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Books in Art: The meaning and significance of images of books in

Italian Religious Painting 1250 – 1400.

Volume 1 - Text

by

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I hereby confirm that this thesis, entitled 'Books in Art: The meaning and significance of images of books in Italian Religious Painting 1250-1400', is my own work, that no part of it has been submitted to this or any other University for a degree, and that all the sources from which information or quotations have been derived are disclosed in the text with complete references.

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Anthony McGrath

Abstract

This thesis uses images of books in Italian art of the *duecento* and *trecento* as pictorial evidence for the appearance of books and to establish a chronology for changes in the detail and style of book-bindings during those two centuries. The conclusions from the pictorial evidence is that there were material differences in the appearance of books in the *duecento* and *trecento* and that gold tooling was used to decorate books from about 1320, a hundred years earlier than previously thought. The thesis also considers how, and to what extent, medieval viewers related to images of books and whether it is possible to identify individual styles in the way artists represented books.

There are four case-studies that are used to investigate how images of books were used, and what religious, social, political and psychological purposes were served. Part of the methodology is to identify and study those points of change when books appear or when the way they are shown changes. This is in the belief that when circumstances alter, the artist responds consciously and creatively rather than by imitation. A number of works of art are studied in detail and the thesis proposes new interpretations for, *inter alia*, the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*, Guido de Graziano's *Dossal of St Francis*, the *Annunciation* scene in the Arena Chapel, the *Rucellai Madonna*, and the *S Caterina Polyptych*. The case-studies have demonstrated that the image of a book was one of the most powerful visual signs, certainly for the period and region to which this study has been devoted. It shows that in the decades around 1300 the book became an established attribute in altarpieces, the book displaced the *rotullus* as the symbol of authority, and the book became the dominant attribute of the Virgin Mary in scenes of *the Annunciation*, displacing earlier formats. The book was the symbol of learning and therefore a key attribute for the mendicant orders and especially the Dominican Order.

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Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Back	The part of the exterior binding that covers the spine. There is confusion in the literature on the use of the term 'spine'. In common parlance the spine of a book means that surface of the book that is hinged and includes the stitching and the binding that covers it. However in order to distinguish differences in binding it is necessary to define the different elements of binding separately. I am following the lead of Professor Szirmai in defining the surface of the Bookblock as the spine and the binding that covers it as the 'back'.
Back-edge	The spine or hinged side of the book. Depending on the binding, it may or may not be covered with a back.
Back-less	A binding that does not cover the spine of the Bookblock. Usually, a binding with only Upper and Lower boards and no Cover.
Blind Tooling	A decorative design impressed into leather with metal tools, applied either hot or cold, usually in some form of press.
Board	While there is much variation in bindings, the typical form is to bind the Bookblock to two wooden boards. The Upper Board goes before the first page of the book and the Lower Board goes after the last page. The edges of the boards may be square or shaped. The boards are covered with a cover, typically leather, although books can be bound solely with boards, which might be decorated directly.
Book furniture	The straps, catches, bosses and other items fitted to a bound book.
Book- marker	A piece of leather or ribbon that is attached to a book to mark a place.
Bookblock	The gathered pages of a book, but without a cover.
Boss	Metal hemispheres or cones attached to the covers of a book to protect and decorate them.
Carolingian	An early type of binding that was prevalent in Western Europe from the 9th century until the 12th century.
Cimasa	The circular end-piece of the top arm of a crucifix.
Chemise	A soft leather or cloth loose cover to protect the bound book when not in use.

Corner piece	A decorative attachment fixed to the corner of a cover.
Cover	The outer layer of a binding. Usually leather but can be a textile or even paper.
Decretal	A volume of collected laws and rulings made by the popes.
Edge	The surfaces of the Bookblock other than the faces of the first and last pages. The surface that opens is the 'fore-edge' or 'front edge'. The surface that is hinged is, in this study, the 'spine'. The top of the Bookblock is called the 'head' and the bottom of the Bookblock is called the 'tail'.
Edge decoration	Decoration applied to the edges of a Bookblock.
Evangelary	A volume containing the Gospel readings for Mass in the order of the liturgical calendar.
Fastening	Straps or clips to keep a book closed. Essential to keep pages flat and prevent vellum from curling. Usually two or four fastenings are used to maintain the shape of the Bookblock. Byzantine fastenings were made of chords, western medieval fastenings were usually a double thickness of leather. Anchored on one board, the fastening would attach to a pin on the other. Later books might have metal clips.
Gathering	A number of folded sheets that is sewn together with other gatherings to form the Bookblock. Also known as a section.
Gauffered	Decoration of the edges of a Bookblock, done with heated tools and usually achieving a cross-hatched effect.
Gold Tooling	A decorative design in gold leaf that is impressed into a leather binding with metal tools. It is usually a two stage process.
Hasp	The metal end of a strap fastening that fitted over the pin. Usually brass, the hasp could be decorated.
Headband	A band at the head and tail of the spine that is sewn to the gatherings. As it is still visible in a fully bound book, the head band may be decorated with embroidery stitching.
Historiated	The decoration of an initial or a border with a scene or with figures.
Lacing	To secure the sewing supports to the binding, the cords are

	laced through holes and channels in the Upper and Lower Boards
Lectionary	A volume containing epistle and gospel readings in the order of the liturgical calendar. It may also include other readings.
Lower cover	The part of the binding that follows the last page of the Bookblock.
Margin decoration	A decorative border on a cover, either continuous or composed of discreet motifs.
Margin rule	A decorative line parallel to the edge of the cover.
Medieval binding	In this thesis, a binding from Western Europe.
Missal	The book of the Mass, containing all the texts used in the Mass, usually for the whole liturgical year.
Panel moulding	A board that has been relief carved to form an outer frame and central raised area.
Pin	A metal spike that is fixed onto the cover and to which the hasp of a strap is fastened to hold the book shut.
Plaquette	An ornamental tablet inset into a binding.
Pull	A cord or tassel attached to the hasp to enable its removal from the pin.
Punch-gilt roundel	A small gold-tooled circle or, *alla fiorentina*, a punched hole filled with gesso, varnished and painted gold.
Rotulus	A rolled up scroll. Tied round with a ribbon or cord. It was a symbol of authority dating from antique times.
Scroll	The ancient form of book. A single continuous page made by joining pieces of parchment or vellum, it is stored rolled and read by unrolling it from one hand to the other.
Sewing	The means by which the gatherings of a book are held together and joined to other gatherings and the book's binding.
Sewing station	The point on the spine where the gatherings are each pieced with a hole to enable them to be sewn together. The number of sewing stations varies but should be at least two.
Sewing support	Cords or thongs, usually a pair at each sewing station, on

	to which the gatherings are sewn.
Spine	In this study, the term 'spine' means the edge of the Bookblock that is stitched.
Spine band	The part of the back of the binding that is raised due to the presence of a sewing station. Some books, notably Byzantine, inset the sewing stations into the Bookblock so as to obviate the need for spine bands. See Fig 2.
Square	The amount by which the board 'overhangs' the Bookblock. On early books the boards were flush with the Bookblock so there was no 'square'. This was due to the Bookblock being trimmed after binding. Later, the boards became larger so as to protect the edges of the Bookblock and there was therefore a degree of 'square'.
Stud	A dome-headed nail.
Tab	A leather flap attached to the top or bottom of the spine to facilitate the removal of the book from a book chest. It may be integral with the headband or an extension of the back of leather binding. See Fig 3.
Tool	A metal block or shape on which a design is cut. The tool is pressed onto leather to leave an impression of the design.
Treasure binding	A binding that is decorated with precious metals, stones or carvings.
Upper cover	The part of the binding that precedes the first page of the Bookblock.

Introduction

This study has its origin in an undergraduate project that required one to choose a potential research topic and write an exploratory essay. I chose images of books in *trecento* and *quattrocento* religious painting, a happy confluence of art forms that give me pleasure. The result of the exploratory essay was a realisation that here was part of the world of Art History which, while not exactly *terra incognita*, was largely unexplored. It was further apparent that there was a surprising lack of knowledge of the external appearance and decoration of books (that is their bindings) in the medieval period because of the very low survival rates of original bindings. Finally, I suspected that images of books meant more to medieval people, whether artist, commissioner or viewer, than just an attribute of a saint. After all, the Bible and other liturgical books played a key, physical role in the performance of the liturgy and evidenced the authority and knowledge of the Church and its clergy. Works of art supported the performance of the liturgy and, as objects of devotion, were props in the endless cycle of prayer to saints. Images of books became one of the most frequently-used symbols in these works, emphasising the authority of the holder and reflecting the activities at and around the altar, so understanding this role seemed important in the context of the history of the book and to enable a better appreciation of the original function of religious artworks.

The period of this study is the *duecento* and *trecento*, with some emphasis on the hundred years up to the Black Death. In paintings of this period it is almost a commonplace to see saints cradling books in their arms. The books are often vividly painted with much detail: the bindings may be shown with delicate tooling, elaborate bosses, straps and fastenings, the page edges with marbling, and if depicted open, the pages of the book may carry writing and illumination. However, to most modern observers of such images, the book is of secondary importance, seen only as an attribute to identify a particular saint or as a prop in the overall composition of the picture. It is my contention that this misses the importance of the book itself as a Christian symbol, a symbol of knowledge and an item of great monetary value. The aim of this thesis is to re-evaluate images, whether they are murals, paintings or book illuminations, in the context of the history of books of the period, the contemporary values

ascribed to books, and the acute visual culture that pertained, in order to recover some of the social and religious meanings that then attached to books and to reconsider how images of them were used.

Books continued to feature in western art in the centuries after 1400, as they had done so previously in medieval art, but the period chosen for this study is significant because it is when the iconography became embedded. The period saw an increase in both the supply and demand of books because of the activities of the mendicant orders, the formation of universities and the needs of their students, the publication of new works of literature, devotion and academic study, the emergence of private collectors and libraries, and the existence of a market for the purchase and sale of books. The period is also remarkable for the step change in the volume and quality of paintings and sculpture made to decorate the churches, town halls and private palaces in Rome and the city republics. That books should appear in paintings (and sculpture) is not a surprise – they were evident in everyday life (both religious and civil) and were a recognised attribute for saints such as the evangelists and St Paul. But their appearance in so many pictures and in such number suggests that they must have a more profound meaning. To illustrate this point with a single example, the large altarpiece *Coronation of the Virgin* by Jacopo di Cione **(Plate 1)** includes twenty-two images of books.[1] If the books were replaced by, say, garden spades, the assembled saints would look like a convention of market gardeners and the Church would have had a different image.

Apart from representing the Word of God, books are associated with learning, wisdom, authorship, laws, and bookkeeping but they may also be seen in terms of order, craftsmanship, authority, fashion and beauty. In the visual culture of the time, images of books may have been received by the viewer as a form of direct communication with the Word of God and the teachings of the Saints and Doctors of the church, as a token of the authority of the Bishops and priests and a reminder of the preaching of the friars to read and 'live' the Bible. Images of books formed part of the package of propaganda used by the Catholic Church to educate and control the people.

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[1] Jacopo di Cione, *Coronation of the Virgin*, 1370-1, National Gallery, London.

The structure of the thesis

As stated above, the period studied is the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with emphasis on the hundred years before the Black Death. It is a period that contains significant points of change when books appear or when the way they are shown changes. I regard these as valuable given my supposition that when circumstances have altered, there is a greater chance that the artist has responded consciously and creatively rather than by imitation. This period is also long enough to provide sufficient and accessible examples of religious painting to allow an adequate sample of images of books to be surveyed.

The thesis has two broad objectives. The first is to discover from the pictorial evidence contained in Italian religious painting of the period information about the physical appearance of books. This is of interest as very little evidence exists about the appearance and structure of books of the period due to the negligible survival rate of original bindings. The second is to use the knowledge gained about the appearance of books to interrogate specific works of art so as to uncover new interpretations and meanings. This is of interest because the book as a motif is an especially potent symbol but this significance has rarely been used for the interpretation of medieval art.

To achieve these objectives it is first necessary to understand the medieval symbolism that attached to physical and conceptual books, and how that symbolism was interpreted. For an image of a book to carry meaning, the book itself has to be embedded in the culture of symbolism. Furthermore, there are issues about the reliability of the pictorial evidence given the changes taking place in the manner of painting. I have considered those changes and for each picture assessed whether it contributes useful information and how much.

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter one reviews the meanings that prevailed in the late Middle Ages that attached to both the physical book and its image. It identifies the importance of both books and images of books as visual signs and examines a rare example where the image of a book has been used for art-historical interpretation. The possibility of images of books having layers of meaning is also examined.

Chapter two reviews the published data on the structure and appearance of Italian books of the period, from the descriptions included in the 1369 inventory of the Papal Library to the examinations of surviving bindings by Janos Szirmai and others. This material is summarised

and its shortcomings illustrated by examining a supposedly fourteenth-century binding in the Beinecke Rare Books Library.

Chapter three uses the results of studying over 120 images of books in religious paintings to derive information about the physical appearance of books of the period and how that appearance changed. For a limited number of artists, the manner in which they portray books is examined with the object of detecting consistent characteristics.

There follow four case studies. These have been chosen so as to include some of the major sources or conduits of patronage, and consequentially some important religious paintings. In each case, there is change in either the subject matter or the manner of representation or the circumstances of the commission.

Chapter four is the case study on the image of a book as the symbol of the authority of God and of the clergy. As the first case study, it includes a discussion of how the book as a symbol can only be interpreted by the viewer if it is already established in the culture of symbolism. The principal paintings examined are Simone Martini's *Holy Family* and Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*.

Chapter five is the case study on the friars, principally the Franciscans. The possession of books was a difficult and divisive issue for the Franciscans and subtle changes occur in the way books are represented in Franciscan paintings of the period. The Order was influential in the shift to greater verisimilitude in religious painting, in the development of the altarpiece and in establishing the book as a key motif. The principal paintings examined all include images of one of two founders, St Francis or St Dominic.

Chapter six is the case study on the change in the way the scene of the Annunciation is portrayed, where a book replaces the Virgin's earlier attributes of cloth or spindle. The chapter seeks to identify when this change occurred and the reason for the change. The pictorial examples include a mosaic, Cavallini's *Annunciation* in Santa Maria in Trastevere.

Chapter seven is the final case study and considers how the Dominican claim to be the authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Word of God is reflected in the Order's art, the use of images of books to communicate that claim and the key role played by images of St Thomas Aquinas. The principal paintings examined include Simone Martini's *S. Caterina Polyptych* and *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* attributed to Lippus de Sena.

The final chapter summarises the findings of the thesis and suggests some directions in which further research might be undertaken.

The symbolism of books and images of books

This chapter reviews the knowledge and theories concerning how books were perceived in the Middle Ages and the meanings that attached to both the physical book and its image. It identifies the importance of both books and images of books as visual signs and examines an example where images of books have been used for art-historical interpretation. The possibility of images of books having layers of meaning is also examined. The chapter contributes to the thesis by establishing the cultural framework of symbolism and meaning that is necessary for the later case studies. The chapter commences with observations by Michael Camille and Otto Pächt on the importance of the book as a symbol.[1]

In his 1989 article "Visual signs of the sacred page: books in the *Bible moralisée*", Michael Camille explored the range of meanings attached to images of books in thirteenth century art. He describes the book as an important visual sign in medieval Christianity.

> Medieval Christianity – a religion of the Word given by God to man, to be uttered by the prophets, written by the Evangelists and made flesh in Christ himself – involved a profound theory of communication which is expressed in visual signs as well as the verbal medium of the Logos. One of the most powerful of these was the book.[2]

Otto Pächt noted the 'dual interaction' that existed with books in the Middle Ages that valued both the content (whether or not that was accessible) and the physical properties of the book.

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[1] In this chapter I draw on a wider range of sources than just those originating from Italy, an approach that accommodates previous scholarly writing and I believe is justified by the permeability of thinking and knowledge in Western Europe in the period because of the overlay of a dominant church and the continued use of Latin as a shared second language, despite political boundaries, conflicts and slow speeds of communication.

[2] Michael Camille, "Visual Signs of the Sacred page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*," *Word & Image* 5, no. 1 (1989): p 111.

The relationship between physical and non-physical, or form and content, is not something purely rational, like the correlation of text and illustration. It is irrational and magical. In an age when the most important book, the Book of Books, was the Holy Scripture, the believer, even if illiterate, instinctively felt this deeper meaning in the relationship between the book and its outward form, its artistic embellishment.[3]

This instinctive value that attached to the physical form of books is clearly an important context, indeed it is a precondition, for the use of images of books in medieval art and their interpretation by the viewer. By valuing the physical nature of books, whether because of a shared format with the Holy Scripture or because of the expense associated with the production of manuscripts, the viewer was prepared for the appearance and meaning of images of books in art.[4]

In his 1989 article, Michael Camille's principal subject of study was an illuminated manuscript, the *Codex Vindobonensis 2554*, a *Bible moralisée* probably made in Paris in about 1215-1230.[5] This manuscript is a collection of over 1000 short passages from the Bible, each of which is 'illustrated' with painted scenes in roundels, many of which include images of books. By examining these scenes in the context of the biblical passages that they illustrate, Camille was able to demonstrate that the interpretation of the images of books was not restricted to the 'standard' meanings, as described by contemporary authors such as Bishop William Durandus, but that the images were used as symbols of power and authority, knowledge and truth, and were deployed in a 'battle against the enemies of the faith'.[6] Camille cited this interpretation as part of the wider subject of the 'visual literacy' of medieval art, where symbols were transformed and manipulated in response to the changing agenda of the powerful and were as much about securing control and conformity as about delivering Gregory the Great's call for visual interpretation of the scriptures for the illiterate. In this context, images of books were one of the most powerful visual signs.

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[3] Otto Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages*, trans. Kay Davenport (London: Harvey Millar Publishers, Oxford University Press, 1986), p 10. (As J. J. G. Alexander notes in the Preface to this book, Otto Pächt was part of the Vienna School of Art History with its emphasis on the detailed examination of works of art. It is an emphasis which is particularly relevant to the study of images of books.)

[4] The fact that an image of a book would offer only very limited or no access to content (as images showed books that were closed or a single folio spread) does not seem to have raised any difficulty.

[5] The codex is in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. A recently published facsimile, commentary and translation is Gerald B Guest, ed., *Bible Moralisèe: Codex vindobonensis 2554* (London: Harvey Miller, 1995).

[6] Camille, "Visual Signs of the Sacred page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*," p 126. This study is a rare example where images of books have been used to interpret meanings.

The thirteenth century saw increasing trade, greater affluence, more education and a growth in the production of books but the reality was still that a majority of the population were illiterate and books were expensive.[7] In consequence, access to and ownership of books was the preserve of the educated and wealthy minorities. However, there was one book that was familiar to all sections of the population and that was the Bible. This was 'The Book of Books', the source for the teachings of Christ, a book that was constantly presented to congregations, was read from and preached about. It also had more prosaic uses. By the thirteenth century it was the volume that was most readily available for use as a school book. It, or perhaps a constituent part such as a Psalter, could be used to teach the basic skills of literacy. Thus, the Bible was a part of life, in the home, the church, the school room and the university.[8] The Bible informs our interpretation of much of medieval art and is thus the starting point for this study.

The Bible was the Holy Book that defined Christianity. The book itself was revered as well as its contents and in the early Middle Ages the binding might be decorated with precious metals, enamels and semi precious jewels as if it were a shrine or reliquary.[9] **(Plate 36)** Such books were treated as treasures and would normally be stored in a treasury rather than a library.[10] When treasure bindings were not used, the bindings of Bibles and gospel books were still decorated, if only with tooling or other leather-working techniques.[11] **(Plate 2)** The

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[7] The price of medieval books was studied by H.E. Bell who gathered some 1,500 prices, although very few came from the thirteenth century. However, his conclusion about the prices of books based on data from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries must equally apply to the thirteenth century. He stated that a book was 'an extraordinarily expensive object'. See H.E. Bell, "The Price of Books in Medieval England," *The Library* XVII, no. 3 (1936): p 331. More recent comments about the price of medieval books tend to be isolated observations in wider studies and do not alter the fact that manuscript books were expensive. Christopher Dyer's study of Standards of Living in the Middle Ages includes valuations of books from executor's inventories which show that books were valued as luxury items worth a £1 or more, at a time when the daily wage of a skilled labourer was 2 pence. Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Agers: Social change in England c. 1200-1500*, *Cambridge Medieval Textbooks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 76-7. For the ownership of liturgical books in Tuscany, see Daniel Bornstein, "Spiritual Culture, Material Culture: Church Inventories in Fifteenth-Century Cortona," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 28 (2002): pp. 101-15.

[8] See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p xxx.

[9] Mary J Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p 40.

[10] Such bindings are known as Treasure Bindings.

[11] Durandus provides an explanation for the decoration of gospel books in Book III, Chapter 19, paragraph 15 of the *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*. He states that the gospel book was carried by the priest before his chest and as the 'Breastplate' worn by the High Priest in the Old Law was decorated with gold, silver and precious stones so, he speculates, should the gospel book. He goes on 'there is also another reason; for in it gleams the gold of wisdom, the silver of eloquence, and the precious stones of miracles. These are the bride's borders of

Bible, and its constituent parts, were treated with reverence. Thus, during mass the gospel book was blessed by the priest, carried in procession by a sub-deacon with the book enfolded in a veil[12] and shown to the congregation. The Bible was therefore a physical object that was privileged and revered. As for the text of the Bible, this established books as metaphors. The Bible contains many references to books, from the 'Book of Life' in *Ecclesiasticus* and in the *Apocalypse* to the 'Book of the Just' in *Joshua*.[13] The importance of the 'Book of Life' could not be greater, as a soul's fate on the Day of Judgement was dependent on it:

> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works..... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire. (*Apocalypse*: 20: 12 and 15)

The Book of Life was a record, a complete memory, indeed an account book of an individual's life and actions. Thus, God's all-seeing knowledge was symbolised by a book. Other descriptive metaphors that underline how deeply the use of books was embedded in the culture include the account of the Day of Judgement when the 'heavens shall be folded together as a book' (*Isaiah* 34:4) and 'the heavens departed as a book folded up' (*Apocalypse* 6:14).[14] More extraordinary is the description of books being eaten. In Ezekiel, the prophet is required to eat a book:

> And he said to me: 'Son of man, eat all that thou shalt find: eat this book, and go speak to the children of Israel'. And I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that book. And he said to me: 'Son of man, thy belly shall eat, and thy bowels shall be filled with

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gold with studs of silver.' A reference to the Song of Songs, I, 11: 'murenulas aureas faciemus tibi vermiculatas argento'. William Durandus, *William Durand On the Clergy and their Vestments: A New Translation of Books 2 and 3 of the Rationale divinorum officiorum*, trans. Timothy M Thibodeau (Chicago: University of Scranton Press, 2010), p 234.

[12] A humeral veil or *sindon*.

[13] For the Book of Life see Eccles. 24:32; Apoc. 3:5 and later. Also Paul's Letter to the Philippians, 4:3. For the Book of the Just, in some translations the Book of the Upright, see Josh. 10:13 and also Kings 1:18. Quotations from the Bible are taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible in Latin and English, 1899 Edition of the John Murphy Company, and available on line at www.drbo.org.

[14] The Latin text uses the word 'liber' and must have originally meant a scroll rather than a codex. And it is as a scroll that artists have interpreted the text such as in Giotto's *Last Judgement* at the Arena Chapel.

this book, which I give thee'. And I did eat it: and it was sweet as honey in my mouth. (*Ezekiel*: 3: 1-3)

This identifies the book with learning and knowledge, a point made by St Jerome in his commentary on this passage: 'Eating the book is the starting point of reading and of basic history. When, by diligent meditation, we store away the book of the Lord in our memorial treasury, our belly is filled spiritually and our guts are satisfied'.[15] The scene is repeated in the Apocalypse when St John is required to eat a book:

> And I heard a voice from heaven again speaking to me, and saying: 'Go, and take the book that is open, from the hand of the angel who standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth'. And I went to the angel, saying unto him, that he should give me the book. And he said to me: 'Take the book, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey'. And I took the book from the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth, sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. (*Apocalypse*: 10: 8-10)

This act of book-eating is portrayed in an illumination in an Apocalypse in the Cloisters Collection and this suggests that the symbolism was both understood and appreciated.[16] **(Plate 3)**

In its importance to medieval life, both as a physical object and a text, the Bible provided a universal example of the importance and significance of books. In the late Medieval period the church had a range of liturgical books in use, from gospel books to lectionaries, calendars and processionals, while outside the church there were a growing number of books, from academic works on theology and philosophy to herbals, and from beastiaries to histories.[17]

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[15] St Jerome, "Commentarium in Ezechielem", 40:4,(*Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina*, 25, 573D), quoted in Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, p 44.

[16] Cloister's Collection, NY, MS 68.174, f. 16v. *Manuscript of the Apocalypse*, c.1330, Normandy, France. The page dimensions are 30.8 x 22.9 cms. There is another example from an English MSS in the Getty Collection, dated 1255-60, MS Ludwig III 1, f. 15v. There is also a tapestry known as *The Apocalypse of Angers* in the Tapestry Museum of that city that has a scene with John eating a book.

[17] For the range of liturgical books, see Thomas J Heffernan and E Ann Matter, eds., *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), pp.435-59. As for books in general, although it addresses Plantagenet England, the essay by Nigel Morgan and Lucy Sandler gives a sense of the change and diversity of book production that occurred in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Nigel J Morgan and Lucy Freeman Sandler, "Manuscript Illumination of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *Art of Chivalry*, ed. Jonathan J G Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), pp. 148-56.

Images of books had existed for many centuries in church murals, icons and manuscripts and the book was thus an established motif for artists.[18]

William Durandus provides us with an account of what should be regarded as the standard meanings of images of books.[19] His *Rationale divinorum officinorum* was written in about 1290 in order to 'unveil and explain clearly and openly each object or ornament that belongs to the ecclesiastical services, what each of these signifies or represents figuratively, and set forth their rationale, according to that which has been revealed by Him'.[20] Chapter 3 of Book I is entitled 'On the Pictures, Curtains, and Ornaments of the Church' and is a systematic exposition of images and objects in a church. From this, and elsewhere in the *Rationale divinorum officinorum* ("*RDO*") one can derive a list of books used as attributes and their explanations:

> Christ enthroned (the 'Divine Majesty') may be shown with a closed book 'because no one was found worthy to open it except the Lion of Judah', or with an open book 'so that anyone can read in it that he is the light of the world, the truth, and the life, and the book of life'. (*RDO*, 1, 3, 12)

> The four Evangelists are shown with books ('near their feet') as 'what they have accomplished in their mind and in their works, they have taught others by their words and writings'. (*RDO*, 1, 3, 9)

> Prophets and patriarchs are shown with scrolls to denote 'imperfect knowledge' as they predated Christ. (*RDO*, 1, 3, 11)

> Apostles, who were instructed by Christ and thus had perfect knowledge could be shown with books, although Durandus distinguishes between those apostles who

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[18] A nice early example is a manuscript page in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, dated c.512, that shows Anicia Juliana, daughter of the Western Emperor Anicias Olybrias, holding a copy of a Pharmacopeia, the *De materia medica* by Dioskorides. See Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p 43.

[19] William Durandus (c.1230-96) was one of the chief medieval canonists of his day. He studied at Paris, taught at Modena and Bologna, was a legal official of the Curia and Apostolic Chaplin. Appointed Bishop of Mende he took possession by proxy so enabling him to remain with the Papal court. In addition to the *Rationale divinorum officiorum* Durandus wrote a treatise on civil and canon law, the *Speculum judiciale*. See F L Cross and E A Livingstone, eds., *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997); Guilielmus Durandus, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum: Books I, III & IV* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2007), pp. xii-xvii.

[20] William Durandus, *The Rationale Divinorum: A new translation of the Prologue and Book One*, trans. Timothy M Thibodeau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 1.

authored gospels and letters (Paul, the Evangelists, Peter, James and Jude) who were shown with 'books in their hands' and the remaining apostles who were shown with scrolls as 'a sign of their preaching'. (*RDO,* 1, 3, 11)

Paul's book signifies his status as a 'doctor, or on account of his conversion', the book symbolising the power that converted him. (*RDO,* 1, 3, 16)

Doctors of the Church are shown with 'books in their hands'. (*RDO,* 1, 3, 15)

Durandus describes the Gospel book as symbolising the New Testament (*RDO,* 4, 6, 3) and it is placed on the altar 'since the Gospel was published by Him, that is, Christ, and he still provides testimony to us.' He states that the gospel book is decorated on the outside. (*RDO,* 1, 3, 34)

These then, are the 'standard' meanings of images of books as given by Durandus.[21] In his study of *Codex Vindobonensis 2554,* Camille identified additional meanings for images of books in narrative scenes:

> While scrolls can denote the Old Law, books denote the time of Christ but not necessarily the New Law. This is demonstrated in folio 57r, where the Jews proffer open books to Christ as if showing him their scriptures, while at the same time gesturing in incomprehension and despair at what he is saying. In the next scene Christ produces his open book and the Jews discard their now closed books.[22] **(Plate 4)** Therefore, books here represent learning and a gesture with a book could mean discourse about that learning or that the learning has been abandoned.

> In folios 16r and v, the Old Testament story of Moses, the infant's cradle is portrayed as an open book, in which the infant Moses lies and is held there by the book's long strap fastenings. Camille interprets this as the book symbolising revelation whether or not it is before or after the coming of Christ. He goes on to suggest that the scroll represented a static interpretation of the Old Testament and was deployed in art as a

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[21] Thibodeau describes the *Rationale* as the 'premier liturgical exposition of the Middle Ages'. Part of the evidence for this is the survival of more that 200 medieval Latin manuscripts. Durandus, *William Durand On the Clergy and their Vestments: A New Translation of Books 2 and 3 of the Rationale divinorum officiorum*, p. 46. A copy of the *Rationale* written by Antonius of Bologna in the first half of the fourteenth century was sold at auction by Christies in 2006.

[22] Camille, "Visual Signs of the Sacred page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*," pp. 113-4.

criticism of the Jew's perceived preoccupation with the letter of scripture (the 'killing letter') in contrast to the Christian approach of interpreting scripture .[23]

In folio 1r, the female figure of *Ecclesia* holds an open book above her head, the pages of which are shining white and without text or ruling. This again is thought to be placing emphasis on the Word as a whole as opposed to the detail of the letter – it was the book that symbolised the teaching of Christ not the text.[24]

A much larger book appears on folio 24r, seemingly supported by the four Evangelists and from which Christ instructs the Apostles. The book stands open and again the pages are blank. The text that accompanies this scene is based on Exodus 25 and starts: 'The table that Jethro made signifies the holy divinity that is Jesus Christ'.[25] The book therefore represents that divinity.[26] It appears again in folio 32r, this time representing the vine of the 'divinity of the word of God' on which hang smaller books representing the fruit of the vine which the 'sons of God' pick and have their fill.[27]

Camille writes: 'The sign of the book in the *Bible moralisée,* like the Bible itself, emphasises the role of the Word as spirit, as something which goes beyond the mere materiality of the written. Making it a dynamic open and shut thing without lines of script or ruling avoids the notion of the 'flesh' and the 'letter' and instead suggests the efficacy of divinity in the spiritual meaning of the Word transmitted by God's revelation to man through Christ.'[28] The image of a book, like the book itself, was not seen as something passive or inert but as the vector by which Christ's teaching was revealed. It represented knowledge and, because knowledge was power, the image of the book also represented power. But as Camille discusses, the interests of the church were best served if the 'knowledge' was restricted to the 'proper hands', that is the clergy. It was a mark of the concerns that were raised by the growth of literacy (even some women could read), the availability of non liturgical books (such as Histories and Romances) and the production of heretical texts (such as Aristotle)

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[23] Ibid.: p 115.

[24] Ibid.: pp. 116 and 19.

[25] Guest, ed., *Bible Moralisèe: Codex vindobonensis 2554*, p. 80.

[26] Camille, "Visual Signs of the Sacred page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*," p. 118.

[27] Guest, ed., *Bible Moralisèe: Codex vindobonensis 2554*, p. 90.

[28] Camille, "Visual Signs of the Sacred page: Books in the *Bible moralisée*," p. 119.

that attempts were made in the thirteenth century to restrict the availability of texts, thereby protecting the Church's hegemony of knowledge of Christ's teaching.[29]

Camille's study demonstrates that the book was a motif that could be used flexibly so as to communicate specific meanings. Thus, he saw that it could be a symbol of knowledge and power that was used to project the Church's desired hierarchy of theological knowledge and authority. Images of books were not just attributes but were vehicles for the signalling of messages and meanings.

But what of that instinctive 'deeper meaning' that Otto Pächt thought the medieval believer, even if illiterate, felt towards books?[30] When the medieval Christian gazed on an altarpiece and perceived an image of a book, did he merely see it as a symbol of authority and learning or could he/she relate to it as the Word of God? We know of the enthusiasm exhibited by believers for 'seeing' the elevated host, for most worshippers the 'primary form of piety', at a time when communion might only be received once a year.[31] Its sight alone bestowed upon the faithful a form of grace and protection.[32] There was also a cult of contemplating the crucifix so as to acquire faith and a spiritual affinity with Christ.[33] Devotion was essentially visual and 'to see' was sufficient for spiritual nourishment. Did then the sight of an image of a gospel book in the hand of a saint inculcate a sense of receiving the Word of God? How could such an interpretation be justified and is there any evidence in the art to support it? These questions are important not just for throwing light on the reception of images but for understanding whether images of books had to appear contemporary and whether their decoration was exaggerated – points that are relevant to the history of books themselves.

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[29] Ibid.: pp. 126-8.

[30] Page 7.

[31] The practice of elevating the host had occurred for centuries in both the Latin and Greek churches but in the West became widespread following the Lateran Council of 1215. Indeed, the elevation was for most members of the congregation the climax of their experience, save for the rare occasions when they received holy communion. Heffernan and Matter, eds., *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, p. 310.. The cult of viewing the host is summarised in Roland Recht, *Believing and Seeing*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 70-2. and by R N Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 100ff..

[32] Cynthia Hahn, "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 175. One of the predella panels of the *Strozzi Altarpiece* by Orcagna shows *Saint Thomas Aquinas Moved to Spiritual Ecstasy during the Elevation of the Host at Mass.* Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

[33] See Ibid., pp. 176ff; Cynthia Hahn, "Vision," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), p. 51.

Religious images of this period can be regarded as functioning as 'devotional images' and viewed as being potent sources for spiritual advantage.[34] The mechanism by which such advantage flowed to the onlooker's soul was sight, explained by the then prevailing theories of optics and divine illumination.[35] The cult of the saints was very strong, as they were seen as capable of interceding with God on behalf of the penitent, and images of saints played an important role in facilitating the cycle of prayer and entreaty. There is no doubt that individual images were venerated.[36] The question is whether the inclusion of an image of a book altered that relationship so that the onlooker believed that he received spiritual advantage from the book as well as the saint. And can this dimension be untangled from the role of the book as validating the authority and knowledge of the clergy?

There is evidence in the art of the period to assist with these questions and this evidence is threefold. The first level is the very presence of the books. To modern eyes, the presence of a book in a picture of a saint will usually not give rise to any interrogative thoughts, such is the familiarity that exists with this motif. For some saints such the Evangelists, Epistolarians and Doctors of the Church, a book may be seen as an attribute. But other saints have different attributes and may still be portrayed holding a book. An example is the panel by Taddeo di Bartolo of *Christ with the Twelve Apostles* in the Berenson Collection.[37] **(Plate 5)** Why was it necessary to have every Apostle holding a book? It is clear who these figures are from their number and, in some cases such as St Peter, from the attributes that they hold. I do not believe that the books can be explained as a consequence of a tradition of saints holding books (an example being the twelfth century conch mosaics in Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome – **Plate 6**), as a book is not seen as a necessary attribute of either an apostle or a saint. So the presence of a book, no doubt representing the Word of God in general and the Gospels specifically, is there for a purpose. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, these books could merely serve a propaganda role in supporting the clergy who performed their duties in front of these pictures. But they may also be symbolic of God's all-seeing knowledge and a reminder of the Book of Life.

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[34] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 362ff.

[35] See Appendix 4 for a summary of this theory.

[36] Andre Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 448ff. Some images were regarded as miraculous, such as the wall painting of the Virgin in Orsanmichele, Florence, see Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, p. 398.

[37] Dated to c.1400. There is another panel of the same subject in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The second level of evidence is the decoration given to many, albeit not all, images of books. The many examples given in this chapter demonstrate the splendours of cover decoration that artists depicted. But the remarkable lack of survivors of real decorated covers from the period points to the images of books being usually more splendid than the volumes used by the clergy.[38] Furthermore, the decoration of the books seems intended to draw attention to them, especially in the period after 1320 when gold tooling was represented with its light reflective qualities. While this could still be seen as being supportive of the clergy, it is more than just mimicking the books on the altar and suggests a deeper intention.

The third level of evidence is in the gestures of saints that accompany books. The most fundamental is the way the book is held and by far the most numerous pose is for the saint to cradle the book in his (or her) left hand. **(Plate 7a)** This pose is familiar from that of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child and invites an equivalence between Christ the Child and the Word of God. **(Plate 8)** This raises the image of a book to a greater degree of importance than a saint's attribute, such as a key or a wheel. There is no surprise in this, given the central role the book played in the Catholic Church. And the equivalence is enhanced by the other gestures of the saints. Many hold another attribute in their other hand but where they do not, the hand will usually be deployed in one of a limited number of gestures. In the thirteenth century the most common gesture is one indicating 'speaking' or '*adlocutio*' – the hand held up with the palm towards the viewer and the fingers extended and untouching.[39] **(Plate 9)** This would suggest preaching the Word of God with an emphasis on the book as the source. Another gesture is one that mirrors the *Hodegetria* gesture of the Virgin Mary ('she who shows the way') – the right hand held horizontally out towards the Christ Child with the hand open and palm upwards. **(Plate 10)** This would emphasise the implied equivalence of the book with Christ. A third gesture is where the holder gently touches the top or side of the book with his spare hand as if to indicate its importance. **(Plate 8)** The final gesture is where the holder points with his finger at a specific word in an open book which, again, indicates a role as a preacher or instructor. **(Plate 11b)**

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[38] Indeed, it is possible that many churches did not possess complete Bibles and made do with service books. See Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515*, p. 75.

[39] Moshe Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Ch. 1. As Barasch explains, there is some variation in the detail of this gesture in terms of the positioning of fingers but it is clear that in only a very few cases is the gesture a blessing

The effect of these gestures, together with the decoration on the book cover and, in some cases, the inclusion of internal details such as coloured or historiated letters, is to draw attention to the book. Given that it is a devotional image, the intention was probably to incite meditation on the image of the book in the same way that the faithful were encouraged to listen or read and meditate on the text of the gospels. The practice of memorising passages from the gospels by both clergy and congregation[40] supports the idea that the image of a book was used to trigger recitation and contemplation. This then, was one way the believer may have obtained spiritual advantage from an image of a book.

However, was there further advantage to the viewer when looking at an image of a book? Did the presence of a book in a picture allow the beholder to acquire a spiritual possession of the Word of God? In short, did the image of a book benefit the soul? [41]

In approaching this question one has to accept that there is little in the way of documentary evidence on how the details in pictures were perceived.[42] Further, there was in the western late Middle Ages no accepted and stable understanding of optics or the operation of human vision.[43] Rather than being facts of physics and physiology, these were matters that were regarded as being at the heart of philosophy and theology, and on which there was prolonged discourse. Thus an appreciation of how the detail in a picture might have affected a viewer has to be built up, bit by bit.

There was a sense of pilgrimage in the way people were expected to develop and improve their souls. The Augustinian view was that the soul initially lacks definition. It is a 'blank', no different from the spiritual and cosmic environment in which it has been made. It was not just a matter for the believer to look after his or her soul, it had to be defined and developed and thus this was the life-time objective: to define and develop one's soul in preparation for the afterlife, knowing that one's hold on an earthly life was finite and its end unpredictable.

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[40] Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515*, p. 79.

[41] I am grateful to Dr Catherine Dunton of the University of Essex for drawing my attention to the link between vision and soul.

[42] A problem that Michael Baxandale touches on when considering the Fifteenth Century, describing the evidence as 'disablingly thin'. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A primer in the social history of pictorial style.*, Second ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 24. Madelaine Caviness notes that documents describing the reception of particular works of art are 'very uncommon' prior to the late fourteenth century: Madeline H Caviness, "Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), p. 66..

[43] See Appendix 4 for a summary of the state of knowledge of light and optics.

This 'improvement' of the soul required effort and initiative and was achieved through the persons and objects with which the soul of the individual engaged. To quote Plotinus: "We are what we desire and what we look at".[44]

The link between the soul and the body and all that surrounded it was light. Light was seen as the instrument of the creation of all things and provided an ongoing linkage between all things. This linkage by light meant that everything had an influence on everything else, those interactions being regulated by light, and included the influence of celestial bodies on terrestrial things and *vice versa*.[45] That light had a spiritual dimension would have been common knowledge in the late Middle Ages given, *inter alia*, the regular recitation of the opening verses of St John's gospel.[46] The identification of Christ with light, a light that masters darkness, inevitably associates God with the sun, the most apparent physical source of light, but also makes light an essentially spiritual phenomenon. James McEvoy has summed up medieval light philosophy in three basic propositions:

'God is light in a proper and not merely a metaphorical sense; the essence of light lies in the spiritual being rather than corporeal; in the visible world, light is the first, subtlest and most active of material elements, and hence closest to immaterial nature.'[47]

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[44] Margaret Miles, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's "De trinitate" and "Confessions"," *The Journal of Religion* 63, no. 2 (1983): p. 129. Plotinus was a major, and influential philosopher of the third century who 'is historically important as an influence in moulding the Christianity of the Middle Ages and of Catholic theology'. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, Second ed. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), p. 290.

[45] This is a gross but deliberate simplification of a very complex topic. It follows the thinking of al-Kindi that was adopted by Robert Grosseteste and then by both Roger Bacon and Bonaventure. Variations existed in what was understood and believed, variations that broadly reached back to Aristotelian and Augustinian origins. One aspect that was common to theories of light was that the rays of light travelled in straight lines, something that seems obvious to modern minds but was significant given the multi-dimensional role played by light, and an aspect that would influence pictorial composition. It will also be apparent that the beliefs in linkages and influences lay at the root of astrology as well as theology. See David C Lindberg, "The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler," *Osiris* 2 (1986): pp. 4-42; J McEvoy, "The Metaphysics of Light in the Middle Ages," *Philosophical Studies* 26 (1979): pp. 126-45.

[46] Simson states that it was the custom to recite the prologue to St John's Gospel at 'the close of every mass' and that the custom was established in the thirteenth century. However Durandus does not refer to it and it only became a defined part of the Roman Liturgy with the adoption of the Tridentine Rite in 1570. It does appear however that the prologue was a popular passage throughout the medieval period and pre-Tridentine rites were subject to substantial local variation. Its adoption in 1570 certainly suggests that its use was widespread by that time. Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1962), p. 55.

[47] McEvoy, "The Metaphysics of Light in the Middle Ages," p. 139.

It follows that light was a critical and all pervading element to the extent that the spirits of all living things and the souls of humans were influenced by light. To what degree the subtleties of such thinking were understood by clergy and laity is unclear but the belief that there was no hiding from God and that He knew even the most private thoughts of the individual was the regular fare of priests and preachers.

Human vision was believed to result from both the reception and transmission of rays from the eye. It was not therefore a passive process whereby images were just received. Instead, sight was regarded as a process of 'reaching out' to objects so that they would be visually touched and explored. Furthermore, physical vision was accompanied by 'spiritual vision' so that the soul as well as the body would transmit as part of the visual process and thereby receive images that were 'printed on the soul'. Needless to say, there were conditions to be met in achieving spiritual vision: Augustine argued that the viewer had to take the initiative (as was the case in developing the soul) and it required faith. However, for the believer, light and vision connected the soul to the body, connected the soul to external objects, were vital for the development of the soul, and were the means by which divine illumination reached the soul. For Bonaventure, it was divine illumination that was the source of all knowledge and light was the linkage between body and soul.[48]

With light and vision being the means and conduit for access to the soul, what spiritual role did art offer beyond that of pictorial instruction for the illiterate? Herbert Kessler provides one answer:

> The work of medieval art was more agent than object. It did not so much attract the beholder's eye to itself as mediate vision towards something beyond; and its spiritual significance derived from the complex context for which it was made. Thus, it served as but a part of the whole: an apse mosaic needed the altar beneath it for completion, candlesticks required a cross between them to convey their symbolic message, and all were furnishings dependent on the church structure to articulate their place and hence hierarchical position. In turn, art also communicated higher impulses to the faithful by visually fixing the spoken and performed liturgy or preached message, by stimulating religious emotions, and sometimes by speaking or acting.[49]

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[48]Lindberg, "The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler," pp. 4-42; McEvoy, "The Metaphysics of Light in the Middle Ages," pp. 126-45; Miles, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Saint Augustine's "De trinitate" and "Confessions"," pp. 125-42.

[49] Herbert L Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," *The Art Bulletin* 70, no. 2 (1988): p. 177.

The mechanism for the contextualising of art was the exercise of memory. In reaching the 'something beyond' in the work of art, the audience drew on its memories and experiences, existing knowledge of the liturgy and holy stories, and ability in decoding symbols.

St Bernard argued that the only justification of religious art (and music) was to mediate the perception of ultimate truth.[50] Connected to this was a belief that the visual image had more emotional impact than words.[51] According to the Gregorian tradition, a visual image had the ability to 'strike the soul, instantaneously and with completeness'[52] and preachers such as Giordano da Rivalto stated that a narrative picture enabled the beholder to be, almost, present at the scene.[53] Thus there is no difficulty in seeing religious art as having a spiritual role. The believer would seek and expect a spiritual import into his or her soul from looking at a religious picture or sculpture. The inclusion of a book in a picture or sculpture would enhance that spiritual import by enhancing the associations of the images with the Word of God and the liturgy.

Having established the importance of images of books in late medieval art, the next step is to form a working understanding of what books of the period looked like. However, as already indicated, this period saw considerable change and artistic evolution, so it is to be expected that the way books were portrayed would also change. This is illustrated by taking two examples of Italian art from the outer quartiles of the period covered in this study, examples that will illustrate some of the problems faced. The first is the panel of the *Majestas Domini* of 1215, originally from the church of Saints Salvatore and Alessandro at Badia Berardenga and now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena.[54] **(Plate 12)** The central image is of Christ,

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[50] Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, p. 57.

[51] Hahn, "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality," p. 183.

[52] Ibid., p. 177.

[53] Giles Constable, "A Living Past: The Historical Environment of the Middle Ages," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 1, no. 3 (1990): p. 51.

[54] The dimensions of the panel are 98 x 198 cms. The attribution is to the Maestro di Tressa. The date comes from an inscription on the upper frame: ANNO DNI MILLESIMO CCXV MENSE NOVEMBRI HECTA. The literature includes Michele Bacci, "The Berardenga Antependium and the Passio Ymaginis Office," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61 (1998): pp. 1-16; Julian Gardner, "Altars, Altarpieces, and Art History: Legislation and Usage," in *Italian Altarpieces 1250-1550: Function and Design*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1994), pp. 14, 16; Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: I dipinti* (Genova: Sagep Editrice, 1990), p. 10; Henk Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988), pp. 12 ff. See also Edward B Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," (London: Courtauld Institute of Art, 1998), No. 357.

seated in a mandorla, holding a closed book with its lower cover to the viewer. **(Plate 12a)** The book is bulky, with a plain gold cover. The edge of the book block is painted in a shade of blue with lines of a lighter colour indicating the folio pages or gatherings over which there are some faint marks that might either be sewing bands or a pair of strap-fastenings. There is no other indication of book furniture. While we know it is a book because of its shape and because of the person holding it and the probable context for the panel, the overall naivety of the composition and the lack of any detail might make one doubt whether this image can add to our knowledge of books. And yet, a binding covered with sheet gold was a form of treasure binding that almost certainly existed[55] and the lack of additional decoration may have been deliberate and, at the time, thought to be a correct form for a book held by Christ – an aspect that will be met again later in the study.

The second example is dated to about 1380 and is an altarpiece by Giovanni del Biondo, in the Museo dell' Opera di Santa Croce.[56] **(Plate 13)** Titled *St John Gualbert and Scenes from his Life*, the central panel shows the saint seated on a throne holding a closed book with the upper cover towards the viewer. **(Plate 13a)** Although this book is large, it is not bulky. No attempt has been made by the artist to show the individual folio pages and the edges of the book block are a plain colour. However, the binding is shown in sumptuous detail. It is blue with gold decorations including delicate and intricate tool work in the centre. The long strap fastenings are shown in red with gold thread decoration plus gold hasps and pulls. This image looks as thought it might be a portrait of a treasured and highly valuable book. But to what extent is it the result of an artist following convention or repeating a learnt formula for images of books in a religious setting? Is it the result of artistic exaggeration, possibly at the behest of the commissioner? Or is the present image the result of decay, damage and then restoration, perhaps insensitively done with exaggerated detail?

To be able to obtain results in terms either of interpreting meanings of images of books or of securing information on the history of books and bookbinding, we need to be able to

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[55] The covering of bindings with precious metal such as silver gilt was one of the methods of decorating particularly valued books. However, surviving examples are further decorated with inlaid precious minerals, jewels and enamels. One fine example of a silver-gilt Byzantine book cover from the late tenth to early eleventh centuries was exhibited at the Byzantium exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, 2009. Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki, eds., *Byzantium 330-1453* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2008), No 82. The *Sion Gospels Book Cover* (German, 10th C.) in the V & A is made of gold sheets, again elaborately decorated. See Paul Williamson, ed., *The Medieval Treasury* (London: V & A Publications, 1998), p. 78.

[56] The triptych measures 180 x 160 cms and has a predella measuring 20 x 190 cms. It was previously in the Bardi di Vernio Chapel.

navigate through these questions and this starts with the admittedly thin knowledge that we have on the appearance of real books of the period.

The existing evidence of book covers and their decoration.

This chapter considers the existing evidence for the structure and appearance of Italian books of the period, from an analysis of the 1369 inventory of the Papal Library to a review of the literature on medieval bookbinding. Due to the negligible survival rate of original bindings of the period, the evidence is incomplete and the literature is contradictory. This is illustrated by an examination of a supposedly fourteenth-century bound book. The conclusion that the existing knowledge on the appearance of books is unreliable gives the context for the analysis of pictorial evidence in chapter three.

That books existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in considerable numbers is not in doubt as there are many surviving manuscripts, some of which are illuminated. Nor is there any doubt that in this period nearly all books were in a codex format and that a large number of these volumes were bound in covers, of which a small proportion were decorated with coloured leather, tooling and metal furnishings. As evidence of this, there is a fourteenth century inventory of the Avignon Papal Library. This important library, described by Pierre Gasnault of the Bibliotèque Mazarine as 'la plus importante peut-être de la chrétienté à cette époque' had an inventory of books compiled in 1369 as part of an overall inventory of the Papal Palace drawn up in the context of a planned return of the Pope to Italy.[1] This is especially useful for this study as the inventory was prepared by a notary rather than a librarian (albeit under the direction of the Bishop of Cavaillon) and was intended to identify and assess the books. In most cases the books did not have titles and, accordingly, the inventory describes the physical condition of most of the books (the exceptions seemingly being those with titles or where the notary regarded a description of the contents as being sufficient for identification). The inventory has 2059 entries of which 2,058 were books or collections of papers in codex form or similar, and one rolled manuscript or *rotulus*. Out of these entries, there are 1,903 books where the binding has been described (albeit briefly).[2]

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[1] Pierre Gasnault, "Observations paleographiques et codicologiques tirees de l'inventaire de la libraire pontificale de 1369," *Scriptorum* 34 (1980): p. 269.

[2] My analysis of the inventory uses that published by Ehrle in 1890. See Franz Ehrle, *Historia Bibliothecae Romanorum Pontificum tum Bonifatianae tum Avenionensis* (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1890), pp. 274-450. The

Among these, leather bindings predominate with 1,439 entries (76%), although there are also bindings in parchment (3%), vellum (1%), various types of cloth (3%) and a single example of a binding in horn. What is of interest is the number of books that were bound in uncovered wooden boards, 337 (18%).[3] The terminology used by the notary for these bindings, *coopertus postibus sine pelle*, or *coopertus postibus sine corio*, or *cum postibus sine pelle*, uses the word *postibus* for the board, thereby describing it as a support for a covering as opposed to a form of binding in its own right. This could suggest that the boards were meant to be covered and were thus 'unfinished'. And yet these books are distributed throughout the library, irrespective of the importance of the room, and include a wide range of texts, from breviaries to works of the Church Fathers.[4] It is an indication that irrespective of how they were regarded in 1369, wooden board bindings were a significant format in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In nearly all cases where a binding of leather or fabric is specified, the colour of the binding is also given. These are given in the following table:

Latin	English	%
Viridi	Green	37
Rubeo	Red	29
Albo	White	18
Nigro	Black	5
Croceo	Yellow	3
Tannato	Brown, or possibly uncoloured	3
Viridi claro	Bright green	2
Livido	Blue	1

numbers that I have derived differ slightly from those published by Gasnault, almost certainly because of differing interpretations of the entries.

[3] Gasnault expresses surprise at the number of these bindings. Gasnault, "Observations paleographiques et codicologiques tirees de l'inventaire de la libraire pontificale de 1369," p. 273.

[4] The layout of the Papal library at Avignon is discussed by Cathleen A Fleck, *The Clement Bible at the Medieval Courts of Naples and Avignon: A Story of Papal Power, Royal Prestige, and Patronage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), Ch. 5.

Other colours and shades occur in small numbers or single examples : *violacea, quasi albo, rubeo claro, quasi rubeo, ruffo, livido claro, quasi croceo, seminegro, quasi violacea, semiviolacea* and *quasi tannato*. There are sixteen examples where two colours are used. The frequency of colours is different from that derived from the analysis of images of books of the period, where red dominates followed by black, then green, blue and brown. [5]

The inventory has only limited descriptions of decorative features and furniture. In twenty-six entries, *impresato* were recorded indicating that the leather binding was decorated with a metal die. It does not record whether this is blind or gold tooling. However, of the twenty-six, coloured leather (white, red and black) was decorated in fourteen cases. As blind tooling would be likely to discolour the leather, the use of coloured leather may indicate that gold tooling was used.

With few exceptions, details of fastenings are not recorded. Indeed, as the notary records some occasions where there are no fastenings, the presumption may be that all books have fastenings unless otherwise stated. The exceptions are where the fastenings are of precious metal. Thus there are fifteen entries that note clasps (*firmaliis*) and hasps (*clausuris*) of silver and silver gilt. There is also one entry that notes an iron lock on a book *continente regulam Templariorum*. [6]

The papal library may have been 'la plus importante' but there were at that time many other libraries in the universities and monasteries and in the palaces of kings and prelates – the Franciscans in England had 180 libraries by 1300[7] and the library of Charles V had 910 volumes in 1380. There is no estimate for the number of books in existence in Western Europe in the fourteenth century but they must have been measured in hundreds of thousands and the decorated (and more valuable) bindings must have numbered several thousand. So the expectation is that there will be a good number of examples from this period from which to gain an idea as to how these books might have looked.

However, research suggests that the actual number of surviving examples is very small. Indeed, it is apparent that there are several problems in trying to construct a reliable account of the history of bindings in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: there is a lack of

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[5] See Page 64 and Appendix 1.

[6] No 1174.

[7] M T Clanchy, "Parchment and Paper: Manuscript Culture 1100-1500," in *A Companion to the History of The Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford and Malden MA: Blackwell, 2007), p. 201.

surviving examples; the dating of covers is often difficult and lacks precision; despite some regional characteristics, the origin of books is often unclear given the movement of books within monastic, clerical, academic and royal networks; and there are few contemporary descriptions of the appearance of books. To consider Italian books on their own is even more difficult as, to date, there is little evidence for the survival of Italian bindings.

