# Façade, Face, and Frontal Photo of St. Peter's

## San Pedro de Roma: fachada, frente y fotografías

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*For Joel Snyder, on his retirement
from the University of Chicago*

ABSTRACT

Regarded as the first medieval architectural portrait, Cimabue's *Ytalia* at Assisi has important precedents in pilgrim images and depictions of St. Peter's in the eleventh-century *Vita gregorii* from Farfa and on the fifth-century Samagher casket. All of these are constructions based on both inherited conventions and reality, and serve anagogical as well as documentary purposes. Modern renderings, by Domenico Tasselli and others, of images within architectural contexts continued to integrate depictions of individual elements into overall settings; their artificial techniques passed ultimately into photographs that art historians still deploy today. The results privilege clarity over experience and, by doing so, fail to convey somatic positioning and dynamic viewing.

KEYWORDS: St. Peter's (Rome), St. Paul's (Rome), portraiture, Cimabue, Assisi, Giacomo Grimaldi, the Veronica, pilgrimage, Samagher casket (Venice), Eton College *Vita gregorii*, Paulinus of Nola, Antonio Eclissi, Antonio Sarti, Adolphe Braun, Sistine Chapel (Rome), photography, icons, narrative images, Vercelli rotulus

RESUMEN

Considerado como el primer retrato de arquitectura medieval, *Ytalia* de Cimabue en Asís tiene precedentes importantes en imágenes peregrinas y representaciones de San Pedro en la *Vita Gregorii* (Farfa, siglo XI) y en la arqueta Samagher (siglo V, conservada en el Museo Archeologico di Venezia). Todos estas construcciones se basan tanto en convenciones he-

redadas y en la realidad física, y sirven a propósitos tanto anagógicos como documentales. Representaciones más modernas, como las ejecutadas por Domenico Tasselli entre otros, muestran imágenes dentro de contextos arquitectónicos, de modo que subsumieron las representaciones de los elementos individuales en el marco de los ajustes generales; sus técnicas artificiales de representación afectaron en última instancia a las fotografías que los historiadores del arte todavía emplean hoy. El resultado de esas modificaciones fotográficas privilegian la claridad comprensiva sobre la experiencia y, al hacerlo, omiten la posición somática y la visualización dinámica del espectador.

Palabras clave: San Pedro (Roma), San Pablo (Roma), retrato, Cimabue, Asís, Giacomo Grimaldi, la Verónica, peregrinación, Caja Samagher (Venecia), *Vita gregorii* del Eton College, Paulino de Nola, Antonio Eclissi, Antonio Sarti, Adolphe Braun, Capilla Sixtina (Roma), fotografía, iconos, imágenes narrativas, Rotulos Vercelli

## The Faces of St. Peter's in Rome

Labeled *Ytalia*, Cimabue's image of St. Mark's missionary destination in the crossing vault of San Francesco at Assisi (Fig. 1), in fact, portrays *Roma*, identifiable through buildings "fotografata," as Serena Romano has characterized them, "con fedeltà inusitata"[1]. The Pantheon with its portico and ancient inscription, the Castel Sant'Angelo, and the Meta Romuli are readily recognized within the Aurelian walls; so too is St. Peter's with its campanile to the right of its tile-roofed atrium and the mosaic-covered façade (Fig. 2). Refashioned *a cavetto* by Pope Gregory IX (r. 1227-41), the front of St. Peter's is also documented in a drawing made by Domenico Tasselli around 1608 for Giacomo Grimaldi's *Instrumenta autentica* (Vatican, BAV, Cod. A 64 ter, fol. 10; Fig. 3)[2], the survey of St. Peter's compiled for Pope Paul V (r. 1605-21) at the moment the last vestige of Constantine's basilica was being razed to make room for Maderno's nave[3]. The great tower at the left is a little more difficult to secure, but it is certainly

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[1] S. Romano, *La basilica di San Francesco ad Assisi. Pittori, botteghe, strategie narrative*, Rome, 2001, pp. 101-39. See also: M. R. Marchionibus, "L'evanglista Marco nella vela di Cimabue ad Assisi: Immagine e realità", *Arte medievale*, 7 (2008), pp. 81-93; M. Andaloro, S. Romano (eds.), *La pittura medievale a Roma 312-1431. Corpus e atlante*, Milan, 2006-12, vol. 5, pp. 11-49, at pp. 38-41.

[2] The *Instrumenta* itself is Vatican, BAV, Cod. Barb. lat. 2733, where the façade is pictured on fol. 133; R. Niggl (ed.), *Decorazione della basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, Vatican, 1972. See: S. Waetzoldt, *Die Kopien des 17. Jahrhunderts nach Mosaiken und Wandmalereien in Rom*, Vienna and Munich, 1964, pp. 65-72; H. Belting, "Das Fassadenmosaik des Atriums von Alt St. Peter in Rom", *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 23 (1961), pp. 37-54; A. Arbeiter, *Alt-St. Peter in Geschichte und Wissenschaft*, Berlin, 1988, pp. 141-44; F. Gandolfo, "Il ritratto di Gregorio IX dal mosaico di facciata di San Pietro in Vaticano", in M. Andaloro et al. (eds.), *Fragmenta picta. Affreschi e mosaici staccati del Medioevo romano*, Rome, 1989, pp. 131-34; A. Iacobini, "Est haec sacra principis aedes", in W. Tronzo (ed.), *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, Cambridge and New York, 2005, pp. 48-63; J. Gardner, *The Roman Crucible. Mosaic and Painting in Rome 1198-1276*, Munich, 2013, pp. 227-28; A. Ballardini, "Die Petersbasilika im Mittelalter," in *Der Petersdom in Rom: Die Baugeschichte von der Antike bis heute*, H. Brandenburg et al. (eds.), Petersberg, 2015, pp. 35-76.

[3] K. Queijo, "Il mosaico della facciata di San Pietro in Vaticano", in *La Pittura medievale,* vol. 5, pp. 113-16.

a real structure, either the Torre dei Conti or Torre delle Militzie; and identifying the prominent structure behind it requires more effort still. Cesare Brandi argued persuasively that the building is not a church, as had been proposed, but rather the Palazzo Senatorio on the Capitoline Hill adorned with coats-of-arms of the Orsini family alternating with shields inscribed SPQR[4]. In what has become a classic article on the *Ytalia*, Maria Andaloro elaborated the palazzo's importance for the reigning Orsini Pope Nicholas III (1277-80)[5]; and more recently, both Romano and Chiara Frugoni have extended Andaloro's claims about papal cultural politics and San Francesco itself, "il luogo più romano fuori Roma," pointing out that not only Nicholas but also his predecessors Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) and Gregory IX, played important roles in establishing the Franciscan order[6].

In fashioning *Ytalia*, Cimabue rejected conventions for representing Rome that, since the eleventh-century and up to his own day, were deployed on papal and secular seals, for example, the "Aurea Roma" of Pope Victor II (r. 1055-57)[7]. Likewise, he eschewed mementoes of St. Peter's that featured the Veronica, the image of Christ's face impressed a cloth which, through actions of the very same popes Frugoni has implicated
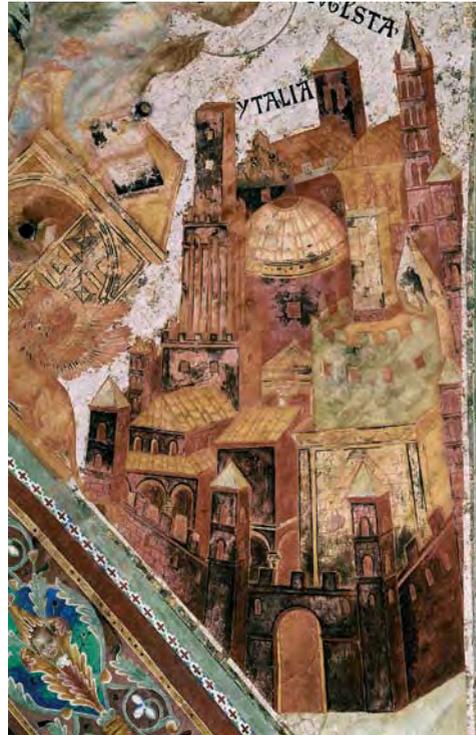


Fig. 1. Cimabue, *Ytalia*, Assisi, San Francesco; Photo: Scala/Art Resource

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[4] C. BRANDI, *Duccio*, Florence, 1951, pp. 128-29. Raphael's representation of the façade mosaic behind the Vatican gatehouse in the *Fire in the Borgo* confirms the claim; squeezed between the oculus and the central window, Christ is visible, flanked by Mary and Peter and the four evangelist symbols and above St. Matthew; J. ONIANS, *Bearers of Meaning*, Princeton, 1988, p. 258; I., ROWLAND, "Raphael, Angelo Colocci, and the Genesis of the Architectural Orders", *Art Bulletin*, 76 (1994), pp. 81-104; P. REILLY, "Raphael's 'Fire in the Borgo' and the Italian Pictorial Vernacular", *Art Bulletin*, 92 (2010), pp. 308-25. I thank Morten Steen Hansen for helping me with this detail.

[5] M. ANDALORO, "Ancora una volta sull'*Ytalia* di Cimabue", *Arte medievale*, 2 (1985), pp. 143-77. Andaloro, in turn, built her arguments on observations made a century earlier by J. STRZYGOWSKI, *Cimabue und Rom*, Vienna, 1888, pp. 84-98.

