main Altar of Santa Maria degli Angeli: Iconography and Purpose,' in A. Tartuferi and D. Parenti (2006), pp. 39–43 (at p. 42).

⁴⁴ Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian Ms 35 (B 17, 094) (Corale 2, fol. 56v; prov. Santa Maria degli Angeli). Kanter et al. (1994), p. 133, Fig. 48.

⁴⁵ London, British Library, Add. MS. 37472 (3). (Corale 2, fol. 90r; prov. Santa Maria degli Angeli). Kanter et al. (1994), no. 16d.

found in the same volume from the Florentine series—would have aided in the Camaldolese’s endeavour to create visual connections between their founder and St. Benedict.

San Mattia’s approach to conveying the relationship between St. Benedict and St. Romuald varied from that of Santa Maria degli Angeli. Returning to the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass, the bust portrait of St. Romuald shows him wearing the white habit of his order whereas the portrait of St. Benedict, located two medallions over, depicts him in a black robe with a pale blue cope over his shoulders (see Fig 137). There is no doubt that this is St. Benedict, as he holds his crozier and what is presumably a copy of the *Regula Benedicti* in his right hand. Additionally, his name is written in the medallion. In Lorenzo Monaco’s *Coronation* altarpiece (see Fig. 84), and in the Florentine images (see Fig. 143 & 144), it is evident that the artists wanted to create a visual, and thus spiritual, unity between St. Benedict and St. Romuald. In the Milan image, it appears that Cortese wanted to emphasize the distinction between these two figures—very likely at the behest of the monks of San Mattia. This need to stress the individuation of St. Romuald and St. Benedict might have stemmed from the San Mattia monks wanting to express their unique Camaldolese identity within the larger Benedictine monastic family and history. The Venetian brothers could have wanted to show themselves as being a separate monastic entity, distinct from—yet still connected to—their origins in Benedictine monasticism.

The visual unity within the portrait busts of the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (see Figs. 134–141) is fostered by Cortese’s stylistic design of the medallions themselves. The complex configuration of intricate ‘metalwork’ stylized through the use

of gold lines that weave and intersect create the illusion that all the medallions are linked, like a chain. This creates a stronger visual sense that these monastic and mendicant reformers, as well as the Church Fathers, are bound together through time. Fra Angelico used a similar technique in the *Crucifixion* fresco in the Chapter Room at San Marco in Florence (Fig. 145). Along the bottom of the lunette, Fra Angelico painted seventeen roundels, each one containing a bust portrait of an important Dominican figure. The central roundel contains an image of St. Dominic who holds a vine that curls out left and right and unites the eight roundels on either side (Fig. 146).⁴⁶ Arguably, Fra Angelico's aim is the same as that of Cortese: to unify the lineage of the monastic order, in this case, the Dominicans.

The combination of figures in the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass border, placed adjacent to the *Nativity* scene in the initial, also works as a means of conveying the demarcation of eras in historical and sacred time—eras that would have held great spiritual significance for Camaldolese communities of the early fifteenth century. Cortese achieves this by including different iconographic features that represent these spiritual periods. The initial P is nested within a thin pale blue frame. In three of the four corners, Cortese has painted Old Testament prophets—identifiable by their beards, nimbi, and scrolls (Fig. 147). These figures would represent the time before Christ. Perching on the edges of the initial, these prophets watch over the scene of the Nativity—an event that signals that the new phase of God's plan for humanity has begun with the arrival of the Saviour and the transition from the Old to the New Testament. Finally, the bust portraits in the bas-de-page and right margin designate further development of

⁴⁶ W. Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1993), p. 168.

Christianity by depicting the men who founded various monastic movements, such as Benedictine monasticism and subsequent reforms.

The Camaldolese have always been concerned with spiritual threads that run through their history and tie together the particulars of time and space.⁴⁷ The Camaldolese—like other orders—were devoted to understanding how the past and future are connected, as indicated in their Constitutions and Declarations: ‘...it [the monks’ spiritual and ascetical practice] must serve to lead them more deeply into the Mystery of God’s Word made flesh in human history, so that they may all look forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing.’⁴⁸ By having the portrait busts on the same folio as a scene of the ‘birth’ of Christianity, it may be that the monks at San Mattia wanted to link themselves with this pivotal moment in Christian history. In the same way that Christ’s birth is the shift from the Old Testament to the New Covenant, the reform branches of the Camaldolese, the Cistercian, and the Franciscan orders may similarly function as a ‘new’ phase in Benedictine monasticism—a shift from an older form of monastic practice to newer ones.

In addition to this layering of iconographic meaning, it is also significant that St. Romuald has been given the place of pride in the centre medallion in the bas-de-page of the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass. As previously discussed, in the Milan *Advent* initial, Cortese has rendered the Virgin and Child in the centre medallion of the bas-de-page, indicating their significance. The Virgin and Child are also in the centre

⁴⁷ T. Matus and R. Hale, ‘The Camaldolese in Dialogue: Ecumenical and Interfaith Themes in the History of the Camaldolese Benedictine,’ in Belisle (2002), pp. 157–168 (at p. 160).

⁴⁸ Matus, Ch. 4, no. 94; The Rule of Saint Benedict (49, 7), T. Fry, ed., *The Rule of St. Benedict in English* (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville, 1982).

medallion in the bas-de-page of the *Mission of the Apostles*, the full-page illumination in the Wildenstein Collection in Paris (Fig. 148).⁴⁹ Thus, the Camaldolese's reverence for the Virgin and Child is clearly evident within the San Mattia material, therefore the decision to put St. Romuald in the centre medallion of the Nativity for the Christmas Day Mass is equally as significant, and also likely intended to express a certain ideology. From the location of St. Romuald's portrait in the bas-de-page, the most obvious indication is that Cortese is communicating the founding saint's importance as the spiritual father of the order. A less obvious message could concern his placement under the Nativity, which might be so as to convey the idea that both St. Romuald and Mary 'laboured' to bring about a new phase of God's plan. Mary, through her physical labour and birth of Christ and St. Romuald through his spiritual labour, which resulted in the founding of the new monastic order. Just as the Virgin's body has historically been perceived as a vessel for the incarnation of God's wisdom,⁵⁰ St. Romuald was, in many ways, a vessel for this new stage of Benedictine monastic practice.

The varied array of saints present in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass is also significant. Although the Camaldolese developed, over time, a rich visual culture, they appear to have been somewhat hesitant about expanding their range of visual veneration. The Camaldolese figurative concept is distinguished by the 'rigorous' simplicity of the portrayal.⁵¹ They did not seek to venerate lavish images in the early days of their foundation.⁵² This 'simplicity' may have its roots in St. Romuald's strict commitment to ascetic modesty. Due to this, the early Camaldolese monks relied on an

⁴⁹ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6030. Levi D'Ancona (1970), pl. IV

⁵⁰ Forsyth (1972), p. 24.

⁵¹ Melis (2006), p. 36.

⁵² Melis (2006), p. 39.

oral tradition for passing on foundation myths and legends, which they believed fostered a more personal approach. As a result, they did not produce or own any books until the mid-eleventh century.⁵³ Additionally, the Camaldolese environment did not allow for liturgical and devotional ‘digressions.’⁵⁴ This limitation would have presumably extended to images used in worship. Roberta Melis notes that the development of veneration for saints and other blessed figures occurred ‘much later’ and that the number of additional figures venerated was extremely low when compared with other orders and congregations.⁵⁵ Melis does not provide a date for when this shift of saintly veneration occurred but based on the Florentine choir books, the Camaldolese were clearly venerating numerous saints and blessed figures by at least the late fourteenth century, but possibly earlier.⁵⁶ The Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (see Fig. 4), the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli, and Lorenzo Monaco’s *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece (see Fig. 84) are obvious examples of the expanded variety of saints deemed important to the Camaldolese order, particularly to San Mattia and Santa Maria degli Angeli.

A meaningful aspect of the use of corporate iconography in the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass is the representation of different monastic and mendicant orders. By having the founders of disparate reform groups in the medallions, Cortese has made present the ‘essence’ of each of those orders—with the founder functioning metonymically. When discussing the *Crucifixion* fresco at San Marco in Florence,

⁵³ Bent (2006), p. 25.

⁵⁴ Melis (2006), p. 36.

⁵⁵ Melis (2006), p. 36.

⁵⁶ Several of the volumes belonging to the Florentine series are dated: Corale 2 is dated 1370, Corale 5 is dated 1394 and Corale 1 is dated 1396, among others. For a full list of volumes and dates see: Levi D’Ancona (1994), pp. 88–101.

William Hood has noted that, while the major scene in any Chapter House is the Crucifixion, the spirit of the representation can vary greatly, and that Fra Angelico has adapted the San Marco iconography to extremely specialized purposes.⁵⁷ Here, he has combined two different kinds of Crucifixion scenes: the ‘populous’ type and the ‘Mendicant’ type.⁵⁸ Fra Angelico has painted three different groups of figures inserted amongst the three crosses, most prominently is St. Dominic kneeling with arms open in front of Christ’s cross. He has also included other monastic saints such as St. Benedict and St. Romuald. Thus, although Fra Angelico had to work within the basic frame of the standard image, in this case the Crucifixion, he has added particular individuals in order to create a custom design—one that conveys specific and meaningful messages for the Dominicans at San Marco. In the exact same way, Cortese has used standard bust portraits of various religious figures and combined them in the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass in a profoundly consequential way for the monks at San Mattia to meditate upon during the celebration of this Nativity Mass.

The complex corporate iconography of the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass is a compelling parallel to the Dominican Observant frescoes at San Marco, especially as the frescoes date to ca. 1438–1450, which is likely after the production of the Milan Gradual. The dating for the Milan Gradual—discussed in Ch. 1—is based on stylistic similarities between other dated works of Cortese and those of his contemporaries. The Milan Gradual was likely painted in the early decades of the fifteenth century, and therefore represents examples of early Quattrocento Venetian

⁵⁷ Hood (1993), p. 168.

⁵⁸ The ‘populous’ type features crowds of soldiers and other witnesses whose presences have their roots in the Gospel accounts. The ‘Mendicant’ type has saints mingled with the biblical witnesses at the Crucifixion. Hood (1993), pp. 169, 184.

monastic iconography. While there is no evidence to suggest that Fra Angelico was influenced directly by the Milan Gradual, the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass may potentially be a precursor to the types of corporate iconography used by reform monastics in later decades—in particular the interlinking medallion motif.

IV. An Apocryphal Narrative: The Bathing of the Christ Child

In addition to the *Nativity* Christmas Day Mass, the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass also contains unusual iconography that warrants a closer examination. The scene, contained within an initial D (see Fig. 5), depicts the Virgin gently bathing the nimbed Christ Child in a large round wooden basin. She gazes down at the baby almost unaware of the figures and landscape around her, again reinforcing the maternal bond seen previously in the various Madonna of Humility motifs in other folios in the Milan Gradual. Standing beside the Virgin is St. Joseph, looking upward with his hands together in prayer. In the background is a rocky, barren landscape, composed of mainly yellow and brown pigments with minimal foliage—trees and some grass. While the other two *Nativity* initials depict fairly standardized iconography for those particular narratives, the *Nativity* for the Midnight Mass is remarkable because of the way in which Cortese has depicted the subject matter. It is clear that Cortese did not use Don Silvestro's version of an initial D with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass, which was made for the San Michele choir books (Fig. 149).⁵⁹ Therefore, one must look elsewhere for possible iconographic sources for the Milan *Nativity* initial.

When infant bathing iconography is incorporated into a *Nativity* scene it typically occurs in the foreground with the Virgin lying recumbent in a bed, recovering from the birth while one or two midwives wash the newly born Christ (Figs. 150 & 151). In *Nativity* images where the bathing is depicted, there is generally the same combination of figures: the Virgin, St. Joseph, one or two midwives, and some angels.⁶⁰ When there is

⁵⁹ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS 966 [3074]. Kanter et al. (1994), no. 17a.

⁶⁰ Schiller (1966), p. 82.

only one midwife present, the absent one is represented by a jug, which is her attribute.⁶¹ The Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass is atypical because of its unusual iconography: the Virgin is not convalescing but is actively washing the Child herself in the wooden tub. Additionally, Cortese has omitted the midwives completely, although there is a jug and a small pot, perhaps to symbolize them. The bathing scene is ordinarily included in Nativity scenes in Eastern art, and is treated as an integral part of the image, not as a subsidiary scene.⁶² While the bathing can be included as part of Western art, the motif of the midwife was not mentioned in the writing of the Doctors of the Latin Church.⁶³ This is likely due to the fact that the bathing of the infant Christ and the midwife motif are not mentioned in the canonical Gospels accounts but rather in apocryphal ones.⁶⁴

The birth of Christ is only referenced in two of the four gospels, that of Matthew and of Luke. In Matthew, the birth comes at the end of Chapter 1 and in the very beginning of Chapter 2 and the account does not describe the event in great detail: ‘And he knew her not, yet she bore her son, the firstborn. And he called his name Jesus;’ ‘And so, when Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem’.⁶⁵ In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2 recounts the event in only marginally more detail: ‘And she brought forth her first born son and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no

⁶¹ Schiller (1966), p. 80.

⁶² Schiller (1966), p. 84.

⁶³ Schiller (1966), p. 74.

⁶⁴ J. Gijssels, ed., *Libri de Nativitate Mariae. Pseudo-Matthaei evangelium* (Brepols: London and Turnhout, 1997), chs. 20–21, pp. 458–67; *Protoevangelium Jacobi*, chaps. 18–20.

⁶⁵ Matthew 1: 25; 2:1.

room for them at the inn.’⁶⁶ Neither account mentions the bathing of Christ or the midwives. Both of these tropes can be found, however, in the ‘Protoevangelium of James,’ which is an apocryphal gospel.⁶⁷ In this text, Salome appears as a companion to the unnamed midwife who bathes Christ, and she is regularly represented in Eastern Orthodox Nativity icons.⁶⁸ In Chapter XIX, 3 from the ‘Protoevangelium of James,’ it reads: ‘And the midwife went forth of the cave and Salome met her. And she said to her: Salome, Salome, a new sight have I to tell thee. A virgin hath brought forth, which her nature alloweth not.’⁶⁹ This text is an adaption of the episode of Doubting Thomas, and there are other versions of the story in various texts.⁷⁰ Since Salome was the first person, after the midwife, to bear witness to Christ’s birth, she comes to be connected to Salome the Disciple, and by the High Middle Ages she is identified with Mary Salome—the believing midwife.⁷¹ Additionally, in Greek images of the bathing of Christ, the midwife was often labelled as ‘Emea,’ which in the West was sometimes taken as the figure’s name not her professional title.⁷² An example of which can be seen in this twelfth-century fresco from Karanlik Kilise in Cappadocia where the midwife sitting on the left has the label ‘HMEA’ (Fig. 152).⁷³

Although it is clear that Cortese did not draw inspiration from the canonical sources but rather more likely from apocryphal ones, the iconography of the Milan

⁶⁶ Luke 2: 7.

⁶⁷ R. F. Hock, *The Infancy Gospels of James and Thomas* (Polebridge Press: Santa Rosa, 1995).

⁶⁸ Schiller (1966), pp. 63–65.

⁶⁹ M. R. James, trans., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1924), p. 20.

⁷⁰ J. R. Porter, *The Lost Bible* (Metro Books: New York, 2010), p. 32.

⁷¹ Schiller (1962), p. 64.

⁷² Schiller (1962), p. 64.

⁷³ Cappadocia, Karanlik Kilise (the Dark Church).

Nativity for the Christmas Midnight Mass would suggest that he might have looked to sources even beyond the ‘Protoevangelium of James,’ as he has omitted the midwives and instead painted the Virgin bathing Christ. A potential source for this unusual iconography may have been the Matariya Legend, an early medieval myth centring on an event from Christ’s childhood.⁷⁴ The legend claims that during the Holy Family’s time in Matariya—in modern day Cairo—they entered an enclosed garden in which the Christ Child commanded a spring to spurt forth from the ground. Once it had, the Virgin bathed him and/or his swaddling bands, in the spring; in some versions, Mary bathes Christ in a fountain. A very brief, and slightly altered, iteration of this story can be found in the apocryphal *Arabic Infancy Gospel*, from the early Middle Ages.⁷⁵ Although this legend is established in this early medieval text, it is a later interpolation and therefore the *Arabic Infancy Gospel* should not be viewed as the textual source for later medieval versions of this myth. From the thirteenth century onward, the miracle at Matariya is recounted in numerous pilgrims’ accounts of travels in the Holy Land, and in scientific and devotional

⁷⁴ I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Stella Panayotova for bringing the Matariya Legend to my attention.

⁷⁵ ‘At Matarieh [sic] in Egypt a spring bursts forth and balm originates from the sweat of Jesus.’ *The Arabic Infancy Gospel*, Ch. 24. J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1993), p. 103. For Latin and Arabic editions of *The Arabic Infancy Gospel* see: Elliott (1993), p. 101. Additionally, a slightly more expanded version is found in the *Arabic Infancy Gospel*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. MS Or. 350 but not in the ‘vie de Jésus en arabe,’ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Orientale 387: ‘...and the Lord Jesus brought forth in Matariya a fountain in which Lady Mary washed his shirt.’ A. Walker, ‘The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Saviour,’ in A. Cleveland, ed., *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries* (Charles Scribner’s Sons: New York, 1926), pp. 405–15 (at p. 409).

texts.⁷⁶ These sources were the means by which the Matariya Legend entered European culture.

Visual depictions of the Matariya Legend appear to be quite uncommon. One of the earliest is found in the Holkham Picture Bible, which was produced in England ca. 1327–1340. In the upper register of a small collection of scenes from Christ’s infancy, the Virgin is depicted washing Christ’s swaddling bands in a fountain beside a date-palm and a balsam tree (Fig. 153).⁷⁷ The image does not show the Virgin bathing the baby and therefore may likely be stressing the miracle of the water in which he has been washed, instead. Mary Dzon has noted that legends about Matariya likely originated in Egypt and were funnelled into England through the stories of European visitors to the eastern Mediterranean world from the twelfth century onward.⁷⁸ It is therefore unsurprising that one of the earliest representations of this legend should be found in an English manuscript.

It is unclear how widespread the Matariya Legend was in Italy, and more specifically in Venice during the early Quattrocento. Dzon has suggested that the legend did gradually become known to Western Christians through the oral transmission of the stories in the *Arabic Infancy Gospel* and other apocryphal texts, such as ‘Pseudo-Mathew.’⁷⁹ The presence of the Christ Child bathing scene in the Milan Gradual may suggest that the Venetian Camaldolese house of San Mattia was familiar with the

⁷⁶ M. Dzon, ‘Out of Egypt, Into England: Tales of the Good Thief for Medieval English Audiences,’ in S. Kelly and R. Perry, eds., *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imaginations of Christ’s Life* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2014), pp. 147–241 (at. p. 210).

⁷⁷ London, British Library, Add. MS. 47682. M. P. Brown, *The Holkham Bible Picture Book* (The British Library: London, 2007).

⁷⁸ Dzon (2014), p. 219.

⁷⁹ Gijssels (1997), chs. 20–21, pp. 458–67; Dzon (2014), p. 211.

Matariya Legend—or another version—perhaps through an account in a devotional text. While the Milan image might testify to Cortese’s potential awareness of the Matariya Legend, he made certain alterations to the narrative’s iconography, such as depicting a large tub instead of a fountain.

One possible explanation could be that since the original legend claimed that the event occurred in a garden, where a spring miraculously appeared and thus a fountain would be more appropriate for that setting, Cortese had to merge the legend’s story with the more typical setting and iconography of the infant bathing narrative. He did not put the Holy Family in a garden because the bathing occurs after Christ is born, not as part of the Flight into Egypt narrative. Therefore, he appears to have been combining various iconographic tropes from different Christological events into this single scene.

Another rare depiction of the Matariya Legend can be found in a German woodcut dated to ca. 1483, which shows the Virgin washing the Christ Child’s linens in a small well inside of a seven-walled garden while the Child sits on the grass beside her (Fig. 154).⁸⁰ The woodcut is part of John of Hildesheim’s *Historia trium regum*, which was one of the devotional texts by which the Matariya Legend was disseminated in Europe. The woodcut appears to highlight the importance of the garden environment and the miracle of the sprouting balsam tree, as evinced by the amount of foliage surrounding the Virgin and Child. As Dzon notes, the European accounts about this legend consistently link the balsam plant and the fountain, with the former being dependent upon the latter for its existence.⁸¹ By comparison, the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas

⁸⁰ New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS 53 fol. 4r. John of Hildesheim, *Historia trium regum*. Dzon (2014).

⁸¹ Dzon (2014), p. 212.

Midnight Mass offers very little in the way of natural foliage, as noted earlier in the description of the image. Cortese has used primarily yellow tones to create a rocky landscape upon which sits the wooden frame of the building in which Christ was born. The roof is composed using mosaic gold and the entire scene is set against a burnished gold ground. The only foliage is on the trees in the background on either side of the architectural structure and the vegetation that sprouts up from between the rocky crags behind the Virgin. Thus, unlike in the German woodcut, the emphasis in the Milan *Nativity* for the Midnight Mass is not centred upon the miracle of the water or the sprouting balsam tree but rather upon the act of the Virgin bathing the Child.

Liturgically, there is nothing in the corresponding text that relates to bathing the infant Christ (‘Dominus dixit ad me filius meus es tu ego hodie genui te...’), thus Cortese was depicting a scene that must have had some symbolic *spiritual* value for the monks at San Mattia. Alternatively, Cortese may have also been alluding to a different Christological event, such as the future baptism in the Jordan River. Just as certain iconographic depictions of the Nativity function as allusions to the Crucifixion, the bathing of the holy infant could call to mind Christ’s baptism in adulthood. While nothing in the liturgical text for this Nativity feast directly references bathing or baptism, Cortese was clearly making a deliberate iconographic choice, very likely in consultation with the monks at San Mattia.⁸²

⁸² B. Drake Boehm, *Choirs of Angels: Painting in Italian Choir Books 1300–1500* (Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2008), p. 30.

V. Camaldolese Lay Patrons in the Milan Gradual?

The image of the Virgin bathing the Christ Child is not the only piece of remarkable iconography in the Milan *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass. In addition to St. Joseph, Cortese has included a group of unidentified secular figures: a man, woman, and a small baby. These figures stand intimately close to the Holy Family and watch as the Virgin washed the infant. Unlike the Holy Family, these figures do not have burnished gold nimbi, thus conveying their secular status. Moreover, they are dressed in what appears to be contemporary Italian fashion: the male figure wears an orange tabard over what appears to be medieval-style Italian armour: gauntlets, chainmail and leg armour.⁸³ His female companion is dressed in a simple pale pink tunic with a white wimple that covers her hair and neck. Her dress is the same colour, and of a similar design as the tunic worn by St. Joseph, thus perhaps implying that she is not a fifteenth-century witness, however her wimple strongly suggests that she is not a biblical figure. When compared with these images of women from the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*, it is clear that the wimples and headdresses are of a similar style (Fig. 155). Produced in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* was very popular in Western Europe, particularly in France, Germany, and Italy.⁸⁴ These superfluous figures in the Milan *Nativity* are not part of any known Nativity narrative, nor do they feature in the Matariya Legend. A logical explanation could be that these figures were lay patrons who contributed to the production of the Milan Gradual, or to San Mattia more generally.

⁸³ E. Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence* (Bloomsbury: London, 2016), p. 42.

⁸⁴ B. Witthoft, 'The Tacuinum Sanitastis: A Lombard Panorama' *Gesta* 17 (1978), pp. 49–60 (at p. 50).

The Camaldolese order, and in particular the houses of San Michele, San Mattia, and Santa Maria degli Angeli, had long benefitted from the generosity of both lay patrons and the Papacy, and it would not have been unusual for San Mattia to receive auxiliary financial assistance from individuals outside of the monastery.⁸⁵ Many wealthy patrons wanted to be commemorated in the architecture of Camaldolese churches, and chapels were not the only artistic commissions offered during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries: Santa Maria degli Angeli received many different donations from its circle of patrons and each was relegated to support different projects.⁸⁶ However, there do not seem to be any archival records/documents indicating that manuscript illumination served as a commemorative medium.⁸⁷ Moreover, there is no other depiction of lay people found anywhere in the San Mattia corpus, or in the Berlin Gradual and the individual fragments. Nor can any visual parallels be found in the Florentine choir books, however there were altarpieces made for funerary chapels at Santa Maria degli Angeli that are comparable.⁸⁸

The practical intentions of including these lay figures into the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass would likely have been as recognition for their financial support and for the salvation of their souls. Yet, on a visual level, the inclusion of these figures in this specific narrative and in this particular way warrants a deeper consideration about the motivations behind such artistic choices. The iconography of the Milan Gradual would have likely been conceived by Cortese in conjunction with the

⁸⁵ Meneghin (1962), p. 23; Fossa (2012), p. 40; Bent (2006), pp. 116–125, pp. 144–149.

⁸⁶ Bent (2006), p. 146.

⁸⁷ A deeper investigation of the archival documents relating to this specific issue, in the state archives in Florence and Venice, is required before confirming that no records exist.

⁸⁸ One such example is the altarpiece decorating the burial chapel of Gherardo degli Alberti. Bent (2006), p. 154, n. 284.

specific spiritual needs and liturgical requirements of the Camaldolese monks who commissioned the book. Yet, there would also have been some degree of creative freedom afforded to the artist, as the priest or abbot who commissioned the work—either from a monk-artist, or a lay illuminator—did not always stipulate the precise decorative nature of an illumination.⁸⁹ Thus, Cortese would likely have had some freedom to express his own artistic intelligence, which accounts for the presence of his stylistic hallmarks. However, the inclusion of these lay figures is unlikely to have been his independent choice and it is more probable that he received instructions from the monks at San Mattia about how to insert them into the composition. Without written documentation, it is impossible to know what these instructions would have been or what arrangement was made between these patrons and the monks.

The presence of these unidentified lay figures in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass is an iconographic feature not found elsewhere in the visual culture of San Michele. It is highly unlikely that Cortese would have made such an important iconographic choice of his own volition therefore this would have been a decision made by the monks at San Mattia. Whilst the Camaldolese at San Mattia would have been bound by the Rule of St. Benedict, they also had the liturgical freedom to honour canonized figures that were important to them and to their secular patrons.⁹⁰ This image may be an example of the secular patrons themselves being included. Their presence begins to raise questions about the nature of lay patronage and devotion in the Camaldolese monastic context, specifically at San Mattia. Such questions as: why is there only one instance in the entire Milan Gradual where the patrons are included? Why are

⁸⁹ Shapiro (1980), p. 364.

⁹⁰ Bent (2006), p. 30.

they included in this specific illumination? Without documentation, it will only be possible to speculate about these questions but it may be possible to explore them within the context of patrons' visions more broadly.

The primary reason for any patron or donor's desire to be commemorated by a religious order was for the salvation of their soul as the monks would pray for these individuals during Mass. Yet, in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass, these lay patrons seem to be motivated by something other than just the prayers of monks; they appear to want a connection with the Holy Family through close physical proximity within the sacred scene, which could result in a close spiritual proximity as well. The physical intimacy created by depicting these figures in the foreground of the bathing scene is not unlike the kind of spiritual intimacy created by pilgrims or supplicants who envision themselves 'interacting' with the divine. Margery Kempe wrote detailed accounts of how she was not only 'present' at the birth of Christ but also at the birth of the Virgin and that she asked St. Anne if she (Margery) could be her midwife.⁹¹ Margery also envisioned herself physically present at the Visitation, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt, not simply as an observer but as the handmaid to the Virgin.⁹² It has been noted that Margery's accounts changed, omitted, and exaggerated many of the details found in the canonical version of the same Christological events; the most obvious alteration being Margery's central role as servant to the Virgin.⁹³ In a similar way that Margery Kempe envisioned herself as part of the sacred narrative, by inserting the lay

⁹¹ M. Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*. S. B. Meech and H. E. Allen, eds. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1940), 18.15; C. Lee McCarthy, 'Popular Influences on the Book of Margery Kempe,' PhD diss. (Fordham University, 1999), p. 49.

⁹² Meech and Allen (1940), 19.7; McCarthy (1999), p. 49.

⁹³ McCarthy (1999), p. 49.

patrons directly into the scene, standing beside the Virgin and watching her bathe the Christ Child, these lay figures became part of the narrative in a manner not found in the other illuminations in the manuscript.

While the inclusion of supplicants into a religious scene is by no means uncommon, these individuals are generally relegated to the margins of the visual narrative, thus making the demarcation of space obvious. In an example from a German gradual, made for Gisela von Kerksenbrock, the tiny figure of the supplicating Cistercian nun can be seen kneeling in prayer, facing the risen Christ in the initial R with the *Resurrection*, clearly aware of the boundaries between herself and the object of veneration: Christ (Fig. 156).⁹⁴ Throughout the Middle Ages people were highly concerned with, and aware of, the hierarchy that governed their place in the world, regardless of the social order to which they belonged—those who prayed, fought, and laboured.⁹⁵ Therefore, illuminators would also have been highly aware of and sensitive to the layout of a page when designing a scene within an initial.

The centre of an image was a powerful and safe space, which mirrored the safety of the literal centre of the medieval world—the hearth of the home, the centre of a village, and so forth. In the *Mappa mundi*, God was at the centre (Jerusalem), which was symbolic of these safe spaces.⁹⁶ In Christian art, the centre of an image appears to have been the most sacred space, where the holy figures could be found. Thus, including a lay person into that space conveys a powerful message about the desired dynamic between the sacred and secular figures. Another variation was to have the supplicating figures—

⁹⁴ Osnabrück, Diözesanarchiv Osnabrück Inv –Nr ma 101, fol. 70v.

⁹⁵ M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Reaktion Books: London, 2003; reprinting), p. 16.