The shortage of surviving examples from the period is a point highlighted by Dorothy Miner:

> There appears to be something of a gap in the succession of ornamented leather bookbindings that can be dated with any certainty to the years between the early thirteenth century and about 1400. More study is doubtless needed on this period. However, these years coincide with the time when private individuals among the nobles, and later the wealthy burghers, began to acquire books for their personal use – prayer books and works of literature. The heavy wood boards and thick leathers suitable for a monastic study appealed little to aristocratic tastes. The finest such books were bound in silk brocades and rich velvets, often adorned with gold and silver fittings, as we know from the medieval inventories. Such coverings, of course, were perishable.[8]

There are surely other reasons for the scarcity of bindings from this period. One might be the move towards lighter, more portable books that is associated with the rise of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century and personal ownership – books that were less able to withstand the ravages of time. There is the possibility, arising out of the writings of John W. Waterer, that the methods of preparing leather in this period resulted in it being either more brittle or susceptible to atmospheric corrosion and thus less resistant to decay. [9] Another reason might be the well-documented practice of reusing bindings as raw material in the period immediately following the introduction of printing. Given that it is estimated that 18 million books were produced in the second half of the fifteenth century[10] the demand for

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[8] Dorothy Miner, ed., *The History of Bookbinding 525-1950 A.D.* (Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery, 1957), p. 48.

[9] John W Waterer, "Leather," in *A History of Technology: Volume II, the Mediterranean Civilizations and the Middle Ages c. 700 B.C. to c. A.D 1500*, ed. Trevor Williams Singer, et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 154-55.

[10] J A Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 1999), p. 173.

binding material must have been enormous and bindings from the previous two centuries containing 'obsolete' manuscript books must have been an irresistible source.

It is possible that bindings of the period have simply not been recognised as such, a point made by Graham Pollard in 1976. He noted that catalogues of manuscripts often failed to include descriptions of bindings and, where they did exist, were unreliable. This was the result of, in his opinion, a lack of published material on the construction and development of medieval bindings, and a consequential lack of guidance for cataloguers of the technical changes in binding technique that might indicate the date and place of binding. Pollard also noted that recording the binding of a manuscript is only a small part of a cataloguer's job; the content of the book and its illumination will usually be regarded as more important.[11] In recognition of the lack of guidance on the appearance of books, Pollard set out a number of observations on medieval bindings, largely based on his study of English bindings, addressing in turn each of the components involved in bookbinding and noting changes in technique and appearance. He concluded with a 'Chronological Summary':

> Over the four centuries from A.D. 1100 to 1500 there are two main changes in the technique of bookbinding with consequent changes in the appearance of the book. The flat spines, tabs, and thongs going into a tunnel in the thickness of the board all disappear in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. This change coincides with the earliest records of lay bookbinders at London and Oxford. The horizontal bands prominent across the spine begin about 1250, and increase in number until about 1400 after which they decrease. The second important change is the projection of the boards beyond the edge of the leaves which starts just before 1450, and is quickly followed by the general use of tanned leather and its decoration with small blind Stamps.[12]

Pollard noted that what he had set out should not be regarded as 'rules' but as opinions that may well be modified in the light of later information and research, a measure in itself of the lack of certainty that exists within the history of bookbinding and hence the knowledge of the appearance of books. This uncertainty was forcefully underlined in an article in 2000 by Eike Barbara Dürrfeld who reviewed the literature on bookbinding, fastenings and furniture

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[11] Graham Pollard, "Describing Medieval Bookbindings," in *Medieval Learning & Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. Jonathan J G Alexander and M T Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 50-52.

[12] Ibid., p. 64.

and concluded that much of it was contradictory with misunderstandings and mistakes.[13] She proposed a program of research that involved adopting a common vocabulary of bookbinding terms and the pursuit of five methodological approaches, entitled: (i) Book Archaeology, (2) Written Sources, (3) Pictorial Sources, (4) Archaeological Finds, and (5) Binding Models. The third of these, Pictorial Sources, involves studying paintings, book illuminations, prints, sculptures and carvings for evidence of new binding techniques with the object of establishing a chronology for the development of medieval book fastenings and furniture. Her subsequent PhD thesis does not, however, make any progress with this, devoting less than two pages to Pictorial Sources with references to work done by Heinrich Schreiber on sixteenth century German art and the work by Pollard using decorated continental copes as a source of visual information on book fastenings.[14] Neither of these sources are recent and confirms the view that very little use has been made of pictorial sources for information on medieval books. Current knowledge about the appearance of medieval books comes almost wholly from the study of surviving examples of bindings (what Dürrfeld terms Book Archaeology) with the limitations of small sample sizes and the uncertainties that arise with the extrapolation of data. Thus, while past research has not achieved any confident understanding of the appearance of books in the period, it has provided some useful pointers in terms of methodology.

One of the complications of research in medieval bookbinding is that it is the custom in specialist histories to treat the thirteenth century as part of a 'Romanesque' period, being a 200 year span ending in 1300, and the fourteenth century as part of a 'Gothic' period, which is deemed to last for 300 years and thus straddles the advent of printing.[15] To understand the current knowledge of the books of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it is therefore necessary to draw material from studies of the two periods.

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[13] Eike Barbara Dürrfeld, "Terra Incognita: Towards a Historiography of Book Fastenings and Book Furniture," *Book History* 3 (2000): pp. 305-13.

[14] Eike Barbara Dürrfeld, "Die Erforschung der Buchschließen und Buchbeschläge:Eine wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Analyse seit 1877" (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, 2002), pp. 284-5. The work by Pollard is contained in Pollard, "Describing Medieval Bookbindings," p. 63. Dürrfeld advances a theory that changes in the design of book fastenings were driven by changes in the design and shape of boards that were intended to improve the rigidity of books.

[15] A more popular and more readily understood approach is to use the term 'medieval' for the period to 1400 and thereafter to take each century in turn. E.g. Jane Greenfield, *ABC of Bookbinding: A Unique Glossary with over 700 Illustrations for Collectors and Librarians* (New Castle DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2002).

A further complication is that there are different binding structures that originate from different geographical areas, such as Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian bindings, as well as the 'Medieval' structure from Western Europe.[16] A structure that is also potentially relevant to this study is the Byzantine or Greek binding structure, examples of which date from the 9th to the sixteenth centuries. To confuse matters, some 'Byzantine' bindings were made in Italy and books in Byzantine bindings were current in Italy alongside Medieval bindings. The externally visible differences between Byzantine and Medieval binding structures are:

> The backs of Byzantine bindings tend to be smooth because of the practice of cutting notches in the bookblock to accommodate the sewing. (But note Pollard's observations (above) about flat 'spines' existing on 'medieval' bindings prior to c.1250.)[17]
>
> The headband of Byzantine bindings extended onto the boards, while in Medieval bindings the headband was on the spine only.
>
> The Byzantine fastening was typically constructed of braids with a catch fastening onto pins in the edges of the upper boards. Medieval fastenings were usually leather straps.[18]

Thus there was potentially more than one type of binding structure current in the period.

Given this background, my strategy is to consider the literature on surviving bindings of the 'Romanesque' period plus the first century of the 'Gothic' period. The most important text for this is J.A.Szirmai's *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, the first and only comprehensive account to date of binding structures.[19]

Bindings of the period up to 1300: 'Romanesque'

Szirmai summarises the literature on 'Romanesque' bindings, noting that G.D. Hobson produced a list of 106 decorated bindings and that Christopher de Hamel pointed out that 'the majority of them contain glossed Bible texts, apparently mass-produced in twelfth-

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[16] The term 'Medieval binding' is used in this study to mean a binding from Western Europe.

[17] See Glossary on the use of the terms 'back' and 'spine'.

[18] Greenfield, *ABC of Bookbinding: A Unique Glossary with over 700 Illustrations for Collectors and Librarians*, pp. 84-85, 92-93.

[19] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding.*

century Paris, from where they found their way to England and the rest of the Continent, soon to be imitated by local binders'. Szirmai gives the latest census of known Romanesque bindings, as compiled by Friedrich Adolf Schmidt-Künsemüller (1985), as 139 examples.[20]

It is interesting to place the Schmidt-Künsemüller list in the context of Hobson's work of 51 years earlier. Hobson at that stage (1934) had identified 90 bindings, the majority of which were French with smaller numbers from England and Germany. In an article, he addressed the question as to whether many more bindings would be 'discovered' and expressed doubt whether that was possible, as most libraries had been scoured for examples. Indeed, he reported the view of Tammaro de Marinis, the Italian antiquary and bibliophile, that there were none in Italy. By 1938, another 16 bindings had been found that, while a material advance on the 90, demonstrated that progress was going to be slow and the number of examples was always likely to be small.[21]

So it has transpired, as after another 47 years the Schmidt-Künsemüller study includes the 106 bindings identified by Hobson and adds an additional 33 bindings, of which 21 had been identified by Ernst Kyriss. Of the 139 bindings, 98 are deemed to be French, 13 English and 28 are Germanic. There are no Italian bindings.[22]

From his study of 110 bindings and review of literature, Szirmai noted that there were two prevailing kinds of leather covering: a pale, white-grey leather without decoration and a brown leather (apparently vegetable-tanned) with blind-tooled decoration.[23] In Schmidt-Künsemüller's survey, a range of colours were noted (red, rose, black) although most are described as being shades of brown.[24] However, it is apparent from the 1369 inventory of the Avignon Papal Library that a variety of coloured leathers were used as bindings: green and red being the most frequently used. These coloured leather covers were the norm in the Papal library as only 3% of covers were listed as *tannato*, which is either tanned brown or possibly

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[20] Ibid., pp. 140-1.

[21] G D Hobson, *Studies in the History of Bookbinding* (London: The Pindar Press, 1988), pp. 33, 70, 101.

[22] Friedrich Adolf Schmidt-Künsemüller, *Die Abendländischen Romanischen Blindstempeleinbände* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann Verlag, 1985).

[23] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, pp. 162-6. Szirmai also noted from his sample that 'overcovers' or '*chemises*' were regularly used although all known examples come from England, Northern France or Spain.

[24] Schmidt-Künsemüller, *Die Abendländischen Romanischen Blindstempeleinbände*. One is described as 'Goldbraun'.

uncoloured.[25] The inventory also included some bicoloured covers such as red and yellow, green and white, and green and black.[26] It is possible that a higher quality of binding using more coloured leather was peculiar to the Papal library and data drawn from the 1369 inventory is not representative of bindings generally, even those of quality. However, it is also possible that coloured leathers were more prone to deterioration and thus proportionally fewer have survived.

The suveys show that the principal form of decoration of leather bindings was blind tooling, using individual stamps. In addition, the title of a book might appear on the lower cover. Szirmai treated as another type of decoration the use of precious textiles as covering. The Avignon Papal Library had 'some 50 brocade, silk or velvet bindings, some of them embroidered'. Again, they were recorded as being in a range of colours with some bicoloured.[27] Given the fragility of the material, few examples survive.[28]

A survey of Byzantine bindings in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana published in 1988 showed that, out of 94 surviving Byzantine bindings, 15 are deemed to predate 1100, five are thought to be twelfth century, and eight to be thirteenth century.[29] The place of origin of these bindings is largely unknown although two are identified as made in Italy.[30]

A major survey of 'medieval' bindings in Italian libraries was started in 1985 by the *Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro* in Rome. This identified that there were about 15,000 medieval bindings in Italian libraries but these included 'medieval' bindings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Little has been published about the results of this survey, work has been interrupted for lack of funds and there is continuing uncertainty when any detailed

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[25] The word *tannato* appears to be used to indicate colour. For example item no. 41 in the inventory has the description 'cooperta corio tannato' and no. 40 has 'cooperta corio alba'.

[26] See my analysis on page 24 above. Also Gasnault, "Observations paleographiques et codicologiques tirees de l'inventaire de la libraire pontificale de 1369," pp. 273-4.

[27] Ibid.: p. 274.

[28] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 166.

[29] Carlo Federici et al., *Legature Bizantine Vaticane* (Roma: Fratelli Palombi, 1988), p. 10. The Vatican Library has about 4,700 'Greek' manuscripts.

[30] The place of origin of 17 out of the 28 bindings is unknown. Aside from the 2 bindings from Italy, 6 come from Constantinople, 2 from Cyprus and one from the 'Orient'. Ibid., p. 69-70.

results will be published.[31] However, private communications from Paola F. Munafò of the *Istituto centrale per il restauro e la conservazione del patrimonio archivistico e librario* ("ICPAL") revealed that the institute's data bank includes 'poco più di 100 legature sono del XIII secolo'. This is far more than had been previously thought to survive and, while the number may well be reduced as identifications are validated, it is potentially an interesting source of material for analysis.[32]

Treasure bindings also feature in the 'Romanesque' period. However, Szirmai notes that most are now either detached from their contents or so extensively repaired to prevent historical analysis. Also worth noting is the existence of the *tavolette di biccherna* from Siena which date from the twelfth century.[33] These account books were bound in uncovered[34] wooden boards which were decorated with designs and narrative scenes. **(Plate 14)** As a source of data on bindings, the main interest of the *Biccherna* lies in them providing a securely dated sequence of dimensions which may indicate changing fashions in the size of books plus information on sewing stations.[35] It is apparent from the *tavolette* that the norm was to have three sewing stations. A good example where the lacing points are exposed is on the *tavoletta* for January to July 1291. **(Plate 15)**

Over ninety percent of the surviving covers examined by Szirmai show evidence of fastenings. They are of two main types: edge fastenings that were also used on Carolingian bindings but in this period all come from the Germanic area, and 'long strap fastenings' that first appear on 'Romanesque' bindings. This latter group is the larger by 3 to 1. The long strap fastening became the preferred form of fastening and continued as such until the fifteenth

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[31] Six bindings that predate 1200 are described in Carlo Federici and Francesca Pascalicchio, "A census of Medieval Bookbindings: Early Examples," in *Ancient and Medieval Book Materials and Techniques*, ed. Marilena Maniaci and Paola F Munafo (Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1993), pp. 201-37.

[32] Dr Munafò has now left the Institute and her responsibilities for the Census have been taken on by Dr Nicoletti. An initial invitation for me to visit the Institute and consult their database has been withdrawn as the Director of the Institute is intent on making the datebase available on the internet 'e renderlo accessibile a tutti gli studiosi'. However, there is still no date by which such publication on the internet can be expected. As for the number of bindings dated to the thirteenth century, I am very sceptical that the number will be anything like 100.

[33] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 167.

[34] Or in one case with a quarter binding, L Borgia, ed., *Le Biccherne: Tavole Dipente Delle Magistrature Senesi (Secoli XIII-XVIII)* (Roma: Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, 1984), No 12.

[35] See Ibid.. Examining the dimensions of 37 covers dated between 1258 and 1402 shows that they are fairly consistent in size save for the 1280s and the 1340s when they become materially longer, ie more like a ledger format. Then, after 1355 they become squat.

century. In the overwhelming majority of examples of long strap fastenings, the strap is hinged from the upper cover. The few examples of the strap being hinged from the lower cover are all from the Germanic area. The strap itself usually consists of two layers of leather (coloured, seldom brown) with possibly a textile covering. The hasp is usually of bronze, may incorporate a hinge, and will often have an eye to attach a pull. Hasps may be decorated with geometric, floral or animal designs.[36]

A small minority of bindings show evidence of metal furnishings – bosses, corner pieces, title frames (*"fenestrae"*) and clips and rivets for chaining books.[37] The photographs in Schmidt-Künsemüller's survey show only one cover (no. 124) with metal corners and edges. There is an example of a *fenestra* and several covers have titles, although it looks as though many of these were added at a later date.

In terms of the overall structure of medieval books of the period up to 1300, the principal features that are relevant to this study were that: the cover boards did not overhang the pages of the book (or bookblock) but were flush with it; the spine might have tabs at top and bottom for the book's easier removal from storage chests; and the edges of the bookblock might be plain or decorated.[38]

The initial conclusions from looking at the literature on 'Romanesque' bindings is that the examples that survive provide too small a sample to give a reliable account of the appearances of bindings in the period. Furthermore, there is the suspicion that the examples that have survived are mostly of a particular type, i.e. bindings with multiple stamped decorations, which may reflect the particular interests of earlier collectors. There is, however, the prospect of a meaningful number of bindings surviving in Italy – the results of the large survey that was undertaken by the *Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro*. When this data is published, it may become possible to draw useful conclusions about the appearance of Italian books in the thirteenth century.

Bindings of the period after 1300: 'Gothic'
As stated above, when it comes to bookbinding, the 'Gothic' period is a three hundred year period from 1300 and this study is only directly interested in the first hundred years.

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[36] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, pp. 167-8.

[37] Ibid., pp. 168-9.

[38] Ibid., Chapter 8. and Greenfield, *ABC of Bookbinding: A Unique Glossary with over 700 Illustrations for Collectors and Librarians*, p. 93.

Although thousands of 'Gothic' bindings have survived, only a few examples are expected from the fourteenth century. There is no separate study of fourteenth century bindings and Italian histories of bookbinding commence with the fifteenth century.[39]

Szirmai studied 410 bindings from the 'Gothic' period in his study of Medieval bindings. Of this sample, about 80% come from Germany with small numbers from England, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria and Italy. It appears that he considered only two Italian bindings.[40] As for the centuries to which the bindings relate (where they can be dated) only twelve bindings date from the fourteenth century.[41]

Szirmai discusses in a note the prevalence of Germanic bindings and notes Goldschmidt's comment in 1928 that 'it would be easy to collect fifty Bavarian specimens for every one French monastic binding'. Indeed there are no French bindings in Szirmai's study (c.f. his work on Romanesque bindings where the majority were French). Some reasons have been suggested for the greater survival rates for German bindings, such as differences in economic wealth or degrees of destruction as compared with other countries.[42] However, such explanations are not compelling given the number of economic cycles that have occurred and the scale of European warfare during six centuries.

The small number of survivals from the fourteenth century is reflected in various published collections and exhibition catalogues. Dorothy Miner notes a single leather binding and one textile binding from the fourteenth century, both of which are French.[43] In Mirjam Foot's catalogue of the Henry Davis Gift of English Bindings, there is only one binding that predates 1400, and that is dated to about 1200.[44] In Howard Nixon's study of the Broxbourne Library, there are three bindings that predate 1400: a French binding from c. 1150, a Rhenish jewelled

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[39] Such as Tammaro de Marinis, *La Legatura Artistica in Italia* (Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 1960); Piccarda Quilici, *Legature dal quattrocento al novecento* (Rome: 1988).

[40] Not identified but the implication of the data presentation is that they post date 1400. One is almost certainly the fifteenth century binding in the Pierpoint Morgan Library collection that is referred to below. Szirmai studied bindings in collections in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands, England and the United States.

[41] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, Chapter 9 & p. 277, n. 8.

[42] Ibid., p. 277. In note 8. The reference to Goldschmidt is to E P Goldschmidt, *Gothic and Renaissance Bookbindings* (London: Ernest Benn, 1928). The earliest binding in Goldschmidt is dated 1455.

[43] Miner, ed., *The History of Bookbinding 525-1950 A.D.*

[44] Mirjam Foot, *The Henry Davis Gift* (London: The British Library, 1978, 1983).

binding from c. 1200, and an Italian miniature girdle book from the fourteenth century.[45] The Wormsley Library has three bindings that predate 1400: on *The Byland Bede* which is English and dated to 1150-75, on Zacharias of Besançon's *In unum ex quatuor* which is also English and dated to 1170-80, and a fourteenth century German cut-leather binding. The library's fourteenth century Franco-Italian manuscript, Gratian's *Decretals*, was rebound in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, the fate of nearly all surviving manuscripts of the period.[46] The Pierpoint Morgan Library has an Italian 'Treasure Binding' that is dated to about 1050 but no other Italian bindings earlier than a leather binding from Padua that is dated to after 1410. Their collection includes bindings from Germany, Austria, France and England together with examples of Persian and Egyptian work but only two of them are from the fourteenth century.[47]

The Riccardiana Library in Florence has a single binding from the fourteenth century, bound in plain boards with leather back.[48] **(Plate 16)**

The survey of Byzantine bindings in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana showed that twenty-one surviving Byzantine bindings are deemed to be fourteenth century.[49] The place of origin of these bindings is largely unknown and none are identified as having been made in Italy.[50]

The major survey of 'medieval' bindings in Italian libraries by the *Istituto centrale per la patologia del libro* has, according to Paola Munafò, found 'circa 600' bindings from the fourteenth century.[51] This is a substantial number and, if correct, could give a far better idea of the appearance of books in Italy of that period than had previously been thought possible.[52]

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[45] Howard M Nixon, *Broxbourne Library: Styles and Designs of Bookbindings from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Century* (London: Maggs Brothers, 1956).

[46] H George Fletcher, ed., *The Wormsley Library* (London: Maggs Bros, 2007). Catalogue numbers 3, 4 and 10.

[47] Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbinding, 400-1600* (New York and London: Pierpont Morgan Library, Oxford Universty Press, 1979).

[48] Ricc. 607. Rosanna Miriello, *Al primo sguardo… Legature riccardiane* (Florence: Edizione Polystampa, 2008), p.232.

[49] Federici et al., *Legature Bizantine Vaticane*, p. 10.

[50] The place of origin of 15 out of the 21 bindings is unknown. Of the rest, 1 comes from Constantinople, another from Greece, and 3 from Cyprus. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

[51] Private communication.

[52] See note 32 above.

The *tavolette di biccerne* of the fourteenth century exhibit clues that indicate that the Italian method of binding used three sewing stations, that uncovered wooden boards were used and that the upper cover commonly had a painted decoration. The *tavoletta* for 1402 in the Victoria & Albert Museum, although repaired, retains lacing holes on its reverse that indicates three sewing stations and underlines the ubiquity of this arrangement.[53] **(Plate 17)**

The analysis of Gothic bookbinding techniques and styles carried out by Szirmai was on a sample that is nearly all fifteenth and sixteenth century. While this may only have partial relevance for Italian bindings of the fourteenth century, some of the findings display anomalies that illustrate the difficulties in determining when particular techniques were introduced. One example is the decorative technique known as *cuir-ciselé*, which involved the cutting back of the leather and applying a decorative texture with a punch and chiselling hammer. Szirmai describes this as a style of decoration that was developed in the fifteenth century, and states that a few examples of this technique have come from Italy.[54] However in an article published in 1933, E P Goldschmidt draws attention to two fourteenth century examples of *cuir-ciselé* work on Hebrew manuscripts of German and Austrian origin, thereby demonstrating that the technique existed before the fifteenth century. Indeed, as Goldschmidt observes, the technique was used to decorate objects other than books, such as leather caskets, sword sheaths and bottles, and is found in examples from nearly every European country, so it seems probable that the technique had been in use for a long time prior to the fifteenth century, and the lack of surviving examples of Italian bindings with *cuir-ciselé* work from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries does not preclude the possibility that they did exist.[55]

A second example of the difficulty in dating techniques is the decoration of leather bindings with metal dies, called 'tooling'. Szirmai notes that 'blind tooling' continued to be widely used in the Gothic period, however the demands of greater production in the fifteenth century led to the introduction of rolls, blocks and panels to speed up and de-skill the process. He states that the earliest examples date from after 1450.[56] However, as will be seen later in this study, the capability to make and use these production techniques existed much

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[53] V & A Museum inv. no. 414-1892.

[54] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 241.

[55] E P Goldschmidt, "Some Cuir-Ciselê Bookbindings in English Libraries," *The Library* 13, no. 4 (1933): pp. 338-40.

[56] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 243.

earlier than the fifteenth century and the pictorial sources indicate that they were used in the fourteenth century.

Related to this is 'gold tooling', the technique whereby a design in gold leaf is applied to a leather cover using a metal tool.[57] It has long been accepted that gold-tooling was introduced in the 'Gothic' period but there has been much debate as to the 'when' and the 'how'. The usual account is that this was a Moorish invention and entered Italy from Spain through one of the main trading cities such as Naples or Venice in the fifteenth century.[58] There is, however, an example of a late twelfth century French binding that has gilt decoration, although it is unclear whether it is the result of gold tooling or blind tooling with the subsequent application of gold-leaf or paint.[59] Needham states that the assumption is that it is the latter and also suggests that it was an isolated example of this form of decoration and one that was not seen again until the fifteenth century. However in a note, Needham also recognises that these gilding techniques were familiar to the medieval illuminator[60] which raises the question of why these techniques were not adopted earlier for the decoration of bindings. In discussing a Neapolitan binding of about 1490, Needham states his opinion that gold tooling was first seen in Europe in about 1460, the technique having been imported from the Near East to Venice, and that Naples acquired the technique, either from Venice or independently from abroad, in about 1480.[61] Anthony Hobson also discusses the introduction of gold tooling and suggests that it was practised in Florence from the start of the fifteenth century although it took another 50 years before it was more widely adopted.[62] He also argues that it was in Padua that the technique was first properly exploited and that Spain acquired the knowledge from Italy.[63] Szirmai acknowledges that there is much uncertainty about the timing and method of the introduction of gold tooling but questions the accuracy

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[57] This technique is distinct from the gilding of leather, where gold leaf was applied to leather and burnished. This technique had existed since Roman times. See Michelle O'Malley, "A Pair of Little Gilded Shoes: Commission, Cost and Meaning in Renaissance Footwear," *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2010): p. 50; John W Waterer, *Spanish Leather* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), pp. 29-30.

[58] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, pp. 247-8.

[59] Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbinding, 400-1600*, pp. 61-64.

[60] Ibid., p.64, n.8.

[61] Ibid., p. 104.

[62] Anthony Hobson, *Humanists and Bookbinders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 30.

[63] Ibid., p. 58.

of Hobson's account.[64] This all suggests that the history of the introduction of gold tooling is as open a question as that relating to the appearance of bookbindings in the fourteenth century. Given that gold-leaf was used in panel painting and manuscript illumination, and as already noted, leather was gilded for items such as shoes, and that these techniques existed from before the thirteenth century, it is surprising that gold-tooling is thought not to have occurred prior to the fifteenth century. This interpretation of the evidence may be a consequence of a narrow dependence on surviving bindings and the disregard of other evidential sources. What is clear, however, is that the physical evidence does not preclude the use of gold tooling earlier than the fifteenth century and the pictorial evidence will show that the technique of gold-tooling was in use in Italy from the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

Turning to the book fastenings, Szirmai states that there are two categories of fastening in use: the common long strap fastening that has already been discussed and, from about 1400, the hook-clasp fastening. In his survey, all the Italian examples employ a hook-clasp fastening that closes on the lower cover, and he includes data from a survey by Dürrfeld[65] that again shows that all the Italian bindings use a hook-clasp and that the clear majority close on the lower cover (unlike German bindings which usually close on the upper cover). Szirmai also notes that fifteenth century clasps tended to be quite plain but in the sixteenth century there were variations in the design and decoration of clasps and suggests that these reflect regional preferences.[66]

Szirmai suggests that protective furnishings were uncommon and their presence depended 'in part on the contents and the dimensions of the book and the particular circumstances of its use and storage'.[67] The main types of furnishing were bosses, corner pieces, shoes, heels, *fenestrae*, edge strips and skids.

As for the overall structure of the book, the cover boards became extended beyond the edges of the bookblock; backs became more rounded and pronounced; edges were plain or decorated. However, it is unclear when these features became apparent.

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[64] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 247.

[65] This was an MA thesis at the School of Art History, Camberwell College of Arts.

[66] Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, pp. 251-62.

[67] Ibid., p. 263.

Summary of current knowledge

The following table seeks to summarise the information that is drawn from the literature.

Details that would not be obvious in an image of a book, such as the type of skin used on a cover or the sewing patterns, have not been included, nor aspects which are unchanging throughout the period, such as the range of colours.

The data has been tabulated over three centuries to reflect the way past studies have been organised. However, it is only the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that are relevant to this study.

Summary of current knowledge about details of bindings in Italy derived from non-pictorial evidence			
	Thirteenth Century	Fourteenth Century	Fifteenth Century
Shape of Boards	Flat, with or without bevel edges	Either flat, with or without bevel edges, or cushion bevels.	Simple or complex bevel patterns.
Backs	Flat backs in early thirteenth century. Backs become more rounded with projecting bands.	More rounded backs.	Well rounded backs.
Spine bands	The number of spine bands increase throughout this period to peak at about 1400.		Reduction in number of bands.
Projection of boards ("Square")	Cover flush with book-block.	Cover boards gradually extended beyond the book-block.	Majority of covers project beyond book-block.
Tabs	Up to c.1240. No tabs thereafter.	No tabs	No tabs
Bosses	Lower cover only. Made of sheet metal or cast and turned in a lathe. Usually bronze.	Uncommon. Used for protection rather than decoration.	Uncommon
Fastenings	Long strap fastening secured on the upper cover and fitting on a peg on the lower cover. The strap is usually coloured, seldom brown. The hasp is usually of bronze, may incorporate a hinge, and will often have an eye to attach a pull. Hasps may be decorated with geometric, floral or animal designs. Initially two side straps. Later, additional straps at top and bottom. The position of the peg is initially in the centre of the cover but then shifts part way towards the edge.		Hook-clasp fastening closing on the lower cover. Clasps being plain.
Decoration	Blind tooling on cover using individual stamps. Edge of book-block may be decorated.		*Cuir-ciselé* decoration. Blind tooling using rolls, blocks and panels from about 1450. Gold tooling from about 1460.
Title	Lower cover	Upper cover?	Upper cover
Other furnishings	Corner pieces, title frames, chain clips.	Uncommon	Uncommon

While the table summarises the interpretations of a chronology of bookbindings by past scholars, it will be apparent from the foregoing that these interpretations are by no means certain. To illustrate the difficulties that arise when considering a binding in relation to the conclusions suggested by the literature, I offer the case of an Italian manuscript in the collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.[1] Marston MS 40 **(Plate 18)** is a copy of the *Derivationes* by Uguccione of Pisa, an alphabetical lexicon in Latin of words and names appearing in the Bible and Classical works. The original text was composed in c.1200 (Uguccione died in about 1210) but this manuscript is in two parts: Part II was written in the middle of the thirteenth century while Part I was added in the fourteenth century, when it is thought that the two parts were bound together, the earlier work being trimmed, as there is a loss of some marginal notes. The binding appears to be original and it is therefore thought also to date from the fourteenth century (although might include elements of the thirteenth century binding). It will be appreciated from the above review that this manuscript with its binding is potentially a precious survivor. However, as will be seen, it is hard to reconcile the discernible features of the binding to the previous interpretation of the history of book-binding.

The binding is damaged.[2] Examination shows that it originally had two side straps, plus one at the top and one at the foot. They would have been short straps, the same colour as the cover, attached to the upper cover and fastening on to edge-mounted clips on the lower cover. **(Plate 18a)** The clips are made of what looks like a thin brass plate. They are five sided like a kite, held with three rivets. There is a fourth, larger rivet at the tip which is more decorative than functional. The two side clips are decorated with a faint zig-zag pattern. The other two clips are plain. The use of short straps should suggest a binding of the fifteenth century and the shape of the clips (albeit not their decoration) is similar to that on a binding in Naples that is dated 1458.[3]

The construction seems to be of beech boards, with a brown leather spine covering, white end bands, and the boards and spine covered with pink leather. There are four spine bands. The lower cover has evidence of five round bosses, one at each corner and one in the middle. A simple tooled line joins the bosses. In the tooled line there is a lighter colour in places but I

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[1] I spent two days examining manuscripts in this collection in April 2009.

[2] Dimensions: 38.6 x 23.6 x 6.5 cms excluding the thickness of the spine. With the spine the width is 24.2 cms. The book block appears to be 37.5 x 23.5 cms. The cover thickness is approx10mm. There are 169 folios.

[3] See Szirmai, *The Archaelogy of Book Binding*, p. 262.

do not think that it was originally coloured. There is no sign of other decoration on the lower cover. The upper cover is decorated in the same way: five bosses and connecting tooled lines. The number of spine bands and use of bosses would suggest a late thirteenth or early fourteenth century binding.

The back is decorated with a set of tooled lines in a large diagonal movement along the back. There are two gold lines. The use of gold tooling would suggest a date later than 1460.

The projection of the cover to the book block is 6mm at the top and 7mm at the bottom. This is taken from the last fully scribed page in the book against the lower cover as representative of the whole. Such a degree of 'square' suggests the binding dates to the late fourteenth century or fifteenth century.

The consequence of this analysis is that one cannot be confident in dating the binding. The balance of the above deductions is that Marston MS 40 is not a fourteenth century binding but mid to late fifteenth century. However, current knowledge about Italian bookbinding of the thirteenth and fourteenth century is so rudimentary, because it is so dependent on the tiny number of surviving manuscripts in original bindings, as to make any attempt at dating a binding subject to very wide margins of error.

In this context, the availability of a far larger number of images of books in Italian art of the thirteenth and fourteenth century offers an invaluable pictorial resource that can provide information about the books of that period. The next part of this chapter considers the approach to be followed in using what Eike Barbara Dürrfeld defined as these 'pictorial sources'.

Pictorial evidence for the appeance of book covers and their decoration

This chapter uses the close study of 125 images of books in Italian religious paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as pictorial evidence of the appearance of book covers and their decoration in those centuries.[1] Of these images, ninty are dated to the hundred years from 1250 to 1350. The chapter commences by considering the issues about the reliability of the pictorial evidence given the changes that were taking place in the style of painting in the period. The chapter continues with a consideration of the individual features of book covers and their decoration as derived from the pictorial evidence. The results are tabulated. Finally, for a limited number of artists, the manner in which they portray books is examined with the object of detecting consistent characteristics. The information presented in this chapter contributes to our knowledge about the appearance of books in the period and provides a basis for interpreting images of books in the following case studies.

Images of books: issues of realism and stylistic development.

If images in paintings are to provide useful information about books, it is a necessary precondition to have a view of the degree to which paintings give a reliable depiction of the original subject matter. The two examples given above[2] from the outer quartiles of the period covered in this study, the panel *Majestas Domini* of 1215 and the *St John Gualbert* altarpiece of 1380, have already illustrated some of the problems.

While there is usually no problem in identifying which objects in paintings are representing books, there is a problem in deciding to what extent images are descriptive and another in determining which images are sufficiently naturalistic and like the 'real thing' to be reliable

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[1] The images are listed in Appendix 1 with data fields on binding details, decorative details and on the position and orientation of each book.

[2] Pages 20 and 21.

sources of data.[3] Furthermore, we must take into account the fact that the data may not relate to contemporary books but to a perception of what books looked like at an earlier date. In tackling these problems one can take advantage of the numerous studies that have been undertaken on the development of naturalism in the late medieval period and its underlying causes. [4] It is clear from these that, in contrast to what Michael Camille refers to as our 'post-Cartesian' mind set, the medieval mind favoured continuity over originality and that the making of images relied heavily on favoured precedents and exemplars.[5] Notable shifts towards verisimilitude appear to have occurred in the opening years of the thirteenth century and again from about 1250 onwards. However, such moves were not consistent across location, media or subject matter. Furthermore, it is possible that once an artist acquired a skill in rendering objects naturalistically, he may on occasion have chosen to use a non-naturalistic representation and deliberately reverted to an apparently clumsy form.[6]

The general shifts to verisimilitude in depicting figures and surroundings suggest that it should be possible to see a change during the thirteenth century in the representations of books from a form that was realistic but symbolic to a form that exhibited greater naturalism. The starting point for this is to consider some examples of twelfth century works of art.

Images of books in the twelfth century included many representing 'treasure bindings', and examples can be seen in the apse mosaic at Santa Maria in Trastevere. **(Plate 6)** This dates to

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[3] In this thesis I am using the meanings of the words "realistic", "naturalistic" and "descriptive" as defined by Jean Givens. Thus "realistic" means that the image refers to an identifiable real-world object, "naturalistic" means that the image seeks to portray an object as it might be seen by the human eye, and "descriptive" means that the image conveys information about the object. So, an image might not be naturalistic but still descriptive. See Jean A Givens, *Observation and Image-making in Gothic Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 101-2.

[4] Among the works that I have consulted on this subject are Otto Pächt, "Early Italian Nature Studies and the Early Calendar Landscape," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13, no. 1/2 (1950)., E H Gombrich, *Art & Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Fifth ed. (London: Phaidon, 1977)., Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)., Madeline H Caviness, ""The Simple Perception of Matter" and the Representation of Narrative, ca. 1180-1280," *Gesta* 30, no. 1 (1991)., Jonathan J G Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)., Michael Camille, "The Eye in the Text: Vision in the Illuminated Manuscripts of the Latin Aristotle," *Micrologus* 6 (1998)., Givens, *Observation and Image-making in Gothic Art*., Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[5] Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art*, p. 42.

[6] I am grateful to Dr Gervaise Rosser of Oxford University who aired this possibility when discussing the work of Duccio at a *Giotto's Circle* seminar at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

about 1140 and was commissioned by Pope Innocent II. Next to Saint Peter are shown three martyrs from the Roman era, Popes Cornelius and Julius and Bishop Calepodius. Each of the martyrs is holding a bulky gospel book, the edges marked with lines to show folios or gatherings, and crossed by two bands that might indicate sewing bands or possibly strap fastening, albeit with no details of the attachments. A variety of cover designs are shown that include representations of gold-work and precious stones. While each image clearly and successfully indicates what they represent, none of them looks life-like and the details are uncertain.

A less luxurious medieval binding can be seen in an illumination from a Sacramentary in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.[7] This manuscript was made in Florence for a Pisan client in the second half of the twelfth century.[8] **(Plate 19)** Christ's book is shown as being bulky, with faint lines on the edges to indicate folios or gatherings and two dark lines denoting either sewing bands or strap fastenings. (There appears to be a similar mark on the top edge which would push the explanation towards the lines being straps.) The cover has a brown colour (possibly indicating a leather binding) with intricate lines suggesting elaborate decoration, perhaps blind-tool work or embroidery. Again, while it is clear what it is, the execution of the image is clumsy with confused perspective. It does not look natural.

Simple forms of representation can also be seen in artist's pattern books. One example is a single bifolio sheet in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana dated to around 1200 or a little before, with a series of drawings on both sides.[9] **(Plates 20a-d)** The drawings include eleven books and all of them are of a similar design. They are thick, in some cases with folio edges indicated with lines; strap fastenings are shown, some with decoration, but the straps themselves are dysfunctionally askew, placed at an angle to the corner-line of the book block; and the covers are shown with simple corner bosses and a central diamond design. This style of portraying a book is like a shorthand; it conveys a simple meaning that these are books of substance (they are thick) and of value (they are both bound and decorated) and if they are

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[7] MSS m737, f. 86.

[8] The sacramentary was written and illuminated in Florence, c. 1150-1160. At the front of the manuscript is a calendar, of Pisan origin and dated to about 1180, for use in the Church of San Salvatore in Ponte at Pisa. Pierpoint Morgan Library Catalogue entry for MS M.737.

[9] Vat. Lat 1976, fols. Ir-IIv. One bifolio, 294 x 206 mm. See Robert W Scheller, *Exemplum: Model Book Drawings and the Practice of Artist Transmission in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), Cat. no. 9., D J A Ross, "A Late Twelfth-Century Artist's Pattern-Sheet," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25, no. 1/2 (1962): pp. 119-28.

held by a saint or prophet then they must surely be a Gospel Book or something similar. Although the twelve figures on one side of the bifolio are marked with the names of the Minor Prophets, it is suggested by Ross that these models could equally be used for Evangelists, Apostles and other figures.[10] The range of poses is instructive, especially the ways that books are held: books are held by the spine, cradled in the hand, held with a covered hand, clutched to the body or waved in the air. Furthermore, there is a range of gestures, some of which clearly relate to the held book. Examining the drawings in detail provides some information on the construction and appearance of books:

> Several of the books have lines that indicate one or two long strap fastenings;

> The hasps, and thus the pegs on which the hasps would fix, are depicted on the centre line of the cover. There is no consistency as to which cover the straps are attached;

> The opposite edge from that held by the strap fastenings must be the spine and has two pairs of parallel lines that must indicate sewing bands. Thus the bindings do not have a back and potentially are uncovered boards; and

> The books are held at an angle so that the back-edge is visible. It does not seem to matter whether the upper or lower cover of the book is shown to the viewer.

A second example of a drawing of a book is found in a parchment roll in the S. Eusebia Archivio Capitolare in Vercelli which dates to the early thirteenth century.[11] The drawings are essentially specimen narrative scenes of the lives of Saints Peter and Paul. The only significant appearance of books is in the scene showing the twelve apostles, where St Peter and several others hold books. **(Plate 21)** The books themselves are, again, shown as bulky objects with cover decoration but otherwise devoid of detail.

These examples of twelfth century and early thirteenth century works of art and pattern books demonstrate that images of books were used in a symbolic way. They were realistic, in that they were clearly identifiable as books, but they were not naturalistic. The information such images provide is limited: books were bound, they could have one or more strap fastenings and they might be decorated. They provide a starting point for examining images

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[10] Ross, "A Late Twelfth-Century Artist's Pattern-Sheet," p. 122.

[11] The total size is 1.80 x 0.60 m. There are 18 drawings. See Scheller, *Exemplum: Model Book Drawings and the Practice of Artist Transmission in the Middle Ages*, Cat. no. 11.

of the thirteenth century for signs of a change to a greater naturalism and hence more detailed information.

A basic test as to whether an image is persuasively naturalistic is whether it satisfactorily delivers an impression of depth that conveys the sense of a three-dimensional object. Early images of books failed to do this. They showed the book-cover nearest the viewer being smaller than the cover further away or fail to make sewing bands or fastening straps parallel, which we know is the case with real books. **(Plate 22a)** However, as might be expected, sculpture readily conveys the three-dimensionality of the object and therefore was the earliest form of Western art that did achieve a persuasive naturalism. A second test is the amount of detail shown, a measure of how much the artist has worked from first-hand knowledge.[12]

The pulpit in the Duomo in Siena, dated 1265-8 and made by Nicola Pisano and his workshop, includes a figure of a deacon immediately below the Eagle lectern.[13] **(Plate 23)** This figure holds a book with a great deal of detail. **(Plate 23a)** The upper cover is facing the viewer and probably portrays a treasure binding, a repeated pattern around the edge of the cover within which there are a number of circles and large ovals. Presumably this is indicative of inlaid coloured glass or stones, with a central design of a cross. The edges of the cover are not bevelled. To the left of the cover is clearly the spine with the gatherings visible and two bands with a chevron pattern that indicate a stitch called 'linked sewing'. There is a narrow headband and one assumes the presence of a similar tailband. In conjunction with the earlier pictorial evidence, this sculpture makes it clear that at least one practice of Italian book-binding was to omit a back. This is evident because the spine of the book-block, and thus the edge of the gatherings, were left exposed by the sculptor. Furthermore, just a pair of sewing stations were used, from which it can be surmised that the bindings were not strong. If this sculpture is intended to represent a real book, the detail suggests why there are so few surviving bindings from the period. There are two long strap fastenings with hinged hasps and eyes. The hasps, and therefore the pins, lie short of the middle of the cover. The straps are attached to the lower cover and the pins are on the upper cover. For what is believed to be a treasure binding, this arrangement seems strange as the hasps interfere with a

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[12] '...the key distinction is the quality of descriptiveness, of being information laden, for such visual information is discovered, not invented.' Givens, *Observation and Image-making in Gothic Art*, p. 172.

[13] There is a second figure holding a similar book on the diametrically opposite corner. A third book is held by a child (being taught to read?) in the group at the base of the central column.

symmetrical decoration on the cover. One would expect the straps to be attached to the edge of the upper cover and the pins on the back. So this representation is probably of a real book, one that possibly had particularly splendid hasps.

Of a similar date to the Siena pulpit is the *Arca di San Domenico* in the church of San Domenico in Bologna. This was made by Nicola Pisano with the assistance of Arnolfo di Cambio. **(Plate 24)**Three of the corner figures hold books, two of which are original. **(Plates 24a-d)** These books are not represented as treasure bindings. They would appear to be representations of simple bindings with unbevelled wooden boards. In both cases there are two sewing stations and the lacing onto the cover boards is shown. One book has two long strap fastenings, the other three. Large, round, hinged hasps with eyes are a feature on both books. In one case the upper cover is shown and in the other the lower cover is shown. This demonstrates a lack of consistency in the positioning of the fastenings. As was the case on the Siena pulpit, the position of the pins is off-centre. One of the books has an intricate decoration based on a diamond pattern, but there are no bosses or other furniture visible.

These examples show that, by the 1260s, sculptors were producing images of books that were naturalistic and contained valuable information about the appearance of real books. Paintings of the same decade had not yet achieved the same degree of naturalism. For example the panel of St Francis by Margarito d'Arezzo **(Plate 25)** presents a confused perspective for the book, although the detail of the cover is interesting – a complex design involving diamonds. But a number of pictures in the following decade achieve plausible naturalism in their images of books.

A particularly apt example is the gabled dossal of the *Madonna and Child with Sts Francis, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalen* by Guido da Siena.[14] **(Plate 26)** Saints John the Evangelist and Francis hold books. At first sight these books look like the symbolic forms seen in earlier paintings but the book held by Saint John is plausibly proportioned and the strap lines on the edge are correctly parallel with the top of the edge. These books were originally decorated with glass 'jewels' as if they were 'treasure bindings'. The book held by St Francis is curiously angled. **(Plate 26a)** This is an attempt to portray an open book – one that has been opened right back on to its spine, to the point that the spine

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[14] It carries part of an inscription that indicates a date between 1270 and 1279.

itself is hidden.[15] The page edges are crudely indicated in blue, the straps are in black with fastening loops just visible, but they are implausibly short for the perceived thickness of the book. The binding is red and shows a thin, branching floral pattern around the empty holes where the glass jewels would have been.

This far, the altarpiece could be said to demonstrate a greater consciousness of compositional design, a greater care in using hieratic symbols. However, there is a nice detail that suggests the artist was also seeking a naturalistic image for the books. At the top of the back-edge of the book held by Francis is a small double circle in two tones of blue. This appears to be a 'tab endband', characteristic of Romanesque bindings and incorporated to facilitate the drawing of a book out of its storage box or *cassone.* Furthermore, it is likely that the tab would have a semi-circular outline which, when the back-edge was folded back on itself, would appear circular. This detail suggests a profound step towards greater realism for the images of the books, one that has taken place ahead of the treatment of the rest of the composition, which follows traditional forms.

Development is evident in the panel of *St Luke* in the Uffizi. **(Plate 27)** Dated to around 1280, it is attributed to the Master of the Magdalen. While the shape of the book is still confused (particularly the bottom of the book), there is a clear attempt to make some of the details realistic. The lines indicating the edges of the pages are subtly done, the thickness of the lower cover (that being the cover facing the viewer) is indicated, the strap fastenings clearly bend over the edge of that cover, the back is shown with a thin black line, and the lower cover is decorated with a repeated stamp mark. While the image of St Luke retains a traditional iconic appearance, the book has been portrayed with realism.

A further development of naturalism is seen in the *St Francis vita* panel that dates from about 1280 and is attributed to Guido de Graziano.[16] **(Plate 28)** The central figure of St Francis is depicted standing, displaying the stigmata. He holds a closed book in his left hand, while in

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[15] It is a curious oddity that the back-edge of books in thirteenth century paintings is hardly ever shown. Most images have the book orientated so that the front-edge is visible, not the back-edge. In this case the open book has been opened to such an extent that the back-edge is again not visible (and probably damaging the binding!)

[16] *St Francis and Stories from his Life*, 237 x 113 cms, in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, previously in the church of S. Francesco, Colle Val d'Elsa. The attribution was peviously given as 'A follower of Guido da Siena'. William R Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi* (Firenze: Leo S Olschki Editore (with University of Western Australia), 1999), p. 209; William R Cook, "The St. Francis Dossal in Siena: An important interpretation of the Life of Francis of Assisi," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 87 (1994): pp. 3-20; James H Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p.107; Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: i dipinti dal XII al XV secolo* (Genova: Sagep Editrice, 1977), p. 39.

his right hand he holds a cross. On the left and right are eight scenes from his life, while in the gable is a now largely obscured bust of Christ with eight angels. The style of painting visible in the scenes is still traditional, lacking compositional depth, but the central figure of St Francis shows some life-like qualities.[17] However the significance of this panel is the degree of realism the artist has given the book. **(Plate 28a)** It is held with the front of the book towards the viewer, whereas in the earlier paintings it is the lower cover that is visible. The dimensions of the book make it look more elongated than usual, edging towards a depiction of an 'agenda format' that was in use in the twelfth century. The front edges of the pages are suggested by faint lines rather than the heavy ruled lines depicted in earlier representations. Two black straps are visible (indicating, by their placement, three in total), with what appears to be an edge fastening and a leather pull. The cover is red and, instead of the crude decorations seen earlier, there is an intricate floral design in black within a rectangular border of fine lines. At the centre is a four-leaf design suggesting the shape of a cross, within a diamond shape from whose corners flow the floral branches. One interpretation is that this looks like a fine leather bound book that has been either painted with the design or, more likely, been blind tooled. Alternatively, given the lack of bosses and the use of an edge fastening, this could be a book bound between thin boards covered in silk brocade.[18] Either way, this is a representation of a real book, not one that is symbolic of a book or a design copied from a pattern book. Furthermore, this is an image of a book that is recognisably valuable.

These examples are representative of surviving images of books. They indicate that there was a shift in the decade around 1275 to a representation of books that was more naturalistic, with greater detail than was depicted earlier. It is possible that such a change started in advance of the move to greater realism in human features, although that followed quickly. While, as has been shown, some information about real books can be obtained from pictures prior to 1270 (and certainly from sculpture), from about this date onwards more reliable information is available from images of books in pictures. For the remainder of the thirteenth century and throughout the fourteenth century there was a steady improvement in the

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[17] Stubblebine notes the soft foldings of the saint's habit and stylistic features that are associated with 'a newer style of painting'. Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, p. 107.

[18] It appears to be a feature of bookbindings in the thirteenth and fourteenth century that cloth binding was sometimes used in place of leather, another possible explanation for the comparative lack of surviving examples of bindings from the period, whereas in the twelfth century leather bindings were used and a number have survived.

naturalistic rendering of images but there was no second step-change in the way books were depicted.

Images of books: using pictorial sources to derive information on the appearance of books.

In this section I will seek to develop an analysis of the principal external features of Italian books in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from what is shown in images of books of that period. The source material for this analysis is the sample list of 125 images of books set out in Appendix 1 ("the Sample"). For each image there is data on observable details of the book, its orientation and the manner in which it is displayed.

As previously stated, after about 1275, a growing number of images of books were more or less naturalistic and contained accurate clues of what real books looked like. Clearly that was not always the case, but if pictorial evidence can be gathered from several pictorial sources then our confidence in the derived information will be increased. One of the problems with this methodology is the dating of works of art. Eike Dürrfeld lays stress on using dated pictorial sources so as to 'determine the *terminus ad quem* for the appearance of new techniques'[19] but the reality is that most works of medieval art are not precisely dated and there is often uncertainty as to who the artist was and where the work was originally sited. Nor would it have been the case that a particular binding technique was adopted universally at a single point in history. The number of locations and craftsmen involved in bookbinding and decoration must have been large and new techniques were probably adopted gradually while old techniques continued to be used. Accordingly, the use of works of art that are dated to a range of up to 10 years, i.e. a decade, gives sufficient accuracy for this exercise.

Another problem is the degree to which the artists illustrated what they saw. There is no reason to doubt that artists were familiar with books as objects and an artist's training would make him note the external details. The working assumption is that when rendering an image of a book, artists would have added sufficient accurate detail to make the image convincing and appropriate. But that did not necessarily mean the image was of a contemporary book: if the composition contained an historical narrative, it may have been

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[19] Dürrfeld, "Terra Incognita: Towards a Historiography of Book Fastenings and Book Furniture," p. 309.

more appropriate to paint an image of an old style of binding. Furthermore, an artist may have developed a particular way of painting an image of a book that might be repeated many times during the artist's working life. Thus, that image might reflect a real book made a decade or more earlier. Therefore, in considering the pictorial evidence, the images of books need to be considered in their compositional context and with the recognition that the detail in the image probably lags behind that of a real book.

My strategy in this section is to consider in turn the individual features of books and to plot any changes to those features across the two centuries. The order in which these features will be considered broadly follows the sequence used by Pollard,[20] with the addition of decorative features, including the types of tooling.

Commencing with sewing and lacing, details will only be apparent in images if they are visible on the books themselves. Binding structures would, by the fourteenth century, be hidden by the back and board covers and only details such as spine bands would give a clue as to how a book was assembled. Even in bindings using uncovered wooden boards, the lacing holes and channels could be concealed with gesso so as to provide a smooth surface for decoration.[21] It is apparent from images, however, that many books in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were bound in uncovered boards which left the back-edge visible, and thus some details of the sewing stations, and of the lacing, would be visible on the outside of the boards. Examples of such binding have already been discussed: the drawings in the artist pattern books and the sculptures by Nicola Pisano. Two of the sculptures on the *Arca di San Domenico* show the 'V' shape of the lacing, where the sewing support is attached to the board. This 'V' shape is characteristic of the Carolingian system of binding that, according to Federici and Pascalicchio, was 'used in Italy, throughout the twelfth century, and perhaps a bit beyond'.[22] The sculpted books suggest that the Carolingian binding was certainly known and recognised for most of the thirteenth century.

The *Dossal of St Francis* by Bonaventura Berlinghieri at Pescia (1235) shows St Francis holding a book. **(Plate 9)** While the orientation of the book can be questioned, from the way the other four books in the surrounding scenes are portrayed, it is probable that Francis's book is presented with the upper cover towards the viewer and that the back edge is visible.

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[20] Pollard, "Describing Medieval Bookbindings," pp. 50-65.

[21] The *Tavilette di Biccherna* are an example of this.

[22] Federici and Pascalicchio, "A census of Medieval Bookbindings: Early Examples," p. 209-10.

Like the earlier examples, this shows just two sewing stations. A pair of sewing stations is also visible on the book held by St Anthony depicted on the archivolts of the upper church at Assisi (c.1290, destroyed in the 1997 earthquake).[23] **(Plate 29a)** Therefore, the pictorial evidence indicates that just two sewing stations was regarded as a normal binding structure.

Turning to the shape of the boards used for book-binding, the evidence from the images is that, throughout the period of study, most boards were flat. In only three cases in the Sample is there a possibility of a bevel edge. There is no evidence that cushion bevels were used, although that subtlety would be difficult either to paint or to observe. The major exception to this uniformity is the appearance of 'panel mouldings', in which boards have a raised outer edge effectively framing the inner part of the board, making it appear panelled. (See Fig 1) In the Sample there are 16 examples of images of books with panel mouldings The earliest painted example is from the archivolts of the upper church at Assisi, where both St Anthony and St Lawrence hold books with the relief of the panel moulding shown. **(Plates 29a and b)** This shape is also seen on the book held by St John the Evangelist in the *Maestà* by Duccio (c.1308-11). **(Plate 31a)**
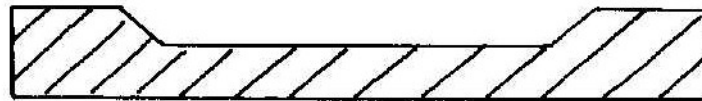
Fig 1

A development of this shape is seen in the book held by King David in Duccio's *Polyptych No 47- Madonna and Child with Saints* (c.1311-18) **(Plate 32)** which appears to show a second rim framing the panel, as in Fig 2.

Fig 2

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[23] These frescoes are ascribed by some to Giotto and his workshop.

There is a similar evolution in the work of Ugolino di Nerio. In the *Clark Heptatych* (c. 1317) the books held by five saints show a cross-section like that in Fig 1. **(Plates 33a-e)** In the slightly later panel of *St Thomas* in the Berenson Collection (c.1320) the cross-section has developed a raised central surface, as in Fig 3. **(Plate 34a)** This shape is also visible in the *Cleveland Polyptych* (c.1322) with the books held by Saints Francis and James. **(Plate 35a and b)**

Fig 3

Panel Mouldings can be seen as a reference to a certain type of Treasure binding that framed a central devotional object, a classic example of which is the *Milan Book Cover*.[24] **(Plate 36)** It was a form of ornamentation that would set a book apart from one with flat boards, even if that had a painted decoration such as a *Tavolette di Bicherna*.