[6] C. FRUGONI, "L'*Ytalia* di Cimabue nella basilica superiore de Assisi. Uno sguardo dal transetto alla navata", in F. BOCCHI, R. SMURRA (eds.), *Imago Urbis*, Rome, 2003, pp. 33-63. See also the cautious revisions proposed by D. COOPER, J. ROBSON, *The Making of Assisi. The Pope, the Franciscans and the Painting of the Basilica*, New Haven and London, 2013, pp. 82-85 and P. BOKODY, *Images-within-Images in Italian Painting (1250-1350) Reality and Reflexivity*, Farnham, 2015, pp. 62-63.

[7] I. HERKLOTZ, "Ikonographie der Papstsiegel", in H. R. MEIER *et alii* (eds.), *Für irdischen Raum und himmlischen Lohn. Stifter und Auftraggeber in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*, Berlin, 1995, pp. 116-30; see also B. BEI DER WIEDEN, "Bolla di Enrico IV", in M. D'ONOFRIO (ed.), *Romei & Giubilei, Il pellegrinaggio medievale a San Pietro (350-1350)*, Milan, 1999, p. 433.

Fig. 2.
Cimabue (det.)
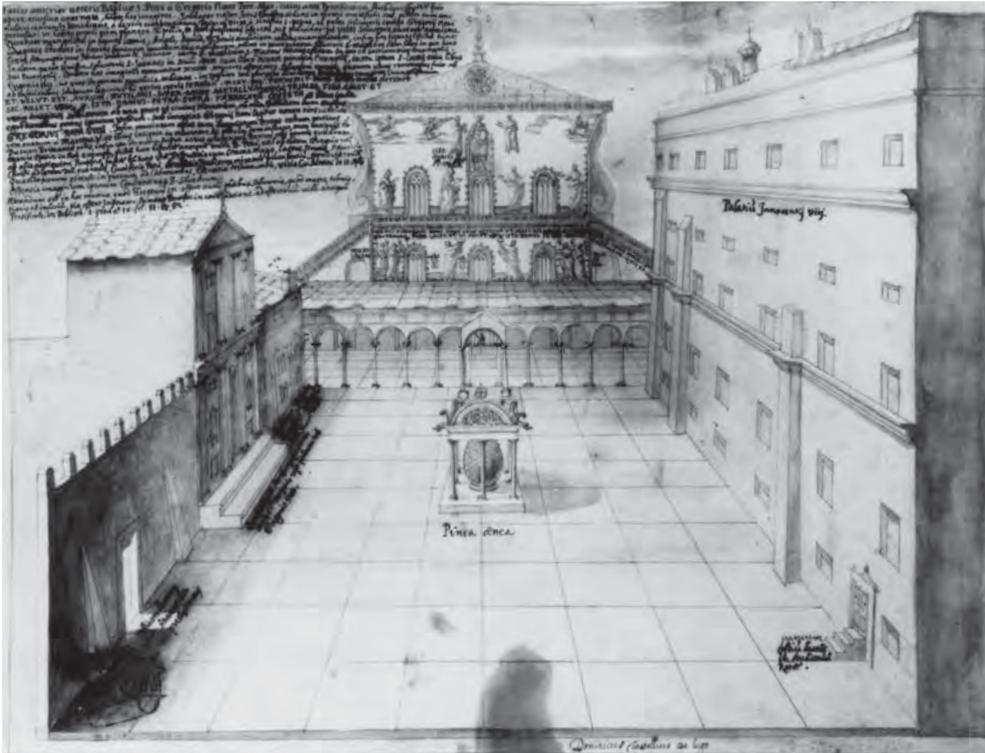


Fig. 3. Domenico Tasselli, Façade of St. Peter's (Vatican, BAV, Cod. A 64 ter, fol. 10)

in the Assisi fresco, was the Church's prime relic after Peter's bones[8]. Reproduced on badges sold to pilgrims in the basilica's atrium, such as one in the Musée Cluny inscribed SIGNUM SANCTUM SODARIO, the Veronica identified St. Peter's[9], for example, on the more-or-less contemporary seal of Lorenzo dei Tiniozi (Rome, Museo del Palazzo Venezia, Fig. 4)[10], which portrays the canon flanked by his heraldry and the basilica's well-known pigna within the fountain enclosure in the atrium and the miraculous image featured between Peter and Paul inside a conventional nave. As also on Boniface VIII's bull transcribed in 1300 by the scribe Silvester (Cortona, Biblioteca del Comune e dell'Accademia Etrusca)[11], the famous *acheiropoieton* was both a seal and a coat-of-arms. The face of Christ continued to stand for St. Peter's two centuries later in the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* and in Ludovico Lazarelli's depiction of Pope Sixtus IV displaying the relic to pilgrims in an otherwise generic building[12].



Fig. 4. Seal of Lorenzo dei Tiniozi
(Rome, Museo del Palazzo Venezia)
(after Morelli and Wolf).

At heart, *Ytalia* is not very different from such conventional representations of cityscapes as those on a rotulus prepared a century before as an aide mémoire for the repainting of the vault of San Eusebius in Vercelli (Museo del Tesoro del Duomo)[13]; Jerusalem is one example with its towers, clustered basilicas shown in three-quarters, arcuated campanili, and circular domed building (Fig. 5). It is noteworthy that, although from the floor *Ytalia* does not stand apart particularly from the other Evangelists' destinations, it is in fact closest to the adjacent IUDEA of John with its own crenellated precinct and central domed building. As a way of constructing Rome as the particular terrestrial manifestation of (the celestial) Jerusalem, Cimabue may well have

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[8] J.-M. SANSTERRE, "Variations d'une légende et genèse d'un culte entre la Jérusalem des origines, Rome e l'occident. Quelques jalons de l'histoire de Véronique et de la Veronica jusqu'à la fin du XIIIᵉ siècle", in J. DUCOS, P. HENRIET (eds.), *L'Occident médiéval* (Acts of a colloquium, Bordeaux), Toulouse, 2013, pp. 217-32.

[9] B. SPENCER, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, London, 1998, 248-51; *Romei & Giubilei*, p. 342; B. CHIESI *et alii* (eds.), *Il medioevo in Viaggio* (cat. of an exhib.), Florence, 2015, p. 141.

[10] "Tipario del sigillo di Lorenzo dei Tiniosi, canonica della basilica di San Pietro", in G. MORELLO, G. WOLF (eds.), *Il volto di Cristo*, Rome, Milan, 2000, p. 178.

[11] "Lettera dello scrittore pontificio Silvestro", in *Volto di Cristo*, pp. 176-78.

[12] See: J. HAMBURGER, "Vision and Veronica", in J. HAMBURGER, *The Visual and the Visionary. Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany*, New York, 1998, pp. 317-82.

[13] R.W. SCHELLER, *Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900-ca. 1450)*, Amsterdam, 1995, pp. 155-60; and S. UGGE, G. FERRARIS (eds.), *Et verbum caro factum est . . . La Bibbia oggi e la sua trasmissione nei secoli*, Vercelli, 2005, pp. 77-80; *Petrus Eni, Pietro è Qui* (cat. of an exhibition), Vatican, 2006, p. 223.

Fig. 5. Rotulus, Vercelli
Photo: © Museo del Tesoro del Duomo di Vercelli

appropriated such an image as that in the twelfth-century *Liber Floridus* in Ghent (Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS. 92, fol. 65ʳ) with its portal welcoming viewers, imposing wall and towers, and sacred buildings[14]; in the very year he was painting his Assisi *Ytalia*, Frugoni has reminded us, Nicholas III directed a bull titled *Civitatem sanctam Jerusalem* to the canons of St. Peter's in which he likened Rome to the prophetic *urbs* ready to descend from heaven[15].

*Ytalia* depends, then, on the very kind of interplay between generic forms and individual features as human portraits do and coats-of-arms[16]; thus, it is significant that Cimabue embedded a *paragone* of figural painting and heraldic crests within his revolutionary portrait of architecture[17]. In other words, when he replaced the Veronica that traditionally stood for St. Peter's with the façade mosaic, he applied the same paradigm that Joseph Leo Koerner, Rudolf Preimesberger, and Stephen Perkinson have taught us also underlay the origin of portraits of persons[18]. And when Cimabue introduced such details as the Pantheon's oculus and Castel Sant'Angelo's rectangular tower emerging from the center of a cylindrical base to underscore Rome's particularity, he was replicating the fundamental

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[14] H. ROSENAU, *The Ideal City, Its Architectural Evolution*, New York, 1975.

[15] FRUGONI, "L'*Ytalia*", p. 57.

[16] On the relationship to personal seals of the earliest city seals, see B. BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego Was Imago. Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, 2011, pp. 238-49 et passim.

[17] On the application of "portrait" to the rendering of actual structures, see J. WIRTH, *Villard de Honnecourt, architecte du XIIIᵉ siècle*, Geneva, 2015, pp. 53-56 and also the analysis of the perspectival rendering of architecture, pp. 108-115 et passim.

[18] J. L. KOERNER, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, Chicago, 1993, pp. 80-126; R. PREIMESBERGER, "'…proprijs sic effingebam coloribus…': zu Dürers Selbstbildnis von 1500", in H. KESSLER, G. WOLF (eds.), *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation* (*Villa Spelman Studies*, Vol. 6), Bologna, 1998, pp. 279-300; S. PERKINSON, "Portraits and Counterfeits: Villard de Honnecourt and Thirteenth Century Theories of Representation", in D. AREFORD, N. ROWE (eds.), *Excavating the Medieval Image, Manuscripts, Artists, Audiences: Essays in Honor of Sandra Hindman*, Aldershot, 2004, pp. 13-35 and *The Likeness of the King. A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France*, Chicago, 2009.

mechanism of heraldry which inserted particular devices within a family's recognizable crest. Cimabue thus constructed his revolutionary image of architecture by drawing on coats-of-arms and figural painting, two competing ways to portray persons[19]. The result, as Andaloro, Romano, and Frugoni have noted, is to identify Assisi with the papal City and, in turn, to underscore Pope Nicholas' dual role as ruler of Rome and leader of the Church[20].