⁹⁶ Camille (2003), p. 14.

monastic or lay—kneeling at the feet of the Virgin or Christ in a way that demonstrates their secular—and thus inferior—status to the object of the veneration. In addition to being in a physically subjugate position, they are also often depicted as much smaller in size. The lay figures in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass (see Fig. 5) are of equal proportion despite the fact that they appear to be kneeling beside the Virgin while she bathes the Christ Child. They act as direct witnesses to this event, yet this ‘interaction’ between the lay figures and the sacred actors is mirrored not to them but to the monks at San Mattia.

The Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass, like every other folio in the Gradual, would only have been seen by the monks at San Mattia, who used the manuscripts as part of the celebration of the mass. These volumes were made for the closed worship of the Camaldolese brothers and the lay family would very unlikely have had regular access to them. Therefore, it is more likely that the monks at San Mattia would have prayed on behalf of the lay patrons, as was the religious practice. Yet, this fact does not explain why the donors were included in this specific image or in this very intimate way. One possibility could be that the lay donors wanted to emphasise their direct and personal spiritual connection with the Holy Family. Perhaps they wanted this intimate proximity to remain in the minds of the monks who meditated on this image and who would act as the intermediaries between God and the laity.

VI. Conclusions

The Milan Gradual is an important part of the partial reconstruction of the San Mattia Choir Books. Unlike the Berlin Gradual, the Milan volume has received more attention from scholars, particularly concerning its codicology and liturgy. Yet, the rich iconography of the manuscript has been overlooked, which is why elements of it have formed the centre of this chapter. While there are iconographic features that reflect a more conventional visual programme for the book's liturgical content, just as with the Berlin Gradual, there are also elements that are unusual and clearly diverge from this 'typical' programme. These remarkable features were likely included at the behest of the monks who not only used the manuscript during their liturgical celebration but also would have been intimately involved in the visual programme's conception and execution.

In certain ways, the Milan Gradual's illuminations exhibit a much more overt sense of Camaldolese monastic identity than the ones in the Berlin Gradual, as many of them are abundant in the use of monastic corporate iconography. In Folio 47v with an initial P with the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass (see Fig. 4), Cortese has maximized the entire space to convey complex ideas about how the Camaldolese monks at San Mattia understand themselves through the application of intricate iconography. The eight bust portraits of Church Fathers and monastic reformers function in a two-fold manner: they are visual references to these figures, perhaps intended to facilitate meditation and rumination during prayer. The portraits also act as pseudo-signposts for the evolution of Benedictine monasticism and church history. The lives of these religious men mark various developments in the mission of Christianity and it would appear that

the monks at San Mattia perhaps sought to insert themselves into this narrative. While the spiritual and historical importance of St. Romuald remains central in the religious lifestyle of the monks at any Camaldolese monastery, the Milan Gradual functions as a record of the various ways in which he remained visually present for the brothers at San Mattia.

By painting him in the centre medallion in the bas-de-page of the *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass, Cortese has emphasised the founding saint's spiritual significance to the monks who looked at this folio. In other illuminations from the San Mattia material, the bas-de-page contains images of the Virgin and Child (the Milan *Advent* folio; the *Mission of the Apostles*⁹⁷), or biblical narratives, such as in the Berlin *Resurrection* (*Noli me tangere*) (see Fig. 81). By depicting St. Romuald in the bas-de-page of the *Nativity* folio, Cortese has created a visual link between the Camaldolese founding father and the Virgin and Christ, vis-à-vis their 'shared' place on the pages of the choir book. Thus, Cortese may have been trying to convey a message about how the monks at San Mattia understand their spiritual history within the larger Christian context of time.

The arrangement of the iconography within the space on the folio has been carefully considered and no area on the page has been left unadorned, with the bust portraits occupying a great deal of space. Yet despite the intimacy of the visual composition, the monastic portraits still adhere to a hierarchy of space, wherein they are set in the margins, relegated to the liminal territory. These bust portraits function as 'witnesses' to the *Nativity* without interfering with the sacred dynamics. Although he adheres to this hierarchy of space in the *Nativity* for the Christmas Day Mass, Cortese

⁹⁷ Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection, M6030. This cutting is discussed in depth in Ch. 4.

completely disregards it in the illumination for the *Nativity* for the Christmas Midnight Mass by inserting a secular family directly into the narrative (see Fig. 5). These unknown lay figures have been placed intimately into the image, not relegated to the background but right beside the Virgin and Christ Child—closer than St. Joseph. Their presence in this image likely speaks to the relationship between the monks at San Mattia and their lay patrons, especially as there are no other examples of lay patrons included in the illuminations belonging to either of the Venetian houses or to the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Based on the codicological and liturgical evidence, it is likely that the Milan Gradual is one of only two known surviving intact volumes associated with the San Mattia series and as such is a crucial source for probing the nature of Camaldolese spirituality at that specific house. The remarkable iconographic features in some of the illuminations may also reveal insights into how the monks at San Mattia perceived their sense of identity in relation to Benedictine monasticism and Christianity, more broadly. It could also serve to inform how the monks at San Mattia saw themselves in relation to their brothers at San Michele and Santa Maria degli Angeli, which is an area of research that is virtually uncharted.

VII. Catalogue Entry: The Milan Gradual

Milan, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense
MS. AB. XVII, 28 (previously Arm. I.28)
Gradual
In Latin
Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca.1445
Script: Gothic bookhand (Southern textualis)
Artist: Cristoforo Cortese
Provenance: Venice(?)

I. Physical Description

Parchment, 600 x 420 mm, ruled space 430 x 290 mm. 94 fols. (two sets of modern foliation: 1 in pencil – top corner, recto, 1 in ink – left margin, verso); 6 four-line music staves (on each folio) in red ink + 6 lines of text in brown ink (Southern Gothic textualis); catchwords in brown ink (Southern Gothic textualis); no silk curtains across illuminations or initials, but tiny pin holes above the illuminations suggest they were once there; modern green fabric tabs mark all the historiated initials (on side of parchment); no indication of a *fenestra* label on either cover.

94 fols. + iv modern parchment leaves

Binding

Manuscript has been rebound, possibly in the nineteenth century. Brown leather over oak boards. 1 metal centre piece; 4 metal corners; 4 metal studs – traces of leather straps to close book: one on top/bottom, two on right side (front)

Internal Evidence for Content

pastedown inside upper cover: modern cursive text: Graduale dalla I(a) Domenica dell Adventa all Domenica in Quinquagesima

Fol. 1r: Advent – in right margin is a seal with two white doves drinking from a chalice – the seal of the Camaldolese order

Production Notes

Stave height: 40 mm, space b/w staves: 35 mm; textline height: 13 mm, space b/w text lines: 60 mm; height of space b/w top edge and 1st stave: 45 mm, height of bas-de-page: 150 mm (stave to edge), 125 mm (text to edge)

Musical notation penned before ornamented initials were painted; not necessarily before text was written (fol. 70r)

The modern parchment covering the historiated initials (full sheets) appear to be bound into the spine (hence, rebound)

The Alleluia sung by cantor or choir marked by a red cross

The text was written after the notation

II. Text & Decoration

The gradual contains six historiated initials with Christological scenes; ten smaller historiated initials with prophet portraits; and six decorated initials. The Milan Gradual contains the feasts of the Temporale from the first Sunday of Advent until the first Sunday of Lent.

Fol. 1r – A: Advent

Ad te levavi manus

Full page incl. 2 staves and 2 text lines beneath image

400 x 110mm

Fol. 5r – P: Christ – *Dominica secunda introitus*

Populus sion ecce dominus

150 x 100 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 9v – G: prophet – *Dominica iiiia post advent[tum] introitus*

Gaudete in domino semper

140 x 120 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll.

Fol. 13r – M: decorated initial – *Dominica iiiia introitus*

Memento nostri domine in bene

100 x 110 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l

Fol. 16v – R: decorated initial – *feria quarta qua tuor tempurem de advent[i] introitus*

Rorate celi desuper

80 x 80 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l

Fol. 20v – P: decorated initial – *feria v post advent[tum]introitus*

Prope esto domine

150 x 90 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 22v – V: decorated initial – *Sabbato introitus*

Veni et ostende nobis

70 x 70 mm, 1 stave and 1 text l

Fol. 33r – M: prophet – *Dominica iiiia de adventu[i]*

Memento nostri domine

160 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 36v –H: decorated initial – *In vigilia nativitatis Domino introitus*

Hodie scietis quia veniet

160 x 130 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 40r – D: Washing Baby Jesus – In nocte nativitatis domini nostril Ad missam introitus

Dominus dixit ad me

165 x 160 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 43r – L: Nativity (Morning) – In die nativitatis domini in aurora. Ad missam introitus

Lux fulgebit hodie super

175 x 135 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 47v – P: Nativity – In die nativitatis Domini nostri Jesu Xpi. Ad missam maiorem. introitus

Puer natus est nobis

Full page, incl. 2 staves and 2 text lines beneath the image

430 x 210 mm

Fol. 51v – D: prophet with Christ – Dominica post nativitatem Domini

Dum medium silentium

150 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 55v – P: Circumcision – In die circumcisionis Domini nostri Jesus Christ. Ad missam introitus

Puer natus est

Full page incl. 3 staves and 3 lines of text beneath the image

360 x 190 mm

Fol. 59r – D: decorated initial – In vigilia epiphiae introitus

Dominus dixit ad me filius

145 x 150 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 62r – E: Adoration of the Magi – In die epiphiae as Missam et per Octave

Ecce advenit dominator

210 x 215 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 66r – I: prophet with Christ – Dominica prima post epiphiae introitus

In excelso throno

210 x 70 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 70r – E: decorated initial – In octave epiphiae introitus

Ecce advenit dominator

140 x 110 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 73v – O: prophet – Dominica secunda post epiphiae introitus

Omnis terra adoret

210 x 70 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 77v – A: prophet – Dominica tertia post epiphiae
Adorate deum omnes angeli
160 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 80v – C: prophet – Dominica in Septuagisma introitus
Circumdederunt me gemitus
145 x 140 mm, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 85v – E: prophet – Dominica in Sexagesima introitus
Exsurge quare obdormis Domine?
140 x 140 m, 2 staves and 2 text ll

Fol. 89v – E: prophet – Dominica in quinquagesima.introitus
Esto mihi in deum
140 x 155 mm, 1 stave and 1 text

The previous two chapters have each dealt with an intact volume but in this chapter the most complex aspect of the reconstruction shall be addressed: the individual cuttings. One of the most obvious issues concerning the fragments is the loss of the original liturgical context, which is precisely what this project hopes to recover—even partially. The challenges that are presented by the fragments centre on basic identification of the iconography and any text on the reverse side, and are addressed below. Accompanying this chapter is an Appendix with a catalogue in which each of the cuttings has been identified as best as possible based on the available data. The Appendix is divided into three groups of cuttings: the ones that can assuredly be identified based on iconographic and/or liturgical evidence; the cuttings that present ambiguous iconographic and/or highly fragmented liturgical evidence, and have been assigned a tentative identification by this author; and finally the cuttings that are completely inscrutable due to either obscure iconography and/or no available liturgical evidence.¹

As previously discussed, the Berlin Gradual contains the sung parts of the *Temporale* from Easter Sunday to the Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost, while the Milan Gradual contains the sung portion of the *Temporale* from the first Sunday of Advent until the first Sunday in Lent. Presumably, there would have been a gradual that contained the liturgical material for Lent and the services for Tenebrae (the three day period leading up to Easter Sunday), thus it is possible that the original set for San Mattia consisted of five graduals. The thirty-six cuttings included in this partial reconstruction

¹ This statement refers to cuttings that have been pasted down onto card and therefore the reverse side is inaccessible. See: the appendix at the end of this thesis.

likely constituted at least two *Sanctorale* graduals. Not included in this reconstruction are two additional cuttings that are mentioned in the Ottley sale catalogue but have never been traced: the Annunciation (25 March) and the Presentation (2 February). Listed in Lot 31 ‘Two—The Annunciation and Presentation, *richly gilt and coloured from Murano*.² This entry not only refers to the existence of these two images but also states Murano as their provenance. These cuttings would definitely have been part of the *Sanctorale* because of their subject matter and would likely have been in the same volume as their feast days are close in calendric proximity.

However, it cannot be assumed that all of the cuttings belonged to the same kind of choir book. This chapter will begin by attempting to parse out three issues: (1) to what types of choir books these cuttings may have originally belonged, based on iconographic and liturgical and identifications; (2) whether these choir books were all part of the same set, based on codicological analyses; and (3) whether they were all intended for use by San Mattia, based on integrated evidence from (1), (2), and later provenance and Camaldolese affiliation. This will be followed by a discussion of the thirty-eight cuttings now assigned to the Murano Master’s oeuvre. The remainder of the chapter will then probe more deeply several cuttings that contain unusual iconography and examine them through the lens of Camaldolese spirituality.

² Ottley sale catalogue, 11 May 1838. London, British Library, *A Catalogue*, General Reference Collection S. C. Sotheby. 218 (3). p. 4.

I. Issues of Identification & Methodology

When a cutting has clear iconography and/or text on the reverse side, identifying the feast and allotting it back into its correct place within the choir books series is relatively straightforward. However, reassembling these volumes becomes challenging when the cutting lacks one or the other—or both—of these key features. The iconographic content of the cuttings can be grouped into the following categories: 1) recognizable individuals, such as *St. Blaise* (Fig. 157)³ and *St. Jerome* (see Fig. 109),⁴ both at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles; 2) unrecognizable/generic individuals, such as *Female Saint* (see Fig. 13),⁵ in the University Library, Cambridge; 3) biblical narratives, including the *Dormition of the Virgin* in the Fitzwilliam Museum (see Fig. 6), and the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist* (Fig. 158);⁶ and 4) unidentified figures that could be a specific individual, such as the initial O (?) with a *Holy Pope(?)* (Fig. 159).⁷

The problems are due largely to the following factors: firstly, if the iconography is too generic then it can be difficult to assign a specific narrative or identity. A second issue concerns the close cropping of the fragment that often occurred when the initial was removed from the full folio in order to be sold as a ‘miniature painting.’ In some instances when the iconography does not provide insight into the identity of the feast, the initial can sometimes indicate the liturgical text that the image may have introduced.

³ Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 73.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/219793/master-of-the-murano-gradual-cutting-from-a-gradual-italian-about-1450-1460/>

⁴ Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 106.

<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/250226/master-of-the-murano-gradual-cutting-from-a-gradual-italian-second-quarter-of-15th-century/>

⁵ Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 4165 (10). Binski and Panayotova (2005), No. 60b.

⁶ London, Private Collection.

⁷ Current location unknown.

However, when the edges have been trimmed too closely, as they have in the majority of the San Mattia fragments, it can be very difficult to ascertain the shape of the original letter. A third problem that can prohibit the identification of a cutting is that the text and music notation on the reverse side are sometimes inaccessible, usually because the fragment has been pasted down onto card.

A good example of all three issues is the Marmottan initial with a *Holy Bishop* (see Fig. 32).⁸ Although this figure wears a mitre and holds a crosier, he has no other visible identifying attributes, which might be the result of damage to the cutting.⁹ Another possible explanation for the absence of an identifying attribute could be because this figure was never intended to represent any specific saint or figure, and was instead created to accompany text from the *Communale* portion of the series. An additional problem is that the edges of this cutting have also been trimmed so closely that the original letter is now virtually impossible to determine. Lastly, a further hindrance is that the Marmottan *Holy Bishop* has, like other cuttings in the Wildenstein Collection, been pasted onto card thus rendering the reverse side inaccessible.¹⁰ This was a common practice throughout the nineteenth century when cuttings were part of a dealer's stock or in an auction sale or private collection. Although the text on the other side of the initial can yield crucial information about the original liturgical text, for some of the San Mattia

⁸ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6037. Levi D'Ancona (1970), pl. XI.

⁹ Levi D'Ancona has speculated that this figure could have been a representation of St. Nicholas of Bari, if there had been three golden balls held in his gathered up chasuble. However no such iconographic feature is visible now, perhaps due to damage. Levi D'Ancona (1970), p. 48.

¹⁰ In some instances the museum or institution will have a record of the text on the reverse side but this is not always the case and unfortunately the Marmottan does not.

cuttings the text is too fragmentary to be identified and therefore cannot provide helpful information about the corresponding liturgical feast and relevant iconography.

As part of the liturgical analyses, seven sources have been invaluable for identifying the partial text. John Stinson's Medieval Music Manuscripts Database at La Trobe University allows text to be searched by various means including liturgical feast, partial text, or manuscript.¹¹ Another crucial on-line resource for this project has been the Cantus Manuscript Database: Inventories of Chant Sources.¹² Although these were the two main on-line databases used, on occasion this project also consulted the Global Chant Database, developed at the Institute of Musicology at Charles University in Prague.¹³ Once a text has been found in any of the on-line databases, it is then checked within the context of a medieval breviary,¹⁴ followed by checking in the first edition of the Breviary and Missal of 1568.¹⁵ While this is a highly effective method for identifying texts and linking them back to their liturgical feasts, if a feast is order-specific—not part of the Use of Rome—then the text needs to be checked within that context. Since these are manuscripts for a Camaldolese house, it was necessary to cross-reference in a Camaldolese missal,¹⁶ and a breviary.¹⁷ Both of these manuscripts are approximately contemporary with the original series.

¹¹ <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/index.htm>

¹² <http://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/>

¹³ <http://www.globalchant.org/chant.php?id=59>

¹⁴ S. J. P. van Dijk, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy. The Ordinals of Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents*, vol. II, Texts (Brill: Leiden, 1963).

¹⁵ M. Sodi and A. M. Triacca, eds., *Breviarium Romanum. Editio Princeps* (1568) (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Città del Vaticano, 1999); M. Sodi and A. M. Triacca, eds., *Missale Romanum. Editio Princeps* (1570) (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican City, 1998).

¹⁶ London, British Library, C. 24. f. 8. Dated 1503.

¹⁷ London, British Library, IA. 27171. Dated 1484.

Over the last few decades of the twentieth century there were conflicting accounts of how many fragments are associated with the Murano Master's oeuvre and how many of these fragments were once part of the volumes for the Camaldolese house in Venice.¹⁸ It will be important to clarify the various accounts in order to attempt to reconcile them. To date, there are thirty-eight cuttings that have been assigned to the Murano Master's hand. This is problematic for two reasons: firstly, the various scholars who have made these assignments to the Murano Master's oeuvre have often only looked at either individual fragments or small groups of fragments.¹⁹ In some instances, fragments are allotted to the Murano Master based on their physical proximity to other cuttings that exhibit his stylistic hallmarks, such as cuttings in the Marmottan Wildenstein Collection. This thesis only recognizes thirty-six cuttings as part of the Murano Master's body of work. The two that are not considered part of his corpus are an initial S with the *Seated Evangelist* (see Fig. 7)²⁰ and an initial R with *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?)* (see Fig. 8).²¹ These two fragments are currently at the Marmottan as part of the Wildenstein Collection and are exhibited in the same vitrines as the other cuttings. In 1970, Mirella Levi D'Ancona attributed both of these cuttings to Belbello²² and to the San Michele Choir Books.²³ While the *Seated Evangelist* appears to exhibit some stylistic features typical of the Murano Master's work, such as the use of pseudo-Arabic script, a

¹⁸ Much of the published scholarship indicates that the cuttings were part of choir books that belonged to San Michele in Isola with no mention of San Mattia di Murano. This thesis posits that the books were for the latter monastery.

¹⁹ Levi D'Ancona (1970)

²⁰ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M6039. Levi D'Ancona (1970), pl. XIII.

²¹ Paris, Musée Marmottan, M602. Levi D'Ancona (1970), pl. XV.

²² See: Ch. 1 for clarification about Levi D'Ancona's argument about the Murano Master and Belbello, and see: Levi D'Ancona (1970), pp. 35–38.

²³ Levi D'Ancona attributed the cuttings to choir books belonging to San Michele not San Mattia. Levi D'Ancona (1970), p. 37.

deep blushing of the figure's face, and an attempt at modelling of the flesh, none are executed with the technical sophistication that truly indicate the Murano Master's work. The pseudo-Arabic script is perhaps the most deceptive aspect as with a cursory glance, it would pass for the style of the Murano Master but upon closer inspection it does not resemble the version used in other more securely attributable cuttings. Rosamond E. Mack has noted that pseudo-inscriptions (Arabic, Hebrew, and others) used in Italian medieval and Renaissance art differ in the form and resemblance to the genuine script, and artists tended to develop their own personal style.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, the Murano Master developed his own manner of pseudo-Arabic, which he applied with stylistic consistency repeatedly throughout his illuminations.

The cutting with *St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?)* bears no stylistic similarity to any of the other cuttings associated with the Murano Master's corpus or with any of the illuminations in either the Berlin or Milan Graduals. While the presence of some Murano Master-esque features in the *Seated Evangelist* might suggest the possibility of an attempt by another artist to imitate his style, the *St. Catherine* cutting does not even display stylistic features that mimic the Murano Master's style, therefore it would be unlikely that this cutting is attributable to his hand. Additionally, neither cutting exhibit any iconographic features that link it with the style of the scriptorium at Santa Maria degli Angeli. Such elements as the use of jewel tones, the lush foliate acanthus marginalia, and the diaper/lozenge-pattern decorating the initial borders. These features often immediately suggests a provenance of, or other connection with the

²⁴ Mack (2002), p. 61.

‘Angeli School.’²⁵ Additionally problematic is that the fragments, like the other Wildenstein Marmottan cuttings, are pasted onto card and there is no record of the text or notation on the reverse side, thus there is no means of connecting them liturgically to San Mattia or any Camaldolese choir books. Therefore, while these two cuttings are included in the Appendix, they are found under the section ‘Problematic Attributions’ for the reasons specified above.

²⁵ Levi D’Ancona (1995), p. 21.

II. Types of Books

As stated, in this thesis thirty-six cuttings are recognized as belonging to the Murano Master's oeuvre, but that is not to assume that every one of them belonged to the original San Mattia series, or that they were all part of the same volume. Depending on their iconographic and liturgical content, the cuttings could have belonged to a gradual, antiphoner, or possibly a hymnal-psalter. To try and deduce from which types of books the cuttings might have come, the liturgical and iconographic evidence is key. As mentioned above, the iconography can either be clearly identifiable, unidentifiable or just a generic figure, or unidentifiable but could be a specific individual. This third possibility is the one that poses the greatest challenge but if an identification can be made—or at least attempted based on stable logic and evidence—then this adds additional content to the partial reconstruction. Using the available iconographic, liturgical, and codicological evidence, this thesis has aimed to identify as many cuttings from this fourth category as possible. For example, the aforementioned initial O (?) with a *Holy Pope* (?) might be St. Clement based on the iconography, which often includes him depicted in papal vestments—and in this example, a papal tiara. He is also often depicted with a book, again also present in this specific fragment. If this is St. Clement—and the letter is an 'O' then this cutting may have accompanied the responsory for the first nocturn of his feast day Mass (23 November): 'Oremus omnes ad dominum jesum.'²⁶ This cutting would have then been part of the *Sanctorale* portion of an antiphoner.

Of the thirty-six cuttings, the reverse side of fourteen was accessible and this data was gathered through direct analysis or gleaned from previous publications. Using the

²⁶ <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/Feasts/114112300.htm>

texts and iconography, the cuttings have been reassembled into an approximation of their original liturgical context.²⁷ Of the full corpus of known cuttings attributed to the Murano Master, sixteen appear to correspond to specific saints' feasts days such as St. Andrew Apostle (30 November), St. Blaise (3 February), St. Mary Magdalene (22 July), and the Dormition of the Virgin (15 August). However, there are at least seven cuttings that may have constituted the *Communale* (Common of Saints), and while some of the iconography appears to reflect specific feasts, such as the *Mission of the Apostles*, some of the cuttings have more generic iconography: the *Unidentified Female Saint in Cambridge*. This fragment may have been intended to correspond to the Common of Several Virgins and therefore does not depict a specific saint.

Furthermore, some of the cuttings may have come from an antiphoner, which, as discussed, would have contained the sung portion of the Divine Office and would therefore have differed from the contents of a gradual. In addition to the aforementioned initial O (?) with *Pope St. Clement* (?), another fragment that may have originally been part of an antiphoner is the initial V with *St. John the Evangelist* (see Fig. 14). The letter 'V' would likely have been the opening of the text: 'Valde honorandus est beatus Joannes,' which is the antiphon²⁸ that correlates with chapter 21, verse 20 of the Gospel of St. John. In addition to being an antiphon, it could also be a responsory.²⁹ More specifically, in the context of the feast of St. John (27 December), this opening line could be the Magnificat antiphon of Vespers or the responsory of the first Nocturn of Matins. If this cutting had originally be intended to open the Mass for St. John's feast day, then it

²⁷ See: the chart in the Appendix at the end of this thesis.

²⁸ A short sentence sung before or after a psalm or canticle as part of the Divine Office.

²⁹ A responsory is a vocalized response to a lesson, as part of the Divine Office.

would have corresponded with the text of the introit: ‘In medio ecclesiae aperuit os...’. The introit of any feast is found in a gradual not an antiphoner therefore this cutting likely belonged to the latter. Moreover, while it is usually the opening initial of an introit that receives an illumination, it is more common for the opening initial of an antiphon to be illuminated, therefore making it likely that the fragment is part of an antiphon not a responsory.

The set of choir books commissioned by the monks at San Mattia were required to fulfil crucial liturgical needs and as such would have consisted of graduals and antiphoners, and both types of manuscripts would have contained the *Temporale* and *Sanctorale* portions of the liturgical calendar. The San Mattia corpus would have consisted of excised initials from both kinds of codices. It is, therefore, important to not assume that an initial was part of a gradual but to use the available evidence—iconographic, textual, codicological—to try and discern the original feast to which it likely corresponded, and to be as specific as possible in terms of assigning the fragment to its original codicological context.

III. Same Set?

The next task has been to ascertain if the choir books to which these loose fragments once belonged were all part of the same set. Here, the codicological evidence might offer some insight. While the cuttings all vary in their dimensions,³⁰ the reverse side of fourteen cuttings is accessible and the codicological information gathered from that source offers crucial evidence. All of these cuttings have at least one four-line red ink stave with neumes and text between each set of staves. All of the staves measure 40 mm in height and the space between each stave measures 35 mm.³¹ Two other cuttings have codicological information on their painted side: the initial I with *St. Matthew* (?) (Fig. 160) and the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles* (see Fig. 9). The initial I with *St. Matthew* was excised in a manner that left visible the traces of three four-line staves and their clefs. Each of the staves measures 40 mm, and the space between them is 35 mm. The *Mission of the Apostles* has one line of text and one partial stave with neumes and a clef. The space with the word ‘Inclitus’ measures 35 mm, which is the same as the space between the staves of the other cuttings. The precise agreement between these measurements strongly suggests that all of these cuttings belonged to the same set of choir books, if not to the same volume.

³⁰ See: catalogue in the Appendix for full measurements of each cutting. Each cutting that was personally examined by this author is indicated with a ❖ in the catalogue.

³¹ Some of the cuttings were measured by this author, either in person or by recreating the cuttings to their precise dimensions. For others, the measurements were sourced from publications or from curators at the institution in which the cutting is held. The staves on the reverse side of *St. Blaise* and the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist* measure 39 mm.

IV. For San Mattia di Murano?

The original provenance of the fragments is both important and difficult to establish. To attempt this, the iconographic, liturgical, and codicological evidence should be considered within the framework of Camaldolese monastic iconography and the later provenance of the cuttings. The first place to begin this facet of the investigation is with the codicology and the Berlin Gradual. Since the Berlin volume has a concrete provenance and connection to San Mattia, it may prove useful to compare the measurements of the manuscript's illuminations with those of the cuttings. The Berlin volumes contains forty-three initials with prophets, all of which have similar dimensions: 155 × 80 mm, 145 × 90 mm, 150 × 125 mm, 160 × 135 mm.³² The measurements of the individual cuttings are also close to one another, varying by only a few millimetres: initial G with *St. Blaise*, 157 × 120 mm; an initial S with *St. Augustine (or possibly a Holy Bishop)*, 168 × 149 mm (Fig. 161)³³; initial G with the *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*, 150 × 115 mm (see Fig. 158); initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (or possibly a Camaldolese nun) (see Fig. 13), 143 × 96 mm. The measurements of the fragments are comparable with those of the Berlin prophets, which may further support the suggestion that the excised initials once belonged to volumes that were made as part of a series to which the Berlin Gradual also belonged. Taking the analysis one step further: when the initials with *Prophets*, from the Berlin Gradual and the cutting corpus,

³² The measurements for all of the initials are listed in the catalogue entry for the Berlin Gradual at the end of Ch. 2.

³³ Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1954.257.

http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1954.257?collection_search_query=The+Master+of+the+Murano+Gradual&op=search&form_build_id=form-Kmnuxx_fNXPfe34bGxzAfwkuGmFfLI8sDQf066u1xYc&form_id=clevelandart_collection_search_form

are compared with the initials with *Prophets* in the Milan Gradual, again, the measurements are very similar with only a few millimetres difference: 140 × 120 mm, 160 × 140 mm, 150 × 140 mm.³⁴

In terms of the full-page illuminations of the San Mattia series, the initial R with the *Resurrection*, which opens the Berlin Gradual, measures 600 × 420 mm. The only surviving full-page cutting, the *Mission of the Apostles*, measures 540 × 365 mm and when this is compared with the Berlin *Resurrection*, one can see that they are similar in size. The slight difference between these two measurements can likely be accounted for by the fact that the *Mission of the Apostles* has been excised thus any surrounding parchment is obviously gone. When the measurements of the music staves in the Berlin Gradual are compared with those of the fourteen cuttings whose reverse side is accessible, a perfect match is found. The height of the music staves in the Berlin Gradual is 40 mm, with the space between each stave measuring 35 mm. In all of the fourteen cuttings, the stave height is 40 mm, and in those fragments with more than one stave, the space between them is 35 mm, thus further strengthening the connection between these cuttings and the Berlin Gradual.