The significance for this study is that boards with panel mouldings could not feasibly be covered, either in leather or fabric. Even for an important Gospel book or Bible, these bindings used uncovered wooden boards, presumably with the lacing concealed within the thickness of the board, which were carved, painted and decorated, and that could include gilding or silvering. This interpretation accords with the presence of many books bound in uncovered wooden boards in the Papal Library, as is attested by the Inventory of 1369.[25]

The question therefore arises as to whether bindings of uncovered boards or of leather-covered boards and backs dominated in the thirteenth century and, if the former, at what point was there a transition to the leather bindings that the pictorial sources indicate were dominant by the second half of the fourteenth century. Distinguishing leather bindings from painted boards in images is difficult and, in the absence of a clue such as a panel moulding, depends on being able to see a spine or back. Given the way books are orientated in most

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[24] *Milan Book Cover*, Second half of the 5th century, Ivory with silver-gilt and garnets, Northern Italy, Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano e del Museo del Duomo, Milan.

[25] See discussion on page 24.

images so as to show the fore-edge rather than the back-edge,[26] this often depends on being able to see the top of the back-edge (where the headband might be) for evidence of a back. There is no clear visual evidence for the presence of a back in the thirteenth century. That does not exclude the possibility of real books with full or partial leather bindings, but it is a statement of how books were perceived.[27] It retains the possibility of 'back-less' bindings where the boards are individually covered in leather or fabric. Alternatively, it is quite possible that decorated book boards were prepared with a covering of gesso, as were the *Tavolette di Bicherna*.[28] Gesso would facilitate the concealment of lacing and could provide a basis for the formation of panel mouldings as *gesso relieve.*

A number of thirteenth century images (there are six in the Sample) suggest a book that has been covered in fabric. One good example is the book held by St Francis in the *Dossal of St Francis* by Guido di Graziano. **(Plate 28)** The cover design is improbable as a product of die stamping and is more likely to represent embroidery. The position of the pins, at the very edge of the board, is consistent with a fabric cover.

The earliest images that show the back of a book (that is a spine that is covered) date to about 1300 and are by Giotto. In the *Badia Polyptych* (c.1302) both St Nicholas and St Peter hold books where the back is visible. **(Plates 37a and b)** The *Figure of a Franciscan* in the Berenson Collection (c.1300) also shows a book with a back.[29] **(Plate 38)** The date of the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* is open to dispute (see Chapter 2) but this too has books with backs, for example, that held by St Paul. **(Plate 39f)**

As these examples demonstrate, from the early decades of the fourteenth century there are images of both 'backed' and 'backless' books. In the Sample, approximately one-third of images of books in the period 1300 to 1320 had backs. Some artists, such as Duccio and Ugolino di Nerio, seem only to paint backless books while others, such as Simone Martini

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[26] There are at least two reasons for this practice: the fore-edge may have been seen as appropriate as it is the 'door' to sacred texts that lie within; more prosaically, the fore-edge with the strap fastenings and their colourful hasps and pulls would have been more attractive than the back-edge with its sewing stations.

[27] The *tavoletta di biccherna* for 1291 is evidence of a quarter-bound book. See **Plate 15**.

[28] See Ronald W Lightbrown, "The Tavolette di Biccherna of Siena," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2, no. 7 (1963): p. 296.

[29] The attribution is tentative. As for the date, the Berenson Collection have it as 1285 on the advice of Carl Brandon Strehlke but this seems too early.

and Niccolo di Segna, include backed books in their pictures. As the century continues, the visual evidence of books with backs, and thus fully bound in leather, grows.[30]

The conclusion to be drawn from this material is that bindings with uncovered wooden boards were prevalent in the thirteenth century but that this format was steadily replaced by leather binding from around the turn of the century and that this new format was dominant by the mid fourteenth century.

There are only a limited number of pictures that offer evidence of spine bands. However, a very consistent interpretation emerges from them. Pictures by Giotto, Simone Martini, Marco di Banco and Jacopo di Cione all show three spine bands, thereby indicating that three sewing stations were the norm throughout the fourteenth century. **(Plates 39f, 30a, 41 and 1a)** As previously discussed, the *Tavolette di Bicherna* consistently show evidence of three sewing stations. A possible exception to this interpretation is suggested by the image of the book held by St Lawrence in Orcagna's *Strozzi Altarpiece.* **(Plate 42a)** There are signs of damage to that part of the painting and the Saint's hand covers part of the back but the location of the upper band suggests a book with only two spine bands. However, as the overall design of the back has a coffered appearance, the horizontal bands may simply be decorative and unrelated to evidence of sewing.

As discussed above, the evidence from thirteenth century images of books without backs is that a binding with two sewing stations was the norm. It appears that, early in the fourteenth century, this changed to a three sewing station format. While an improvement, such an arrangement was still structurally vulnerable to wear and breakage and probably contributed to the lack of surviving books from the period.

While uncovered wooden boards remained the dominant binding format, it is to be expected that the book block would be cut flush with the boards and there is no evidence to the contrary in thirteenth century images. During the fourteenth century, however, there are a number of examples where the boards are larger than the bookblock and an overhang ("square") is visible. However, these examples are the minority. In most of the images there is no apparent square. Whether this reflects reality or is the result of an artists' convention or shorthand is hard to judge.

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[30] In the Sample, there are no images of books from the period 1330 to 1350 that show evidence of a back-less binding and only four from later in the century.

An early example of a book with a square is Pietro Lorenzetti's *Triptych* in the Museo Horne which is dated to about 1315. **(Plate 43a)** The book held by St Benedict clearly shows a marked square for the upper cover. There is another interesting feature contained in this image in that the book has a panel moulding, which indicates a binding with boards and not leather. This combination of features suggests the artist is conflating aspects of different books so as to derive something special.

In the *Polyptych No 29/32* by the Maestro di Città di Castello (c.1320)[31], the book held by St Anthony Abbot[32] again suggests that there is a square. **(Plate 44a)** Later artists who paint books with squares include Giovanni di Nicola and Paolo di Giovanni Fei.

Thus, there is evidence that books with squares existed in the fourteenth century but it is also apparent that such a feature was either not sufficiently prevalent or pronounced to make it an expected feature of an image of a book, i.e. its absence, which might suggest an old fashioned or obsolete format, was not an issue among painters.

The only example from the period of study of an image of a book with a tab is that depicted on the gabled dossal of the *Madonna and Child with Saints* by Guido da Siena in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena.[33] **(Plate 26)** This might suggest that the use of tabs continued later than the end date of the 1240s, as suggested in the literature, or the artist has chosen to portray an older Treasure binding.

Moving on to book furniture, we commence with bosses and studs. The purpose of bosses was to protect the book as well as to decorate it. They were typically dome shaped but through much of the thirteenth century images of books appear to depict bosses as flat circles. An example is the *Dossal of St Francis* by Berlinghieri at Pescia. **(Plate 9)** The book has four circles on the cover and these could be seen as representing bosses. Similar motifs can be seen on the *Dossal of St Francis* by The Master of the Bardi St Francis. **(Plate 45a)** From 1270 onwards, when images become more naturalistic, it is nonetheless rare to see a representation of a dome shaped fitting. One example that does show such a fitting is Lippo Memmi's *Panel No 48/49* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale. Dated to about 1330, it shows St Louis of Toulouse holding a book in his right hand. **(Plate 46a)** The book has a dome-like object at

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[31] Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena.

[32] Another saint holding a tau-shaped crozier.

[33] Discussed on page 48.

each corner of the cover and a fifth in the middle. They look like the high-domed nails that are used in furniture upholstery. Something similar can be seen in Lippo Memmi's *St Clare* in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (c.1325-30). **(Plate 47a)** Here, there appears to be an arrangement of eight domed fittings and the implication is that their use is more for decoration, and perhaps as part of the way the leather is held to the board, than for protection.

While there are few examples of book images that have dome-like fittings that might equate to bosses (there are eight such examples in the Sample), there are many examples of images that include dots on a book cover. It is my interpretation that in many of these cases (there are twenty-four in the Sample) the intention is to indicate the use of small dome-headed nails ("studs") as a decorative feature. The term 'studs' is used by Theophilus, who describes them being used to secure 'leather bindings on books'. [34] However dots may also be intended to represent punch-gilt roundels and there are eleven examples in the Sample, all from the last quarter of the fourteenth century, which might be interpreted as such.

Thus, while the evidence from book images suggests that studs were regularly used and that punch-gilt roundels were included later, there is only limited evidence that bosses were used on books. The one exception is where books of an earlier age were portrayed, when bosses and sometimes corner pieces are included. One example is the book held by St Cecilia in the *Dossal* by The Master of St Cecilia in the Uffizi. (c.1304) **Plate 48a** The book has thick boards, very long strap fastenings with braided cords and simple hasps, and large round objects in each corner, which I interpret as bosses. This matter of depicting an 'antique book' is something that I will return to in Chapter 2, when considering the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece.*[35]

Moving on to fastenings, the dominant form of fastening throughout the period of this study is the long strap. Two or four such straps were normally used, each attached to one cover and fastening onto a pin on the other cover. While the cover to which the strap is attached is the upper in 75% of Sample images, I do not think that it is correct to assume that the upper cover attachment was dominant in reality. In depicting a religious book, I believe that the

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[34] Theophilus, *On Divers Arts: The Foremost Medieval Treatise on Painting, Glassmaking and Metalwork*, trans. John G Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), p. 156.

[35] It is a conundrum why the Apostles are shown in Galilean clothes but carrying a book that is in a 'modern' binding. It is probably because the book represents the word of God and that is considered to be always relevant to 'now'.

preferred practice was to show the fore-edge of the book rather than the back-edge so as to display items of book furniture such as hasps. It follows that the depiction of the strap attachment will depend on the stance of the holder and the hand in which the book is held. The added fact that in a quarter of Sample images the strap is attached to the lower cover seems to point to that being an entirely acceptable and unnoteworthy practice.

The straps of fastenings are often painted in two colours and gold was regularly used as a decoration. Hasps were sometimes painted in great detail, invariably in a gold colour, and often are very ornamental. Examples of the shapes of depicted hasps are shown in Appendix 2. There is great variation in the detail but there does not appear to be any marked preference in design at any point in the period.

Prior to or early in the thirteenth century, the practice was to portray the pin position at or near the centre of the cover but this seems to have been changed by the middle of the century. Thereafter the pin position is usually portrayed as being closer to the cover edge than to the middle. However the location of the pin varies and there is no clear trend of the pin position migrating from centre to edge.

From about the 1340s, there are a growing number of examples of book images with what appear to be short strap fastenings. A strap that is shown as only crossing the fore-edge, but not continuing to a hasp on a cover, could either be interpreted as a short strap fastening or as a long strap fastening with the pin and hasp being concealed on the hidden side. However, given the seeming preference with long strap fastenings to display the hasp, it seems more probable that these are short strap fastenings. The deduction is that this form of fastening was used, alongside the long strap fastening, in the second half of the fourteenth century.

Having addressed the main categories of book furniture, it remains to consider the decoration of the book. Dealing with edge decoration first, examples occur throughout the period up to the 1340s but are largely absent thereafter. The decoration of the covers is more complex. Many of the earlier, non-naturalistic images of books showed a form of cover decoration that placed a design at the centre, often based on a diamond shape, plus a design that was repeated in each corner, plus some circles that possibly represented bosses. An example of this is the book held by St Francis in the *Dossal* by Bonaventura Berlinghieri at Pescia. **(Plate 9)** This form of decoration clearly follows the designs in earlier artists' pattern books such as the bifolio sheet in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (see page 45 above). An alternative was a cover decoration with an arabesque design that probably mimicked an

embroidered fabric. This was an established motif used in illuminations (e.g. the Morgan *Sacramentary*, see page 45 and **Plate 19** above) and a design that was repeatedly used by Margarito d'Arezzo. **(Plate 22)**

Another traditional type of cover decoration was the 'treasure' binding where semi precious stones and precious metals would be depicted. During the thirteenth century, representations of this often involved the application of coloured glass 'drops' to represent the jewels. An example (albeit minus its glass) is Guido da Siena's *Dossal of the Madonna and Child with Saints* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. **(Plate 26)** Both the books, one held by John the Evangelist and one by Francis, have gaps where pieces of coloured glass have been lost. In addition, the book held by St Francis has an arabesque design around the spaces where the glass was and there is a similar but simpler design on John's book. This seems to be a conflation of two types of cover design and raises the question of whether this is intended to represent a design used for real books or is an artistic confection. Francis's book has details that point to a desire for verisimilitude (the straps with circles denoting hasps and the tab that has already been discussed) and it is therefore reasonable to consider that this image does purport in some degree to be descriptive of a real design. It suggests that the cover design of real books was evolving and that while the centre of a cover was seen as an appropriate place for some special ornamentation, it could be accompanied by further decorative detail.

A central decoration was the principle feature of the 'back-less' books of the decades around 1300. This commonly involved a single design with its centre based on a circle or diamond shape, surrounded by connected and symmetrical subsidiary designs. Some examples are given in Appendix 2.

Surrounding this central design could be small circles (representing studs) or diamonds in the corners, one or more margin lines and, later in this period, a margin decoration of one or more repeated motifs.

One of the earliest representations of a leather-bound book, which appears on the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*,[36] shows the book decorated with gold-mounted pieces of dark semi-precious stone, the centre one possibly engraved with an emblem. **(Plate 39f)** There is even a humorous touch in that the top right fitting is depicted as missing its stone. This is, in

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[36] For my reasoning that the date of this altarpiece is c.1300 see Chapter 4, page 91ff.

essence, a treasure binding and should be regarded as an exceptional example that befitted a papal context at the heart of Christendom. It does not represent the more normal decoration of bindings of religious books.

In the first two decades of the fourteenth century, there are only a limited number of examples that can reasonably be regarded as images of leather-bound books. The decoration on these books can be interpreted as metal fixings and studs rather than a decoration that is pressed on the leather. In the *Badia Polyptych* each of the four books is decorated with three star designs that are each based on a central solid diamond shape, with studs in the margins of the cover. **(Plate 37a)** The colour of these decorations is either black, green or red with gold studs.[37] In the *Peruzzi Altarpiece*, the book held by Christ is decorated with shapes that look like gold fittings and studs. **(Plate 49a)** The same can be said for the books depicted in Niccolo di Segna's *Polyptych No 38* **(Plates 50a and b)** and Simone Martini's *Polyptych* in Pisa. **(Plate 40a)**

Then in 1320 there appears an example of an image of a leather-bound book with a central design that is composed of interwoven gold lines surrounded by four symmetrical foliate designs. This is in Pietro Lorenzetti's *Tarlati Polyptych* and the book is held by St Matthew.[38] **(Plate 51a)** A similar design is on the book held by St John the Evangelist although here the back-edge is hidden so one cannot establish whether this is a leather-bound book or one in wooden covers. **(Plate 51b)** This polyptych is possibly the earliest example of gold tooled books being represented.

Gold Tooling

Gold tooling is a technique for applying a design in goldleaf on leather. The technique involves the use of a metal die into which the design is cut, a blocking press which holds the die(s) and presses them on to the book cover evenly and maintains that pressure for several minutes, gold foil, and an adhesive such as the white of egg, *glair*. The leather is pressed twice. The first pressing is with heated dies and without gold foil and makes the impressions in the leather (blind tooling). The impressions are then dressed with *glair* and gold foil placed over and the dies applied a second time. This secures the gold foil in the impressions in the leather and any surplus gold foil is brushed off.

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[37] The colours are difficult to make out because of surface damage.

[38] The *Tarlati Polyptych* is at the church of Santa Maria della Pieve in Arezzo. There is dated contract for the work that names Pietro Lorenzetti. It measures 298 x 309 cms. The predella has been lost.

The technique of using dies as a means of impressing a design or image onto a metal object is ancient, and is described in Theophilus's *On Divers Arts* (c.1120). There it is also described how dies can be used to apply gold or silver foil as a design or image and gives examples of dies cut with representations of 'the crucified Lord', 'the Lamb of God' and 'other figures of any shape or sex'.[39] The blocking press was in use from at least the thirteenth century.[40] Thus, the technical elements of a capability for applying gold tooling existed prior to the fourteenth century.

To determine whether an image represents gold tooling there would appear to be several necessary conditions: the decoration must be in gold; it must appear to be at least flat with the surface of the cover, if not impressed into it; it lacks the depiction of volume that would be associated with illustrating a fixture; it should have an anonymity of design that would be appropriate to a die for repeated use; and the binding must appear to be of leather.

Before considering the *Tarlati Polyptych* which, as indicated above, I believe to be the earliest surviving example of an image of gold tooling, I wish to test these conditions against some later pictures, starting with a picture that, I contend, offers a compelling example of gold tooling and then working back in time to 1320. This is the figure of St Anthony Abbot in Giovanni del Biondo's *Polyptych* that is now in the Velluti Chapel of Santa Croce in Florence. **(Plate 52)** It is regarded as one of the best preserved works by the artist and can therefore be regarded as an example that is close to its original state.[41] The book held by St Anthony **(Plate 52a)** does not reveal a back (and nor do the other two books on the panel) but the date of 1372[42] places it well into the period when books were mainly bound in leather and the inclusion of studs in the margin of the cover would support a leather binding. The painting of the studs suggest some volume, while both the central decoration and the surrounding outer decoration appear to be flat and without volume. These decorations are painted in the colour of gold and the design is intricate but non-specific. Thus the necessary

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[39] Theophilus, *On Divers Arts: The Foremost Medieval Treatise on Painting, Glassmaking and Metalwork.*p. 153-4

[40] My source for this is the exhibition "The Art of Binding Books Through the 15th and 16th Centuries" by the Bibliteca Nazionale Braidense in Milan, an on-line version of which is available at www.braidense.it/bookbinding/ukd.htm (consulted 13/2/2011).

[41] Richard Offner and Klara Steinweg, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: the Fourteenth Century. Section 4, Volume 4. Giovanni del Biondo* (New York: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1967-1969), p. 116.

[42] The date is from an inscription on the fame.

conditions are met, to which can be added the observation that the design looks as though it is composed of repeated elements, as if a die were used several times. This image has a high probability of representing a gold tooled book and I interpret it to be that. Indeed, it is an intricate and sophisticated example of gold tooling that suggests that books decorated with gold tooling had existed for some time before 1372.

Masso di Banco's panel of *St Anthony* in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, is dated to c. 1340 and his image of a book exhibits the same characteristics. **(Plate 41)** It is clearly a leather-bound book and the central decoration is in a gold colour, it is flat and without volume. The design is anonymous but simpler than that on Giovanni del Biondo's image of a book. This too is a convincing representation of gold tooling and its lack of sophistication is a marker that the skill in that craft was still developing. Of a similar date is Bartolomeo Bulgarini's triptych *San Pietro in cattedra fra i santi Paolo e Giovanni Evangelista* on which St Peter holds a book that has a detailed central decoration that looks like gold tooling. **(Plate 11a)** Slightly earlier is the dossal of *St Catherine of Alexandria and Scenes from her Life* by Donato and Gregorio d'Arezzo.[43] The book held by St Catherine **(Plate 53)** is clearly leather-bound, but the straps and hasps appear flat so there is no contrast with which to determine whether the central decoration has volume. This, too, may be a representation of gold tooling but rendered with less authority.

Returning to Pietro Lorenzetti's *Tarlati Polyptych* and the book held by St Matthew, **(Plate 51a)** we can see that the central decoration is gold, it appears to be flat in that it is of an open design with the red colour of the book cover showing through and the lines of the design are interwoven, the design is anonymous and the book can be regarded as a leather-bound volume because it has a back. The design is sufficiently simple to obviate the possibility of a repeated application. However, the conditions are satisfied sufficiently to suggest that this is an example of an image of gold-tooling, and it marks the point when representations of this technique appeared in Italian pictures.

This pictorial evidence suggests that gold tooling of real books commenced at the start of the fourteenth century and had reached a degree of sophistication in Florence by the third quarter of that century. This is different to the theories propounded by scholars in the past and moves the date of introduction of the gold tooling of leather bound books in Italy

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[43]Dated to c. 1330. J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. It was previously attributed to the 'Master of St Cecelia'.

forward by more than a hundred years and makes Florence rather than Padua the place where the technique was fully exploited.

Ancillary details and Summary of observations

The most frequently depicted cover colour throughout the period of study was red (48% of images), more than twice as frequently used as the next colour, black (19%). A margin rule was a detail that occurred throughout the period.[44]

There is no indication from images as to whether titles were put on the covers of books, let alone whether they were on the upper or lower cover. In one sense this is strange, given that Paul's epistles would be labelled 'Ad Romanos' and in some cases the depicted books are not even Christian. However, as the great majority of the figures depicted holding books date from a time when the codex had not even been invented, we must assume that a flexible interpretation of the use of books was practised in the period.

The following table summarises the information that is derived from the above analysis of images.

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[44] See Appendix 1.

Summary of binding details from images			
	Thirteenth Century		Fourteenth Century
Binding	Binding with wooden boards, some with embroidered fabric covers	Leather bindings appear	Predominantly leather bindings
Sewing and lacing	Caroligian bindings continue to be used. Two or three sewing stations.		Three sewing stations become the norm.
Shape of Boards	Square and flat. No bevels.	Panel mouldings	Square and flat. No bevels.
Back	Books are 'back-less'		Increasing use of backs. Backs are flat.
Spine bands	None		Up to three bands.
Projection of boards	No overhang	Rare	Occasional examples of overhang
Tabs	Possible use until 3rd quarter	None.	
Bosses	Use dies out by 3rd quarter	Bosses not used except with 'antique' books.	
Fastenings	Long strap fastenings		Long and short strap fastenings
Edges	Frequently decorated		Edges plain
Cover Decoration	Treasure binding or derivative.	Painted ornamentation plus studs	Gold tooling introduced and grows in sophistication
Other furnishings	Corner ornaments	Examples of bookmarkers	

In conclusion, it is clear that images of books in art help to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of the appearance of books in the period, specifically in the detail of bindings and their decoration. This information can also assist in the interpretation of pictures. I suggested above that there were questions in relation to the *St John Gualbert* altarpiece by Giovanni del Biondo, the central panel of which shows St John Gualbert seated on a throne holding a closed book. **(Plate 13a)** Although the work was subject to conservation, the pre-conservation photographs show the existence of the cover decoration in the form that is now seen.[1] **(Plate 13b)** So the intricate detail of the cover design is not the result of recent restoration. Furthermore, the above analysis demonstrates that by the 1370's there was a sophisticated ability in gold tooling and the delicate gold decoration at the centre of St John Gualbert's book was well within the capabilities of book binders of the 1380's when this altarpiece was made. This suggests that the image is not the result of artistic exaggeration by the painter and that it is reasonable to see this image as a portrait of a treasured and highly valuable book.

The representation of books and the issue of individual style.

My approach to answering the question of whether artists developed individual styles in representing books is to explore works by three artists from the early part of the fourteenth century and one artist from later in the century, with the object of trying to detect features that are common in each artist's work and ways in which their technique in painting images of books develops. There are obvious problems with art of the period in terms of attribution and dating, and in order to assemble a sufficient sample of examples for each artist it is easier to focus on well-known and well-studied artists. Accordingly, I have selected Giotto, Duccio and Ugolino di Nerio as the three artists from the early part of the fourteenth century and Jacopo di Cione as the artist from later in the century. Even then, there are uncertainties as to whether specific works or details are by these masters or their assistants.

Giotto

The two works that are at the heart of Giotto's corpus are the *Ognissanti Madonna* (in which there are no images of books) and his programme of frescoes at the Arena Chapel. The later is not well endowed with books (for example, none of the Apostles in the *Last Judgement* scene holds a book) although there is the image of *Christ Blessing* on the ceiling

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[1] See Marco Ciatti, Cecilia Frosinini, and Chiara Rossi Scarzanella, *Angeli, santi e demoni: otto capolavori restaurati* (Florence: Edifir, 2006), p. 70.

of the chapel. **(Plate 54a)** Of other works that are usually attributed, wholly or partially, to Giotto, there is the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* **(Plate 39)** with books held by five figures in the main registers and another seven figures in the predella, the *Badia Polyptych* **(Plate 37)** with four books (including fine images of books held by St Nicholas and St Peter), the *Peruzzi Altarpiece* **(Plate 49)** with a particularly good image of Christ with a book, the *Ognissanti Crucifix* **(Plate 55),** and the panel of *St Stephen* in the Museo Horne. **(Plate 56)** In addition, one might add the panel of a *Franciscan Saint,* possibly St Anthony of Padua, in the Berenson Collection at *I Tatti* that is claimed by some to be by Giotto. **(Plate 38)** (Given the uncertainties surrounding the authorship of works at Assisi, I am disregarding them for this exercise.)

With the exception of the books in the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*, this group of paintings show a marked similarity in the way the artist portrays a book. The size approximates to that of the head of the figure holding the book (which we can think of as being 'quarto') but the thickness is slight. The book is presented face on or at a very slight angle. The book furniture (straps and bosses) are not prominent while the cover decoration evolves from simple ornamental fixtures (centre plates and studs) to, in the 1320s, gold tooling of the central ornament to, finally, gold-tooling with multiple dies.

The treatment of books in the *Stefaneschi Altarpice* is different. While the books in the predella are similar to those described above, the book held by Christ is a treasure binding. **(Plate 39g)** The central quatrefoil and square corners are painted to represent blind tooled leather[2] and there are coloured ovals in the margin which represent precious stones. The colours used to represent the book match the background of Christ's robe, an arrangement that is similar to that in *Christ Blessing* in the Arena Chapel, but different to Giotto's other pictures, where there is a greater contrast in colours between the image of a book and its background. However, the size, dimensions and the way the book is presented is consistent with that in other pictures. On the front face of the altarpiece, the book held by the saint kneeling before St Peter is clearly intended to be seen as an 'antique' book.[3] **(Plate 39e)**The books held by the saints James, John and Paul in the main register, can also be regarded as treasure bindings as they are adorned with *plaquettes* in golden fixtures, although they are less lavish than the book held by Christ. These books also share with Christ's book, a

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[2] The images are very indistinct but the central image could be a Madonna and Child while the corner images could be emblems of the four evangelists with the lion of Mark in the top left corner.

[3] This is discussed, along with the identity of this figure and the date of the panel, in Chapter 4, page 91ff.

pronounced projection at the top and bottom of the back which is not seen in any other image.

Two works attributed to the 'Workshop' are relevant to this survey: the so-called *S. Reparata Altarpiece* **(Plate 57)** in which St Eugenio holds a book, and the *Polyptych with Madonna and Child* **(Plate 58)** in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna in which St Paul holds a book. The book held by St Eugenio is similar in style to the first group of examples save that straps are more noticeable, being decorated and with hasps and pulls. The fore-edge of the book block is also decorated. The book held by St Paul is quite different: a thicker book block in a binding that lacks volume, and with decoration that is loud and crudely executed (although the way it is held by the saint follows that in the Stefaneschi Altarpiece).

The core of the style used by Giotto in painting images of books is to present them as slender, leather-bound volumes, orientated with the upper cover towards the viewer, and decorated with a restrained mix of fittings and later with gold tooling. The main variation to this is the inclusion of treasure bindings in the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece.* The images of books produced by the 'Workshop' are less restrained.

Duccio

The single most important work of Duccio's corpus is *The Maestà.* **(Plate 31)** This includes sixteen images of books which are rendered in a consistent way. Save for the open books held by the Virgin in the two *Annunciation* scenes, all the books are shut with the lower cover towards the viewer and cradled in the left arm. Each appears to be in a back-less binding of wooden boards. In the larger images, the boards have a panel moulding. Decoration is typically a central ornament with studs plus a margin rule and often a margin decoration. Fastenings are long with hasps and pulls. This manner of painting books also appears in the rest of Duccio's works. The larger images are in *Polyptych No 28* **(Plate 7)** and *Polyptych No 47* **(Plate 32)** which have five and three books respectively. Smaller books appear in the triptychs.[4] The only variation is the degree of detail, with some images including edge decoration and, in one case, a bookmark. None of the images include representations of gold tooling which, given that Duccio's career ended in about 1319, is consistent with this study's hypothesis on the date of introduction of gold tooling.

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[4] In the collections of HM the Queen, National Gallery London and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

Ugolino di Nerio

A similar style applies to the work of Ugolino di Nerio, a consequence, perhaps, of his probable pupilage under Duccio. The most detailed images of books appear in the *Clark Heptatych*, **(Plate 33)** the *Panel of St Thomas* in the Berenson Collection, **(Plate 34)** and the *Polyptych* in the Cleveland Museum of Art. **(Plate 35)** All the main register images in these works (eight in total) show a closed book, with a back-less binding, panel moulding, edge decoration, central ornamental design but no margin rule nor, except in one case, a margin decoration. In the less detailed images, including the book on the *Polyptych No 39* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena **(Plate 59)** and the *Madonna and Child with Saints* in Certaldo, **(Plate 60)** a flat cover is portrayed and is marked with one or two margin rules. It is noticeable that Ugolino renders hasps with great care.

From the works of these three artists, it appears that each developed a manner of painting books that he continued to apply over his career. Variations depended on the size of image of a book being made rather than its context: Duccio used the same type of representation for books held by the priests in the *Massacre of the Innocents* **(Plate 31d)** (presumably representing the Old Testament) as for the books held by the Apostles (the New Testament). For these artists, there was evolution in the detail given to images of books, such as the shape of a panel moulding or the introduction of gold tooling, but the basic approach remained. This makes exceptions to this analysis, such as the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece*, more interesting and is an aspect that is considered further in Chapter 2.

Jacopo di Cione

As a contrast to the earlier artists, whose work belongs to the first quarter of the *trecento*, we may consider works by Jacopo di Cione, which belong to the third quarter. The issue here is that Jacopo di Cione belonged to a family of artists which had a large and successful workshop. Commissions undertaken by the di Cione family would have been executed by several artists, albeit under the direction of a master. The first work is the *St Matthew Triptych* in the Uffizi which was started in 1367 when Andrea di Cione ("Orcagna") was head of the workshop although, following the latter's death, most of the detail is thought to have been carried out by Jacopo. **(Plate 61)** The images of books shown in the scenes from St Matthew's life have an appearance of being solid, square and are ornamented with a line of studs in the margin of the cover and a simple, gold-tooled, central decoration. This arrangement, of a margin decoration of studs or repeated motifs, plus a central decoration, appears to be characteristic of images of books in paintings produced by the di Cione family

workshop, and is found in works by both Andrea and Nardo di Cione.[5] In this case there is a variation in dimensions, as the open book held by St Matthew on the front panel is elongated, with the proportions of a ledger, something that would be appropriate for a tax collector. While this difference may be the result of two hands at work, it does suggest that there is more than just a formulaic approach being taken to the imagery of books.

The second work is the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* in the National Gallery in London (c.1368). **(Plate 62)** There is a mix of books visible. For example, the books held by St Paul and the 'old man' in the crowd below the Bad Thief, are noticeably narrower and longer than those held by St James and the figures in the predella.[6] It has long been recognised that more than one artist worked on this altarpiece. The first, assumed to be Jacopo di Cione, painted the crucified figures, the central group of mourners, the four full length saints and the half-length figures in the predella. A second, unidentified artist painted most of the rest and a third painter may have applied the mordant gilding. However, within this division of the composition, there was co-operation between the artists in colouring and finishing. The explanation that has been offered to account for this is founded upon the idea that a 'team' approach was taken by the 'workshop' and that it was the consequence of the process of colour mixing and the necessity of using colours before they went 'off'.[7] It may be co-incidence, but the narrower books are painted red while the broader books are painted black, which might indicate the work of different artists. As well as the variation in dimensions of the books, the decoration of some covers is restricted to simple stud-work while in others it is stud-work and gold tooling, however such variation is consistent with the style of images of books produced by the workshop. We are therefore dealing with a workshop style rather than one that can be associated with a single artist, Jacopo di Cione, although as the Master, he presumably directed and controlled the painting.

The third work is *The Coronation of the Virgin*, the principal panels of which are in the National Gallery. **(Plate 1)** Dated to 1370-1, this is one of the largest altarpieces to be painted in the second half of the fourteenth century and was made for San Pier Maggiore in Florence.

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[5] Examples include: the book held by St Nicholas in Andrea di Cione's *Madonna and Child with Saints* in the Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence; the book held by St Gregory in Nardo di Cione's *Madonna and Child with Saints* in the Museo della Sata Croce, Florence.

[6] It is unusual to see a figure holding a book in an outdoor narrative scene such as a Crucifixion. Here, it is presumably used as a device to indicate a believer, perhaps Joseph of Arimathaea.

[7] See David Bomford et al., *Italian Painting before 1400* (London: National Gallery, 1989), pp. 153-55.

While it is ascribed to Jacopo di Cione, it is, again, clearly a collaborative work and, apart from carpenters and specialist gilders, it is thought that Niccolò di Pietri Gerini[8] was involved in the design while the painters Matteo di Pacino and Tuccio di Vanni are named in the documentation as being involved with the altarpiece. However, opinion has it that Jacopo was the principal painter of the panels.[9]

The two side panels have a total of 22 books. Three of the books are shown open with visible texts and a proportion of the rest are only partly shown, being largely hidden by other figures. As far as can be judged, all the books share the same format, being of standard rather than ledger proportions, are of approximately the same size (roughly a quarto), and all have a cover decoration that bears gold tooling. There are a variety of designs but in each case they fill the whole cover and there is no complementary stud work. Small variations can be seen in other details such as the inclusion of some long strap fastenings and hasps. None the less, there is a consistency in the treatment of the books but that treatment is different to the established style previously used by the Cione workshop and seen in the first two examples. This would seem to confirm the view that one artist, presumably Jacopo di Cione, was responsible for the painting of these two panels but would also indicate that another artist was responsible for the design.

The conclusions that I draw from this brief examination of images of books by four artists are:

> Where an individual artist is at work, there can be a particular style in which images of books are painted and which can be regarded as characteristic of that artist;

> A style can evolve to reflect changes in the appearances of real books e.g. by the inclusion of gold tooling; and

> Collaborative works, and those that are the productions of workshops, albeit under the direction of a master, may also show a particular style for the painting of images of books.

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[8] Or possibly Niccolò di Tommaso, see Dillian Gordon, *The Italian Paintings before 1400*, *National Gallery Catalogues* (London: National Gallery Company, 2011), p. 81.

[9] Bomford et al., *Italian Painting before 1400*, pp. 185-89.

Summing up Chapters 1 to 3

These chapters have reviewed the literature regarding the structure and appearance of real books in the two centuries up to 1400. The information derived from the review has been tabulated in Table 1. The reliability of this information is heavily qualified because of the lack of surviving examples of books with original bindings. Having considered the veracity of images in this period, 'pictorial sources' have been used to derive information on how artists portrayed books and hence how real books might have appeared. This information has also been tabulated, in Table 2.

The principle findings from this process are:

> Uncovered boards were regularly used in the *duecento* and that these boards could be finely decorated;

> Full leather bindings became the dominant form of binding only in the *trecento*; and

> Gold tooling of leather bindings developed in the early part of the *trecento* and reached a high degree of sophistication by the 1370s. This is much earlier than had been previously surmised and the pictorial evidence points to Florence being the place where the technique was fully exploited.

It is apparent from an examination of the works of individual artists that a style of painting an image of a book can be characteristic of the individual artist, and possibly of a workshop. It is also apparent that the style can evolve to reflect changes in the appearance of real books. This has the potential to contribute to answering questions of the attribution and date of paintings. Further, works that include images of books that differ from a characteristic style require an explanation and may reveal specific factors as to authorship or the commission.

Chapter 1 also considered the reception of images of books in the period as devotional images and as sources of spiritual advantage. The images of books, the way that they are held and the associated gestures, suggest that these images did represent more to the viewer that mere attributes and contributed to the viewer's relationship with the Word of God.

Each of the following four chapters is a case study addressing specific ways in which images of books are used. The case studies have been chosen so as to include some of the major sources or conduits of patronage, and consequently some important religious paintings. In each case there is a change in either the subject matter or the manner of representation or the

circumstances of the commission. Knowledge about the appearance of books is combined with historical, philosophical and scriptural sources to analyse works of art. The case studies show that images of books can indicate the influence and impact of a variety of agendas involving belief, liturgical practice and power. But images of books also played a more general role as a prop to the clergy in their daily cycle of liturgy and prayer and as a one of the points of focus for the devotions of the faithful.

Case-study

Liber Dei et Ecclesiae – the book as symbol of authority of God, and the clergy

This chapter explores the image of a book as the symbol of the authority of God and of the clergy. It commences with an examination of representations of the moment in Luke's gospel when the young Christ is found by his parents sitting in the temple and the significance of the book held by Christ in Simone Martini's *Holy Family*. As the comprehension of symbolic meanings depends on them being embedded in the memory, there follows an examination of the symbolism of books in general, their particular role and symbolism in the performance of the liturgy, the role of the book in the iconography of the Trinity and the Word, and the iconography that had been inherited from earlier periods. The final part of the chapter examines Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* and the role that books play in asserting clerical and papal authority.

The episode from the life of Christ when, as a child, he slips away from his parents in Jerusalem and is found three days later in the temple 'disputing' with the Doctors, is a potent subject for medieval thinkers and illuminators.[1] The anguish of the mother, the dismissive response of the son, the claim of divine paternity, the amazement of onlookers at his knowledge, the final submission to parental control, all this is rich material for interpretation. The aspect chosen by illuminators was the scene in the temple with the young Christ taking centre stage before the learned men. Thus, an illumination from the twelfth century Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany shows Christ (whose youthfulness is denoted by a lack of beard) in the centre, seated on an ornate bench with his feet on a step.[2] **(Plate 63)** To the right stand five 'Doctors', at least two of which are holding *rotuli.* To the left stand the Virgin and Joseph. Both Christ and His mother hold scrolls on which are texts from Luke 2 and these act as speech texts for the dialogue between them.[3] In Christ's

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[1] Luke 2, 41-51

[2] Morgan Library, NY, MS M.0492, fol.059v. The manuscript is dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century and is thought to have been made in San Benedetto Po near Mantua.

[3] The texts are 'AN NESCIEBATIS Q(UIA) I(N) HIIS Q(UE) PAT(RIS) M(E)Y S(UN)T O(PORTET) ME ESSE' meaning 'Did you not know that I was bound to be in my Father's house' and 'FILI Q(UI)D FECISTI

left hand is an open book with a text from Luke 4 proclaiming that 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him'.[4] Thus the artist has portrayed the young Christ as if enthroned, a figure of authority, holding a book in his left hand like many images of the *Pantocrator*. A much later illumination from a fourteenth century *Decretal* made in Bologna also shows Christ at the centre, seated in a substantial raised throne, with a pope and a king as supporters.[5] **(Plate 64)** In this picture, Christ is without a book but is animatedly turning and gesturing to the large assembly of seated doctors below him, many of whom hold books. This is again a composition that shows Christ as a figure of authority.

This 'temple' format for the episode of Christ and the Doctors is also seen in examples of fresco and panel painting. Duccio's *Maestà* has such a scene in the predella. **(Plate 31e)** Christ is seated on a raised bench before six doctors. His mother and Joseph gesture to him from the left. In this case there is no throne-like structure, nor does Christ hold a book, so there is less of an emphasis on portraying Christ as a person of king-like authority. Instead, the faces and gestures of the doctors convey the message that the precocious young man has impressed and amazed them. A similar construction is seen in Giotto's fresco of the scene at the Arena Chapel. **(Plate 54b)** In a high ceilinged room with a back drop of arches, Christ is seated centrally on a high backed bench along with ten doctors. No books are visible and Christ gestures with both hands and the doctor on his right also gestures back indicating dialogue. However, most of the doctors sit, expressionless, with hands on their laps. The Virgin and Joseph enter on the left of the scene. In Giotto's equivalent scene in Assisi, while there is no throne, Christ is shown in a regal posture: seated at the centre with right hand raised and holding a *rotulus* in his left hand.[6] **(Plate 65a)** The fifteen doctors are all seated and occupy three sides of the room in the temple. None hold books but they are more animated and some appear to shy away from Christ. The Virgin and Joseph again enter on the left of the scene. These examples show that the pictorial rendition of Luke's account of Christ going missing and being found in the temple typically focused on Christ in the temple, discoursing with the

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NOBIS SIC ECCE PATER TUU(S) E(T) EGO DOLENTES Q(UE)REBAM(US)' meaning 'My son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety'. Luke 2, 48-49.

[4] 'SP(IRITUS) D(OMI)NI SUP(ER0 ME EUA(N)GELIZARE PAUP(ER)IB(US) MISSIT', Luke 4, 18

[5] Morgan Library, NY, MS M.0821r. Dated to 1330-5. A leaf from Pope Boniface VIII's *liber sextus decrealium* with the *glossa ordinaria* of Johannes Andreae.

[6] North Transept, Lower Church, San Francesco.

doctors, and amazing them with his knowledge, a narrative story that was viable for painting and readily understood by the viewer.

For medieval thinkers, the conventional response to the episode was to place greater emphasis on the relationship between Christ and his mother and Joseph. Thus, it is seen as a passage that supports discussions on humility, modesty, patience and obedience, as well as wisdom, perhaps what might be expected from those engaged in a monastic or mendicant life.[7]

Against this background, Simone Martini's small painting of *The Holy Family* is both unprecedented and problematic.[8] **(Plate 66)** If it were not for the words visible in the book held by the Virgin, *fili quid fecisti,*[9] it would not be immediately clear what the picture was about as there is no architectural detail to place the scene.[10] In consequence, the picture has been variously referred to as *Christ returning from the Temple* and *Christ admonished by his parents* as well as the current, more neutral title of *The Holy Family*. While the words shown in her book and the gesture of her hand shows that the Virgin is voicing the admonishing question contained in Luke, the blonde-headed Christ is shown in defiant stance, unsmiling, eyes narrowed, and arms crossed. These are hardly the 'burgher values' that might be expected for a privately commissioned work that was intended for private devotion.[11] It is

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[7] Don Denny reviews the medieval commentaries on the story. See Don Denny, "Simone Martini's The Holy Family," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967): pp. 138-49.

[8] Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. The dimensions are 49.5 x 35 cms. The literature includes Don Denny's article and the following: Marco Pierini, *Simone Martini* (Silvana Editoriale, 2000), pp. 242 ff., Hayden B J Maginnis, *The World of the Sienese Painter* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 109., Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), p. 60-1.,

[9] The words in Luke are '*fili quid fecisti nobis sic ecce pater tuus et ego dolentes quaerebamus te*' and Don Denny has written that the words visible on the Virgin's book are the first three. Pierini states that the first five words are written in the book. However, when the picture is examined the lettering appears to be an Italian Gothic Rotunda and the first word is not 'fili' but 'filu', presumably a contraction of 'filius'. The second word is not 'quid', the letters being either 'qiu' or 'qm'. The third line is less legible but appears to be 'frti'. There are no contraction signs such as macrons but the assumption must be that the lettering is there to indicate longer words. Thus 'qm' might be a contraction of 'quam' or 'quoniam', to give only two possibilities. While I accept that the wording on the book is probably intended to be the phrase from Luke, I suggest that it is not entirely clear.

[10] For example, it could be a scene from the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* with Joseph bringing Jesus home after the lesson with a teacher where Jesus had taken a book from a lectern and preached to a large crowd. See David R Cartlidge and J Keith Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 116.

[11] This is the implication of Meiss's comment on painting of the period that were 'expressive of family sentiments'. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*, p. 61.

apparent that Simone Martini has completely re-thought the subject for this painting and this means that every detail is potentially meaningful. The detail that is interesting for this study is the closed book that is folded in Christ's arms. A small book, bound in red with bosses and strap fastening, it is held by Christ on its side and close to his heart.

Christ's response to his mother in Luke is '*quid est quod me quaerebatis nesciebatis quia in his quae Patris mei sunt oportet me esse*' but there is no speech-text nor other writing in the picture that tells us this. The meaning of the second part of Christ's response is ambiguous although it has often been translated as referring to 'my Father's business/occupation'.[12] In the picture, the book is the one object that might fulfil the function of indicating Christ's response and I propose that it represents 'my Father's business' and, by showing it tightly held in Christ's arms, the artist is signalling Christ's commitment to undertake his Father's business. In other words, Christ is taking hold of the symbol of the *Pantocrator* and his serious facial features are commensurate to that awesome role. However, such an iconography would only work if the image of the book was readily understood as representing the power of God the Father. If it was, then such an understanding would also validate the bearing of books in images of saints and the authority of clerics in possessing and using books in the liturgy.

For an image to be recognised as a symbol and its meaning comprehended, it needs to have been embedded in the language of symbolism – that system of contextualisation and interpretation that prevailed in the late Medieval period. For the viewer this was essentially an exercise in memory, what Michael Baxandall describes as 'previous visualising activity on the same matter'.[13] Thus, to explore this further, it is necessary to examine the precedents that placed the meaning in the memory. So I will examine: first, how books, as objects, were perceived and what symbolism had become attached to them; second, the prevailing beliefs about the Trinity, the Logos and the Word; and third, the iconography that had been inherited from earlier periods.

The next section will examine the symbolism of books in general, and the particular role and symbolism of books in the performance of the liturgy.

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[12] Modern translations go for 'in my Father's house' which has the advantage of being logical given the location where Mary and Joseph found Jesus but probably misses the deeper meaning.

[13] Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A primer in the social history of pictorial style.*, p. 45.

Symbolism of books

By the late thirteenth century, both the number of books available and the persons capable of reading them had become material to the point that every church had a book and every person at least knew somebody who could read.[14] Books and literacy had become more fundamental to both commerce and government and learning to read was seen by both men and women (particularly those in the mercantile classes) as a means to advancement and widening of interests.[15] The majority of books were no longer produced in monastic scriptoria but were the result of the commercial enterprise of stationers, professional scribes and bookbinders. Yet despite this commercialisation and the penetration of books into the day-to-day lives of people, books and literacy remained closely associated with the church and the clergy. Church influence over the supply and use of books remained intact as education, especially in the new universities, was largely in the hands of the clerical orders with the Dominicans and Franciscans playing a leading role.[16] This association between books and church was reinforced in a number of ways. There continued to be a degree of mystery attached to the skill of writing and its learning was seen as a challenging task but also one that was necessary for a child destined for the church.[17] The majority of books remained religious even in the case of collections by lay people[18] and children often learned their letters using a religious text. Books were studied repeatedly and at length to discover every layer of meaning and texts were committed to memory. The practice of reading itself was not straightforward, with various strategies being advocated culminating in a form of contemplation whereby the reader would obtain an understanding of the contents (both text

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[14] Clanchy, "Parchment and Paper: Manuscript Culture 1100-1500," pp. 194-5.

[15] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), p. 101.

[16] Clanchy, "Parchment and Paper: Manuscript Culture 1100-1500," p. 194.

[17] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R Trask (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 304. Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in late Medieval Religion*, p. 102.

[18] A good example is the collection of books in the possession of Francesco di Marco Datini, the 'Merchant of Prato'. His account books show that he had nine religious books, namely: *Lives of the Saints, Gospel Book, Epistles of Saint James, Letters of Don Giovanni dalle Celle, Psalter, Life of Christ, Letters of St Jerome and St Gregory, Epistles of St Paul*, and the *Fioretti of St Francis*. Non-religious books numbered five and were: the *Divine Comedy*, the *Chronicles of Matteo Villani*, a book by Boethius, another by Fra Japopo da Todi (presumably poetry and possibly religious), and 'a work copied from the book of Guido di Michele Guiducci'. Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato: Daily Life in a Medieval Italian City* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 276-7.

and image) as if he 'saw with his heart'.[19] Thus, as had been the case for centuries, books and literacy continued to be placed on an elevated plane and be regarded as something religious both in form and in practice.

This association was underpinned in two ways. The first was the common use of the book as a metaphor in the Bible, contemporary religious writing and in the context of knowledge. Ernst Robert Curtius lists some of the metaphors in the Bible: from the 'book of life' in Exodus to the 'heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll' in Isaiah and the fateful role of books in Revelation.[20] Likewise, a philosopher such as Bonaventure would use books as metaphors, such as the 'inner book' of reason and the 'external book' of appetite.[21] He was not alone in doing this.[22] Thomas Aquinas was renowned for his learning, it was 'as if knowledge were ever increasing in his soul as page added to page in the writing of a book'.[23] The second way that underpinned the association of the book with the sacred was the influence of the prevailing way of thinking which had at its core the concept of analogy- a deocentric view of the physical world that had existed for centuries and held that as God had made the world and everything in it, so his image could be found all around.[24] Thus, John Scotius Eriugena had stated in the ninth century: 'every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God'.[25] An example is found in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, the seventh century encyclopedia that remained an important source throughout the Middle Ages. Book VI is entitled *De libris et officiis ecclesiasticis* and includes chapters on the making of books. Thus:

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[19] See M T Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd ed. (London: Blackwell, 1993), p. 194-5.

[20] See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 310-1.

[21] 'Accordingly, there are two books, one written within, and that is God's eternal art and wisdom; the other written without, and that is the perceptible world.' *Breviloquium, Part II, Chapter 11, Paragraph 2.* Bonaventure explains Eve's fall by her failure to read the 'inner book' *Part III, Chapter 3, Paragraph 2.* See Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, St Anthony Guild Press, http://www.catholic.uz/tl_files/library/books/Bonaventure_breviloquium/index.htm.

[22] Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 320-1.

[23] Quoted by Hahn, "Visio Dei: Changes in Medieval Visuality," p. 188.

[24] Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, p. 54.

[25] Quoted by H Flanders Dunbar, *Symbolism in Medieval Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 364.

The scribe's tools are the reed-pen and the quill, for by these the words are fixed onto the page. A reed-pen is from a tree; a quill is from a bird. The tip of a quill is split into two, while its unity is preserved in the integrity of its body, I believe for the sake of a mystery, in order that by the two tips may be signified the Old and New Testament, from which is pressed out the sacrament of the Word poured forth in the blood of the Passion.[26]

Later thinkers such as Hugh of St Victor (1096-1142) and Bonaventure (1217-1274) continued to place the concept of analogy at the heart of their philosophy. The latter wrote: 'Thus it is clear how the manifold wisdom of God, which is clearly revealed in sacred scripture, lies hidden in all knowledge and in all nature'.[27]And this belief helps to explain the behaviour of St Francis in collecting scraps of parchment:

For this reason he used to gather up any piece of writing, whether divine or human, wherever he found it: on the road, in the house, on the floor. He would reverently pick it up and put it in a sacred or decent place because the name of the Lord, or something pertaining to it, might be written there.

Once a brother asked why he so carefully gathered bits of writing, even writings of pagans where the name of the Lord does not appear. He replied: "Son, I do this because they have the letters which make the glorious *name of the Lord God.* And the good that is found there does not belong to the pagans nor to any human being, but to God alone 'to whom belongs every good thing.' "

What is even more amazing is this: when he had letters written as greetings or admonitions he would not allow a single letter or syllable to be erased from them even when they included a repetition or mistake.[28]

But it was not just a pious preoccupation with the life of Christ or 'a poetic play with symbols' that generated such analogies which, to modern eyes, seem contrived, even pathetic. It was a belief that the concept of analogy was the only theory of knowledge that was valid.[29] In a world of unknowns and the occult, an awareness of parallels in nature lay at the heart of

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[26] Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A Barney, Oliver Berghof, and J A Beach (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 142.

[27] 'Et sic patet, quomodo multiformis sapientia Dei, quae lucide traditur in sacra Scriptura, occultatur in omni cognitione et in omni natura.' Chapter 26, verse 1, Bonaventure, *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, corpus scriptorum latinorum, http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/bonaventura/reduct.html.

[28] Regis Armstrong, J A Wayne Hellman, and William J Short, eds., *The Francis Trilogy of Thomas of Celano* (New York: New City Press, 2004), p. 91-2.

[29] Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral: Origins of Gothic Architecture and the Medieval Concept of Order*, p. 54.

medicine and science as well as religion. It also was a driving force in art: 'Craftsmen and scholars, artists in stone or in language, worked alike with the *verba Dei*.'[30]

The book was not only used as a metaphor for intangible concepts, such as the divine recording of human life, and for tangible objects, such as the world, but it was also used to represent God and his knowledge. Hugh of St Victor describes three books:

> For example, three books have been written down for you: the first of which is the work of man, the second of which is the work of God, and the third of which is not the work of God, but the wisdom of God: by which God does all his works. Accordingly it consecrates the work of man, the work of God, and the wisdom of God.[31]

Curtius interprets this as meaning that Christ Incarnate is one of the 'books of God' along with the Creation.[32] Bonaventure describes Christ as the 'Inscribed Book' and the 'book of wisdom'[33] and Dante writes at the end of The Divine Comedy that the Godhead, described as the Infinite Goodness and the Eternal Light, appears as a single volume in which lies all of the universe.[34] In his *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, Durandus writes, in the context of the pictorial representation of saints in church buildings, that books 'are the emblems of (Christ's) perfect knowledge'.[35] In the performance of the liturgy the book that is treated with the greatest reverence, and by that measure is the most important, is the 'Gospel-book' or its proxy, the Missal.[36] The reverence is shown in the way the book is moved. It may have

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[30] Dunbar, *Symbolism in Medieval Thought*, p. 439.

[31] 'Verbi gratia, tres tibi libros praescripsimus; primum qui est opus hominis; secundum qui est opus Dei, tertium qui est non opus Dei, sed sapientia Dei; per quam facit omnia opera sua Deus. Dic ergo opus hominis, opus Dei, et sapientia Dei.' *De Arca Noe Morali, Libri IV*, printed in J P Migne, *Patrlogiae Cursus Completus:Latina*, Documenta Catholica Omnia, http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu. Book CLXXVI, 644D. My translation.

[32] Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 320.

[33] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God: The Tree of Life: The Life of St Francis*, ed. Richard J Payne, trans. Ignatius Brady, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 169-70.

[34] Dante, *The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri*, trans. Allen Mandelbau (London: Everyman Library, 1995), Paradiso XXXIII 82. In quite a long section in his chapter on *The Book as Symbol*, Curtius identifies numerous examples in *The Divine Comedy* where the book is used as a metaphor, finishing with the aforementioned metaphor of the Godhead: Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 326-32.

[35] Durandus, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum: Books I, III & IV*, p. 44.

[36] Prior to the thirteenth century, liturgical readings were contained in several books, those most notably for the performance of the mass being the Gradual (prayers to be recited or sung), the Sacramentary (the Canon of the Mass and prayers said by the priest), the Epistolary (readings from the Old Testament and Epistles in order of

its own procession as is described in *Roman Ordo 1* which dates from the eighth century. In this, the Gospel book is carried in procession into church by an acolyte, the book being held in the folds of a chasuble so as to protect it from the hands of the acolyte, and is given to a sub-deacon who places it on the altar.[37] The same *Ordo* describes how the Pope processes to the altar and kisses the Gospel book, and how the book is processed to the *ambo* for the reading of the gospel and processed back to the altar whereupon it is kissed by all the clergy.[38] Durandus adds more detail to these processional rituals by describing how a priest enters the church preceded by a subdeacon carrying the Gospel book, in front of whom are two acolytes carrying candles and another priest with a censor. The first actions of the priest at the altar are to say the *Confiteor* with the Gospel book held closed before him, then open the book and kiss it.[39] For the procession to the *ambo* the Gospel book is taken from the altar by the deacon who seeks a blessing from the priest and is then is led by an acolyte carrying a cross. In addition a subdeacon may carry a cushion on which the book would be placed for the reading.[40]

Durandus also states that the book of the Gospels 'symbolises the New Testament'[41] which taken literally could be a statement of the obvious but is intended rather to mean that the Gospel book is symbolic of Christ's teaching and hence the Word of God. Indeed, the symbolism is even clearer when reference is made to the early councils of the church: the Gospel book was determined by the Council of Chalcedon to represent the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit.[42] It thus occupied a privileged position among the accoutrements of liturgical ritual. This is possibly reflected in the omission of a Bible or Missal from the list of objects for which there are blessings contained in Durandus's

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use) and the Evangelary (the Gospel readings in order of use). The latter two were sometimes combined into a single volume, the Lectionary, and examples survive from as early as the 9th century. The single volume book of the mass, the Missal, was developed as a consequence of advances in book production and calligraphy, advances which also saw the production of single volume, and portable, Bibles. When Durandus and others refer to 'the book of the Gospel' he may be referring to a stand-alone Evangelary but, more probably, to a Missal.