The first conclusion, then, is that Romano is certainly correct that the *Ytalia* is not only an expression of the new realism that Nicholas III had advanced already in Rome[21], but also the beginning of portraiture *tout court* [22].

## PRECEDENT PORTRAITS

That said, any claim that Cimabue's truly marks the start of architectural portraiture must be qualified[23]. For one thing, some earlier depictions on pilgrims' badges had also included recognizable buildings and even, in certain cases, their identifying images. One token found at Bull Wharf in London (Museum of London, Fig. 6), for instance, renders the Pantheon, known since the seventh-century as Sta. Maria Rotunda, quite as the *Ytalia* does[24]; the famous pagan structure that Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590-604) transformed into a church is easily recognized by the semi-circular cut-out at the top representing the distinctive oculus, ringed as, in the Assisi fresco, with a molding from which the tiles radiate; and the portico is also depicted, its tile roof supported on columns (and, within it, the icon of Mary holding the Christ Child on her lap)[25]. The medieval pilgrims' tokens, in turn, depended ultimately on Early Christian souvenirs of shrines at sites in the Holy Land, for instance, the Holy Sepulcher in the Maries at Christ's Tomb pictured on an ampulla at Dumbarton Oaks[26], and, to cite a painted example, on the sixth-century Sancta Sanctorum reliquary box in which

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[19] See H. BELTING, *Spiegel der Welt. Die Erfindung des Gemäldes in den Niederlanden*, Munich, 1994, pp. 55-64; ID., "Wappen und Porträt. Zwei Medien des Körpers", in *Bild-Anthropologie,* Munich, 2001, pp. 115-42; and *Faces: Eine Geschichte des Gesichts*, Munich, 2013.

[20] ANDALORO, "Ancora una volta", p. 173.

[21] See: GARDNER, *Roman Crucible*, pp. 245-55.

[22] Richard Krautheimer's important arguments about copies of medieval architecture have been much cited and, as he once lamented to me, much abused; R. KRAUTHEIMER, "Introduction to an "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 1-33. See now, W. SCHENKLUHN, "Iconografia e iconologia dell'Architettura medievale", in PIVA, P. (ed.), *L'arte medievale nel contesto*, Milan, 2006, pp. 59-78; J. H. SHAFFER, "Letaldus of Micy, Germigny-des-Prés, and Aachen: Histories, Contexts, and the Problem of Likeness in Medieval Architecture", *Viator*, 37 (2006), pp. 53-83; E. RUCHAUD, "Iconographie architecturale et architecture en image", in J. BASCHET, P.-O. DITTMAR (eds.), *Les images dans l'occident medieval*, Turnhout, 2015, pp. 109-19.

[23] See ANDALORO, "Ancora una volta".

[24] SPENCER, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, pp. 253-54; *Romei & Giubilei*, p. 348; R. MANIURA, "Two Marian Image Shrines in Fifteenth-Century Tuscany, the 'Iconography of Architecture' and the Limits of 'Holy Competition', in P. DAVIES *et alii* (eds.), *Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000-1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, Farnham, 2013, pp. 213-29.

[25] The icon is still preserved, albeit cut down; see: G. LEONE, *Icone di Roma e del Lazio 1*, Rome, 2012, pp. 59-60.

[26] K. WEITZMANN, "Loca Sancta and the Representational Arts of Palestine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 28 (1974), pp. 31-55; G. VIKAN, *Early Byzantine Pilgrimage Art* (rev. ed.), Washington, DC. 2010; D. KRUEGER, *Liturgical Subjects. Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*, Philadelphia, 2014, pp. 67-129.

Fig. 6. Pantheon, Pilgrim's badge
(Museum of London)



Fig. 7. Holy Sepulcher (det.).
Relics box, (Vatican, Museo Vaticano)

a great dome encompasses the burial precinct (Vatican, Museo Vaticano, Fig. 7)[27]. These, too, deploy the conventions of portraiture, namely, symmetry and frontality that assure maximum scrutability and the intense interplay between seeing and being shown. Cimabue's *Ytalia* is a pilgrimage image.

So is another, even more telling, exception to any claim that Cimabue's is the first architectural portrait, the depiction of Old St. Peter's in the *Vita gregorii* produced at Farfa and now at now at Eton College, Windsor (MS. 124, fol. 122r; Fig. 8)[28]. The basilica's façade doubles as the frontispiece in the eleventh-century edition of John the Deacon's ninth-century biography of the seventh-century Pope, forming the backdrop for the depiction of Gregory's burial and of a curious event in which Peter the Deacon persuaded people to cease setting the Pope's writings afire. St. Peter's is identifiable primarily by the façade mosaic that had preceded the Gregory IX's thirteenth-century remaking of the decoration, otherwise known only from an inscription referring to the fifth-century commission by Consul Marianus and his wife Anastasia in which *quattuor animalia circa Christum sunt picta*[29].

Ever since the Jesuit historian, Hartmann Grisar, first analyzed it, scholars have treated the Eton College frontispiece as a reliable document of the appearance of that disappeared facade.[30] Richard Krautheimer accepted the claim in his *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum*

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[27] B. Fricke, "Tales from Stones, Travels through Time. Narrative and Vision in the Casket from the Vatican", *W86th*, 21 (2014), pp. 230-50.

[28] M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Eton College* (Cambridge, 1895), p. 56; H.L. Kessler, "'Histoire mythique et archéologique' in the Eton College *Old St. Peter's*", in *Mélanges Christian Heck*, Paris (forthcoming).

[29] R. Krautheimer et al. (eds.), *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, vol. 5, Vatican City, 1977, p. 173; S. De Blaauw, *Cultus et Decor. Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale*, Vatican, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 465-66; A. Thacker, "Popes, Emperors and Clergy at Old Saint Peter's from the Fourth to the Eighth Century", in R. McKitterick *et alii* (eds.), *Old Saint Peter's, Rome*, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 137-56.

[30] "Il prospetto dell'antica basilica Vaticana", in *Analecta Romana*, Rome, 1899, pp. 463-506.

*Romae*[31]; so did Andaloro in *La pittu-ra medievale a Roma*[32]. Indeed, most scholars consider the drawing to be so reliable that they have entered into an on-going debate about whether or not the pictured Lamb represents an actual alteration of the fifth-century mosaic, the majority subscribing to Grisar's argument that, in fact, the *Agnus dei* is an eighth-century replacement of the original "Christus" made in contemptuous papal response to the Byzantine prohibition at the Council of Trullo in 680 of such symbolic images of the Savior[33]. Andaloro needs three full text columns in the *Corpus* to summarize the discussion.

Although the Eton College miniature is accurate in some ways, for instance in its locating of Gregory's tomb at the atrium's left, it is surely a construction imagined through contemporary artistic conventions traceable in other works from Farfa and common sources[34]. To cite the most important feature, the Pope's portrayal as a balding, bearded man whose face is framed by long hair with a tuft on the forehead is nearly identical to that in a fresco that once adorned the Monastery of St. Andrew on the



Fig. 8. Façade of St. Peter's, Eton College, MS. 124, fol. 122r. Reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College

Caelian Hill and known through a watercolor by the sixteenth-century Church antiquarian, Alphonsus Ciacconius (Vatican, BAV, Cod. Lat. 5408, fol. 27[r])[35]. The fresco and John the

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[31] Krautheimer *et alii*, *Corpus*, vol. 5, p. 228.

[32] M. Andaloro, *Pittura medievale a Roma*, vol. 1, pp. 416-18; J. L. Opie, "Agnus Dei", in *Ecclesiae Urbis*, ed. F. Guidobaldi *et alii*, (Vatican, 2002), vol. III, pp. 1813-1840; A.-O. Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini: Une image de l'église en occident*, Paris, 2006, p. 107; Gardner, *Roman Crucible*, p. 228.

[33] See L. Brubaker and J. Haldon (eds.), *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850): The Sources. An Annotated Survey*, Aldershot, 2001, pp. 236-37.

[34] Kessler, "Histoire mythique."

[35] G. Ladner, *I ritratti dei papi nell' antichità e nel medioevo*, Vatican, 1941, vol. I, pp. 70-77 and "The So-called Square Nimbus", *Medieval Studies*, 3 (1941), pp. 15-45, at p. 19-21 (repr. in *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages*, Rome, 1983), pp. 115-70 at pp. 122-25. On Gregory's portraiture, see: F. Crivello, *Le "Omelie sul Vangeli" di Gregorio Magno a Vercelli*, Florence, 2005.

Deacon's description of it have been much discussed in art-historical literature because they are the principal sources for the much-repeated claim that square haloes signal that a person depicted bearing it was still alive when the likeness was made. Gregory's "authentic" face (and vestments) in the Eton College frontispiece thus reinforces the sense that the façade, too, is a true portrait. This impression does not withstand scrutiny, however; for one thing, John the Deacon was describing a painting, not Gregory himself; for another, his written account based on it might, itself, have been the source of the picture as it recounts in some detail not only the facial features but also the liturgical garments[36].