The measurements of the music staves can be useful in terms of codicological evidence. As demonstrated, the measurements of the staves match those found in the Berlin and Milan Graduals, which helps to strengthen the suggestion that the cuttings may have likely once belonged to volumes for San Mattia. The stave heights and number of them per page typically differ depending on the type of choir book. Generally, the books belonging to monastic houses/churches in Florence have between six and ten per

³⁴ For a full list of the initials' measurements, see catalogue entry for the Milan Gradual at the end of Ch. 3.

page, however the dimensions of the choir books varied in scale regardless of geographical location.³⁵ The choir books made for Santa Maria degli Angeli during the final decade of the Trecento and first several decades of the Quattrocento, adhere to the prescription of six staves per page, each staff being a tetragramma (four lines). The San Mattia volumes—the Berlin and Milan Gradual—made in the first half of the fifteenth century also have six tetragramma staves per pages. Since the cuttings have been excised from their original codicological context, measuring and comparing the staff heights helps to create a link between the intact volumes and the loose cuttings. In Venice, from the mid-fourteenth century and into the first few decades of the following one, staff height seemed to range from between 31 mm and 49 mm but the volume size also varied considerably.³⁶

The most recent Cini Foundation catalogue lists cuttings, as well as intact manuscripts, from their collection that were made and/or used in Venice. Beginning with the mid-fourteenth century, a series of twelve excised initials, attributed to a Venetian painter thought to be Giustino del fu Gherardino da Forlì, have on their reverse sides red-ink tetragrammas that measure 31 mm.³⁷ The size of the volume that they originally belonged to has been estimated at 155 × 77 mm.³⁸ This appears to be a standard size ratio for music manuscripts in Venice during this period. Between 1420 and 1450, Cristoforo

³⁵ B. C. Keene, 'Many Voices, Many Hands: Artist Collaboration and Workshop Practices in Early Fourteenth-Century Choir Books from Florence,' PhD diss. (The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2018), pp. 116–117.

³⁶ The most recent Cini Foundation catalogue has a solid list of choir books in Venice from the period in question. See: M. Massimo and F. Toniolo, eds., *Le Miniature della Fondazione Giorgio Cini: pagine, ritagli, manoscritti* (Silvana Editoriale: Milan, 2016).

³⁷ Active in Venice from the seventh to the ninth decade of the fourteenth century. Massimo and Toniolo (2016), pp. 361–367.

³⁸ F. Toniolo, in Massimo and Toniolo (2016), No. 133, p. 361.

Cortese was working on some illuminations for choral books in Venice, and the stave height for these initials measured 49 mm, which is nearly 10 mm taller than the San Mattia staves. The books to which his initials belonged has dimensions of 238 × 218 mm, which is far less than the 600 × 420 mm dimensions of the Berlin and Milan Graduals.³⁹ Despite being contemporaneous with the San Mattia material, this series of choir books does not share the same measurements, and it is not until the mid Quattrocento that we encounter choir books, made in Venice that do share the similar stave heights and volume dimensions.

Between 1467 and 1470, the monks at San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice commissioned a new series of choir books and granted a large portion of the work to Belbello da Pavia.⁴⁰ Other illuminators were also involved, such as the so-called ‘Maestro dell’Antifonario Q,’ who was active in Venice during the third quarter of the fifteenth century.⁴¹ The staves for these choir books measure 42 mm and the overall dimensions of the volumes are 570–580 × 400–432 mm.⁴² This series of choir books is later than the suggested production date for the San Mattia set but are analogous with their dimensions and stave heights. The stave measurements from the mid-late fourteenth century are much smaller than those of the San Mattia cuttings and intact volumes, as are the books’ dimensions. The challenge posed by the cuttings is that, because of their excised state, they do not allow scholars to fully comprehend the size of the original volumes, unless

³⁹ S. Fumian, in Massimo and Toniolo (2016), No. 136, pp. 373–374.

⁴⁰ P. Palladino, *Treasures of a Lost Art. Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press: New York/New Haven/London, 2003), p. 114.

⁴¹ Fumian in Massimo and Toniolo (2016), p. 379.

⁴² G. Toscano, in Massimo and Toniolo (2016), No. 137a, b; Fumian in Massimo and Toniolo (2016), No. 138.

partial or full leaves from the set survive against which to compare. This is true for the San Maggiore volumes and the San Mattia ones, but not for many of Cortese's numerous commissions. All things being equal, however, based on the evidence offered above, the stave heights increase to about 40 mm during the early decades of the Quattrocento and remain as such for monastic houses until at least the mid 1470s. This data could also help support the suggestion that the stave heights of the San Mattia cuttings match those of the intact volumes and therefore, coupled with the stylistic similarities, belong to the same corpus. The argument for the cuttings having once been part of volumes commissioned for the San Mattia set may also find credence in other forms of evidence, such as pigments.

There is technical evidence that could support a provenance of Murano for at least one of the cuttings associated directly with the Ottley sale, and with several others attributed to the Murano Master. In 2016, a blue pigment called smalt was identified in the Fitzwilliam's *Dormition of the Virgin*.⁴³ This pigment was produced by grinding blue glass with cobalt and was the commonest pigment in glassmaking. It also would have been easily obtained in Venice, particularly on Murano, which had an active glass industry by 1291.⁴⁴ Although common in the glass industry it was uncommon in painting until the sixteenth century, and was not documented by the use of Venetian easel painters until the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento.⁴⁵ Thus, the discovery of smalt in

⁴³ S. Panayotova and P. Ricciardi, 'The Masters' Secrets,' in Panayotova (2016), pp. 119–161 (at p. 123).

⁴⁴ Venetian glass making dates back as far as the eighth century but it became concentrated on Murano in early 1291. C. I. Gable, *Murano Magic: Complete Guide to Venetian Glass, Its History and Artists* (Schiffer: Atglen, 2012), p. 16.

⁴⁵ G. Poldi and G. C. F. Villa, 'A New Examination of Giovanni Bellini's Pesaro Altarpiece: Recent Findings and Comparisons with Other Works by Bellini,' in M.

several cuttings by the Murano Master predates this known use by nearly fifty years.⁴⁶ Smalt has also been found in the initial D with *St. Lawrence*, in the National Gallery in Washington, DC (Fig. 162),⁴⁷ and in the Getty's *St. Blaise*.⁴⁸ Since these three fragments can be linked back to the other cuttings in the Murano Master's oeuvre based on their codicological measurements, they may help to connect the entire corpus to the Venetian Lagoon and more specifically to Murano.⁴⁹ The use of smalt in the cuttings also speaks to the technical ingenuity of the Murano Master who seemed to draw on the local resources available and who may have also pioneered the use of this pigment in Venetian manuscript illumination.

The later provenance of the cuttings is also important for trying to establish a connection between the cuttings and San Mattia, although secondary and does rely on a degree of speculation. For this, the Ottley sale may shed some light. Discussed in Ch. 1, the importance of the Ottley sale for this partial reconstruction cannot be overstated because this auction is the first record of these cuttings. The Sotheby's sale catalogue for the Ottley auction is divided into the two days of the sale on 11 and 12 May 1838. On page four, Day 1, the record shows that nine lots containing fourteen cuttings are listed

Spring, H. Howard, C. Christiansen, S. Q. Lomax, M. Palmer, and S. Wilcox, eds., *Studying Old Master Paintings: Technology and Practice, Postprints of The National Gallery Technical Bulletin 30th Anniversary Conference, London, UK, 16–18 September 2009* (National Gallery: London, 2011), pp. 28–36, at p. 34.

⁴⁶ Panayotova and Ricciardi in Panayotova (2016), p. 123.

⁴⁷ Washington, The National Gallery of Art, B-14,48. G. Vikan, ed., *Medieval & Renaissance Miniatures from the National Gallery of Art* (National Gallery of Art: Washington, 1975), No.21.

⁴⁸ The discovery of smalt in the various Murano Master cuttings was the result of a collaboration between the Fitzwilliam Museum, the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, and the Getty Museum and Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles.

⁴⁹ Panayotova and Ricciardi in Panayotova (2016), p. 123.

and under Lot 31, it reads: ‘Two—The Annunciation and Presentation, *richly gilt and coloured from Murano*’ (Fig. 163).⁵⁰

There are two other instances, on this page, where a provenance of ‘Murano’ is given: Lot 32 ‘Two—The Nativity of St. John; and another by the same hand from Murano,’⁵¹ and finally at the bottom of the page, it reads: ‘The Miniature Paintings in the above nine lots are all by the same hand, from Murano.’ (Fig. 164)⁵² This declaration is significant because, if accepted as true, it indicates that all fourteen cuttings once belonged to a religious house on Murano. Additionally, on page twenty of the sale catalogue with the listings from the second day, 12 May, it again lists ‘Murano’ as the provenance: Lot 191 One—The Death of the Madonna, from Murano,’ and for Lot 192, the catalogue states that this cutting is ‘by the same hand.’⁵³ Thus, these two other fragments are also linked to Murano in addition to the fourteen from Day 1 of the sale. The listing of ‘Murano’ as the cuttings’ place of origin in the catalogue is instructive due to its specificity. If the author⁵⁴ of the Ottley sale catalogue were simply choosing a location as a provenance for these particular sixteen cuttings, why not select Venice or another centre of artistic culture, such as Florence?⁵⁵ Murano is such a specific place that it seems reasonable to believe that the fragments were acquired there.

There is no question that the Berlin Gradual was made for use by San Mattia di Murano. There is also the very strong likelihood that the Milan Gradual was a companion

⁵⁰ See Ch. 4, n. 2.

⁵¹ *A Catalogue* (1838), p. 4.

⁵² *A Catalogue* (1838), p. 4.

⁵³ *A Catalogue* (1838), p. 20.

⁵⁴ Christopher de Hamel has suggested to this author that Ottley himself wrote the catalogue in preparation for the sale after his death.

⁵⁵ I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Donal Cooper for raising this issue with me in conversation.

volume to the Berlin manuscript, based on their corresponding codicological evidence and their liturgical content. Based on the codicological, liturgical and technical evidence presented above, it would also be reasonable to suggest that at least sixteen of the cuttings very well could have belonged to volumes associated with the San Mattia series. The remaining cuttings exhibit some or all of the Murano Master's stylistic hallmarks, which connect them to the sixteen fragments preserving concrete evidence. In his history of churches and monasteries in Venice, Flaminio Corner records only two Camaldolese monasteries on Murano: San Michele and San Mattia.⁵⁶ Although Corner has listed San Michele under the umbrella of churches and monasteries on Murano, he notes that San Michele is not on Murano but on another island in the Venetian Lagoon.⁵⁷ Thus, San Mattia is the only Camaldolese monastery on Murano proper. Based on all of the evidence presented, this thesis has drawn the conclusion that the cuttings very likely did once belong to volumes of San Mattia's choir book series.

⁵⁶ F. Corner, *Notizie storiche dalle chiese e monasteri di Veneziane, e di Torcello, tratte dalle chiese venezian, e torcellane* (Giovanni Manfr : Padua, 1758), pp. 624, 637.

⁵⁷ Corner (1758), p. 637.

V. Monastic Corporate Iconography: Self-representation & Liturgy

Of the thirty-six cuttings assigned to the San Mattia series, several warrant a more thorough analysis of their iconographic and liturgical features as these fragments may potentially reveal deeper insights into the spiritual identity of the Venetian Camaldolese. Eight cuttings have been chosen, specifically because of their unusual, under-studied, and wrongly identified subject matter. Furthermore, these eight fragments convey both visual and liturgical information that is crucial to this project's interest in Camaldolese spiritual and monastic identity. The fragments that will be analysed are: *Mission of the Apostles* (see Fig. 9), initial O with the *Dream of St. Romuald* (see Fig. 10), initial O with St. Romuald? (*Male Saint?*) (see Fig. 11), initial O? with *Two Bishops and Two Saints* (see Fig. 12), initial D with a *Female Saint* (see Fig. 13), initial V with *St. John the Evangelist* (see Fig. 14), initial with a *Scene of Sacrilege* (see Fig. 15), and initial B with the *Holy House Floating on the Sea* (see Fig. 16).

Each one will be carefully considered within the larger framework of the Camaldolese history—especially as a reform branch of Benedictine monasticism. Camaldolese liturgy will also be used as a lens to analyse the iconography, when appropriate, and the style of the Murano Master will also be factored into the discussion as a means of probing more acutely the nature of his artistic intelligence. In both the Berlin and Milan Graduals monastic corporate iconography was incorporated as part of the visual programme of certain historiated initials as a means of fusing Camaldolese identity with the biblical narrative of the particular feast being depicted. It would appear that the Murano Master has adopted the same approach with the San Mattia cuttings. To aid with the explication of the iconography and liturgical significance, other fragments

from the San Mattia corpus will be used as comparanda. These include: an initial D with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (Fig. 165), initial T with a *Bishop Consecrating a Church* (see Fig. 116), and initial B with *Archangel Michael Transfixing Satan* (see Fig. 35).

V. i A Rare Full Page & Its Iconographic Messaging

In the full-page illumination depicting the *Mission of the Apostles* in the Wildenstein Collection of the Musée Marmottan (see Fig. 9), the Murano Master has combined stylistic and iconographic features that were likely intended to merge the human world of the monks with the sacred world of the divine figures. Situated within the left-side margin are seven roundels, each containing the bust portrait of a monk. The roundels alternate showing the monks wearing either the white habit of the Camaldolese order or the black one of the Benedictine foundation. While this alternation creates an appealing visual effect, it likely had greater iconographic significance and was intended to convey specific ideas about Camaldolese identity within the broader and older history of Benedictine monasticism. The Camaldolese monks may have seen their identity as interwoven into the fabric of the Benedictine order, and this has been reflected back to them through the use of a vine motif. The Murano Master has employed a winding and looping branch motif that creates the circular frames of the portraits. The design forms an infinity loop—always unbroken—and strongly conveys a visual sense of interconnectedness amongst the busts.

Having developed out of the Benedictine order, the Camaldolese may have viewed themselves as a spiritual evolution of Benedictine monasticism, an idea that the monks of San Mattia sought to express within their choir books. If St. Romuald was the ideological heir to St. Benedict, as has been suggested, then the Camaldolese as a whole would be the spiritual descendants of the Benedictines.⁵⁸ This argument may have fostered a two-fold desire: for the monks to associate themselves with their spiritual

⁵⁸ Bent (2006), p. 383.

‘parentage,’ and to also distinguish themselves as a new manifestation of the Benedictines. The alternation of bust portraits and the use of the looping vine motif in the *Mission of the Apostles* would have conveyed this desire as the Camaldolese are clearly differentiated from their black-robed spiritual ‘ancestors’ yet the vines function to assert their integrated place within Benedictine monastic history.

While bust portraits are not rare in the San Mattia material, in neither the intact volumes nor the cuttings are they treated in this manner. In the opening *Resurrection* folio, from the Berlin Gradual, two bust portraits of Camaldolese monks in white robes are incorporated into the highly elaborate foliate marginalia (Fig. 166). These bust portraits—one on either side of the main miniature—are set in profile and draw attention to the scene unfolding at the centre of the page. While they certainly function to convey Camaldolese ownership of the Gradual, they are not as iconographically integrated into the narrative as the bust portraits of the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*. The bust portraits in the Berlin *Resurrection* appear more disjointed from the overall visual programme, which is due largely to the way in which they are incorporated into the marginalia as decorative disembodied heads.

The two bust portraits in the Berlin *Resurrection* constitute the only examples of the use of this motif in the entire manuscript. It is therefore unsurprising that the Camaldolese portraits are on the opening folio of the Gradual, likely added as a means of conveying ownership, in addition to the spiritual connotations of the portraits. In the Milan Gradual, while Cortese painted bust portraits of various important ecclesiastical figures in the borders of the *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass, he did not paint any bust portraits of monks—Camaldolese or otherwise. Thus, just as Cortese’s bust portraits

were likely intended to convey Camaldolese ideas about their place within the larger ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Marmottan *Mission* may serve its own specific function: to communicate the dynamic between the Camaldolese and the Benedictine order.

The bust portraits, in the *Mission* cutting, also serve another spiritual function: they present the Camaldolese (and Benedictine) monks as new ‘apostles;’ imposing them as witnesses to the birth of the new Christian mission depicted in the main scene. Again, in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass (see Fig. 5), Cortese combined iconographic elements from the Old and New Testaments and imbued this visual programme with monastic corporate iconography. By doing this, Cortese created a temporal ‘layering’ that articulated ideas about Camaldolese identity within the broader biblical and Benedictine histories. In the *Mission of the Apostles* fragment, the Murano Master has achieved the same temporal effect by presenting the original apostles in the main miniature and the ‘new’ apostles in the margins ‘observing’ this sacred event in the centre.

The use of vine imagery may be more than simply an iconographic device, and might have its origins partially in the *Vita beati Romualdi*. In the Camaldolese *Constitutions*, it is written that: ‘...there are some brothers, especially hermits, who work in the Lord’s vineyard by living a life of total dedication to God in solitude, continual prayer, and severe penance, united to the body of Christ by the bonds of a mysterious apostolic fruitfulness.’⁵⁹ The vine and fruit imagery in the above quotation from the *Constitutions* and *Vita beati Romualdi* is reflected in the delicate tendrils of which all of

⁵⁹ Matus, *The Constitutions and Declarations to the Rule of Saint Benedict*. Ch. 6, No. 122; Petri Damiani, ‘Prologus Vita Beati Romualdi,’ in P. Damiani and G. Tabacco, eds., *Vita Beati Romualdi* (Rome: Palazzo Borromini, 1957), p. 52.

the bust portrait medallions are composed. The vines run along the entirety of the cutting, and in this way act as a frame around the inner frame of multi-coloured lozenges—a common motif of the works produced at Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence.⁶⁰ The vines function as a compositional device as they encapsulate the scene in the main miniature. More importantly, the vines also serve as a symbol of a larger iconographic theme: the Romualdian idea of working in the Lord's vineyard, which has its roots in the Gospel text of St. John, in which Christ declares: 'I am the true vine.'⁶¹ On one level, the apostles are working to clarify their mission within the vineyard that the Murano Master has depicted in the cutting; on another level, the apostles are the tendrils that shoot off the vine that is Christ, as they spread the messages of his church throughout the world.

There does not appear to be an iconographic precedence for this vine motif in any of the other cuttings and manuscripts in the San Mattia corpus, or in the volumes belonging to Santa Maria degli Angeli. This absence could strongly suggest that the Murano Master sought inspiration from sources other than the familiar Florentine manuscripts. As discussed in Ch. 3, Fra Angelico used the vine motif in the *Crucifixion* fresco in the Chapter Room at San Marco in Florence also as a framing device for linking the monastic bust portraits of important Dominicans in order to metaphorically strengthen the network of customs and myths that bound this community together (see Fig. 145).⁶² Created between 1438 and 1452, the San Marco fresco is unlikely to be the model for the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*. However, it does demonstrate the appeal of the vine motif as a device that unifies the individual monastic figures under the larger umbrella of

⁶⁰ Levi D'Ancona (1995), p. 113.

⁶¹ John 15: 1–17.

⁶² Hood (1993), p. 124.

Dominican monasticism. While it is likely that the Murano Master was informed by Romualdian and biblical notions of vine symbolism, a visual corollary is not as easily identifiable. This lack of a specific model speaks largely to the Murano Master's own artistic intelligence concerning the creative use of textual sources and monastic corporate iconography to communicate notions of self-representation for the monks at San Mattia. The vine imagery framing the bust portraits in the Marmottan *Mission* would have achieved the same specific aim as in the Dominican Chapter Room in that it visually fortified this monastic community and unified the Camaldolese under their shared customs and myth. The customs were extracted from the Bible, the *Rule*, and Romualdian texts, such as the *Vita beati Romualdi*, and the myth to which the Camaldolese prescribed was that they occupied a special place within Benedictine monasticism, one with a specific spiritual mission.

The disembodied head motif can also be found in other illuminations connected to Santa Maria degli Angeli and San Michele in Isola. Previously discussed in Ch. 2, Don Silvestro's initial R with the *Resurrection*, today in Chantilly, contains two bust portraits of Camaldolese monks in the roundels at the base of the R's stem (see Fig. 77). In this example, the heads convey original Camaldolese provenance; they are also a stylistic feature as they provide visual symmetry within the design of the initial; and they also likely have deeper spiritual importance as facets of monastic corporate iconography. Unlike in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, however, Don Silvestro did not include any bust portraits of Benedictine monks in the Chantilly *Resurrection*, thus keeping the focus solely on the Camaldolese presence in the image.

The number of cuttings that feature monastic bust portraits from the Santa Maria degli Angeli choir books are few but do offer potential models for Cortese and the Murano Master. Most of the initials from the Florentine series have been trimmed so closely that they, like many cuttings from the San Mattia volumes, offer no information as to whether there were any bust portraits originally in the margins. Of the remaining Florentine cuttings that do still have their surrounding borders, none have an iconographic feature like the vine-roundels seen in the Marmottan *Mission*. Nor do any of the artists at Santa Maria degli Angeli appear to have used the alternation of roundels with Camaldolese and Benedictine monastic bust portraits in their choir books. Furthermore, this motif finds no iconographic parallel in any of the extant cuttings belonging to the San Mattia corpus or in either of the intact volumes. This may suggest that, like much of the San Mattia visual material, the Murano Master did not simply adopt the motifs he saw in the Florentine manuscripts but rather fused his own creative ideas with pre-existing ones in order to produce an innovative image of self-representation for the monks at San Mattia.

By comparison, in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass, Cortese integrated saints and other ecclesiastical figures amongst the monastic reformers, such as St. Romuald and St. Francis, as part of the corporate visual programme (see Fig. 4). As discussed in the previous chapter, this iconographic approach may have been intended to express Camaldolese beliefs concerning their identity within the larger framework of monasticism and, more specifically, within the Benedictine tradition. In the Marmottan cutting, the presence of monk portraits may suggest that the monks wanted to see images of themselves—as aspects of their monastic identity—reflected back at them while they

engaged with the books during the Mass and Divine Office. These bust portraits probably drew attention to the micro aspects of Camaldolese monasticism: the monk as individual, versus the macro aspects: the monk as part of the whole order. Thus, the monks of San Mattia may have wanted to see both the overarching framework of Benedictine monasticism and their own unique place within it—as the reform Camaldolese order—mirrored in the books that were integral to their spiritual practices.

In the previous chapters, the presence of bust portraits and Camaldolese monks in the sacred narratives or adjacent to them, was discussed within the ideology of the use of monastic corporate iconography as a means of fashioning their identity within the Benedictine monastic traditions and within the larger arc of a general Christological history. The concept of the ‘surrogate self’ refers to the inclusion of the donor or user of an image within the image in order to function as a spiritual proxy.⁶³ According to Laura Gelfand and Walter Gibson, an image of a donor could be seen as more than just a manifestation of vainglory (in the case of secular patrons): it was actually an active and engaged surrogate working on behalf of the individual’s salvation.⁶⁴ This author would posit that this same notion is true of the monastic depictions of monks in sacred imagery and that this could have been a driving force behind the Camaldolese’s inclusion of themselves in specific biblical narratives. A crucial difference, however, between the images in the San Mattia corpus and the private books and panels of Gelfand and Gibson’s study is that patrons of private devotional materials more often placed themselves kneeling in front of patron saints or the Virgin and less frequently in front of

⁶³ See: L. D. Gelfand and W. S. Gibson, ‘Surrogate Selves: The “Rolin Madonna” and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait.’ *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 29 (2000), pp. 119–138.

⁶⁴ Gelfand and Gibson (2002), p. 122.

Christ or directly in a sacred narrative.⁶⁵ The monks at San Mattia do not appear to have had spiritual anxiety about placing themselves (or donors) directly into a sacred scene: the *Resurrection* initial in the Berlin Gradual, the *Nativity* for Christmas Morning Mass, or in the *Dormition of the Virgin* (Fig. 167).

In the centre of the gathered apostles, standing with his back to the Virgin lying on her funerary bier, is a white-robed figure that could easily be mistaken for an angel. However, upon closer inspection, one can see that he is tonsured, and lacks any divine attributes, such as wings or a nimbus. Yet, unlike in the *Resurrection* initial where the monk stands passively behind the Three Marys looking upward, this little brother holds open the book from which St. Peter is reading. He is, in this way, an active participant in the funeral Mass for the Virgin. It was understood that kneeling effigies that were placed in significant locations were operating as surrogate selves—repeatedly attending Mass or praying for the people who had commissioned the work, be it manuscript illumination, panels, or tomb sculptures.⁶⁶ The figure of the Camaldolese monk may stand in metonymically, as with the other examples of monks present in the San Mattia material, only in this instance he is engaging in the holy Mass in perpetuity communicating the eternal devotion of the brother of San Mattia to the Virgin. Unlike the painted cloisters of fifteenth-century Italian monastic building, which were programmes of self-advertisement where a religious order could convey their corporate myths in a public,

⁶⁵ Gelfand and Gibson (2002), p. 128.

⁶⁶ A good example is the tomb of Alvaro de Luna, first minister under King John II of Castile, made in the 1430s. The tomb features life-size bronze effigies of Luna and his wife that had a mechanism allowing the figures to be raised and lowered into a prayer position during Mass. Gelfand and Gibson (2002), p. 135.

monumental location,⁶⁷ the visual material of the San Mattia choir books was private and only seen by the monks themselves. This reinforces the idea that they may have very much wanted to see themselves literally entrenched in the liturgical material, which perhaps allowed them to make a deeper spiritual connection while singing the accompanying texts. Therefore, the portraits of the monks were not merely decorative but may have had a significant practical function: as a means of being in closer physical and this spiritual proximity to the Divine. This visual tactic is not limited to the main miniature of an initial but can also be found elsewhere in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*.

⁶⁷ Hood (1993), p. 124.

V. ii Rabbits, a Dove & Thirteen (?) Apostles

In the bas-de-page of the Marmottan cutting there are three additional roundels each containing a bust portrait. In the central medallion is an image of the Virgin and Child in which Mary clutches the baby to her chest and presses her face against his in a maternal manner. In the centre of the apostolic gathering, there are three white rabbits frolicking and darting in and out of burrows on the grassy knoll (Fig. 168). The inclusion of rabbits in the foreground of the *Mission of the Apostles* may also have been intended to function as an iconographic allegory, designed to represent the presence of the Virgin. Although rabbits were identified with fecundity in medieval art, Herbert Friedmann has noted that rabbits also symbolize the quality of meekness and are frequently found in images of the Madonna and Child.⁶⁸ Building on this observation, it is perhaps not by accident that the rabbits are located directly above the medallion in the bas-de-page that contains the image of the Madonna and Child. Friedmann also posits that white rabbits, in particular, may have symbolized the purity and controlled sensuality of the Virgin in European art.⁶⁹ Another example of rabbits, in the San Mattia illuminations, is seen in the initial B with the *Old and New Testament Trinity* in the Berlin Gradual (Fig. 169). In this example, the three rabbits are black and grey, not white, therefore it cannot be assumed that the choice to paint the rabbits in the Marmottan cutting with white and blue pigments was a default of some kind. The Murano Master clearly made a deliberate artistic choice to include white rabbits directly above the Virgin and Child medallion.

⁶⁸ H. Friedmann, *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome. Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art* (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, 1980), pp. 287–288.

⁶⁹ Friedmann (1980), pp. 287–288.

In the roundels on either side there are two saintly figures, each wearing a bishop's mitre and a richly patterned cope, and each with a (now only faintly visible) nimbus punched into the burnished gold background, which is badly damaged. Although neither figure has any identifying attributes, they are mostly likely intended to represent St. Romuald in the white habit and St. Benedict in the black. In other Camaldolese manuscripts, St. Romuald and St. Benedict are often paired together for ideological reasons, such as in the bas-de-page of certain pages in the printed missal that belonged to San Michele (Fig. 170). Although St. Romuald and St. Benedict are more easily identifiable in other Camaldolese sources, such as the Milan Gradual—where their names are inscribed below their bust portraits—the mitred figures in the Marmottan cutting are unlikely to be anyone other than Romuald and Benedict.

The scene in the main miniature (see Fig. 9) is unusual because it is not a biblical or Christological narrative that is commonly depicted. It is also remarkable because of the way in which the Murano Master has represented this apostolic legend. The 'Mission of the Apostles' is mentioned in the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, and recounts how Christ gathered the twelve apostles together and instructed them to preach the gospel in all parts of the world.⁷⁰ Despite the fact that this account is not one commonly illustrated, there is another example in the Florentine choral book series, attributed to the so-called Master of the Ashmolean Predella (Fig. 171), today found in the British Library in London.⁷¹ Enclosed within a highly ornate initial E, Christ sits enthroned surrounded by the twelve apostles inside a domed hexagonal temple.

According to Levi D'Ancona, the 'Mission of the Apostles' is more often fused with the

⁷⁰ Matthew 10: 1–42; Mark 6: 7–13; Luke 9: 1–6.

⁷¹ London, British Library, Add. MS. 38896, fol. 1. Kanter et al. (1994), p. 192.

scene of Pentecost, from which it is distinguished by the absence of the Virgin and the domicile in which the apostles gather to receive the Holy Spirit.⁷² However, the design of the London *Mission of the Apostles*, suggests that the artist followed the gospel texts closely, and does not appear to include iconographic elements from Pentecost. Based on the text on the reverse side, this initial illustrates the third responsory of the first nocturne for the Common of Apostles and Evangelists: ‘Ecce mitto ego vos in medio luporum’ (‘Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves’).⁷³ From the text, it can be assumed that this initial was intended to depict the moment when Christ instructs the apostles to go into the world and spread the message of his church, thus rendering the Master of the Ashmolean Predella’s depiction somewhat exemplary of this uncommon narrative.

The Murano Master’s unusual composition, however, does not appear to be based on any iconographic precedent and instead seems to combine aspects of different biblical narratives into one single image. The *Mission of the Apostles* depicts the gathering of the Twelve after both Pentecost and the Death of the Virgin, at which they congregated for a final time in prayer, and ‘...decided to spread the Gospel throughout the world.’⁷⁴ It is unclear which biblical event Levi D’Ancona is citing, as the ‘Mission of the Apostles’ could not have occurred after they received the Holy Spirit, as Christ was present at this gathering in order to give the apostles their instructions concerning the dissemination of the Church. However, based on Levi D’Ancona’s suggestion, and on the visual features of the Marmottan cutting, it would appear that the Murano Master has combined narrative

⁷² Levi D’Ancona (1970), p. 42.