[37] See Heffernan and Matter, eds., *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, p. 282.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Durandus, *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum: Books I, III & IV*, p. 269-71.

[40] Ibid., p. 127-32.

[41] Ibid., p. 270.

[42] William Telfer, *The Office of a Bishop* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), p. 207.

Pontifical of 1293-5. While there are blessings for a wide range of occasions, from the dedication of a church to the consecration of chalice, from the blessing of a hair-shirt to a blessing of a boat, there is no blessing in the list for a book.[43] The gospel book was already blessed and not to be treated as something man-made, and this may have extended to other liturgical books, hence the lack of a need for a specific blessing. These examples show how, over many centuries, the Gospel book was an object of reverence, a reverence that continues to be shown to this day in the rituals of the Church.[44]

The image of a book was thus perceived as being symbolic of something on a higher plane than a mere object, with a religious dimension that became more pronounced with its association with liturgy and devotional surroundings. Whether such symbolism could extend to an image of a book representing 'my Father's business', depends on the role of the book in the iconography the Trinity and the Logos. This is addressed in the next section.

The Trinity, the Logos and the Word

The doctrine of the Trinity was clarified by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which declared that:

> the Father is from none, the Son is from the Father alone, and the holy Spirit from both equally, eternally without beginning or end (and that) this holy Trinity, which is undivided according to its common essence but distinct according to the properties of its persons, gave the teaching of salvation to the human race...according to the most appropriate disposition of the times. Finally the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, who became incarnate by the

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[43] John Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion 1000-1500: A reader*, 2nd ed., *Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures II* (Ontario: Broadview, 2007), pp. 291-2. This volume (page 294) also contains an example from twelfth century Germany where a psalter is used to determine guilt or innocence. A peg is placed in a closed psalter with one end marking Psalm 118 ("Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgement is right") and the other protruding as a pivot on which is balanced another stick like a compass needle. This is placed between the disputants and prayers are said for the stick to point to the truthful party.

[44] Kessler writes: 'Because it recorded God's word, the book was elevated in Christianity to the position once occupied by the cult statue. Embellished, it was to have the visual effect befitting its spiritual content.' And 'In both East and West, priests paraded books to the altar in rituals that paralleled the procession of relics; and legends developed to assert the magical powers of decorated books.' Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," p. 173.

action of the whole Trinity in common and was conceived from the ever virgin Mary through the cooperation of the holy Spirit, ...became true man.[45]

St John's gospel identified 'Christ the man' with the Greek concept of an everlasting divine intellect that created the universe and is present throughout it: the *logos*. The Greek meaning of this word encompasses logic, wisdom and intellect as well as word and speech but in the West the term become translated as *'Verbum'* or 'the Word' – thus emphasising the verbal message of Christ. The 4th century Christian apologist Lactantius discusses the names of Jesus in the *Divine Institutes* and states that *logos* is preferable and superior to *verbum*, as *logos* means both speech and reason.[46] None the less, *Verbum* became the preferred term in the Middle Ages.

The Council of Nicaea (325) established that Christ was identical to God, was everlasting and, as God, was the creator in Genesis. Thus, while the image of God the Father was unknowable, the Logos could be represented by Christ the Man, and the Godhead could therefore be represented as Christ Logos in images of the Creation. This representation of God was reinforced by Augustine in his *De Trinitate* where he stated that the Word was the image of God.[47]

Christus, *verbum* and *liber* come together in the writings of Bonaventure. His '*The Tree of Life*' contains a section entitled *Jesus, Inscribed Book*.

> For the glory of the kingdom to be perfect, there is required not only exalted power but also resplendent wisdom so that the government of the kingdom is directed not by arbitrary decision but by the brilliant rays of the eternal laws emanating without deception from the light of wisdom. And this wisdom is written in Christ Jesus as in the book of life, in which God the Father has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, the only-begotten Son of God, as the uncreated Word, is the book of wisdom and the light that is full of living eternal principles in the mind of the supreme Craftsman, as the inspired Word in the angelic intellects and

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[45] Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515*, p. 21.

[46] *Divine Institutes*, Book IV, Chapter 9 available online at www.newadvent.org see also Dunbar, *Symbolism in Medieval Thought*, p. 135 n. 97.

[47] See Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L E M Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), p. 211.

the blessed, as the incarnate Word in rational minds united with the flesh. Thus throughout the entire kingdom the manifold wisdom of God shines forth from him and in him, as in a mirror containing the beauty of all forms and lights and as in a book in which all things are written according to the deep secrets of God.

0, if only I could find this book
whose origin is eternal,
whose essence is incorruptible,
whose knowledge is life,
whose script is indelible,
whose study is desirable
whose teaching is easy,
whose knowledge is sweet,
whose depth is inscrutable,
whose words are ineffable;
yet all are a single Word!
Truly, whoever finds this book
will find life and will draw salvation
from the Lord.[48]

While books (and mirrors) were popular metaphors in the Middle Ages, the interplay of *verbum/*the Word, with Christ, and with 'the book', is a measure of the identity that an image of a book might have with Christ. The association of Christ with 'the book' is seen repeatedly in Italian art before and during the period of study.

Iconography of the Verbum prior to 1250

The image of Christ Verbum was well established in Italian art prior to 1250. Christ is shown either with a beard or clean-shaven, nearly always with a cross-nimbed halo (being a clear variation to the Byzantine practice of showing the Logos with a plain halo), often dressed as a teacher and with one arm outstretched or at least a hand raised giving a blessing or gesturing as an orator. There are broad variations in stance. One format was a full-length figure of Christ standing. Examples of this format are:

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[48] Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God: The Tree of Life: The Life of St Francis*, p. 169-70.

Rome: SS Cosma e Damiano, sixth century

Santa Pressede, ninth century

Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, ninth century **(Plate 67)**

San Marco, ninth century

Tivoli   San Silvestro, twelfth century

Nepi   Castel Sant'Elia, twelfth century

A second format was of a seated Christ. Examples are:

Tivoli   Duomo, twelfth century

Montecassino Exultet Roll, eleventh century, *Brit Lib.*[49] **(Plate 68)**

Florence   Sacramentary, twelfth century, *Bib. Vat.*[50]

Sarzana   Duomo, Cross, twelfth century

Lucca   San Frediano, c. 1250. **(Plate 69)**

A third format was a bust length figure of Christ within a circle. The best and largest examples to have survived are in Sicily such as the apse mosaics at Palermo, Cefalu and Monreale. Examples from mainland Italy are:

Rome   San Paolo fuori le Mure, fifth century

Santa Prassede, ninth century **(Plate 70)**

Florence   MSS. twelfth century *Bib. Laur.*[51]

Rome   Santi Domenico e Sisto, c.1220

In the majority of cases, Christ is holding either a scroll or book in his left hand. The scroll may be rolled (*rotulus*) and symbolic of authority or open with an inscription. Likewise, the book may be shut or open with an inscription. The traditional inscription was a passage from John: "I am the light of the world…" The bindings of the books (where visible) can be either plain or decorated. If the latter, then the binding portrayed would usually be a treasure binding.

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[49] *Christ enthroned between Angels*, Exultet Roll, c.1072, MS. Add. 30337, British Library.

[50] Ms. Barb. Lat. 561, f. 108v, Biblioteca Vaticana.

[51] Conventi Soppressi 630, f.6, c.1140, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.

Post 1250

The examples of surviving images (being only a tiny fraction of what once existed) suggest that Christ was most often represented with a book or scroll and this iconographical association continued during the period of this study. Christ Verbum, as opposed to Christ incarnate[52], appeared in Italian art in (a) scenes from the Old Testament, principally scenes from the Book of Genesis[53]; (b) in *cimase* at the top of a crucifixes and the central attic panels of polyptychs; (c) as the central figure in a church apse, above the high altar; (d) as a central image on the ceiling of a church; and (e) in representations of the Trinity.

From the examples given above, it can be seen that in both the literature and the art of the period the image of a book was closely associated with the Christ Verbum. Further, the book would have been repeatedly seen as an integral part of images of the Verbum. The association was reinforced by the reverence given to missals and gospel books reflecting a belief that these books contained the Word of God and that the gospel book represented the presence of Christ. All these factors, plus the possession and use of books by the priestly caste and the use of books as metaphors for God, life and much else, make it reasonable to conclude that there was an understanding and recognition that an image of a book could be taken as representing the authority of God the Father. Thus, Christ's book in Simone Martini's *Holy Family* is the symbol of God, the Pantocrator, and the message of the picture is that the young Christ is assuming his role and responsibilities as Christ Verbum. It is a statement of his divinity.

While the presence of the book in Christ's arms was symbolic, would it have been assumed that the image of the book was of a Gospel book, that being the volume that was closest to the teaching of Christ? In my opinion this is likely, given that the texts that are shown on open books held by Christ (e.g. 'I am the light of the world' from the Gospel of John 8:12 and 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end' from the Book of Revelation 21:6)

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[52] Narrative scenes of the life of Christ rarely show him holding a book. The exceptions are scenes such as the *Transfiguration* (Duccio, 1311, National Gallery, **Plate 31f**) which it can be argued show Christ in a 'heavenly' state.

[53] Two thirteenth century Italian Bibles in the Walters Collection include illuminations of Genesis with the Godhead holding a book in each of six roundels showing the days of creation. Walters 121 and 122. In Walters 122, the light is drawn out of the book on the first day. **Plate 71.**

are from the New Testament. Furthermore, the interests of the clergy would be best served if the book held by Christ could be identified as being the same as that in use on the altar.[54]

Books and the Clergy

This takes us to the question of whether the inclusion of books in images of Christ and the saints was merely intended to reflect and reinforce the rituals on and around the altar or was intended to give added authority to the clergy as gatekeepers to the sacraments and sacred texts.[55] There can be no single answer to this and the pragmatic response is to assume that it was a mixture of both, in varying degrees. However, what is apparent is that books were signs of office and hence authority and that this authority came from God through the Popes and bishops.

The *Traditio Legis* (literally meaning the 'handing over of the law') by which Christ handed the 'Law' to St Peter as either a *codex* or a *rotulus* was the parallel of the *Traditio Clavis* by which Peter was given the keys to heaven. The two are seen as visual equivalents to the passage in Matthew (16:18-20) where Christ calls Peter 'the Rock' and promises him the keys of heaven. The *Traditio Legis* originated in the art of Imperial Rome (whereby the Emperor delegated authority by handing a *rotulus*) and appeared in Christian art from the 5th century.[56] While by the late Middle Ages the usual iconography was for Peter to receive the keys while Paul held a book, examples of the *Traditio Legis* still occurred. One is on the second pier of the Orvieto façade, the reliefs on which date from the first quarter of the

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[54] However, it is noticeable that on altarpieces the book held by Christ is often less well decorated, or undecorated, than the books held by saints. Whether this is intended as a mark of Christ's humility or a consequence of most missals being undecorated, is an open question.

[55] This is a subset of a wider debate that asks for whom medieval art was actually intended. While there has been much written on the subject of patronage, and Gregory the Great's statement on art being 'books for the illiterate' is now a commonplace, the suspicion has grown with some scholars that it was not a concern for the afterlife that was driving art but a concern for earthly position and power, and that it really mattered. Thus Kessler wrote: "The debate only confirms the conclusion that art often functioned as a reminder of clerical monopoly for those without direct access to Scripture and other spiritual instruments." Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," p. 178.

[56] This is the customary explanation and there appears to be no source for it in Holy Scripture. However Klaus Berger explored the origins of *Traditio Legis* by examining a range of Judeo and Christian writings and concluded that it was Jewish in origin and the scroll given to Peter was an apocalypse. See Klaus Berger, "Der traditionsgeschichtliche Ursprung der "traditio legis"," *Vigiliae Christianae* 27, no. 2 (1973): pp.104-22. While that might be the origin, there is nothing to suggest that the image had such a meaning in the late Middle Ages.

fourteenth century.[57] **(Plate 72)** In the top register is Christ Enthroned, at the top of the Tree of Jesse. He holds a closed book in his left hand. Below and to the right is St Peter, facing Christ and holding an open scroll. This is interpreted as 'Peter receiving from the hand of the Risen Christ the finished law of the new Kingdom'.[58] However, the scroll is symbolic and is a conflation of the Word, the law and the gospel.

In the hands of the church however, there was an incentive to separate the different elements of the *Legis* – the teachings of Christ were contained in the gospels; the law and doctrines of the church were promulgated and enforced by the successors of St Peter. Thus in the same way that Christ hands the Law to St Peter in the *Traditio Legis*, so the popes were portrayed handing volumes of their decretals to the clergy.[59] **(Plate 73)**

Traditio was also part of the ritual of clerical ordination. At each level, an appropriate symbol of office was ritually handed to the ordinand. For the minor orders, the doorkeeper received keys, the lector received a lectionary, the exorcist received a book of exorcisms and the acolyte received a candlestick and candle. For the major orders, the sub-deacon received a paten and chalice (plus a pitcher, basin and towel), the deacon received alb and stole[60], and the priest received both stole and chasuble.[61] The ordination rite of a bishop included both acts of *traditio* and symbolic rituals involving books. The bishop-elect gave an oath of obedience to the Holy See while placing his hand(s) on a gospel book; an open book of the Gospels was ceremonially placed on the neck and shoulders of the bishop-elect, and held

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[57] The credit for the design and oversight for the reliefs is usually given to Lorenzo Maitani and while he clearly played a major part in the years prior to his death in 1330 it seems probable that other parties were involved. See John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, Third ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 452ff.

[58] Elizabeth A Rose, "The Meaning of the Reliefs on the Second Pier of the Orvieto Facade," *The Art Bulletin* 14, no. 3 (1932): p. 274. What is meant by 'law' is unclear. Discussion usually refers to the epistle of St Paul where he talks of the 'law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2) or Christ's commandment in John 'to love one another' (John 13:34). What ever it was, it was contained in the New Testament.

[59] A nice example is an illumination in Walters 158, *Decretals of Gregory IX*, f.1, which shows the pope enthroned handing copies of books to men. The Walters Museum, Baltimore.

[60] This is according to the Roman Rite. De Puniet notes that there is evidence in the English Rite that Deacons also received a Gospel book. See Pierre De Puniet, *The Roman Pontifical: A History and Commentary* (London: Longmans Green, 1932), p. 173.

[61] Although it was not essential to the rite of ordination, there was a *Traditio* of the Chalice where the ordinand touched the chalice containing wine and water and the paten on which there was an unconsecrated host. Ibid., p. 258-9.

there during the prayers, blessings and imposition of hands that marks the point at which the elect became a bishop; the new bishop was handed crozier and ring, following which the gospel book was removed from his back and handed to him; finally the mitre was placed on his head.[62]

Thus, as the *Traditio legis* passes the authority of the book from Christ to St Peter, so the bishop is ordained while under the yoke of the gospel book and receives a book as one of the symbols of his authority. However, it is noticeable that of deacon, priest and bishop, all of whom read the gospel during mass, under the Roman Rite it was only the bishop who was given the gospel book as a symbol of office.

There are a few examples in the period of works of art that show priests or deacons holding and using books. One example is the fresco *Meditation of St Martin* by Simone Martini[63] which shows St Martin in bishop's vestments and mitre, meditating before a deacon holding a closed book. **(Plate 74)** In addition, Franciscan art included scenes from the life of St Francis and these showed friars holding books.[64] **(Plate 75a)** But these are incidental alliances and there appears to be no attempt in the art of the period to bolster directly the authority of priests to control access to the word of God. Thus, the presence of images of books in the art around the altar gave authority to the liturgy taking place at the altar and the copy of the gospel on the altar, but only indirectly to the clergy that used it.

In the final part of this chapter, I examine a work of art where, I believe, the image of a book plays an important part in revealing the meaning of the composition, the identification of figures represented, and even the date of the commission. It is an example that illustrates some of the forgoing matters, such as the *Traditio Legis*, and demonstrates that an image of a book in a liturgical setting does not necessarily represent a gospel book or Bible. It is also a work of art that, I contend, was intended to enhance the authority of a pope.

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[62] See Roger E Reynolds, "The Liturgy of Clerical Ordination in Early Medieval Art," *Gesta* 22, no. 1 (1983): pp. 27-38. Which has examples of illuminations showing the act of *traditio* for the ordination of each level. Also Roger E Reynolds, "The Portrait of the Ecclesastical Officers in the Raganaldus Sacramentary and its Liturgico-Canonical Significance," *Speculum* 46, no. 3 (1971): pp. 432-42.

[63] Chapel of St Martin, Lower Church, Assisi, c.1317.

[64] For example scenes in the *Dossal of St Francis* in the Museo Civico, Pistoia (see Chapter 3).

The Stefaneschi Altarpiece

The Stefaneschi Triptych[65] is a double-sided altarpiece that is firmly attributed to Giotto and was commissioned by Cardinal Jacopo Caetano Stefaneschi for Old St Peters, either for the high altar or the canon's altar.[66] On one side is Christ enthroned holding a closed book on his left knee. **(Plate 39a)** The book is richly decorated with what appears to be triangular areas of gold surrounding a central hexagon within which is a quatrefoil indicating multiple inlays of leather. A broad margin has further decoration. In the predella below the main panels, the Virgin and Child are placed in the centre surrounded with two angels and twelve apostles.[67] Six of the apostles are holding closed books, of similar size and each decorated with a central diamond pattern, although the binding colours vary. The decoration of these books is modest in comparison with the book held by Christ but there can be no doubt that each represents the teachings of Christ, so they are to be interpreted as gospel books.

On the other side of the Triptych, which originally faced the nave[68], St Peter is shown enthroned holding the keys of heaven, with Saints James Major, Paul, Andrew and John the Evangelist as supporters. **(Plate 39b)**. Kneeling before St Peter are two figures. **(Plate 39c)** One can be clearly identified as Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi. **(Plate 39d)** He was the donor and is shown holding a model of the Triptych itself. He is presented by St George, his patron. The identity of the second kneeling figure is more problematic. This figure is shown as a saint and has a bishop's mitre and dark travelling cloak. **(Plate 39e)** He is looking up at St Peter, with his mouth open as if speaking and he is holding a decorated book. The figure behind is also difficult to identify: another saint, wearing the pallium (which indicates a

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[65] Musei Vaticani.

[66] The literature is extensive. While nearly all authors accept the attribution to Giotto, dispute continues as to when the panel was made and where in St Peter's it was placed. See Julian Gardner, "Giotto's Portrait of Christ," in *Intorno al Sacro Volto di Genova*, ed. Anna Rosa Calderoni Masetti (Venezia: Marsillo, 2007), pp. 209-22; Julian Gardner, "The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974): pp. 57-103; Bram Kempers and Sible De Blaauw, "Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist," in *Giotto and the World of Early Italian Art: An Anthology of Literature*, ed. Andrew Ladis (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), pp. 407-37; Margrit Lisner, "Giotto und die Aufträge des Kardinals Jacopo Stefaneschi für Alt-Peter," *Romisches jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 30 (1995): pp. 59-133.

[67] The Christ Child is unusual in that the child's fingers are in the mouth.

[68] Gardner, "The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration," p. 63. Some books state that this is the rear of the altarpiece thereby implying that it faced the apse but I am convinced that Gardner is right about the orientation and St Peter faced the nave.

pope or archbishop), holding a small, red, open book but without headgear. He could be seen as the supporter of the kneeling figure but does not place his hand in an act of presentation in the way St George does.

In descriptions of the Triptych, the kneeling figure is usually identified as Celestine V, who was pope for a few months in 1294 before abdicating and being imprisoned by his successor, Boniface VIII. Celestine was canonised by Clement V in 1313. The sponsoring saint is likewise identified as Pope St Clement I, or Pope Celestine I or Pope Silvester I. The attraction of the hypothesis that Celestine V is the identity of the kneeling figure, is that Stefaneschi wrote a life of him, the *Opus Metricum*, which was in time enlarged to include an account of Celestine's canonisation, the *De Canonizatione,* and it has been suggested that this is the book held by the kneeling figure. [69] The origin of this hypothesis goes back at least to Ignaz Hösl in 1908.[70] It was promoted by Martin Gosebruch in 1961 and subsequently supported by Bram Kempers and Sible de Blaauw who expressed complete certainty that the kneeling figure was Celestine and opined that the standing figure was indeed St Clement I, as proxy for Pope Clement V.[71] Margrit Lisner also supported the identification of Celestine for the kneeling figure but opted for Celestine I for the standing figure.[72] However, Julian Gardner challenged these identifications and proposed that the kneeling figure was St Augustine of Hippo with St Gregory the Great standing behind.[73] I wish to question whether any of these explanations are correct and advance an alternative hypothesis. By doing so, I hope to offer an interpretation of the underlying meaning of the work and draw attention to the value of considering the books that appear in works of art in this period.

The identification of the kneeling figure as St Celestine places the date of the altarpiece to no earlier than 1313, and possibly to 1319 if arguments about the date of composition of the *De canonizatione* are accepted. The current date range offered by the Vatican Museum is 1315-

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[69] Martin Gosebruch, "Giotto's Stefaneschi-Altarwerk aus Alt-St. Peter in Rom," in *Miscellanea Bibliotheca Hertzianae Romische Forschungen* (Munich: A. Schroll, 1961), pp. 112ff.

[70] Ignaz Hösl, *Kardinal Jacobus Gaietani Stefaneschi : ein Beitrag zur Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des beginnenden vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Emil Ebering, 1908), p. 118.

[71] Gosebruch, "Giotto's Stefaneschi-Altarwerk aus Alt-St. Peter in Rom.", Kempers and De Blaauw, "Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist," p 411-12.

[72] Lisner, "Giotto und die Aufträge des Kardinals Jacopo Stefaneschi für Alt-Peter," p. 66.

[73] Gardner, "The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration," pp. 86-7.

1320, although some of the above-mentioned scholars have suggested dates in the late 1320s and the 1330s.[74] Gardner, however, argued that the Triptych predated the Arena Chapel frescoes and therefore to a date around the Jubilee year, 1300. If Gardener is correct, then the kneeling figure cannot be Celestine.[75]

The difficulties that attach to an identification of St Celestine are many. Julian Gardner argues persuasively that the lack of either tiara or pallium was evidence that the figure was not a pope. The counter argument is that while Celestine had abdicated the papacy and thus was not entitled to those papal attributes he was, having once been bishop of Rome, entitled to a bishop's mitre. This seems a very weak argument given Celestine's apparent desire for humility, his abandonment of all the trappings of office and his intention of returning to a mountain hermitage as plain Brother Pietro. It is more likely that if Celestine was not to be portrayed as a pope then he would have been shown as a saintly hermit, not as a bishop. In addition, there is a difficulty with the book held by the figure. Portrayed with thick, square-edged boards and corner bosses, this appears to be an old style of binding and contrasts with the books held by Christ and the Apostles. Such a binding would be inappropriate for a pope who had died only a few years earlier and suggests that the kneeling figure dates from a earlier time.[76]

If the iconography is questionable, so is the motive. St Celestine V would be an awkward choice for a prominent place on an altarpiece in the nave of Old St Peter's. While Celestine was venerated as a hermit saint and founder of the Celestines, he did not make a suitable role model as pope. He resisted his election and abdicated at the soonest opportunity, after just

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[74] Kempers and De Blaauw, "Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist," p. 425-6.

[75] The dating of the altarpiece is significant for several reasons. While there is evidence from the Necrology of St Peter's that the altarpiece was commissioned from Giotto, the uncertainty about its date means that its position in the corpus of the artist's work, and how it relates to other works where the attribution is more problematic, is harder to resolve. The nature of Giotto's workshop and the role played by other artists in the workshop is a matter of hypothesis but is seen as a way of resolving differences in Giotto's work. Having a firmer date for the Stefaneschi Altarpiece would allow such thinking to develop. Finally, an early date would confirm the altarpiece as 'a truly revolutionary achievement'. Gardner, "The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration," p. 103; Hayden B J Magininis, "In Search of an Artist," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giotto*, ed. Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 24-25.

[76] The use if such a pictorial device to signal to viewers (whether or not the educated elite) that the composition incorporated a shift in time was a viable strategy in the late medieval period. See Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, "Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism," *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 3 (2005): pp. 403-15.

five months and ten days in office. His pontificate is remarkable for having achieved nothing but ineptitude and his own life ended in a prison cell, with rumours that he had been murdered.[77] Furthermore, the decision to canonise Celestine owed much to politics. The French King, Philip IV, was particularly eager to demean the memory of Boniface VIII, the last Roman Pope, and to exert his influence over the papacy in Avignon. Although there is no question that Stefaneschi supported and celebrated the canonisation of Celestine it does not follow that he would want, or be allowed, to place Celestine's image on the altarpiece, a position in full view of the congregation and inviting comparison between Celestine and the current incumbent of the papal throne. Although Stefaneschi was a Canon of St Peters, he was not the Archpriest, the pre-eminent authority in the basilica.

If an identification of the kneeling figure as St Celestine is problematic, then it follows that the *terminus post quem* for the date of the altarpiece can be earlier than 1313 and, crucially, candidates for the kneeling saint can also include those that are relevant to the period before the papacy left Rome in 1304. In this context, Stefaneschi's close association with Boniface VIII (1294-1303) is relevant. Both Stefaneschi and his uncle, Cardinal Matteo Rosso Orsini, were related to Boniface[78] and were allies in the Orsini family struggle with another Roman family, the Colonna. This struggle was convincingly determined by the election of Boniface and the subsequent proscription of the Colonna cardinals, Giacomo and Pietro, the bull for which was signed by Jacopo Stefaneschi in 1297. Boniface had created Stefaneschi cardinal deacon of S. Giorgio in Velabro in 1295 and it is as a cardinal that Stefaneschi appears on the altarpiece as the donor. So there was a strong motive, and it might have been politic, for Stefaneschi to find a way to represent on the altarpiece Pope Boniface, his ally and mentor, and perhaps his uncle Cardinal Orsini as well. That Boniface VIII was the kneeling figure was suggested as a probability by Wilhelm Lübke in 1878.[79] While this is clearly wrong given the figure's nimbus, it is worthwhile to consider whether the kneeling figure is a proxy for Pope Boniface VIII, one of his namesakes, St Boniface, Bishop and Martyr.[80]

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[77] T S R Boase, *Boniface VIII* (London: Constable, 1933), p. 73.

[78] Boniface was Benedetto Caetano and was a cousin of Matteo Orsini, although it is not clear of what degree (he was equally related to the Colonna); Stefaneschi's full name was Jacopo Caetano Stefaneschi; Matteo Orsini was Stefaneschi's uncle, by his mother. See Ibid., p. 33.

[79] Wilhelm Lübke, *Geschicte der Italienischen Malerei*, 2 vols., vol. I (Stutgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1878), p. 123.

[80] St Boniface the Martyr was listed in all the martyrologies that contributed to the formation of the *Martyrologium Romanum*, including that of Bede, the *Vetus Romanum* and the Martyrology of Usuard. See

St Boniface came from Devon and was a missionary in Germany in the eighth century. He was martyred in 754 and the first 'life' of him was written by a monk, Willibald, prior to 768.[81] In 719 Boniface was summoned to Rome and on 30th November 722 was consecrated bishop by Pope Gregory II and, crucially for this study, was given a book. This is described by Willibald:

> When the holy day for the sacred solemnity dawned, which was both the feast day of St Andrew and the day set aside for his consecration, the holy Pontiff of the Apostolic See conferred upon him the dignity of the episcopate and gave him the name of Boniface. He put into his hands the book in which the most sacred laws and canons of the Church and the decrees of Episcopal synods have been inscribed or compiled, commanding him that henceforth this norm of church conduct and belief should be kept inviolate and that the people under his jurisdiction should be taught on these lines.[82]

The book handed to Boniface by Pope Gregory can be termed a *decretals*, a collection of decrees, and as such, is of a much earlier date than other known collections in the western church.

As part of the consecration ceremony Boniface made an oath of loyalty to the pope, although it was addressed to St Peter. It commences:

> I, Boniface, by the grace of God bishop, promise to you, blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, and to your vicar, the blessed pope Gregory, and to his successors....[83]

The wording of the oath is remarkably apt given the circumstances that existed during Boniface VIII's papacy almost 600 years later. It gives unwavering allegiance to the

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Jacques Dubois, ed., *Le Martyrologe D'Usuard: texte et commentaire*, vol. 40, *Series Subsidia Hagiographica* (Bruxelles: Societe Des Bollandistes, 1965), p. 241; Henri Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques du moyen âge : étude sur la formation du martyrologe romain* (Paris: J. Galbada, 1908), pp. 115 & 429.

[81] Translated by Talbot. See C H Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954), pp. 24ff.

[82] Ibid., pp. 44-5. The Latin text is in Wilhelm Levison, ed., *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum Scholarum et Monumentis Germaniae Historicis separatim editi.* (Hannoverae et Lipsiae: 1905), pp. 29-30.

[83] The full text is in John Seville Higgins, "The Ultramontanism of St Boniface," *Church History* 2, no. 4 (1933): p. 203. It is also in Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, pp. 70-1. The Latin text is in Michael Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1916), pp. 28-29.

successors of St Peter and commits the speaker to act against deviant bishops, as the Colonna were undoubtedly regarded by the Orsini.

Given Stefaneschi's strong connection to Boniface VIII, and his role in regard to the Colonna, it is plausible that it is the moment of St Boniface's oath that is portrayed on the Stefaneschi altarpiece. St Boniface was about 42 when he was consecrated bishop so it would have been appropriate to show him both as a man of mature years and as older than Stefaneschi. The bishop's mitre is obviously correct and the black cloak is appropriate for a Benedictine missionary. Boniface is looking at St Peter with his mouth open as if speaking his oath of loyalty. In addition, the figure of St Andrew is adjacent, indicative of the day on which the consecration took place. Thus, the figure kneeling before St Peter in the Altarpiece is both a proxy for Boniface VIII and a clear reminder to the clergy (those who would be familiar with the historical account) of what the pope expected in terms of loyalty.

It follows that the book held by the kneeling figure is not being offered to St Peter, nor is it a copy of Stefaneschi's *De Canonizatione*. Willibald's account describes Boniface's oath as having been written out and placed over the sacred body of St Peter, presumably a reference to St Peter's tomb. But this script would be a document, a piece of parchment, and unlikely to be represented by a book. The straightforward explanation of what Boniface grasps is that it is a gospel book on which Boniface is taking his oath. This explanation is supported by the image of the book itself. As already noted, it is portrayed with an old style of binding, although the similarity of the decoration, if not the detail, to that on the books held by St Paul, St John the Evangelist and St James could identify it as a gospel book. However, there is the possibility of a deeper meaning. As described above in Willibald's account, Boniface received a *decretals* from Gregory II. In 1296, Boniface VIII commissioned a *decretals* called *Liber Sextus Decretalium*, which updated the earlier *Decretals of Gregory IX*.[84] Boniface VIII approved the *Liber Sextus* on 3rd March 1298. So, there are three possible interpretations of the book depicted in the saint's hand, any of which, or a conflation of them all, might have been seen and understood by the viewer of the altarpiece. It could be the gospel-book on which St Boniface is making his vow, thereby reminding the viewer of the oath of loyalty to the pope. It could be the volume of laws, canons and decrees that has been given to St Boniface by Gregory II, as described by Willibald. Or it could represent the *Liber Sextus*

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[84] The Pope himself was involved in preparing the *Liber Sixtus* and its publication was 'an event of capital importance for church administrators throughout Europe'. Boase, *Boniface VIII*, p. 91-3.

Decretalium issued by Boniface VIII. Thus St Boniface would be a proxy for the pope and the book would be a proxy for the pope's new *decretals*. Putting the book at the centre of the interpretation of this work underlines the importance of understanding the role of an image of a book when interpreting a picture.

The identity of the figure standing behind St Boniface is also problematic. A saint, balding, bearded but without headgear, he wears the pallium (which indicates a pope or archbishop) and holds what appears to be a small, red, open book with a tassel or strap hanging from it. He could be seen as the supporter of the kneeling figure of St Boniface even though he does not place his hand in an act of presentation in the way St George does for Cardinal Stefaneschi. So it could be St Gregory II, the pope who consecrated Boniface. However, if St Boniface is a proxy for the pope then the standing figure should relate to Boniface VIII in the same way that St George relates to Stefaneschi. Prior to becoming pope as Boniface VIII, Benedetto Caetano was Cardinal Deacon of S. Nicolo in Carcere and then Cardinal Priest of SS. Silvestro e Martino ai Monti. Seals survive from both these appointments and show St Nicholas on both[85], which suggests that the pope had an ongoing attachment to the saint.[86] However, if the figure is St Nicholas then the iconography would be original. St Nicholas is usually shown in the west with a beard and often holding a book, but the attribute of a pallium is a characteristic of his image seen only in Eastern art.[87] Also, given that St George is shown with his attribute the serpent, one would expect St Nicholas to be shown with the three round purses with which he is commonly depicted, but there is no sign of them on the panel. So, alternative identifications are that of St Boniface IV, the saint pope that Boniface VIII chose as the patron of his own funeral chapel in St Peter's Basilica and whose remains, already in St Peter's, Boniface VIII had reinterred under the altar below his new tomb,[88] and

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[85] See Julian Gardner, "Some Cardinals' Seals of the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 38 (1975): pp. 87-8.

[86] An earlier Orsini pope, Giovanni Gaetani Orsini, had also been Cardinal Deacon of S. Nicolo in Carcere, had taken the name Nicholas III, and was buried in the Chapel of St Nicholas at St Peter's. Furthermore, the chapel dedicated to St Nicholas at Assisi was built by Cardinal Napoleone Orsini in memory of his brother Giovanni Caetano. This suggests that the Orsini had a powerful and longstanding dedication to St Nicholas. If, in the altarpiece, the figure standing behind St Boniface is St Nicholas then this would not only be appropriate for the pope but also would allude to Cardinal Matteo Orsini and the Orsini family.

[87] Where it is termed an *omophorion*.

[88] The funeral chapel was in place by 1297. See Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*, trans. D.S. Peterson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 216-7. and Herbert L Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the path of the pilgrim* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 215-6..

Pope Boniface III, who although not included in the *Martylogium Romanorum*, was depicted on the walls of St Peter's as a saint and had the same attribute of profound baldness as the figure in the altarpiece.[89] The inclusion of a 'Saint Pope Boniface' in the Stefaneschi Altarpiece as a second proxy would be consistent with the pope's desire to reinforce his legitimacy and authority.[90]

 If the kneeling figure is St Boniface the Martyr and not St Celestine V, then the currently held *terminus post quem* of 1313 (the canonisation of Celestine) no longer applies to the altarpiece. Given the hostility towards Pope Boniface VIII by his successors it is unimaginable they would have sanctioned a design which included a Boniface namesake. Thus, the Stefaneschi Altarpiece relates to the papacy of Boniface VIII and it is possibly dated to between 1298 (when the *Liber Sextus Decretalium* was approved) and 1303 (the death of Boniface VIII).[91] This would mean that the commission dates from when the papacy was still in Rome and would accord with Julian Gardner's assertion that the Stefaneschi Triptych predates Giotto's work at the Arena Chapel.[92] It would also mean that the Stefaneschi altarpiece predates that other great double-sided altarpiece, Duccio's *Maestà*.

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[89] The papal images are recorded in Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, *Effigies pontificum Romanorum cum eorum vitis* (Rome: Typis Bartholomaei Bonfadini, 1595). The image of Boniface III is titled as 'S. Bonifacius' and described as 'Sanctus Bonifacius iii'; Cavalieri, *Effigies pontificum Romanorum cum eorum vitis*, p. 63. However Boniface III is not listed in the Martyrology of Usuard and was not included in the *Martyrologium Romanum* when that was made for Pope Gregory XIII in the sixteenth century.

[90] As T Boase has noted, Benedetto Caetano's choice of Boniface as his papal name was not without negative connotations. The previous holder of the name, Boniface VII, was regarded as an 'Anti-Pope' who was blamed for the deaths of two popes and was himself possibly murdered in 985. Unsurprisingly, successors to the papacy avoided the name of Boniface. Boase, *Boniface VIII*, p. 240, n. 2.. What the attraction to Caetano of the name is unknown but the presence in St Peter's of the relics of Pope St Boniface IV (d. 615) and of another nave altar dedicated to a St Boniface, and that three other Saints called Boniface figured in the martyrology must have contributed to the name's acceptability. (For the presence and position of the altar dedicated to St Boniface, see Giacomo Grimaldi and Reto Niggl (Ed), *Descrizione della basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano : Codice Barberini latino 2733* (Rome: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1972), pp. 138-39.)

[91] For Giotto's presence in Rome from 1298 see Miklos Boskovits, "Giotto a Roma," *Arte Cristiana* 88 (2000): pp. 171-80.

[92] Given the importance that Boniface attached to the Jubilee of 1300 it is possible that the Stefaneschi Altarpiece could be associated with decorations for the Jubilee or as a consequence of it. However, Boniface only proclaimed the Jubilee on 22nd February 1300 and it is unclear what preparations were put in place specifically for the *Anno Santo*. The connection is too tenuous to permit a narrowing of the date of the Altarpiece.

Conclusion

A belief in an all-powerful and all-seeing God underpinned the authority of the Church and its clergy. The role of church art was to reinforce this belief and the consequent authority. This was done by educating and reminding the viewer of the gospel story (what can be thought of as transmission) and acting as a conduit for the unsleeping eye of God.[93] The image of a book was a key symbol of the Godhead and Christ Verbum, emphasising the Word and the message of the gospels. It was a clear sign to the faithful that the gospel book was at the heart of their religion. The Church's identification of the gospel book with both Christ's teaching and the presence of Christ, justified the great reverence given to the gospel book in the way it was processed, handled, blessed and kissed. Images of books held by Christ and the saints reinforced and confirmed the divine significance of the book. Both images and human conduct validated and, indirectly, enhanced the importance of the clergy who handled the book, read its contents and interpreted them.

The book held in the arms of the young Jesus in Simone Martini's *Holy Family* is a symbol of Jesus's divinity and a sign of his assuming the role of Christ Verbum and teacher.

The delegation of absolute authority from Christ to St Peter and through him to the popes was recorded in a book and portrayed in art as the handing over of a book in either scroll or codex form (*traditio legis*). Onward transmission of authority to the bishops involved the swearing of an oath on a book, consecration under a book, and the receipt of a book. The book symbolised the authority of God. The book was also a symbol of papal authority in the form of *decretals*, volumes of papal and council decisions in ecclesiastical law. The *Stefaneschi Triptych* includes a book that could be representing such a volume and is a mark of the authority of a pope.

The two sides of the Stefaneschi Triptych sum up the symbolic role that images of books played. An altarpiece on the high (or canon's) altar of St Peters with an image of a richly decorated book held by Christ, together with pictures of apostles prominently holding books, all emphasise the authority of the Gospel book and validate both the liturgy being performed at the altar and the clergy responsible for its performance. In addition, a book that

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[93] For examples where images of Christ were thought to be dangerous to contemplate, a result of the combination of the reverence accorded to certain images, the medieval comprehension of optics and the connection between light and the soul, see Gardner, "Giotto's Portrait of Christ," pp.214-15.

is a *decretal*, in the hands of a bishop, indicates the authority of the pope in ecclesiastical law and the role of the bishops.

Case-study

'Arma nostre militie' - books as the weapons of the Friars.

This chapter examines the interest of the Franciscan Order in books as symbols of the Order's own evolution, mission and authority. The possession of books was a difficult and devisive issue for an order founded on a principle of total poverty and subtle changes occur in the way books are represented in Franciscan paintings in this period. The Order was influential in the shift to greater verisimilitude in religious painting and in the development of the altarpiece, and the book became a key motif. The chapter considers *Vita* panels of St Francis (together with a single example of a *Vita* panel of St Dominic) for the role played by images of books, and Franciscan altarpieces for the way images of books replaced images of *rotuli* as symbols of authority. The chapter commences by noting the importance of books to the mendicant orders.

The friars liked books. It was a relationship that developed in the thirteenth century along with the growth of the mendicant orders. Although the four main orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Austin Hermits and Carmelites) followed differing ministries and rules, each undertook the education of its own members and sought to underpin their preaching with learning and scholarship. This was particularly the case with the Dominicans and Franciscans, who established schools in their convents and became involved with the teaching of theology in the universities. This all required access to books and resulted in the creation of libraries. Thus, the friars became collectors of books and were so active in their collecting that, by the middle of the fourteenth century, there were complaints. The Archbishop of Armagh and sometime Chancellor of Oxford University, Richard Fitzralph, told the Pope that he was unable to find "any useful book for sale; for they have all been bought up by the friars, so that every convent has a large and noble library, and every friar with a standing in the *studia* has a noble library".[1] Admittedly, this was part of a wider

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[1] N. Senocak, "Book acquisition in the medieval Franciscan order," *Journal of Religious History* 27, no. 1 (2003): p. 20.

charge against the friars in a campaign to have their privileges reduced so as to protect the rights of the secular clergy, but the complaint is still suggestive of the practices of the friars.[2]

The friars were also ambitious to extend their ministry and this involved building new churches. Throughout the period of study, great effort was applied by the friars to building churches and decorating them with works of art, and specifically art that was more naturalistic. An example is the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence. The first church on the site was started in the 1220s to be replaced by a second in the 1250s and the present church in the 1290s. This, when first built, was one of the largest churches in Tuscany and its Cappella Maggiore was the focus of a sustained decorative campaign by the friars.[3] For the high altar, a large *polyptych* was commissioned from Ugolino di Nerio, measuring over four metres wide and two and a half metres high.[4] **(Plate 76)** In terms of scale and technical innovation the altarpiece, along with the church itself, can be seen as a statement of the Franciscan Order's position in the community of the Florentine city state and in the Church, just 100 years after the death of St Francis. The altarpiece is an example of the format that was then dominating the market for altarpieces in Tuscany and central Italy in the first half of the fourteenth century and in which the inclusion of images of books was an embedded part of the iconography.[5] Although much of the altarpiece is now lost, the identity of most of the figures on the altarpiece has been deduced and it is probable that in

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[2] Fitzralph was complaining that the education of his curates at Oxford was being inhibited because no theological textbooks were available for them as the friars had bought them all. Katherine Walsh, *Richard Fitzralph in Oxford, Avignon and Armagh: A Fourteenth-Century Scholar and Primate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 426. Senocak states that there is other evidence that shows that Franciscans were 'fervent buyers of books at the institutional and individual level'. Senocak, "Book acquisition in the medieval Franciscan order," p. 21.

[3] Santa Croce was commenced in 1295 and decoration of the Cappella Maggiore started about 1310. See Nancy M. Thompson, "The Franciscans and the True Cross: The Decoration of the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Croce," *Gesta* 43, no. 1 (2004): p. 61.

[4] The probable date of the Santa Croce altarpiece is 1325-1329. Only fragments survive, dispersed in several collections, and the original arrangement and construction has been subject of scholarly research and conjecture. The literature includes Christa Gardner von Teuffel, "The Buttressed Altarpiece: A Forgotten Aspect of Tuscan Fourteenth Century Altarpiece Design," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 21 (1979): pp. 48ff., Martin Davies and Dillian Gordon, *The Italian Schools before 1400* (London: National Gallery, 2001), pp. 99-116., Bomford et al., *Italian Painting before 1400*, pp. 98-123., Joanna Cannon, "The Creation, Meaning, and Audience of the Early Sienese Polyptych: Evidence from the Friars," in *Italian Altarpieces 1250-1550: Function and Design*, ed. Eve Borsook and Fiorella Superbi Gioffredi (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1994), pp. 53ff. and Norman E Muller, "Reflections on Ugolino di Nerio's Santa Croce Polyptych," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 57, no. 1 (1994): pp. 45-74.

[5] Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460*, p. 74.

the main register four saints: Peter, Paul, Francis and Anthony of Padua, were shown holding books. In the upper tier a further seven apostles also hold books.[6]

As noted in Chapter 3, there was a marked shift towards greater verisimilitude in painted images during the second half of the thirteenth century and particularly in the decade around 1275. There is an established theory that links the development of naturalistic art to the rise of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century. Although Vasari is cited as the first art historian to write about this connection, it was Henry Thode who provided the first theoretical explanation of the causal relationship between the friars and painting and this has been debated and elaborated since by others.[7] Thus, in seeking an answer as to how the change in art in the thirteenth century came about, Gombrich points to:

> the increasing demand for what I have called the dramatic evocation, the return to the desire not to be told only *what* happened according to the scriptures, but also *how* it happened, what the events must have looked like to an eyewitness. I agree with those who connect this decisive change with the new role of the popular preacher in the thirteenth century. It was the friars who took the Gospel story to the people and spared no effort to make the faithful relive and re-enact it in their minds.[8]

If this link between the preachers and naturalism in art is valid, then we should look for changes in the detail of mendicant altarpieces and panels, and specifically in the images of

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[6] Ten out of the twelve upper tier panels survive. The saints holding books are Matthew, James the Less, Andrew, James the Greater, Philip, Simon and Matthias. The two missing panels may have shown St Lucy and St Thomas. The apostle that is missing from the various reconstructions is John the Evangelist who may have been shown in the Crucifixion scene, also missing.

[7] Anne Dunlop helpfully summarises the shades of opinion on this in Louise Bourdua and Anne Dunlop, eds., *Art and the Augustinian Order in Early Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 3-8. See also Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and art patronage in late medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 7-11. Originally published in Germany in 1885, Henry Thode's *Franz von Assisi und die Anfänge der Kunst der Renaissance in Italien* has recently been translated into Italian. It is possible that Thode places too great an emphasis on the character of St Francis himself and does not allow for the way that the Order evolved after the saint's death. None the less, Thode identifies the Franciscan offering of a Christianity that is a 'simple and a natural religion' as meeting a need in society that was weary with crusades and looking for reform in the Church, a society that included new commercial and artisan classes and a faithful that demanded 'the right to read and interpret the Bible'. The popular success of the Franciscans in challenging the established church order, and the building of numerous new convents and churches, created the opportunity to challenge the established artistic convention by creating new and more realistic forms in sculpture and painting. Thode places the impact of the Franciscans as far greater than the other mendicant orders and, so far as the thirteenth century is concerned, that is probably correct.Henry Thode, *Francesco D'Assisi e le origini dell'arte del Rinascimento in Italia*, trans. Rossella Zeni (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 1993).

[8] E H Gombrich, *The Uses of Images: Studies in the Social Function of Art and Visual Communication* (London: Phaidon, 1999), p. 29.

books. It is my proposition that the importance of books to the friars can be detected in the art that decorated the friars' churches. Some of the earliest panels to survive are *Vita* panels and those of Francis and Dominic included, from the start, images of books which became part of the iconography that accompanied the cult status attaching to these saints. The subsequent inclusion of these saints in the horizontal dossal altarpieces of the late thirteenth century created a conflict of attributes: books versus the *rotuli* of authority. The book became the norm thus establishing the format, seen in polyptychs, of saints being portrayed holding books. This chapter explores this proposition by examining a number of art works for details relating to books.

Certainly, the format of saints holding books did exist prior to the arrival of the mendicant orders. Churches and cathedrals were decorated with mosaics and carved, full length statues of saints and clerics; smaller objects such as boxes and pilgrim tokens carried images of saints; and manuscripts had historiated initials with images of saints – and in each case, examples exist of some of these figures holding books.[9] However, specific choices were made during the thirteenth century which changed the emphasis on the way images of books were used and perceived in art.

This chapter will concentrate primarily on Franciscan panel paintings, with the figure of St Francis as a key motif. The focus on Francis is largely a consequence of the number of Franciscan works that are available for study. Indeed, there is a marked difference in the number of surviving early images of the founders of the two major mendicant orders. St Dominic died in 1221 and was canonized in 1234; St Francis died in 1226 and was canonized in 1228. Both orders grew dramatically during the rest of the thirteenth century, building large convents and churches, establishing libraries and places of learning, and commissioning works of art. Yet while there are many images of St Francis that are dated to the years prior to 1300, there are few painted images of St Dominic.[10] However, there are two important

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[9] For example the apse mosaics at Santa Maria in Trastevere **(Plate 6)**; the wood and bone *Casket with Apostles and Saints*, (A.543-1910) in the V&A (probably of Roman provenance it dates from the first half of the twelfth century and shows half length figures of saints, many of which are holding books.); and a manuscript in the Bodleian, MS Canon. Bibl. Lat. 34, contains the Epistles of St Paul with gloss and has historiated initials with saints holding books. It is dated to the third quarter of the twelfth century and was made in Florence. See Otto Pächt and Jonathan J G Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Cat. No. 53.

[10] It is not my purpose in this study to explain this discrepancy but I note that in William Cook's catalogue of images of St Francis there are 110 entries that are dated to before 1300 (Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi.*) In contrast, Henk van Os has suggested that there is only one surviving image of St Dominic from the thirteenth

panels that are dated to the 1230s, one of St Francis and one of St Dominic, and these will be considered first.

Vita panels

We do not know whether there was an earlier attempt at making an altarpiece celebrating the life of St Francis but the *St Francis Altarpiece* by Bonaventura Berlinghieri at San Francesco, Pescia is the earliest dated image to survive.[11] **(Plate 9)** This is signed and dated 1235, seven years after the saint's canonization. The panel shows a central figure of St Francis holding a closed book in his left hand while he gives a gesture with his right that indicates speaking or preaching. Around the central figure are six scenes that are believed to be drawn from the *Vita Prima* of Thomas de Celano[12]: 1) the Stigmatization, 2) The Sermon to the Birds, 3) the Cure of the Girl with the twisted neck, 4) the Cure of the Cripples, 5) the Cure

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century (Henk Van Os, *Studies in Early Tuscan Painting* (London: The Pindar Press, 1992), p. 269.). However, in addition to the panel in the Fogg Art Museum to which he refers, there is a small image of Dominic in one of the scenes in the *Triptych of Beato Andrea Galleriani* by the workshop of Guido da Siena in the Piancoteca Nazionale, Siena dated to about 1270 and another small image in a portable triptych in the Yale University Gallery, also dated to about 1270. One of the border medallions of the *Rucellai Madonna* contains a half-length image of St Dominic holding a book. But these are all small, supporting images and there remains a lack of any more works where Dominic is the central image. The explanation may be that, unlike the Franciscans, there was reluctance in the Dominican Order to allow a cult to develop. Joanna Cannon, "Dominic alter Christus? Representations of the Founder in and after the Arca di San Domenico," in *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans: Represetations of Christ in the Text and Images of the Order of Preachers*, ed. Kent Emery and Joseph Wawrykow (Notra Dame, Indiana: University of Notra Dame Press, 1998), pp. 26-48.

[11] The earliest surviving image of St Francis is thought to be a fresco in the chapel of St Gregory, Sacro Speco, Subiaco, a Benedictine house, which is dated 1228-9 although it is possible that it is a later reworking of a picture of a monk. There is a fragmentary image of St Francis at Mont Saint-Michel, another Benedictine house, which is dated to 1228. (Rosalind B Brooke, *The Image of St Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 161-2. And Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 222.) Some scholars give the Louvre panel of *St Francis* a date of 1230-5 but I share Cook's view that it is later, c.1260. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 152.. Whether the *St Francis Altarpiece* in Pescia was originally an altarpiece is an open question. It is possible that the early *Vita* panels were used in processions and to decorate the interior of the church, but they may also have been placed on side altars. See Gregory W Ahlquist and William R Cook, "The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of St Francis of Assisi in Thirteenth-Century Italian painting," in *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy*, ed. William R Cook (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), p. 216; Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, pp. 377-84; Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 21; Klaus Krüger, *Der frühe Bildkult des Franziscus in Italien: Gestalt- und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1992), pp. 17-24.

[12] *Vita Prima* was written in 1228/9, a task assigned to Brother Thomas of Celano by Pope Gregory IX, shortly before the canonization. (Armstrong, Hellman, and Short, eds., *The Francis Trilogy of Thomas of Celano*, p. 12.) See also Ahlquist and Cook, "The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of St Francis of Assisi in Thirteenth-Century Italian painting," pp. 211-56. for the discussion on the origin of scenes in *Vita* panels.

of Bartholomew of Narni and 6) the Expulsion of Devils at the shrine of St Francis. Altar books are visible in three of the scenes and Francis is shown holding a book in his right hand as he preaches to the birds. No other friar holds a book. The books in the scenes, four in number, are all closed and have a similar cover design and colour (brown) as the book held by the central figure.

In choosing to portray Francis in this way, iconographic choices had to have been made. In one sense, there was latitude in that there was no established or prescribed format for the painting of altarpieces, although there were precedents. The compositional arrangement of a central figure with scenes on left and right already existed in the *Majestas Domini* (c.1215, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena) **(Plate 12)** and the application of such a layout to a saint rather than to Christ had a precedent in the *Dossal of St Zenobius*, (1210 – 1230, the Master of the Bigallo Crucifix, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence), **(Plate 77)** although these panels were probably antependia rather than altarpieces.[13] Nor was there a tradition or an established way of portraying Francis and his legend.[14] Clearly, there were many precedents for the portrayal of saints and artist's pattern books included examples of saints holding books.[15] But aspects of the portrayal in the Pescia altarpiece suggest that it was not intended to give Francis a traditional 'saintly' appearance. His appearance is gaunt, the clothes are basic and rough as specified in the Franciscan Rule, and his gesture is the one that would be associated with a preacher. He is portrayed standing, possibly because of a desire to show his stigmata and to differentiate him from anything that might make him seem sedentary or like a prelate.[16] There is therefore an element of originality in the composition that confirms the view that iconographical issues were carefully thought through and that the detail has significance. So why is he holding a book?

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[13] Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460*, p. 12.

[14] E H Gombrich, "Bonaventura Berlinghieri's Palmettes," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976): p. 236.

[15] See pages 45-46 above.

[16] It seems plausible that the decision to portray Francis standing led to the more vertical, gabled structure of the altarpiece, in contrast to the existing horizontal structure of the dossal, of which both the *Majestas Domini* and the *St Zenobius* are examples.

Celano's *Life of St Francis* does not associate the saint with books. This is hardly surprising, as St Francis's concept of extreme poverty eschewed the ownership of books. While there is evidence of the existence of Franciscan libraries from early on and of Francis's study of books and recitation from breviaries, it was a different matter when it came to the personal ownership of books. [17] In response to a request by a novice to own a psalter he replies: 'whoever wishes to be a Friar Minor ought not to have anything except a tunic, as the Rule allows him, and a cord and breeches, and those who are forced by necessity or illness may have shoes'. Francis saw the ownership of books as potentially corrupting: 'After you have a psalter you will want and hanker for a breviary; after you have a breviary you will sit in an armchair like a great prelate, saying to your brother: "Bring me the breviary"'.[18] Despite this, the Rule of the Franciscans permitted brothers in holy orders the books necessary to perform Divine Office, but no other books, although brothers who could read were permitted a Psalter.[19] However, these permissions were for temporary possession, not ownership, which was forbidden by the general chapter of Assisi in 1220.[20] The issues of book ownership and the ownership of books other than the Psalter and Breviary became the subject of Papal intervention.

There are few contemporary, non-partisan descriptions of St Francis. One is by Thomas of Split who witnessed Francis preaching in Bologna in 1222 and states that: 'his habit was dirty, his appearance contemptible and his face ill-favoured' but that he gave his sermon in the Palazzo Pubblico in 'a rousing fashion'. There is no mention of Francis carrying a book.[21] Thus, if there is a lack of evidence to support the idea that a book was seen as a recognisable attribute of Francis when he was alive, and there is evidence to show that he was actively against book ownership, what were the reasons to show him with a book nine years after his death? This is especially pertinent given that the habit identified the figure as a Franciscan and the Stigmata identified him as Francis. No more attributes were necessary.

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[17] K W Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars 1215-1400* (Amsterdam: Erasmus Booksellers, 1964), p. 47.