As in the case of the Pope's visage, specific details transmitted through conventional or literary sources were mapped onto generic forms to render the Roman church over which he presided, such as those found on Pope Victor II's seal that rely on modalities typical also of the *loca sancta* pictures, especially the frontality through which transient features are subsumed in a conventional schema that suggests a subject's permanent appearance. Incorporating the Pope's portrait and portrait of St. Peter's basilica, the frontispiece transforms the terse allusion in John's *Vita* into a believable albeit fictitious "historical event", in much the same way the accompanying caption does, which is interpolated directly from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, the authoritative historical account, and not the paraphrase in the *Vita gregorii* itself[37]. In this way, the titulus subordinates Gregory's time on earth to his "true" life in heaven, just as the miniature does by contrasting the burial of his body to the image of an image of the celestial realm[38]. The same anagogical structure is found already in the Sancta Sanctorum picture, where the building over the tomb is the dome of heaven filled with stars[39]; and it was maintained in Gregory IX's remade façade, where a different titulus divided the adoring elders from the celestial court, creating a membrane between the two realms:

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[36] *Sed et in absidula post fratrum cellarium Gregorius ejusdem artificis magisterio in rota gypsea pictus ostenditur, statura justa et bene formata, facie de paternae faciei longitudine et maternae rotunditate ita medie temperata, ut cum rotunditate quadam decentissime videatur esse deducta, barba paterno more subfulva et modica; ita calvaster, ut in medio frontis gemellos cincinnos rarusculos habeat, et dextrorsum reflexos; corona rotunda et spatiosa, capillo subnigro et decenter intorto sub auriculae medium propendente; fronte speciosa, elatis et longis, sed exilibus superciliis; oculis pupilla furvis non quidem magnis sed patulis; subocularibus plenis; naso a radice vergentium superciliorum subtiliter directo, circa medium latiore, deinde paululum recurvo et in extremo patulis naribus prominente; ore rubeo; crassis et subdividuis labiis, genis compositis; mento a confinio maxillarum decibiliter prominente; colore aquilino et vivido, nondum, sicut ei postea contigit, cardiaco; vultu mitis; manibus pulchris; teretibus digitis et habilibus ad scribendum. Praeterea planeta super dalmaticam castanea, Evangelium in sinistra, modus crucis in dextra; pallio mediocri a dextro videlicet humero sub pectore super stomachum circulatim deducto, deinde sursum per sinistrum humerum post tergum deposito, cujus pars altera super eumdem humerum veniens propria rectitudine, non per medium corporis, sed ex latere pendet; circa verticem vero tabulae similitudinem, quod viventis insigne est, praeferens, non coronam.* PL75.230-31.

[37] *His temporibus, id est anno dominicae incarnationis DCV, beatus papa Gregorius, postquam sedem Romanae et apostolicae ecclesiae XIII annos, menses VI, et dies X gloriosissime rexit, defunctus est, atque ad aeternam regni caelestis sedem translatus. Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, B. Colgrave, R.A.B. Mynors (eds.), Oxford, 1969, pp. 131-33. Cf. Johannes Diaconus: *Tantis precibus Gregorius tandem aliquando divinitus exauditus, postquam sedem catholicae et apostolicae sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae annis tredecim, mensibus sex et diebus decem, doctrinis pariter ac operibus felicissimis illustravit, anno imperii Phocae secundo, indictione septima, quarto iduum Martiarum, a carnis corruptione subtractus est, incorruptionis perpetuae gloria sublimandus.* PL.75.221.

[38] This is possibly an allusion to contemporary debates about carnal resurrection in which Gregory was engaged.

[39] See also Ruchaud, "Iconographie architecturale".

As when the heavenly orb of the sun turns and shines on everything, and gleams like gold above every other metal,

Thus, the haven of peace built of stone is filled with fervor by doctrine and by faith and expands its power everywhere.[40]

Inspired perhaps by this very inscription on St. Peter's facade, Cimabue realized the distich's explicit assertion of the dynamic of seeing by quoting only the mosaic's upper part in the Assisi *Ytalia*, with its monochrome figures of Christ, Mary, and Peter "gleaming like gold above every other metal", by obscuring with the ancient stone Castel Sant'Angelo and Meta Romuli the lower parts of the "haven of peace".

The concept of images of architecture functioning as spiritual channels is at play already in the earliest portrait of St. Peter's -the exceptionally refined fifth-century Samagher reliquary (Venice, Museo Correr; Fig. 9)[41]. Inserted within a framework of crosses, lambs, and birds, the ivory box's back panel depicts two men and two women praying at the pergola sheltering the Apostle's tomb; and, just outside the *confessio*'s closed doors at the center, it pictures a third man gestur-



Fig. 9. Confessio of St. Peter's, Samagher casket (Venice, Museo Correr). Photo: Art Resource

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[40] *Ceu sol fervescit sidus super omne nitescit / Et velut est aurum rutillans super omne metallum / Doctrina atque fide calet et sic pollet ubique / Ista domus petram supra fabricata quietam.* Translated in IACOBINI, "'Est haec sacra principis aedes'".

[41] M. GUARDUCCI, *La capsella di Samagher*, Trieste, 1978; G. L. RAVAGNAN, *Restituzioni 1999-Capolavori restaurati*, Vicenza, 1999, pp. 23-33; D. LONGHI, *La capsella eburnea di Samagher: Iconografia e committenza,* Ravenna, 2006. The classic study remains: T. BUDDENSIEG, "Le coffret en ivoire de Pola, Saint-Pierre et le Latran", *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 10 (1959), pp. 157-95.

ing and another woman presenting a small object. In this case, the representation's general accuracy cannot be doubted. The twisted columns now enshrined as relics beneath Michelangelo's dome confirm the architectural image's reliability down to the strigel motifs alternating with vine scrolls and putti scampering in the vegetation[42]. Archeology as well as textual sources confirm the overall arrangement's accuracy[43], which therefore probably extends to the decorated lunette. The cross against the spirally ground represented over the door to the *confessio* evokes the "cross of finest gold weighing 150 pounds" that, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Constantine and Helen had provided "over St. Peter's body, above the bronze in which he had been sealed" (Bk. 34, chap. 17). Following Anna Angiolini, Margherita Guarducci suggested that the indistinctness indicates that the depicted lunette represents a painting or mosaic of two angels bearing a cross[44]; Davide Longhi refuted the hypothesis, arguing, instead, that it pictures metal statues of Peter and Paul flanking a cross against a grill-work lattice[45]. Both hypotheses have merit, but neither works perfectly.

In my opinion, the lunette evokes the motif, widely-spread in fifth-century Rome and represented on the box's own lid, of the cross rooted on a mound from which four rivers flowed[46]; the flanking men would be Rome's twin apostles, as Longhi has suggested and as an eastern bread stamp dating from the same time or a little later pictures (Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum; Fig. 10); identified by tituli, the saints flank a cross atop the fluvial mound framed by trees[47]. The Pseudo-Hippolitus had already identified the cross as the Tree of Life mediating between heaven and earth[48]; and an inscription running around the outer circle leaves no doubt about the meaning on the bread mold: "The origin of life is the cross."

The lunette's geometricized vegetal ornament organized around a cross resembles such actual architectural membranes as the marble *a jour* transennae and bronze window grates

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[42] See: D. KINNEY, "Spolia", in *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, pp. 16-47.

[43] See: DE BLAAUW, *Cultus et Decor*, pp. 474-77.

[44] The image recalls the contemporary mosaic in the Lateran Baptistery with its Tree of Life image bearing the fruit of little crosses and, even more because of the funereal context, the niche in San Gaudiosio in Naples; see: A. IACOBINI, "L'albero della vita nell'immaginario medievale: Bisanzio e l'Occidente", in A.M. ROMANINI, A. CADEI (eds.), *L'architettura medievale in Sicilia: la cattedrale di Palermo*, Rome, 1994, pp. 241-90.

[45] Eusebius described the altar in the basilica at Tyre as being enclosed with wooden lattice-work on which artistic carving presents a wonderful sight to the beholders; discussed by J. Jung, *The Gothic Screen. Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and German, ca. 1200-1400*, New York, 2013, p. 18. See also: A. DE MARCHI, "*Cum dictum opus sit magnum*: Il documento pistoiese del 1274 e l'allestimento trionfale dei tramezzi in Umbria e Toscana fra Due e Trecento", in A.C. QUINTAVALLE (ed.), *Medioevo: immagine e memoria*, Milan, 2009, pp. 603-621.

[46] IACOBINI, "L'albero della vita"; G. NOGA-BANAI, L. SAFRAN, "A Late Antique Silver Reliquary in Toronto", *Journal of Late Antiquity*, 4 (2011), pp. 3-30.

[47] D. KÖTZSCHE, in *The Age of Spirituality*, pp. 628-29. See also G. NOGA-BANAI, "Between Rome and Jerusalem. The Cross at the Center of a *Herrscherbild* Composition", *Ikon. Journal of Iconographic Studies* 5 (2012), pp. 57-64. George Galavarais suggested that the stamp may have been used to adorn cakes taken away by pilgrims from sacred sites; G. GALAVARIS, *Bread and the Liturgy. The Symbolism of Early Christian and Byzantine Bread Stamps*, Madison, 1970, pp. 67-68. If so, then a connection may have been intended to the food of salvation that redeemed Adam and Eve's violation of God's prohibition which supports the hypothesis that the flanking figures might be humankind's sinful progenitors.

[48] (Chrysostom, Spuria), *De Pascha Homilia* 6, PG 59.743-44; see IACOBINI, "L'albero della vita".

deployed in the next century in San Vitale, San Michele a Affricisco, and Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna and also the bronze window grill from the latter church.[49] Its very blurriness, moreover, stages the transition between the Church's visible outer precinct and its inner sanctum containing the ineffable spirit[50]; the indistinctness thus encapsulates the mechanism of pilgrimage itself, which is precisely to transform earthly experience –real and present– into a step toward the sublime.

This leads to a second conclusion: Even if images of architecture are trustworthy for archaeological reconstructions, they must also be understood as devices for conjuring up the world beyond. In that, they are like icons, holy faces that are never simply portraits but devices for making the invisible Deity present and comprehensible.