⁷³ Kanter et al. (1994), p. 191.

⁷⁴ Levi D’Ancona (1970), pp. 38, 42.

elements from the gathering of the apostles and Pentecost to create a complex and unprecedented iconography.

In the Marmottan image, the Murano Master has included a tiny white dove hovering above the group of apostles representing the Holy Spirit (Fig. 172).⁷⁵ Thus, if the dove of the Holy Spirit is present, this image—as it stands—cannot be the ‘Mission of the Apostles,’ but rather may be fused with other narratives, as suggested earlier.

Furthermore, the Murano Master has depicted a mass of red pigment, located directly above St. Peter’s head, which is most likely intended to represent the fiery tongues that came upon the Virgin and the apostles during Pentecost as described in Acts.⁷⁶

The above iconographic analysis reinforces Levi D’Ancona’s notion that the ‘Mission of the Apostles’ is often combined with Pentecost. However, her suggestion cannot be used to explain why the Murano Master has included thirteen apostles, of which potentially three are identifiable: St. Peter stands in the centre and St. John, who is youthful and beardless, holds a book (his Gospel or the Book of Revelations).⁷⁷ The apostle with the wild flowing white hair and beard, kneeling on the viewer’s left, could be St. Andrew as this is his prescribed physiognomy.⁷⁸

By having thirteen apostles, the Murano Master has deviated from the scriptural text, which states that St. Peter stood up with the eleven thus making a total of twelve,

⁷⁵ Levi D’Ancona (1970), p. 42.

⁷⁶ ‘And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming: and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as if of fire: and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.’ Acts of the Apostles 2: 2–3.

⁷⁷ Levi D’Ancona (1970), p. 42.

⁷⁸ I thank Dr. Donal Cooper for bringing this possibility to my attention. Kaftal (1978), No. 16, col. 36; G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Sansoni: Florence, 1952), No. 15, Col. 36.

and instead he has painted St. Peter plus twelve other figures, thereby totalling thirteen.⁷⁹ Levi D’Ancona has suggested that the presence of thirteen apostles implies that the artist⁸⁰ acknowledged St. Paul as an apostle although he joined them after Christ’s death and thus was not picked by Jesus.⁸¹ The inclusion of thirteen apostles has no iconographic parallel in the choir books made for either San Michele or Santa Maria degli Angeli, and like the vine roundels in the margin of the Marmottan cutting, suggests that the Murano Master was not reliant upon the extant models as visual guides. In imagery from both series, such as in the *Last Supper* from the San Michele volumes (see Fig. 85) and in the previously cited *Mission of the Apostles* by the Master of the Ashmolean Predella, apostolic gatherings always contained twelve apostles and Christ.

While it can be expected that many of the illuminations from the Murano series—both San Michele and San Mattia—would echo the iconography of the Florentine manuscripts, in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, the Murano Master has relied little upon the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes. Instead he appears to have combined the biblical narrative of the gathering of the apostles with Camaldolese liturgical requirements using the lens of his own creative intelligence to produce this image. The depiction of thirteen apostles is uncommon and warrants further examination of the potential meaning of this iconographic choice. The three apostles that can be more easily identified—St. Peter, St. John, and St. Andrew—fit within the traditional gospel narrative

⁷⁹ Acts of the Apostles, 2:14.

⁸⁰ Levi D’Ancona has attributed the Murano cuttings to Belbello da Pavia. See Ch. 1 for a discussion of the conflation of these two artists.

⁸¹ In her text, Levi D’Ancona writes: ‘The twelfth is St. Barnabas, who replaced Judas after the latter’s treason and defection...’ Either there has been an error wherein Barnabas was written instead of Mattias, or Levi D’Ancona was incorrect about who replaced Judas. Levi D’Ancona (1970), p. 42.

of both the Gathering of the Apostles and Pentecost. The Murano Master has treated the kneeling apostles, gathered around St. Peter, with the intensity of expression for which his work is especially distinguished.⁸² The faces of the apostles convey the inner emotional and psychological state, and the combination of different facial features results in each face being highly individualized. This type of expressive power finds parallels in the frescos of Giovanni da Modena in the Bolognini Chapel in San Petronio, in addition to the corpus of figures produced by Lorenzo Monaco at Santa Maria degli Angeli.⁸³ Despite the high degree of individuation of the apostles' faces, the majority are not identifiable as specific apostles. The ambiguity of this iconographic programme is exacerbated by the two figures standing on either side of St. Peter, and thus warrants a closer examination.

The two bearded men who appear significantly older than the other apostles have their delicate hands raised in prayer while staring into the cloud of fiery tongues, and are seemingly disengaged from the frenetic emotional energy of the figures below. These saintly men exhibit a 'mirror' quality with one another, achieved by their identical facial expressions: furrowed brows, calm eyes, and closed taut lips; style of hair and dress; and their physical posture with raised hands and erect spines. While the Murano Master has depicted the figures in the group below kneeling and contorting towards the sky and each other, the two figures act almost as a frame that encapsulates the scene in the foreground. They stand out, yet are in the background of the main narrative almost as if the Murano Master had intended for them to have a different symbolic function from the (other) apostles in this cutting.

⁸² Padovani (1978), p. 30.

⁸³ Toscano (1998), pp. 10–15; Franco (1998), p. 164.

As discussed in the previous chapter, some of the illuminations in the Milan Gradual seem to exhibit a temporal ‘layering’ that was produced by combining iconographic features from the Old and New Testaments, as seen most prominently in the Milan *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass. In the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, the Murano Master might have had the same objective as Cortese, which was to convey a sense of temporal displacement within the image, which he achieved by including the two older figures as representations of Old Testament prophets. The suggestion that the figures in the Milan *Nativity* are Old Testament prophets is based on the scrolls that they hold, which is very similar to the way in which Old Testament prophets are depicted in the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli (Fig. 173). In the Marmottan *Mission*, this suggestion is based on their much older physiognomy and is offered as a means of trying to explain their position in the image—standing up and back from the kneeling figures. Unlike in examples of works where Old Testament prophets hold scrolls with their names inscribed to help identify them, such as in Pietro Lorenzetti’s *Carmelite Madonna* (Fig. 174), there are no names to indicate which prophets the two figures in Marmottan *Mission* might be.

In the Milan Gradual’s *Nativity* for Christmas Midnight Mass, Cortese included five Old Testament prophets as decorative facets for the initial P. Through a precise combination of these prophets, a narrative from the New Testament (the birth of Christ), and bust portraits of monastic reformers and church fathers, Cortese created an iconographic programme that was likely intended to communicate Camaldolese ideas concerning their spiritual understanding of how Christian history unfolded, and their specific role within that history—and destiny.

As William Hood has noted regarding the painted cloisters at San Marco—and at other observant conventual houses—the intention of these kinds of visual programmes was to record a community’s claim to institutional legitimacy, and to demonstrate the authenticity of the order’s mission to the wider Church.⁸⁴ This ideology can also be applied to the visual programme of liturgical manuscripts, which were a source of spiritual stimuli that the monks would have encountered with a great degree of frequency. Much in the same way as Cortese, the Murano Master may also have been tasked by the monks of San Mattia to create visual material that reflected back to them the ideological and spiritual messages that comprise their sense of self-understanding within the realm of Christian history. If the two bearded figures standing behind St. Peter in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles* are intended to be Old Testament prophets, then the viewer is presented with the pairing of the two halves of Christian time: before and after the coming of Christ.

If the suggestion that these two figures are Old Testament prophets is accepted, then it becomes rather imperative to re-examine the number of figures depicted in the main miniature of the *Mission of the Apostles*. Assigning the title of ‘prophet’ to these two figures reduces the number of apostles from thirteen to eleven, including St. Peter. Eleven apostles would correlate with the period after Judas’s betrayal and subsequent expulsion from the group, but before St. Matthias was chosen to replace him. However, St. Matthias was selected by lot after the ascension of Christ but before the descent of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵ Based on this biblical timeline, the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles* does

⁸⁴ Hood (1993), p. 124.

⁸⁵ Acts of the Apostles 1: 23–26.

not coordinate with either the Gathering of the Apostles, which occurred prior to Christ's death, or with Pentecost.

Alternatively, given that the Murano Master may have been combining iconographic elements from two different apostolic narratives, perhaps it would be worth proposing that there is a third biblical event incorporated into the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*. According to the timeline in the New Testament, there were eleven apostles at the Ascension of Christ, which occurred after Judas's expulsion and prior to Matthias's selection as his replacement:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem, within a sabbath [sic] day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Apheus and Simon Zelotes and Jude the brother of James.⁸⁶

As the above quotation from Acts of the Apostles shows, eleven apostles returned from witnessing Christ's ascension into Heaven, and only afterwards did they begin the process of electing another man to take the place of Judas. While these verses function as textual examples for the presence of only eleven apostles (including St. Peter), the two preceding verses may offer some additional textual support for the presence of the two bearded figures standing behind St. Peter in the Marmottan cutting: 'And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments.'

⁸⁶ Acts of the Apostles 1: 12–13. 'tunc reverse sunt Hierosolymam a monte qui vocatur Oliveti qui est iuxta Hierusalem sabbati habens iter et cum introissent in cenaculum ascenderunt ubi manebant Petrus et Iohannes Iacobus et Andreas Philippus et Thomas Bartholomeus et Mattheus Iacobus Alpei et Simon Zelotes et Iudas Iacobi.'

Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven?’⁸⁷ The two standing figures in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles* are rendered in such a way that they possess a sense of separateness from the other figures. Firstly, they stand on either side of St. Peter, the golden temple behind him, and the Holy Spirit and fiery tongues above. They function almost as a framing device for these crucial iconographic elements. Secondly, the Murano Master has rendered both figures with a fixed upward gaze that not only draws the attention of the viewer to the dove and fiery cloud, but also accords these figures with an almost otherworldly aura. This divine-like quality contrasts sharply with the much more human quality of the apostles below, whose facial expressions convey a variety of emotions, ranging from concern to pensiveness to curiosity. The standing figures do not appear to have any emotions or judgments concerning the celestial activities occurring at the top of the miniature.

The suggestion that the Murano Master might have included an aspect of the Ascension narrative is not intended to imply that the Marmottan cutting is the Ascension, as there is already an illumination for this feast in the Berlin Gradual. However, as speculated earlier in this discussion, the Murano Master may have combined elements from different narratives including Pentecost and the Gathering of the Apostles to create an image that was intended to satisfy the spiritual needs of the monks at San Mattia. The ‘Mission of the Apostles,’ as outlined in the gospels in which it is mentioned, emphasises the importance of Christ’s role in that event as the one from whom the apostles received their instructions about proselytizing. The word ‘Inclitus,’ which is the only visible text

⁸⁷ Acts of the Apostles 10: 10–11. ‘cumque intuerentur in caelum eunte illo ecce duo viri adstiterunt iuxta illos in vestibus alba quie et dixerunt viri galilaei quid statis aspicientes in caelum...’

on the Marmottan cutting, likely opens the hymn *Inclitus pater rector*, which is chanted at Lauds for one priest.⁸⁸ The prominence of St. Peter, in the Marmottan cutting, combined with the use of the image as part of the office of Lauds, visually and liturgically reinforces St. Peter's role as Christ's representative on earth. It would appear that the Murano Master has substituted St. Peter for Christ in the central position of the composition. Additionally, the composition of *the Mission of the Apostles* seems to further reinforce St. Peter's central place within it, as the eye is immediately drawn to the figure of St. Peter who functions as the centre point of an axis that runs from the fiery cloud and holy dove down to the centre medallion containing the Virgin and Child and runs parallel with the line of monastic bust portraits in the left margin.

⁸⁸ Ad Laudes Matutinas; Pro uno pastore. *Antiphoner Romanum. Liber Hymnarius* (Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes: Solesmes, 1983), pp. 293–294.

VI. Romualdian Portraiture: Images of the Camaldolese Founder

Of all of the dismembered San Mattia cuttings, the use of corporate iconography is most evident in the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*. However, there are other illuminations belonging to the corpus that reveal information about some of the ideas regarding Camaldolese self-identity, especially those images that include a depiction of St. Romuald. The *Dream of St. Romuald* (see Fig. 10),⁸⁹ in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, illustrates the origin of the Camaldolese foundation myth, and thus provides a wealth of ‘Romualdian’ iconography to unpack. First, however, it is critical to the discussion to outline the history of the myth and clarify some of the inconsistencies within it, particularly in regards to the attribution of the dream to St. Romuald.

Despite the spiritual and historical significance of the dream legend, the story is not recorded in the *Vita beati Romualdi*. Although the dream came to be ascribed to St. Romuald as his own personal experience, the account of it in the *Annales Camaldulenses* attributed it to a man called Count Maldolo. The dream narrative is found in other key Camaldolese texts, including the *Liber eremitice regule* of the Blessed Rudolph, and is accounted herein as: St. Romuald encountered Count Maldolo while on one of his eremitical sojourns, this time in the Apennines. The Count told St. Romuald of a vision that he had in which he saw a ladder connecting earth with Heaven, and upon which white-robed men ascended and descended the ladder.⁹⁰ After recounting his divine vision

⁸⁹ Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1973.692. J. F. Hamburger, W. P. Stoneman, A.-M. Eze, L. Fagin Davis, and N. Netzer, eds. *Beyond Words. Illuminated Manuscripts in Boston Collections* (McMullen Museum of Art: Boston, 2016), no. 34.

⁹⁰ ‘...quod Maldulus viderate visionem quamdam, in qua vidit scalam eretam usque ad caelum, per quam ascendebant et descendebant homines albi...’ *Liber eremitice regule* of

Could Maldolo offered to assist with the establishment of the new order by donating the land, where the dream occurred to St. Romuald upon which the Motherhouse could be founded.⁹¹

Aside from the version recorded in the *Liber eremitice regule*, the first account of this dream can be found in a fourteenth-century manuscript, preserved in the library of the Fraternità dei Laici in Arezzo.⁹² This text chronicled a variation of the original dream story that was perhaps intended to shift the miracle event from Count Maldolo to St. Romuald, at least partially. The dei Laici manuscript claims that after the vision of Count Maldolo, St. Romuald returned to the location of the dream and had the same dream, himself.⁹³ George Bent has argued that for St. Romuald, this dream signified the righteousness of his quest for monastic reformation and for his followers the dream symbolized their distinct mission and confirmed their permanent distinction from the established Benedictine order.⁹⁴ The textual variation in the dei Laici manuscript is clearly intended as a means of ‘transferring’ the vision to St. Romuald’s life, thereby legitimising the Camaldolese claim of this significant event.

The dream legend found in the *Liber* is the version in which only Count Maldolo has the holy vision, and yet despite this the majority of images depicting the Camaldolese foundation myth only show St. Romuald having the dream. It was obviously important

the Blessed Rudolph is edited in D. J.-B. Mittarelli and D. A. Costadoni, *Annales Camaldulenses*, III, (J. B. Pasquali: Venice, 1758), Ch. 28.

⁹¹ *Liber* (1758), App. 52.

⁹² G. Mazzatinti, *Inventari ei manoscritti delle biblioteche d’Italia*, vol. VI (L. Bordandini: Forli, 1886), p. 237.

⁹³ ‘Quo audito vir Dei, tamquam divino illustatus oraculo, mox campum petiit, locum vidit, et eandem visionem postmodum in eodem loco conspexit, cellasque ibidem construxit.’ Cataluccio and Fossa (1979), 432.

⁹⁴ Bent (2006), p. 24.

for the iconography to reflect this specific version of the event as it would have reinforced the spiritual authority of St. Romuald to his followers. Still, the foundation legend has splintered into two iconographic types: one which Cécile Caby refers to as a ‘double vision,’ and another in which only St. Romuald experiences the dream.⁹⁵ The ‘double vision’ iconography is demonstrated in a panel painting in Florence, attributed to an unknown Pisan painter from ca. 1400 (Fig. 175).⁹⁶ In this panel, the heavenly ladder, upon which white-robed tonsured monks ascend into the open arms of Christ, protrudes skyward in between two sleeping figures. The haloed St. Romuald lies against a rock, head supported by his hand, and identifiable by his long beard, white robe, and T-shaped staff. On the right an older bearded male figure—presumably Count Maldolo—sleeps sitting upright with his head resting on his hand and wearing a white cap. By placing the ladder between the two figures the artist has cleverly expressed the notion that both men are having the same dream. This stressed the equality of both dreamers and clearly depicts the *dei Laici* version of the dream legend.

This ‘double vision’ iconography is not a common occurrence within Camaldolese visual culture, which is unsurprising as the order very likely wanted the dream to be St. Romuald’s alone, and therefore would have desired images that reflected this version of the story. Yet, regardless of the spiritual importance of the dream legend, in early representations this narrative was restricted to altarpiece predellas, and St. Romuald appeared on the main altarpiece panels as a supporting saint, with other figures

⁹⁵ Caby (1995), p. 141.

⁹⁶ Florence, Uffizi Gallery. Caby (1995), p. 141.

taking primacy, namely St. Benedict.⁹⁷ Despite the bountiful artistic culture that would eventually develop within the wider Camaldolese community, particularly at the houses of Santa Maria degli Angeli and San Michele in Isola, virtually no visual art was produced in the early years of the order's development. This was likely due to the fact that the Camaldolese transmitted their myths and legends orally.⁹⁸

Of the very limited cases in which scenes from St. Romuald's life have been depicted, the 'Dream of St. Romuald' is the most common.⁹⁹ Extant examples of this hagiographical narrative typically follow the 'single vision' version, which feature St. Romuald as the protagonist. While the Boston *Dream of St. Romuald* (see Fig. 10), follows this iconography, it demonstrates a remarkable visual departure from both the single and double vision narratives. Instead of white-robed men ascending and descending the ladder, the Murano Master has painted angels in their place, while Camaldolese monks are gathered around watching. In the centre of the cutting, St. Romuald sleeps against an altar with his head resting in the crook of his arm, cushioned by the robe's massive tubular folds of fabric. The Liber's text, which recounts the details of the vision clearly states that it was men ascending and descending the ladder ('...ascendebant & descendebant homines albi...')¹⁰⁰ and it does not mention angels being present in the vision.

⁹⁷ A. Labriola, 'Per Don Simone, minatore camaldolese,' *Arte Cristiana* 792 (1999), pp. 189–202 (at p. 194).

⁹⁸ Bent (1992), p. 517.

⁹⁹ Other scenes from the saint's life that have been depicted are 'St. Romuald tempted by demons,' St. Romuald preaching,' and 'The appearance of St. Apollinaris to St. Romuald.'

¹⁰⁰ Liber (1758), col. 28.

Other known depictions of the ‘Dream of St. Romuald’ do not appropriate the legend in the same manner as seen in the Boston fragment. In 1365, Nardo di Cione painted a polyptych for the chapter house of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, which features the Trinity in the central panel flanked by St. Romuald on the left panel and St. John the Baptist on the right (Fig. 176).¹⁰¹ In the predella below are three smaller scenes from St. Romuald’s life, one of which shows the *Dream of St. Romuald* (Fig. 177). In this version, Nardo di Cione has faithfully depicted the event with white-robed monks preparing to ascend the ladder while St. Romuald sleeps at the base of an altar. Similarly, in the Uffizi panel attributed to the unknown Pisan painter, three tonsured, white-robed monks clearly ascending the ladder, as they look upward directly into the face of God. The only angels in this image are the two that surround the Camaldolese emblem, painted just above St. Romuald’s head. It is clear that in both examples the artists have favoured the traditional legend narrative, staying within the iconographic parameters of the story.

Although the Murano Master has incorporated angels into his adaptation of the ‘Dream of St. Romuald’ legend, presumably at the request of the monks of San Mattia, he has not excluded the white-robed men that were integral to the original account. By fusing these two elements, the Murano Master has created a ‘layered’ effect, a dream-within-a dream, wherein St. Romuald sees the angels who are relaying to him a divine message concerning the foundation of his reform order, and the white-robed men who represent the monks of this yet-unfounded monastery.

The composition of the Boston cutting also differs from the previously discussed examples in that the ladder appears to be projecting out from the head of the sleeping

¹⁰¹ Florence, Galleria dell’Accademia. *Galleria dell’Accademia* (Giunti: Florence, 1999), pl. 22.

saint, conveying the dream-like nature of the vision. Unlike in the paintings by Nardo di Cione and the anonymous Pisan painter where St. Romuald is relegated to the side of the scene, the Murano Master has placed in directly in the centre of the image, making him the visual nucleus from which the other elements of the composition stem. The Murano Master has painted him on the same linear axis as the ladder, thereby strengthening the ideological link between these two key iconographic elements. The angels on the ladder call to mind the story of the biblical Patriarch Jacob and his dream as described in Genesis: ‘And when he was to come to a certain place, and would rest in it after sunset, ... [he] slept in the same place. And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven: the angels also of God ascending and descending by it.’¹⁰² In the New Testament, the Gospel of John also recounts a similar event: ‘And he saith to him: Amen, amen, I say to you, you shall see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’¹⁰³ It is within these texts that a potential source for the Murano Master’s choice to depict angels, not men, on the ladder may be found. The inclusion of angels in the Boston cutting might have been intended to function as a visual allusion to the metaphor of Christ as the mythical ladder.

The ladder rising to heaven was often used by the Church Fathers, especially as a metaphor for Christ who bridges the gap between heaven and earth.¹⁰⁴ In the second-century writings of Irenaeus, the Christian Church is interpreted as the ‘ladder of ascent

¹⁰² ‘Cumque venisset ad quondam locum et vellet in eo requiescere post solis...[is] dormivit in eodem loco. Viditque in somnis scalam stantem super terram et cacumen illius tangens caelum angelos quoque Dei ascendentes et descendentes per eam.’ Genesis 28:11–12.

¹⁰³ ‘Et dicit ei amen amen dico vobis videbitis caelum apertum et angelos Dei ascendentes et descendentes supra Filium hominis.’ John 1: 51.

¹⁰⁴ B. Keach, *Christ Alone the Way to Heaven or Jacob’s Ladder Improved* (Benja Harris: London, 1698), pp. 20–23.

to God.’¹⁰⁵ This ideology can be applied within the Camaldolese foundation story because St. Romuald sought to return to a more traditional Benedictine lifestyle as a means of attaining a closer spiritual proximity to God. The depictions of the ladder physically linking the earth (and the monks ascending it) with Heaven (God’s open arms at the top) convey the notion that the monastic order that St. Romuald founded could be viewed as being the ladder itself; that the Camaldolese order is a vehicle for reaching God. In the third century, Origen of Alexandria expressed the notion that there are two ladders in Christian life: an ascetic ladder that the soul climbs during ones earthly life through an increase in virtue, and the second one upon which the soul climbs after death to heaven towards the light of God.¹⁰⁶ This notion of two ladders is very much in line with Camaldolese ideology, as asceticism was an integral aspect of Camaldolese life and spirituality from the very beginnings of the order’s foundation.

When discussing the *Coronation* altarpiece at Santa Maria degli Angeli, Bent has noted that the complexities of the liturgy (as reflected in the iconography of the altarpiece) suggest that the monastic community participated in the creation of its programme, as monks may likely have requested references to the Virgin, the Baptist, St. Peter and St. Benedict.¹⁰⁷ Like their Florentine brothers, the monks at San Mattia would have been actively involved in the conception and development of the choir books’ visual programme, and therefore the Murano Master’s substitution of angels for monks may have been a direct request from the brothers. The Boston cutting demonstrates how the

¹⁰⁵ Irenaeus, *Liber de praescriptione haereticorum*. Accendunt S. Irenaei *Adversus haereses* III 3-4. G. Rauschen, ed., (Sumptibus P. Hanstein: Bonnae, 1914), 24, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Origen, *Homilies on Numbers*, T. P. Scheck, trans. C.A. Hall, ed., (IVP Academic: Downers Grove, 2009), No. 27, nm. 33: 1–49.

¹⁰⁷ Bent (2006), p.383.

Murano Master infused critical Camaldolese iconography with his own creative intelligence to create an image that is unique to San Mattia's choir books yet still conformed to the necessary spiritual guidelines required for Mass.

In the printed missal, belonging to San Michele, there is an elaborate historiated initial R that accompanies the introit to the Mass for the feast of St. Romuald. Depicted therein, St. Romuald is shown asleep against an altar with a ladder reaching towards heaven. On the ladder there are two angels that appear to be climbing towards God the Father (Fig. 178).¹⁰⁸ That this very specific iconographic feature of the Camaldolese foundation legend has been visualized in liturgical material belonging to San Mattia and San Michele may signify that it was a significant concept for the Venetian Camaldolese houses, especially.¹⁰⁹ This suggestion may also be buttressed by the absence of this iconographic element in images of the same legend produced at/for the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, as in the example of Nardo di Cione's altarpiece. Unfortunately, as so few images of the 'Dream of St. Romuald' survive—or were originally painted—it would be difficult to gather a large enough corpus to make a visual comparison between Santa Maria degli Angeli and the Venetian houses. However, the extant material demonstrates the use of angels on the ladder in two instances in the religious material for the Venetian Camaldolese houses. Somewhat surprisingly, Levi D'Ancona's inventories for the choir books of Santa Maria degli Angeli and Santa Maria Nuova do not list the 'Dream of St. Romuald' as having been a part of the original

¹⁰⁸ London, British Library, C. 24, f. 8, fol. 229r.

¹⁰⁹ Another possibility is that the engraver responsible for the San Michele missal's woodcuts was looking at the choir books of San Mattia, which were still at the monastery in the sixteenth century.

series.¹¹⁰ In terms of the Florentine corpus, Levi D’Ancona records one example, the aforementioned historiated initial O with St. Romuald enthroned with a bishop saint (probably St. Augustine), John Gualbert—the founder of the Vallumbrosan order, and St. Maurus and St. Placidus—two of St. Benedict’s disciples.¹¹¹

Beyond the iconography of St. Romuald’s legend, the Murano Master appears to have further deviated from conventional representations of the saint’s physiognomy by portraying him as a young, beardless tonsure monk with golden hair. According to George Kaftal, depictions of St. Romuald in most regions of Italy typically show him with a long, dark beard, and usually as a much older man.¹¹² This generalized description of St. Romuald accords with the Florentine examples already discussed: *St. Romuald Enthroned* (see Fig. 144) and the panel by the Pisan painter (see Fig. 175), as well as the Nardo di Cione panel (see Fig. 177). The only exception to Kaftal’s description of St. Romuald, within his corpus of iconography of saints in Italian art, is found in images from North West Italy. It is here that Kaftal mentions St. Romuald depicted as a ‘middle-aged beardless monk in white’ and references the Boston cutting as an example from this region.¹¹³ The Murano Master’s depiction of St. Romuald as a young monk may have simply been a choice to render the saint in the earlier part of his life.

¹¹⁰ Levi D’Ancona (1994), pp. 88–112.

¹¹¹ London, British Library Add. MS. 37, 472 (3) (Corale 2, fol. 90). Kanter et al. (1994), p. 133, fig. 48.

¹¹² See: Kaftal (1952), no. 272; (1978), no. 264; G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Le Lettere: Florence, 1986), no. 341.

¹¹³ G. Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art. Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Casa Editrice le Lettere: Florence, 1985), no. 201, col. 571.

VII. Other Romualds?: Additional Images of the Founding Saint

The Boston cutting is the most iconographically dense depiction of a scene from St. Romuald's life that is associated with the Murano Master's corpus. The straightforward subject matter facilitates the easy identification of the narrative and allows for the cutting to be inserted into the partial reconstruction with a great degree of accuracy. In addition to this image, there may be two other cuttings that illustrate the Camaldolese founding saint but whose iconography provides less visual surety, and therefore leans towards a speculative attribution. The initial O with *St. Romuald? (Male Saint?)* (see Fig. 11),¹¹⁴ depicts a middle-aged white-robed monk in three-quarter profile. The figure wears a pale pink cope with mosaic gold edges embellished with pseudo-Arabic detail and a large oval broach, and holds an open book in his gloved hands. Sold through Christie's and now in a private collection, this cutting has been assigned to the Murano Master's corpus on the basis of stylistic similarities with other illuminations in his oeuvre.

Evident in the initial are some of the Murano Master's stylistic hallmarks, specifically the application of pseudo-Arabic script on the figure's garment, as well as on the nimbus and along the edge of the initial. The use of linear hatching on the figure's robe, the sun-blushed cheeks and his deeply thoughtful expression are key features of the Murano Master's style, all of which are also found in this cutting.¹¹⁵ Based on the presence of these features, it is then reasonable to agree with the attribution of this fragment to the Murano Master's oeuvre. The initial has been mounted onto card with

¹¹⁴ London, Private Collection, 12 June 2013, Sale 1176, Lot 11. <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/st-romuald-initial-o-by-the-master-5685579-details.aspx>.

¹¹⁵ See Ch. 1, Sec. IX for a discussion of the Murano Master's defining stylistic characteristics.

modern burnished gold ground to match the interior burnished gold space. Without access to the reverse side, the original liturgical material on the back cannot be recovered. Presumably, if this is a representation of St. Romuald,¹¹⁶ then the ‘O’ may have opened the text ‘Os justi meditabitur sapientiam...,’ which is part of the Communion of One Confessor (not a Pope), and would have been used for the feast Mass of St. Romuald celebrated on 19 June (Fig. 179).¹¹⁷ The provenance of this cutting can be traced back to the Holford Collection, which was the private collection of Sir George Lindsay Holford and housed at the now-demolished Dorchester House near London.¹¹⁸ George Holford inherited the collection from his father, Robert Stayner Holford, who was an avid collector and acquired many cuttings from the Ottley sales in 1838.¹¹⁹ The catalogue entry for this cutting states that it once belonged to Ottley and was probably sold on 11 May 1838 at Sotheby’s, possibly in Lot 33, which consisted of two cuttings: ‘A Male and Female Saint’ (Fig. 180).¹²⁰

Since there is no accessible liturgical evidence to either support or refute the claim that the privately owned initial O depicts St. Romuald, we need to turn to iconographic analysis and more specifically the physiognomy of the figure. The white

¹¹⁶ This initial has been speculatively called ‘St. Romuald’ in the Christie’s sale catalogue for 12 June 2013, Sale 1176, Lot 11.