[18] For Latin text and translation, Rosalind B Brooke, ed., *Scripta Leonis Rufini et Angeli Sociorum S Francisci* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 210-17.

[19] *Regula Bullata* Chapter 3 and *Regula Non-Bullata* Chapter 3.

[20] Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars 1215-1400*, p. 48.

[21] Thomas of Spalato *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum et Spalatinorum*, extract translated by Rosalind B Brooke, *The Coming of the Friars* (London: George Allan & Unwin Ltd, 1975), p. 136.

The key to the significance of the image of a book has to lie with the panel's first audience. They were, at least, of two types: the friars themselves and the people to whom they ministered, who were ideally the poor and needy but extended to all who were attracted by popular preaching. There may have been a third type: a patron or commissioner of the panel, either an individual or a group. Each type of audience would probably read different meanings into the images on the panel, including that of Francis's book, and these meanings would be influenced by the devotional cult attaching to Francis himself. There were no relics of Francis (the friars had been particularly careful to prevent any being 'gathered') so the cult became focused on images.[22] It was a period when 'popular religious practices' in Italy were influenced by the veneration of icons in Byzantine Orthodoxy, and some Catholic images were seen as having miraculous powers.[23]

With this background, we can consider a number of possible explanations for the inclusion of the image of the book. The first is that the book may be symbolic of the Rule of an Order and it is therefore appropriate for a founder to be holding a book. This interpretation is assumed by some scholars, but I find it unconvincing.[24] Awareness of Francis's role as Founder was common and, except for the friars themselves, the Franciscan Rule is irrelevant. What mattered was the saint's thaumaturgical powers.[25] A second explanation might be that the book could be a reference to Christ and the image of Christ the Redeemer holding a book. This is certainly possible given the identification of Francis as a 'second Christ' and would be consistent with the other shared attribute, the stigmata, although this is often not visible on images of Christ. The '*alter Christus*' identification can be traced back to Celano's *Vita Prima* of 1229 and had currency throughout the thirteenth century.[26] Such a meaning would be powerful in the context of a cult and appeal to both the friars and the common people.

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[22] Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, p. 308.

[23] Cathleen Hoeniger, *The Renovation of Paintings in Tuscany, 1250-1500* (Cambridge: Canbridge University Press, 1995), p. 33-4.

[24] Including Cathleen Hoeniger in relation to the Fogg *St Dominic*, Ibid., p. 91..

[25] The one saint who was most closely associated with a rule was St Benedict. Narrative images of St Benedict include showing him handing a book to monks and performing miracles while holding a book. While the former is probably the Rule, the latter is more likely to be the gospel book. The context is different and so is the implied meaning of the image of a book.

[26] The Louvre panel of St Francis shows him holding an open book with the text *Spiritus domini super me evangelizare caesis visum* which is seen as placing Francis in the prophetic tradition and as another Christ. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 153.

Another, more prosaic, explanation would be that the book is associated with the hand gesture. This is a gesture of speaking or preaching, thus the book could indicate what he is preaching about, that is the Word of God and the book is therefore the Gospel.

A final explanation, one that would be understood by friars and clerics, is that the inclusion of a book is political, intended to give authority and legitimacy to Franciscan friars possessing books. For this explanation to be feasible, a dramatic change to the rules and activities of the Order since Francis died in 1226 would have been necessary, and this was indeed the case.

In 1228, Pope Gregory IX had granted permission to the Franciscans to build churches in any place where they dwelt and specifically to build the basilica at Assisi as a shrine to St Francis. This was a major step in shifting the Order from the concepts of poverty espoused by the founder.[27] Then, by the bull *Quo Elongati* in 1230, Gregory issued an interpretation of the Rule of St Francis with the object of making it more practical given the great increase in the number of friars and the social impact they were having (and could have) on society. This bull permitted the friars to possess property, specifically including books, while placing ownership with the Church, thereby reconciling (albeit tendentiously) this move to greater freedom and security with the Rule. It is clear from the wording of the bull that the papal interpretation resulted from representations made by a delegation from the Order,[28] presumably those who sought to change the direction of the Order from one of itinerant evangelists to something that was closer to the monastic tradition, with its greater security and scholarship. Steps had already been made by the Order's Minister General, Giovanni Parenti, to facilitate study and the routine of prayer by ordering a supply of breviaries and by appointing provincial lecturers. Other moves had been taken to develop the scholastic capabilities of the order by establishing convents in university towns, attracting scholars to the order, and teaching theology.[29] And once permission, in the form of *Quo elongate*, had been granted, these activities could be expanded and this included the establishment and

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[27] Described by Roland Recht as 'work of correction and adjustment undertaken by pontifical ideologues when faced by the image of Francis as *il poverello*.' Recht, *Believing and Seeing*, p. 75.

[28] Regis J. Armstrong, J A Wayne Hellman, and William J Short, eds., *Francis of Assis - The Saint: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 1999), p. 570.

[29] John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: from its origins to the year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 90 - 93. The Franciscans had rapidly established themselves in the Italian university towns of Bologna and Padua, plus Oxford and Paris.

growth of libraries. Thus, by the time the Pescia *St Francis Altarpiece* was made in 1235, the Franciscan order had changed and it is possible that the inclusion of the book in St Francis's left hand was intended to emphasise that change and underline the Order's claim to scholarly authority.

Roland Recht was certain that 'the public image of St Francis was carefully controlled by the Roman authorities'[30] although whether that was really practicable in Pescia in the territory of Lucca is open to doubt. Thus, I suggest that the meaning of the book in Francis's hand in the Pescia altarpiece was intended to be read at two levels. In furtherance of the cult, the image of a book helped to associate Francis with Christ and to underpin his thaumatological powers. But the book was also a symbol of the majority, progressive parts of the Order whose views had triumphed over those friars who wished to remain close to Francis's original ideals, and so reinforced the right to possess books and pursue study and learning[31]

Within a few years of the making of the Pescia altarpiece, a *vita* panel of St Dominic was made by an anonymous Sienese painter. **(Plate 78)** The original location for the panel is unknown, although it has been suggested that it was made for the Dominican church of San Domenico in Siena.[32] The painting, now in the Fogg Museum at Harvard, is reduced to just part of the central section, a half length portrait of St Dominic, but was originally a full length portrait surrounded by perhaps twelve scenes from the saint's life.[33] On the surviving fragment, St Dominic is shown wearing the habit of the order, holding a closed book in his left hand and raising his right hand in a gesture of *adlocutio.* The image of the book lacks any cover decoration or furniture, although the cover may originally have been gilded, similar to that in the *Majestas Domini.* **(Plate 12)**

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[30] Recht, *Believing and Seeing*, p. 75.

[31] Throughout the period to 1400 there appear to have been groups of friars that objected to the Order's moves away from the ideals of simplicity, humility and poverty laid down by St Francis. These became known as the Spirituals and in the last quarter of the thirteenth century identifiable groups existed in the Marches of Ancona, Provence and in Tuscany. These were suppressed in the early fourteenth century although later another group, the Observants, were recognised and permitted to have their own convents. I have not been able to identify any art works that relate to these groups. For the position of the Spirituals on the building and decoration of churches, see David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 2001), pp. 121-23.

[32] Hoeniger, *The Renovation of Paintings in Tuscany, 1250-1500*, p. 96., repeating an hypothesis made by Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, p. 87.

[33] Hoeniger, *The Renovation of Paintings in Tuscany, 1250-1500*, p. 88-99. and Carmen Gomez-Moreno et al., "A Sienese St Dominic Modernized Twice in the Thirteenth Century," *The Art Bulletin* 51, no. 4 (1969): pp. 363-66.

The Fogg *St Dominic* is remarkable because X-Ray photographs have revealed that the image of St Dominic was twice repainted in the thirteenth century. While the first image was made in about 1235-40, the face was repainted in about 1260 and again about 1280-1285. On each occasion, the proportions and positioning of the main facial elements changed. The hands were repainted at least once, although this appears to have been without change in position. The book was present from the first version and there is no indication from the X-Ray photographs that the design of the book changed.[34] This repainting of the face and hands is seen as characteristic of the treatment given to important icons in the Orthodox Church and a consequence of the adoption of a similar devotion of images in Italy.[35] It is evidence of the importance attached to this image and in particular the need to preserve and maintain a continuity of imagery.

It is apparent, however, that when the panel was first painted there was little enthusiasm among the Dominicans for a cult of their founder.[36] The motivation for its construction was presumably a desire to decorate a side altar dedicated to the saint and the format followed was the one already used for St Francis.[37] The format included a book held by the saint and, for Dominicans, this would have seemed totally appropriate for St Dominic, who founded the order for study and preaching and encouraged the acquisition of books. Unlike Francis, Dominic carried books with him.[38] The book held by Dominic in the panel can be interpreted as a gospel. It can not be the 'Founder's Rule' for, in addition to the reasons given above for St Francis, St Dominic did not write a special rule for his order but adopted the Rule of St Augustine. Furthermore, an image of a gospel-book correlates with the role of the Dominican as a preacher and the pose given to St Dominic.

Given the iconic treatment of images of saints in the period, it is not surprising to find that virtually all images of St Francis that survive from the thirty year period following 1235 show

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[34] Gomez-Moreno et al., "A Sienese St Dominic Modernized Twice in the Thirteenth Century," p. 363 & Pl. 7.

[35] Hoeniger, *The Renovation of Paintings in Tuscany, 1250-1500*, p. 97.

[36] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 119-20.

[37] Cook states that *Vita* panels of St Francis were not placed on high altars. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 21.

[38] William A Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, vol. Two (New York: Alba House, 1973).Ch. 7, p. 191.

the saint holding a book.[39] Characteristic are the panels by Margarito d'Arezzo and followers, a good example of which is in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena.[40] **(Plate 22)** This shows the saint in the grey habit of the friars, holding a book in his left hand, the book cover decorated with a cross design. It has been suggested that these panels were hung as devotional objects on the columns of Franciscan churches but it is equally possible that they were used in processions and/or hung in convents.[41] Either way, the iconography was stable and an association between St Francis and the possession of holy books was being reinforced. But while this repeated representation might have offered authority and legitimacy for Franciscan friars to possess books, it does not necessarily offer any visible evidence of the importance of books to the Franciscans. For this, we need to turn to two more *vita* panels.

In the Bardi Chapel, immediately to the right of the High Altar in Santa Croce, is a gabled *pala* of St Francis with Scenes from his Life (**Plate 45**). It has the same format as Berlinghieri's altarpiece at Pescia from which it is derived. But it is larger, at over two metres in height, and being placed on the altar, towers over the viewer. The authorship and date of the panel is the subject of debate but current opinion suggests that it dates from about 1245 and was possibly the work of Coppo di Marcovaldi.[42] The central image of St Francis shows him holding a book in his left hand while he gives a blessing with his right. The book is shut, the lower cover shown, on which there is a design showing a decorated cross and circles indicating bosses. The page edges are indicated with lines and the strap fastenings are

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[39] The exceptions are a cross in the Pinacoteca Nazionale Bologna which has a small figure of Francis kneeling at Christ's feet and the *Stigmatization* panel in the Uffizi which was probably part of a diptych. (Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, pp. 72, 108. Also see Miklos Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, ed. Richard Offner, trans. Robert Erich Wolf, vol. 1, Section 1, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting* (Florence: Giunti, 1993), pp. 402-7.

[40] Cook gives a date for this painting as '1240s or early 1250s' although the Pinacoteca Nazionale itself suggests a later date. In the commentary on the panel by this artist in the National Gallery, Davies suggests that Margarito d'Arezzo's 'pictures are most probably of the second half of the thirteenth century'. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*; Davies and Gordon, *The Italian Schools before 1400*. Margarito d'Arezzo's panel at Sta. Maria delle Vertighe, Monte San Savino, of *Six Saints*, shows two saints with books.

[41] Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, 21.

[42] The dossal measures 234 x 127 cms. The artist is usually given as 'The Bardi St Francis Master' although some books ascribe it to a follower of Berlingheri. Likewise the date of the work is usually given as within a range from the mid 1240s to the late 1260s. Miklòs Boskovits has argued that the artist is Coppo di Marcovaldo and the work dates from about 1245. See Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, pp. 112 - 16, 472 - 507. It is therefore possible that the panel was originally in the first, and smallest church of Santa Croce, where its size would have made even more impact.

shown, albeit with incorrect perspective. Above St Francis there are two angels and between them is a scroll held by a hand from heaven on which is inscribed *Hunc exaudite perhibentem dogmata vite* ("Listen carefully to this presentation of life's doctrines"). Around the central figure are twenty scenes of the life and miracles of St Francis in which at least eighteen books are visible. Separating the central image and the surrounding scenes is a border in which are shown seventeen tiny busts of Franciscan friars, each gesturing with his hands. The scenes are thought to be based on Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima* of 1229[43] and these are listed below:

Scenes from the Life of St Francis in the Bardi Chapel panel.

Scene	Title	Vita Prima	Books
1	Francis set free by his mother	12/13	
2	Renounces everything including his clothes	14/15	The bishop and a cleric hold closed books in their left hands. The books are decorated with large and smaller crosses.
3	Designs the Franciscan habit	22	
4	Hearing the gospel he removes his shoes	22	An open book on the altar. This is presumably the gospel that Francis hears being read.
5	Innocent III approves the Rule	33	The Pope hands a book to Francis. This is the rule of the order. The book is plain. A second decorated book is held by a deacon.
6	Nativity crib at Greccio	84 – 86	There is an open book on the altar. Francis, in the vestments of a deacon sings from a second book. The book is open and has leger lines
7	Preaches to the birds	58	Francis holds a book in his left hand. Another friar holds a book in his right.
8	Preaches to the Sultan	57	Francis holds an open book in his left hand.

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[43] Boskovits sets out the studies that he says 'prove' the origin of the scenes. See Ibid., p. 472. Also Ahlquist and Cook, "The Representation of the Posthumous Miracles of St Francis of Assisi in Thirteenth-Century Italian painting," pp. 221, 33, 36-41.

Scene	Title	Vita Prima	Books
9	Ransoms the lamb	77/78	
10	Exchanges his cloak for two lambs	79	A friar holds a book.
11	Receives the stigmata	94/95	
12	Makes penance for breaking a fast	52	
13	Apparition of Francis at Arles	48	Two friars hold books.
14	Ministering to the lepers	17	
15	Death of Francis	110	A friar reads from a book
16	Crippled girl is cured and demons are expelled	127, 137/138	
17	Canonized by Pope Gregory IX	123-6	There are two books on the altar. A third book is held by a deacon.
18	Saving a ship from Ancona	55?	Francis is possibly holding a book in his left hand.
19	Pilgrims visit the shrine of St Francis	55?	There is a book on the altar (Damaged).
20	Bartholomew of Narni is cured of gout	135	

The only time in the *Vita Prima* when Thomas of Celano describes Francis holding (or at least standing before) a book is in the scene in Greccio (scene 6) when: 'the holy man of God is dressed in the vestments of the Levites' (that is, as a deacon) 'and with full voice sings the holy gospel'.[44] In addition, Celano's account states that Francis hears the gospel being read in scene 4 and calls for it to be read to him as he dies in scene 15.[45] So these books can be explained. The presence of books on altars in scenes 6, 17 and 19 would be expected, as part of the normal altar accoutrements during mass. Thereafter, the inclusion of books in the scenes must be the result of elaboration. The *Vita Prima* describes Francis writing the rule of his order but states that it was short and there is no reference to a book in the account of the Pope's approval of the Rule. Nor in any of the accounts of miracles is Francis described as holding a book.

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[44] Armstrong, Hellman, and Short, eds., *The Francis Trilogy of Thomas of Celano*, p. 96.

[45] Ibid., p. 118.

While the image of St Francis holding a book is a continuation of the iconography seen in the Pescia panel and the panels by Margario d'Arezzo, the developments to be seen in the Bardi St Francis panel are the number of books included and the number of books held by friars and clerics, rather than the saint. It suggests that books were now either seen as an attribute of friars generally or something that those who commissioned the panel wished to emphasise.

Thought to date from around 1250, the dossal of St Francis now in the Museo Civico, Pistoia, again shows a central figure of St Francis holding a closed book and giving a hand gesture indicating preaching.[46] **(Plate 75)** There are eight scenes surrounding the central figure in which are visible five altar books. In the scene of the Approval of the Rule by Innocent III, Francis is shown as receiving a book from the Pope and the book is undecorated. And in the death scene, a friar is reading from an open book that carries the opening words of the Introit from the Requiem Mass.[47] **(Plate 75a)** Thus far, this panel is consistent with the composition of the Bardi St Francis and, like it, there is a border between the central image and the surrounding scenes in which there are eight fragmentary busts of friars. However, there is an additional element in this composition that breaks new ground. What is new is that the upper four busts appear to be Franciscan friars holding open books, below which are four busts of friars dressed to indicate two other orders and all without books.[48] **(Plate 75b-e)** Putting aside an apparent distinction being made between the different orders of friars, the images of Franciscan friars holding books, used decoratively and unrelated to narrative scenes, suggests that by this time Franciscans were associated, or wished to be seen as associated, with the possession and active use of books. The friars preached and they taught

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[46] *Dossal with central figure of St Francis with eight scenes from the Legend*, 162 x 136 cms. The artist is not known but possible attributions are the so called 'Master of the Cross 433' or 'Master of Santa Maria Primerana'. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p.173.

[47] 'Requiem eternam dona eis Domine.'

[48] Cook suggests that the friars are all Franciscans but in a range of habits reflecting men at different stages of life, the oldest at the top and the youngest at the bottom. Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 175. However, two of the friars are shown in a white habit with dark capuche, while two more are wearing a lighter habit (brown?) compared to the grey habits of the top four Franciscan friars with books. While there was clearly some variation in Franciscan dress, contrary to the Rule and the subject of prohibition in the Constitutions of Narbonne and thereafter, it seems improbable that such variation would be made explicit in a dossal. Nor is such a variation seen in any Franciscan narrative paintings of the period. Thus, it seems more likely that it was intended to show other orders of friars, and perhaps to make a point as to their relative importance. Possible identifications of the habits are those of the Cistercians or Augustinian Canons for the white habit and Carmelites for the brown habit.

– activities which could and should require learning and scholarship. Both Franciscans and Dominicans were teaching theology in the universities, notably at Paris, which provoked a long running dispute with the university authorities.[49] From the beginning of the papacy of Innocent IV (1243 to 1254) the Franciscans were involved in the Inquisition and were made responsible for all inquisitorial work in the central and north-eastern areas of the Italian peninsular.[50] So the activities of the friars had become more academic and legal and this was likely to be reflected in the art.

We can take this point a stage further by considering the diptych *Crucifixion and Madonna with Child and Saints*, **(Plate 79)** dated to about 1255, and now attributed to Bonaventura Berlinghieri (although it has previously been attributed to the so-called Master of the Oblate Cross).[51] This diptych is notable as it is an early example of Franciscan saints appearing alongside other saints. The right hand panel shows the Madonna and Child with the Archangel Michael (plus dragon) and seven saints. John the Baptist and St Clare hold crosses. The child Christ and Saints Peter, Andrew and James hold *rotuli*, while St Francis and St Anthony of Padua hold books. **(Plate 79a)** Crosses, *rotuli* and books are held with the left hand. The two books are identical: they are closed and decorated with a cross design, augmented with circles, white spots and decorated corners. They are still in the style of the books shown in the earlier *vita* panels, symbolic rather than realistic, but here the perspective is more convincing. With their right hands, Andrew and James are blessing, the remaining five saints are portrayed making a speaking/preaching gesture. The Child is also gesturing in a way that could be a blessing, but He is not blessing the viewer.

The established iconography of St Francis holding a book has been applied to St Anthony, in itself demonstrating an association of Franciscans with books. But the painting also offers evidence of the friars' perceived role. The painter is not trying to equate the two Franciscan saints with the three Apostles and St John the Baptist – they are placed as supporters of the Archangel Michael (the symbol of the Church Militant) as he spears the Dragon (symbolising the Devil and heresy). These are no longer the wonderworkers, the *thaumaturgi*, of the period immediately following canonization but soldiers of Christ and, while *rotuli* might have been seen as badges of authority or ancient symbols of philosophers,

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[49] Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: from its origins to the year 1517*, pp. 122ff.

[50] Ibid., p. 302.

[51] Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, p. 73. The diptych is in the Uffizi.

the books symbolise current learning and the authority of the gospel as preached in church. The books have become the *'Arma nostre militie'.*

One final *vita* panel is worth considering. This dates from about 1280 and is the *St Francis Vita* panel attributed to Guido de Graziano.[52] **(Plate 28)** As discussed in Chapter 1, the significance of this panel is the degree of naturalism the artist has given the book. **(Plate 28a)** It is a representation of a real book, not a design copied from a pattern book, and furthermore, it is an image of a book that is recognisably valuable. This panel in Siena is an important marker of the shift to greater naturalism in religious painting, the point in time when some objects in paintings began to be rendered with greater attention to how they actually looked. It also marks a change in the presentation of the saint's life, in that the choice of scenes included in this panel excludes the miracle scenes that are in earlier vita panels.[53] These changes provoke questions of motive and timing. Henk van Os interprets the narrative scenes as indicating a desire to portray Francis as a mystic rather than a miracle worker, while William Cook draws attention to an apparent interest in the relationship between the Order and institutional Church.[54] Another answer could be that the panel was made when there would have been few, if any, surviving eye witnesses of St Francis alive and the memory of the saint depended on repeated accounts of his life and pictures – but the accounts (at least those that have come down to us) did not give much assistance in forming an image of what the holy man looked like. Thus the representations of Francis on altarpieces and other devotional panels would have been important to the laity and the friars. Furthermore, the stigmata was an important part of the Franciscan cult but was subject to questions by doubters, including some other religious orders. Thus images of Francis needed to be believable, meaning that both the human form and accompanying objects had to be naturalistic. There was a motive to paint the book realistically so that the viewer was more likely to think that the Saint's face, hands and feet were also realistically portrayed.

Realism may have brought new questions. The book looks real and would clearly have been an expensive possession – bound in red leather with elaborate tool work or in silk brocade. Is

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[52] *St Francis and Stories from his Life*, 237 x 113 cms, in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, previously in the church of S. Francesco, Colle Val d'Elsa. The attribution was peviously given as 'A follower of Guido da Siena' Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 209; Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, p. 107; Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: i dipinti dal XII al XV secolo*, p. 39.

[53] A point noted by Henk van Os – see Van Os, *Studies in Early Tuscan Painting*, p. 270.

[54] Ibid., p. 275.and Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 211.

that the sort of book that would have been associated with the Poor Man of Assisi? Perhaps not, but a painting in 1280 would have reflected the current interests of the Order of Friar Minors. The cult of St Francis was essential to the Order in that it attracted human and financial support but realism is itself a strong indication that, by 1280, the Order's lifestyle and interests had become removed from the ideas of its founder.

This examination of the *vita* panels has traced the involvement of books in early Franciscan images, picking up on the immediate association of St Francis with books, the subsequent association of books with Franciscan friars generally, and the move to greater naturalism in the portrayal of books. The next question is whether this involvement influenced the iconography of altarpieces in the thirteenth century and ultimately that of the polyptych altarpieces that became the standard backdrop to altars from the late thirteenth century.

Altarpieces

That the development of the altarpiece in the thirteenth century was influenced by the friars is widely accepted.

> The mendicant orders, as has been stressed time and again, played an important role in the development of altarpieces during the thirteenth century: particularly concerned with the spiritual guidance of urban populations, they had recognised the instrumentality of visual stimuli to foster a devotional attitude. To that end they employed church decoration by means of wall paintings and altarpieces on a vast scale.[55]

Among the mendicant orders, the Franciscans were probably quickest to reach a level of property occupation and financial leverage (albeit not ownership) to facilitate the commissioning of altarpieces.[56] The development of the altarpiece is seen as a consequence

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[55] Kees van der Ploeg, "How Liturgical is a Medieval Altarpiece?," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Ducento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M Schmidt, *Studies in the History of Art* (New Haven: National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2002), p. 114.

[56] Joanna Cannon notes that the Dominicans were committed to a life of poverty and were not in a position to commission art until the end of the thirteenth century: 'Mere survival was the main aim, and any surplus was needed for books and better buildings.' Joanna Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): p. 75.

of liturgical changes introduced by the Fourth Lateran Council and a longer-standing change in the position of the celebrant at the altar.[57] The initial form of the altarpiece was probably the *dossal* and would have been used on side altars.[58] An example is the gabled dossal of the *Madonna and Child with Sts Francis, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalen,* (1270-79) by Guido da Siena. **(Plate 26)** The central figures of the Madonna and Child (the latter clutching a *rotulus*) had originally three saints on either side but the dossal was cut back at some stage. Like the Christ child, John the Baptist holds a *rotulus* while Mary Magdalen holds a decorated ointment jar. Saints John the Evangelist and Francis hold books.[59] The *rotuli* held by Christ and John the Baptist are symbols of authority while the book held by John the Evangelist is symbolic of his gospel. Francis holds a book because of the established iconography of the *Vita* panels.

It is worth considering why the book in St Francis's arm is open. Open books are shown in a few earlier works but with the pages visible to the viewer and usually with an inscription, the *St Francis* panel (c.1255) at the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi is an example.[60] **(Plate 80)** Narrative scenes may include a figure reading or singing from an open book, and later altarpieces show figures reading or writing in an open book where the viewer can only see the cover.[61] But there is no other contemporary or earlier example of a book held in the way portrayed in the Siena dossal. It is possible that the open book was intended to

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[57] Ploeg, "How Liturgical is a Medieval Altarpiece?," pp. 103-05.

[58] Ibid., p. 106.

[59] See pages 48-49 for discussion of the detail of St Francis's book.

[60] It is attributed to the 'St Francis Master'. The panel is interesting as, *inter alia*, the inscription is not scriptural: '*hic michi viventi lectus fuit et morienti*', the translation of which is problematic but probably relates to the larger inscription concerning the stigmata. Also in Assisi, and of a similar date, is the panel attributed to Giunta Pisano where St Francis's book carries words from St Matthew's gospel '*si vis perfectus esse vade vende omnes quae habes et da pauperibus*' (Mt. 19:21). Apart from these two panels, there are only four surviving examples of pre-1275 pictures of St Francis where he is shown holding a book with a text. The earliest is the fresco at Sacro Speco in Subiaco that is dated to the 1240s, where the text is from Luke '*Pax huic domiui*' (Lk. 10:2). Of similar date is the panel now in the Louvre where Francis holds the text '*Spiritus domini super me evangelizare caesis visum*' from Luke 4: 18-19. Dated to c. 1272, the dossal in Perugia by the St Francis Master shows Francis holding the text '*Christo confixus sum cruci*' (Gal. 2:19). Finally, the panel in San Francesco a Ripa in Rome is dated to about 1275 and the text is '*Quis vult venire post me abnegat semetipsum et tollat crucem suam*' (Mk. 16:24). The one example where the book is open but blank is that now in the Vatican Pinacoteca, dated to c. 1255 and is by a follower of Giunta Pisano. It is interesting that each text is different. (Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi.* Cat. Nos. 32, 27, 193, 126, 138, 154, 163.)

[61] An example would be the polyptych by Giovanni del Biondo *The Virgin and Child with Saints Francis, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalen,* 1379, in the Rinuccini Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence.

contrast with the closed book held by St John the Evangelist, indicating that St Francis had access to the gospel.[62] In addition it may have been intended to suggest that Francis (and thus Franciscans) offered access to the mysteries of the gospel for the faithful they served, while not displaying a text so as to avoid unbalancing the composition.[63] This can only be speculation but what is clear is that a decision was made to portray a book in a new and different way and that the book was held by St Francis, thus subtly changing the established iconography of the saint.

As in the Uffizi *Diptych*, the gabled dossal by Guido da Siena combines figures with books with other figures holding *rotuli*. The *rotulus* was a symbol of authority and was therefore an attribute of St Peter but it appears that the book was the more potent symbol. For example, while St Peter holds a *rotulus* in the gabled dossal *Madonna and Child with Saints Paul, Peter, John the Baptist and Andrew* that is dated to c.1270[64] **(Plate 81)** and in the slightly later *St Peter Enthroned* altarpiece,[65] **(Plate 82)** the *rotulus* has been replaced by a book in Deodato Orlandi's gabled dossal dated c.1301.[66] **(Plate 83)** By the beginning of the fourteenth century the book had become the accepted attribute to indicate authority as well as the Word. A piece of iconography that started with cult images of St Francis had become embedded in the wider iconography of the polyptych.

Guido's dossal is seen as being innovative in terms of the compositional organisation of an altarpiece, but it was a format that would necessarily have to evolve to accommodate larger numbers of figures or narrative scenes. Along with the evolution of the polyptych format, there was also an evolution in the way books were portrayed, and the last part of this chapter looks first at two comparable altarpieces, one Franciscan and one Dominican, from early in

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[62] A contrast which will be seen again in the exporation of the *S. Caterina Polyptych* in Chapter 7.

[63] In contrast, the reconstruction of the double-sided altarpiece by the St Francis Master, of which the dossal in Perugia is part, includes St Anthony holding an open book with an inscription from *Wisdom* and the prophet Isaiah holding a scroll with text from *Isaiah*. Thus, while St Francis is positioned next to St Bartholomew who is holding a closed book, St Francis is not alone in displaying a text. For a reconstruction of the altarpiece see Dillian Gordon, "A Perugian Provenance for the Franciscan Double-sied Altarpiece by the Maestro di S. Francesco," *The Burlington Magazine* 124, no. 947 (1982): pp. 70-77.

[64] No 6 in the collection at the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, attributed to Guido da Siena.

[65] Guido da Graziano, c.1280, also at the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena.

[66] Deodato Orlandi, *Madonna and Child with Saints Peter, Paul, James and Dominic*, gabled dossal, signed and dated 1301 on frame, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa.

the fourteenth century and, finally, a third altarpiece from about 1317, by which time a format for the representation of books was fully established.

The first altarpiece, *Madonna and Child with Saints Francis, John the Evangelist, Stephen and Clare*, is attributed to the Maestro di Città di Castello.[67] **(Plate 84)** There is a pinnacle tier with the central figure of Christ Redeemer accompanied by Saints Augustine, Peter, John the Baptist and Mary Magdalen. Five books are visible; all are closed. The Christ Child has neither book nor *rotulus* but holds the Virgin's finger. The four books are held by the saints with the lower cover towards the viewer while Christ holds his book with the upper cover forward. This book has a red cover and appears undecorated apart from a pair of straps.[68] **(Plate 84a)** The book held by Francis is the same and may, along with the stigmata, be a means of emphasising an identification of the Saint with Christ. The books held by Saint John the Evangelist and St Stephen are simply decorated. That held by Stephen has a green cover with a double rectangular border and a central pattern that is reflected in his deacon's vestment. **(Plate 84b)** The book held by St John the Evangelist is brown and all that is clearly visible is a rectangular border.

Stubblebine argues that the format of this altarpiece is based on a Ducciesque formula that can be seen in the slightly earlier *Polyptych no. 28: Madonna and Child with Saints Augustine, Paul, Peter and Dominic,* which is by Duccio and dated 1305.[69] **(Plate 7)** This is a 'new formula of clearly organised and distinct parts'[70] and could be seen as the basis from which more complicated altarpieces would be developed. A new format provides an

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[67] No 33 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena. The dimensions are 116 x 184 cms. The date of the panel is open to differing views. Stubblebine suggests a date of about 1310-1315 when the Maestro was closely associated with Duccio's workshop. Torriti places it slightly later at 1320-1325 while Cook gives a date of 1300-1310. Stubblebine notes that the painting has been restored and had been badly damaged. James H Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, vol. II Plates (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 87., Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: i dipinti dal XII al XV secolo*, p. 67., Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 212..

[68] Observations about details in the pictures are qualified by knowledge that the painting was damaged and restored, possibly meaning that details have been lost.

[69] This is in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena and measures 139 x 241 cms. Although attributed to Duccio in the Pinacoteca and elsewhere, Stubblebine attributes it to the workshop of Duccio and identifies the hand of Segna di Bonaventura as the artist.Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, p. 65. I will refer to it as by Duccio. Although its original location is unknown, it is certainly a Dominican piece and Cannon suggests that it might have been on the high altar in San Domenico, Siena. Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," pp. 79-80.

[70] Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, p. 87.

opportunity to examine aspects of detail, as there is a greater likelihood of them not being copies of earlier work but represent conscious choices made by the artist or commissioner, and are thus of significance.

There is no doubt that the polyptych by Duccio is a finer piece, or at least has survived with less damage, than the polyptych by the Maestro di Città di Castello. But even allowing for this, it is possible to discern differences in the treatment of the books that are shown. There are problems with perspective in both paintings (e.g. the books held by Francis and Augustine) and there is some confusion with straps on the book held by Dominic, but the books in the Dominican altarpiece have a markedly greater level of decoration and ornament. While the book held by Christ in the Franciscan altarpiece is in a plain red cover, that in the Dominican altarpiece is black with what looks like a heavy gold decoration with circles and stars in the shape of a cross and, although indistinct, the remnants of page edge decoration. **(Plate 7b)** It is held in a more traditional way with the back of the book visible. The level of finish is clearer in the main panels: the book held by Paul shows the hasps and tasselled pulls, **(Plate 7c)** and the decoration on the front edge of the pages is visible on the books held by Augustine, Peter and Dominic. The bindings are in different coloured leathers but with identical decoration, the design being a diamond with star-bursts at each corner and a small cross in the centre. Each book has a different pattern on the page edge.

So here are two altarpieces produced within a very few years of each other by persons either working in or associated with Duccio's workshop. They share a new format, albeit one is larger than the other. Both were for use in churches in Siena but have a markedly different approach to the representation of books. The difference in treatment might be a function of wealth, belief or attitude, or a combination of two or more. The Maestro's polyptych is the smaller and is thought to have originally been located in the Poor Clare Convent of San Lorenzo in Siena, which may not have been as well endowed as San Domenico. This was also a time when the Franciscan order was divided between the Spirituals and the Conventuals with their conflicting views about poverty and there may well have been an additional need to exercise restraint in terms of 'finish', even with regard to images of books. But there may also have been a difference in attitude, with the Dominicans asserting a level of confidence while the Franciscans projected a more humble style. What is shared however is the prevalence of books, a common visual currency representing authority and knowledge.

The final altarpiece to be considered in this chapter is the 'Clark Heptatych' by Ugolino di Nerio.[71] **(Plate 33)** This altarpiece, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, is dated to about 1317, so only about a decade later than those just discussed, and it represents a culmination of the evolution of the representation of the book following the death of St Francis. It is clearly a Franciscan work and was possibly in the church of the Order's convent in Siena, San Francesco, although there is no confirmation of this.[72] The altarpiece's format is a derivative of the form that started with the Duccio *Polyptych number 28*, with three saints on either side of the Madonna and Child, a higher pinnacle for the Christ Redeemer, reduced pinnacle widths, and the addition of small angels in the spandrels. The iconography of the composition is now well established. As in the Duccio *Polyptych*, the Christ Child clutches the Madonna's gown. The choice of saints reflects the Franciscan association with martyrdom but adds the recently canonised St Louis of Toulouse. However, there is no attempt in the representation of the books to suggest poverty; no attempt to associate Francis with Christ in a shared simplicity. Instead, a formulaic representation of books is being used that emphasises their preciousness and value. The Christ Redeemer holds his book, which is in a plain red binding with black straps, in his left hand. Five saints, namely Francis, Andrew, Paul, Peter and Stephen, each hold a book in their left arm/hand. Each book is closed with the lower cover facing towards the viewer. The bindings are similar, framed boards with delicate central designs in gold representing diamonds with floral sprays. The straps are thin with delicate clasps and pulls of gold coloured thread. The edges of the pages are decorated with an arabesque floral pattern. **(Plate 33e)** This may well reflect the attitude that the Franciscans then had towards their books but it also establishes a norm in representation that is repeated in other paintings by Ugolino and countless other artists.

Conclusion

The theory being explored in this chapter is that Franciscan art in the six decades following the death of Francis reveals a particular interest by the Order in books as symbols of the order's own evolution, mission and authority. Further, my argument is that images of books acquire a degree of realism as a means of validating the image and memory of the founder and

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[71] The attribution is given by The Clark, van Os and Cook although Stubblebine attributed to an unnamed follower of Ugolino. He also gave a later date of 1325-1330. Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460*, p. 65., Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 230 - 33., Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, p. 182 - 83..

[72] Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, p. 230.

provide an additional means of association between St Francis and Christ. In altarpieces, books are a visual currency of authority and knowledge.

St Francis was regarded as a miracle worker and a mystic, one who sought to live as Christ lived, sharing the agony of crucifixion, and preaching to anyone, however lowly. The identification with Christ (something that would develop into an identification as the *alter Christus*[73]) is made clear by revealing the saint's stigmata in paintings but is also reflected in images of Francis clutching the cross in Crucifixion scenes. There was no need, nor tradition, to associate Francis with the book. Francis himself was against the possession of books and believed that friars should travel without shoes or even a staff. He was a preacher and although there were many precedents in sculpture and illumination of showing saints holding a book, the early iconography of Francis was to differentiate him from the traditional image; to have him standing rather than sitting, and dressed in a poor, simple habit rather than vestments and fine robes. In this new dynamic, iconographical choices were made, including one to show Francis holding a book, an association that was nigh on universal for the first forty years after his death. That association reflected a preoccupation on the part of the Order, or at least those that influenced the commissioning or reception of works of art, in the possession and accumulation of books.

As Thode argued, the Franciscan order became associated with, and was possibly causal in, the move in painting to greater realism. This is seen in their images of books, which in the last decades of the thirteenth century changed from being purely symbolic. The reason was possibly a need to give validation of the veracity of the image of a saint, and in doing so images of books acquired a visual currency. As the altarpiece developed, the image of the book supplanted the *rotulus* as the symbol of authority and a norm became established in polyptychs whereby saints held books as a sign of authority and knowledge, and as a symbol of their role as conduits of the Word of God. By the early fourteenth century, the books looked real, with lavish bindings and fine pages. The evidence in the Franciscan images is that books were important to the friars, as the Bishop of Armagh was only too aware.

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[73] Van Os, *Studies in Early Tuscan Painting*, p. 203.

Case-study

'Speculum Verbi' - The Virgin's Book in The Annunciation

This chapter examines the changes that occurred to the iconography of the Annunciation as portrayed in Italian paintings in the years around 1300. The Virgin's earlier attributes of cloth or spindle are replaced by a book and the chapter seeks to identify when this change occurred and the reasons for it. One mosaic and three painted representations of the Annunciation where the Virgin holds a book are examined in turn and their analysis seeks to place them in chronological order and the iconographical development. The possible influence of liturgical drama on painted Annunciations is considered and the chapter commences with an account of one such dramatisation in Florence and the eye-witness's comparison of the acted scene with the painted.

In 1439, the Ecumenical Council of Bishops that had commenced in 1431 in Basel and continued in Ferrara, moved to Florence for reasons of health and finance. One of the objects of the Council was to negotiate an end to the Great Schism with the Eastern Church and, accordingly, the Council was attended by a large number of Orthodox Bishops. One of these was Abramo, the Russian bishop of Souzdal. He kept a diary, in which he describes, *inter alia*, performances of the Annunciation and Ascension in Florentine churches. The Annunciation was performed at the church of Santissima Annunciata and Abramo describes how the scene was recreated by actors and props on the stone chancel screen. He writes: 'Seated on it there was a beautiful youth richly dressed in maiden's clothes with a crown on his head and holding a book which he was reading in silence, very much like the Virgin Mary to look at'.[1] His comparison between the staging of the annunciation and its representation

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[1] Peter Meredith and John E Tailby, eds., *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1983), p. 243. Santissima Annunciata, the church in which Abramo watched the performance of the Annunciation, was celebrated in having the 'miraculous' *Annunciation*, a fresco that was said to date back to 1252 and to have been painted by a Fra Bartolomeo, assisted by an angel. The fresco seen by Bishop Abramo showed the Virgin seated with an open book. However, it is known that this fresco of the Annunciation, viewed by the bishop in 1439, was not the 1252 original but a later, mid fourteenth century composition by an unknown artist. For a useful

in pictures is also apparent later in the same account when he describes the actor playing the archangel Gabriel as 'dressed in a robe as white as snow, adorned with gold, exactly as celestial angels are to be seen in paintings'.[2] The implication of his description is that the staging of the annunciation was intended to mirror the familiar images of the scene contained in paintings and mosaics. But while drama might be imitating art in this instance, it has been recognised for some time that art might have been influenced by dramatic interpretations.[3]

Although Annunciation images have many variations of detail (e.g. whether the Virgin is standing or sitting, whether Gabriel is on the right or the left, whether there is a baldachin), for this exploration there are three broad formats for images of the Annunciation: what I term the Lucasian format, where the Virgin has no attributes; the Byzantine format, where the Virgin has either a pitcher or a spindle; and the Book format, where the Virgin either holds or reads a book. As the last of these is familiar and is the focus of the chapter, I now give examples of the first two formats.

An example of the Lucasian format is the Annunciation scene that originally was part of an altarpiece at S. Domenico, Siena, and is now at Princeton University Art Museum. **(Plate 85)** The panel is by Guido da Siena and it is dated to about 1270.[4] The Virgin is standing before a

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summary of the background on this fresco, see Penny Howell Jolly, "Jan van Eyck's Italian Pilgrimage: A Miraculous Florentine Annunciation and the Ghent Altarpiece," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 61, no. 3 (1998): pp. 369-78. There is no record of the appearance of the original fresco and there are open questions as to why it was repainted, whether the new version merely replicated the old composition or introduced a new iconography, and whether the repainting had any influence on the dramatic performance of the Annunciation, or visa versa. It may have been repainted more than once, a consequence of the fresco's iconic and miraculous status and the practice in the thirteenth century of refreshing such pictures. See Chapter 5, page 111.

[2] Meredith and Tailby, eds., *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation*, p. 244. The Latin text of Abramo's account is in Joannes Krajcar, ed., *Acta Slavica Concilii Florentini: narrationes et documenta*, vol. XI, *Concilium Florentinium. Documenta et Scritores.* (Rome: Pontificii Instituti Orientalium, 1976), pp. 112-21.

[3] See Laura Jacobus, "Giotto's Annunciation in the Arena Chapel, Padua," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 1 (1999): p. 98. She writes: 'Clearly, performance practices conditioned expectations as to certain characters' appearances in art, and visa versa'. Also Otto Pächt's chapter on *Pictorial Representation and Liturgical Drama* in Otto Pächt, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth Century England* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962).

[4] Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, pp. 13, 45. See Appendix 3 for more examples.

tower and is recoiling from the angel who is 'touching down' on the left. The Virgin has neither dais nor chair and her hands are empty.

An example of the Byzantine format would be the Annunciation scene contained in the St Peter Dossal now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. **(Plate 82a)** Attributed to Guido da Graziano and dated to about 1280, it shows the Archangel Gabriel approaching from the left with his right hand in a gesture of blessing. The Virgin is standing on a low dais before a chair, clutching her cloak with her right hand and holding a spindle with her left. The scene is outdoors, with buildings in the background.[5] The origin of this form of iconography lies in the Apocryphal Gospels, and particularly the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, with the account of the Angel of the Lord appearing to Mary while she worked with the purple thread for the veil of the Temple.[6]

The 'book format' is seen throughout the *trecento* with paintings of the Annunciation usually following an iconography of the Virgin being seated indoors with a book. An iconic example of this form is *The Annunciation* painted by Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi for the Duomo in Siena and which is now in the Uffizi in Florence. **(Plate 86)** An indoor setting is indicated by the veined marble floor but there is no painted architectural framework, reliance being placed on the ornate frame to suggest enclosure. Mary is seated on a high backed, solid, throne-like chair, over which an intricately worked cloth of gold has been thrown. Gabriel kneels before her, holding an olive branch, and a vase of white flowers stands on the floor between them. Gabriel's greeting to Mary is inscribed in a direct line from his mouth to her ear: 'Ave Gratia Plena Dominus Tecum'. Mary holds a partially open book in her left hand, her thumb marking her place. Like the garments worn by Mary and Gabriel, the book is portrayed with a sumptuous level of detail: the edges of the book block are decorated with a repeated geometrical design; the cover is plain red with long strap fastenings, delicate golden hasps and red tasselled pulls. **(Plate 86a)** The ends of some eight lines of text in the book are visible but the characters are meaningless.

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[5] Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena: I dipinti*, pp. 18-19. Alessandro Bagnoli, ed., *Duccio: Alle origine della pittura senese* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2003), pp. 88-91.

[6] B. Harris Cowper, *The Apocryphal Gospels* (London: Frederic Norgate, 1881), p. 44.

That this 'book format' of the annunciation scene was the dominant format in the *trecento* is apparent from a survey of surviving images: out of 33 examples of Italian *trecento* annunciations, 28 are in the book format and 5 follow the Lucasian format.[7] Variations within the book format include the book being open or closed, held in the left or right hand, lying on the Virgin's lap, on a lectern, shelf, desk or bench. Some images have multiple books, and in others the book is incorporated as part of the Virgin's gesture of recoil. The presence of the book is usually understood to indicate that the Virgin has been reading and she can therefore be referred to as the 'reading Annunciate'.

The origins of the 'reading Annunciate' have been explored by Otto Pächt.[8] His opinion is that both the Byzantine format and the book format of the Annunciation have their roots in the Gnostic Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. That the young Mary studied the Biblical texts can be inferred from passages in Chapter 6 of Pseudo-Matthew and this idea was developed further by St Ambrose in the fourth century and by St Bede in the eighth. That Mary read and knew the prophecy of Isaiah ('a young woman is with child, and she will bear a son') was stated in a sermon by Odilo of Cluny (962-1049). And the suggestion that Mary was reading the prophecy at the moment of the Annunciation is contained in a sermon by Ailred of Rievaulx (1109-1166).[9] Belief in this account presumably lay behind the existence of book-format images in Northern Europe. However, St Bernard makes no reference to it nor is it contained in any of the more popular devotional works that were current in Italy in the thirteenth century.

The book format did not feature in Byzantine Annunciations (which kept to an iconography based on Mary as the maker of the Veil of the Temple) but it became one of the principal formats in Northern Europe. Pächt tracks examples of these annunciation scenes back to a 9th century ivory from the Metz school **(Plate 87)** that shows Mary seated on a canopied throne with her right hand on an open book on a lectern.[10] This formula is repeated in Anglo-Saxon examples from the late 10th century, notably the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, **(Plate**

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[7] See Appendix 3.

[8] Otto Pächt, C R Dodwell, and Francis Wormald, *The St Alban's Psalter (Albani Psalter)*, vol. 25, *Studies of the Warburg Institute* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1960), pp. 63-67.

[9] Ibid.

[10] It forms an end panel on an ivory casket in the Herzog Anton Ulrick Museum, Brunswick, inv. no. MA 59.

88) albeit with the additional detail of Mary holding a shuttle in her left hand, a reference back to the Byzantine formula.[11] The book is shown in Mary's hand or resting on her knee, rather than being on a lectern, in an 11th century Bohemian Gospel, the *Codex Vyssegradensis*,[12] and the slightly later *Cluny Lectionary*,[13] in both cases with the book closed. The Annunciation in the *St Albans Psalter*, c. 1130, **(Plate 89)** shows Mary seated with an open book resting on her knee, with the pages ruled but with no writing.[14] These are precedents for the various forms of 'Reading Annunciate' found in *trecento* Italian art.

In his discussion of the origins of the Reading Annunciate, Pächt does not consider what influence liturgical drama might have had on images although he does address the broader subject of the relationship between drama and pictorial representation in another book on the development of pictorial narrative.[15] In discussing the St Albans Psalter he notes evidence that links the imagery of the Psalter to dramatic performances (such as the *Massacre of the Innocents* and the *Washing of Hands*) but concludes that the imagery does not seek to portray the drama, rather it seeks to represent the dialogue: 'the mechanism of pictorial invention is that of word-illustration and no other.'[16] This was achieved by devices, such as figures with open mouths and the use of gestures, or by the incorporation of text in the picture space, as in Simone Martini's Annunciation, or as text on scrolls and open books.

However, that liturgical drama was established much earlier than the date of the St Albans Psalter is clear from the existence of the play *Visitatio Sepulchri* set out in Chapter 5 of the *Regularis Concordia*.[17] This document is dated to about 970 and is the product of the Benedictine Abbey at Winchester under the direction of St Æthelwold, for whom the

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[11] British Library MS Add. 49598, f.5v. Also, Annunciation in the *Boulogne Gospels*, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliotheque Municipale, MS 11, f. 11r.

[12] Prague, Národní knihovna Ceské Republiky, MS XIV, A 13/1.

[13] Paris, Biblioteque Nationale, MS Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2246, f.6r.

[14] Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, page 19. It has been suggested that the lack of text is an oversight on the part of the scribe (see Commentary on the St Albans Psalter by Jane Geddes on the St Albans Psalter Project web site, University of Aberdeen). However, an alternative explanation is that suggested by Michael Camille for the Codex Vindobonensis, see pages 12-13 above.

[15] Pächt, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth Century England*, pp. 51-59.

[16] Ibid., p. 55.

[17] For Latin text and translation, see Thomas Symons, *Regularis Concordia* (London: Nelson, 1953), pp. 49-50.

Benedictional was made soon after, and it is possible that the narrative of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* is reflected in the illumination of that scene in the Benedictional.[18] But the *Regularis Concordia* does not make any reference to Annunciation plays nor is there any other evidence that the Annunciation became established in dramatic productions at an early date, as did the Nativity, the Passion and the Resurrection. There is, however, evidence that, by the thirteenth century, an Annunciation play was established in the canon of liturgical drama as there is a Paduan ordinance dated 1278 describing an annual custom of processing to the old Roman arena for an enactment of the Annunciation by boys dressed as the Angel Gabriel and Mary.[19] This arena became the site of Enrico Scrovegni's Chapel. Furthermore, the few accounts of Annunciation plays from the *trecento* include an indication that books were present. An *ordo* of the fourteenth century from the cathedral of Padua describes that in the preparations for a performance of the Annunciation the players gathered in the sacristy: 'And in the said sacristy stand Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph and Joachim, preparing with the Deacon and Sub Deacon, carrying in their hands books covered with silver.'[20]

Thus far, it is established that the 'book' format was the dominant form of annunciation in western *trecento* art. Furthermore, the origins of the iconography stretch back at least three hundred years. Liturgical drama had a similar length of history, and performances of the Annunciation were certainly in existence in the thirteenth century, if not before. One might therefore expect the book format to feature in *duecento* art as well as *trecento* but this is not the case. David Robb noted that the first time the book format appeared in Italian art was in the mosaic by Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere.[21] **(Plate 90)** The accuracy of this

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[18] Dunbar H Ogden, *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 30-33.

[19] Jacobus, "Giotto's Annunciation in the Arena Chapel, Padua," p. 93. A transcription and translation of the ordo is given in Appendix 2 of Laura Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience* (London: Harvey Miller 2008).

[20] Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1933), p. 248. The Latin is 'Et in dicta sacristia stent Maria, Elisabeth, Ioseph et Ioachin preparati cum diacono et subdiacono portantes in manibus libros argenteos.' The translation is mine. There is an ambiguity as to whether just the Deacon and Sub Deacon are holding books, presumably the Epistle and Gospel books, or whether some or all the actors are carrying books. Also, as has been pointed out by several scholars, the inclusion of Joachim is probably a mistake and that Zachariah was intended. One of the volumes listed in the 1369 inventory of the Avignon Papal Library, No. 1879, is described as being *coopertus postibus argenteis deauratis*, that is, bound in silver-gilt boards.

[21] David M Robb, "The iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *The Art Bulletin* 18, no. 4 (1936): p.482.

statement depends on the dating of the Cavallini mosaic and that of other works of approximately the same date. Robb gave a date of 1291 for the mosaic and it appears that, apart from two exceptions,[22] there are no surviving examples from earlier decades of an Italian annunciation using the book format. Among frescoes, panels, mosaics, illuminations and sculptures, there are 42 examples of annunciations that are deemed to be Italian work and are dated to before 1300. Of these, 6 are thought to be twelfth century, 5 are dated to the first half of the thirteenth century and the rest, that is 31, are dated to the second half of the thirteenth century.[23] The latter represents a meaningful sample and, where the detail can be made out, shows that in only 5 cases is the Byzantine format used (with the Virgin holding one or more spindles) and 23 cases follow the Lucasian format. Of the remaining three cases in this sample, there are two of the Virgin holding a book: one fresco dated c.1292 and the aforementioned Cavallini mosaic. These will be discussed below. In addition, there is the small panel entitled *The Virgin and Child* attributed to the Master of the Clarisse, also known as Rinaldo da Siena.[24] **(Plate 91)** It is dated c.1265-8 and shows a Crucifixion above a Virgin and Child. In the spandrels above the latter, are the minature figures of the Annunciation, the Virgin being only 4.6 cms high. **(Plate 91a)** She is portrayed standing, the right arm held across her body while the left arm hangs at her side. In her left hand is an 'object' which is described in the catalogue as a book, with a suggestion of red lettering. I believe that this identification of the object, which is only 5 millimetres high, as a book is questionable and that, instead, the Byzantine format is being followed and the Virgin is holding a cloth and, possibly, a spindle. The panel has suffered wear and damage, particularly

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[22] The two exceptions are a panel dated c.1265-8 by the Master of the Clarisse in the National Gallery, London, which I will discuss presently, and a relief of the Annunciation now in The Cloisters Museum in New York, part of the Metropolitan Museum. This relief, which shows a standing Virgin holding a book in her left hand, is described as the missing panel from the pulpit that was once in the church of San Piero Scheraggio in Florence and is dated to 1180 to 1200. However, its authenticity is open to question for the following reasons: It has no provenance beyond 1960 when it was 'discovered' in a garage in Genoa; a missing panel was postulated by the Florentine scholar Giuseppi Carraresi in 1897 who suggested that it should be sought by amateur art historians; it is suggested that the Cloister's panel was originally discarded because it was broken when the pulpit was dismantled and removed from San Piero Scheraggio some time between 1410 and 1755 and that it thereafter was possibly cemented into a wall, and yet it is in relatively good condition. Finally, as related in a memoir by Thomas Hoving, the relief was initially rejected by the Met as a fake, see Thomas Hoving, *Artful Tom, A Memoir*, published by Artnet Magazine, 2009, Chapter 22. The original account of the acquisition is given in Thomas P F Hoving, "A Long-lost Romanesque Annunciation," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 20, no. 4 (1961): pp. 117-26.

[23] See Appendix 3. I have excluded the Cloister's relief from my summary numbers.

[24] NG 6571, National Gallery, London. The dimensions are 31.4 x 19.5 cm. See Gordon, *The Italian Paintings before 1400*, pp. 348ff.

on the right side. It has been restored at least twice and parts of the image of the Annunciate Virgin have been repainted. The infra-red photographs from the time of the restoration in 1999 show the object to have a different, more trapezoidal, shape than that currently seen on the panel. This shape is not that of a book and is more plausibly interpreted as a piece of cloth. Also in the infa-red photograph, there is a line extending from the Virgin's hand and beyond the top of the 'cloth'. This may indicate a spindle. This interpretation, that the Annunciation is following the Byzantine format, would accord with the central image of the Virgin and Child, the particular format of which derives from Byzantine icons.[25] I am therefore treating this panel as an example of an Annunciation in the Byzantine format.