Fig. 10. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.
Photo: KHM-Museumsverband

## IMAGO AND HISTORIA

The iconic character of these depictions may explain why the narrative cycles in the nave of St. Peter's did not generate same history that those of the façade or *confessio* transom did, despite the fact that, beginning in the fifth century with St. Paul's Outside the Walls (seen in Panini's 1750 painting in a private collection; Fig. 11)[51], and continuing throughout the

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[49] H.G. FRANZ, "Transenne als Fensterverschluss. Ihre Entwicklung von der frühchristlichen bis zur islamischen Zeit", *Istanbuler Mitteilungen*, 8 (1958), pp. 65-81; F.W. DEICHMANN, *Ravenna. Geschichte und Monumente*, Wiesbaden, 1969, pp. 71-73 (Deichmann considers the transennae to be sixth-century imports from Constantinople); P. PORTA, "San Michele in Africisco a Ravenna. La scultura architettonico-decorativa", in C. SPADONI, L. KNIFFITZ (eds.), *San Michele in Africisco e l'età giustinianea a Ravenna*, Cinisello Balsamo, 2007, pp. 192-221. See also: R. CAMPANATI, "La cultura artistica nelle regioni Bizantine d'Italia dal VI all'IX secolo", in G.P. CARRATELLI (ed.), *I bizantini in Italia*, Milan, 1982; F. DELL'ACQUA, *"Illuminando colorat" La vetrata tra l'età tardo imperiale e l'alto medioevo: Le fonti, l'archeologia*, Spoleto, 2003, p. 28; and B. VERNIA, "L'arredo liturgico della basilica di Sant'Apollinare Nuovo a Ravenna", in C. RIZZARDI (ed.), *Venezia e Bisanzio. Aspetti della cultura artistica bizantina da Ravenna a Venezia (V-XIV secolo)*, Venice, 2005, pp. 363-76. The tradition continued for centuries; see the sarcophagus in Soria discussed by Francesca Español Beltrán in this issue of journal and Asturian "ventanas". The triumphal arch in Santa Cristina de Lena is particularly evocative in this regard; see: C. GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, *Arte Prerománico en Asturias*, Pola de Siero, 2008, pp. 78-83. I wish to thank Rachel Danford for helping me with the Ravenna material.

[50] The fluid network that fills the lunette is distinctly different from the balustrade (depicted on a larger scale) on the casket's right panel; but it is also more geometric and open than the vegetal ornament rendered on the front of the ivory box.

[51] H. L. KESSLER, "Séroux's Decadent Column Capital and other Pieces in the Puzzle of San Paolo fuori le mura", *Arte medievale*, n.s. 3 (2004), pp. 69-94; GARDNER, *Roman Crucible*, p. 41.

Fig. 11. St. Paul's outside the Walls, J. B. Panini (private collection). Photo: Author's archive

Middle Ages, the scenes from the Old and New Testaments provided the paradigm of Roman church decoration[52], one that was, indeed, imported into the nave of San Francesco at Assisi[53]. Intend-ed to be seen in sequence as a person moved through the church, the narrative cycles were ignored in images of architecture precisely because, I would maintain, they served the distinct purpose of tracing temporal history and establishing typological connections. Indeed, only a few years after the narrative frescoes were completed in St. Peter's and St. Paul's, Paulinus of Nola recommended that a visitor looking at the biblical "paintings on the porti-coes decorated in a long series" in his church of St. Felix in Nola "take the slight trouble of bending his neck backwards, taking stock of everything with head thrown back so that, he might recognize truth from the idle figures"[54]. That truth, Paulinus makes clear, is the disco-very of Christian meaning in the series that "contains in faithful order everything that ancient Moses wrote in five books", for instance, Joshua "marked by the name of the Lord", leading

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[52] H. L. Kessler, *Old St. Peter's and Church Decoration in Medieval Italy*, Spoleto, 2002.

[53] H. Belting, *Die Oberkirche von San Francesco in Assisi. Ihre Dekoration als Aufgabe und die Genese in neuen Wandmalerei*, Berlin, 1977, pp. 68-72 et passim; Romano, *San Francesco ad Assisi*, pp. 183-84 et passim.

[54] *Nunc uolo picturas fucatis agmine longo/ porticibus uideas paulumque supine fatiges/ colla, reclinato dum per-legis omnia uultu. Qui uidet haec uacuis agnoscens uera figuris/ non uacua fidam sibi pascit imagine mentem.* C. R. Goldschmidt, *Paulinus' Churches at Nola. Texts, Translations and Commentary*, Amsterdam, 1940, pp. 60-61; G. Herbert de la Portbarré-Viard, "Paulin de Nole et Prudence: deux conceptions du rapport entre textes et repré-sentations figurées au début du Vᵉ siècle", *Pallas. Revue d'Études antiques*, 93 (2013), pp. 185-206.

the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan or Ruth parting from her sister Orpah[55]. Although they might prompt a spiritual *reading*, the narratives did not activate the kind of anagogical transcendence the iconic images on the façade and apse did[56].

When Pope Gregory contrasted *pictuare* intended for worship to *historiae* meant to teach the illiterate, he had made a similar distinction[57]; and, in response to the *Libri carolini* of ca. 794, his successor Hadrian I (r. 772-95) applied the contrast specifically to the decorations of St. Paul's:

> Leo the Great [r. 440-61] decorated churches with paintings and mosaics of images and diverse stories, of which the greatest is the basilica of St. Paul, making a mosaic on the major arch of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, and the twenty-four elders which up to this day are faithfully venerated by us.[58]

The general lack of interest in the narratives that ran beneath St. Peter's' clerestory, evident in Marten van Heemskerck's 1535 sketch of the half-demolished nave (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett)[59]; is perpetuated in the overall view of the nave in the *Instrumenta authentica* (fol. 104ᵛ-105ʳ) which includes tombs and floor markings but does not depict the cycles from Genesis, Exodus, and the Gospels that once filled the double row of frames. 150 years later, Panini was not much more concerned when he copied the mosaic on the transept arch of St. Paul's accurately but treated the lateral sequences impressionistically[60]. This is due only partly to the technical problem of rendering narrative pictures *di sotto in su* and in perspective; of the hundreds of renderings of St. Paul's I know, only one actually shows the paintings in situ, made in 1827 by Antonio Sarti after the 1823 fire destroyed the last surviving Early Christian basilica in Rome (Rome, Accademia di San Luca, Biblioteca Sarti, Banc. R. 34, fol. 10; Fig. 12)[61].

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[55] *Quae gessit domini signatus nomine Iesus/ quo duce Iordanis suspenso gurgite fixis/ fluctibus a facie diuinae restitut arcae; Ruth sequitur sanctam quam deserit Orfa parentem/ perfidiam nurus una, fidem nurus altera monstrat. Ibidem*, pp. 60-63.

[56] The juxtaposition of scenes from the Old and New Testaments was also understood as a spiritualization of historical events, at least in the later period; see: M. BÜCHSEL, "Materialpracht und die Kunst für *Litterati*. Suger gegen Bernhard von Clairvaux", in M. BÜCHSEL, R. MÜLLER (eds.), *Intellektualisierung und Mystifizierung mittelalterlicher Kunst. 'Kultbild:' Revision eines Begriffs*, Berlin, 2010, pp. 155-81.

[57] *Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere.* (Epistola XI.10) in D. NORBERG (ed.), *Registrum Epistularum* (CSEL 140A), Turnhout, 1982, p. 874; see also: H.L. KESSLER, "'Aliter enim videtur pictura, aliter videntur litterae:' Reading Medieval Pictures", in *Scrivere e leggere* (Settimana di studio LIX, 2011), Spoleto, 2012, pp. 701-29.

[58] *Itemque de sancto quarto concilio, egregius atque mirificus praedicator sanctus Leo papa et ipse fecit ecclesias, quas in musivo et diversis historiis seu imaginibus pingens decoravit. Magis autem in basilica beati Pauli apostoli, arcum ibidem majorem faciens, et in musivo depingens Salvatorem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, seu viginti quatuor seniores, nomine suo versibus decoravit: et a tunc usque hactenus fideliter a nobis venerantur.* PL 98.1286.

[59] See ARBEITER, *Alt-St. Peter*, Fig. 110.

[60] KESSLER, "Séroux's Decadent Column"; N. CAMERLENGHI, *The Life of the Basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura in Rome: Architectural Renovations from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) Princeton University, 2007.

[61] KESSLER, "Séroux's Decadent Column Capital", pp. 15-17.

Fig. 12. St. Paul's after the fire, Antonio Sarti (Rome, Accademia di San Luca, Biblioteca Sarti, Banc. R. 34, fol. 10). Photo: Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome.

Technical aspects alone do not account for the absence of narrative scenes in these early modern depictions. During the sixteenth century, the *Codex Escurialensis* (Escorial, 28 II 12)[62], Marten van Heemskerk, and Francisco de Hollanda all experimented with rendering narrative decorations in representations of medieval buildings[63]; but the first real success came only at the start of the seventeenth century in Tasselli's drawings for Grimaldi's *Instrumenta autentica* (fols. 108v-109r and 113v-114[v]; Fig. 13). One of Grimaldi's motivations was again papal history; as the Vatican notary carefully recorded, the nave frescoes were believed to have been restored by the infamous ninth-century Pope Formosus (r. 891-96)[64]. The same interest certainly also lay behind the inclusion of separate renderings of papal portraits (fols. 116[v] and 118[r]), even though these are entirely conventional. Grimaldi was prompted by art history, as well, making special note of the angel Giotto had painted in the clerestory undoubtedly because Vasari had referred to it in the *Vite*[65].