¹¹⁷ Calendar page for the month of June from the missal of San Michele. London, British Library, C. 24, f. 8, fol. 16r.

¹¹⁸ This cutting is listed as Cat. No. 27 (c). G. Holford and R. Benson, *The Holford Collection, Dorchester House, with 200 Illustrations from the Twelfth to the End of the Nineteenth Century*. 2 Vols. (Oxford University Press/Humphrey Milford: Oxford and London, 1927).

¹¹⁹ Holford and Benson (1927), p. ix.

¹²⁰ Lots 35 and 36 are of a ‘Bishop’ and lot 37 is listed as ‘Another,’ which could have meant another bishop. Since the figure in the San Mattia cutting does not have a mitre, he is probably a saint but not a bishop. Furthermore, in the Holford Catalogue, he is listed as ‘A Reading Saint.’

hooded robe worn by the figure can indicate that this is a Camaldolese monk, and the book that he holds could be the ‘Rule of St. Romuald,’ which in addition to the T-shaped staff is also one of his attributes.¹²¹ As mentioned briefly above, Kaftal has noted certain physiognomic features in the depiction of saints depending on the Italian region in which the images were produced. Paintings from North East Italy typically present St. Romuald as a middle-aged monk with a long black beard, all in white.¹²² In Tuscany, however, St. Romuald is represented as an old bearded monk in white holding a book or other attributes.¹²³

While these descriptions can be taken as stylistic generalizations, depictions of St. Romuald—as with other religious iconography—probably do conform to regional variances, which would result in the kind of iconographic typology seen in Kaftal’s work. The figure in the privately owned cutting appears to be a composite of these iconographic features: he is a middle-aged monk with a short blond beard holding a book. This fusion of physiognomic features from two different regions is not surprisingly considering that the Murano Master drew inspiration from various environs, including Florence via the Santa Maria deli Angeli illuminators. It would, therefore, not be unreasonable to consider the possibility that he may have incorporated stylistic elements from different localities into his depiction of St. Romuald.

In addition to the privately owned *St. Romuald(?)*, there is another fragment, possibly associated with the San Mattia series that has gone largely unstudied, also due to its ambiguous iconography: an initial O with *Two Bishops and Two Saints*, at the

¹²¹ Kaftal (1952), col. 895f; (1986), col. 973.

¹²² Kaftal (1978), col. 903.

¹²³ Kaftal (1952), col. 895.

Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (see Fig. 12).¹²⁴ Until now, there has been no attempt to identify any of the figures. As with many of the San Mattia fragments, the New York cutting has visible text on the reverse side that is too partial to reveal anything about the original feast to which it corresponded (Fig. 181), therefore any endeavour to name these figures hinges purely on iconographic analysis, specifically their physiognomy and attributes.

The numerous examples within Camaldolese visual culture of images in which St. Romuald and St. Benedict are paired together provide support for the suggestion that the ‘two bishops’ in the New York initial may likely be St. Romuald and St. Benedict. The figure on the left is painted with a full white beard—a common physiognomic feature of St. Romuald.¹²⁵ This figure is wearing a white robe, just visible underneath his green cope, which is likely to be the Camaldolese habit. Similarly, the ‘bishop’ on the right displays many iconographic attributes of St. Benedict, including a dark beard and mitre, and he holds a crosier in one hand and a book in the other (in this example in a book girdle).¹²⁶ Additionally, it makes ideological sense for these two saints to be paired together as they were the most deeply revered figures in Camaldolese liturgy.¹²⁷

Although a mitre is not a typical attribute of St. Romuald, the New York cutting is not the only example in which the founding Camaldolese saint is represented wearing one, particularly within the San Mattia material. In the bas-de-page of the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, the figures of St. Romuald and St. Benedict are both rendered, in their respective habits and richly decorated copes, wearing a mitre (see Fig. 148). Mitres

¹²⁴ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 48.40. Drake Boehm (2008), p. 59.

¹²⁵ Kaftal (1978), col. 125.

¹²⁶ Kaftal (1978), col. 125; (1952), col. 145.

¹²⁷ Bent (2006), p. 30.

and croziers could also denote the rank of an abbot as well as that of a bishop, thus if the figure in the New York cutting is St. Romuald, it was more likely that he was being shown as the former rather than the latter.¹²⁸ The attire of participants in symbolic or religious rites transforms their appearance with evocations of power, reverence, and tradition.¹²⁹ According to Susan L'Engle, it was not uncommon for medieval illuminators to manipulate elements of fashion, accessories, and hairstyles to characterize passages within manuscripts that discuss divisions of authority.¹³⁰ By depicting St. Romuald in the garments of an abbot, the Murano Master may have been trying to convey an idea about St. Romuald's authority within the boundaries of Camaldolese worship.

The two younger figures that stand behind St. Romuald and St. Benedict in the New York initial have also never been accurately identified. They both hold palm branches and each likely has a nimbus etched into the now-badly damaged burnished gold ground. It has been speculated that they might be St. Cosmas and St. Damian.¹³¹ This seems unlikely since these figures lack the typical saintly attributes associated with St. Cosmas and St. Damian. As twins, they were often—if not always—depicted with the same features that reflected their status as medical doctors, including medicinal jars and

¹²⁸ I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Donal Cooper for bringing this possibility to my attention.

¹²⁹ M. E. Snodgrass, 'Ritual Garments,' *World Clothing and Fashion: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Social Influence*, Vols. 1–2 (Routledge: London and New York, 2014), p. 487.

¹³⁰ S. L'Engle, 'Addressing the Law: Costumes as Signifier in Medieval Legal Miniatures,' in D. G. Koslin and J. E. Snyder, eds., *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress. Objects, Texts, Images* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2002), pp. 137–156 (at p. 137).

¹³¹ This suggestion has never been published officially but was in a note, written by the curator of manuscripts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the object file.

specific garments.¹³² The young figures in the New York cutting are not represented with these identifying attributes and therefore are unlikely to be St. Cosmas and St. Damian.

Instead, it may be possible to offer an alternative identification for these young figures: St. Justus and St. Clement. The iconography of the figures accords with established representations of them and they are both named specifically in the Berlin Gradual (see Fig. 62). Folio 80r of the Berlin Gradual contains a historiated initial S with two young male figures representing St. Justus and St. Clement as indicated by the rubric for the Mass that follows: 'In sanctorum iusti et clementis...'. Aside from the initials with Christological events, this is the only one for which the figures are named explicitly in the rubric preceding the new Mass; the others simply contain generic prophets with no correlation to the proceeding Mass.

The physiognomy of the St. Justus and St. Clement in the Berlin Gradual is very similar to that of the two young figures in the New York fragment. Both pairs of figures wear similar styles of garments—simple monochromatic tunics under their copes—while holding a single palm branch. The hairstyles are nearly identical, as are the shape and composition of their faces: smooth flesh that is highly modelled and gives the appearance that it is raised off of the parchment. The figure on the left in both initials even possesses two widely spaced front teeth seen in other figures attributed to the Murano Master. Naturally, the Murano Master could depict any generic saints using these particular features, however the two young figures in the New York cutting do strongly resemble St. Justus and St. Clement from fol. 80v in the Berlin Gradual. These saints clearly held some spiritual significance for the monks at San Mattia in order to have a Mass in their

¹³² Kaftal (1978), no. 264.

honour, and, as discussed in Ch. 2, there is a Camaldolese abbey dedicated to St. Justus and St. Clement in Volterra. Given all of this information, it would perhaps be quite logical to suspect that the figures in the New York initial are St. Justus and St. Clement.

While the suggestion that the figures in the New York fragment are St. Benedict, St. Romuald, St. Justus and St. Clement may be satisfying, there is still the problem of the highly fragmented text on the reverse side. Unfortunately, the reverse does not offer enough liturgical information for the original text to be identified, thus rendering it extremely difficult to place the initial back into its correct liturgical order within the *Sanctorale*. However, if this initial does depict St. Romuald then this is yet a third representation of the Camaldolese founding saint that may be associated with the San Mattia corpus. These multiple images of St. Romuald ranging from youthful (the *Dream of St. Romuald* [see Fig. 10]) to an aged appearance (the New York cutting [see Fig. 12]) offer an almost panoramic span of the saint's life. The need for multiple depictions of their founding saint might fulfil a desire to contemplate more deeply St. Romuald's role within the narrative of Camaldolese history and the larger Christian narrative: the Dream of St. Romuald represents the order's foundation; the initial O with St. Romuald (private collection [see Fig. 11]), which shows him holding what is likely either the Rule of St. Benedict or perhaps his own Rule, may reinforce his devotion to Benedictine monasticism; and the New York cutting would represent St. Romuald's close connection with St. Benedict.

This desire by the Camaldolese monks to understand St. Romuald's life and virtues more fully is reflected in the prologue for his Vita, written by Peter Damian of Fonte Avellana: 'They are eager to hear the story of his [St. Romuald] life...for I feel

compelled by the requests of so many brethren and bound by fraternal love, so I am putting into script what I have gotten from the disciples of his wonderful man and, with God's help, will try to describe his life from beginning to end.¹³³ It has already been established that the Camaldolese esteemed images with liturgical and spiritual importance, and therefore to have the life of St. Romuald reflected back to them through images would be a natural course of action on their behalf.

¹³³ Petri Damiani in Tabacco (1957), p. 10.

VIII. Camaldolese Portraiture: Enigmatic Figures

In addition to the images of St. Romuald, there are other cuttings that speak about the nature of Camaldolese identity and self-representation, found within the San Mattia material. One such fragment is the historiated initial with an *Unidentified Female Saint* (see Fig. 13), in Cambridge, which was attributed to the Murano Master's corpus in 2005.¹³⁴ Like so many of the San Mattia fragments, this initial was trimmed very closely when excised from the choir books and now the original letter shape is difficult to discern, although O, D, C, or G have been suggested as possible options. A primary identification was put forth in 2005, when it was suggested that this figure may be a depiction of St. Clare, and therefore would have opened the introit for the Mass on her feast day (11 August).¹³⁵ However, there may be more a plausible identification for the female figure based on a closer reading of the iconography and the liturgical text on the reverse side.

The text on the reverse of the image is extremely fragmentary, consisting of a decorated initial E and two partial syllables: '[...] *um ver* [...]' (Fig. 182).¹³⁶ Despite its fractured state this text may still provide important information as to its original liturgical source. When the '*...um ver...*' is compared against the introit for the feast of St. Clare, it is clear that this combination of letters does not appear in the opening lines of the text.

¹³⁴ Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4165 (10). S. Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), No. 60b.

¹³⁵ *O virginale liliū et paupertatis speculum Clara contemplationes speculum viam secuta Christi ora spretis divitiis hic nos sivi delitiis*. Panayotova in Binski and Panayotova (2005), pp. 150–151.

¹³⁶ The reverse side of the cutting could have been the verso of the original leaf, containing the continuation of the feast introduced by the image. It could also have been the recto of the original leaf, thus containing the text of a preceding feast.

This sequence of letters can, however, be found in the second verse of Psalm 44: *Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum dico ego opera mea regi Gloria*. Psalm 44: 1 is featured in many texts for both Mass and Office, and therefore would be found in antiphoners and graduals.¹³⁷ More specifically, in monastic use—including that of the Camaldolese—this psalm is sung at Monday Matins on feast days of various virgins, including St. Agnes, St. Anne, St. Catherine, and the Virgin Mary.¹³⁸ Additionally, this psalm is also used for the Common of Several Virgins not Martyrs¹³⁹ and is the psalm verse for two introits: *Gaudeamus omnes in domino*, and *Dilexisti iustitiam et odisti iniquitatem*. As neither Psalm 44: 2 nor either of these introits pertain to the liturgical material for St. Clare’s feast Mass, it is therefore very unlikely that this cutting is a representation of her.

Focusing on just the fragmentary text on the reverse side, and considering the aforementioned liturgical uses of Psalm 44: 2, it would seem that D is a likely possibility for the letter shape in this cutting. This suggestion is based on the fact that ‘...um ver...’ is part of Psalm 44: 2 and is adjacent to a decorated initial E (on the reverse side of the fragment) that likely opens this psalm. As just mentioned: Psalm 44 also correlates with two introits, and when the letter shape of this cutting is compared with other initial Gs in the Murano Master’s corpus, such as the *Dormition of the Virgin* or the *Nativity of the*

¹³⁷ J. Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2001), pp. 253.

¹³⁸ S. Panayotova, ed., *The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts: A Handbook* (Harvey Miller/Brepols: London and Turnhout, 2021).

¹³⁹ *Dilexisti iustitiam et odisti iniquitatem propterea unxit te deus deus tuus oleo letitiae preconsortibus tuis. Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum dico ego opera mea regi Gloria. e u o u a e*

<http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/MMDB/MusicDBDB/single.php?FN=M4740&REPNO=>

Virgin (Fig. 183), it is clear that it does not resemble a G. Therefore, it is unlikely to open the introit *Gaudeamus omnes in domino* but rather open the other introit that corresponds with Psalm 44: *Dilexisti iustitiam*. A closer inspection of the stylistic features of the initial may further support this hypothesis. In the upper left corner, just still visible is what appears to be a light blue, white-patterned tail extending from the body of the initial, which is itself a fully closed loop, thus ruling out the possibility of it being a G. The tail is a design feature seen on initial Ds found in the choir books belonging to both the Venetian and Florentine Camaldolese houses, such as for the initial D with the *Nativity* by Don Silvestro (see Fig. 149).

The most significant iconographic evidence, however, is the garment in which the Murano Master has rendered his female saint. While she has no attributes, she is wearing the white habit and black veil worn by Camaldolese nuns during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An example of this monastic habit is found in another Camaldolese gradual made in Florence in ca. 1380.¹⁴⁰ On folio 98v of the manuscript, there are three scenes including Christ appearing to St. Mary Magdalene in the Garden, and the *Last Supper*. In the bottom right margin, there is a kneeling Camaldolese nun praying to St. Mary Magdalene, who is enclosed in a mandorla (Fig. 184). This tiny figure wears a long white robe that envelopes her entire body, and her head is covered by a black veil.

¹⁴⁰ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, MSL 5836–1868. R. Watson, ‘Gradual (the ‘Camaldolese Gradual’), with the Sanctorale, Common of the Saints and the Office of the Dead, in Latin,’ in R. Watson, ed., *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of works in the National Art Library from the eleventh to the early twentieth century, with a complete account of the George Reid Collection*, vol. I (V&A Publishing: London, 2011), Cat. No. 24.

Another example of a female figure in the same style of habit is seen in a historiated initial L with St. Margaret, now in a private collection in Milan (Fig. 185).¹⁴¹ Painted by Don Silvestro, as part of the Santa Maria degli Angeli series, the saint emerges from the mouth of the dragon, while outside of the initial a diminutive-sized nun kneels with her hands raised in prayer. She holds rosary beads and is dressed in the same white habit and black veil as in the previous two examples. The nun has tentatively been identified as the Blessed Paola, abbess of Santa Margherita at Cafaggiolo.¹⁴² Yet, it is unlikely that the identity of a generic Camaldolese nun would ever be known and although the Camaldolese acquired many holy women—nuns and abbesses—none was ever canonized, and only a few beatified centuries later.¹⁴³ Thus, while the nun in the V&A image might be a beatified Camaldolese nun, the female figure in the Cambridge cutting has a halo, which would suggest that this is not a generic Camaldolese nun but a saint.¹⁴⁴

In addition to the Cambridge initial, there is another fragment attributed to the Murano Master that has been described as a ‘female saint.’ Sold at auction through Sotheby’s, and now in a private collection, this fragment depicts a pale young woman

¹⁴¹ Milan, Private Collection. Kanter et al. (1994), p. 135, fig. 50.

¹⁴² Upon Blessed Paola’s death in 1368, she willed all of Santa Margherita’s properties to Santa Maria degli Angeli, which had led to the speculation that the nun depicted with St. Margaret is Blessed Paola. Freuler, ‘Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci,’ in Kanter et al. (1994), p. 138, no. 9; Z. Tantini, ‘Vita della Beata Paola e del Beato Silvestro,’ in *Leggende di alcuni Santi e Beati venerati in S. Maria degli Angeli di Firenze, testi del Buon Secolo*, pt. 2 (G. Romagnoli: Bologna, 1864), pp. 85–128.

¹⁴³ C. Caby, ‘La sainteté féminine camaldule au Moyen Âge: autour de la b. Gherardesca de Pise.’ *Hagiographica* 1 (1994), 235–269 (at p. 245).

¹⁴⁴ In order to probe this idea further, more research into the history of female saints that were significant to the Camaldolese is required and this therefore outside the scope of this dissertation.

with blond hair and arms folded across her chest (see Fig. 165).¹⁴⁵ The on-line sale catalogue entry states that this cutting is ‘...probably ‘O’, possibly ‘D’ (possibly the introit “Dilexisti justiciam” for a virgin not a martyr).’¹⁴⁶ The initial has been pasted down onto card and therefore the liturgical content on the reverse cannot be confirmed. The issue of identifying this figure is made more problematic by the generic iconography of the young saint, as she possesses no identifying attributes.

In addition to the Common of Several Virgins, this text ‘Dilexisti justiciam,’ corresponds to various different feasts including the feast Masses for St. Lucy and for St. Agnes, both of whom were virgin martyrs. The measurements of the Sotheby’s initial are nearly precisely those of the Cambridge cutting: 157 × 92 mm, which suggests the likelihood that both initials were made for the same series of choir books or in the same scriptorium. If the Cambridge cutting were intended to correspond to the Common of Several Virgins, then it is more likely that the Sotheby’s cutting was associated with a different feast Mass. Since the figure bears no identifying attributes, she—like the Cambridge cutting—may have been intended to function as an archetype, and could possibly be associated with the Common of One Virgin. While the Cambridge cutting is likely a generic nun, the figure in the Sotheby’s initial could be a generic virgin and not a specific saint.

Another fragment that demonstrates the intersection of liturgical narrative and the Murano Master’s creative approach to iconography is the initial with a young male saint,

¹⁴⁵ London, Private Collection. Sotheby’s London 7 July 2009, Lot 110.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/western-manuscripts-and-miniatures-and-the-korner-sale-l09740/lot.110.html>

possibly *St. John the Evangelist* (see Fig. 14).¹⁴⁷ As with many of the San Mattia cuttings, it has been pasted onto card thus rendering any text and notation on the back inaccessible. Despite the close trimming of the initial, enough of the letter is still visible, and it is clear that the top is not completely closed. One possibility is that it is an initial V and would correspond to the liturgical text: ‘Valde honorandus est beatus Joannes...’ which is the first Epistle of St. John I: 1–10 and would suggest that this cutting once belonged to an antiphoner. John I:1 was chanted for several different parts in the antiphoner for the feast of St. John (27 December): the antiphon, the responsory, and the versicle.

The iconography of the Geneva cutting is unlike the more typical iconography associated with depictions of St. John in his two primary roles: as Evangelist and author of his gospel, and as John of Patmos, the author of the Book of Revelation. In the Geneva initial, the Murano Master has depicted the figure as young and beardless with long flowing blond hair, very similar to how St. John is depicted in the Marmottan’s *Mission of the Apostles*.¹⁴⁸ Unlike the Marmottan cutting, the figure in the Geneva initial does not hold a book—or possess any other saintly attribute on his person that could aid in confirming his identity, however, the large blue cloud in the upper right corner could signal that he is indeed St. John. There are other examples, in the San Mattia corpus, where a cloud is used to convey the presence of God within a visual narrative: in the *Dormition of the Virgin* (Fig. 186) the Murano Master has painted a white mass emitting delicate gold tendrils. Within that cloud formation, he has depicted a bearded God receiving the tiny soul of the Virgin, whose body lies on a bier below (Fig. 187). The

¹⁴⁷ Geneva, Comites Latentes, Ms. 256. Unpublished.

¹⁴⁸ John is one of only two apostles in the *Mission* cutting that is identifiable due to his youthful, beardless face and the book that he holds. The other is St. Peter, who is standing at the centre of the group.

same gold tendrils can be seen depicted above in the initial N with *St. Helena Finding the True Cross* (Fig. 188), and lastly, in the Berlin Gradual, the feet of Christ can be seen jutting out from a cloud composed of blue, white, and gold (Fig. 189).¹⁴⁹ It is also this cloud that resembles the one in the Geneva cutting identical in colour and form.

Representations of St. John typically focus on two stages of his life: as the young, beardless Evangelist and/or as an older, usually bearded figure, on Patmos writing the Book of Revelation. These two distinctive phases would account for the varied list of iconographic features associated with him.¹⁵⁰ If the Geneva cutting is an image of St. John, then it appears as if the Murano Master created an iconographic hybrid of the two ‘types’: he has painted the young, beardless saint experiencing a vision of the Revelations. In the reconstructed Florentine series, the cutting that corresponds to the same liturgical material has been attributed to Don Simone Camaldolese and shows an elderly figure in an initial V (Fig. 190).¹⁵¹ Don Simone’s style was heavily influenced by that of Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci, and yet can be characterized as ‘more vigorous, less suave and sweet than Don Silvestro...’¹⁵² Don Simone’s figures possess a more swarthy flesh tone and are recognizable by their rounded heads, which tend to be disproportionality small for their elongated bodies.¹⁵³ While such scholars as Mariani Canova have suggested that Don Silvestro had immense stylistic influence on the Venetian school, particularly on Cristoforo Cortese at San Michele and San Mattia, Levi

¹⁴⁹ Colour photographs of this illumination are not available.

¹⁵⁰ Kaftal (1952), no. 164; (1978), no. 151.

¹⁵¹ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, no. 1900. Levi D’Ancona (1994), p. 121.

¹⁵² Levi D’Ancona (1994), p. 32.

¹⁵³ Levi D’Ancona (1994), p. 32.

D'Ancona has posited that it was Don Simone who had the greatest impact on the style of the Venetian artists.¹⁵⁴

In the case of the Geneva *St. John the Evangelist* cutting (see Fig. 14), the Murano Master clearly demonstrates an awareness of both Don Silvestro and Don Simone's styles, as he appears to have borrowed features from the 'degli Angeli' artists, while still producing a figure very much within his own style. The Geneva *St. John* is rendered with the 'sweetness' ascribed to Don Silvestro's style, as evinced by the soft lines of the figure's head, neck, and nose. The Murano Master has used white to highlight and define the muscles of St. John's neck, much in the same way as Don Simone does with his figures. Additionally, the head of the Geneva *St. John* appears to be as wide as his neck, yet somewhat small for the broadness of his shoulders, again making a stylistic reference to Don Simone. Yet, at a basic descriptive level, the Geneva *St. John* certainly displays hallmark characteristic of the Murano Master's style: the linear hatching on the figure's face, the sun-blushed cheeks, the deeply pensive expression, and the delicate fingers and hands.

In the Florentine initial, Don Simone has painted St. John as the bearded, older man on Patmos who experiences the Revelations. He holds his hands together in prayer and makes eye contact with the face of Christ, positioned in the upper left corner of the initial, symbolizing the source of the revelations that St. John received. While this is not the first instance in which St. John has been depicted in this way, a more typical iconography might include his symbol, the Eagle, offering the divine inspiration for the Book of

¹⁵⁴ Mariani Canova (1988), pp. 232–239; Levi D'Ancona (1994), p. 32.

Revelation, as representations of St. John are extremely standardized.¹⁵⁵ However, in the Florentine initial it is Christ who speaks directly to St. John, not an Evangelist symbol or an angel. Although the cutting from Santa Maria degli Angeli and the Geneva fragment are by no means identical, it would seem that Don Simone adhered to a more typical iconographic trope by depicting St. John as the old, bearded recipient of the Revelations directly from God. The Murano Master, however, has rendered St. John with the physiognomy of the young Evangelist who appears transfixed by the presence of God, thus seemingly combining two iconographic categories to create one image.

¹⁵⁵ R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2006); B. D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford University Press: New York/Oxford, 2004), p. 468; Kaftal (1978), col. 525.

IX. Unusual Narratives & Sacred Scenes

The discussion, thus far, has centred mainly on explorations of the dynamics between Camaldolese corporate iconography and the Murano Master's creative intelligence as a vehicle for conveying messages about Camaldolese identity and self-representation. Pivoting slightly, the following analysis focuses on the potential liturgical flexibility within the Venetian houses to represent specific narratives that held spiritual significance for the monks at San Mattia. Although San Mattia followed the same liturgy as its sister houses, San Michele and Santa Maria degli Angeli, which was the Roman Rite, and therefore would have honoured all the same feast days, it appears that San Mattia also recognized and celebrated certain feasts that were of specific importance to them. According to George Bent, while all the Camaldolese houses were bound by the Rule of St. Benedict, they were also able to honour canonized figures that were spiritually meaningful to the community, including secular patrons.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, local spiritual traditions and legends appear to have been honoured when appropriate, such as with an eighth-century legend about a miraculous crucifix that seems to have importance for the Venetian Camaldolese but more specifically, San Mattia.

The historiated initial N with the *Scene of Sacrilege*, today in the Musée du Cluny in Paris, is another cutting in the Murano Master's corpus that has received little attention (see Fig. 15).¹⁵⁷ Until now, the scholarship that has been done on this image has not addressed key iconographic features, nor the liturgical text on the reverse side.¹⁵⁸ For the

¹⁵⁶ Bent (2006), p. 30.

¹⁵⁷ Paris, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22713. S. Bandera Bistoletti, 'Maestro di San Michele a Murano,' in Boskovits (1988), pp. 104–109, no. 9.

¹⁵⁸ For a thorough iconographic analysis see: S. Azzarello, 'Iconoclasm and Anti-Semitism in a Fifteenth-Century Venetian Choir Book,' *IKON* 11 (2018), pp. 103–112.

past three decades this image was titled simply a ‘Scene of Sacrilege’ on the basis of a prima facie reading of the visual narrative in the initial, which features a bearded figure holding a vexillum up towards an altarpiece of the Crucifixion.¹⁵⁹ It has been trimmed so closely that the original letter is not immediately discernible, and as a result, scholars have made no attempt to properly identify this image. By probing the iconography further, and taking into consideration the Camaldolese liturgy, a new possibility emerges. This cutting may be an image of the rarely depicted legend of the Beirut Miracle. Although there are variations of the Beirut Miracle legend, which is also sometimes called the ‘Beirut Crucifix legend,’ the principal narrative is the same.¹⁶⁰ Part of the basis for this suggestion takes into account an essential iconographic element: the hat worn by the figure with the vexillum.

Sandrina Bandera Bistoletti has referred to the bearded figure as a Roman soldier, likely a pagan, and while this description is based on his Centurion-style armour, it neglects to take the figure’s prominent red hat fully into account.¹⁶¹ Klára Benešová does acknowledge this, noting that it is a ‘Jewish hat,’ but goes no further with an analysis of its potential significance, and like Bandera Bistoletti, focuses on the violent

¹⁵⁹ Bandera Bistoletti in Boskovits (1988), p. 104.

¹⁶⁰ In eighth-century Beirut, a crucifix attributed to Nicodemus was abandoned in a house occupied by a pious Christian. The new Jewish occupant failed to notice the crucifix on the wall and when a group of Jews attending Sabbath dinner saw the icon, they became angry that their Jewish compatriot owned such an item. The group struck the crucifix with knives, and the legend states that the crucifix began to bleed miraculously and the blood converted the Jews to Christianity. G. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 31 vols. (Editio novissima: Florence and Venice, 1759–1798), cols. 24–32.

¹⁶¹ Bandera Bistoletti in Boskovits (1988), p. 104.

action of the figure.¹⁶² Benešovská suggests that this figure probably represents Longinus and as a result, this cutting has come to be linked directly with Longinus's story.¹⁶³

Two issues arise from the notion that the Cluny figure is Longinus/a Roman soldier. Firstly, Longinus is always depicted at the Crucifixion, not in a secondary setting such as the interior of a church, as depicted by the Murano Master in the Cluny cutting. The second issue with Benešovská's idea is that if this were Longinus or a Roman soldier, he would presumably be wearing a Centurion-style helmet. The Cluny figure's hat—as Benešovská herself has noted—is much more like the type of hats worn by Jews in Christian illuminated manuscripts and panel painting during the Middle Ages and early modern period. Since the Beirut Miracle legend was regarded as a re-enactment of the Crucifixion, it could conceivably be possible to interpret the Cluny figure as a Longinus 'type,' especially as the violence in both narratives was integral to the outcome of salvation. However, based on an iconographic and liturgical analysis, it is unlikely that this figure in the Cluny cutting is intended to be Longinus.

An ordinance from the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 legislated that the dress of Jews and Muslims was to be distinguished from that of Christians. The ordinance decreed that Jews must retain their traditional form of clothing and not assimilate with the Christian population.¹⁶⁴ The 'Jewish hat,' as depicted in medieval and early modern

¹⁶² K. Benešovská, 'Une représentation de l'iconoclasme(?) au Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge à Paris,' in K. Stejskala, ed., *V Zajetí Středověkého Obrazu. Kniha Studií k Jubileu* (Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny: Prague, 2011), pp. 115–120 (at p. 115).

¹⁶³ Benešovská (2011), p. 117.