The paucity of surviving examples of book-format images before the fourteenth century is matched by a lack of textual references to a reading Annunciate. While the cult of the Virgin continued to be strong in the thirteenth century, the contemporary Latin theologians who wrote about Mary, such as Anthony of Padua, Bonaventure, Conrad of Saxony, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, based their commentaries on the Gospel accounts of the Annunciation and did not seek to elaborate the narrative account.[26] Thus, while the justification for the book-format had been established in the centuries up to twelfth century (as described above), there was no written theological encouragement in the thirteenth. Nor was the book-format included in the account of the Annunciation in the *Legenda Sanctorum* or *Golden Legend* that dates from about 1260.[27] This is seen as a work of compilation of

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[25] I consulted the Curatorial File and the Conservation Records at the Library of the National Gallery on 30th August 2011. The conservation photographs have not been published. The Curatorial File also contained a Report on Pigment and Layer Structure investigations in 1998-9 (also unpublished) which disclosed some additional anomalous aspects of the panel: "The damaged blue-green paint of the drapery around the Christ child's waist was sampled and shown to be composed of indigo mixed with mineral orpiment, an unusual combination in early Italian paintings, but described rather later in Cennino Cennini's treatise." And "Analysis by EDX of the metal leaf used for the mordantdecoration showed the use of an alloy of gold and silver or the two metals in combination as 'Zwischgold' (that is, gold and silver beaten together). This is the first identification of gold/silver leaf in a Gallery picture from Italy, although the technique has been noted elsewhere, particularly in German School painting of the 15th-century."

[26] Fr. Luigi Gambero describes the twelfth century as a 'Golden period for Marian doctrine' when the Mother of God became the centre of attention and there were numerous writers elaborating and commenting on Her life. In contrast, Fr. Gambero notes the thirteenth century as having a 'noticeable concern to return to biblical and patristic sources and to the most authentic monastic traditions'. See Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), pp. 105 & 95.

[27] See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. xiiiff & p. 196ff.

earlier sources, as is the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* which also does not refer to a reading Annunciate.[28] These religious but non-theological texts would be the likely place to find such references and their silence supports the view that a reading Annunciate did not figure in Italian art for most of the thirteenth century.

The evidence of the surviving examples of Italian Annunciation scenes would suggest that the first example of the use of the book format in Italian Annunciation scenes was in the final decade of the thirteenth century, although whether Robb was correct in thinking that the Cavallini mosaic was first is a point for debate because of our still-imprecise understanding of the chronology of images of the period. As stated above, Robb gave a date of 1291 while Paul Hetherington dated the Cavallini mosaics in Santa Maria in Trastevere to the period 1291 to 1298.[29] However, other authors have offered a wider range of possible dates and it is an open question whether the mosaics date from the last decade of the thirteenth century or the first decade of the fourteenth.[30] Given that uncertainty, it is instructive to consider what

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[28] The authorship, date and even the original language of the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* ("MVC") remains unresolved. Until recently it was confidently thought to be by a Franciscan friar living in Tuscany in the second half of the thirteenth century, see Elizabeth Salter, *Nicholas Love's 'Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ'*, ed. James Hogg, vol. 10, *Analecta Cartusiana* (Salzburg: Institut fur Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1974), pp. 39-42. and Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. xxi, note 2. However the work of Sarah McNamer has demonstrated that the origins of the MVC are complex. See Sarah McNamer, "Further Evidence for the Date of the Pseudo-Bonaventura Meditations on the Life of Christ," *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990): pp. 235-61; Sarah McNamer, "The Origins of the Meditationes vitae Christi," *Speculum* 84, no. 4 (2009): pp. 905-55. While acknowledging that any theory about the origins can only be tentative, McNamer has proposed that the MVC was initially a text of some 30 chapters, possibly written by a woman, in Italian, in the decade around 1300. This text was subject to repeated revision, expansion and translation by other authors during the fourteenth century, resulting in differing versions, the largest being about 108 chapters. However it came to be written, the MVC became 'the single most influential devotional text' of the later Middle Ages (McNamer, "The Origins of the Meditationes vitae Christi," p. 905.) as indicated by the number of surviving manuscripts - over 200 (See Ragusa and Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, p. xxiii.). Given the uncertainty as to the date of the MVC some caution has to be exercised when using it as a primary source. However, as would be expected in a work of this period, it is apparent that the authors draw heavily on other sources, notably the writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and can perhaps be seen as consolidating earlier tracts. Thus, it can be used as either a late thirteenth century source or as a source that reflects thirteenth century views.

[29] Paul Hetherington, "The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970). In the Online Grove Dictionary of Art, Hetherington suggests that the cycle was carried out in 'the later 1290s'. (Oxford Art Online viewed 3/7/2009)

[30] For example Matthiae proposed that the mosaics dated to before 1293 while Poeschke argued that they were made after 1296. Most attempts at dating have been based on stylistic analysis, the relative chronology of Cavallini's surviving works and comparison with other reference works such as Torriti's cycle in Santa Maria Maggiore and the tomb of Bonface VIII in St Peters. In a recent thesis Marius Bratsberg Hauknes revised earlier

other early examples of book format Annunciations have survived, and three very remarkable examples immediately become apparent. The first is the fresco of the annunciation on the South Wall of the Upper Church at Assisi. **(Plate 92)** Although very damaged and of uncertain attribution, it is quite possibly earlier than the Cavallini mosaic and may date from the start of the 1290s.[31] The second is the Duccio Triptych that is now in the Royal Collection of HM The Queen and has been dated to around 1300[32]. **(Plate 93)** The third is the Annunciation scene that is part of Giotto's fresco programme at the Arena Chapel in Padua, dated to the years 1303 to 1305.[33] **(Plate 54c)** Thus, within a very few years there appeared four distinct examples of the new book-format of annunciation by different artists, in different media, at different scales and in different places.[34] Together they represent a significant point of change in the way the Annunciation was represented in Italian art.

But could this apparent change just be the result of the very small number of works of art that have survived from the thirteenth century and which are not therefore representative?[35] This is possible, but the evidence from the fourteenth century shows that the book format more than just supplanted the Byzantine and Lucasian formats, it became the dominant format, so whether or not the Cavallini mosaic was the first example of the use of the book in

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attempts by introducing possible political influences on such a programme of works and the role of Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi who he sees as the guiding hand behind the overall design. Hauknes concludes by suggesting a range of 1298 to 1306 as the period when the mosaics were made. Marius Bratsberg Hauknes, "The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere" (University of Oslo, 2005), p. 87; Guglielmo Matthiae, *Pietro Cavallini* (Rome: De Luca, 1972), p. 67; Joachim Poeschke, "Per la datazione dei mosaici de Cavallini in S. Maria in Trastevere," in *Roma Anno 1300*, ed. Angiola Maria Romanini (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1983), p. 427.

[31] See note 56 below.

[32] Luciano Bellosi proposed a date of 'intorno all'anno 1300', see Bagnoli, ed., *Duccio: Alle origine della pittura senese*, p. 192. Joanna Cannon and Viola Pemberton-Pigott suggest a range of 1302 to 1308, see Joanna Cannon and Viola Pemberton-Pigott, "The Royal Collection Duccio: A triptych reconsidered," *Apollo* CLVI, no. August (2002): p. 12.

[33] For a recent account and discussion see Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience*, pp. 325-29.

[34] The Duccio with a height of its central panel, including head piece and base, of 50.2 cm is a portable work. Its original owner and location is unknown. Where it was painted is also unknown and the possibility of it being painted when Duccio was in Paris cannot be excluded.

[35] Garrison suggested that as little as one percent had survived from the thirteenth century. See Edward B Garrison, "Note on the Survival of Thirteenth-Century Panel Paintings in Italy," *The Art Bulletin* 54, no. 2 (1972): p.140.

an Annunciation image, it is clear that there was a change in the prevailing iconography at around the end of the thirteenth century. Before considering what caused this, I will examine the four works of art that appear to be in the vanguard of this change, as they show differences in approach.

Cavallini's *Annunciation* at Santa Maria in Trastevere

The *Annunciation* mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere is the first of the four adjoining scenes of the life of the Virgin on the semi-circular wall of the apse. **(Plate 90b)** Arguably it is in one of the less prominent positions occupied by the cycle and should not be seen as having the same significance of location as, say, the *Miraculous Annunciation* had at Santissima Annunziata in Florence. Cavallini's *Annunciation* contains a lot of detail. The Virgin is seated on a throne, complete with footstool, with rectangular pedestals on either side, and before a temple structure that is portrayed at an angle to the picture plane. While the perspective is chaotic, a lot of architectural detail has been added to give a sense of depth. The Angel Gabriel approaches from the left and at the top of the picture there is a bust of God from which, on blue rays that stream towards the Virgin, the dove of the Holy Ghost, descends.

The attributes that accompany the Virgin are, on the left pedestal, a vase of white lilies, on the right pedestal a bowl of green fruit (thought to be figs), and in the Virgin's left hand a closed book. [36] The detail of the book is limited because of the nature of mosaic but it appears to be a small volume with a decorated binding and a single strap fastening. The book is cradled in the left hand, the fingers of which are resting on the Virgin's left thigh. It is the only book that appears in the six mosaics depicting the life of the Virgin, although two books appear in the Donor Panel below (held by Saints Peter and Paul) and five above, in the twelfth century *concha* mosaic (closed books held by Saints Lawrence, Callixtus, Julius and Calepodius and an open book with text held by Christ). [37]

Apart from the presence of a book, the details that are at least partially innovative in an iconographical sense are as follows:

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[36] See Livio Pestilli, "'Ficus Latine a Fecunditate Vocatur': On a Unique iconographic Detail in Cavallini's *Annunciation* in santa Maria in Trastevere," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* XX, no. 3 (2001): p. 6.

[37] Hauknes, "The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere", p. 40 & plate 12.

The Virgin is seated. The Virgin is more commonly shown standing in Italian Annunciations prior to 1295. An exception is the *Madonna of Tressa* altarpiece, dated to about 1220[38]. (The other possible exception is a triptych in a private collection in Turin which has an Annunciation on the shutters but is attributed by Garrison to Dalmatia and to the end of the thirteenth century.[39]) There are many examples of the Virgin standing before a throne and /or a tower or temple-like building. This makes sense because thrones and baldachins are symbolic of royal status, and towers are thought to be symbolic of chastity (Song of Songs 4:4). Temple-like building structures may be an extension of the royal or priestly status, a variation on a tower or a reference to the temple for which Mary was weaving the cloth.

The prominence given to the Virgin's belly ('Your navel is a rounded goblet' Song of Songs 7:2). Earlier images of a seated Virgin, usually holding the Christ Child who tends to obscure the sitter's abdomen, depicts the Virgin well wrapped in her cloak. But in this image, it is as if the Virgin were already pregnant and is possibly intended to indicate her fertility or to suggest an immediate state of pregnancy. This emphasis on the womb may originate from the popular text *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis*, now attributed to Conrad of Saxony (d.1279), which promoted the concept of salvation through Mary's womb.[40]

The Temple and Pedestals are at an angle to the picture plane. The mosaic is already on a curved surface so the angle at which the architectural details are represented helps to enhance an illusion that the viewer is standing between the two participants (albeit in front of the picture plane) as the Angel Gabriel approaches the Virgin, and to facilitate the line from God the Father that is taken by the Holy Ghost. While elements of this appear in other annunciations, for example the Torriti *Annunciation* in S. Maria Maggiore, which shows the Virgin's seat overlapping one side of the baldachin, the Cavallini composition offers clear depth in its architectural details and fictive spaces.

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[38] See Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, Fig. 34 & p. 57. Also Van Os, *Sienese Altarpieces 1215-1460*, p. 12.

[39] Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," Ref: Add. 45.

[40] Derbes and Sandona noted the significance of this text and its emphasis on the womb of the Virgin in their study of the Arena Chapel. See Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, *The Usurer's Heart: Giotto, Enrico Scrovegni and the Arena Chapel in Padua* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), p. 70.

The bowl of figs. This appears to be a unique detail. Pestilli has suggested that it should be read as a symbol of fecundity, juxtaposed with the vase of lilies that represent virginity.[41] Fig trees appear in earlier Annunciations.[42] The Song of Songs has the line: 'when the green figs will ripen on the fig tree' (2:13).

The broken ground, on which flowering plants grow, on either side of the temple. Plants are also included in two other scenes from the cycle, the Nativity and the Donor Panel, and the former also presents an uneven rocky landscape. But the Annunciation has rocky indentations at the front edge of the picture plane like a cliff edge. It is not a feature of earlier Italian Annunciation scenes but is known from such scenes originating in Northern Europe.[43] This may be an intended reference to the *Hortus conclusus* of the Song of Songs (4: 12), an image that would become established as a Marian symbol in the fifteenth century. Flowers and cliffs are also referred too in the Song of Songs (2:1 and 2:14).

The rays and dove of the Holy Ghost are directed at the Virgin's womb, not her head. In earlier pictures of the Annunciation, such as that attributed to Guido da Siena at Princeton or that attributed to Guido da Graziano at the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, rays down which the dove of the Holy Ghost is moving extend from the top of the picture towards the head of the Virgin. This accorded with the declaration of the Church Fathers that conception had occurred by the Virgin receiving the Word of God through her ear.[44] This 'angle of attack' is also used in Torriti's Annunciation at S. Maria Maggiore with the addition of a bust of God the Father from whose mouth the rays emanate. But in the Cavallini composition the rays travel from the mouth of God towards the pronounced belly of the sitting Virgin. The justification for this comes possibly from St Bernard (1090-1153) who writes: 'As a pure ray enters a glass window...the Son of God, who entered the most chaste womb of the Virgin, emerged pure...'[45]

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[41] Pestilli, "'Ficus Latine a Fecunditate Vocatur': On a Unique iconographic Detail in Cavallini's *Annunciation* in santa Maria in Trastevere," p. 9.

[42] For example the Annunciation panel by Guido da Siena at Princeton.

[43] For example the twelfth century enamel of the *Annunciation* by Nicholas of Verdun in the Abbey of Klosterneuburg, Austria.

[44] See Millard Meiss, "Light as Form and Symbol in some Fifteenth-Century Paintings," *The Art Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (1945): p. 176.

[45] Quoted by Ibid.: p. 177.

This richness in iconographic innovation demonstrates that the designer of the Annunciation mosaic, whoever he was, was knowledgeable of the scriptures and was in a position sufficiently authoritative to break with traditional forms of representation. It has been proposed that Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi was the guiding hand in the design of the Cavallini mosaics at Santa Maria in Trastevere and given his learning, his position in the church, family background and penchant for commissioning major works of religious art, he would certainly be qualified to be the designer.[46] He was a graduate of both Paris and Bologna universities and would later become Cardinal Protector of the Franciscans.[47] However likely, there are inconsistencies with other works that he is known to have commissioned and it is not certain that he was the 'guiding hand' of the mosaics.[48]

Who ever created it, the design makes copious references to the Bible, particularly the Song of Songs. Apart from the Bible, the religious writings of the time were texts such as the *Golden Legend*, the *Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* and the copious writings of the Franciscans. In this context, it is noticeable that the density of the iconographical detail in Cavallini's Annunciation is comparable to some contemporary texts, such as Bonaventura's *Commentaries on the Book of Wisdom*, a long text that is thick with references to scripture, the writings of Church Fathers and Classical texts. However, while these texts may have provided models for detail-rich images, they did not include the reading Annunciate in their accounts of the Annunciation.

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[46] Paul Hetherington presented evidence to suggest that the author of the Latin hexameter verses that accompany each of the mosaics was Cardinal Stefaneschi, and Marius Bratsberg Hauknes has argued that Stefaneschi was responsible for the whole design of the mosaics, as a monument to his brother Bertoldo Stefaneschi. See Hauknes, "The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere", p. 77; Hetherington, "The Mosaics of Pietro Cavallini in Santa Maria in Trastevere," pp. 89-91. See also Kempers and De Blaauw, "Jacopo Stefaneschi, Patron and Liturgist," pp.409-16. for a discussion on the Cardinal's patronage. On the question of to what extent patrons influenced design and content see Cannon, "The Creation, Meaning, and Audience of the Early Sienese Polyptych: Evidence from the Friars," pp. 41-2. Her observations relate to the Dominican Order but there seems no reason why they should not apply to other orders. Beth Williamson discusses the role of Cardinal Stafaneschi in the frescoes by Simone Martini at Avignon and suggests that patron and artist worked closely together. See Beth Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility: Development, Dissemination & Reception, 1340-1400* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), p. 33.

[47] Gardner, "The Stefaneschi Altarpiece: A Reconsideration," p. 68.

[48] For example, the Codex of St George, which contains both text by and portraits of Cardinal Stefaneschi, has two illuminated Annunciations in which the rays from God are directed at the Virgin's head.

Within this context, what is the significance and meaning of the book in the Virgin's left hand? For a start, I suggest that the innovation of including a book in an Italian annunciation points to it as having been deliberate and having a meaning. It is not included merely because it was an element found in Northern European Annunciations. The book is there for a reason that is most probably to do with either the character of the Virgin, the act of conception, the result of conception i.e. the incarnation of Christ, or a combination of these. I further suggest that the way that the book is portrayed is deliberate. The attention that has clearly been given by designer and artist to every detail supports the contention that nothing should be taken to be accidental.

Given this approach, some possible interpretations can tentatively be ruled out. The book is not open, nor is it on a lectern or in a position that would suggest that the Virgin had just been reading it. If the book had been held open in the right hand and was closed upon the appearance of the angel, it would be held with the front of the book towards the viewer. Instead, it is the back of the book that is visible and the bottom edge is cradled in the hand. Thus, the customary explanation used for later images, that the Virgin had been reading Isaiah's prophecy, or engaged in study at the moment of Gabriel's appearance, does not accord with the visual evidence. For the closed book to be purely symbolic of the act of reading, in the same way that a thread-less spindle might be symbolic of the act of spinning, there would have to be a history of images that made the reading Annunciate explicit. In the absence of such a history, the presence of a book is open to other interpretations and the possibility of it being symbolic of a reading Annunciate may be disregarded.

If the book is intended as an attribute of the character of the Virgin, then various possibilities are open. The book is closed so that it might be a further reference to the holder's chastity. A book is a symbol of learning and thus this one might be a reference to the Virgin's attention to the scriptures and knowledge as described in the apocryphal gospels and, further, it could be indicative of the Virgin's suitability to instruct a child. Given this last possibility, the book could be the Book of Wisdom or the Scriptures more generally.

If the book is intended to be part of the act of conception then the orientation and position of the book is significant. It is held with the front of the book towards the holder and tilted at an angle and in line to intercept the rays emanating from God. I suggest that the book could be interpreted as a mirror, reflecting the rays into the womb of the Virgin. In this context the

words of Bonaventura that 'sacred scripture is a mirror' seem apposite. [49] The meaning thus becomes that sacred scripture is the mirror of the Word of God and it is via the Scriptures that Christ became man. The description of the books in the *ordo* from Padua Cathedral as 'libros argenteos' acquires added significance. [50]

Seeing the book as a mirror would be consistent with the attempts to arrange the participants in the scene in a physically plausible way. Both the Virgin and God the Father are facing forward, albeit with a deliberate device in the angle of the architectural details behind the Virgin to suggest she is also at an angle, thereby revealing part of her front to God. None the less, the rays from God down which the Holy Spirit is shown to move must be at an acute angle to the Virgin's belly and a mirror would provide the necessary corrective.

If the book is intended to represent the result of conception, then there is only one interpretation: the book is symbolic of Christ. Such a symbolism already existed in the works of St Hugh of St Victor (1096-1141)[51] and is supported by the writings of thirteenth century authors. St Bonaventure wrote six sermons on the subject of the Annunciation that have survived, and Matthew of Aquasparta[52] wrote three. The sermons of both Bonaventure and Matthew are analytical in style and not descriptive. However, they make clear the equivalence of 'the Word of God' to Christ. Bonaventure writes that the Virgin conceived 'the Word of God when addressed by the Angel' and that 'the Word of God is the Son of the Father, Christ' and Matthew writes similarly of Mary's 'conception of the divine Word or divine child or Son'. [53] Thus, to the extent that the Word of God can be represented by a

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[49] Chapter VII of Bonaventura's *Second Commentary on the Book of Wisdom*. Bonaventura continues by quoting the *Epistle of St James*, (1:23) that 'They shall be like those who look at the face of their birth in a mirror'. Indeed, the mirror, *speculum*, appears as a metaphor several times in the *Commentary* and repeatedly in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. Fr Campion Murray, *Early Franciscan Texts, Franciscan Friars Province of the Holy Spirit*, http://www.franciscans.org.au/spirituality/campion/translations.htm. The mirror as metaphor dates from antique times and was current throughout the Middle Ages. See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, p. 336.

[50] See Note 20.

[51] See page 81.

[52] Like Bonaventure, Matthew of Aquasparta trained and taught in Paris. He became Minister General of the Friars Minor in 1287 and was made a cardinal in 1288. He died in 1302.

[53] Bonaventure's Sermons on the Annunciation, Sermon 2 and 3. Murray, *Early Franciscan Texts*. Matthew's first sermon, paragraph 12. Murray, *Early Franciscan Texts*.

book, a book held by the Virgin in an Annunciation scene could have the symbolic meaning that Christ had become incarnate.

While we cannot know what was in the minds of the designer and artist of the Annunciation mosaic at Santa Maria in Trastevere, it seems probable that the inclusion of a book was intended to give a message concerning the character of the Virgin and/or the role of the written scriptures as a conduit for the Word of God and/or be symbolic of the incarnation.

The introduction of a book into Cavallini's Annunciation scene was only one of several innovations which indicate that this was not a case of simply adopting a northern European format, as might be the consequence of patronage by personages who were either from Northern Europe or who had lived there. While external influences were undoubtedly present, as many of the Roman Curia at that time were French, and Cardinal Stefaneschi had studied in Paris, the Annunciation mosaic at Santa Maria in Trastevere reveals an originality in iconography over earlier French and Italian versions of the subject.[54] Part of that originality was the introduction of an image of a book with its rich variety of meanings.

The Annunciation in the Upper Church at Assisi

The second of the four works that appear to be in the vanguard of a change in iconography is the *Annunciation* scene in the fourth bay of the south wall of the nave of the Upper Church at Assisi. **(Plate 92)** It is one of the scenes in the Old and New Testament cycles and occupies the top right segment of an arched bay, and adjoins a window. The space is approximately triangular. The fresco is severely damaged but the outlines can still be made out. The significant aspects are that the Virgin stands on the right before a cushioned seat within a form of baldachin. Behind the baldachin are the roofs and windows of buildings. To the right of the buildings there is a tree, possibly a fig tree. The angel Gabriel stands on the left, his wings stretched above him, his right hand extended towards the Virgin. A shaft of rays falls on the head of the Virgin, coming from the apex of the arch. The source of the rays has been lost and there is no indication that the dove of the Holy Spirit was included. The Virgin holds

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[54] On French influence see Julian Gardner, "The French Connection: Thoughts about French Patrons and Italian Art, c.1250-1300," in *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy*, ed. Charles M Rosenberg (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), pp. 91-93.

in her left hand an open book, the pages of which are facing the viewer. It is unclear whether this fresco has been repainted at some point.

There is no certainty as to who the artist was. Over time, the Old and New Testament frescoes, or parts of them, have been attributed to Cavallini, Filippo Rusuti, and Jacopo Torriti, and it is the last of these who enjoys the weight of current opinion, although with the proviso that the Annunciation scene might have been painted by his assistants.[55] As to the date, opinion ranges from the late 1280's through to about 1300.[56] Part of the debate relates to whether Torriti made the frescoes before or after the mosaics in St John Lateran or after the mosaics in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore (the latter are in turn relevant to the Cavallini mosaics in Santa Maria in Trastevere). However, if Torriti's assistants or another artist were responsible for the Annunciation, then the dating would possibly become yet more fluid and could even extend into the period after 1300.[57]

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[55] See James H Stubblebine, *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 61 note 1. See also: Alastair Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto* (Oxford: The Clarenden Press, 1971), p. 9. White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, p. 199. Alessandro Tomei, *Iacobus Torriti Pictor: Una vicenda figurativa del tardo Duecento romano* (Rome: Argos, 1990), Ch. 2. The suggestion that the Annunciation is the work of assistants is contained in the article on Torriti in Grove Art Online by Valentino Pace: Valentino Pace, *Torriti, Jacopo,* ‹http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T085760›.

[56] Smart argues that the biblical scenes were initially done in the late 1280s and that some (but not the Annunciation) were repainted by the 'Isaac Master' in the mid 1290s: Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of Giotto*, p. 9. Gardner concurs that Torriti was working in Assisi in the late 1280s: Julian Gardner, "Pope Nicholas IV and the Decoration of Santa Maria Maggiore," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 36, no. 1 (1973): p. 39. White opined that the date is 'just before or just after the period c.1290-2' which is certainly tentative: White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, p. 199. Stubblebine, however, regards the arguments that support these views as lacking 'persuasiveness' and believes that Torriti was working at Assisi 'at the turn of the century': Stubblebine, *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art*, p. 43. More recent opinions range from Pace's 1280s to Hetherington who suggested a date after 1291. See Luciano Bellosi, ""Nicolas IV fieri precepil", Una testimonianza di valore inestimabile sulla decorazione murale della Basilica Superiore di San Francesco ad Assisi," *Prospettiva* 126-127, no. April-July (2007): pp. 2-14; Paul Hetherington, *Torriti, Jacopo,* ‹http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e2615›; Pace, *Torriti, Jacopo.* 9th August 2009); Anabel Thomas et al., *Assisi,* ‹http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T004640›. Donal Cooper and Janet Robson reviewed the evidence and concluded that 'the planning and the execution of the entire nave programme (the Old and New Testament cycles followed by the St. Francis cycle) can now be narrowed down to the nine years between *Reducentes* in May 1288 and the disgrace of the Colonna in May 1297'. Donal Cooper and Janet Robson, "'A great sumptuousness of paintings': frescos and Franciscan poverty at Assisi in 1288 and 1312," *The Burlington Magazine* CLI (2009): pp. 656-62.

[57] That the whole programme took several decades to complete is revealed by the conservation work done in the 1950's that discovered graffito on the second bay of the south wall that indicates that it was not painted until the 1340s. See Thomas et al., *Assisi.* Aug 2009).

It is worth noting that there are some similarities with the Annunciation scene in Torriti's mosaic in the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome **(Plate 94)**: the standing Virgin, the cushion on the Virgin's chair, the shaft of rays descending on the Virgin's head, and the large wings of the Angel Gabriel. But there are also some differences. The Angel Gabriel is less static in the Assisi fresco, the right leg appears to be at an angle indicating forward motion, and the proportions of head and body are more plausible.[58] The angel's wings are positioned to match the triangular shape of the fresco and point to the source of the rays. It is an imaginative way of deploying them. The portrayal of the angel's wings above and behind the head of Gabriel is a form found in both Byzantine and Northern European Annunciations but is not found in Italian art prior to the 1290s. There is no tree in the Rome mosaic. The collection of towers and buildings behind the Virgin's baldachin is completely different to the architectural throne in the mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore. These have similarities to the background buildings in earlier Annunciations such as that in the Museo Stibbert in Florence[59] **(Plate 97)** and on the left wing of the triptych "Madonna del Carroccio" at Santa Chiara in Assisi.[60] **(Plate 96)** Additionally, the Virgin is holding a book, which is not the case in Santa Maria Maggiore.

The way the book is held, with the arm straight down and the hand holding the top of the open book, has no precedent although there are examples of Christ holding an open book at its top.[61] The stance appears identical to that in the Annunciation panel of Duccio's *Maestà*.[62] **(Plate 31g)** and it might be assumed that, like the *Maestà*, the intention was to

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[58] The stance and proportions are similar to that in a watercolour in the Uffizi that is attributed to Vigoroso da Siena who is known to be working in the period 1276 to 1293. See Bagnoli, ed., *Duccio: Alle origine della pittura senese*, pp. 109-11.

[59] See Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index." No 667 - which Boskovits attributed to Ristoro d'Arezzo, see Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, p. 737 n. 12.

[60] See Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index." No 325. Dated to 1260 to 1270.

[61] Dated to about 1260, the *The Madonna and Child* by the 'Master of S. Agatha' at Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence, in its restored state, shows enough of the pediment to reveal Christ holding the top of an open book **(Plate 104)** and the cimasa of the *Painted Cross* by the Master of San Francesco (1272) at the Galleria Nazionale dell' Umbria in Perugia also shows Christ holding the top of an open book.

[62] National Gallery, dated to 1308-11. See Jill Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Durer: early Renaissance Painting in The National Gallery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 216-7. The format is also used in Duccio's later triptych of the *Maestà* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, No 35.

have a speech text on the pages with the prophecy from Isaiah but it could equally be the case that the pages were intended to be blank.[63] If there was a text, it has now been lost.

The Annunciation scene in the Upper Church at Assisi appears to have more in common with earlier Tuscan or Umbrian works than with the work of Torriti. It does not have much common ground with his mosaic Annunciation at Santa Maria Maggiore nor, for that matter, with Cavallini's Annunciation at Santa Maria in Trastevere. It takes an established format, what I have been terming the Lucasian, shapes it to the triangular space available and introduces the innovation of an open book, either as a vehicle for a speech text or as symbolic of the Word of God.

Duccio's Triptych in the Royal Collection

The third work to be considered is the Royal Collection's Duccio. The Annunciation scene in the upper part of the left wing of the triptych which occupies a quadrantal space of about 200 square centimetres.[64] **(Plate 93a)** It shows the Virgin standing, before a seat and a building with a gothic arch and overhanging balcony. The initial presumption is that the scene is outdoors. The Virgin cradles a closed book in her left hand. The lower cover is visible and is shown with a red binding with gold bosses and long strap fastenings. Although smaller, the book appears to be similar to that held in the same way by Christ in the enthronement scene on the right wing. Gabriel, holding his customary attribute of a sceptre with fleur-de-lys, approaches from the left. A vase of lilies is to the right of the scene. There is no image of God the Father, nor of the Holy Spirit nor are there any rays descending on the Virgin. In contrast, the equivalent scene on the right wing shows what might be termed another impression of the divine on the human, the stigmatization of Francis, but with rays emanating from the wounds of Christ.

It is claimed that elements of the iconography of the triptych could be linked to the decoration of the Upper Church at Assisi, specifically the scenes on the right wing, the

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[63] See pages 12-13 above for an explanation of blank pages.

[64] The dimensions of the Annunciation scene are 17.6 x 15.0 cms.

Stigmatization and the *Christ and the Virgin Enthroned*.[65] The same cannot be said of the *Annunciation*. Comparison with the Annunciation in the Upper Church shows that although both pictures occupy a roughly triangular shape and follow the customary convention of the Angel Gabriel approaching from the left, the differences in the treatment of Gabriel, in the passage of the Holy Spirit and in the architectural details, are marked and indicate that the Triptych Annunciation drew its inspiration from elsewhere.

In terms of innovation, the first element to be addressed is the vase of lilies. While a long-established symbol of chastity and employed in Italian art,[66] a vase of lilies was not a normal part of Annunciation scenes in the latter half of the *duecento*. The reason for this is that these scenes are set outdoors, making a vase out of place. Furthermore, the angel's sceptre with fleur-de-lys makes the point of the Virgin's chastity, and if there is symbolic vegetation, then it is usually a fig tree symbolising fecundity. But here the vase makes a prominent appearance with the added novelty of its being positioned on the fictive frame of the picture (along with the angel's toes and wing feathers) so appearing in front of the picture plane. As the angel still carries the sceptre with fleur-de-lys, the need for the vase needs to be explained. My proposal is that, rather than being outdoors, the Virgin is actually indoors. With this in mind, the architectural details take on a new meaning. While the angle of the building and the balcony can be seen as an attempt to bestow depth to the picture when viewed obliquely, as would be the case when the wings of the triptych were three-quarters open,[67] they can also be seen as an device to portray the Virgin as being indoors and approached by the angel who is outdoors. The angel is looking through the space under the 'balcony' into the house or internal courtyard. It is as if the picture plane has sliced the house in half with only the vase of lilies being retained from the half that has been removed. This arrangement possibly precluded the inclusion of rays and dove as the 'building' gets in the way and it was more important to show the Virgin as being indoors.

With this context, the temptation is to think that the presence of the book is a reference to the legend that the Virgin was indoors studying the scriptures at the moment that the angel

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[65] Cook, *Images of St Francis of Assisi*, pp. 122-23. And Cannon and Pemberton-Pigott, "The Royal Collection Duccio: A triptych reconsidered," p. 10-11.

[66] An early example is a relief of the Annunciation in Monreale Cathedral which is dated to about 1190.

[67] See Cannon and Pemberton-Pigott, "The Royal Collection Duccio: A triptych reconsidered," p. 14-16.

arrived. But the book is closed and is cradled in one hand close to the belly of the Virgin and an alternative interpretation is possible. Looking at the triptych as a whole, Christ appears in each of the other scenes: as the Christ Child in the *Maestà*, crucified in the *Crucifxion*, seated with the Virgin in the *Enthronement*, and crucified and enfolded in the seraph's wings in the *Stigmatisation of St Francis*. In order to complete the ensemble there should be some representation of Christ in the remaining scene, the *Annunciation*. Accordingly, I suggest that the book held by the Virgin represents Christ and is indicative that He is present in the body of the Virgin, which would accord with John's line: 'the Word became flesh' (1:14).

Giotto's *Annunciation* in the Arena Chapel

The fourth work that appears to be in the vanguard of a change in iconography is the Annunciation scene in the Arena Chapel. It is composed of two frescoes, high up, on either side of the chancel arch. **(Plate 54c)** On the left is the Angel Gabriel, kneeling, gesturing with his right hand and clutching a scroll with his left. He wears a white tunic with shoulder and cuff bands as on a dalmatic, and a pink toga. A reddish-brown glow surrounds him. The Virgin is on the right, genuflecting, wearing a voluminous dark pink shift over a white shirt, with her head uncovered, her hands crossed in front of her and holding a closed book in her right hand. A reddish-brown glow descends on her from above-left. Visible near the figure of the Virgin is part of a reading desk. Both parts of the scene are framed in a fictive architectural structure, like a pair of loggie, with protruding balconies and curtains drawn back to poles. There is no dove of the Holy Spirit nor is there a vase of lilies.

Separating the Virgin and Angel is not new. This arrangement appears in triptychs of an earlier date[68] and, separated by a pillar, in manuscript illuminations.[69] The wings of a triptych, when in use, would be turned in by some 30 degrees so that a line of sight existed between the two figures. This need for a physical plausibility in the topographical layout seems to have been important and the arrangement where the wings are turned in to each

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[68] For example, the Marzolini Triptych in the Galleria Nazionale dell' Umbria. See Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," No. 348.

[69] An English example would be from a Psalter in the Bodleian Library: MS Gough Liturg. 2. Although the two figures are in different 'compartments', it is noticeable that the Virgin has been positioned slightly forward so as to facilitate a 'line of sight'.

other has been replicated as an illusion in the Arena Chapel, even though it contradicts the other illusion of the fictive Chapels lower down on the chancel arch. Thus, the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel are to be viewed as in separate loggie, facing each other over the space of the nave, with an unimpaired line of sight.

The Angel does not have a sceptre but holds a scroll in his left hand. Scrolls appear in earlier Annunciations, especially in illuminations, and some carry speech text such as 'Ave Maria'. So it is possible that the Angel's scroll in the Arena Chapel originally had text. But it is not necessary. The story and words were so well known that the simple presence of a scroll would have been enough to indicate that the Angel's greeting was being given. The Angel is kneeling and this is highly unusual although not without precedent.[70] In the normal portrayal, the angel is at the moment of arrival from God and is shown in motion and sometimes in the air. In this case, the angel is in a posture of subservience and supplication. This is not the moment of arrival but a later point in the meeting and dialogue, or perhaps it is intended to represent the confrontation in its entirety.

Likewise, the Virgin is shown in the unprecedented position of genuflecting.[71] This may be, in part, for reasons of symmetry, to match the dimensions of the kneeling Angel Gabriel whose own pose could be determined by the available space on the chancel wall. A standing figure would be less effective in the space and consequently less visible from the floor of the nave. But a seated Virgin, for which there are precedents, would have been as effective in achieving that balance, so another explanation is required. It is as if the Virgin has come away from her chair and around her reading desk so as to confront the Angel and then to genuflect.

The Virgin is bareheaded, without a veil to cover her head, neck and shoulders and this is further indication that the scene is taking place in the Virgin's house: she is in her private room and therefore without a need to be veiled. This is an indoor scene. The rays descend on her from above and should be interpreted as descending from the figure of God that

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[70] The only example I am aware of is a triptych in a private collection in Turin where the Angel is genuflecting. It is dated to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. See Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," No. Add. 45.

[71] An alternative interpretation is that the Virgin is seated on a stool hidden under her robe with part of her robe stretched out behind but this seems improbable.

originally occupied the top of the space above the chancel arch, whether depicted in fresco or stained glass.[72] The rays appear to be coming down on her head rather than her torso. The book held by the Virgin is small and bound in grey-blue.[73] The book is held with the front (or upper) cover towards the viewer. The straight-forward explanation is that the Virgin was reading the book at her reading desk and carried it with her when confronting the Angel but, as was the case with the Cavallini mosaic, I question whether such an explanation is really plausible. The lack of an established history of images of the reading Annunciate means that that interpretation cannot be safely assumed to be available to the viewer. Thus I believe there is an alternative explanation.

It has been proposed that the Annunciation fresco reflects performances of the scene that we know were enacted in the adjoining Roman arena and also, perhaps, as is suggested by later Annunciation plays, in the chapel itself. From the detail of the frescoes it has been suggested that the actors were in *stalligia* and were initially concealed by curtains. The curtains were drawn back to reveal the actors and their dialogue would begin.[74] It is possible that the initial tableau when the curtain was pulled back was the Virgin reading, but why would a large reading desk be required for such a small book, which would be hardly visible to an audience? A more probable explanation is that the book represents the fact of conception and that it was produced dramatically. In an *ordo* from Padua Cathedral it is recorded that in a dramatisation of the Annunciation a dove was lowered down to the stage and, at the words *Ecce ancilla Domini*, the dove was taken by the actor playing the part of the Virgin who placed it under her cloak.[75] Equally dramatic would be if, with the same words, the actor had produced from within her cloak a book symbolising Christ. The book would have to be small to do this but it would also be appropriate for a newly-conceived baby. In the absence of

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[72] Laura Jacobus explores the options in Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: Art, Architecture and Experience*, p. 105 ff.

[73] Photographs suggest that the book has two fine strap fastenings at the top and side but they look very fine and, if intended, are incomplete and wrongly positioned. They may be just damage lines or the result of repairs during conservation.

[74] It is a minor point but I suggest that the actors would have stepped forward from the *stallagia* and turned towards each other. The frescoes indicate that the figures are in front of the curtains.

[75] Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, p. 250.

further corroborative evidence, this interpretation is speculative but, I suggest, it is what is seen in the Arena Chapel fresco.[76]

Iconographic progression

To explore whether David Robb was correct in suggesting that the Cavallini mosaic was the first example in Italian art of an Annunciation scene with a book, and given the uncertainties of dating, it may be productive to consider the evolution of elements of the iconography in the works analysed above, although any conclusions must be conjectural. It assumes that there is a shared knowledge among artists working at the end of the thirteenth century, even when they are operating in different cities; something which with an allowance of time is quite possible given the communications afforded by trade, the Church and the peripatetic lives of some craftsmen, but is nonetheless largely unstudied.

The broad iconographic themes of the four analysed works are (i) the location, (ii) the stance of the participants, and (iii) the use of the book.

In terms of location, the transformation in the iconography is from the outdoor setting that is found in most *duecento* scenes to an indoor setting that is characteristic of *trecento* scenes. The Assisi annunciation is clearly outdoors and follows a traditional format in terms of locative emblems. The Cavallini mosaic is ambiguous with a mixture of outdoor vegetation and indoor accoutrements such as vases and bowls. The Duccio is, I believe, an attempt to portray the Virgin indoors or at least within the walls of her house. The Giotto is clearly indoors. On this analysis the Annunciation in the Upper Church at Assisi is the earliest of the four works.

The overwhelming majority of *duecento* annunciations show the two main participants standing, while a high proportion of *trecento* annunciations depict the Virgin seated and a material number show the angel kneeling. A transformation towards a norm of a seated Virgin and a kneeling Angel can therefore be looked for. On this approach, the Assisi and

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[76] There is a fourteenth c. Italian Book of Hours in the British Library (Add. 15265) which has an illumination (f. 10v) showing a seated Virgin holding a small closed book that is partly concealed under her cloak. **(Plate 97)** The initial interpretation of this gesture is that the Virgin is recoiling from the appearance of the Angel but, perhaps, it is indicative of a dramatic production of a book.

Duccio annunciations are at the start of this transformation as both participants are standing; the Cavallini, with a seated Virgin, is a step closer to the *trecento* norm, which is achieved in the Giotto.

In terms of the books, the meanings that attach to them are speculative but, on the basis of such interpretations, the books that appear in the Cavallini, Duccio and Giotto works can all be seen as representing the prenatal Christ or as instrumental in the conception. In contrast, the open book held in the hand of the Virgin Annunciate in Assisi is a vehicle for a speech text or, possibly, symbolic of the Word of God. Speech texts occur in paintings both before and after the period of these works so this theme does not assist in determining the icongraphical progression.

The conclusion from this analysis is that the Assisi Annunciation is probably the earliest surviving example to include a book and therefore predates the Cavallini mosaic. It would support the school of thought that suggests that the Biblical scenes in the Upper Church at Assisi were part of a campaign of decoration that followed the election of the Franciscan Pope Nicholas IV in 1288 and were carried out in the years around 1290.[77]

Possible causes of the change in iconography

If one accepts that one of the earliest examples of a book-format annunciation is on the south wall of the nave of the Upper Church at Assisi, then one of the primary influences for the innovation must be the Franciscan order. That primacy is reinforced in this study by, as already noted, the Franciscan interests of Cardinal Stefaneschi and the clear Franciscan elements in the Duccio triptych.

That the Annunciation was held in great importance by the Franciscans is not in doubt. St Bonaventure, when he was Minister General, made changes to the Franciscan Liturgy that included the ringing of a bell at dusk to remind friars of the Annunciation, the origin of the

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[77] See Note 56.

Angelus.[78] As discussed above, both Bonaventure and Matthew of Aquasparta wrote sermons on the Annunciation.[79]

The *Meditations on the Life of Christ* contains an account of the Annunciation that describes the Virgin as being in 'a room of her little house'.[80] This moves the scene from outdoors, as in most *duecento* pictures, to indoors. While the *Meditationes* does not describe what the Virgin was doing at the moment that the Angel appeared, it does describe her daily ritual, which included praying, spinning and studying the works of God and the laws of God, and she is described as the 'best read in the verses of David'.[81] The clear implication is that part of her time in her room was spent reading the Old Testament.[82]

If the *Meditations* is representative of the written and oral dialogues of the late thirteenth century, then there was in circulation an account of the Annunciation that was different and more detailed than that portrayed in sculpture and painting. That is a condition that historians have already noted.[83] And if that account was circulating in Franciscan circles then it was likely to emerge in the blossoming of Franciscan art at the end of the century.

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[78] The references are confused on the point but it appears that at the Chapter in 1263, when Bonaventure was Minister General, statutes were passed that included one for the ringing of a bell in honour of the Annunciation and that subsequently Bonaventure encouraged others to follow the example of the Franciscans in the practice. Raphael M. Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order from the Birth of St Francis to the Division of the Order under Leo X: 1182-1517* (Milwawkee: Nowing Publishing, 1944), pp. 913-4.

[79] See page 140 and note 53.

[80] Ragusa and Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, p. 16. The more recent Taney translation has the Virgin 'in the bedroom of her little house', John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. Francis X Taney, Anne Miller, and C Mary Stallings-Taney (Ashville: Pegasus Press, 2000), p. 13.

[81] Ragusa and Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 12-13. The Taney translation has: 'more polished in the songs of David'. Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. 11.

[82] If that were to be interpreted accurately into a pictorial representation, then the expectation would be that the Virgin would be holding a scroll, as indicative of the Old Testament. But, as had seemingly always been the case with the book-format of the Annunciation, the codex is used.

[83] For example Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. R.J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch (Chicago: The University of Chicargo Press, 1996), p. 318.

Two other factors should be brought in that may have influenced the change or at least the acceptance of it. The first is, as mentioned above[84], the presence in the Roman Curia at that time of many cardinals, and no doubt even more followers, from Northern Europe. With manuscripts and sculpture in Paris and elsewhere already using a book-format, a change to that iconography in Italy was not likely to be criticised.

The second is the rise of liturgical drama. If it is the case that the written accounts of the Annunciation were in advance of the pictorial, is there any reason why the dramatic performances should not be equally advanced? We know that the Annunciation was being acted out prior to the book appearing in pictures but, sadly, there are not sufficiently detailed accounts to know which visual 'format' they followed. The reasoning has to come the other way around. The hypothesis has already been proposed that the scene in the Arena Chapel is based on an existing dramatic production[85] and if that is accepted then it can be argued that dramatic performances influenced the change in pictorial representation.[86] Such an argument would not apply to the Annunciation in Assisi but could apply to Cavallini's mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome.

Returning to the *Meditations*, the account of the meeting of the Virgin and the Angel ends with: 'But finally the prudent Virgin understood the words of the angel and consented, and, as is related in the aforementioned revelations, she knelt with profound devotion and, folding her hands, said, "Behold the handmaid of God; let it be to me according to your word". Then the Son of God forthwith entered her womb without delay and from her acquired human flesh, wholly remaining in his Father's bosom.'[87] This account could be the origin of the Virgin's pose in the Arena Chapel scene, kneeling, with forearms crossed and holding the small book. And it would follow that the scene is taken from the end of the meeting between the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel rather than the moment of shock at the appearance of the Angel that is characteristic of most other Annunciation pictures.

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[84] Page 141.

[85] Jacobus, "Giotto's Annunciation in the Arena Chapel, Padua," pp. 93-107.

[86] This is clearly contrary to what Otto Pächt concluded from his study of the earlier *St Alban's Psalter*. See page 129.

[87] Ragusa and Green, eds., *Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, p. 14. The Taney translation has the pose of the Virgin as '...she knelt in profound devotion, and with clasped hands, said...' Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, p. 15.

Conclusion

That the iconography of the Annunciation changed in Italian art in the last decade of the thirteenth century is clear. The changes included location, posture, attributes and, importantly, the inclusion of a book. While there is not a written account that clearly validates what I believe happened, I think there is enough evidence in the pictures and the fragments of documentation that has survived to enable a theory to be formulated.

The surviving examples of Annunciation scenes that predate 1290 use either a Byzantine or Lucasian format. The Annunciation in the Upper Church in Assisi is probably the earliest surviving example of the book-format. This follows the earlier compositional arrangement with the addition of an image of a book. The Annunciations in Santa Maria in Trastevere, on the Duccio triptych and at the Arena Chapel show a marked development in the iconography that ultimately lead to the 'reading Annunciate'.

The book format did not feature in contemporary theological works of the period that had a bias towards authenticity and placed heavy reliance on mainstream scriptures. However, we know from documents that, in thirteenth-century Italy, liturgical drama existed and that the Annunciation was performed regularly. These dramatic productions certainly involved dialogue and we know included dramatic effects. Pictorial and sculptural art lagged behind the written word and in all probability lagged behind the dramatic renditions of Biblical narratives. As the decoration of churches with pictorial narratives expanded at the end of the *duecento*, there became a need to match the narrative as portrayed in liturgical dramas. Those dramas portrayed the Annunciation taking place indoors, and used devices to symbolise the incarnation of Christ. As Christ was synonymous with the Word of God that was contained in the Scriptures, a book was used as such a symbol.

The images of a book in the Annunciations in Santa Maria in Trastevere, on the Duccio triptych and at the Arena Chapel are symbolic of either the process of conception or of the consequence or of both. While only a hypothesis, I suggest that in Pietro Cavallini's remarkably innovative mosaic at Santa Maria in Trastevere, the book can be read as the

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Sacred Scriptures acting as a mirror for the Word of God. In the Triptych by Duccio and the Arena Chapel fresco by Giotto, the book is symbolic of Christ at the moment of incarnation. In none of these cases should the book be seen as symbolic of the 'Reading Annunciate'. That interpretation developed thereafter, and by the mid fourteenth century had become the norm.

What then can we say about the *Miraculous Annunciation* in Santissima Annunziata in Florence? I suspect that Fra Bartolomeo's original picture did not have the dramatic flourishes that were developed at the end of the thirteenth century nor, in his image, did the Virgin hold a book. Thus, it is likely that this iconic fresco was repainted not only to refresh it but to reflect the scene as performed in the church.

It is my basic proposition that images of books in religious art of this period were not just attributes but reflected and supported the liturgy that was performed around them. This exploration of the Annunciation demonstrates the possible links between images of books and liturgical drama.

Case-study

Lux et libri: Illuminating the church with symbols of wisdom

This chapter, the fourth and final case study, considers how the Dominican claim to be the authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Word of God is reflected in the Order's art, the use of images of books to communicate that claim and the key role played by images of St Thomas Aquinas. The principal works examined are Simone Martini's *S. Caterina Polyptych* and *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* attributed to Lippus de Sena. The chapter begins with a discussion on the importance of books to the Dominican Order and how that importance may be conveyed in the Order's art.

Unlike the Franciscans, the Dominican Order valued the possession and use of books from the start. Its founder, St Dominic of Guzman, realised that to achieve the apostolic mission of praying, preaching and teaching, the Order would have to place studying at the heart of its routine and that meant books.[1] In contrast to St Francis, who appears to have had minimal education, Dominic studied the arts and theology at the schools of Palencia in Spain. Text books were essential to his studies and as a friar he was said to have always travelled with the Gospel of St Matthew and St Paul's Epistles.[2]

In the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the acquisition and use of books were a constant theme in the *Constitutions* of the Order, in the letters of the Master Generals and in the comments on the Order by outsiders. The fifth Master General was Humbert of Romans (1194 – 1277) who is seen as one of the most influential religious figures of the period.[3] He emphasised the need for study:

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[1] Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 191.

[3] 'One of the most influential religious figures of the thirteenth century in that he played a monumental role in the development of the Dominican Order', Edward Tracy Brett, *Humbert of Romans : His Life and Views of Thirteenth-century Society* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), p. 3.

> Study is not the end of the Order, but it is an utmost necessity to that end, which is preaching and labouring for the salvation of souls, for without study we can do neither.[4]

This commitment to study was seen in the daily routine of Dominican friars. Every friar in the Convent, from the Prior downwards, was expected to spend time in the *schola.* Indeed, a friar was permitted to miss choir before he was allowed to skip class. Hugh of St Cher (c.1200-1263) characterised this life as 'the bow is bent in study, then the arrow is released in preaching'.[5]

As part of his efforts to regulate the Dominican life, Humbert wrote the *Instructiones de officiis ordinis* which, inter alia, addressed the role and duties of the Librarian.[6] These instructions cover the organisation of a library, the duties of the librarian, the books to be kept and the facilities for study. In their detail, they address matters which are typical of libraries of every age, including the cataloguing of books and making inter-library loans. The acquisition of books was a specific duty: 'Item, the librarian ought to take care that books of every type of discipline which are not owned are acquired', as was the provision of the tools of study: 'Item, it is the librarian's concern to have in the library ink, pens, pumice stones, chalk, lead, rulers, knives (to cut the pens), tallow or candles for nightly study, and all things of this type necessary for writing or studying or keeping awake, and to supply them to the brothers without difficulty when they need them.'[7]

A subsequent Master General, Aymeric Giliani of Piacenza[8] (c.1240 – 1327), took repeated steps to encourage and authorise the accumulation of books. He is recorded in the General Chapter of 1308 as stating the responsibility of the order to look after those who study and research theology and the need to ensure that they had sufficient books. In furtherance of

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[4] Quoted by Ibid., p. 41.

[5] 'Arcus tenditur in studio, postea sagittatur in praedicatione' from *Postilla super Genesim,* quoted by Marian Michele Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is bent to Study..": Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1998), p. ix. There are multiple editions of the *Postillae.* I consulted the *Biblia cum postillae* by Hugh of St Cher printed in Basel between 1498 and 1502. The words are in volume 1, on page 37, as part of a commentary on Genesis 9:13.

[6] Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, pp. 192-94; Robert D Taylor-Vaisey, "Regulations for the Operation of a Medieval Library," *The Library* 33, no. 1 (1978): p. 47.

[7] Translated by Taylor-Vaisey, "Regulations for the Operation of a Medieval Library," pp. 47-50.

[8] In the literature usually called Aymeric, although sometimes spelt as Aylmer. The Latin form is Aymericus.

this, earlier ordinances permitting the retention of a deceased friar's books for the benefit of a convent or their sale to purchase other books were renewed and new directives made for the purchase of books.[9] On another occasion he authorised the English Dominican friar Nicholas Trevet to purchase whatever books he needed from wherever they could be found.[10] This 'constant prodding', as Hinnebusch describes it, resulted in the Dominican Order having substantial collections of books and many libraries.

This activity was noted by others. The English Benedictine Richard de Bury (1287 – 1345) in his amusing but revealing *Philobiblon* describes the Dominicans as constitutionally 'pledged to the love of books' and that sacrifices in food and clothing would be made so as to permit 'spend in buying and correcting books'. He adds that books 'collected at great expense in the various parts of the world' were given to the Dominicans 'for the edification of the whole Church'.[11]

So there is no doubt as to the importance of books to the Dominican Order and its constitutional pursuit of learning and truth. But how was this conveyed in Dominican art?

The earliest pictures of Dominic show him holding a book. The panel that is arguably the earliest survivor is that in the Fogg Museum which shows Dominic holding a plain book. **(Plate 78)** As discussed in Chapter 3, this panel was repainted twice in the thirteenth century and the earlier layers are detectable by X-ray. The first of the three layers is dated to 1235-40 and the X-ray confirms that the book has always been present and that it was plain.[12] Dominic appears again in a hinged triptych in the Yale University Art Collection. On the central panel is shown the Madonna and Child flanked by St Dominic and St Francis. **(Plate 98)** This is Florentine and dated to 1275-80.[13] Both the supporting saints hold books and the obvious interpretation to be drawn is that the inclusion of books is no more than

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[9] B M Reichert, ed., *Acta capitulorum generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 7 vols., vol. 2 (Rome: In domo generalitia, 1900), pp. 34-35.

[10] Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, pp. 197-8.

[11] Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon*, trans. E C Thomas (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1960), pp. 61 & 63.

[12] See Chapter 5, page 110.

[13] Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," No 330.

following a formula.[14] The book is there to give credence to the saint and is not offering a particular message about the book.

However, two panels suggest that more is being made of the image of a book. The first is an altarpiece in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples. **(Plate 99)** The central panel, which is late thirteenth century and pre-date the side panels, shows St Dominic holding an open book that is also touched by two small figures of Dominican friars.[15] The inscription on the book is EVN / TES / IN / MV / DVM VIN / VER / SVM / PDI / CATE which appears to be a contraction of 'Euntes in mundum universum praedicate' ('Go into the whole world and preach') from the Gospel of St Mark, 16:15. The use of a book rather than a scroll for this text and the fact that the two small friars are touching the book suggests that it is more than just an instruction from the founder. The two friars appear to be either receiving the book, and so committing to the mission to preach, or gaining strength by touching the book, or perhaps both.

The second example is Duccio's *Rucellai Madonna* painted for the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.[16] **(Plate 100)** The contract is dated to 1285.[17] The work is a gabled panel and has a series of thirty roundels as part of the framing for the central picture of the enthroned Madonna and Child with Angels. Christ occupies the roundel at the apex of the gable. On his right are the twelve Apostles starting with Peter and finishing with Thaddeus in the bottom left hand corner. At least four carry books and some carry *rotuli*. Matching them on Christ's left are twelve prophets starting with John the Baptist. Although Daniel and David can be identified the others are obscure – they probably include Jeremiah, Isaiah, Moses and Ezekiel plus some of the Minor Prophets. Some carry scrolls with decorative text, some rotuli, and David has a book. The five remaining roundels along the

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[14] An interpretation that is supported by the two books being of nearly identical shape and colour and are held in the same way by the two saints.

[15] Attrib. to Giovanni da Taranto, *St Dominic and his Histories*, Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index," No. 169.

[16] Now in the Uffizi. The literature is substantial and the following is only representative. Monika Cammerer-George, *Die Rahmung der toskanischen Altarbilder im Trecento* (Strasbourg: P.H.Heitz, 1966), pp. 29-49. Irene Hueck, "La tavola di Duccio e la Compagnia della Laudi di Santa Maria Novella," in *La Maesta di Duccio Restaurata* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1984), pp.32-46. Luciano Bellosi, "The Function of the Rucellai Madonna in the Church of Santa Maria Novella," in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor M Schmidt (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2002), pp. 147-60; James H Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, vol. I. Text (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 21-27.