Presumably, Tasselli had copied the smaller and less important scenes up close in separate renderings, as Francesco Barberini did thirty years

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[62] H. EGGER, C. HÜLSEN, *Codex Escurialensis*, ein Skizzenbuch aus der Werkstatt Domenico Ghirlandaios, Vienna, 1906; M. FERNÁNDEZ GÓMEZ, *Codex Escurialensis 28-II-12: libro de dibujos o antigüedades*, Madrid, 2000.

[63] Hugues Sambin produced real elevations of medieval churches that included their ornament; see: Andaloro, *Pittura medievale*, vol. 1, pp. 54-86. Francisco de Hollanda experimented with integrating images of the decoration into his representations of medieval buildings; his precocious overall view of Sta. Costanza, however, does not include the dome mosaic that he copied separately.

[64] NIGGL, *Descrizione*, pp. 140-41.

[65] Il papa . . . ordinò che [Giotto] facesse a San Piero istorie del Testamento vecchio e nuovo: onde, cominciando, fece Giotto a fresco l'Angiolo di sette braccia, che è sopra l'organo; G. VASARI, *Opere*, G. MASSELLI (ed.), Florence, 1832-38, vol. 1, p. 120.
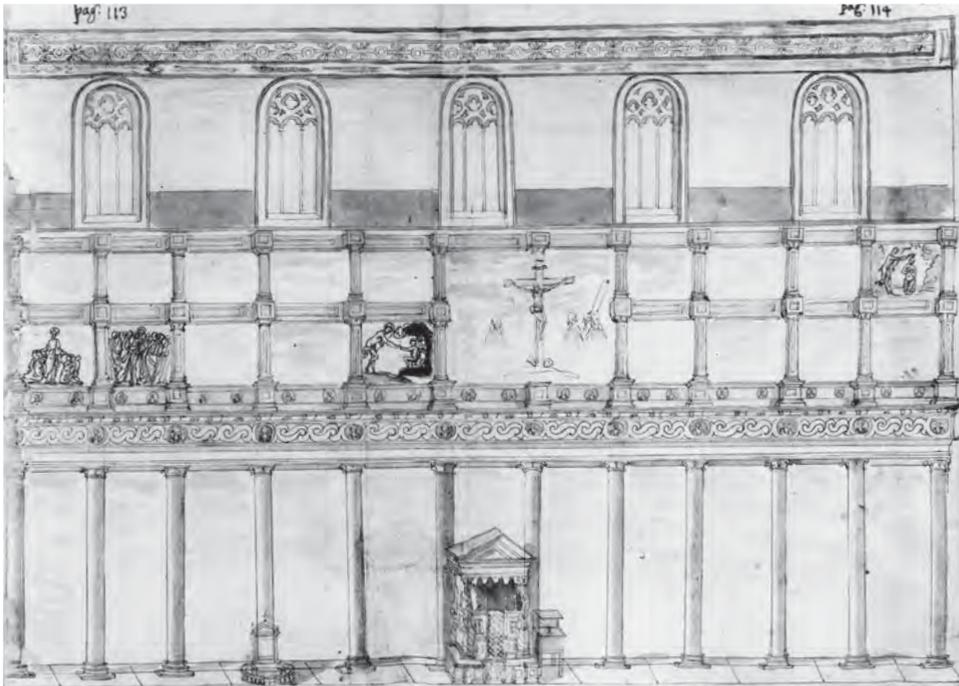
Fig. 13. Grimaldi, Instrumenta Autentica (Vatican, BAV, Cod. Barb. lat. 2733, fols. 113v-114v).
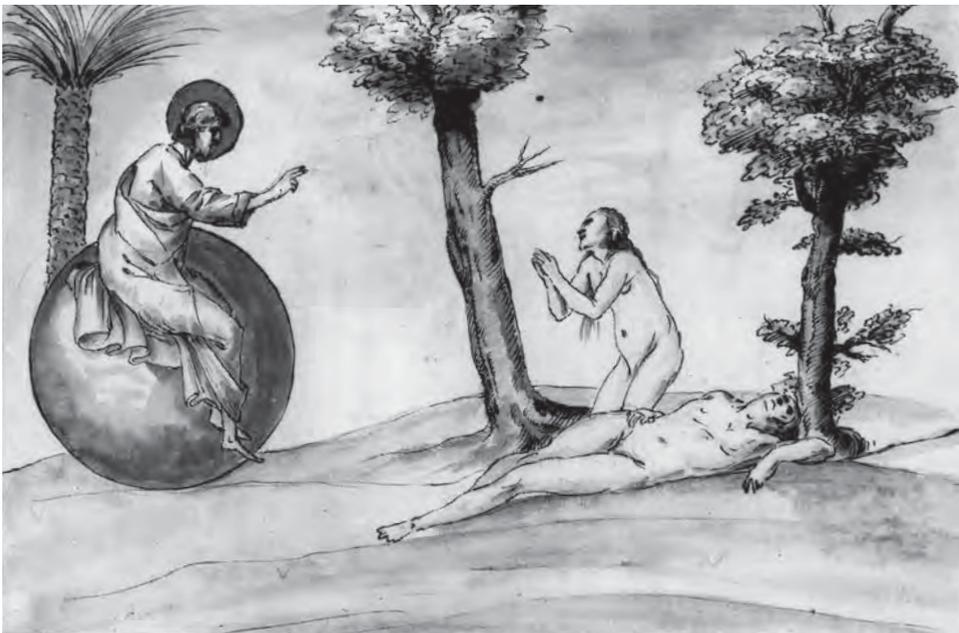


Fig. 14. Francesco Barbarini, Creation of Eve from St. Paul's outside the Walls (Vatican, Cod. Barb. lat. 4406, p. 25)

later in an album of St. Paul's nave frescoes comprising vignettes rendered as framed pictures shown frontally (Vatican, Cod. Barb. lat. 4406), for example, the one picturing the Creation of Eve (fol. 25; Fig. 14). Grimaldi's own inventory lists such scenes as the Raising of Lazarus that he could still make out but that Tasselli did not include in the illustration[66]; and the suggestion that he made individual drawings of the scenes, as he did of altars and tombs, is strongly reinforced by the surviving *preliminary* drawing for the left wall of St. Peter's nave (Vatican, BAV, Cod. A 64 ter, p. 15; Fig. 15), which focuses on the architecture and the altar of Simon and Jude sheltering a fragment of the True Cross that was the destination of a ceremony *ad crucifixos*[67]. Of the narrative paintings, the preparatory drawing includes only
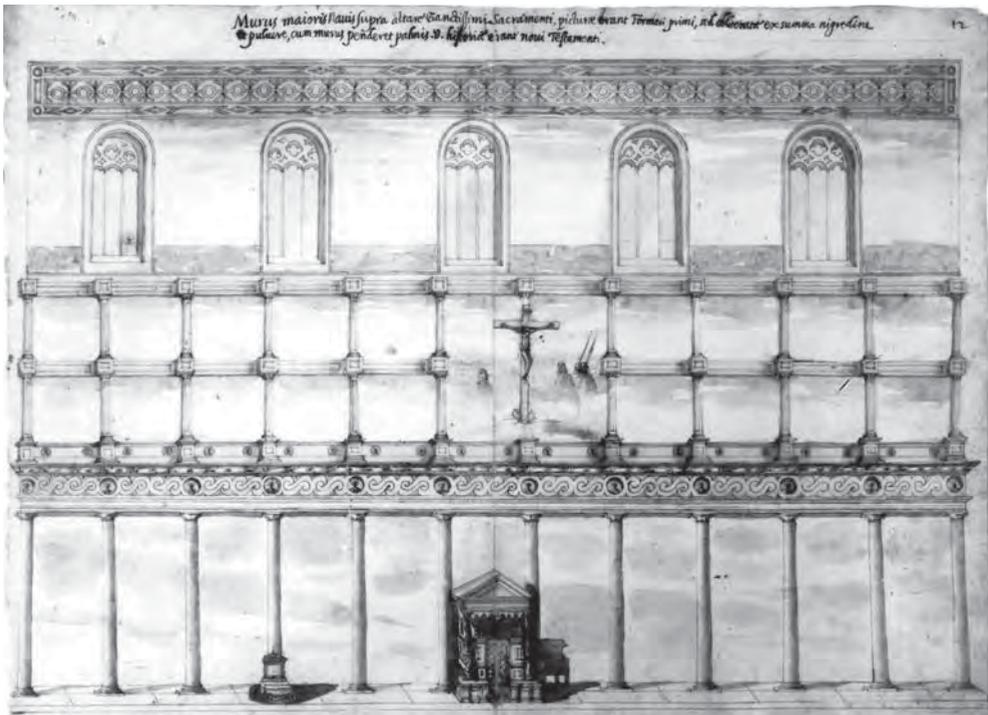


Fig. 15. Domenico Tasselli, left wall of St. Peter's (Vatican, BAV, Cod. A 64 ter, p. 15)

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[66] "*Animalia ingrediuntur in arcam*", *tres alias historias offuscatas et pulvere caecatas excipere non potui* (presumably Jacob's Ladder, Jacob at Bethel, and Jacob Wrestling the Angel) and, in the lower register, "subvervsio Pharaonis in mari Rubro et egressio Moysis tangentis virga aquas maris". On the other side, Grimaldi laments, the *historiae novi testamenti sed quia pulvis ob inclinatum parietem in ipse facile consistebat picturae errant penitus caecatae*, but there, too, he could see the Raising of Lazarus and the two thieves crucified with Christ; on the other hand, he subsumed the Blessing at Bethany which Tasselli rendered, with the *Apparet XI apostolis, ut clarius sequens declarat exemplum*. Niggl, *Descrizione*, p. 140.