¹⁶⁴ This ordinance was primarily to distinguish Jews and Muslim (Saracens) from Christians in order to prevent intermarriage. J. Alberigo, J. A. Dossetti Perikle, P. Joannou, C. Leonardi, P. Prodi, eds. *Conciliorum Oecumemicorum Decreta* (Edizioni Dehoniane: Bologna, 1972), Canon 68, p. 266.

images, appears to have developed from a Phrygian-style pointed hat.¹⁶⁵ Although the Council's prescription of special dress was originally intended as a defensive measure for the salvation of Christians, over time the 'Jewish hat' became a derogatory identifying mark.¹⁶⁶ As a result, artistic representations of Jews wearing the 'Jewish hat' carried negative connotations, especially when the figure was depicted in a categorically negative way in relation to Christian icons.¹⁶⁷ The figures that were represented committing acts of impiety against Christian icons in medieval and early modern illuminations were often wearing the type of hat seen in the Cluny cutting. This fact, coupled with the Cluny figure's aggressive action towards the painted altarpiece, may support the suggestion that this figure is intended to be a Jew, as part of the Beirut Miracle legend.

The colour of the hat is also of symbolic significance and may help to link the Cluny cutting to Venice. The choice of red may have been a compliance with Trecento and Quattrocento Venetian dress customs. In 1394, the Venetian Senate legislated that after 1397, all Jews who resided in Venice were required to wear a yellow badge for identification.¹⁶⁸ Throughout the fifteenth century, the yellow badge of distinction was replaced by a red hat for Jewish men and a red kerchief for Jewish women.¹⁶⁹ This dress

¹⁶⁵ H. Schrekenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art* (SMC: London, 1996), p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Schrekenberg (1996), p. 15.

¹⁶⁷ There are copious examples in illuminated manuscripts and panel paintings of Jews engaged in the desecration of the Eucharist Host, throwing icons of the Virgin Mary into the latrine, or physically attacking Christ on the Cross. See: Lipton (2014); M. Rubin, *Gentile Tales. The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1999).

¹⁶⁸ The relevant documents in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV, CL, 5 March 1408) are cited by B. Ravid, 'From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head-Coverings of the Jews of Venice,' in B. Ravid, ed. *Studies on the Jews of Venice* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003), pp. 179–210 (at pp. 202–203).

¹⁶⁹ Archival documents show that the transition from a yellow badge to a yellow then a red hat for Venetian Jewish dress regulation was connected to concerns around clearer

regulation would have, therefore, been in effect around the time in which the San Mattia choir books were likely to have been made, and the inclusion of a figure in a 'Jewish hat' would have been a direct reflection of contemporary Venetian Jewish life in the early fifteenth century. More broadly, it would have further reflected the Murano Master's ability to make specific iconographic choices for the San Mattia material.

In addition to the figure's hat, his physiognomy and colouring may lend further support to the notion that this figure is a Jew, as part of the Beirut Crucifix narrative. While the Murano Master does paint male figures in a range of ages, they tend to share a similar eye and hair colour palette: typically fair with light eyes. In obvious contrast, the Cluny figure has a striking, chin-length black beard, with ample hair of the same colour flowing out from under his cap. His lips and nose are full and round, and his eyes are coloured with light brown pigment.

The choice to paint the hair, eyes, and skin of the Cluny figure using darker pigments may have been informed by observations of Jews in Venice. Additionally, the writings of certain Christian authors focused on the physiognomy of various non-Christian populations, such as the Jews, in an attempt to explain the physical 'characteristics' of non-Christians.¹⁷⁰ In one text, the Virgin, who is viewed as the progeny of the Jews, is described as having black hair. According to the logic of this text, this attribute reveals to the reader that 'in many cases the race [genus] of the Jews has

visibility for distinguishing Jews from Christians. The records do not indicate why red was chosen nor do they clarify when the Venetian government made these changes to the regulations. See: Ravid (2003).

¹⁷⁰ Resnick (2012), p. 104.

black hair.’¹⁷¹ According to Sara Lipton, such visual assertions about Jewish physiognomy may have roots in actual observations of the Jewish population, for example the small Jewish communities that were settled in northern Germany seem to have originated in southern regions, and when compared with the overall surrounding populations, they had a higher percentage of dark hair.¹⁷²

The liturgical relevance of the Cluny cutting is directly linked to its corresponding feast. The Beirut Miracle legend is intimately connected with the Office of the *Passio ymaginis* (Passion of the Image), which was celebrated on 9 November and marked on the calendar in many liturgical books at this time. The feast originally commemorated the miracle of the bleeding Beirut crucifix, but over time, 9 November came to be associated with the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome.¹⁷³ However, during the period in which the Cluny cutting was likely to have been painted for the San Mattia choir books, this day still honoured the *Passio ymaginis*. The texts and lections associated with the office of the *Passio ymaginis* were also used during the celebration of two other feasts: the *Invention of the Cross* (3 May) and the *Exaltation of the Cross* (14 September).¹⁷⁴ The iconography of the Cluny cutting does not correlate to either of those feasts and, thus, the Office of the *Passio ymaginis* is the most likely to have been the feast for which this historiated initial was made.

¹⁷¹ ...sed videmus, quod genus Judaeorum ut in pluribus habet nigros capillos. [Ps.] Albert the Great, *Quaestiones super Evangelium* 19.2.5, p. 44.

¹⁷² Lipton (2014), p. 175.

¹⁷³ The source for this origin is based in a sermon attributed to St. Athanasius. ‘*Hoc insuper ab his efflagitans, ut per annos singulos in mens Novembri, qui apud Hebraeos est nonus, apud nos vero mensis undecimus, nono die ipsius mensis, id est, quinto Idus Novembri, non minori reverentia, quam natalis Domini, vel paschalis, ista dies praecipua observatione colatur.*’ G. D. Mansi (1759–1798), Col. 585.

¹⁷⁴ *Nos autem gloriari oportet...*

Michele Bacci has noted that the *Passio ymaginis* office was widely known throughout central Italy from at least the eleventh century, and was particularly observed in monastic contexts such as in Camaldoli.¹⁷⁵ Camaldoli, as previously discussed, was an important centre for the Camaldolese order, not least because it was the location where St. Romuald (and Count Maldolo) had the dream of white-robed men ascending a ladder to Heaven. Additionally, Camaldoli is the site of the Mother House, founded as a result of the aforementioned dream, and the source of the order's name.¹⁷⁶ That the *Passio ymaginis* office was especially celebrated within monastic settings in the Camaldoli region may further reinforce the likelihood that this is the scene depicted in the Cluny cutting for the San Mattia series.¹⁷⁷

The Beirut Miracle also appears to have spiritual significance for another Camaldolese house: the abbey church of San Salvatore della Berardenga near Monastero d'Ombrone in the diocese of Arezzo, which was administered by Camaldolese monks. As a result of the abbey's struggle for autonomy in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the monks may have commissioned art that functioned in both a political and

¹⁷⁵ M. Bacci, 'The Berardenga Antependium and the Passio Ymaginis Office,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 6 (1998), pp. 1–16 (at p. 12).

¹⁷⁶ Cacciamani (1974), col. 1726–1728.

¹⁷⁷ As with the entirety of the cuttings corpus, since these initials and scenes have been excised from their original context within the bound volumes, codicological analysis becomes increasingly important for linking the individual fragments with the San Mattia series. The Cluny cutting has two and half 4-line staves visible on the reverse side, each of which measures 40 mm. The space between the staves measures 35 mm. These measurements correlate exactly with the measurements of the staves in the Berlin Gradual, which can concretely be linked directly to San Mattia because of the *fenestra* label on the back cover.

religious capacity.¹⁷⁸ The Berardenga Antependium, today in Siena's Pinacoteca Nazionale (Fig. 191) is especially significant in this capacity.¹⁷⁹ Made by the so-called Tressa Master in 1215, the Berardenga Antependium predates the San Mattia choir books by two hundred years and depicts an image of the Beirut Miracle.¹⁸⁰ Flanking the large central panel of Christ in Majesty are three smaller panels on either side depicting scenes from the Crucifixion narrative. The panel on the bottom of the viewer's left depicts the Beirut Miracle, which is not connected to the other scenes (Fig. 192).

The presence of the Beirut Miracle panel in the Berardenga Antependium programme, and in the San Mattia choir books, suggests that this narrative held spiritual significance for the Camaldolese order. Additionally, the two panels on the upper right of the Antependium's centre panel depict the *Invention of the Cross*, which as previously noted uses the same chants and lections as the *Passio ymaginis* office. Thus, there may have been liturgical reasons for pairing the images of the two feasts in the Antependium. San Salvatore and San Mattia are examples of important Camaldolese institutions, both of which appear to place liturgical value on the Beirut Miracle legend. However, not all Camaldolese monasteries and churches may have felt this way.

The inventory, created by Levi D'Ancona for her reconstruction of the Florentine choir books, does not list an initial that contains the Beirut Miracle or any 'scene of

¹⁷⁸ P. Cammarosano, *La famiglia dei Berardenghi. Contributo alla storia della società senese nei secoli XI–XIII* (Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo: Spoleto, 1974), pp. 64–84, 93–103, 273–331. Bacci (1998), p. 5.

¹⁷⁹ Bacci (1998), p. 15.

¹⁸⁰ An inscription on the upper border reads: “† an[n]o d[omi]ni millesimo cc xv mense novembris hec tabula facta est” (‘In the year 1215 in the month of November this panel was made.’) Bacci (1998), p. 1.

sacrilege' type narrative.¹⁸¹ Nor can any such cutting be found in Levi D'Ancona's inventory for the choir books from Santa Maria Nuova, the neighbouring Camaldolese hospital.¹⁸² The absence of this miracle narrative in the Florentine volumes speaks directly to two of the main issues discussed repeatedly throughout this thesis: the way in which the Murano Master engaged his own creative intelligence when producing images for the choir books; and the specific liturgical needs of San Mattia as manifested in the visual programme of the books.

The presence of the Beirut Miracle in the San Mattia corpus indicates that the monks at San Mattia wanted to venerate this event, unlike their brothers at Santa Maria degli Angeli. It also indicates that the Murano Master would have sought visual inspiration from sources other than the Florentine volumes. The house of San Mattia may also have wanted to link their liturgy directly to that of the powerful Camaldoli abbey. Bent has noted that the Camaldolese liturgy was not a monolithic text practiced firmly within all Camaldolese houses and that monastic liturgies were quite fluid, rooted in local traditions.¹⁸³ This enabled houses to differentiate themselves from their peer institutions within the same order, and these distinctions often materialized in the selection of saints venerated by each house. The chants and texts honouring specific martyrs or religious events in one cloister could vary considerably from those used in other communities.¹⁸⁴

In addition to the San Mattia choir books, the Beirut Miracle legend is found in another Venetian source: the San Michele printed missal from 1503. On the November calendar page, the term 'Salvatore,' written in red ink, correlates with the ninth of the

¹⁸¹ Levi D'Ancona (1994), pp. 88–104.

¹⁸² Levi D'Ancona (1994), pp. 105–112.

¹⁸³ Bent (2006), pp. 29–30.

¹⁸⁴ Bent (2006), p. 30.

month (Fig. 193).¹⁸⁵ Bacci has noted that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the term ‘passio ymaginis’ was substituted for the single word ‘Salvatore.’¹⁸⁶ Although there is no extant evidence that San Michele’s choir books also included an image of the Beirut Miracle, this missal evinces that it was of liturgical significance to them as well as to San Mattia. This evidence supports the notion that the *Passio ymaginis* was significant in a Venetian context, as well as in central Italy, but not necessarily for Santa Maria degli Angeli.

Further evidence of the Beirut Miracle legend’s relevance for Venice can be found in the basilica of San Marco. Contained within the basilica’s treasury is an ampulla containing blood that is said can be traced back to the blood emitted by the original Beirut crucifix.¹⁸⁷ Perhaps even more significantly, San Marco also possesses a painted panel cross that is believed to have recreated the Beirut miracle.¹⁸⁸ In 1290, the painted cross, which stood in the piazza in front of San Marco, was attacked with knives and according to the chronicles, ‘responded to the assault with a miraculous flow of blood from its wounds, as if it had been a living person.’¹⁸⁹ Hans Belting suggested that by re-enacting the miraculous event, the panel cross illustrated and confirmed the old legend linked to the ampulla of blood already owned by San Marco.¹⁹⁰ According to Belting, in the late tenth century, cult legends gave images the same spiritual authority as relics due

¹⁸⁵ London, British Library, C. 24.f. 8, fol. 12r.

¹⁸⁶ Bacci (1998), p. 11.

¹⁸⁷ G. Meschinello, *La chiesa ducale di S. Marco* (Bartolomeo Baronchelli: Venice, 1753), 2:60–61.

¹⁸⁸ Meschinello (1753), pp. 21–22; F. Ongania, *La Basilica di S. Marco* (F. Ongania: Venice, 1888), pp. 266–267.

¹⁸⁹ H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, E. Jephcott, trans. (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1994), p. 197.

¹⁹⁰ Belting (1994), p. 197.

to their divine origins and miraculous abilities.¹⁹¹ Thus, an image was deemed especially powerful if it could be connected to a miracle. The Beirut Crucifix legend was itself a miracle narrative and the ampulla of blood in San Marco's treasury could be linked directly back to it. San Mattia and San Michele appear to have been part of a long-standing Venetian religious culture that highly valued objects and images connected to the original Beirut Miracle legend, and this may explain the presence of the Cluny cutting in San Mattia's choir books.

In the Cluny museum there is another cutting that is attributed to the Murano Master and also associated with the San Mattia series that depicts an unusual visual narrative: An initial B containing what has been called the *Holy House Floating on the Sea* (see Fig. 16).¹⁹² Like the *Beirut Miracle* cutting, the iconography of this fragment has been largely unstudied. Divided into two halves, the lower bow of the B contains a church amid green ocean waves; in the upper bow, an angel with large red wings blesses the church as it watches from above. Several of the Murano Master's stylistic hallmarks are visible in the image, including the use of linear hatching on the angel's garment and in the ocean waves; modelling of the angel's face to create depth and to give the flesh a greater degree of realism; and faint traces of pseudo-Arabic script on the angel's collar.

The legend of the Holy House of Loreto states that on 10 May 1291, the house of the Virgin Mary—the original site of the Annunciation—was raised from its foundations and transported by angels from Nazareth across the Mediterranean to the small town of Tersatto (Trsat) on the Adriatic coast of modern-day Croatia, where it remained for three

¹⁹¹ Belting (1994), p. 196.

¹⁹² Paris, Musée de Cluny – Musée national du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22172. Bandera Bistoletti in Boskovits (1988). The basis for a connection between these two cuttings and the San Mattia series is the codicological measurements of the Cluny fragments.

years. On 10 December 1294, it was seen by some shepherds being carried, once again by several angels, away from Tersatto across the Adriatic to Loreto.¹⁹³ This legend—recorded through inscriptions in the house itself—forms the basis for the iconography of depictions of this miracle.¹⁹⁴ Another longer inscription in the Holy House reads: ‘Angels conveyed this House from Palestine to the town of Tersatto in Illyria in the year of salvation 1291... Three years later... it was carried again by the ministry of angels and placed in a wood near this hill...’¹⁹⁵ Thus, images depicting the transportation of the Holy House typically include multiple angels carrying the structure, and the Virgin and Child are also often present. In a panel painting, dated 1507, the Virgin and Child stand atop the Holy House while an angel supports each visible corner as it is carried across the water (Fig. 194).¹⁹⁶ Similarly, in a panel attributed to Saturino Giatti and dated ca. 1510, the Holy House is physically carried by two angels (Fig. 195).¹⁹⁷

These later depictions of the miracle of the Santa Casa di Loreto adhere to the narrative, and as such are part of a lineage of images that portray this Marian miracle. There are two fresco cycles, which are believed to illustrate the Holy House at Loreto legend, and both of which slightly predate the Cluny cutting. The earlier of the two is found in the church of San Marco at Jesi, in Le Marche and is thought to have been produced in the second half of the fourteenth century.¹⁹⁸ The relevant fresco is of two angels, standing with their arms raised above and holding a small church (Fig. 196).

¹⁹³ G. Santarelli, *A Santa Casa di Loreto. Tradizione e Ipotesi* (Industrie Grafiche Fratelli Anibaldi: Ancona, 1988), pp. 17, 261.

¹⁹⁴ Santarelli (1988), p. 271.

¹⁹⁵ This inscription is dated to the sixteenth century. Phillips (1917), p. 33.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Our Lady of Loreto,’ Syracuse, Galleria Regionale di Palazzo Bellomo.

¹⁹⁷ ‘The Translation of the Holy House of Loreto. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1973.319. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436445>

¹⁹⁸ Santarelli (1988), p. 306.

According to Giuseppe Santarelli, despite the Virgin's absence, the two angels are holding, and thus transporting, the church.¹⁹⁹ However, not all scholars agree that the Jesi fresco depicts the Holy House legend. Adolfo Venturi has argued that because the scene lacks the presence of the Virgin, it is simply an image of angels with a symbolic representation of Mother Church.²⁰⁰ Exploring Venturi's suggestion is beyond the scope of this dissertation but for the purposes of this discussion, the Jesi fresco is included in the corpus of the Holy House legend because despite lacking an image of the Virgin, the iconography does still correlate with certain facets of the narrative (the angels and the church).

The second fresco cycle, painted ca. 1420, is closer in dating to the Cluny cuttings.²⁰¹ This series of frescos is located in the church of San Francesco di Gubbio. The now badly damaged wall painting depicts what appears to be angels addressing the Virgin and lifting her house as if to carry it away (Fig. 197). These four examples of the Holy House narrative share, to a lesser or greater extent, the same iconographic features. The image by the Murano Master deviates from the earlier and later versions mentioned above. As Santarelli has noted, one aspect that makes the Cluny Loreto cutting unusual is that the church floats along the sea unaided by the angel above. The angel offers a celestial sanctification rather than assisting directly in the transportation of the church.²⁰² Additionally, in all but the Jesi fresco, the angels are quite diminutive compared with the church and the Virgin and Child—likely intended to convey their reduced importance in

¹⁹⁹ C. Annibaldi, *Un affresco lauretano giottesco e il culto di S. Casa a Jesi* (Petrucci Editore: Città di Castello, 1912), p. 20.

²⁰⁰ A. Venturi, 'Affreschi del pittore delle Vele di Assisi,' *L'arte. Rivista di storia dell'arte medievale e moderna* 14 (1911), pp. 25–28 (at pp. 27–28).

²⁰¹ Santarelli (1988), p. 308.

²⁰² Santarelli (1988), pp. 334–335.

the Loreto legend, while giving the other iconographic features visual prominence. In the Cluny cutting, the angel occupies nearly the entire space of the initial's upper bow, acquiring visual significance equal to that of the church below.

Another crucial iconographic difference is that, unlike the other portrayals of the Holy House legend, the Murano Master has not depicted a 'ministry' of angels but rather only one, who is relegated to its own separate space within the initial, which acts a boundary preventing any engagement with the church below. A visual parallel for the singular angel can be found in the *Annunciation* from the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, painted by Jean Pucelle in ca. 1325 (Fig. 198).²⁰³ In this image, a tiny angel can be seen grasping the lower right corner of the Virgin's house, which Erwin Panofsky argues is evidence that this image is the earliest allusion to the Loreto legend.²⁰⁴ Although Pucelle has only depicted one angel, this celestial agent is actively holding up—and likely transporting—the house in which the Angel Gabriel addresses the Virgin.

Additionally, representations of this narrative frequently include the Virgin and Child as part of the transportation narrative. They are often sitting atop the roof of the Holy House, or somewhere within the vicinity of the house watching or blessing the event. The Virgin and Child are not present in the Cluny cutting. While there is no possibility of knowing what decorations surrounded the initial when it was part of a full folio, it is unlikely that the Virgin and Child were depicted outside the initial B.

²⁰³ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters, 54.1.2, fol. 16r. K. Pyun, A. D. Russakoff, eds., *Jean Pucelle: innovation and collaboration in manuscript painting* (Harvey Miller: London, 2013).

²⁰⁴ E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: its origins and character*, 2 vols. (Icon Editions/Harper & Row Publishers: New York, Hagerstown, San Francisco, London, 1971), vol. I, p. 30.

Furthermore, the conventional iconography for the Loreto legend typically places the Virgin and Child within close visual proximity to the house and angels. Thus, it is here suggested that the absence of both the ‘ministry of angels’ and of the Virgin and Child raise doubts that the Cluny cutting depicts the Holy House of Loreto miracle.

When the iconography and the text, on the reverse side, are taken into consideration, a new possible identification for this cutting arises. Perhaps the Cluny initial does not depict the Loreto miracle but instead corresponds to a feast in which an angel is the central focus, such as the feast day of the Archangel Michael. There are, in fact, two feast days in the liturgical calendar for Archangel Michael: 8 May, which corresponds to the apparition at Mount Gargano, and 29 September, which is his traditional feast day. Both of these dates are found in the calendar pages for May and September in the Camaldolese missal from 1503 (Figs. 199 & 200).²⁰⁵ It is unlikely that the Cluny cutting corresponded to the introit of the Mass for 29 September, as there is another cutting, attributed to the Murano Master, which is much better suited iconographically for this feast.

Preserved in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, the historiated initial B with *Archangel Michael Transfixing Satan* (see Fig. 35)²⁰⁶ is an example of the iconography more commonly associated with St. Michael’s feast day on 29 September, which honours his role as protector. The cutting has been pasted down onto card thus rendering the reverse inaccessible. However, based on the iconography and the initial B, it is very likely that this cutting opened the introit for the Mass of Archangel Michael’s

²⁰⁵ London, British Library, C.24.f.8.

²⁰⁶ New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1129.
<https://www.themorgan.org/manuscript/255013>

feast: ‘Benedicite Domino omnes angeli ejus...’ If the Morgan cutting correlates to the 29 September feast day, then the Cluny cutting may correspond to the 8 May date.

Although the Murano Master may have painted two images of Archangel Michael—one for the gradual and one for the antiphoner—it should not be assumed that both initials would necessarily have similar iconography, regardless of whether they were representing the same feast Mass. Moreover, even if both the Cluny cutting and the Morgan fragment were intended to correspond to the two different feast days of St. Michael, the liturgical text for both Masses may have been the same thus explaining why both cuttings are initial B.

As stated, 8 May in the liturgical calendar is traditionally associated with the apparition of St. Michael at Mount Gargano in Southern Italy. The legend is recorded in *Liber de apparitione Sancti Michaelis* and recounts the various times Archangel Michael is said to have appeared at a cave in the mountains on the Gargano peninsula, in order to instruct that the site be dedicated to Christian worship.²⁰⁷ The apparitions are reported to have taken place at a cave in a mountainous region, which does not visually correlate with the iconography of the Cluny cutting. However, the opening line from the introit to St. Michael’s feast Mass, ‘Benedicite Domino omnes angeli ejus...’ also corresponds to the introit for the Mass of the dedication of Le Mont Saint-Michel in France.²⁰⁸ According to legend, the abbey was founded by St. Aubert, bishop of Avranches, after

²⁰⁷ G. Waitz, ed., ‘Liber de apparitione Sancti Michaelis,’ *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum* (Impensis Bibliopolii: Hanover, 1898), pp. 541–543.

²⁰⁸ <http://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/chant/668648>

Archangel Michael appeared to him in 708 and instructed the bishop to build a church on the rocky islet.²⁰⁹

The Cluny cutting portrays a structure and an environment much more like that of Le Mont Saint-Michel—a church ‘floating’ on the sea—than of Mount Gargano. Although there is no concrete link between the French foundation and San Michele in Isola, both monastic institutions share the same patron saint and the same geographic location on an island surrounded by water. While it is unlikely this is not to suggest that the Murano Master was depicting Le Mont Saint-Michel, perhaps he was representing San Mattia’s neighbouring sister house, San Michele. The iconography further supports this position, as the church depicted in the initial B strongly reflects Venetian architecture with its domed roof, rounded arch door, lancet-style windows, and turret. It does not resemble the original house in Nazareth, as reproduced in the other Holy House images discussed above.

This idea, however, does not rule out the possibility that the Murano Master was drawing on the Holy House as part of a composite iconographic programme. The Loreto legend may hold significance for the Murano houses because of its connection to the Annunciation, celebrated on 25 March. The mythical foundation of Venice is recorded as noon on Friday 25 March 421, which was a way for Venetians to link themselves directly with the great intercessor, and sanctify their origins.²¹⁰ Lydia Hamlett has discussed the close stylistic and iconographic corollaries between San Marco’s sacristy and those at the church of Santa Casa di Loreto, particularly the ones dedicated to St. Mark and St.

²⁰⁹ Waitz (1898), p. 380.

²¹⁰ D. Rosand, *Myths of Venice. The Figuration of a State* (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill & London, 2001), pp. 12–13.

John.²¹¹ In addition to the shared connection of the Annunciation, Hamlett also notes that there was a strong relationship between Venice and Loreto for other reasons during the fifteenth century, such as the fact that Loreto would have been an ideal stopping place for pilgrims and merchants travelling to and from Venice and Rome.²¹² Thus, Loreto does hold special significance for the history of Venice, and as demonstrated earlier, the spiritual and cultural identities of both San Mattia and San Michele appear to have been intimately tied to Venice's religious and cultural identity. It is this shared bond centred on the Annunciation that may offer a means of deciphering the iconography of the Cluny cutting.

From as early as the twelfth century, the establishment of 25 March as both Venice's birthday and the feast of the Annunciation was expressed in ways that elaborated its fullest resonance.²¹³ The link between Venice and the Annunciation was so deeply rooted in Venetian identity that this idea was given humanistic sanction by such figures as Bernardo Guarini.²¹⁴ The understanding that Venice was sanctified by both the act of the Annunciation and by humanism may have fuelled a spiritual desire to see this important aspect of Venetian self-identity reflected in the liturgical manuscripts at San Mattia. According to David Rosand, the appropriation of the Annunciation on behalf of Venice found 'monumental expression' long before the celebrated Renaissance masterworks.²¹⁵ Therefore, it could be argued that the Murano Master was one of the earliest artists to include aspects of this narrative, which was so integral to Venetian

²¹¹ L. Hamlett, 'The Sacristy of San Marco, Venice: Form and Function Illuminated,' *Art History* 32, 3 (2009), pp. 458–484 (at p. 469).

²¹² Hamlett (2009), p. 469.

²¹³ Rosand (2001), p. 12.

²¹⁴ Rosand (2001), pp. 12–13.

²¹⁵ Rosand (2001), p. 16

identity, into the San Mattia material thereby intimating that it meant a great deal to these monks. By doing this, the Murano Master may have been attempting to incorporate San Mattia into the broader history of Venice, just as he did with the Marmottan *Mission of the Apostles*, and as Cortese did with the illuminations in the Milan Gradual. Like the Cluny cutting of the Beirut Miracle legend, this initial B with the floating church appears to have mirrored momentous spiritual themes in its unique imagery, tailored especially for San Mattia.

While it cannot be stated definitively that the Murano Master did merge the Holy House of Loreto legend with the feast of the Apparition of the Archangel Michael, it is clear that the Cluny cutting does not reflect an easily recognizable narrative. The unusual iconography may suggest that this image held a spiritual importance specific to the viewers of this choir book. The significance of this cutting may also be connected to the role that the Archangel Michael plays in the history of Venice's foundation and development of its identity as a republic. Although images of the archangel are ubiquitous in regions throughout Italy, St. Michael was the nucleus of an important narrative that offered Venice as a New Jerusalem.²¹⁶ In an oration delivered upon the election of Pasquale Cicogna as doge, Agostino Michele spoke of Venice's divinely inspired purpose, connected largely to the date of its foundation. According to Michele Venice had its '...most noble origin in the Mind of God...defended not by soldier but by Angels...'.²¹⁷ More specifically, the Archangel Michael was the angelic soldier adopted by Venice to defend her honour and values. Rosand observed that on the most

²¹⁶ L. Puppi, *Verso Gerusalemme: Immagini e termini di urbanistica e di architettura simboliche* (Casa del Libro: Rome, 1982), pp. 66–70.

²¹⁷ S. Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall: studies in the religious iconography of the Venetian Republic* (L'erma di Bretschneider: Rome, 1974), pp. 141–42, no. 4.

conspicuous corner of the ducal palace—the Solomonic corner—above the images of Adam and Eve, is a representation of Archangel Michael ‘ruling.’ St. Michael holds a sword in one hand and in the other a scroll that functions as a declaration of his divinely-sanctioned intent to protect the good and punish the wicked.²¹⁸ The creation of Venice as the political salvation of mankind was seen as analogous to the incarnation of Christ—the spiritual salvation of mankind—both events occurring on the same date albeit in different years. The original Paradise lost might be reclaimed through the laws of the Republic—a promise implicit in the image of the Archangel of Justice wielding sword and shield.²¹⁹

The immense spiritual significance concerning salvation and divine protection inherent in the legends of the Holy House of Loreto and the Apparition of St. Michael may have appealed to the monks of San Mattia. As previously discussed, the Cluny Beirut cutting was possibly amongst the earliest depictions of the Beirut Crucifix legend in Venice—or perhaps even elsewhere. Similarly, the Cluny Loreto cutting may be one of the oldest known images that incorporates aspects of the Loreto legend. According to Santarelli, the first official versions of the Loreto legend were written by Giacomo Ricci ca. 1468–1469 and by Pier Giorgio Tolomei ca. 1472.²²⁰ The Cluny Loreto cutting is datable to ca. 1420, based on stylistic features shared with other datable contemporary works, and thus clearly predates the official versions by at least forty years. The early date of this image suggests that the monks of San Mattia knew about the legend prior to the publication of official versions. This awareness may have stemmed from the close relationship between Venice and Loreto, as discussed above. Additionally, as with the

²¹⁸ The scroll reads: ‘Ense bonos te go malorum crimina purgo,’ Rosand (2001), p. 100.

²¹⁹ Rosand (2001), pp. 100–102.

²²⁰ Santarelli (1988), p. 11.

Beirut Miracle cutting, the Cluny Loreto initial finds no stylistic parallel in the choir books of the Florence monastery, thus perhaps suggesting that it may not have had the same degree of spiritual significance there as it did in Venice.