[17] This is the date of the contract so, presumably, the panel was completed a year or so afterwards.

bottom of the panel are occupied by St Catherine, St Dominic, St Jerome, St Augustine and St Peter Martyr and their presence on a panel commissioned by the Society of the Virgin of Santa Maria Novella (the "Compagnia dei Laudesi") for a Dominican Church is entirely plausible. [18] Of these figures, only St Dominic holds a book.[19] However, whether the overall arrangement of roundels represents a meaningful programme has been a point of disagreement.[20] I believe that the clue to understanding the roundels lies in the gestures of the five saints. St Catherine is facing the viewer with her left hand raised with the palm showing and fingers raised. **(Plate 100a)** This is the gesture of teaching.[21] The same gesture is seen with St Augustine and St Peter Martyr. St Jerome is shown giving a blessing although that roundel was badly damaged and the current form may be an interpretation. **(Plates 100b-d)** St Dominic does not give the teaching gesture. Instead, he has a gesture of introduction, indicating the book that he holds. **(Plate 100e)** With an interpretation of 'teaching', the overall scheme becomes apparent: it is based on the verse from St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians: 'Within our community God has appointed, in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, thirdly teachers' (1 Cor. 12, 28). Thus, there is an overall programme, it is hierarchical, and claims a Dominican identification with the teachers appointed by God. The books give authority to that role in the same way as they underpin the Dominican approach to study and preaching.

While such a message is subtle and understated, it demonstrates an intention to claim a central role within the church, as teachers, standing behind only the Apostles and Prophets. It was a message contained in probably the largest panel of the *duecento* and one that was visible in the most sacred part of the church. This claim became more forthright with panels

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[18] For a long time the central figure was identified as St Augustine and the figure to his right was St Zenobius. Justification for those identifications was based on the panel being made to hang in the Laudesi Chapel, however this has now been shown to be incorrect, as has the suggestion that the panel was originally placed on the high altar. The most likely hanging place is on a wall in the south transept overlooking the area before the high altar although a location on the *tramezzo* has also been suggested. See Bellosi, "The Function of the Rucellai Madonna in the Church of Santa Maria Novella," p. 153.

[19] St Catherine holds a palm. The figure of St Jerome was badly damaged prior to restoration and the image of St Peter Martyr is unclear. St Augustine holds his crozier.

[20] David Wilkins opined that no overall programme was apparent. James Stubblebine argued that the choice of the five saints along the foot of the panel was programmed for the Laudesi. See D Wilkins, "Early Florentine Frescoes in Santa Maria Novella," *Art Quarterly* NS 1, no. 3 (1978): p. 171, n.71.; Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and his School*, p. 22.

[21] Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture*, pp. 27-8.

in the fourteenth century and books were clearly a key component in that message. To demonstrate this, I now turn to a work that Henk van Os described as 'one of the most important altarpieces to have survived from that period', the S. Caterina Polyptych by Simone Martini.[22]

The S. Caterina Polyptych

This altarpiece once stood on the high altar of the Dominican church in Pisa. It is large, imposing and justly regarded as important. **(Plate 40)** The museum's description of the subject as *Vergine col bambino e santi*, suggests that the polyptych was intended as a devotional object dedicated to the Virgin and Child, albeit with a large number of saints and prophets in attendance. But the complexity of the piece and the unusual iconography raises the possibility that there were other objectives in the minds of the commissioner and the artist. There are 44 figures, 28 books or epistles, 6 scrolls and 2 tablets, plus assorted additional attributes for individual saints. Such a density of books in a single composition is unprecedented.[23] Saints that were not customarily portrayed with books now have them and one book, that held by the *Doctor Communis* Thomas Aquinas, is portrayed radiating light, a detail that is again without precedent.[24] **(Plate 40b)** The degree of innovation deployed by Simone Martini, whether of his own volition or at the command of others, suggests that unusual factors were influencing the composition. That this innovation was being used on an altarpiece for a high altar, when the norm would have been a composition on traditional

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[22] Van Os, *Studies in Early Tuscan Painting*, p. 252. The panel is now in the Museo Nazionale di S Matteo, Pisa. Dimensions: 195 x 340 cms. In 2011 the panel was removed from display for conservation.

[23] For example, the Polyptych No 47 in Siena's Pinacoteca Nazionale, by Duccio, c1305-10, has the Madonna and child accompanied by four saints, twelve prophets, four angels and Christ Logos, with eleven scrolls and just three books. **(Plate 32)** In the main front panel of Duccio's *Maestà*, c1308-11, (that 'richest and most complex altarpiece to have been created in Italy' – John White) the Madonna and Child are accompanied by 20 saints and 20 angels, the former with 9 books and 3 *rotuli*. **(Plate 31)**

[24] In this chapter I will usually refer to Thomas Aquinas as "Thomas" unless there is potential for confusion, such as with St Thomas the Apostle.

lines, is also significant.[25] The purpose of what follows is to unpick the detail and derive a hypothesis explaining those factors.

It is my contention that at the heart of the composition is an assertion of the Catholic Church's right to be the sole gatekeeper to the Word of God and the claim of the Dominican Order to be the authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Word. This claim depended on the acceptance by the Church and the Universities of the doctrines and commentaries written by Thomas Aquinas. It was a bold power-play by the Order and the altarpiece is a first attempt to render pictorially both the process by which knowledge of God's wisdom is received and transmitted to the faithful, and the central role of the Dominicans in that process.

The inclusion of Thomas Aquinas, complete with a nimbus denoting sainthood, is an innovation of particular significance, one that influences many aspects of the overall composition. No earlier image of Thomas has been securely identified and his inclusion as a saint in an altarpiece created for a Pisan client raises questions.[26]

Other scholars have demonstrated that the polyptych was finished and installed in 1319/20.[27] Thomas was not canonised until 1323 so it is relevant to analyse the altarpiece in the context of his canonisation process.

Thomas died in 1274. His canonization was an important objective for the Dominican Order, not least as a way of reversing the condemnations issued against aspects of Thomist teaching

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[25] Christa Gardner von Teuffel, "Clerics and Contracts: Fra Angelico, Neroccio, Ghirlandaio and Others: Legal procedures and the Renaissance High Altar in Central Italy," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 62, no. 2 (1999): p. 195.

[26] The lack of earlier images of Thomas is certainly the case with paintings in panel or fresco format. The Ulrico Hoepli Collection had two folios from a Choral with illuminations showing Thomas Aquinas teaching and preaching together with smaller scenes from his life. They are stated to be from Bologna and dated to the beginning of the fourteenth century but they are, I believe, more probably from the second quarter of that century. Pietro Toesca, *La Collezione di Ulrico Hoepli* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1930), Cat. No. 32 &33.

[27] The evidence is helpfully laid out in Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 69. The *Annales* of S Caterina indicate that the installation took place in 1320 and it is assumed that this date is according to the medieval Pisan calendar which was in advance of the calendar in common use elsewhere by eight months and seven days. See Hayden B J Maginnis, "The Literature of Sienese Trecento Painting 1945 - 1975," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 40, no. 3/4 (1977): p. 285. If correct, the actual date of installation was during the twelve months following Easter 1319.

by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, in 1277.[28] An initial attempt by the Dominicans to interest Pope Benedict IX in a cause for canonization was made in 1303 but terminated with the death of the Pope in 1304.[29] In about 1317, Pope John XXII offered to add a third Dominican Saint to Saints Dominic and Peter Martyr, as a mark of his esteem for the Order and possibly as part of his encouragement to the Order to expand.[30] This seems to have prompted the Dominican Province of the Kingdom of Sicily, a province which included Naples and the D'Aquino family estates at Roccasecca, to commence in November 1317 an inquest or inquiry into the life and miracles of Thomas, the consequence of which was a submission to the Pope in Avignon in August 1318. This submission contained a record of the miracles ascribed to the saintliness of Thomas Aquinas, a draft biography (the *Ystoria)* and a request for his canonization supported by King Robert of Naples and his mother Queen Marie, by the University of Naples and by the Dominican Province.[31] John XXII was already well disposed to Thomist teachings (as evidenced by his collection of all the works of Thomas Aquinas[32]) and had declared in March of that year that the doctrines expounded by Thomas were miraculous and that 'He alone enlightened the Church more than all other doctors; a man can derive more profit in a year from his books than from pondering all his life the teaching of others'.[33] It was in response to the submission that Pope John ordered the formal process of examination and appointed a commission of three cardinals.[34] The first

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[28] While not initially aimed at the writings of Thomas Aquinas, the moves taken by the Church against 'radical Aristotelianism' in Paris had the effect of stopping Thomist teaching and led to a revival of Augustinian doctrines. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), pp. 298 ff.

[29] Leonardas V Gerulaitis, "The Canonization of Saint Thomas Aquinas," *Vivarium* 5, no. 1 (1967): p. 36.

[30] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 75, n. 41. Also William A Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965), p. 252.

[31] Gerulaitis, "The Canonization of Saint Thomas Aquinas," p. 37. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 79. Samantha Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p. 98.

[32] See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, pp. 317-8.

[33] As quoted by Pope Pius XI in *Studiorum Ducem* 1923, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius11/P11STUDI.HTM (consulted 25/5/2010). See also Jacques Maritain, *St Thomas Aquinas: angel of the schools*, trans. J F Scanlan (London: Sheed & Ward, 1931), p. 184.

[34] Gerulaitis, "The Canonization of Saint Thomas Aquinas," p. 37.

Canonization Enquiry took place at the Archbishop's Palace in Naples from 21st July to 18th September 1319.[35]

An altarpiece of the scale of the S. Caterina Polyptych (in its current form it has a surface area of over 5.7 square metres and originally had an elaborate frame[36]) would have taken many months to construct, carve and paint. If it is correct that it was installed on the high altar in 1319/20, then the commission must have been awarded in 1318 or even 1317,[37] well before the first Canonization Enquiry or even the submission by the Sicilian province in August 1318. No contract for the commission has survived so it is not known whether it was the intention from the first to include an image of Thomas Aquinas, although I will argue that the detail of the iconography suggests that it was.[38]

There were precedents for the painting of an un-canonised person. Local cults existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which included the making of devotional images of saintly persons often to further their cause for canonization, a matter then for the local bishop. However, following the *Decretals* of Gregory IX in 1234, the authority to canonize was reserved to the pope alone[39] and subsequently moves were taken, on occasion, to suppress

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[35] Kenelm Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents* (London: Longmans, Green, 1959), p. 82.

[36] See Gardner von Teuffel, "The Buttressed Altarpiece: A Forgotten Aspect of Tuscan Fourteenth Century Altarpiece Design," p. 46.

[37] Measured by date of contract to installation, Duccio's *Maestà* took 2 years and 8months although it has been suggested that the work had been commenced prior to contract. See Luciano Bellosi, *Duccio: The Maesta*, trans. Elizabeth Currie (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), p. 11. The few contracts of the period that have survived do not contain a completion date See John White, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979), pp. 34 ff & Appendix on Documents. Also Gaetano Milanesi, *Nuovi Documenti per la Storia Dell'Arte Toscana dal XII al XVI Secolo* (Roma: Tipografia delle Scienze Matematiche e Fisiche, 1893), pp. 22-3. A study of fifteenth century contracts by Hannelore Glasser noted that 'Time limits within which the work was to be completed were almost always specified in the initial contract but in the majority of the more important *quattrocento* commissions, these were rarely held. Most commissions took longer, often much longer, than the time allowed' She also notes that in contracts 'The time allowed for an altarpiece and for the making of a life-sized marble sculpture was about the same: from six months to two years'. Elsewhere in her thesis she gives some examples of contract times for altarpieces and they range from 2 to 8 years. Hannelore Glasser, "Artists' contracts of the early Renaissance" (Columbia University, 1965), p. 38.

[38] As John White has noted, the initial stage of production of an altarpiece was the making of the frame, so a final decision on the iconography could have been taken part way through the process. White, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop*, p. 35.

[39] Gerulaitis, "The Canonization of Saint Thomas Aquinas," p. 28.

the practice of venerating images of the un-canonized.[40] The decision by the Dominicans in Pisa to include an image of Thomas Aquinas in their new altarpiece would presumably only have been countenanced after the pope had offered to make a third Dominican saint and (given that Thomas was not the only candidate[41]) made his declaration about the importance of Thomas in March, 1318.

Given that the initiative for the canonization process had come from the Royal Court in Naples and the Sicilian Province of Dominicans, the question arises as to why it was in Pisa that there was a desire to anticipate Thomas Aquinas's canonization. Pisa was periodically at war with other Tuscan cities and with the Kingdom of Naples, so it might have been politically difficult to support an initiative from Naples. However, the years immediately around 1318 were ones of relative peace among the Tuscan City States following the Peace Treaty negotiated by King Robert of Naples on 12th May 1317 between Pisa and Lucca of the Ghibelline alliance and Florence, Pistoia, Siena and San Gimignano of the Guelf.[42] Furthermore, Dominicans were clearly involved in building bridges at this time between the various factions in Italy, as evidenced by the role played by Ptolemy of Lucca in retrieving the body of King Robert's brother after the victory of the Pisan army at the Battle of Montecatini in 1313 and the sermons of Remigio dei Girolami of Florence given at Santa Maria Novella supporting the Angevins.[43]

Dominicans had additional influence in Pisa as a friar of the Order, Oddone della Sala, was Archbishop of Pisa from 1312 to 1323. He attended and spoke at the canonization ceremony of Thomas in 1323, in which year he became Latin Patriarch of Alexandria.[44]

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[40] For example, the cults of Armanno Pungilupo in Ferrara and Gugliema Boema in Milan, which were suppressed by Boniface VIII. See Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 88-9.

[41] King James II of Aragon had proposed the Catalan Raymond of Peñafort. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, p. 317.

[42] Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship*, p. 228.

[43] Both these friars were disciples of Thomas Aquinas, Ptolemy being a close friend, collaborator and confessor to Thomas. Both were part of the entourage of councillors to King Robert, but with positions in Tuscany: Ptolemy being for a time prior of Santa Maria Novella in Florence and Remigio being Preacher General there. See Ibid., p. 40.

[44] Prior to becoming Archbishop of Pisa, Oddone della Sala was Bishop of Terralba (1297), Bishop of Pola (1302), and Archbishop of Oristano in Sardinia (1308). He was politically active, supporting the appointment of the mercenary Uguccione della Faggiola and blessing the Pisan army before the Battle of Montecatini. But in 1318 he supported the *condottieri* when they outraged the citizens of Pisa with heavy tax demands and had to flee the city and took refuge in Florence. He is thought to have died in 1325. Frater Bentius's account of the

The Dominican convent of S Caterina in Pisa contained the *Studium Artium* of the Rome Province and a substantial library. There seems to have been a tradition that Thomas Aquinas taught there and a *Cathedra* said to be his is displayed there. However, there is no evidence that this was true. The *Studium Artium* was only established by the Provincial Chapter of June 1272 (held in Florence) and a Br. Ricculdus of Florence was appointed to teach there. At the same Chapter, Thomas was appointed to found and organise a *Studium generale theologie*, the location of which was already determined as Naples, and he was engaged in this activity in 1272-3, although he attended the Provincial Chapter in Rome in September 1273. His health collapsed that December and he died in March the following year.[45] It seems more likely that the tradition of Thomas Aquinas at S. Caterina was one cultivated by the priory and was a product of the *Studium Artium*, the importance of its library and the prominence given to the works of Aquinas in Dominican studies.[46] The particular friar that is mentioned in the *Annales* as responsible for causing the altarpiece to be installed is 'Frater Petrus, conversus, sacrista superexcellens'[47] but while a lay-brother may well have facilitated the installation, the decision to commission an altarpiece, and its richness and content, would have been a matter for the Prior, his council and, possibly, the conventual chapter.[48] While the inclusion of an image of Thomas Aquinas might have been part of the cultivation of the tradition of an association with S. Caterina, it may also have

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canonization states: 'Post, patriarcha Alexandrinus, quondam archiepiscopus Pisanus, frater Odo, proposuit: *Similem illum fecit in Gloria sanctorum.*' (Ecclesiasticus 45, 2.)

[45] Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 74. The relevant passages from the 1272 Florence Chapter are:

> Studium generale theologie quantum ad locum et personas et numerum studentium committimus plenarie fr. Thome de Aquino.
> Studium artium ponimus in conv. Pisano, ubi leget fr. Ricculdus Florentinus, cuius studio deputamus et cetera.
>
> From www.dhspriory.org/thomas/RomanChapters.htm accessed 29/5/2010.

Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, Ch. XIII & XIV. The Province of Sicily was only created in 1294, Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500*, p. 174.

[46] The library was important and a significant number of manuscripts have survived, including copies of texts by Aquinas that date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars 1215-1400*, p. 91. Also Tamburini, "Pisa: Biblioteca Cateriniana del Seminario," in *Inventari dei MSS delle biblioteche d'Italia*, ed. Giuseppe Mazzatinti (1963), pp. 69-92.

[47] Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 69, note 3.

[48] Gardner von Teuffel, "Clerics and Contracts: Fra Angelico, Neroccio, Ghirlandaio and Others: Legal procedures and the Renaissance High Altar in Central Italy," p. 193. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500*, pp. 343 ff.

been part of an effort to reinforce the Order's efforts to secure canonization. The cause for Thomas was not without opposition and there may have been a wish to entrench his cult. [49]

Whatever the reasons for the initiative, the decision to include Thomas Aquinas on the altarpiece was a risk, as his canonization might not have taken place. The experience of 1304, when Pope Benedict IX had showed a willingness to see a process of canonization for Thomas but then died, showed what could go awry.

The image of Thomas is placed on the *predella*, immediately to the right of the central section. **(Plate 40c)** He is shown half-length (as are all the figures) and facing the viewer. He has a sombre face and the eyes are lifted upwards, as though gazing into the distance. He wears Dominican dress and has a nimbus that matches those of the other saints on the predella. Thomas holds an open book that has an inscription that is shown as radiating light. The inscription is a contracted form of 'veritatem meditabitur guttur meum et labia mea detestabuntur (impium)' –verse 7 of Chapter 8 of the Book of Proverbs concerning Wisdom ('My mouth shall meditate truth, and my lips shall hate wickedness') but is also the *incipit* of Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. This book is regarded as the second most important of Thomas's works, the first being the *Summa Theologiae*. Why was Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles* chosen to be the attribute for Thomas and why are the words shown radiating light?

The *Summa Theologiae* does not have quotations from the Bible as *incipits* in the same way as each book of the *Summa contra Gentiles* has a quotation. This may have been significant in that while the designers of the iconography may have wished to indicate a work by Thomas, a passage from the Bible may well have been deemed more appropriate for an altarpiece, especially as Thomas was not then a saint. An advantage of indicating Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles* was that the opening chapters of the book proclaim both the wisdom of the author and the importance given to the pursuit of wisdom. Thus:

> Among all human pursuits, the pursuit of wisdom is more perfect, more noble, more useful, and more full of joy. [50]

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[49] The Franciscans opposed his canonization to the end. As Vauchez observes, the stakes for the Dominican Order were high: 'it was the value of the doctrine of the 'universal teacher', and even the place of the Preachers within the Church, which was at issue.' Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 121.

> (*Summa contra Gentiles, Book I, Chapter 2*)

And

> It is more noble because through this pursuit man especially approaches to a likeness to God: Who made all things in wisdom.[51]

> (*Summa contra Gentiles, Book I, Chapter 2*)

For an institution that was a place of learning with an important library, this was validation of its objectives and a justification for its occupation and possessions.

A second, possibly complementary, explanation may lie in the wider purpose of the *Summa contra Gentiles.* Book IV includes Thomas's explanation of how mankind can achieve knowledge of God, and that God's wisdom descends to man by divine revelation. So although the inscription is the *incipit* of Book I of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, it may be that the whole work is intended to be referenced.

The depiction of rays of light emanating from the words on the book has no precedent in Italian painting. Rays were used to symbolise the transmission of the Word from God the Father to the Virgin in Annunciation scenes[52], to symbolise the transfer of the Stigmata to St Francis[53], and sometimes to show the personal luminescence of Christ[54] but there is no earlier example of a book, or text, portrayed emitting light rays.

In the late Middle Ages it was believed that God favoured his earthly servants with divine powers and in consequence saintliness in a person might be detected or determined by the presence of those exceptional, God-given, attributes. Among the most keenly-sought attributes were physical beauty and luminosity and it is interesting that in the record of the Canonization Enquiry, many of the witnesses are asked about the appearance of Thomas, an aspect which to a modern mind might seem irrelevant but then would have been a valid line

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[50] 'Inter omnia vero hominum studia sapientiae studium est perfectius, sublimius, utilius et iucundius.' Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* (Web edition 2006) Fundacion Tomas de Aquino, http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/scg1001.html.(Accessed 27/8/2010).

[51] 'Sublimius autem est quia per ipsum homo praecipue ad divinam similitudinem accedit, quae omnia in sapientia fecit.' Ibid.

[52] See Chapter 6.

[53] See Chapter 5 for examples.

[54] E.g. the figure of Christ in the *Last Judgement* in the Capella degli Scrovegni, **(Plate 54d)**

of enquiry in the search for an external sign of saintliness.[55] Thus, the innovation of showing light rays is intended to convey and draw attention to the saintliness of Thomas. In Book IV of the Summa contra Gentiles, Thomas writes:

> Therefore, just as the soul which enjoys the divine vision will be filled with a kind of spiritual lightsomeness, so by a certain overflow from the soul to the body, the body will in its own way put on the lightsomeness of glory. Hence, the Apostle says: "It is sown in dishonor. It shall rise in glory" (1 Cor. 15:43); for our body is dark now, but then it will be lightsome; as Matthew (13:43) has it: "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.[56]
>
> (*Summa contra Gentiles, Book IV, Chapter 86*)

What constituted physical beauty was not straight-forward. However, beauty in a modern sense was not something that anybody could claim for Thomas Aquinas. Witnesses speak of him being large and heavy with a bald forehead.[57] His nickname at Paris had been 'the Dumb Ox' and this was probably an accurate summation of his physical appearance albeit not his intellectual ability.[58] And there are accounts of him being followed and admired by country folk because of his size and corpulence.[59] However, it was his mind that was celebrated, the product of which was his writings. Thus, if the intention was to indicate and promote the saintliness of Thomas, the addition of light rays to his words was a symbol that would have been understood and would have drawn attention to his teachings. It would also be an attribute that was distinct and did not conflict with the attributes and appearance of the other saints.

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[55] See Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, Section II; Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 434-9..

[56] 'Sicut igitur anima divina visione fruens quadam spirituali claritate replebitur, ita per quandam redundantiam ex anima in corpus, ipsum corpus suo modo claritatis gloriae induetur. Unde dicit apostolus, I Cor. 15-43: *seminatur corpus in ignobilitate, surget in gloria*: quia corpus nostrum nunc est opacum, tunc autem erit clarum; secundum illud Matth. 13-43: *fulgebunt iusti sicut sol in regno patris eorum.*' Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*.

[57] Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, p. 278.

[58] James A Weisheiph, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p. 44.

[59] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 437.

Thomas's position on the predella was also significant. The central Man of Sorrows has been associated with the feast of Corpus Christi, the liturgy for which has traditionally been ascribed to Thomas Aquinas.[60] Thomas is placed immediately to the right of the central trio of the Virgin, Christ and St Mark.[61] To the right of Thomas is St Augustine of Hippo. The latter was reported to have appeared in a vision to Albert of Brescia, confirming the doctrines of Thomas and declaring that Thomas was 'my equal in glory, except that in the splendour of virginity he is greater than I'.[62] To the right of St Augustine appears St Agnes, a saint for which Thomas had a particular devotion. **(Plate 40d)** Thomas kept a relic of St Agnes on his person and used it to perform a miracle by curing a man of his fever.[63] Next to Agnes is another Doctor of the Church, St Ambrose. Mirroring Augustine and Ambrose are, on the left hand side of the *predella,* the remaining Doctors of the Church, Saints Jerome and Gregory. Between these two saints is St Lucia, looking towards the Man of Sorrows (and hence Thomas) and holding up her lamp, thereby providing light and thus "illuminating grace".[64] **(Plate 40e)**

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[60] Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 73. The question of whether Aquinas was actually the author of the liturgy has been disputed, not least because of the seeming reluctance of the Dominicans to observe the feast, but this has now been resolved in his favour and it is clear that by the early fourteenth century there was belief, even among Dominicans, in his authorship. It may be relevant to the dating of the polyptych that the Dominican order only adopted the feast of Corpus Christi in at their General Chapter in 1318. The feast had been originally promulgated by Pope Urban IV in 1264 although this was generally ignored in the Church and the papal promulgation was repeated by John XXII in 1317. See Weisheiph, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works*, pp. 176-7, p. 83.

[61] The inclusion of St Mark rather than St John is presumably a consequence of latter's presence in the main register. This is possibly the earliest example of the Man of Sorrows appearing in a *predella* and its appearance may be influenced by the earliest sculptural example, on the lectern of the Pulpit for Pisa Cathedral, by Giovanni Pisano (1301-1310), now in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. See James H Stubblebine, "Segna di Buonaventura and the Image of the Man of Sorrows," *Gesta* 8, no. 2 (1969): pp. 8-9.

[62] This is in the evidence given to the first canonization enquiry and was stated to have been a matter kept in confidence until such time as a canonization enquiry took place but it seems probable that knowledge of it would have been more general. See Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, pp. 103-4.

[63] See Ibid., pp. 40, 99 and 135.

[64] In the *Golden Legend*, Voraigine commences his account of St Lucia (Lucy) by stating that 'Lucy comes from *lux,* which means light. Light is beautiful to look upon; for, as Ambrose says, it is the nature of light that all grace is in its appearance. Light also radiates without being soiled; no matter how unclean may be the places where its beams penetrate, it is still clean. It goes in straight lines, without curvature, and traverses the greatest distances without losing its speed. Thus we are shown that the blessed virgin Lucy possessed the beauty of virginity without trace of corruption; that she radiated charity without any impure love; her progress toward God was straight and without deviation, and went far in God's works without neglect or delay. Or the name is interpreted "way of light".'Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, Vol I, p. 27. Luccia appears at

The remaining figures on the *predella* are the Evangelist Luke to the immediate left of the central trio, and at the extreme ends of the *predella*, the deacons St Stephen and St Lawrence accompanied by the virgin martyrs Apollinia and Ursula. These end-pairs lack an obvious link with Thomas and their relevance probably lies more with Pisa or S. Caterina.[65]

Nine *predella* figures hold books. Those held by the evangelists are open and they hold pens. The books held by the four Doctors of the Church are closed and each is cradled in the left hand. The two deacons' books are closed and each is held with two hands as if it were a Gospel book. It is possibly significant that the Evangelist's books are open, as is Thomas's book, but that the books of the four Doctors are closed. It is perhaps a reflection of John XXII's statement that: 'a man can derive more profit in a year from his books' (that is teachings of Thomas) 'than from pondering all his life the teaching of others' (i.e. the Doctors of the Church, *inter alia*).[66]

Altarpiece predellas were an established format by 1317, even though they were still novel. While their pictorial content was usually well integrated with the other registers, there appears to be some evidence to suggest that they could be used to convey a particular message.[67] I suggest that this is the case with the predella of the Pisa Polyptych: it was used to promote the cause for the canonisation of Thomas Aquinas. He is shown in the company of the Doctors of the Church but the symbolism of the books demonstrates that his teachings are superior; he is accompanied by St Agnes for whom he had a particular devotion; the need to demonstrate saintliness by luminescence is achieved by the rays of light from his book and the presence of St Lucia; and he is placed immediately adjacent to the central panel with the

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the beginning of *The Divine Comedy* as an emissary to Beatrice from the *donna gentile* (i.e. the Virgin Mary). This is in Canto II of the *Inferno*, which was in circulation by 1314, and demonstrates that St Lucia, albeit a cult saint of Sicily and Southern Italy, was also revered in Tuscany by the early fourteenth century. An interpretation of the meaning attached to Luccia is given by Curtius, the 'illuminating grace', although he concedes that what Dante was intending is now unclear. See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 376-7.

[65] St Ursula was venerated in Pisa and there is an early panel depicting her protecting Pisa from a flood. George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence: Sansoni, 1952), Col. 996.

[66] See above, note 33.

[67] See, for example, Simone Martini's panel *St Louis of Toulouse crowning Robert of Anjou,* 1317, now in Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples. This panel was painted shortly after the canonization of Louis in 1317 and while the main panel celebrated the new saint and his relationship to Robert of Anjou, the predella established an iconography for the saint. See Julian Gardner, "Saint Louis of Toulouse, Robert of Anjou and Simone Martini," *Zeitschrift fur Kunstgeschichte* 39, no. 1 (1976): p. 30.

Man of Sorrows. But Thomas was not yet a saint so some caution was in order, and placing his image on the predella, the lowest register of the altarpiece, may have been regarded as appropriate. However, while caution was exercised, the inclusion of Thomas was essential to the overall message of the altarpiece that the Dominican Order was the authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Word.

Turning to the parts of the altarpiece above the *predella,* these consist of seven vertical sections.[68] In the main and upper registers there are 16 books, plus St Paul holding his labelled epistles. The Christ child in the central panel holds a small, red book. While it is not unknown at this date for the Christ child to hold a book, it is more usual for the object held to be a scroll or something like a bird.[69] The decision in this case to include a book could be an allusion to the City Seal of Pisa which, in one of its forms, shows the Virgin and Child enthroned and the Christ Child holding a book. **(Plate 101)**[70] However, this motif is also found on the City Seal of Siena, as painted by Simone Martini in the *Maestà* in the Sala del Consiglio, Palazzo Pubblico.[71] **(Plate 102)** So the book probably has a more general symbolic meaning of the wisdom of the Christ Child.

The Evangelists, John and Matthew hold open books. Only the letter 'I' (plus possibly the top of letters 'p' and 'r') is visible in John's book, presumably to indicate the opening words of his gospel: 'In principio erat verbum'. The text on Matthew's book is 'In illo t[em]p[ore] dixit ihs discipulis'. Cannon correctly states that this text is not found in St Matthew's gospel but associates it with Chapter 16, verse 24.[72] Pierini associates it with Chapter 5, verse

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[68] In total, the altarpiece is in fourteen pieces and various reconstructions have been proposed and tried in the past. The sequence of the predella panels has been determined by reference to the grain of the wood on which they are painted and the main sections assembled by reference to the relative importance of the upper tier figures. See Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," pp. 69-70 and notes 7 & 8.

[69] Examination of the Garrison index shows that out of 183 examples where the Christ child is holding something, 70 of those objects are scrolls while only 12 are books. Garrison, "Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index."

[70] Mariagiulia Burresi and Antonino Caleca, *Cimabue a Pisa: la pittura pisana del Duecento da Giunta a Giotto* (Pisa: Pacinieditore, 2005), p. 219.

[71] The iconography of Siena's city seal dates from the middle of the thirteenth century. See Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a late Medieval City State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 217 n. 72.

[72] Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 72.

13.[73] Neither association is right. The phrase 'in illo temporare dixit Jesus discipulus suis' ('at that time Jesus said to his disciples') is the standard phrase used when introducing the *Evangelium* or reading from the Gospels in the liturgy of the mass.[74] Thus, it is found at the start of the gospel for Palm Sunday, the Passion according to Matthew, commencing with Chapter 26, 1. The phrase is also found introducing readings from the gospels in lectionaries and breviaries. An example would be 'In illo tempore dixit Iesus discipulis non turbetur cor vestrum creditis in Deum et in me credite' being the words of John, Chapter 14, verse 1, contained in a twelfth century Italian Lectionary.[75] Thus, the words selected for display should not be associated with a specific gospel text but are a statement about the transmission of the Word ('At that time Jesus said to his disciples') as symbolised by the Christ's open book in the central gable and the apostles in the upper register holding books; a statement that Christ taught the apostles and disciples, and thus the other evangelists (and it should be noted that all four of the Evangelists hold open books, although the two in the predella do not have visible texts), whose writings in turn informed the Doctors of the Church and then Thomas Aquinas. This process of dissemination figures more schematically in the later *Triumph of Thomas Aquinas* that is at S Caterina and is discussed below.

In the main register, Saints Peter Martyr and Catherine of Alexandria hold closed books while St Dominic has an open book with the words: 'Venite filii audite me timorem domini docebo vos' from Psalm 33, verse 12.[76] As is clear from the commentary on this verse by Thomas Aquinas, this is about teaching the word of God to the faithful, the central role of the Order of Preachers.[77]

In the upper register there are twelve apostles, including St Paul. The latter holds his epistles and although they are not open the top one does have its title, 'AD ROMANOS', and I suggest that this is symbolic of their accessibility. Thomas Aquinas had a particular devotion to St Paul and Foster has suggested that it represents a link between Thomas and S

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[73] Pierini, *Simone Martini*, p. 234, n. 7.

[74] See Daniel Sheerin, "The Liturgy," in *Medieval Latin: an Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. F A C Mantello and A G Rigg (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), p. 166.

[75] Rochester Institute of Technology Leaf 03 from the Otto F. Ege Collection, available online from the Denison University website: www.denison.edu/library/collections/ege/rochester_leaf_03 (accessed 31/8/2011).

[76] 'Come, children, hearken to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'

[77] Latin and English text of Aquinas's Commentary of the Psalms is available on http://dhspriory.org/thomas/PsalmsAquinas/ThoPs33H34.htm, accessed on 8/6/2010.

Dominic.[78] St Jude (Thaddeus) also appears to be holding an epistle, although without a title, presumably deemed unnecessary as he only wrote one.[79] Of the remaining apostles, all but Andrew hold closed books. In earlier altarpieces where all the apostles are presented, such as Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece,* Duccio's *Maestà* and Meo da Siena's polyptych *Madonna and Child with Saints*[80] , some of the apostles are shown with closed books and some with *rotuli*.[81] In this case however, every apostle has a book or epistle, including St Andrew, who is not portrayed holding a book in most earlier works (although he does in Duccio's *Maestà*). Why Andrew has been singled out here from among the non-Evangelists to have an open book is obscure but one possibility is that it is a reference to the Benedictine Abbey of St Andrew in Pisa which would have had a monastic school and library.

The greater incidence of images of books in the Pisa altarpiece may be part of the pictorial statement in support of the canonization of Thomas Aquinas; a statement about the claims of the *Studium Artium* and substantial library at S. Caterina; or a reflection of the then current trend to associate sainthood with intellectual activity.[82] Before addressing this we need to complete the examination of the altarpiece and consider the gables which are crucial to understanding the whole work.

The central gable is occupied by Christ Verbum. The other six gables are occupied by the four major prophets holding inscriptions, plus King David holding a harp and Moses with tablets. The inscriptions refer to verses in the prophets' writings that either foretell or elaborate on the incarnation. They are the same verses (albeit with wording alterations) as are included in another altarpiece, the Clark Heptaptych **(Plate 33)**, which is attributed to Ugolino di Nerio.[83] This is thought to be the same date as the Pisa polyptych, or perhaps a year or two earlier, and is a Franciscan commission, thus indicating that the choice of inscription is a matter of general devotion rather than being specifically Dominican or Thomistic.

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[78] Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas: Biographical Documents*, pp. 38 & 70, n. 47.

[79] But also, possibly, because Aquinas did not write a commentary on Jude.

[80] Dated to about 1315, now in the Gall. Naz. Dell'Umbria, Perugia.

[81] Apart from the Evangelists, Peter and Paul, there seems to be no consistency in who gets to hold a book.

[82] See Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 346 ff.

[83] *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints Francis, Andrew, Paul, Peter, Stephen and Louis of Toulouse*, attributed to Ugolino di Nerio, The Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Williamstown, MA.

The figure of Christ Verbum is half length, giving a blessing with his right hand and supporting a book with his left. The book is open and appears to be resting on the picture frame. The text is an abbreviated form of 'ego sum Alpha et Omega principium et finis' from Apocalypse 1:8. Joanna Cannon states that this is the first time in a 'Sienese polyptych' that the book is held open.[84] However, a little caution is needed as, while this is strictly true in terms of the polyptychs that have survived, the existence of several precedents of open books held by Christ in allied formats leaves the possibility that the Pisan polyptych was not the first. Apart from the long established format of the Verbum with open book used in apse frescoes, there are several examples of cimasa of crucifixes that show an open book. **(Plate 103)**[85] In addition, there are panels such as *The Madonna and Child* by the 'Master of S. Agatha' at Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence that, in its restored state, shows enough of the pediment to reveal Christ with an open book, **(Plate 104)**[86] and a Dossal now in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo by the Maestro di San Marta (mid-thirteenth CENTURY) that again shows Christ holding an open book with the Apocalypse text. **(Plate 105)**[87] That having been said, it is clear that in the format of earlier surviving polyptychs, the book is closed and the question arises as to what prompted the decision to represent an open book on this polyptych. One possibility is that the innovation was driven by the iconography chosen for Thomas Aquinas. It would be potentially conflicting to have the Verbum with a closed book while the *Doctor Communis* had an open book. However, as indicated above, the more likely intention is to indicate the communication and dissemination of Christ's teaching. It is as if the book of the Verbum was no longer closed *because of* the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

The forgoing analysis suggests that the S. Caterina Polyptych can be 'read' with at least three layers of meaning. The first is straightforward and is as a work of devotion to the Virgin and Child. The second meaning is as a statement of the Dominican cause for the canonization of Thomas Aquinas. He is shown in the predella with a saint's nimbus and radiant text, on the

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[84] Cannon, "Simone Martini, the Dominicans and the Early Sienese Polyptych," p. 70.

[85] The *Painted Cross* by Deodado Orlandi, signed and dated, 1301, Museo del Conservatorio di Santa Chiara, San Miniato, see Burresi and Caleca, *Cimabue a Pisa: la pittura pisana del Duecento da Giunta a Giotto*, p. 258. Another example is the crucifix by the 'Master of the St Francis Painted Cross' originally in San Francesco Prato and now in the Gall. Naz dell'Umbria, Perugia or that by Coppo di Marcovaldi at San Gimignano

[86] See Boskovits, *The Origins of Florentine Painting 1100 - 1270*, pp. 706-14, Plates XV/LXIX .

[87] See Burresi and Caleca, *Cimabue a Pisa: la pittura pisana del Duecento da Giunta a Giotto*, pp. 202-3.

same level as the four Doctors of the Church, adjoining the central panel of the Man of Sorrows, and with St Agnes close-by to signify his miracles.

The third meaning is the most profound, in that the altarpiece plots for the first time a process by which God's teaching is transmitted, placing the Dominican order at the centre of that process. The book held by Christ Verbum is open. The text held by Matthew proclaims that Christ taught his disciples and the Apostles are shown all holding books to symbolise that received wisdom. The texts held by the prophets and the tablets held by Moses are also 'open' in that their texts can be read. The evangelist's books are open and I suggest that the epistles of St Paul can also be deemed to be 'open'. Finally, there is Thomas Aquinas, facing the viewer and presenting his open book with radiant text, thus transmitting the wisdom of Christ.

In the main register, the presence of Saints Dominic and Peter Martyr holding books makes a clear statement of Dominican learning and authority. The binding of each of their books is coloured red, as is the book held by St Catherine of Alexandria (a patron saint of learning and education) and the little book held by the Christ Child. The books share an identity, thereby showing that Dominican teaching was consistent and doctrinally sound.

Thus, at the heart of the composition is an assertion of the Catholic Church's right to be the gatekeeper to the Word of God and a claim by the Dominican Order to be the authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Word. But this was a claim that depended on an acceptance of the doctrines and commentaries written by Thomas Aquinas. Therefore, including an image of Thomas on the altarpiece had to be part of the composition from its inception.

Thomas Aquinas was canonized in 1323 by Pope John XXII and on fourteenth February 1325 the bishop of Paris, Stephen Bourret, annulled the 1277 condemnations by Bishop Stephen Tempier, to the extent that they affected Thomas Aquinas.[88] The Dominicans had triumphed and this paved the way for a more expansive representation of Thomas Aquinas, the so-called *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas,* also at S. Caterina, Pisa.

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[88] Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, p. 324.

The altarpiece known as *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* **(Plate 106)** was attributed to Francesco Traini by Vasari.[89] In a fundamental study published in 1933, Millard Meiss demonstrated that the artist was not Traini but another, unidentified artist, thereafter referred to as 'The Master of Triumph of Thomas'.[90] Michael Mallory claimed to identify two other works by the same hand and gave the name of this artist as Lippus de Sena, a person born and probably trained in Siena but otherwise as obscure as the Master.[91] Meiss initially argued on stylistic grounds that the altarpiece was painted at the end of the second quarter of the thirteenth century, so about 1340 to 1350, later refining it to about 1335. Other scholars have placed it in the period 1335 to 1345 although Polzer has argued that the altarpiece dates from the time of the canonization in 1323, or even just before.[92] For the reasons given earlier in this chapter, I think it is highly unlikely that the altarpiece would have been commissioned prior to the canonization in 1323. Even with the precedent of Simone Martini's *Polyptych*, the commissioning of a large altarpiece with Thomas as the dominant figure, and with a nimbus, would have been too risky an enterprise prior to the canonization process being completed.

Joseph Polzer usefully summarises the composition:

> The central theme of the *Triumph of Thomas* panel consists of the stepped descent of Divine Knowledge: first, from God to Moses, the Evangelists and Saint Paul; second,

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[89] Also known as the *Glorification of St Thomas.* Its dimensions are 421 x 259 cms, so it is higher but narrower than the Simone Martini *Polyptych.*

[90] Millard Meiss, "The Problem of Francesco Traini," *The Art Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (1933): pp. 106-16.

[91] Michael Mallory, "Thoughts Concerning the "Master of the Glorification of St Thomas"," Ibid.1975, no. 1 (1975): pp. 9-20.

[92] While the altarpiece was attributed to Francesco Traini the date was thought to be later. An extant fragment of a contract was supposed to relate to the altarpiece and gave a date of installation of 1364 although this has now been shown to be an error. There is no known contract for the altarpiece and the earliest documentary reference to it is an entry in the *Annali* of S. Caterina which refers to events in about 1353 and indicates that the altarpiece had been existence for some time before then. See Millard Meiss, "The Problem of Francesco Traini," Ibid.15, no. 2 (1933): p. 116. Also Millard Meiss, "A Madonna by Francesco Traini," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 56, no. July-Aug (1960): p. 55 note 2. Michael Mallory, "Thoughts Concerning the "Master of the Glorification of St Thomas"," *The Art Bulletin* 1975, no. 1 (1975): p. 17 note 24. Joseph Polzer, "The "Triumph of Thomas" panel in Santa Caterna, Pisa. Meaning and date.," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 37, no. 1 (1993): p. 31.

the descent of the combined knowledge of the latter to Thomas; and third, through his mediation, from him to the clerics of the earthly church. In addition, Thomas also draws on the knowledge of rational thought and natural philosophy, obtained from the two ancient philosophers standing beside him. The transfer of knowledge involving men, books or tablets is represented by golden rays connecting them, single or forming a radiance.[93]

Christ is enthroned within a mandorla. He holds a closed book with his left hand and raises his right in blessing. He looks down at Thomas, seated below him, and a splay of golden rays emerges from his mouth to descend on the saints below. Moses, Paul and the Evangelists are shown as half-length figures, seemingly leaning over the parapet of Heaven, and all staring at Thomas. Plato and Aristotle are on either side of Thomas, full length, with their names inscribed, and also looking directly at Thomas. Directly below Thomas is the figure of the Arabic scholar Averroes, lying on the ground and looking dejected. To either side is a crowd of figures, seemingly clerics and lay people, but they include no women and only one Franciscan.

The two aspects of this composition that are of most interest in this study are the books and the system of rays. Additionally, there is the appearance of Thomas, notably youthful and more attractive than in earlier images.

The books held by Christ, St Paul, the Evangelists and the two ancient philosophers have plain bindings: mostly dark colours, no furniture in the way of bosses, and no strap fastenings. The edges of the book blocks are decorated in reds and brown and mostly with a hatched design. In contrast, the book lying face-down by Averroes, presumably representing his various *Commentaries* on Aristotle[94], does have bosses decorating the binding, plus long

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[93] Polzer, "The "Triumph of Thomas" panel in Santa Caterna, Pisa. Meaning and date.," p. 35.

[94] Polzer states that the book 'can be identified as his commentary on Aristotle' but there is no explanation as to how. Ibid.: p. 47. Furthermore, there was no single 'commentary' by Averroes but a number of commentaries, written in different forms, plus a number of treatises. The library of S. Caterina had a copy of *De substantia orbis* , a collection of treatises by Averroes dealing with particular questions arising on Aristotle's theories on the nature of the universe, and strictly speaking it was not a commentary. Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars 1215-1400*, p. 91. However, according to the Mazzatinti Inventory, *De substantia orbis* is bound in the same volume as four works by Thomas Aquinas: 1. *Expositio in libro de causis*; 2.*Sententia supra librum de sensu*; 3. *Tractatus super librum de memoria et reminiscentia*; 4. *Commentaria in tres libros Aristotelis de anima*. See Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia.*, vol. 24 (Firenze: Olschki, 1916), p. 71. Thus the Thomistic rebuttal is coupled with Averroist error. The book in the panel is symbolic and can not be identified with a particular volume.

straps, and the edges of the book block are undecorated. I believe that there is a subtle message being conveyed, one suggesting that the pages of Christ's book, and those of his followers, are what are important while it is just the 'shell' of Averroes' book that is attractive.

Thomas holds one book and has another four books resting on his lap. **(Plate 106a)** All are open so the bindings are not visible beyond their being red. The edges of the book blocks are undecorated but at least three long-strap fastenings complete with hasps and tassels are visible. The intention of this construction is probably to demonstrate that these are images of 'real' books but the emphasis is on the contents, not the handsome looks of the bindings. This emphasis is seen in the detail of the book held in the hands of Thomas and which bears the same inscription as appears on his book in the Simone Martini *Polyptych*, the *incipit* from the *Summa contra Gentiles*, albeit un-contracted except for a single macron. Indeed, the inscription, in an Italian Gothic script, 'veritatem meditabitur guttur meum et labia mea detestabuntur impium' takes up less than the space available and there is a line filler between 'meditabitur' and 'guttur', a minim with a line through it, and the final line on the right hand page is filled with a complex geometrical design. As has been stated by Clemens and Graham: 'The aesthetics of medieval manuscript production dictated that the text within columns be arranged in block format with justified left and right margins.'[95] So the artist of the panel has followed the manuscript convention and, as a scribe would, he has achieved margin justification and equal blocks, left and right. As a further refinement, the letter 'V' has been decorated.[96]

Of the four books lying on Thomas's lap, the two lower books have meaningless ornamental texts, while the upper left book shows the beginning of *Genesis* and the upper right book has the opening words of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.[97] These were the two key texts used in

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[95] Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 44.

[96] Possibly historiated but a closer examination is required.

[97] The words from Genesis are: "Im principio creavit Deus caelum et terram - terra autem erat inanis et vacua" ("In the beginning God created heaven, and earth. And the earth was void and empty"). The words from the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (Book 1, Chapter 1) are: "Veteris ac nove legis continentiam diligenti indagine (etiam atque etiam) considerantibus nobis" ("While diligently considering the contents of the old and new law again and again"). This text has not previously been identified in the literature on this panel as being from the *Sentences*.

the study of theology when Thomas was at Paris so they represent the foundation of Thomas's knowledge.

The two tablets held by Moses are inscribed with four abbreviated Commandments: 'non adorabis deos alienos', 'honora patrem et matrem', 'non occides' and 'non furtus facies'.[98] The book held by Paul is inscribed with 'Paulus servus Ihu Xpi vocatus apostolus segregatus' being the opening words of his Epistle to the Romans. The formula of using the opening words is also followed with the books held by Matthew, Mark and John, while Luke's book shows the fifth verse of his gospel, which is equivalent, being the opening verse of his narrative on Christ.[99] On each book or tablet the initial letter of the text is in red. These books and texts represent the teachings contained in the Old and New Testaments and the Acts of the Apostles, the fundamental texts for Thomas's work.

The inclusion of images of Aristotle and Plato in an altarpiece is without precedent.[100] The presence of Aristotle is understandable given Thomas's life-work in reconciling Aristotelian philosophy with Catholic theology. But the presence of Plato is potentially significant. Weisheipl notes that 'Thomas had access to practically nothing of Plato's writings'[101] and his only significant discourse on him is an evaluation of Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers in the unfinished *De substantiis separatis* (or *De angelis*) that dates from his last years.[102]

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[98] Being Commandments one: 'thou shall not honour false gods', four: 'honour thy father and thy mother', five: 'thou shall not kill', and seven: 'thou shall not steal'. All from Exodus Ch 20.

[99] The texts are Luke: 'Fuit in diebus herodis regis judee sacerdos quidam nomine zaca(rias)'; Mark: 'Initi(um) evan(gelii) Ihu Xpi'; Matthew: 'Liber generationis Ihu Xpi, filii David filii Abraam. Abraam genuit Isa(ac)'; John: 'I(n) principi(o) erat ve(r)bum et v(e)rbum er(a)t apud Deum et Deus erat verbum'.

[100] The most obvious precedent with a religious context are the statues of Aristotle and Plato made by Giovanni Pisano for the façade of the Duomo in Siena which date to about 1290. See Michael Ayrton, *Giovanni Pisano* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), Figs. 215 & 25; John Pope-Hennessy, "New Works by Giovanni Pisano," *The Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 729 (1963): pp. 528-33. Plato, at least, may also have been portrayed in manuscripts in his perceived role as a prophet of the Incarnation – there is an illuminated initial that shows Plato in the Book of Genesis in the thirteenth century Merseburg Bible. See David Knipp, "Medieval Visual Images of Plato," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: A Doxographic Approach*, ed. Stephen Gersh, M J F M Hoenen, and J F M Maarten (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), p. 389 n. 64.

[101] Weisheiph, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works*, p. 318. The works of Plato available were essentially limited to part of *Timaeus* in a translation by Cicero and a version by Chalcidius, the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* in the translation by Henricus Aristippus, part of the *Parmenides* in a translation of Prolus' *Commentary* by William of Moerbeke, plus fragments of the *Republic* from Microbius' Commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*. Raymond Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1981), p. 51.

[102] Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, pp. 220-1.

Thomas was not a Neoplatonist like Albertus Magnus but his thinking was none the less influenced by Platonism. It has been argued that this influence is apparent, *inter alia*, in Thomas's explanation of how man can achieve knowledge of God, and how God's wisdom is distributed to man by divine revelation, as set down in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.[103] As the altarpiece was intended to show the sources that influenced Thomas, then Plato's inclusion makes sense. Furthermore, having two 'ancient philosophers' allows the composition to be balanced. But the suspicion is that the inclusion of Plato suited those who commissioned the altarpiece in that it accommodated the Neoplatonist thinking of the early fourteenth century.

The costumes of Aristotle and Plato are worthy of comment. Unlike Christ and the saints, the two philosophers have their heads covered, Aristotle with a cap that is similar to that worn by Plato in Pisano's statue in Siena, Plato with what looks like an Arab headdress.[104] This is presumably to indicate that these two men are not Christians, and not muslim either given the contrast with Averroes' turban.

The books held by Aristotle and Plato are positioned so that the texts are largely obscured by the book covers and the little that is visible is ornamental. Vasari assumed that the intended texts were Aristotle's *Ethics* and Plato's *Timaeus* and Polzer opined that this was a 'reasonable guess' given the importance of these works in the Middle Ages.[105] However, I suspect that Vasari's assumption was based on his knowledge of Raphael's *The School of Athens* where the two books have their titles written on the fore-edge, and a different interpretation could apply almost two centuries earlier. The statues of Aristotle and Plato that were on the façade of the Duomo in Siena hold inscriptions relating to the Incarnation, so are not indicative of their own works and thus have no bearing on the texts in the altarpiece.[106] Thomas wrote extensive commentaries on the works of Aristotle and one of the most formidable was the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, and a copy of the Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was in the S. Caterina library along with copies of *De Animalibus* and works of

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[103] See Patrick Quinn, *Aquinas, Platonism and the Knowledge of God* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996), p. 91.

[104] In its present form Pisano's statue shows Aristotle to be hatless but the head of the statue was replaced in the 18th century. See Pope-Hennessy, "New Works by Giovanni Pisano," p. 529.

[105] Polzer, "The "Triumph of Thomas" panel in Santa Caterna, Pisa. Meaning and date.," p. 41.

[106] The statues are now in the Museo dell'opera del duomo, Siena.

natural philosophy.[107] It can also be noted that an important and celebrated point of disagreement between Thomas and Averroes was over Aristotle's assertion as to the conditions for finite motion contained on Book IV of the *Physics*. Averroes, in his commentary, agreed with Aristotle (this was known at the time as *Comment 71 on Book IV*) while Thomas, in Book VIII of his *Sententia super Physicam* disagreed and criticised Averroes' logic.[108] Thus, it is not obvious which book might be appropriate for Aristotle to hold in the *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* and it is safe to conclude that the books held by both Aristotle and Plato probably represent their thinking in general rather than specific texts, and that would be consistent with the representation of the texts being ornamental.

The descent of Divine Knowledge is represented by a network of rays. While the enthroned Christ holds a book, it is closed and the rays do not come from it. The rays emerge from the mouth of Christ: single rays travel to the heads of the Evangelists, Paul and Moses, and three rays descend to the head of Thomas. The four Evangelists, Paul, Moses and the two philosophers all hold up books and from the initial red letter of each there is a single ray that goes to Thomas's head. From Thomas's books there is an all-round radiance of rays which are extended downwards to the massed clerics on either side, plus a single ray that strikes the book lying by Averroes. In the midst of the rays extending downwards are two more texts. On the right is 'doctor gentium in fide et veritate' from Paul's first Epistle to Timothy,[109] while on the right is 'hic adinvenit omnem viam disciplinae' from the Old Testament Prophecy of Baruch.[110]

Such a construction of rays has no precedent in art. As has been discussed elsewhere in this study, rays are to be found in scenes of the Annunciation and the Stigmatisation of Francis, and a radiance is found on some images of Christ, but there is nothing that compares to the web of rays in the *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*. I suggest that these rays should be considered as being in two forms. The first is the radiance that emanates from Thomas's book. This, on its own, could be seen as deriving from the S. Caterina Polyptych and are a refined version of the rays that emanate from the text of the book held by Thomas in the

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[107] See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, Chapter XII. Also Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Medieval Friars 1215-1400*, p. 91.

[108] See Edward Grant, ed., *A Source Book in Medieval Science* (Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 253-71.

[109] 'Doctor of the Gentiles in faith and truth' 1 Timothy, 2, 7.

[110] 'He discovered all the ways of knowledge', Baruch, 3, 37.

predella of that altarpiece. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it could be regarded as an attribute that emphasised the saintliness of Thomas and his writings. In addition, it is entirely plausible to think of these rays as indicating the transmission of the Wisdom of Christ to the congregation, especially as Thomas's eyes now engage with the viewer, a 'reciprocity of gaze' that had significance in the Middle Ages.[111] However, to a degree greater than in the Polyptych, the rays seem to inhabit the picture plane and do not suggest a forward or outward radiation. Whether that is intentional or a result of a limitation of artistic skill is impossible to know.

The second form of rays is the network that connects the various persons in the composition. I suggest that if these rays had been omitted, the Descent of Knowledge would still be obvious given the juxtaposition of the various figures, their manner of staring at Thomas and the way the texts are held open to him, rather than to the viewer. Furthermore, Aristotle and Plato would only be included on an altarpiece in a clear role of giving philosophical instruction to a saint and this would suggest a process of knowledge transfer. Thus, the need to innovate and add rays connecting the figures points to there being a deeper meaning, a requirement to emphasise something in addition to the Descent of Knowledge. Given that these rays start from the mouth of Christ, the immediate interpretation is that they are intended to represent Divine Illumination, a theory of cognition that was deeply entrenched in medieval thought and had been included in the theories of many leading thinkers of the thirteenth century such as Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon and Bonaventure.[112] But this was also a theory that was largely rejected by Thomas, who is now seen as the man who caused the theory to fall out of favour.[113] Therefore, is it not a contradiction to see the rays as representing the Divine Illumination in the context of the doctrines of Thomas?