[67] See: W. Tronzo, "The Prestige of Saint Peter's: Observations on the Function of Monumental Narrative Cycles in Italy", in H. L. Kessler, S. Simpson (eds.), *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (*Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 16), Washington, 1985, pp. 93-112.

the oversized Crucifixion that had served as a kind of altarpiece for the liturgical destination below and that, occupying four fields, fractured the chronological structure. Erasures reveal the fact that Tasselli first laid out the architectural grid and only after that accommodated it to the church's reality, including most of the other histories that he could make out and still copy.

In a watercolor of thirteenth-century paintings in the porch of San Lorenzo f.l.m. in Rome, Antonio Eclissi left a precious witness of the process that Tasselli, too, must have employed (Windsor, Royal Library, 8952; Fig. 16)[68]. He showed the façade frontally, the three registers of scenes from the lives of St. Stefano and St. Lawrence sectioned off and numbered but blank[69]; and he rendered the compartments on the flanking walls in perspective, noting narratives from the life of Emperor Henry II and pictures on the left *tutte scalcinate talmente che à pena se ne vede vestigio*. Exceptionally, Eclissi included the trace of one of the poorly preserved narratives on the left wall, identifying it with the letter "O", and drew it a second time in the lower margin. Even though he could discern only the feet and lower hems of four figures, Eclissi turned the documentary drawing frontally (unlike the *in situ* composition sketched in perspective), as he did also the partial inscription of another scene. As always, legibility trumped context and, for a reason; the purpose of these drawings was to document medieval art, even as Counter-Reformation vandals were destroying the monuments themselves.

These seventeenth-century drawings are, in this way, Janus-like. One face looks back to the tradition, transmitted also in the Vercelli rotulus, in which paintings were copied with
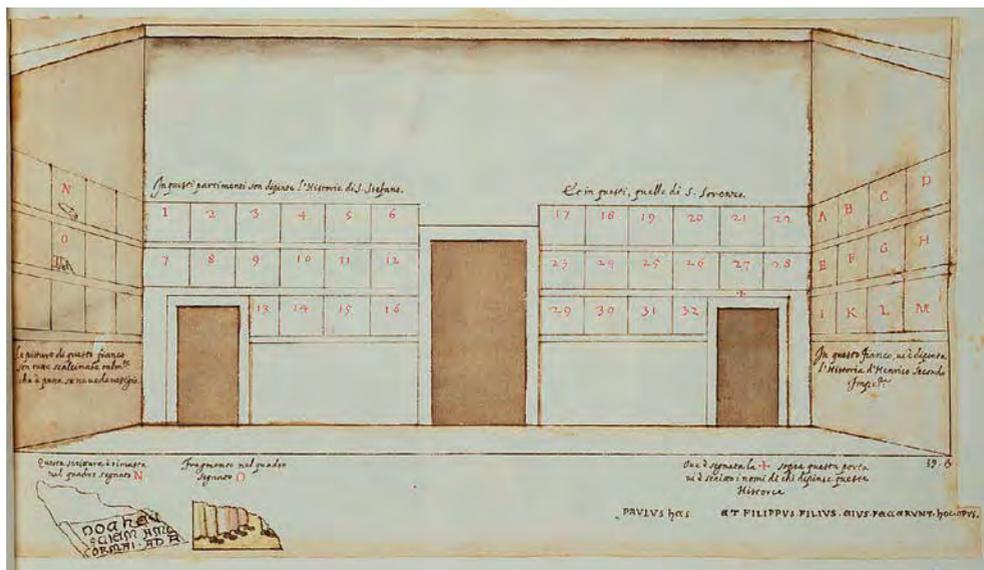


Fig. 16. Antonio Eclissi. Porch of San Lorenzo, f.l.m in Rome. Windsor, Royal Library, 8952. Photo: Royal Collection Trust ©Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2015

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[68] J. Osborne, A. Claridge, *The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo*. Part 2: *Early Christian and Medieval Antiquities*, vol. 1, London, 1996, pp. 124-25.

[69] The individual narratives are duly recorded in Vatican Barb. lat. 4403; Waetzoldt, *Kopien*, pp. 44-47.

minimum color and detail, like preliminary drawings themselves. The other turns its eyes to its own time, conceiving the copied works as contemporary panel paintings or, more precisely, as something akin to Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling in which individual vignettes are set off in elaborate fictive architecture. Indeed, as Ulrich Pfisterer recently remined us: "*bei den 'Vorbildern' für Michelangelo wurde einmal mehr auf die frühchristlichen und mittelalterlichen Wandmalereien der römischen Basiliken, allen voran Alt-St. Peter und St. Paul, verwiesen*"[70].

The converse is equally true. The sources Pfisterer himself used to make this claim about the medieval murals[71], the *Instrumenta autentica* and Barberini drawings, had already been filtered through modern workshop practice and sensibilities. The methods Tasselli developed to record medieval images of architecture were so modern, in fact, that Andaloro was able simply to insert individual frames from the *Instrumenta autentica* into computer-generated nave elevations. Her attempt to pinpoint a point-of-view only confirms what we have deduced, however; there is no actual place where a copyist could have been standing to make these[72]; the originals like the computer-generated reconstructions are constructed from separate elements, some seen from afar and others closer up. The elimination of *di sotto in su* ambiguity and all other contingent circumstances converts not only the Crucifixion but also the lesser *historiae* into *imagines*. It is telling, therefore, that Grimaldi also had had a special fascination with the Veronica, which shared with the Tasselli drawings of St. Peter's both an archetypal status and the basic facial frontality, and which was, simultaneously, both a portrait and a narrative, an original and a copy[73].

A third conclusion is that depictions of narrative cycles within images of architecture petrify the unfolding display of individual pictures viewed in diverse light conditions (such as those leading up to the altar of Simon and Jude, where a map of chandeliers dramatized the climactic Crucifixion), transforming them into something fundamentally different from how they appeared in the original viewing circumstances.

## HISTORICONICITY

The methods the seventeenth-century copyists deployed persisted for centuries, in the N. M. Nicolai's 1815 scientific publication of St. Paul's[74], for instance, and more important, in J.-B. Séroux d'Agincourt's originary *Histoire de l'art par les monuments depuis sa decadence au IVᵉ siècle jusqu'as son renouvellement au XVIᵉ*, published posthumously in Paris the very year St. Paul's burned to the ground[75]. The engravings in these and other such works came

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[70] U. PFISTERER, *Die Sixtinische Kapelle*, Munich, 2013, p. 64. See also: H. FILLITZ, "Michelangelos Genesis-Darstellungen in der Sixtinischen Kapelle und die Fresken von S. Paolo fuori le mura", *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 23 (1981), pp. 329-334.

[71] *Sixtinische Kapelle*, Fig. 12.

[72] ANDALORO, *Atlante*, pp. 32-34.

[73] G. GRIMALDI, *Opusculum de sacrosancto Veronicae Sudario*, Rome, 1618.

[74] *Della basilica di San Paolo. Con piante e disegni incisi*, Rome, 1815; see: KESSLER, "Séroux's Decadent Column Capital", Fig. 3; PÖPPER, "Stifterbild", Fig. 2.

[75] I. M. MARIANI, *Séroux d'Agincourt e l'Histoire de l'Art par les monuments. Riscoperta del medioevo, dibattito storiografico e riproduzione artistica tra fine XVIII e inizio XIX secolo*, Rome, 2005; D. MONDINI, *Mittelalter im Bild. Séroux d'Agincourt und die Kunsthistoriographie um 1800*, Zurich, 2005.

ultimately to underlie the ontology of photography of images in architectural contexts[76], in which St. Peter's again played a generative role[77]. The church that the twelfth-century canon Peter Mallius called the "caput et speculum omnium ecclesiarum"[78] had long been identified with images and papal sanction of them, the façade, the Veronica (a "caput" that was itself likened to a "speculum")[79], and the interior decorations. Constantine's basilica was gone (and St. Paul's too) when, in 1869, Adolphe Braun made pioneering photographic pictures of images in architecture (Fig. 17)[80]; so he applied the new reproductive technique to record its most acclaimed artistic masterpiece, the Sistine Chapel, the very work that "had referred back to the Early Christian basilicas of St. Peter's and St. Paul's". Emulating Tasselli's, Barberini's, and Eclissi's mode, that had been perpetuated in mechanical reproductions[81], he began by removing all evidence of liturgical use and by erecting scaffolding to secure frontal photographs that eliminate every trace of point-of-view. And, recalling nothing so much as Grimaldi's *Instrumenta autentica*, he assembled the individual prints in a carnet that he presented to the Pope. Philippe Jarjat, who recently analyzed Braun's album[82], was puzzled by a couple exceptions to the straight-on pictures that constitute the majority of shots, and rightly so; as they are also in drawings, *di sotto in su* views are extremely rare in early photography and, for that matter, up to the present moment. In their frontality traceable back to Cimabue's experiments in architectural portraiture and the Farfa illuminator's and Early Christian ivory-carver's interest in iconic anagogy, Braun's photographs brought to the particular task what Joel Snyder has claimed all so-called "documentary" photographs do, namely, the "pictorial formulae that are available at the time"[83]. They are what Jaš Elsner has aptly characterized as a kind of "visual

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[76] The literature on art and photography is vast; see: H. ROBERTS (ed.), *Art History through the Camera's Lens*, Abingdon, 1995; S. BANN, *Parallel Lines. Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, New Haven and London, 2001; M. SMARGIASSI, *Un'autentica Bugia La fotografia, il vero, il falso,* Rome, 2009; R. LIEBERMAN, "The Art-Historical Photograph as Fiction: the Pretense of Objectivity", in M. LEDBURY (ed.), *Fictions of Art History*, Williamstown, 2013, pp. 118-38.