X. Conclusions

This chapter has dealt with the most complex aspect of the partial reconstruction: the cuttings. Unlike the intact volumes in Berlin and Milan, which give clear information about the codicology, liturgy and iconography, the fragments convey varying degrees of this crucial data. The most important aspect has been to use the evidence gathered from these initials in order to try and ascertain certain information such as to what types of books (graduals, antiphoners, psalters) they may have once belonged; whether or not all the books were part of the same set; and whether these manuscripts were all for San Mattia. Based on the evidence, this thesis suggests that the fragments were all from the same series of choir books commissioned by San Mattia, although not all of the cuttings belonged to graduals. Based on this partial reconstruction, which includes the original attributions made within this thesis and the attributions given by others in the previous scholarship, twenty-seven fragments have been tentatively assigned to the gradual portion of the *Sanctorale*. Included in this total are the two fragments listed in the Ottley sale on 11 May 1838 in Lot 31: ‘Two—The Annunciation and the Presentation, *richly gilt and coloured from Murano*’ (see Fig. 163).²²¹ However, because these two fragments have never been photographed or even described in the literature, as of now it is impossible to know whether they would have been part of a gradual or an antiphoner. Therefore, in this study they have been put in both with the caveat that they may have belonged to one or the other. Three cuttings (plus the Annunciation and Presentation) have been allotted to the antiphoner volume of the *Sanctorale*. Seven of the cuttings have been tentatively put into the *Communale* portion of the gradual.

²²¹ See Ch. 4, n. 2.

Although there are thirty-eight fragments attributed to the Murano Master's corpus, as discussed, on the basis of stylistic grounds only thirty-six are herein recognized. The eight cuttings that are discussed in depth were selected because of their unique and unusual iconography as well as their innovative stylistic features. The aim of this investigation was to probe the possible deeper spiritual significance behind the iconography of such cuttings as the 'Scene of Sacrilege' (*Beirut Miracle*) and the *Mission of the Apostles*. By examining the images through the lens of Camaldolese spirituality, the intention was to try and glean information about how the monks at San Mattia perceived themselves in relation to the larger Christian narrative of biblical history and the future mission of the Church.

These particular illuminations were also selected because many of them reflected the ways in which the Murano Master interpreted Camaldolese identity and history through the frame of his own creative intelligence, using local artistic techniques and iconography as well as drawing from regions outside of Venice. He appears to have combined features in order to create a new stylistic and iconographic language exclusively for the San Mattia Choir Books—one not seen in the works of his contemporaries. The Murano Master seemed curious to experiment with various painting techniques in order to achieve a heightened sense of naturalism in his figures. This included rendering the fabrics of their garments to bunch and gather as they would in reality and he used the faces of his figures as a vehicle for conveying profound inner emotion: the women with their dreamy, contemplative visages, and the men often having pensive, grave, and questioning expressions. This emotive quality is as much a feature of

his oeuvre as is his use of pseudo-Arabic script and the voluminous, tubular folds of his garment

CONCLUSION

As this thesis has demonstrated, there is nothing straightforward about attempting a reconstruction—or even a partial reconstruction—of a dismembered series of illuminated manuscripts. Yet, even a modicum of success can yield insights into the original artistic and liturgical context in which the volumes were made. This conclusion offers a recapitulation of this complex task and, equally important, also explores the necessary future work that remains to be done to further our understanding of manuscript illumination in early Quattrocento Venice and the role of art in Camaldolese spiritual life.

The mention of early fifteenth-century Venice conjures images of the rich cultural and artistic tapestry that was comprised of the merging of Western Europe with the Eastern world. In addition to the active economic trade and religious and secular politics that played out daily, there was also a vibrant artistic network that included illuminators from Venice and surrounding regions. These artists often worked in various media, including manuscript illumination, panel painting, and xylography and the artists at the centre of this study are no exceptions. Although nothing definitive is known about the Murano Master's life, his corpus of work suggests that he had a creative, innovative mind and was interested in experimenting with a range of techniques, styles, and materials.¹ Although his oeuvre consists entirely of illuminations on parchment, there is reason to suggest that he was influenced by other media including monumental paintings, such as the fresco cycles at San Petronio, and the altarpieces of Don Lorenzo Monaco. The Murano Master also appears to have been inspired by the Eastern-style architecture that

¹ Panayotova (2016), p. 287.

covers the Venetian cityscape as well as the island of Murano, where he is likely to have been based. Similarly, Cristoforo Cortese was a prolific painter to whom numerous works have been attributed including manifold illuminated manuscripts—both religious and secular—and prints and woodcuts. While Cortese is known to have had commissions in various places in Italy, it is unknown whether the Murano Master worked outside of Murano, although his use of techniques and styles from Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna could suggest some formal training in those places.

The quiet serenity of Murano is what first drew St. Romuald (ca. 950–1025/27) to that part of Italy during the nomadic days of his religious sojourning.² This seeking was rooted in a desire to bridge the widening gap between the ermetic and cenobitic aspects of Benedictine monasticism, and the result was an austere reform order that eschewed the secular world in all its forms: the *Ordo Camaldulensium* (Camaldolese Order). Even the use of the written word was, at first, proscribed and their myths and legends were passed on orally. Eventually the need to preserve their histories in a permanent, uniform manner led the Camaldolese to embrace the written word and document their existence in several key texts, including the ‘Life of the Blessed Romuald,’ recorded by Peter Damian of Fonte Avellana.³ This use of the written word would eventually lay the foundations for the development of the rich and complex visual culture found within the order, which was cultivated at most of the Camaldolese houses within Italy, especially key institutions such as Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence and the Venetian houses of San Michele in Isola and San Mattia di Murano.

² Caby (1999), p. 16.

³ Peter Damian, ‘The Life of the Blessed Romuald,’ trans., Peter-Damian Belisle, *Camaldolese Spirituality: Essential Sources* (Ercam Editions: Bloomingdale, 2007), pp. 105–175.

These houses formed a critical triangulation of Camaldolese visual culture and became centres of impressive artistic output including the illuminated choir books at the heart of this study. Herein is offered a partial reconstruction of the now-dismembered series of manuscripts made for San Mattia, which was largely based on the lavish set made for their aforementioned Florentine sister house. While many of the visual narratives correlate quite closely with those found in the volumes belonging to Santa Maria degli Angeli, there are numerous iconographic features that appear to be unique to the San Mattia material, and therefore, I argue that the monks at San Mattia wanted to use monastic corporate iconography to express specific personal narratives and ideologies about their place in the smaller Benedictine history and in the larger Christian universe. These ideas about self-expression and self-identity were filtered through the Murano Master's innovative creative intelligence, which resulted in illuminations different from what his contemporaries were producing during the last few years of the Trecento and first half of the Quattrocento.

The current state of the San Mattia manuscripts was delineated in Ch. 1; today they exist as two intact volumes and thirty-eight (known) individual cuttings currently in various public and private collections all over the globe.⁴ The core manuscript, colloquially referred to as the 'Berlin Gradual' because of its current location in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, contains a crucial piece of codicological evidence that links it concretely to San Mattia: on the exterior reverse cover is a *fenestra* (or window) label that states explicitly that this volume is the fourth in a series made for the house of

⁴ As discussed in Ch. 1, although thirty-eight cuttings are attributed to the San Mattia corpus, and more specifically the Murano Master's oeuvre, this author only acknowledges thirty-six.

San Mattia di Murano.⁵ In addition to this piece of evidence, the manuscript has been attributed in its entirety (with the exception of the opening folio, an initial R with the *Resurrection*, in which several different hands can be detected [see Fig. 2]) to the Murano Master, making it the most comprehensive collection of his work. Due to these two factors, the Berlin Gradual is the anchor to which all the other components of the San Mattia series have been tethered, especially the loose leaves. There is also another volume, known as the ‘Milan Gradual,’ again because of its current location in the Bibliotheca Nazionale Braidense di Brera in Milan, which has been associated with the Berlin Gradual, based on codicological and liturgical evidence.⁶

Based on the Berlin *fenestra* label, there should be at least four volumes in the San Mattia series. It is possible that the other two manuscripts are now the fragments, excised from their original binding after the Napoleonic suppression of the monasteries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These leaves have been linked to the Murano Master based on their stylistic characteristics but I have also tried to demonstrate that they can be linked based on codicological data including the height of the music staves on the reverse side and the dimensions of the initials. Until now, previous scholarship has only examined components of the San Mattia material as individual objects in isolation from each other, and the output has been typically brief, focusing primarily on the stylistic aspects of the images. This thesis is the first comprehensive study to consider the two intact volumes and the cuttings in relationship with one another and within the larger framework of the original liturgical context in which they would

⁵ The *fenestra* label reads: *Gr[aduale] a Paca usq[ue] ad vigesi[m]am t[er]ciam d[omini]cam S[ancti] Math[ee] IIII.*

⁶ Canova (1988).

have been made and likely used. The stylistic features were also reconsidered within the larger creative network of Venice in the early decades of the fifteenth century. This is also the first dedicated study of the entire San Mattia corpus in terms of iconography, codicology, liturgy and Camaldolese history. This analysis has provided new insights into the significance of the use of monastic corporate iconography by San Mattia for conveying ideas about self-identity and spirituality within the larger Benedictine and Christological narratives.

Chs. 2 and 3 were each devoted to the investigation of the intact volumes. The Berlin Gradual shines as a beacon of the exemplary work produced by the Murano Master and displays various applications of different painting techniques, including *cangiante*, which is a change in colour necessitated by the colour's limitations of darkness and lightness.⁷ This technique was not being used in the scriptorium at Santa Maria degli Angeli, which may suggest that the Murano Master had observed its use in other sources, possibly in the oeuvre of Belbello da Pavia—the painter with whom he was long conflated.⁸ As briefly mentioned above, the opening page of the Berlin Gradual is the initial R with the *Resurrection* for Easter Sunday, and is also the only full-page miniature in the volume (see Fig. 2). It is also the only illumination in the manuscript that clearly shows the presence of various hands as there is no stylistic unity, especially when compared with the preceding initials, which each demonstrate a remarkable consistency in terms of style and composition. The *Resurrection* initial also contains unusual iconography that does not appear to have its origins in the models offered by Santa Maria

⁷ Hall (1994).

⁸ This long-standing confusion in the scholarship on the Murano Master is discussed at length in Ch. 1 of this thesis. The general consensus, today, is that the Murano Master and Belbello are two distinct personalities.

degli Angeli, such as the remarkable gesture of St. Mary Magdalene who can be seen holding her hair, almost as an offering it to the empty tomb (see Fig. 76). This may have been included at the request of the monks at San Mattia; perhaps it was a product of the Murano Master's own creativity, or some combination of these two possibilities. The result is that a depiction of St. Mary Magdalene in this way has no known visual precedent in Camaldolese visual culture. The implications of this may suggest that the monks wanted to cogitate on iconography that while unorthodox, reflected more accurately the spiritual experiences they wanted to cultivate when celebrating Easter Sunday. It may also reflect the degree of creative freedom given to the Murano Master by the monks, as he designed and executed the visual programme of the Berlin Gradual.

I. The Eye of the Beholder: The Role of Reflexive Seeing

The Berlin *Resurrection* folio is an example, within the San Mattia corpus where the monks have incorporated images of themselves into the visual programme. On either side of the risen Christ, in the upper register of the page, is a monastic bust portrait of a Camaldolese monk (see Fig. 78). These pieces of iconography function as markers of ownership, almost like a stamp, and they also face the figure of Christ as if they are ‘witnessing’ the resurrection. Since they are not individually identifiable, in this way, perhaps they also act metonymically as a representation for the whole order. What is also significant is that these bust portraits occupy the same visual plane as the figure of the resurrected Christ, unlike in the Chantilly *Resurrection*, painted by Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci for the San Michele choir books. In that image, Don Silvestro has relegated the bust portraits to either side of the stem of the initial R (see Fig. 77). The close proximity of the diminutive monks to Christ in the Berlin *Resurrection* might have been intended to prompt a mental and emotional closeness to the Risen Christ and to the concept of the Resurrection more broadly. This image is likely to have functioned as a focal point for religious meditation in addition to its role in the liturgy for Easter Sunday.⁹ In a manner, these figures also ‘bear’ witness to the Resurrection and this places the Camaldolese at the most important moment in Christianity, which may have helped them delineate their sense of monastic identity within the larger Christian narrative. There is another example of a white-robed figure being inserted directly into a sacred narrative, not in the Berlin Gradual, but in the fragment of the *Dormition of the Virgin* (see Fig. 6).

⁹ Jeffery Hamburger notes that in medieval devotional practice, images were appropriate tools for the ‘lower’ preliminary stages of the mystical journey, specifically prayer and meditation. Hamburger (1989), p. 27.

This figure is not an angel but clearly a tonsured monk and more profoundly, he holds the book from which St. Peter reads as he presides over the body of the Virgin. Since there is no scriptural record of the Virgin's death, the Murano Master did not draw on biblical sources to include this figure. Instead, just as with the figure in the *Resurrection*, it may be that he [this figure] was intended to function as a metonym for the Camaldolese order thus making them present at another significant moment in Christian history. The use of reflexive seeing is not unique to the San Mattia material not to the Camaldolese order but does seem to have been a meaningful part of their spiritual practice.

The examination of the Milan Gradual in Ch. 3 also reveals instances of monastic corporate iconography that serves to support, not only the practice of reflexive seeing, but also works to define the identity of the Camaldolese monks from San Mattia within the framework of both Benedictine monasticism and Christianity. The initial P with the *Nativity* for Christmas Day Mass (see Fig. 4) clearly evinces the importance of monastic corporate iconography within the San Mattia material as the entire border is decorated with bust portraits of significant figures such as St. Romuald, in the centre of the bas-de-page; St. Benedict; St. Francis; St. Augustine; and others. Seeing their founding saint, not only surrounded by great church fathers and reformers, but also in the place of pride (the bas-de-page) on the page with the *Nativity*, may have served to reinforce their own ideas about their role in both Benedictine monastic life and Christianity. Just as the monastic bust portraits in the Berlin *Resurrection* served as 'witnesses' to the event, St. Romuald is in the same way 'witnessing' the birth of Christ. Yet, what is also evident is the careful use of monastic corporate iconography throughout the Milan Gradual—and the Berlin volume, as well. It is clear from how and where this type of iconography is found within

the two graduals that the monks were highly selective of the narratives to which they seem to have paid special attention. As discussed throughout the dissertation, the Murano Master and Cortese appear to have had some creative license but would have most likely received explicit instructions from the monks about the design of the Gradual's visual programme and it is this combination of monastic administration and artistry that produced this unusual corpus of works.

What is also striking about how the Murano Master and Cortese integrated images of Camaldolese monks and other exceptional iconography is that while there are clear parallels with the iconography of the choir books made for Santa Maria degli Angeli, there are also many deviations that would further suggest that the monks at San Mattia perhaps sought to have images that reflected their unique spiritual identity. By this, I mean that they may have wanted their spiritual identity to be distinct from that of San Michele and Santa Maria degli Angeli, despite being of the same order and following the same liturgy. As mentioned, liturgical texts were fluid and rooted in the local traditions of the surrounding environs and could be used to distinguish different orders from one another and different houses from peer institutions within any specific order.¹⁰ It would not have been exceptional for texts that venerated specific martyrs, religious, or even historical events at one monastic house to diverge from those that were celebrated in others.¹¹ Thus, although the Santa Maria degli Angeli volumes very probably served as prototypes for those produced for San Mattia, the monks on Murano clearly wanted certain narratives and ideologies reflected back to them when they used their books.

¹⁰ Bent (2006), p. 30.

¹¹ Bent (2006), p. 30.

Nowhere in the San Mattia material is this concept seen more evidently than in the corpus of cuttings, which constitutes the largest and most complex aspect of the partial reconstruction. In Ch. 1, the primary challenges of attempting this type of project are outlined explicitly. These problems include the wide geographical dispersion of the fragments in public and private collections, which can limit their accessibility. Additionally, some of the leaves present major challenges as they have no original codicological context in which to be understood and instead must be interpreted firstly as individual objects as a means of attempting to place them back *into* that context. This process has unique obstacles as sometimes the iconography is unclear and it can be difficult to discern the figure or scene depicted. Similarly, in some cases the reverse side, which can yield crucial information, is inaccessible because of damage or having been glued onto card—a practice common during the early nineteenth century when these fragments were excised and sold as miniature paintings. In some instances, although the text and notation on the back are visible, they may be too fragmented to convey information about the liturgical feast to which the cutting once corresponded. While many of these obstacles are not entirely insurmountable, many cuttings are likely to remain unidentified as there is simply not enough evidence to decipher the visual programme.

The concept of reflexive seeing vis-à-vis the use of monastic corporate identity is as prevalent in the individual fragments as it is in the full volumes. More significantly, there are images that have no iconographic parallels in the Florentine material or in the two-volume ‘Diurno Domenicale,’ which was made for the neighbouring sister house of San Michele. Once such curious example is a cutting, today in the Cluny Museum in Paris,

that has until this study been referred to as simply a ‘Scene of Sacrilege’ (see Fig. 15). In this thesis, the iconography has been reanalysed within the framework of Camaldolese history but more specifically, also taking into account important local Venetian traditions, in order to assign a possible new identification for the image. Instead of being a generic ‘scene of sacrilege,’ it may in fact be a rare depiction of the Beirut Miracle, based on the iconography and the text on the reverse.¹² The presence of this narrative in a book belonging to the San Mattia monks reinforces the previously mentioned idea that individual houses were free to celebrate sacred figures and events significant to them based on their liturgical practices and local traditions. The Beirut Legend is especially important in Venice, as it is purported that blood from the original eighth-century miracle was brought to San Marco in an ampule.¹³

Images such as the ‘Scene of Sacrilege’, which are not found in the model corpus of the Florentine manuscripts, suggest that the monks at San Mattia saw themselves as both very much part of the Camaldolese order as well as the larger Benedictine one but also that they understood themselves as a distinct house within this larger monastic family, entrenched in the surrounding Venetian traditions. This visual proximity to Venice is evident in the depictions of architecture in the loose cuttings and in illuminations in the Berlin Gradual, where the structures have a clear Eastern influence (see Figs. 6, 15, 16, 41, 65 & 116). The presence of these Venetian features could further support a Venetian provenance for much of the San Mattia material or at the very least it could buttress the idea that the Murano Master may have been based in Venice and on Murano, as these type of architectural elements are not found in the Milan Gradual,

¹² For a detailed analysis of this cutting, see Ch. 4 and also Azzarello (2018).

¹³ Meschinello (1735), 60–61.

which is attributed entirely to Cortese. Instead, Cortese has appeared to mirror the kinds of buildings depicted in the Florentine manuscripts, particularly in the illuminations painted by Don Silvestro dei Gheraducci,

Both the Murano Master and Cortese were heavily influenced by Don Silvestro, however, the Murano Master appears to have deviated more from this given model and produced figures, architecture, and landscapes filtered through the lens of his own creative intelligence rather than simply copying an extant version of the same narrative. These iconographic and stylistic deviations suggest that the Murano Master was not merely copying the models he saw but rather, was adopting and adapting them to suit the specific spiritual needs of the monks at San Mattia. This approach could also signify that he had more creative freedom than perhaps previously thought, especially as he was producing these manuscripts for a very specific purpose: the celebration of the liturgy. Just as the liturgy had a degree of flexibility for individual houses to celebrate canonized figures and events that were special to them, the art of the San Mattia choir books also demonstrates an iconographic flexibility because they do not conform to type: they do not mirror the books of Santa Mari degli Angeli, despite both houses being of the Camaldolese order. Unlike Cortese, who appears to have followed the Florentine volumes much more closely, in terms of stylistic representations of figures, architecture, and landscapes, the Murano Master chose to mirror the eclectic nature of Venice, which suggests he had the creative freedom to do so.

II. Future Research & Next Steps

The partial reconstruction provided by this dissertation is the first step to not only shed light onto manuscript illumination practices in early Quattrocento Venice but also to begin furthering our understanding of the role of the Murano Master within the vibrant and creative network of Venice and surrounding environs. Without signed works or documentation his identity will never be known but by analysing his extant oeuvre, much can still be learned. Two aims lay at the heart of this study: to probe how the Camaldolese monks at San Mattia used monastic corporate iconography to define and convey their unique identity within the order, and within the larger Benedictine monastic lineage. The second aspiration was to explore the Murano Master's particular artistic approach to manuscript illumination through a close reading of the images attributed to his hand. The partial reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books offered the means by which to approach these two aims. Now, building upon this research there are new directions in which this work could be taken and which could yield further insights into the above issues.

One clear next step would involve the completion of a full reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books. In this thesis, the current known state of the dismembered series has been outlined, and as such the partial reconstruction takes into consideration the components of the corpus that still exist and for which there are records and/or image reproductions. A full reconstruction would be the expansion of this known corpus by attempting to account for the historiated initials that are missing or no longer extant but were likely to have been a part of the original set. In Ch. 4, the iconography of eight of the cuttings has been reinterpreted and analysed within the discussion of corporate

monastic identity and the Murano Master's creative approach to painting. The Appendix, however, contains a complete list of the partial reconstruction and includes all thirty-eight fragments. Here, each cutting has been linked—as accurately as possible—to its corresponding liturgical feast and listed in the liturgical calendar.

However, when cross-referencing against the Christian liturgical calendar and the Camaldolese liturgy, there are obvious feasts missing from this partial reconstruction, such as the feast of the Annunciation and any liturgical material concerning the Crucifixion. The reason for this omission is because the present location of these leaves is unknown, possibly because they have been lost, destroyed or stolen. The fragments, whose present location is unknown and are therefore not included in this partial reconstruction, fall into three categories. The first is where there is a record of the cutting and for which a photograph exists, such as an initial E with *St. Philip and St. James* (Fig. 201).¹⁴ The second category is where there is a textual reference to a particular initial but no photograph has ever been produced or seen, such as the Annunciation listed in the Ottley sale on 11 May 1838.¹⁵ The final category is where there is no reference and no image for an initial. An example of this is the liturgical material for Lent and Holy Week.

Now that the partial reconstruction has been completed, these 'missing' leaves can be factored into the more comprehensive restoration of the whole series. In order to attempt this, a double-pronged methodology should be employed: first looking to the original Ottley sale catalogue from 1838 (and the original Celotti sale from 1825) to ascertain which listed lots do not correspond to cuttings already part of this partial reconstruction. For instance, in Lot 31, it states: 'Two—The Annunciation and

¹⁴ This leaf is listed in a sale catalogue from Jacques Rosenthal, Munich 1931.

¹⁵ Listed in Lot 31.

Presentation, *richly gilt and coloured from Murano*' (see Fig. 163).¹⁶ During the research for this dissertation, neither the Annunciation nor Presentation were ever referenced in any additional or later scholarship, nor have any images of these works been found.¹⁷ Thus, these leaves may have been lost or destroyed or are in a private collection. Regardless, the record of them in the Ottley catalogue evinces their existence as of 1836 and therefore they can be assumed into the full reconstruction.

The second method follows the one used by Mirella Levi D'Ancona for her reconstruction of the Florentine choir books, which I have deployed in this partial reconstruction of the San Mattia volumes. Similarly, this is also the methodology used by Pia Palladino for her reconstruction of the choir books of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice.¹⁸ Levi D'Ancona has meticulously created a comprehensive list of all the known and unknown cuttings that would have *likely* comprised the Florentine series.¹⁹ The approach needed for a full reconstruction of the San Mattia volumes would involve listing each feast likely to have been celebrated in the Roman liturgy and within the Camaldolese community—the Annunciation, the Presentation, individual saints, etc.—and then cross referencing them with those listed in Levi D'Ancona's exhaustive index. Once the major feasts have been established the list could be expanded by consulting

¹⁶ Ottley sale catalogue, London, Sotheby's Day One: 11 May 1838. London, British Library, p.4.

¹⁷ To this author's knowledge.

¹⁸ P. Palladino, *Treasures of a Lost Art. Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press: New York/New Haven, 2003), pp. 114–125.

¹⁹ See: Levi D'Ancona (1993). It should also be noted that the choir books belonging to Santa Maria degli Angeli are extraordinary in that the set appears to have contained almost twenty volumes, which is unusual, and therefore it is unlikely that the San Mattia set would also have that many. As discussed at length: based on the *fenestra* label on the Berlin Gradual, the series is most probably only four volumes.

other liturgical books belonging to Camaldolese houses, specifically those in Venice to check for saints' feasts that are particular to those specific houses. As already discussed, individual houses often sought to celebrate the feasts of canonized figures that were spiritually significant to them, and also events and legends that were celebrated in the localized region in which the house was based. The calendar is the first place to seek out this information, such as the one found in the missal that belongs to San Michele and has been used throughout this dissertation.²⁰ Once the full list of celebrated feasts has been compiled, they then need to be allocated along the liturgical annual timeline, thus fleshing out the cycle of the Church year.

The purpose and benefit of a full reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books would be to give a more holistic view of the liturgical practices of this specific house, which could help to distinguish the variances between the liturgical and spiritual traditions of the Venetian Camaldolese from the Florentine, and then perhaps expand the net wider to compare with Camaldolese houses in other regions of Italy. This could ultimately begin to deepen the conversation around the use of monastic corporate iconography as a means of fashioning identity within Italian monasticism in the Quattrocento. By looking through a broader frame of what and whom they worshipped, scholars may be able to further extrapolate the socio-cultural and religious dynamic between San Mattia and other Camaldolese houses—both in Venice and elsewhere. This would be important for better understanding the diversity of religious practices of individual houses within the same order. In turn this could reveal more about how the local traditions of a given house may have imprinted on a house's spiritual activity and

²⁰ London, British Library, C. 24 f. 8.

how monastics found a balance between their own unique spiritual needs and the required liturgical rituals. Furthermore, I would suggest that by using an interdisciplinary approach—considering the manuscripts and the history of the house and order through the lenses of anthropology, religious studies, Medieval and Renaissance studies and musicology, more could be revealed about the nature of Camaldolese religious practice during the early Quattrocento.

A full reconstruction may also be accomplished by mobilising techniques from the Digital Humanities. The use of computer modelling software will enable scholars to bring back ‘together’ all the dispersed cuttings, which cannot ever likely be physically reunited. The digital landscape has evolved so rapidly over the last several years that the previous reconstructions undertaken by Levi D’Ancona and Palladino could also be digitally replicated. The benefits of digital interventions, which begin with simply digitizing photographs of the images, are that the fragments and the intact volumes can be preserved for future generations of scholars to consult. Another benefit of a digital reconstruction is providing greater accessibility to these materials. One of the main (and most challenging) impediments of the partial reconstruction was obtaining access to the corpus, in particular, the Berlin Gradual and also to various collections of fragments.²¹ This greater accessibility can then in turn lead to more comprehensive research and ultimately greater education about these materials and their art historical, cultural, and religious significance for the time in which they were made and used.

The full reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books is one of the next steps that arise from the foundation laid in this dissertation. In addition to the expansion of the

²¹ See: Ch. 1 for discussion of issues of accessibility.

reconstruction, there are further avenues of research that have opened up from this study, which include the Murano Master's role in the creatively fertile network of Venice in the first half of the fifteenth century. Venice acted as a centre point where intersecting paths from various regions, including Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and the Veneto, more broadly, converged. The understanding of the interaction between artists working in Venice during the late Trecento and first half of the Quattrocento can influence how scholars interpret art produced at this time within this creative milieu. At the outset of this project, questions of influence were at the foreground of this investigation, principally, the artistic influence that other artists may have had on the Murano Master, notably those working at Santa Maria degli Angeli.

In past scholarship, Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci has typically been viewed as having the greatest artistic impact on the Murano Master's own nascent creativity. As discussed in Ch. 1, the basis for this comparison is stylistic, however a closer reading of the Murano Master's work reveals that he appears to have been drawing inspiration from sources beyond just that of Don Silvestro, and perhaps more significantly, as argued herein this thesis, he seems to have been less influenced by this great master as other illuminators, such as Don Lorenzo Monaco and Niccolò da Bologna. While this dissertation is not the first source to make this suggestion, it is the first study that probes this possibility more fully. While Cortese clearly drew on the models provided by Don Silvestro for the Milan Gradual, as well as for work undertaken for both San Mattia and other monastic houses, the Murano Master adopted and adapted more stylistic features from Lorenzo Monaco. This artistic relationship warrants further examination, as I believe it could yield additional insights into the liturgical and working relationship

between Santa Maria degli Angeli and San Mattia. Moreover, a dedicated investigation will hopefully open dialogue around the issue of secular and religious workshops in Venice and their relationships with counterparts in Florence. Unlike Don Silvestro, Lorenzo Monaco is not known to have worked for San Mattia or San Michele. Yet, the stylistic parallels between the work of the latter artist and that of the Murano Master may suggest that the Murano Master had an awareness of the artistic practices of Lorenzo Monaco's workshop. If the Murano Master was more inspired by Lorenzo Monaco, who was both a monk and a lay illuminator, it may behove us, as art historians, to begin to rethink the nature of circles of influence and workshop-monastery dynamics in Venice and Florence within the Camaldolese network. Could there have been more interaction between lay workshops and closed monastic houses than previously thought?

A discussion of workshops is outside of the scope of this thesis, but the topic is important for the understanding of artistic networks and 'circles' of artists in Venice during the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, and is deserving of its own dedicated study. Excellent work on this topic is already being undertaken by such scholars as Bryan C. Keene and Éowyn Kerr-Di Carlo, but these studies focus primarily on Florence.²² Workshops were thriving in Venice during the fifteenth century and while much focus has been placed on the later half of the century, particularly the workshop of the Bellini dynasty, more attention still needs to be paid to the first half. This could further clarify the artistic and professional associations between lay workshops and religious houses in

²² Keene (2016, 2018); E. Kerr-Di Carlo, 'Making the Cardinal's Missal: Looking anew at the Circle of Lorenzo Monaco and the Illuminators of Fitzwilliam MS 30,' in S. Panayotova and P. Ricciardi, eds., *Manuscripts in the Making: Art & Science, Vol. I* (Harvey Miller/Brepols: London/Turnhout, 2017), pp. 87–95.

Venice, as well as between these establishments and their Florentine counterparts—the so-called ‘School of degli Angeli.’