[77] See: H. BREDEKAMP, *Theorie des Bildakts,* Berlin, 2010, pp. 272-76.

[78] R. VALENTINI, G. ZUCCHETTI (eds.), *Petri Mallii Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae*, Vatican, 1940-53, vol. 3, pp. 382-442.

[79] In Grimaldi's day, the Veronica's counterpart in Turin was only beginning to attract interest, and then, more as a relic than as a portrait. That changed dramatically, however, after Secondo Pia photographed the *sindone* in 1898, dramatizing the Shroud's dual aspect as both document and trace that could attest simultaneously to Christ's human reality divine nature beyond place and time. See: M.-J. MONDZAIN, *Image, icône, économie. Les sources byzantines de l'imaginaire contemporain*, Paris, 1996, pp. 235-52; A. NICOLOTTI, *Dal mandylion di Edessa alla Sindone di Torino. Matamorfosi di una leggenda*, Alessandria, 2011.

[80] A. BRAUN *et alii*, *Fresque de Michel-Ange au Vatican*, Dornach, 1869. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's photos of Notre Dame, which predate Braun's of the Sistine Chapel, offer an interesting parallel to the Vercelli rotulus in that the purpose was to document a damaged structure before undertaking extensive restoration of it; they are copies and models. Viollet-le-Duc had the photographer ascend to the top of a building across the *place* to minimize parallax; but even that was not sufficient so he prepared drawings that conform to the established convention and then invented new decorations.

[81] See: G. JOHNSON, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme': Renaissance Sculpture and the Visual Historiography of Art History", *Art History*, 36 (2013), pp. 12-51.

[82] P. JARJAT, "Michelangelo's Frescoes through the Camera's Lens: The Photographic Album and Visual Identity", in S. BANN (ed.), *Art and the Early Photographic Album*, Washington, DC, 2011, pp. 151-72.

[83] See J. SNYDER, "Documentary without Ontology", *Studies in Visual Communication*, 10 (1984), pp. 75-95; MONDZAIN, *Image, icône, économie.*

Fig. 17. Adolphe Braun, 1869. Sistine Chapel (det.). Photo: RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource NY

ekphrasis – interpretative, angled, chosen, made possible by a particular circumstance, the presence of a photographer in a specific time and place"[84]. Cimabue's *Ytalia* –with St. Peter's as its focus– seems to have been "fotografata con fedeltà inusitata" only because photography itself was constructed from schemata developed in the Middle Ages and appropriated during the early modern period, in which frontal bodily inscription elides the differences between evidentiary record and object, between source and experience. Romano's claim about the image of architecture in Assisi is thus an aspect of what might be called "historiconicity" because, like *historiography*, it implicates the way the sources art historians use are themselves embedded in processes and, in turn, affect how scholars interpret their material.

Institutionalized at a moment when the medieval monuments were passing from the scene or, at least, passing into history, the formulae Braun and other photographers of art appropriated served well the nineteenth- and twentieth-century art-historical fixation on the style and iconography, providing lucid, de-contextualized details that were otherwise almost or entirely invisible. They continue to support the discipline's twin methods of investigation, and should; but they are insufficient for today's phenomenological art history which not only evokes the experience of sounds, smells, and performance but also responds to the complex circumstances of seeing itself[85], particularly, to the difficulty, that Paulinus of Nola recognized

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[84] J. ELSNER, "Art History as Ekphrasis", *Art History*, 33 (2010), pp. 10-27.

[85] See the essential work of B. PENTCHEVA, *The Sensual Icon. Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*, Universtiy Park, PA, 2010.

already at the beginning of the fifth century, of viewing images within architectural contexts. Donal Cooper's and Janet Robson's recent analysis of the *Ytalia* exemplifies such current concerns and, in so doing, highlights the inadequacy of traditional photographs:

> One of the ideal viewing points for the cityscape of the Saint Mark vault is from the north transept, which is where one would have entered the Upper Church from the papal apartments in the Sacro Convento. The vault is more than eighteen metres from the floor of the Basilica, but the 'Ytalia' fresco is surprisingly legible even in its present abraded state. Before their reds faded and silver leaf grew tarnished, the Orsini shields would have stood out as sharp flecks of primary colour at the summit of the cityscape, immediately below the 'Ytalia' inscription.[86]

Tellingly, to make this point about how the pictured cityscape would have been perceived, Cooper had to take the photograph himself because the one made by a professional photographer adheres to the established conventions that still dominate art-historical publication and that are insufficient for the purpose (Fig. 18).

*Di sotto in su* photographs like Cooper's run what Snyder characterized as "the risk of confusing the audience;" and, indeed, publishers generally reject or disparage them. Moreover, even representations made from a viewer's standpoint only approximate actual seeing, which involves moving eyes and a brain capable of adjudicating visual stimuli and compensating for defects of perception[87]. The disrupting of norms and any confusion that results from using such photographic images, however, offers the possibility of channeling the contrast between the unchanging iconic truth and dynamic viewing toward medieval theories of art that, beginning with Gregory the Great's promotion of the anagogical potential of physical images and Pope Hadrian's distinction of *imago* and *historia*, had engaged productively. It is worth noting that, at the exact moment Cimabue was painting his *Ytalia*, the Franciscan preacher, Peter of Limoges, interpreted the different modes of seeing as part of Christianity's fundamental spiritual dynamic that oscillates between timeless, clear, ideal forms and blurry, distorted sensory perception of them: "after the resurrection we will see with full directness, but before that only at an oblique angle to that directness".[88]

By reintroducing the interconnections between documentary perfection and real experience, Cooper and Robson's juxtaposition of a traditional frontal view of Cimabue's Ytalia (see

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[86] Cooper and Robson, *Making of Assisi*, p. 84.

[87] D. Ganz, S. Neuner (eds.), *Mobile Eyes*, Munich, 2013 is an excellent attempt to push back against the conventions, especially J. Jung, "The Kinetics of Gothic Sculpture. Movement and Apprehension in the South Transept of Strasbourg Cathedral and the Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon," pp. 133-73. Even in this book, the photographs of sculpture and architecture are generally more advanced than those of two-dimensional media reproduced in the book; plastic forms have, from the start, had a "historiconicity" distinct from painting and prints; see, e.g., H. Wölfflin, "Wie man Skupturen aufnehmen soll", *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, n.s. 7 (1896), pp. 224-28; Johnson, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme'".

[88] *Nam oculi corp[or]is semetipsos videre nequeu[n]t s[ed] alia co[n]spiciunt; eco[n]trario oculi cordis de se no[n] de aliis infallibiliter iudicare possunt. Un[de] qui alios iudica[n]t et seipsos no[n] hij oculos mentales co[n]vertunt in corp[or]ales. Tractatus moralis de oculo*, Augsburg, 1475, Chap. 7; Eng. trans. R. Newhauser, *The Moral Treatise of the Eye*, Toronto, 2012, p. 61. See H. L. Kessler, "*Fenestra obliqua*: Art and Peter of Limoges's Modes of Seeing", in H. L. Kessler, R. Newhauser (eds.), *Science, Ethics, and the Transformations of Art in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, Toronto (forthcoming).
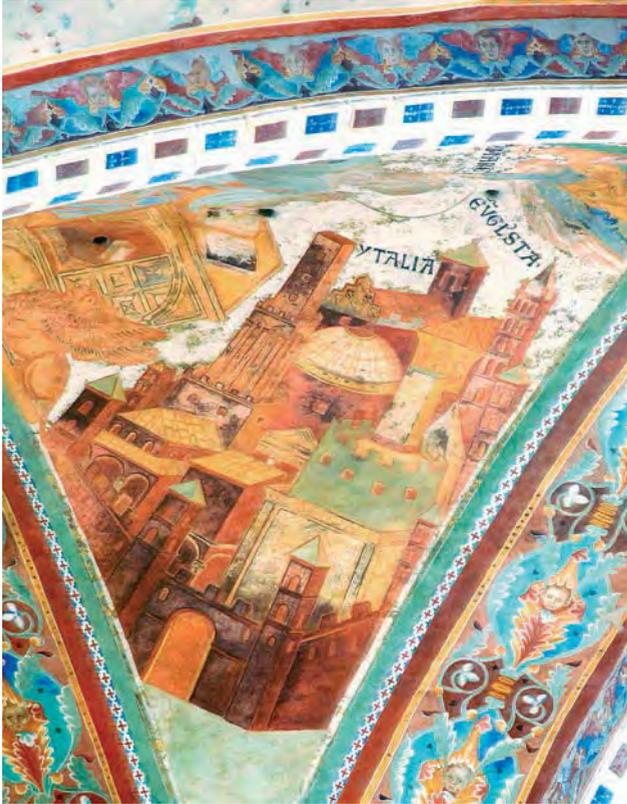
Fig. 18. Cimabue, Ytalia, Assisi, San Francesco. Photo: Donal Cooper courtesy of the Sacro Convento, Assisi

Figure 1 in this article) with a picture that records somatic positioning (Fig. 18) engages Peter of Limoges' existential dichotomy. Together, the conventional and contextual photographs restore at least something of productive exchange between fixed, up-close clarity and contextual distortion that Paulinus of Nola had intuited and that Antonio Eclissi fleetingly captured in his drawing of the San Lorenzo portico. In so doing, they deconstruct and restore the differences that Tasselli's working methods had elided and that later renderings of images in images of architecture have erased, between making images and seeing them. And, to a certain extent at least, the dual historiconicity reactivates the kinetic interplay between unchanging truth and humankind's imperfect understanding of it that underlay much medieval art.