Since nothing is known about the Murano Master personally, it is impossible to ascertain whether he was a monastic or lay painter; whether he was based in San Mattia or like Cortese lived in the secular world. While exploring the idea of a workshop connected to the Murano Master may not clarify this issue, it might reveal more about the nature of collaboration within the context of the Venetian Camaldolese. Two fragments have come to light that were initially attributed to the Murano Master, however stylistic features strongly suggest that he was not responsible for these illuminations (Figs. 202 & 203).²³ They have now been allocated to the ‘Circle’ of the Murano Master.²⁴ Pia Palladino has suggested that this ‘follower’ may have been active in a workshop lead by the Murano Master based on the presence of various hands in the Berlin Gradual.²⁵ The presence of various hands in the Berlin Gradual has been discussed in Ch. 2 and only appears to be the case for the opening folio. However, the strong stylistic similarities between these two cuttings and the rest of the Murano Master’s oeuvre would be a stronger basis on which to make the suggestion of a workshop—or at the very least that the Murano Master might have been a chief illuminator within the scriptorium at San Mattia. Thus, future research could involve tracing more cuttings from the work of this ‘follower’ in order to further probe the possibility of a workshop and/or mentor dynamic between the Murano Master and younger artists. With further and more comprehensive

²³ Ágnes Tóvizi has listed four additional initials, which she assigns to the ‘Circle’ of the Murano Master. See: A. Tóvizi, ‘Some Newly Discovered Quattrocento Illuminations in Székesfehérvár,’ *Arte Cristiana* 96 (2008), pp. 307–312.

²⁴ Palladino (2003), p. 126, No. 60.

²⁵ Palladino (2003), p. 126, footnote 3. Palladino’s suggestion is based on the identification of various hands in the Berlin Gradual, first suggested by T. Franco (1998).

study, scholars can then look in greater depth at the significance of the Murano Master and his larger influence on subsequent generations of painters in Venice.

When the Camaldolese monks of San Mattia di Murano commissioned a series of luxury choir books, their main reason for doing so was to have the necessary liturgical tools for celebrating the Mass and Divine Office—a crucial aspect of their monastic life. Although they were an austere reform branch founded on the basis of eschewing worldly goods in favour of prayer and contemplation, they seem to have spared no expense in the production of these lavish manuscripts. The Camaldolese order may have begun its existence without any visual culture and passed on their ideologies and myths orally, but they soon began to use art to its maximal capacity for venerating the Holy and expressing their spiritual and cultural ideologies.²⁶ Thus, the complex iconography of the visual programme created for the San Mattia choir books conveys the nature of Camaldolese spirituality in early Quattrocento Venice and the innovative stylistic features of the illuminations reflect the artistic character of the illuminators responsible for the manuscripts.

In addition to offering the first partial reconstruction of the San Mattia choir books, this thesis has also served as a reminder that not all monastic houses within the same order expressed their spiritual identity in the same way, and that the use of monastic corporate iconography could be a powerful visual tool for reinforcing an order's self-identity. The ways in which the monks at San Mattia wanted to see themselves reflected back to themselves, as they celebrated Mass, varied from those at other Camaldolese houses, including their neighbouring monastery of San Michele and at Santa Maria degli

²⁶ Bent (2006), p. 25.

Angeli in Florence. The brothers at San Mattia appear to have wanted a ‘both/and’ approach: they wanted to be *both* part of the Camaldolese lineage *and* distinctive within that Benedictine family. They commissioned two extraordinary illuminators—the Murano Master and Cortese—to bring their vision to life, and the resulting volumes are some of the most sumptuous illuminations produced in Venice in the early fifteenth century. Although dismembered and dispersed, examining these objects closely has reanimated them and hopefully shown that they carry crucial implications for the study of the artistic, religious, and cultural history of early Quattrocento Venice.

I. Catalogue Entries: The Individual Cuttings (alphabetical by current location)¹

- **Boston, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1973.692**

Initial O (?): *Dream of St. Romuald*

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 210 × 135 mm, two lines of fragmentary text and three fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse.

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Miniature of the Dream of St. Romuald; Romuald sleeps against an altar with Camaldolese monks and angels on a ladder in the background.

Provenance: Ca. 1955–1961 in the estate of Jacob Hirsch (dealer; New York, b. 1874 – d. 1955); 1961–1967 probably owned by Frederick A. Stern (New York); 1967 acquired by Böhler in Munich; purchased by John Goelet (New York) in 1967 from Julius Böhler; gifted to the MFA in 1973 by Goelet.

- **Bratislava, Slovak National Gallery, 03266**

Initial D: *Nativity of St. John the Baptist*

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 150 × 115 mm, two lines of fragmentary text and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial (cropped) with blue, pink foliate forms still visible: [D] Nativity of John the Baptist, in an interior setting with St. Elizabeth, the baby, a midwife, and a handmaid; The Virgin and St. Zechariah in the foreground.

Provenance: Sold 11 May 1838 at Sotheby's (London) in the sale of William Young Ottley, Lot No. 32; prior to 1928 possibly in the collection of Marcel Nemes; sold 13–14 November 1928 in Muller's sale (Amsterdam); bought in 1967 by the SNG from a private collection (Trnava).

- **Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 4165(10)**

Initial D: *Unidentified Female Saint (Camaldolese Nun)* ❖⊕

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 143 × 96 mm, Two fragmentary words, one decorated initial E, one partial rubric in red, and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

¹ A ❖ indicates a first hand analysis by this author. A ⊕ indicates a reattribution of the iconography by this author. A ⊕ indicates a liturgical identification first proposed by this author.

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white filigree detailing and red, green, pink foliate decoration with solid gold centre: [D] Camaldolese nun in white robe and black veil.

Provenance: 1894 bequeathed to the University Library; pre-1891, owned by Edward Hailstone; sold 4 February, 1891, Sotheby's London to Samuel Sandars (b. 1837, d. 1894).

- **Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Marlay cutting It. 18**

Initial G: Dormition of the Virgin ❖

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment 305 × 320 mm, four lines of fragmentary text and four fragmentary four-lined musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue and graded pink foliate forms on a shaped ground of solid gold with painted foliate forms: [G] Dormition of the Virgin, with Saints Peter, Paul and John behind her, and the lame and blind in the foreground.

Provenance: Bequeathed by Charles Brinsley Marlay (b. 1831, d. 1912) to the Fitzwilliam Museum; 1853 owned by Thomas Miller; William Young Ottley's collection (b. 1771, d. 1836); purchased on 12 May, 1836 at Sotheby's, London (Ottley sale) by Rev. John Fuller Russell (b. 1813, d. 1884).

- **Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art. 1954.257**

Initial S: St. Augustine(?) (A Bishop) ☉

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 168 × 149 mm, three fragmentary lines of text and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with white filigree detailing, green, blue, and mosaic gold palm-shells² on a shaped ground of solid gold with rinceau-style engraving: [S] A Bishop saint holding an open book and crosier.

Provenance: Owned by Vladimir G. Simkhovitch (b. 1874, d. 1959), New York, NY, USA; sold or given in 1954 to the Cleveland Art Museum.

- **Florence, Private Collection.**

Initial I – St. Matthew(?)

In Latin

Italy, Venice(?), ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 178 × 103 mm, beginning of three four-line musical staves ruled in red with black clefs visible (reverse side inaccessible: pasted down)

² The term 'palm-shell' is a term used to describe this particular shape seen on various cuttings related to the San Mattia corpus. This term is unique to this thesis.

Decoration: Historiated initial in pink with white filigree detailing, blue and green acanthus leaves and green, blue, and mosaic gold palm-shells on a shaped ground of solid gold: [I] St. Matthew(?) wearing a pink patterned cope over a blue mantle holding an open book.

Provenance: William Young Ottley collection and sale? Sold through Sam Fogg (London), late twentieth century?

- **Geneva, Comites Latentes.**

Initial V: St. John the Evangelist(?)

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 120 × 95 mm, fragmentary text and one fragmentary four-line musical stave ruled in red on reverse (reverse side inaccessible: pasted down)

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with pink acanthus and green palm-shell on a ground of solid gold [badly damaged]: [V?] St. John wearing a pink robe with green lining under a blue cope with white pseudo-Arabic detailing and orange lining stares up at a nebulous blue cloud with white and gold detailing.

Provenance: William Young Ottley's collection? Sold through Sotheby's (London).

- **London, British Library, Add. Ms. 60630, fol. 10**

Initial T: Bishop consecrating a church ❖

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 325 × 225 mm, four lines of fragmentary text, one decorated initial O, one partial rubric in red, and four fragmentary four-line musical staves rules in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with graded pink, blue, and mosaic gold foliate forms on a ground of burnished gold with painted foliate forms: [T] Camaldolese Bishop Consecrating a Church with a monk entering the Venetian-style church and congregation of men and women behind.

Provenance: Sold 11 May 1838, William Young Ottley (b. 1771, d. 1836) sale in London at Sotheby's Lot No. 39; purchased by Rev. John Fuller Russell (b. 1813, d. 1884) for £1; purchased from him by Samuel Sotheby (b. 1771, d. 1842) prior to 1842 (he also purchased Lots nos. 125, 136, 190, 199, 203, 205 – 209, 245, and 247 from the Ottley sale in 1836; purchased by Leopold de Rothschild (b. 1845, d. 1917); purchased by the British Library on 26 March 1979 as 'The Ascott Album' (Add. 60630, Old Covers).

- **London, Private Collection**

Initial D: Female Saint

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 157 × 92 mm, fragmentary text and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red/orange with blue acanthus and a burnished gold background [badly damaged] [D]: A blond female saint with arms crossed over her chest wearing a gold(?) tunic with a blue mantle over one shoulder.

Provenance: Sold on 11 May 1838 at Sotheby's (Ottley sale), perhaps Lot nos. 33 or 34; subsequently in the collection of Robert S. Holford (b. 1808, d. 1892) and Sir George Holford (b. 1860, d. 1926) (see R. H. Benson, *The Holford Collection, Dorchester House*, Oxford, 1927, p. 3, nt. 27 and pl. XXV, as Sienese); sold on 12 July 1927 at Sotheby's, London, Lot No. 16 (sold with *Saint Helena Finding the True Cross*); sold 7 July 2009 at Sotheby's, London, Lot No. 110.

- **London, Private Collection**

Initial G: Nativity of the Virgin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 194 × 126 mm, two fragmentary lines of text and three fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white filigree detailing and green palm-shells:[G] Nativity of the Virgin with St. Anne in a bed receiving the infant Virgin from a midwife.

Provenance: possibly William Young Ottley collection and sale, Lot 32; sold by Jörn Günther, Hamburg, 2006 to private collection, London.

- **London, Private Collection.**

Initial S – Bishop

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with orange and green acanthus leaves: [S] A holy Bishop in a white habit sits in profile holding a small closed gold book and a crosier, set on burnished gold ground.

- **Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum. Ms. 73 (2003.87)**

Initial G: St. Blaise

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 157 × 120 mm, two fragmentary lines of text, one abbreviated rubric in red, one Roman numeral 7 in red, one decorated initial D, and two fragmentary four-line musical staves + 1 line ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in white (pink?) with green highlighting and red and blue acanthus leaves and green palm-shells: [G] St. Blaise wearing a blue patterned cope holding a red wool carder.

Provenance: Prob. Camaldolese monastery of San Mattia in Murano, Italy; Poss. William Young Ottley (1771–1836); Nella Longari, Milan, sold in Sotheby's sale 25 April 1983 to J. Paul Getty Museum.

- **Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 106**

Initial (?): St. Jerome extracting a thorn from a Lion's paw
Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 157 × 120 mm, reverse side is completely blank

Decoration: Historiated initial (?) burnished gold ground with blue acanthus leaves and green palm-shells; St. Jerome sits in his study holding tweezers and the lion's paw with a frightened monk in the background.

Provenance: Prob. Camaldolese monastery of San Mattia in Murano, Italy; Poss. William Young Ottley (1771–1838); Jacob Hirsch, New York, by 1961; Estate of L.C. Randall, Bern, Switzerland by 1975; by descent in the Randall family; private collection, Canada.

- **New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M 1129**

Initial B: Archangel Michael transfixing Satan ❖
In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 115 × 215 mm, reverse side is inaccessible (pasted down) and no record of reverse contents

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with red and pink foliate forms/acanthus leaves; green, pink, and pale yellow palm-shell decoration: [B] Archangel Michael raises his sword, which curves to fit the upper bow; he occupies the majority of the inner initial with a black dragon in the lower bow.

Provenance: Gift of Suzanne A. Rosenberg, 2002.

- **New York, Private Collection**

Initial N: Finding of the True Cross

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 145 × 104 mm, fragmentary text and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red/orange with white filigree detailing and green and blue acanthus leaves with burnished gold: [N] St. Helena kneels before the true cross surrounded by male and female witnesses.

Provenance: Sold on 11 May, 1838 at Sotheby's, London, (Ottley sale), Lot No. 38 to Thomas Rodd (d. 1849); post-1849 in the collection of Robert S. Holford (b. 1808, d. 1892) and Sir George Holford (b. 1860, d. 1926) (see R. H. Benson, *The Holford*

Collection, Dorchester House, Oxford, 1927, p. 3, nt. 27 and pl. XXVI, as Sieneſe); ſold 12 July 1927 at Sotheby’s, London, Lot No. 16; ſold 7 July 2009 at Sotheby’s, London, Lot No. 109

- **New York, The Metropolitan Muſeum of Art, 48.40**

Initial O or D(?): Two Biſhops and Two Saints (St. Romuald and St. Benedict with St. Juſtus and St. Clement) ❖⊕

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 600 × 475 mm, two fragmentary lines of text, one abbreviated rubric in red and two fragmentary four-line muſical ſtaves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with blue and green acanthus leaves and blue palm-shells with a gold background (badly damaged): [O?] Four male figures, two older bearded with mitres and croiſers wearing elaborate copes and white garments; two younger men holding palm leaves in the background.

Provenance: Purchaſed by Marcel Nemes on 13–14 November 1928 ſale Muller’s, (Amſterdam) Lot No. 98; 1948 in the collection of Dr. Elizabeth de Ceſpel (New York).

- **Paris, Muſée de Cluny – Muſée nationale du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22712**

Initial B: The Holy Houſe of Loreto/ Holy Houſe floating on the Sea ❖

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 210 × 125 mm, two fragmentary words of text and three fragmentary four-line muſical ſtaves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with graded pink foliate forms and white foliate detailing and red and green palm-shells on a gold background: [B] An angel with red wings occupies the upper bow above a Venetian-style church floating on green waves.

Provenance: Bequeathed in 1843 to the Cluny Muſeum by its founder Alexandre Du Sommerard (b. 1779, d. 1832); inventoried in 1847 as part of the collection.

- **Paris, Muſée de Cluny – Muſée nationale du Moyen Âge, Cl. 22713**

Initial N: Scene of Sacrilege (Beirut Miracle) ❖⊕+

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 203 × 125 mm, two fragmentary lines of text, one partial abbreviated rubric in red, one Roman numeral 23 in red, one decorated in G and two and half fragmentary four-line muſical ſtaves ruled in red on reverse

Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in pink with white filigree detailing and green and blue palm-shells: [N?] A bearded figure ſtrikes a vexillum againſt an altarpiece of the Crucifixion with two blue-robed monks kneeling beſide the altar.

Provenance: Bequeathed in 1843 to the Cluny Museum by its founder Alexandre Du Sommerard (b. 1779, d. 1832); inventoried in 1847 as part of the collection.

- **Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet** ❖³

Initial?: Young male saint/Martyr? M6022

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 160 × 91 mm, reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial on a shaped ground of solid gold (badly damaged): [?] Young saint or martyr wearing a red tunic with a green mantle decorated with white pseudo-Kufic script holding an ornate foliate acanthus leaf in red, green, and mosaic gold with blue palm-shells.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 7; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial G: St. Mary Magdalene M6024

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 140 × 85 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white foliate detailing and red highlighting on a burnished gold ground with rinceau florals: [G] St. Mary Magdalene wearing a green tunic with gold florals and a mosaic gold mantle, holding an ointment jar.

Provenance: 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 10; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial E: St. Stephen M6027

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 88 × 145 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with white pseudo-Kufic script detailing, green acanthus leaves and pink palm-shells on a sold gold ground: [E] St. Stephen wearing a blue mantle with gold floral embellishment and burnished gold collar with pseudo-Kufic script, arms crossed with stone and blood on his head.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 8; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

³ I have seen the cuttings through the vitrine as I was not given access to them removed from their case.

Full Page: Mission of the Apostles M6030

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 540 × 365 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down); front side:

Decoration: Full page with one line of text ('Inclitus') and neumes in burnished gold. Wood-style frame with painted foliate roundels containing monk bust portraits (left); bas-de-page with painted foliate roundels containing portraits: St. Romuald, Virgin and Child, St. Benedict. Border decoration includes blue and orange lozenges. Main miniature: apostolic gathering in an outdoor setting with St. Peter in centre.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1838, William Young Ottley, N. 192 'Descent of the Holy Spirit...' 'from Murano'; 1898, T. M. Whitehead, London 10 May, N. 77 'Descent of the Holy Ghost' prov. Ottley Collection; 1926 Rodlphe Kann; Edouard Kann, N. 31 (Boinet indicates the provenance from the Ottley Collection, but with N. 2395 instead of 192); 1946 Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial L(?): St. Margaret M6033

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 140 × 107 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white filigree detailing, red and green accents and pink flowers on burnished gold ground (badly damaged) with rinceau foliate patter : [L?] St. Margaet wearing a pink tunic and mosaic gold mantle with nimbus decorated with pseudo-Kufic script. A large green dragon shares the interior space.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 9; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial I: St. Augustine M6034

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 215 × 100 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in green, blue and pale pink with white filigree detailing and palm shells. St. Augustine wears a black habit with a pale pink cope with pseudo-Kufic script. He wears a white and red mitre and holds a crosier and book, while standing in profile.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 1; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial S: St. Paul M6035

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 160 × 135 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with silver filigree detailing and pink and green palm-shells on a solid gold ground: [S] St. Paul wearing a pink tunic with a red and green mantle with white pseudo-Kufic script, holding a gold sword.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 3; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial S: St. Paul M6036

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 150 × 135 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with pink and green and white filigree detailing and blue palm-shells on a solid gold ground (badly damaged): [S] St. Paul wearing a green tunic with gold floral detailing, holding a sword.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 4; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

Initial ?: Holy Bishop M6037

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 135 × 100 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in pink and blue with red, green, and blue palm-shells on a solid gold ground (badly damaged): [?] A sainted bishop in a white tunic under a mosaic gold mantle with orange and white floral detail and pseudo-Kufic script, holding a crozier and wearing a mitre.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 5; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

*Initial M: Bearded saint with a Book *(An Apostle) M6038*

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 135 × 97 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white filigree detailing and green, blue and red palm-shells on a gold ground with rinceau etching: [M] A bearded saint in a blue tunic with a white and green mantle, holds an open book, has a halo with pseudo-Kufic script.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 6; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

- **Plzen, West Bohemian Museum, 2972(3)**

Initial I: Holy Bishop (A Pope with a Church?) ☛

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 161 × 101 mm, two fragmentary lines of text, one partial decorated initial ? and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse
Gothic bookhand (Textualis)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue (violet) with mosaic gold highlights and red, white, and green acanthus leaf foliage on a burnished gold ground (badly damaged): [I] Mitred-bishop in a green and red cope grips the initial I with both hands and holds the model of a church.

Provenance: In the collection of K. W. Hiersemanna 1909

- **San Francisco, Private Collection.**

Initial O: St. Romuald(?)

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 150 × 127 mm, reverse inaccessible (pasted down) and no record of the contents

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white filigree detailing in a pseudo-Kufic style with red and green accents: [O] A white-robed tonsure monk wearing a pink cope with mosaic gold holds an open book.

Provenance: Sold on 11 May 1838 as part of the William Young Ottley (b. 1771, d. 1836) sale at Sotheby's, London, perhaps Lots nos. 35, 36, or 37; purchased by Robert Stayner Holford (b. 1808, d. 1892); bequeathed to Sir George Holford (b. 1860, d. 1926) (see *The Holford Collection*, 1927 catalogue Vol. I, no 27c, Pl. XXV); 20th Century, England, Private Collection; sold 12 June 2013 at Christie's, London, Lot No. 11 to Dr. Jörn Günther, Switzerland (in his possession until 2015)

- **St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum, 36: 1953**

Initial M: Crucifixion of St. Andrew

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 293 × 246 mm, reverse side is completely blank

Decoration: Historiated initial in red/orange with graded green foliate forms and red and blue palm-shells on a shaped ground of solid gold with painted foliate forms: [M] St. Andrew crucified on the Saltire with onlookers behind.

Provenance: Prior to 1950, in the collection of Anton Hiersemann (Stuttgart, Germany); purchased by J. Rosenthal (Oxford and London) on 11 November 1950 at auction at Karl and Faber, Munich, Germany; 1952 -53 owned by Vladimir G. Simkhovitch (b. 1874, d. 1959) (New York, NY, USA); sold April 1953 to St. Louis Art Museum by V. Simkhovitch

- **Washington, National Gallery, inv. B-14, 842**

Initial D: St. Lawrence

In Latin

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445Parchment, 149 × 125 mm, one fragmentary line of text and two fragmentary four-line musical staves ruled in red on reverse

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with white filigree detailing with green foliate forms, pink and blue acanthus leaves and blue palm-shells with a burnished gold interior: [D] St. Lawrence wearing a green mantle with gold floral patterning, red inner lining, and a blue collar with gold pseudo-Kufic script; holds a small hand-held gridiron

Provenance: Pre-1930 in the Czeczowitzka Collection (Vienna); likely purchased by E. Rosenthal (Berkley) on 12 May 1930 at Ball & Graupe sale, Lot No. 10, Berlin; sold 1937 by Maggs Brothers, Lot. no 23, London; 1947 owned by L. J. Rosenwald (Jenkintown); 1948 acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington

- **Unknown Location**

Initial D(?): Pope St. Clement (?) ❖

Parchment, 150 × 125 mm, no extant record of reverse side therefore contents unknown

Decoration: Historiated initial [colours unknown] with palm-shells and pseudo-Kufic detailing: [D] A saint wearing a tunic with pseudo-Kufic script and a papal crown holds a closed book.

- **Unknown Location**

Initial E: St. Philip and St. James (?) ❖

Parchment, 140 × 147 mm, no extant record of reverse therefore contents unknown

Decoration: Historiated initial [colours unknown] with acanthus leaves and palm-shells, likely on a gold ground with rinceau etching: [E] Saints Philip and James wearing tunics [colours unknown], one holds a crosier, the other holds a closed book.

Provenance: 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 31; 1927 Sotheby's London, 12 July; Holford Collection N. 16

- **Problematic Attributions**

- **Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, M6020**

Initial R: St. Catherine of Alexandria (St. Justine of Padua?) ❖

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 120 × 170 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with white rinceau detailing on a sold gold ground: [R] A crowned female wearing a green tunic with gold detailing and a pink mantle with gold detailing, holds an open book and a palm branch, a sword pierces her chest.

Provenance: ?San Michele in Isola, Murano (Venice); 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 11; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

- **Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, M6023**

Initial ? : St. George(?) ❖

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 103 × 77 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with white pseudo-Kufic script and blue palm-shells on a gold ground (badly damaged):[?] A male saint with a red and white tunic under a mosaic gold mantle and a blue headband, holding a Christian flag.

Provenance: 1926, Edouard Kann; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

- **Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, M6031**

Initial S: Old Man in prayer with a Youth Behind Him ❖

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 90 × 83 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in red with blue palm shells on a gold ground (badly damaged:[S] An old bearded man in a blue tunic stands with his arms crossed, a beardless youth in a green tunic stand behind holding an outstretched open hand.

Provenance: ? 1908 C. G. Boerner, Sale, 13–14 November, No. 40 ‘Sieneese XIV Cent.’ 1912, in the collection of Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984

- **Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet, M6039**

Initial ? : Seated Evangelist ❖

Italy, Venice, ca. 1400–ca. 1445

Parchment, 215 × 130 mm reverse side inaccessible (pasted down)

Decoration: Historiated initial in blue with green acanthus leaves on a red and gold patterned ground: [?] A male saint sit on a square throne wearing a blue mantle with orange and green lining and pseudo-Kufic script, holds a quill and an open book.

Provenance: 1926, Edouard Kann, N. 32, 2; 1946, Georges Wildenstein (Wildenstein & Co., New York); bequeathed in 1984.

II. Reconstruction of the *Sanctorale*

GRADUAL		
Introit of the Mass		
<i>Sanctorale</i> (Selected Feasts)⁴		
<u>Feast</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Image</u>
St. Andrew Apostle (30 November)	Mass: Introit, Andrew, Apostle: Mihi autem nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus	Crucifixion of St. Andrew
*Purification of the Virgin (Presentation in the Temple) (2 February)	Mass: Introit, Purification: Suscepimus Deus, misericordiam tuam in medio	Presentation in the Temple/ Candlemas
*Annunciation (25 March)	Mass: Introit: Rorate coeli de super, et nubes pluant justum	Annunciation
St. Philip & St. James (1 May)	Mass: Introit, St. Philip, Apostle; James the Less: Exclamaverunt ad te, Domine, in tempore afflictionis	Sts. Philip and James in ¾ profile holding their emblems
Invention of the True Cross (3 May)	Mass: Introit: Nos autem gloriari oportet, in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi	A crowd gathered around the true cross with St. Helena praying
Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June)	Mass: Introit: De ventre matris meae vocavit me Dominus	A midwife hands the baby to St. Elizabeth with the Virgin and St. Zecariah in front

⁴ An * indicates that the cutting associated with this feast has not been traced but there is a record of its existence.

	nomine	
St. Paul (30 June)	Mass: Introit: Scio cui credidi et certus sum quia potens est depositum	A bearded saint holds a sword
St. Mary Magdalene (22 July)	Mass: Introit: Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem festum celebrantes sub honore Mariae Magdalene	St. Mary Magdalene hold a small white ointment jar with free flowing hair
St. Lawrence (10 August)	Vigil of the feast of St. Lawrence (9 August): Introit: Dispersit dedit pauperibus sade iustitiae eius permanet	St. Lawrence holds a small portable flaming gridiron
Dormition of the Virgin (15 August)	Mass: Introit, Feast of the Assumption: Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem festum celebrantes sub honore Mariae Virginis	The Apostles are gathered around the Virgin on her deathbed with the sick and the lame kneeling in front
St. Augustine, Bishop & doctor (28 August)	Mass: Introit In medio ecclesiae aperuit os ejus et implevi eum dominus	A bearded saint stands in profile wearing a black robe and pale pink cope and a mitre. He holds a book and a crozier.
Nativity of the Virgin (8 September)	Mass: Introit Gaudeamus omnes in Domino, diem festum celebrantes sub honore Mariae Virginis	A midwife hands the baby to St. Anne in bed
St. Matthew Apostle (21 September)	Mass: Antiphon: In medio et in circuitu sedis dei quattuor animalia senas alas habentia oculis undique	A bearded saint in a decorated mantle holds an open book in both hands
St. Michael Archangel (29 September)	Mass: Introit, feast of St. Michael (Michaelmas) Benedicite Domino omnes	Archangel Michael raises his sword against a black dragon on the ground

	angeli ejus	
St. Jerome (30 September)	Mass: Introit, Common of One Confessor [Doctor]: In medio ecclesiae aperuit os ejus et implevi eum dominus	St. Jerome holds a Lion's paw and pulls thorn from it while a monk looks on behind
Passio ymaginis (9 November)	Mass: Introit, feast of the Sancti salvator: Nos autem gloriari oportet	A bearded soldier raises a vexillum to an altarpiece with the Crucifixion, while two monks kneel beside
St. Clement (Pope) (23 November)	Mass: Introit: Dicit dominus sermones mei quos dedi in os tuum	A saint wears a papal crown and holds a closed book in his right hand
St. Stephen Protomartyr (26 December)	Mass: Introit, Et enim sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur	St. Stephen stands, arms folded across chest with large stones and blood on head and shoulders

***Communale* Common of Saints**

<u>Feast</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Image</u>
Common of Several Virgins	Psalm 44:1 Dilexisti justitiam et odisti iniquitatem propterea unxit	Young female saint
Common of Several Martyrs	Mass: Introit: Iusti epulentur et exsultent in conspectus Dei	Young, beardless saint holds a large acanthus leaf
Common of Apostles and Evangelists in Paschaltide(?)	Lauds: Hymn: Inclitus rector pater atque prudens	Thirteen apostles are gathered in prayer with St. Peter in the centre. A fiery cloud and the Holy Spirit are above them.
Common of Apostles(?)	Mass: Introit: Mihi autem nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus	Old, bearded saint holds an open book

Common of One Confessor	Mass: Introit 4: Os justi meditabitur sapientiam et lingua ejus loquetur	A white-clad monk (St. Romuald?) hold an open book
Dedication of a Church	Mass: Introit: Terribilis est locus iste, hic domus Dei	A group of devout watch at a bishop consecrates a church
Common of One Confessor Bishop(?)	Mass: Introit: Statuit ei Dominus testamentum pacis	A bearded bishop holds a books and a mitre

ANTIPHONER

Sanctorale (Selected Feasts)

<u>Feast</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Image</u>
St. John Apostle and Evangelist (27 December)	<u>Matins: Nocturn 1, Response 1</u> First Epistle of St. John I 1 – 10: (?) Valde honorandus est beatus Joannes	Young beardless saint stand with arms folded across chest staring up at a blue and gold cloud
The Purification of the Virgin (Presentation in the Temple) (2 February)	John of Damascus: Adorna thalamum tuum Sion	Presentation in the Temple/ Candlemass
The Annunciation (25 March)	Isaiah VII 10 – 15: Missus est Gabriel Angelus ad Mariam	Annunciation
St. Paul (30 June)	<u>Matins: Nocturn 1, Antiphon 2; Feast of Paul the Apostle (Antiphoner)</u> Scio cui credidi et certus	Bearded saint holding a sword

	sum	
Common of Several Virgins	Psalm 44:1 D ilexisti justitiam et odisti iniquitatem	Young female saint

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