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[111] See Gardner, "Giotto's Portrait of Christ," p. 215.

[112] Robert Pasnau defines Divine Illumination as 'a theory on which the human mind regularly relies on some kind of special supernatural assistance in order to complete (some part of) its ordinary cognitive activity'. Although thought of as a medieval, Christian theory, its recorded origins lie in ancient Greek philosophy. Robert Pasnau, *Divine Illumination*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/illumination/.

[113] See Robert Pasnau, "Henry of Ghent and the Twilight of Divine Illumination," *The Review of Metaphysics* 49, no. 1 (1995): p. 49-52. But also Robert Pasnau, *Divine Illumination*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/illumination/; Pasnau, *Divine Illumination*. In the later article Pasnau concludes that while Thomas rejected many aspects of Divine Illumination it was by no means complete. What is clear, however, is that Thomas was not alone in rejecting aspects of Divine Illumination, a rejection that provoked a reaction but the theory gradually fell out of favour nonetheless.

It is my proposal that this construction is a product of a Neoplatonic reaction against some aspects of Thomistic thinking: an assertion that Divine Illumination was still valid and had played a role in the development of Thomas's teaching. If so, it was an assertion made against the tide of opinion and would not be repeated. The choice of symbolism was also apposite given the Dominican interest in optics.[114] So, while placing Thomas at the heroic centre of a process whereby God's wisdom is made available to the clergy, the composition never-the-less seems to include a symbolic representation of the doctrine of Divine Illumination that Thomas had rejected.

Indeed, it is clear that while the weight of opinion had shifted away from Neoplatonic philosophy at the end of the thirteenth century, there was a succession of Dominican scholars who maintained an essentially Neoplatonist philosophy based on the works of Proclus throughout the fourteenth century.[115] It is impossible to know now how, and to what extent, these currents of changing philosophical belief and scientific knowledge might have influenced the composition of *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* altarpiece. The presence of a *Studium Artium* and a substantial library at S. Caterina would suggest a level of awareness of those currents but we know too little about the Dominican friars there to permit any conclusions to be drawn. That there were friars elsewhere who were involved in the currents of natural philosophy and theology, and took an interest in the canonization of Thomas, is evidenced by the known activities of one Dominican already mentioned at the start of this chapter in the context of the provision of books, Aymeric Giliani.

Aymeric was probably born in the 1240s and came from Piacenza. He joined the Dominican Order, studied in Milan, became a Master and taught philosophy and theology for more than two decades. He was Provincial Prior of Greece and then in 1304 was elected Master General, in which role he continued until 1311, when he resigned so as to avoid conflict with the Pope over the latter's policy of suppression of the Templars. It was as Master General that he commissioned Dietrich to write a treatise on optics.[116] He subsequently became Prior of the Convent in Bologna and Provincial Prior of the Province of Lower Lombardy. In these roles he received, in 1323, an account of the canonization of Thomas Aquinas written for him by a

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[114] See Appendix 4 for a summary of the state of knowledge on light and optics, and its relationship with the Theory of Divine Illumination.

[115] Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), p. 437.

[116] See Appendix 4.

Frater Bentius. Aymeric died in 1327 and is buried in San Domenico, Bologna.[117] Given the long time during which he held senior offices in the Order, Aymeric was clearly an influential man but there is no evidence to show whether he met Thomas or was involved in the commissioning of works of art at Pisa. He is an example, however, of the linkages that existed between the different provinces of the Dominican Order, the shared interests in natural philosophy, moral philosophy and theology, and the importance given to the canonization of Thomas by senior Dominicans. He is an example of the sort of authority that might have existed with the convent of S. Caterina.

The possibility that the system of rays was intended to symbolise the Neoplatonic doctrine of Divine Illumination is supported by the absence of this symbolism appearing in later compositions celebrating Thomas. While in future images his book may radiate light[118] **(Plate 107)** and he may be portrayed illuminating the church,[119] **(Plate 108)** there is no further representation that shows a descent of knowledge by light. The most substantial example of a *Triumph* from the fourteenth century is the fresco by Andrea di Bonaiuto in the Spanish Chapel at Santa Maria Novella, Florence (1366), by which time the doctrine of Divine Illumination had been largely discredited. Thomas is enthroned and there is a radiance of light around him but there is no system of rays connecting the figures. **(Plate 109)**

Even though the system of rays is a transitory iconographic device, it aids our understanding of the role of the books portrayed. Apart from those rays emanating from the mouth of Christ, all the rays come from the books and, in the case of the single rays from the books held by the Evangelists and others in the gallery, from the initial decorated letter of each text. This adds emphasis to the importance of the books in the overall work and is symbolic of the importance attached to books by the Dominican Order. This importance was described by Humbert of Romans in his *Opera de Vita Regularis*:

> Whosoever are zealous defenders of the faith should seek and collect books that can
> be used against the unbelievers among whom they live, whether Jews, Saracens, or

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[117] Various sources including *The Catholic Encyclopedia*; Fra Bentius: *Notitia de canonizatione Sancti Thomae de Aquino*, from the *Corpus Thomisticum*; Antonio Masini, *Bologna Perlustrata*, Vol 1, Bologna, 1664, p 279.

[118] As in the *The Last Judgement* panel by the 'Master of the Dominican Effigies' in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, c.1340.

[119] As in the stained glass window in the Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella: *Madonna and Child plus St Thomas Aquinas*, by Nardo di Cione, 1340-1350.

heretics, so that they can debate at the opportune time against them, if there be need, creditably, for the defence of the faith.[120]

In a section dealing with the management of 'divine' books, Humbert has a statement that is of relevance to the *Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas*: 'Celestial wisdom is like a fountain flowing from heaven through the channel of books'.[121] He follows this with a reference to Ecclesiastius 24, *The Praise of Wisdom*, adding: 'Likewise in the manner of the fountain comes the writing of books'[122] thereby making books both the conduit of wisdom and the begetter of more books.

Conclusion

The *S. Caterina Polyptych* and *The Triumph of St Thomas Aquinas* are both prime examples of religious painting where images of books play a key role in the iconography. As representing the Word of God they lend authority. As representing the studies, learning and writings of the Dominican Order, they add authority to the Dominican claim to be the conduit by which Christ's teaching is passed to the clergy and the faithful. They represent wisdom whether it be from God or from the 'ancient philosophers'.

Books continued to be a key iconographical feature in Dominican art throughout the fourteenth century and beyond. The frescoes by Tomaso da Modena in the Chapter House of S Nicolò in Treviso of forty Dominican Saints, Popes, Cardinals and Beati is probably the most extreme example. **(Plate 110)** Painted in 1351-2, each figure is shown in an individual carrel either studying a book or writing one, and usually surrounded by books. No image could make it clearer that books were a central feature of Dominican life and that they were a crucial part of Dominican iconography.

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[120] 'Ita debent quicumque sunt fidei zelatores quaerere et congregare scripta utilia contra infideles inter quos habitant, sive judaeos, sive Sarracenos, sive haereticos, ut possint tempore opportuno contra eos pro fidei defensione laudabiliter, si necesse foret, disputare.' J J Berthier, ed., *Opera de Vita Regularis by Humbert of Romans*, Reprint ed. (Turin: 1956), p. 467. Translation from Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, p. 192.

[121] 'Sapientia coelestis est sicut fons qui de coelo venit per canale librorum.' Berthier, ed., *Opera de Vita Regularis by Humbert of Romans*, p. 419. Translation by Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, p. 192.

[122] 'Quae scilicet ad modum aquaeductus veni per scripturam librorum', my translation.

Conclusions

Michael Camille described the book as one of the most powerful of the visual signs in medieval Christianity.[1] The task set for this study was to explore how this visual sign, the image of a book, was used in Italian religious art of the *duecento* and *trecento* and to consider what purposes the image served. In addition, the study sought to use the surviving pictorial evidence to increase our knowledge of the appearance of books in this period and to detect changes in binding and decoration, about which there is little certain knowledge given the lack of surviving bindings.

It is clear from artist's pattern books dating from the start of the period of study that the image of a book was a standard attribute for saints, especially apostles and evangelists. The book was symbolic of the Word of God, as it was either written or preached. But the image of a book was a flexible motif and could be deployed to communicate not only specific liturgical meanings but also messages of power, authority and learning. The motive to communicate such meanings and messages was driven by a need to relate the pictorial content of panels to the ritualistic and dramatic content of what went on at and around the altar; and a need to promote factional interests, albeit with subtlety given that the paintings were religious and, usually, placed in a church. The factional interests included the Papacy, a temporal and spiritual power that indulged in self-aggrandisement and periodically sought to consolidate its authority by threat, force and edict. Among other factional interests were the monastic and mendicant orders, the bishops and regular clergy, the tertiary orders and the guilds. Of the two major mendicant orders, the Franciscans had an imperative to promote and protect the cult of St Francis that underpinned its appeal to people and hence its financial viability, while the Dominicans sought dominance in learning and teaching, to become the schoolmasters of Europe. Neither could be achieved without opposition and the art commissioned by those orders reflected their factional interests.

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[1] Page 6.

This study has shown the possibilities that, as well as symbolising the Word of God, an image of a book can have additional religious meanings. Such meanings have been deduced from the details of the visual evidence and relevant collateral material. However, drawing firm conclusions in the late medieval period is often difficult because of the lack of corroborative evidence. Richard Gameson described the process of exploring the role of art as:

> not unlike trying to reconstruct the effect of an opera in a particular theatre without direct access to the building, the scenery, the cast, and the orchestra - and sometimes without the score as well. We have a few of the props (some of which are broken) and a limited amount of information concerning the singers and the audience. The task is certainly daunting. Yet it is by no means a hopeless or an unrewarding one. [2]

The reward is the realisation that there are alternative explanations to the standard attributional meanings. Thus, an image of a book can mean 'My Father's business' in the narrative scene *Christ admonished by his parents*, and be symbolic of the moment of Christ's incarnation in scenes of the *Annunciation*. A book can be symbolic of authority and the delegation of authority, thereby portraying the giver as an absolute authority, whether that be Christ, St Peter or Pope Boniface VIII. This might be termed a political use of the motif, as is the use of books to suggest differences between orders of friars, or to promote the ordination of a saint, or to underpin the authority of a particular teaching.

Sight of an image of a book in the hand of a saint may have offered some spiritual advantage to the believer by, at least, triggering the recall of memorised passages and contemplation on them, but also by associating the book with the Word and the Book of Life, a reminder of God's all-seeing eye and the fateful Day of Judgement. Such interpretations have, again, to be qualified by the problems of grasping meanings across the gulf of centuries. Michael Baxandall, writing about the fifteenth century, noted:

> It is very difficult to get a notion of what it was to be a person of a certain kind at a certain time and place.[3]

The gulf from the present to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is even greater.

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[2] Gameson was writing about Anglo-Saxon art. Richard Gameson, *The Role of art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 4.

[3] Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A primer in the social history of pictorial style.*, p. 152.

Nonetheless, I have proposed that the detail given to an image of a book could also be used to give more subtle messages, such as to validate the genuineness of an image of a saint so as to maintain a cult or to indicate the superiority of one form of learning over another. These might be termed psychological uses of the motif.

The social use of images of books may lie in the message that the motif gave to the congregation about the position of the clergy, those that hold and read from books and thus act as the conduit for the Word of God. The presence of panels around the altar showing the images of saints holding books, writing in books, reading books, and preaching from books, could only be seen as validating the actions of the priest.

The case-studies in this thesis have demonstrated that the image of a book was indeed 'one of the most powerful' visual signs, certainly for the period and region to which this study has been devoted. I have shown that in the decades around 1300 the book became an established attribute in altarpieces, the book displaced the *rotullus* as the symbol of authority, and the book became the dominant attribute of the Virgin Mary in scenes of *the Annunciation*, displacing earlier formats. The book was the symbol of learning and therefore a key attribute for the mendicant orders and especially the Dominicans.

In looking at the way individual artists portrayed books it is apparent that they developed a personal style in painting books, and that the style could evolve to reflect the changing appearance of real books.

The study has revealed crucial details about the appearance of real books in the period. My argument is that the evidence from the paintings (and some sculptures) identifies, *inter alia*, certain aspects about the appearance of books that have been hitherto unrecognised. These include:

Uncovered boards were regularly used in the *duecento* and that these boards could be finely decorated;

Full leather bindings became the dominant form of binding only in the *trecento*; and

Gold tooling of leather bindings developed in the early part of the *trecento* and reached a high degree of sophistication by the 1370s. This is much earlier than had been previously surmised and the pictorial evidence points to Florence being the place where the technique was fully exploited.

These findings help to fill in some gaps in our knowledge about medieval books. The approach could usefully be extended by considering the pictorial sources in other Western European countries, especially France, given the importance of Paris University and the Paris Book Trade. This might establish to what extent styles of book binding were local or trans-border and the way new styles spread across Europe. This would be particularly interesting with regard to the gold tooling. How quickly was the technique copied in other countries?

Another area of research would be to examine the changes caused by the introduction of printing in the mid-fifteenth century. How quickly was this new technology recognised in painting?

The study of a single compositional element has led me to new interpretations and identifications in works of art, many of which are well known and have already been the subject of extensive scholarly research. In this category, my analysis of the books depicted in images has shown:

> The identification of the kneeling saint in the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* as St Boniface and the consequent re-dating of that work to the years around 1300;

> The proposal that the *Annunciation* fresco in the Upper Church in Assisi is the earliest Italian example where the Virgin Mary holds a book;

> The recognition that a programme did exist for the roundels on the *Rucellai Madonna* and that it was based on a line from St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians; and

> The interpretation of the *S Caterina Polyptych* as a schematic of the way God's Teaching is transmitted and with the Dominican Order at the centre of that process.

The approach, using the image of a book as a way into understanding a picture, could clearly be used more widely. This thesis has been focused on religious art but one interesting area for future research would be to look at the art associated with the universities and in civil settings more generally. The desire for education created a demand for books as well as for teachers and schools. The mercantile capitalism that became established in the thirteenth century and was dominated by Italian merchants was a consequence of a number of factors, including greater law and order and advances in bookkeeping – both required books. Thus, it is no surprise that books appear in pictures in civil locations, although not with the prominence that they are given in religious paintings. Further study might ask if this reflects

a differing perception of their value. Furthermore, given that authors such as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio were publishing their works in this period, a study might consider whether literature was represented in the visual arts of the period.

Finally, I hope that my research will lead to a greater interest in the role played by images of books in religious works of art.

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While 'books furnish minds as well as rooms', images of books furnish the art of the *duecento* and *trecento,* thereby helping to educate and influence the minds of the first viewers of that art, and offering us, seven centuries later, a way of penetrating the meaning of that art.

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Finis

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List of selected images of books in Italian religious painting

The entries are listed in date order. Given the number of data fields the details of each entry are shown over four pages.

Key

How held	Pose	LH = left hand
		RH = right hand
		2H = two hands
		C = cradled
		Cl = clutched
		S = supported, the tail of the book
		H = held
		c = hand covered by cloth (e.g. vestment)
		v = vestment draped on book
		Pk = propped on knee
		Pf = propped on frame
		R = resting on another object
	Open/Shut	s = shut with lower cover showing
		s/u = shut with upper cover showing
		s/? = shut but unclear which cover is showing
		O/backs = open with covers showing
		O/text = open with text showing
Board overhang/'square'		0=no overhang
		1=suspicion of an overhang
		2=clear overhang
		3=pronounced overhang
Attached		f = strap attached to upper cover
		b = strap attached to lower cover
Pin position		1 = at edge of board
		2 = in from the edge
		3 = between the edge and the centre of the board
		4 = on or near the centre line of the board

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	DATE		Collection	Holder	How held	
			year	+/-			Pose	Open/Shut
1	Maestro di Tressa	Majestas Domini	1215	5	Siena PN	Christ	LH/Pk	s/?
2	Bonaventura Berlinghieri	St Francis	1235		Pescia San Francesco	St Francis	LH/C	s/u
3	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis	1250	5	Siena PN	St Francis	LH/C	s
4	Master of Cross434	Panel of st Francis	1250	5	Pistoia	St Francis	LH/Cl	s
5	Master of the Bardi St Francis	Dossal of St Francis	1255	10	Florence	St Francis	LH/Cl	s
6	Master of the Oblate Cross	Diptych	1255	5	Uffizi	St Anthony	LH/Cl	s/?
7	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis	1260	5	Montepulciano	St Francis	LH/C	s
8	Margarito d'Arezzo	Castiglion Panel	1260	5	Castiglion Fio.	St Francis	LH/C	s/?
9	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	1270	5	Siena PN	St Francis	LH/C	O/backs
10	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	1270	5	Siena PN	St John Ev.	LH/C	s
11	Cimabue	St Francis	1280	5	Assisi	St Francis	LH/S	s
12	Guido di Graziano	Dossal of St Francis	1280	5	Siena PN	St Francis	LH/S	s/u
13	Magdalen Master	Virgin & Child & Sts	1280	5	Yale	St Leonard	RH/Cl	s/u
14	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	1290	10	Assisi	St Lawrence	LH/S	s
15	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	1290	10	Assisi	St Anthony	2H	s/u
16	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	1290	10	Assisi	St Benedict	LH/S	s/u
17	Cimabue	Madonna & Child	1300	2	Uffizi	St Dominic	RH/S	s/?
18	Duccio	Triptych	1300	5	HM Queen	Christ	LH/S	s
19	Duccio	Triptych Virgin & Ch	1300	5	Nat Gal Lon	St Dominic	LH/S	s
20	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	1300	3	Vatican	St Paul	LH/H	s/u
21	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	1300	3	Vatican	St James Maj.	LH/Cl	s/u
22	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	1300	3	Vatican	St Boniface	2H	s
23	Giotto ?	Franciscan Saint	1300	5	Berenson	St Anthony	2H	s/u
24	Giotto	Badia Polyptych	1301	2	Uffizi	St Nicholas	LH/C	s/u
25	Giotto	Badia Polyptych	1301	2	Uffizi	St Peter	LH/C	s/u
26	Giotto	Arena Chapel	1304	2	Padua	Christ	LH/C	s/?
27	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	1305	5	Siena PN	Christ	LH/C	s
28	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	1305	5	Siena PN	St Augustine	LH/C	s

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Shape of Board Edges	Principal Colour	Back	Spine Bands	Board Overhang 'Square'	Comments
								Binding features 1
1	Maestro di Tressa	Majestas Domini	Square	Gold			0	Treasure?
2	Bonaventura Berlinghieri	St Francis		Brown	No		0	2 sewing stations
3	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis		Brown	no		0	Fabric?
4	Master of Cross434	Panel of st Francis		red	no		0	
5	Master of the Bardi St Francis	Dossal of St Francis		gold	no		0	Treasure?
6	Master of the Oblate Cross	Diptych		Brown			0	Treasure?
7	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis			no		0	Fabric?
8	Margarito d'Arezzo	Castiglion Panel					0	Fabric?
9	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	Square	red	no?		0	Fabric?
10	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	Square	Red			0	Fabric?
11	Cimabue	St Francis	Square	Red			0	
12	Guido di Graziano	Dossal of St Francis	square	red			0	Fabric?
13	Magdalen Master	Virgin & Child & Sts	Square	Red			0	
14	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	square	Orange	no		0	
15	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	square	Brown	no		0	2 sewing stations
16	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	square	Brown	no		0	
17	Cimabue	Madonna & Child	Square	Black			0	
18	Duccio	Triptych		Red				
19	Duccio	Triptych Virgin & Ch	Square	Red	no		0	
20	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	square	Green	yes	3		
21	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	square	red	yes		0	
22	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	square	Grey	no		0	
23	Giotto ?	Franciscan Saint		red	yes	no	1?	
24	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		Red	yes	no		
25	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		Red	yes	no		
26	Giotto	Arena Chapel		Grey			0	
27	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Square	Black	no		0	
28	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Square	Lt Red	no		0	

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 2						
			Tabs	Bosses/ studs	Fastening straps	Attached	Colour	Hasps, Eyes & Pulls	Pin position 1-4
1	Maestro di Tressa	Majestas Domini		no	?	?		no	
2	Bonaventura Berlinghieri	St Francis		yes	Not vis	f?			
3	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis		no	yes	b?	black	no	
4	Master of Cross434	Panel of st Francis			yes	b?	black	no	
5	Master of the Bardi St Francis	Dossal of St Francis		Poss	yes	b?	red	no	
6	Master of the Oblate Cross	Diptych		Poss	no				
7	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis		no	yes	b?		no	
8	Margarito d'Arezzo	Castiglion Panel		no	?	?		no	
9	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	yes	no	Long	b	black	prim.	?
10	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts		no	?	b	black		
11	Cimabue	St Francis		no	Long	f	black	vague	1
12	Guido di Graziano	Dossal of St Francis		no	Long	b	black	yes	1
13	Magdalen Master	Virgin & Child & Sts		studs	yes	f	black	not vis	
14	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes		no	Long	f	?	vague	3
15	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes		no	Not vis				
16	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes		no	no				
17	Cimabue	Madonna & Child		no					
18	Duccio	Triptych		no	Long	f	White?	yes	3
19	Duccio	Triptych Virgin & Ch		poss	Long	f	green	yes	3
20	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce		no	long	b	Gr/Gld	yes	3
21	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce		no	long	b	red	yes	3
22	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce		yes	Long	f	Gy/Gld	yes	2
23	Giotto ?	Franciscan Saint		no	Long	b	red/gld	no	2
24	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		studs?	Not vis				
25	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		studs?	Not vis				
26	Giotto	Arena Chapel		studs?	no				
27	Duccio	Polyptych No 28		poss	long	f	red	yes	3
28	Duccio	Polyptych No 28		poss	Long	f	black	yes	3

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Decoration							Comments
			Edge Decoration	*Central ornament*	*Corner ornament*	*Margin Rule*	*Punch-gilt roundels*	*Blind Tooling*	*Gold Tooling*	
1	Maestro di Tressa	Majestas Domini	no	no	no	no				
2	Bonaventura Berlinghieri	St Francis	no	yes	yes	yes				
3	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis	no	overall	no	yes				
4	Master of Cross434	Panel of st Francis	no	yes	no	no				
5	Master of the Bardi St Francis	Dossal of St Francis	no	yes	no	yes				
6	Master of the Oblate Cross	Diptych	no	yes	yes	no				
7	Margarito d'Arezzo	Panel of st Francis	no	overall	no	yes				
8	Margarito d'Arezzo	Castiglion Panel	no	overall	no	yes				
9	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	no	yes	no	yes				Precious stones
10	Guido da Siena	Madonna & Child & Sts	no	yes	no	yes				Precious stones
11	Cimabue	St Francis	Yes	no	no					Straps added later?
12	Guido di Graziano	Dossal of St Francis	no	overall	no	yes				
13	Magdalen Master	Virgin & Child & Sts	no	no	no	no				
14	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	Yes	Poss	no	no				Panel moulding? Straps added?
15	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	no	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
16	Giotto & Workshop	Archivolt Frescoes	Yes	not vis	no	no				Panel moulding?
17	Cimabue	Madonna & Child								Orientation?
18	Duccio	Triptych	no	yes	no	yes				
19	Duccio	Triptych Virgin & Ch	no	yes	no	yes				
20	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce		yes	no	no				Inlaid plaques?
21	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	?	yes	no	no				Inlaid plaques?
22	Giotto	Stefaneschi Altarp'ce	no	yes	no	no				Antique book?
23	Giotto ?	Franciscan Saint		yes	no	no				
24	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		yes	no	no				
25	Giotto	Badia Polyptych		yes	no	no				
26	Giotto	Arena Chapel	no	yes	no	no				Orientation?
27	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Yes	yes	no	yes				
28	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Yes	yes	no	yes				Panel moulding?

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	DATE		Collection	Holder	How held	
			year	*+/-*			*Pose*	*Open/Shut*
29	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	1305	5	Siena PN	St Paul	LH/C/c	s
30	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	1305	5	Siena PN	St Peter	LH/C	s
31	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	1305	5	Siena PN	St Dominic	LH/C	s
32	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	1305	5	Siena PN	Christ	LH/Pf	s/u
33	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	1305	5	Siena PN	St John Ev.	LH/S	s
34	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	1305	5	Siena PN	St Stephen	LH/C	s
35	Master of St Cecilia	St Cecilia & Scenes	1306	2	Uffizi	St Cecilia	LH/Pk	s
36	Duccio	Maesta	1308	3	Siena Op D	St John Ev.	LH/C	s
37	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	1310	5	Siena PN	King David	LH/C/c	s
38	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	1310	5	Siena PN	St John Ev.	LH/C	s
39	Giotto Workshop	Madonna & Child	1310	10	Florence	St Eugenio	2H	s
40	Duccio	Triptych of Crucifixion	1311	5	Boston	St Nicholas	LH/S	s
41	Segna di Bonaventura	Christ Blessing	1311	5	Met NY	Christ	LH/C/c	s
42	Giotto & Workshop	Peruzzi Altarpiece	1314	2	Raleigh	Christ	LH/C	s/u
43	Master of Citta di Castello	St Peter	1315	5	Yale	St Peter	LH/Cl	s
44	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Benedict, Margaret and	1315	5	Museo Horne	St Benedict	LH/C	s
45	Simone Martini	Bl. Agostino Novello	1315	5	Siena PN	Bl Agostino	2H	s/?
46	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	Christ	LH/C	s
47	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	St Peter	LH/C	s
48	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	St Paul	LH/C/c	s
49	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	St Andrew	2H	s
50	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	St Stephen	2H	s
51	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	1317	5	Williamstown	St Francis	LH/C	s
52	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	1319	5	Siena PN	St Francis	LH/C	s
53	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	1319	5	Siena PN	St Stephen	2H	s

| Cat No | ARTIST | TITLE | Binding features 1 | | | | | |
			Shape of Board Edges	Principal Colour	Back	Spine Bands	Board Overhang 'Square'	Comments
29	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Square	Green	no		0	
30	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Square	Red			0	
31	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Square	Red			0	
32	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33		red				
33	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	Square	Brown	no		0	
34	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	square	Green	no		0	
35	Master of St Cecilia	St Cecilia & Scenes	Square	Brown	no		0	
36	Duccio	Maesta	Bevel?	Black	no		0	
37	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	Square	Red	no?		0	
38	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	Square	Black			0	
39	Giotto Workshop	Madonna & Child	Square	Red			0	
40	Duccio	Triptych of Crucifixion		Grey?	no		0	
41	Segna di Bonaventura	Christ Blessing	Square	Brown			1	
42	Giotto & Workshop	Peruzzi Altarpiece	Square	red	yes	3	0	
43	Master of Citta di Castello	St Peter	Square	red	no?		0	
44	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Benedict, Margaret and	Bevel R?	red			2	
45	Simone Martini	Bl. Agostino Novello	Square	red	prob	3	0	
46	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	red			0	
47	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	red			0	
48	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	green	no?		0	
49	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	blue			0	
50	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	blue			0	
51	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Square	red	no		0	
52	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	Bevel? R	red			1	
53	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	Square	Black	no		0	

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 2						
			Tabs	Bosses/ studs	Fastening straps	Attached	Colour	Hasps, Eyes & Pulls	Pin position 1-4
29	Duccio	Polyptych No 28		poss	Long	f	red	yes	3
30	Duccio	Polyptych No 28		poss	Long	f	black	yes	3
31	Duccio	Polyptych No 28		poss	Long	f	black	yes	3
32	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33		no	Long	b	black	no	2
33	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33		poss	long	f	Red/Dec	yes	3
34	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33		no	long	f	brown/Dec	yes	4
35	Master of St Cecilia	St Cecilia & Scenes		yes	long	f	braided?	yes	4
36	Duccio	Maesta		yes & studs	Long	f	White?	yes	3
37	Duccio	Polyptych No 47		no	Long	f	black	yes	3
38	Duccio	Polyptych No 47		studs?	Long	f	red	yes	3
39	Giotto Workshop	Madonna & Child		studs?	Long	f	patterned	yes	3
40	Duccio	Triptych of Crucifixion		poss	Long	f	black	yes	4
41	Segna di Bonaventura	Christ Blessing		no	long	f	black	yes	3
42	Giotto & Workshop	Peruzzi Altarpiece		studs?	yes	f	red	not vis	
43	Master of Citta di Castello	St Peter		studs?	long	f	patterned	yes	3
44	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Benedict, Margaret and		no	long	f	black	yes	3
45	Simone Martini	Bl. Agostino Novello		studs?	long	?	?	yes	2
46	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		no	long	f	black	yes	3
47	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		studs?	long	f	black	yes	3
48	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		studs?	long	f	black	yes	3
49	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		no	long	f	black	yes	3
50	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		no	long	f	black	yes	3
51	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych		studs?	long	f	black	yes	3
52	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39		Poss	long	f	black	yes	3
53	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39		Poss	long	f	red	yes	3

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Decoration							Comments
			Edge Decoration	*Central ornament*	*Corner ornament*	*Margin Rule*	*Punch-gilt roundels*	*Blind Tooling*	*Gold Tooling*	
29	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	?	yes	no	yes				Panel moulding?
30	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Yes	yes	no	yes				Bookmarkers; Panel moulding?
31	Duccio	Polyptych No 28	Yes	yes	no	yes				Panel moulding?
32	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	no	yes?	no	yes?				
33	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	no	yes?	no	yes				
34	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No 33	no	yes	no	yes				
35	Master of St Cecilia	St Cecilia & Scenes	no	Poss	no	no				Antique book?
36	Duccio	Maesta	no	yes	no	yes				Panel moulding?
37	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	poss	yes	no	yes				Panel moulding?
38	Duccio	Polyptych No 47	Yes	yes	no	yes				
39	Giotto Workshop	Madonna & Child	Yes	yes	no	no				
40	Duccio	Triptych of Crucifixion	no	yes	no	yes				
41	Segna di Bonaventura	Christ Blessing	no	yes	no	yes				
42	Giotto & Workshop	Peruzzi Altarpiece		yes	no	no				
43	Master of Citta di Castello	St Peter	no	yes	no	yes				
44	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Benedict, Margaret and	no		no	no				Panel Moulding?
45	Simone Martini	Bl. Agostino Novello	no	no	no	no				Thin boards
46	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Yes	no	no	no				
47	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	Yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
48	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
49	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
50	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
51	Ugolino di Nerio	Clark Heptatych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
52	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	Yes	yes	no	yes				Reverse bevel?
53	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych No 39	Yes	yes	no	yes				

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	DATE		Collection	Holder	How held	
			year	*+/-*			*Pose*	*Open/Shut*
54	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/32	1320	5	Siena PN	St Antony Abb	LH/C	s
55	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/33	1320	5	Siena PN	St Peter	LH/C	s
56	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/34	1320	5	Siena PN	St Paul	LH/C	s
57	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	1320	5	Siena PN	St Bartholomew	LH/C	s
58	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	1320	5	Siena PN	St Nicholas	LH/C	s
59	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	1320	5	Siena PN	St Benedict	LH/C	s
60	Pietro Lorenzetti	The Tarlati polyptych	1320		Arezzo	St Matthew	2H	s
61	Simone Martini	Polyptych	1320	1	Pisa	John Ev.	2H	O/backs
62	Simone Martini	Polyptych	1320	1	Pisa	St Peter Martyr	LH/C	s
63	Ugolino di Nerio	St Thomas	1320	5	Berenson	St Thomas	2H/c	s
64	Ugolino di Nerio	Bagnano Triptych	1320	5	Certaldo	St Peter	2H	s
65	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	1322	5	Cleveland	St Francis	LH/C	s
66	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	1322	5	Cleveland	St James	LH/C	s
67	Giotto	Ognissanti Crucifix	1325	5	Florence	Christ	LH/C	s/u
68	Lippo Memmi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	1325	5	Pisa	St Thomas	2H	O/T
69	Lippo Memmi	St Clare	1327	5	NY Met	St Clare	RH/C	s/u
70	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	1328		Uffizi	St Matthew	2H	s
71	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	1328		Uffizi	St Nicholas	LH/C	s
72	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	1328	2	Yale	St Andrew	RH/S	s/u
73	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	1328	2	Yale	St James	LH/S	s
74	Bernardo Daddi	Triptych	1330	5	Getty	St Paul	LH/C	s
75	Donato d'Arezzo & Gregorio d'Arezo	St Catherine & Scenes	1330	5	Getty	St Catherine	LH/C/c	s/u
76	Giotto Workshop	Polyptych Mad & Ch	1330	2	Bologna	St Paul	LH/H	s/u
77	Lippo Memmi	Panel 48/49	1330	5	Siena PN	St Louis	RH/C	s/u
78	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	1330	5	Pisa	Averroes	On ground	O/ backs
79	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	1330	5	Pisa	St Thomas	On lap	O/T
80	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	1330	5	Pisa	Aristotle	2H (one c)	O/T(part)
81	Simone Martini	St Andrew	1330	5	NY Met	St Andrew	2H	s/u
82	Giotto	St Stephen	1332	3	Museo Horne	St Stephen	2H+v	s/u

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 1					
			Shape of Board Edges	Principal Colour	Back	Spine Bands	Board Overhang 'Square'	Comments
54	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/32	Square	red	no		2	
55	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/33	Square	blue-green	no		1	
56	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/34	Square	Brown	no		2	
57	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Square	red			0	
58	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Square	Black	yes		1	
59	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Square	red	yes		0	
60	Pietro Lorenzetti	The Tarlati polyptych		red	yes	2/4	0	
61	Simone Martini	Polyptych	square	green	yes		0	
62	Simone Martini	Polyptych	square	red			0	
63	Ugolino di Nerio	St Thomas	Square	blue	no		0	
64	Ugolino di Nerio	Bagnano Triptych	Square	Brown	no		1	
65	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	Square	red	no		0	
66	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	Square	red	no		0	
67	Giotto	Ognissanti Crucifix		Red	yes	no		
68	Lippo Memmi	Madonna & Ch & Sts		red			0	
69	Lippo Memmi	St Clare	Square	red			0	
70	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	square	black			0	
71	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	square	Dark Grn			0	
72	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	Square	blue			0	
73	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	Square	Red			0	
74	Bernardo Daddi	Triptych	square	red			0	
75	Donato d'Arezzo & Gregorio d'Arezo	St Catherine & Scenes	Square	Green	yes		0	
76	Giotto Workshop	Polyptych Mad & Ch		Black	yes	no	0	Thin boards
77	Lippo Memmi	Panel 48/49	Square	Red			0	
78	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	Square	red	yes		0	
79	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	Square	red	yes?		0	
80	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	Square	Green			0	
81	Simone Martini	St Andrew	Square	red			0	
82	Giotto	St Stephen		red	yes	no		

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 2						
			Tabs	Bosses/ studs	Fastening straps	Attached	Colour	Hasps, Eyes & Pulls	Pin position 1-4
54	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/32	no	Long (1)	f	brown	yes	2
55	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/33	no	Long (1)	f	brown	yes	3
56	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/34	no	Long (1)	f	patterned	yes	2
57	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	no	long	f	Bl/Rd/Gld	yes	3
58	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	no	long	f	Rd/Gld	yes	3
59	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	no	long	f	Bl/Rd/Gld	yes	3
60	Pietro Lorenzetti	The Tarlati polyptych	no					
61	Simone Martini	Polyptych	no					
62	Simone Martini	Polyptych	Studs?	long	f	black/gld	yes	2
63	Ugolino di Nerio	St Thomas	no	long	f	red	yes	3
64	Ugolino di Nerio	Bagnano Triptych	poss	long	f	black	yes	3
65	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	no	long	f	black	yes	3
66	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	no	long	f	black	yes	3
67	Giotto	Ognissanti Crucifix	poss	Long	b	black	no	1
68	Lippo Memmi	Madonna & Ch & Sts		long	f	dark	yes	
69	Lippo Memmi	St Clare	studs	Long	b	Blk/Gld	yes	2
70	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	poss	long	f	black/dec	yes	3
71	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	Poss	long	f	black/dec	yes	3
72	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	studs	long	b	black	yes	3
73	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	studs	long	f	black	yes	3
74	Bernardo Daddi	Triptych	studs	long	f	black/gld	yes	3
75	Donato d'Arezzo & Gregorio d'Arezo	St Catherine & Scenes	no	long	b	gold	yes	2
76	Giotto Workshop	Polyptych Mad & Ch	studs?	Long	b	Gld Patn	yes	3
77	Lippo Memmi	Panel 48/49	yes*	short?	f	black	not vis	
78	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	yes?	long	f?	black	yes	?
79	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas		long		black	yes	
80	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	no	long	f	brown	yes	
81	Simone Martini	St Andrew	studs?	Long	b	black	yes	3
82	Giotto	St Stephen	no	Long	b	gold	yes	1

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Decoration							Comments
			Edge Decoration	Central ornament	Corner ornament	Margin Rule	Punch-gilt roundels	Blind Tooling	Gold Tooling	
54	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/32	no	yes	no	yes				
55	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/33	no	yes	no	yes				
56	Master of Citta di Castello	Polyptych No29/34	no	yes?	no	yes				
57	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Yes	obscured	no	no				
58	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Yes	yes	no	no				Headband
59	Niccolo di Segna	Polyptych No 38	Yes	yes	no	no				
60	Pietro Lorenzetti	The Tarlati polyptych	no	yes	no	no			yes?	
61	Simone Martini	Polyptych	no	yes	no	no			yes?	
62	Simone Martini	Polyptych	Yes	no	no	no				
63	Ugolino di Nerio	St Thomas	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
64	Ugolino di Nerio	Bagnano Triptych	no	yes	no	yes				
65	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
66	Ugolino di Nerio	Polyptych	yes	yes	no	no				Panel moulding?
67	Giotto	Ognissanti Crucifix		yes	no	no			yes?	
68	Lippo Memmi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	no							Rays
69	Lippo Memmi	St Clare	no	yes	no	no			poss	
70	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	poss	yes*	no	yes?	yes?			Leger?
71	Bernardo Daddi	Madonna & Ch & Sts	poss	yes*	no	no	yes?			Leger?
72	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	no	yes	no	no			poss	
73	Pietro Lorenzetti	SS Andrew & James	no	yes	no	no			poss	
74	Bernardo Daddi	Triptych	no	yes	no	no			poss	
75	Donato d'Arezzo & Gregorio d'Arezo	St Catherine & Scenes	no	yes	no	no			yes?	
76	Giotto Workshop	Polyptych Mad & Ch	no	yes	no	no				
77	Lippo Memmi	Panel 48/49	yes	no	no	no				Good bosses
78	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	no	?	no	no				
79	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	no							
80	Lippus da Siena	Triunph of St Thomas	Yes	no	no	no				
81	Simone Martini	St Andrew	no	yes	no	no				
82	Giotto	St Stephen		yes	no	no			yes	

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	DATE		Collection	Holder	How held	
			year	*+/-*			*Pose*	*Open/Shut*
83	Simone Martini & Lippo Memmi	Annunciation	1333	5	Uffizi	VM	LH/R	Part O/u
84	Giotto Workshop	Baroncelli Polyptych	1335	5	Florence	St Paul	LH/C	s/u
85	Bartolomeo Bulgarini	St Peter Enthroned	1340	10	Siena PN	St Peter	LH/Pk+v	s
86	Bernardo Daddi	Assumption of Virgin	1340	5	NY Met	VM	LH/C	s
87	Bernardo Daddi	St Catherine	1340	5	San Francisco	St Catherine	LH/Cc	s/u
88	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	1340	5	Siena PN	St Augustine	LH/C	s
89	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	1340	5	Siena PN	St Francis	LH/C	s
90	Maso di Banco	St Anthony	1340	5	Met NY	St Anthony	2H	s/u
91	Ambrogio Lorenzetti	Annunciation	1343		Siena PN	VM	On lap	O/T
92	Giovanni di Nicola	Madonna & Ch & Sts	1350	10	Pisa	St Peter	LH/C	s
93	Andrea di Cione	Madonna & Ch & Sts	1355	5	Accademia	St Andrew	LH/C	s/u
94	Andrea di Cione	Strozzi Altarpiece	1355	3	Florence	St Lawrence	LH/Cl	s/u
95	Bartolo di Fredi (?)	St Peter	1355	5	NY Met	St Peter	LH/C/c	S
96	Nardo di Cione	St Peter	1357	5	Yale	St Peter	LH/Cl	s
97	Nardo di Cione	Madonna & Child & Sts	1360	5	Santa Croce	St Gregory	LH/C/c	s
98	Giusto de Menabuoi	Sts Paul & Augustine	1363	5	Georgia	St Paul	LH/C	s/u
99	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	1365	5	Nat Gal Lon	St James	LH/Cl	s/u
100	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	1365	5	Nat Gal Lon	St John Ev.	2H	s
101	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	1368	5	Nat Gal Lon	Onlooker	LH/C	s
102	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	1368	5	Nat Gal Lon	St Bartholomew	LH/C	s
103	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	1368	5	Nat Gal Lon	St James Major	LH/C	s
104	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	1368	5	Nat Gal Lon	St Paul	LH/C	s
105	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	1370	1	Nat Gal Lon	St Stephen	LH/S	s
106	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	1370	1	Nat Gal Lon	St Bartholomew	LH/S	s
107	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	1370	1	Nat Gal Lon	St Catherine	LH/C	s
108	Giovanni del Biondo	Velluti Chap Polyptych	1372		Florence	St Antony Abb	LH/Sside	s

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 1					
			Shape of Board Edges	*Principal Colour*	*Back*	*Spine Bands*	*Board Overhang 'Square'*	*Comments*
83	Simone Martini & Lippo Memmi	Annunciation	Square	Red			0	
84	Giotto Workshop	Baroncelli Polyptych		Grey	yes			
85	Bartolomeo Bulgarini	St Peter Enthroned	Square	Red	yes?		0	
86	Bernardo Daddi	Assumption of Virgin	Square	Blue			0	
87	Bernardo Daddi	St Catherine	square	Ruby			1	Velvet?
88	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	Square	Brown			0	
89	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	Square	Red			0	
90	Maso di Banco	St Anthony	Square	Green	yes	3	0	
91	Ambrogio Lorenzetti	Annunciation	Square	Red	yes?		0	
92	Giovanni di Nicola	Madonna & Ch & Sts	square	Black	yes		2	
93	Andrea di Cione	Madonna & Ch & Sts	Square	red	yes	no	0	
94	Andrea di Cione	Strozzi Altarpiece	Square	Black	yes	2?	0	
95	Bartolo di Fredi (?)	St Peter	Square	Red	no		0	
96	Nardo di Cione	St Peter	Square	Black	yes		0	
97	Nardo di Cione	Madonna & Child & Sts	Square	Red			0	
98	Giusto de Menabuoi	Sts Paul & Augustine			yes			
99	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	Square	black	yes	no	1	
100	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	Square	red			1	
101	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		Red			0	
102	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		Red			0	
103	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		Black			0	
104	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	Square	red			0	
105	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	Square	Blue			0	
106	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	Square	red	yes	3	0	
107	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	Square	Blue	yes		0	
108	Giovanni del Biondo	Velluti Chap Polyptych	square	Blue			0	

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 2						
			Tabs	Bosses/ studs	Fastening straps	Attached	Colour	Hasps, Eyes & Pulls	Pin position 1-4
83	Simone Martini & Lippo Memmi	Annunciation		no	Long	f	black	yes	2
84	Giotto Workshop	Baroncelli Polyptych		studs?	not vis				
85	Bartolomeo Bulgarini	St Peter Enthroned		?	Long	f	black	yes	3
86	Bernardo Daddi	Assumption of Virgin		yes	long	f	Red/Dec	yes	4
87	Bernardo Daddi	St Catherine		yes?	long	b	Grey/Gld	yes	3
88	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts		no	Short?	?	red		
89	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts		no	long	f	black	yes	2
90	Maso di Banco	St Anthony		no	long	b	black	yes	4
91	Ambrogio Lorenzetti	Annunciation			faint	f?			
92	Giovanni di Nicola	Madonna & Ch & Sts		no	long	f	red	yes	2
93	Andrea di Cione	Madonna & Ch & Sts		no	long	b	black	yes	3
94	Andrea di Cione	Strozzi Altarpiece		studs?	Not vis				
95	Bartolo di Fredi (?)	St Peter		?	Long	f	Bl/Gd	yes	2
96	Nardo di Cione	St Peter		no	long	f	Green/Dec	yes	3
97	Nardo di Cione	Madonna & Child & Sts		no	long	f	black/gld	yes	3
98	Giusto de Menabuoi	Sts Paul & Augustine							
99	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts		no	long	b	Grey/Gld	yes	4
100	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts			long	f	black/gld	yes	3
101	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		no	short?	?	Black/Gld		
102	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		no	short?	?	Black/Gld		
103	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		no	none				
104	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece		no	short?	?	Black/Gld		
105	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin			short?	?	Red/Gold		
106	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin							
107	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin			long	f	Red/Gold	yes	2
108	Giovanni del Biondo	Velluti Chap Polyptych		studs?	Long	f	red/gld	yes	2

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Decoration							Comments
			Edge Decoration	Central ornament	Corner ornament	Margin Rule	Punch-gilt roundels	Blind Tooling	Gold Tooling	
83	Simone Martini & Lippo Memmi	Annunciation	yes	no	no	no				
84	Giotto Workshop	Baroncelli Polyptych		yes	no	dots				
85	Bartolomeo Bulgarini	St Peter Enthroned	no	yes					yes	
86	Bernardo Daddi	Assumption of Virgin	no	yes					yes?	
87	Bernardo Daddi	St Catherine	no	yes	no	no				
88	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	no	yes	yes*	no				
89	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato	Madonna & Child & Sts	no	yes	no	no		yes?		
90	Maso di Banco	St Anthony	no	yes	no	no			yes	
91	Ambrogio Lorenzetti	Annunciation	Yes							
92	Giovanni di Nicola	Madonna & Ch & Sts	no	no	no	no				
93	Andrea di Cione	Madonna & Ch & Sts	no	yes	no	no			yes?	
94	Andrea di Cione	Strozzi Altarpiece	no	no	no	no				
95	Bartolo di Fredi (?)	St Peter	no	yes					yes?	
96	Nardo di Cione	St Peter	no	obscured	no	no				Headband
97	Nardo di Cione	Madonna & Child & Sts	no	yes	no	no			yes	
98	Giusto de Menabuoi	Sts Paul & Augustine		yes					yes?	Poor condition
99	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	no	obscured	no	no				Headband
100	Nardo di Cione	St John Baptist + Sts	no	yes	no	no			yes	
101	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	no	yes	no	no			yes?	
102	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	no	no	no	no				
103	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	no	yes	no	no			Yes?	
104	Jacopo di Cione	Crucifixion Altarpiece	no	yes	no	no				
105	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	no	yes	no	yes			yes	
106	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	no	yes	no	yes			yes	
107	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	no	yes	no	yes			yes	
108	Giovanni del Biondo	Velluti Chap Polyptych	no	yes	no	yes			yes	Tooled border

Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	DATE		Collection	Holder	How held	
			year	*+/-*			*Pose*	*Open/Shut*
109	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	1372	3	Raleigh	St Cosmas	2H	s/u
110	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	1372	3	Raleigh	St Damain	LH	s
111	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	1373		Accademia	St Andrew?	LH/Pk	s/u
112	Agnolo Gaddi	SS James & Peter	1375	5	Walters	St Peter	LH/C	s
113	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	St Andrew	RH/H	s/u
114	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	St Peter	LH/Cside	s/u
115	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	St Jude	2H	s
116	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	Prophets	lectern	O/backs
117	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	St Stephen	LH/Cc	s
118	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	1379		Florence	St James Major	LH/C	s
119	Giovanni del Biondo	St John Gualberto	1380	5	Florence	St John Gual.	LH/Pk	s/u
120	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Nativity of Virgin Mary	1386	5	Siena PN	St Bartholomew	2H	s/u
121	Niccolo di Pietri Gerini	The Baptism of Christ	1387		London Nat Gall	St Peter	RH/C	s/u
122	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Madonna and Child	1390	5	Siena PN	St Francis	2H	s
123	Taddeo di Bartolo	St Jerome	1390	5	Yale	St Jerome	LH/C	s
124	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	1400	5	Siena PN	St Philip	2H	S
125	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	1400	5	Siena PN	St James	LH/C	S
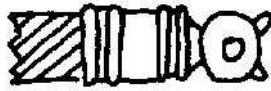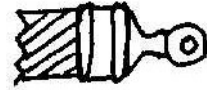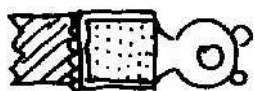
Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Shape of Board Edges	Principal Colour	Back	Spine Bands	Board Overhang 'Square'	Comments
109	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	Square	black	no		1	
110	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	Square	black			1	
111	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	Square	black			0	
112	Agnolo Gaddi	SS James & Peter		Black				
113	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		Black			0	
114	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		Black			0	
115	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	square	grey			0	
116	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		black/red	yes	no	0	
117	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	square	black			0	
118	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	Square	red			0	
119	Giovanni del Biondo	St John Gualberto	square	Blue	yes		0	
120	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Nativity of Virgin Mary	Square	red	no		2	
121	Niccolo di Pietri Gerini	The Baptism of Christ	Square	blue	yes		0	
122	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Madonna and Child	Square	red	no		2	
123	Taddeo di Bartolo	St Jerome	Square	Black			0	
124	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	Bevel	Grey			1	
125	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	Square	Black			0	
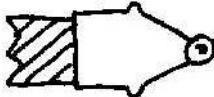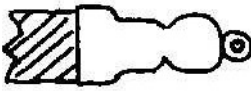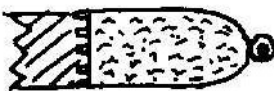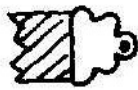
Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Binding features 2						
			Tabs	Bosses/ studs	Fastening straps	Attached	Colour	Hasps, Eyes & Pulls	Pin position 1-4
109	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian			short?	?	red/gld		
110	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian			short?	?	red/gld		
111	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin		no	short	?	Red/Gold		
112	Agnolo Gaddi	SS James & Peter			long	f	Red	yes	2
113	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	short?	?	red/gld		
114	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	long	b	red/gld	yes	2
115	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	long	f	gold	yes	2
116	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	Not vis				
117	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	short?		red/gld		
118	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych		no	short?		black/gld		
119	Giovanni del Biondo	St John Gualberto		no	long	b	red/gld	yes	3
120	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Nativity of Virgin Mary		no	long	b	black/red	yes	4
121	Niccolo di Pietri Gerini	The Baptism of Christ		no	long	b	black/gld	yes	1
122	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Madonna and Child		no	long	f	black	yes	2
123	Taddeo di Bartolo	St Jerome		no	long	f	red/Dec	yes	2
124	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych		no	long	f	Red/Gd	yes	3
125	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych		no	long	f	Grey	yes	3
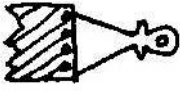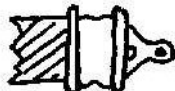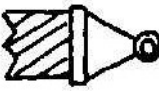
Cat No	ARTIST	TITLE	Decoration							Comments
			Edge Decoration	*Central ornament*	*Corner ornament*	*Margin Rule*	*Punch-gilt roundels*	*Blind Tooling*	*Gold Tooling*	
109	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	no	yes	no	no	yes?			
110	Master of the Rinuccini Chapel	St Cosmas & St Damian	no	yes	no	no	yes?			
111	Jacopo di Cione	Coronation of the Virgin	no	yes	no	no			yes	
112	Agnolo Gaddi	SS James & Peter	no	yes		no			Poss	
113	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes 2 col	no	no	yes?		yes	
114	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes 2 col	no	no	yes?		yes	
115	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes	no	no			yes	
116	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes	no	no			yes	
117	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes	no	no	yes?		yes	
118	Giovanni del Biondo	Rinuccini Polyptych	no	yes shell	no	no	yes?		yes	
119	Giovanni del Biondo	St John Gualberto	no	yes	no	no	yes?		yes	
120	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Nativity of Virgin Mary	no	yes	no	no	yes?		yes	
121	Niccolo di Pietri Gerini	The Baptism of Christ	no	yes	no	no	yes?		yes	
122	Paolo di Giovanni Fei	Madonna and Child	no	yes	no	no			yes	
123	Taddeo di Bartolo	St Jerome	no	yes	no	no	yes?		poss	
124	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	no	yes	no	no	yes?		poss	
125	Andrea di Bartolo	Polyptych	no	yes	no	no			poss	
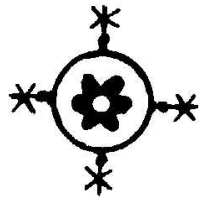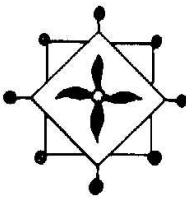
Examples of hasps
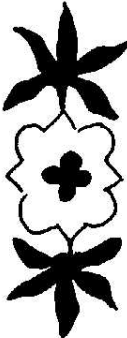
	c.1300	Giotto
	c.1305	Duccio
	c.1305	Master of Città di Castello
	c.1306	Master of St Cecilia
	c.1310	Giotto workshop
	c.1315	Master of Città di Castello
	c.1320	Niccolo di Segna

	1328	Bernardo Daddi
	c.1328	Pietro Lorenzetti
	c.1330	Bernardo Daddi
	c.1330	Giotto workshop
	c.1330	Simone Martini
	c.1340	Bernardo Daddi
	c.1340	Jacopo di Mino dell Pellicciato
	c.1340	Maso di Banco
	c.1355	Andrea di Cione
	c.1357	Nardo di Cione

	1372	Giovanni del Biondi
	c.1386	Paolo di Giovanni Fei
	1387	Niccolo di Pietri Gerini
	c.1400	Andrea di Bartolo

Examples of central decorations- c.1300-1320

	c.1305	Duccio, *Polyptych No 28*, Book held by Christ
	c.1315	Master of Città di Castello, *St Peter*

	c.1317	Ugolino di Nerio, *Clark Heptatych*, Book held by St Stephen
	c.1320	Ugolino di Nerio, *St Thomas*

Survey of Italian Scenes of Annunciation to the Virgin – 1160 to 1393

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail Attribute	Pose	Notes
Cagliari, Duomo	Guglielmus	1160	Sculpture	Spindle	Standing	Originally made for Pisa and moved to Cagliari in 1302-10.
Pistoia, Sant' Andrea	Henricus	1166	Sculpture	Spindle	Standing	
Castel Castagna, Sta. Maria di Ronzano	Abruzzi School	1176	Fresco	Cloth	Standing	
Pisa, Duomo	Bonannus	1180	Sculpture	? Spindle	Standing	
Monreale, Duomo	Bonannus	1186	Sculpture	Spindle	Standing	
Groppoli, San Michele		1193	Sculpture	Spindle	Standing	
Volterra, Duomo		1200	Sculpture	None	Standing	
Appiano, Castle Chapel		1200	Fresco	Spindle	Standing	
New York, Cloisters Museum		1200	Sculpture	Book	Standing	Questionable authenticity
Siena, Tressa, Sta Maria	Tressa Master	1220	Panel	?Spindle	Sitting	Garrison No. 378
Unknown	Tressa Master	1225	Panel	?	Standing	Garrison No. 364. The photograph shows the panel as being badly damaged.

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail Attribute	Pose	Notes
London, British Library	(?)Marcus di Berlinghiero	1235	Illum. Mss	None	Standing	Egerton 3036
Florence, Sta Maria Maggiore	Coppo di Marcovaldo	1255	Panel	None	Standing	
Crypt, Duomo, Siena	Att: Dietisalvi di Speme	1260	Fresco	None	Standing	
Vicopisano, Santa Maria and San Giovanni	Att: Enrico di Tedice	1265	Fresco	None	Standing	
Princeton	S. Maria Primerana Master	1265	Panel	Spindles	Standing	
Montepiano		1265	Fresco	None	Standing	
New York, Met. Mus.	Magdalen Master	1265	Panel	None	Standing	Possibly later, c.1275.
National Gallery, London	Master of the Clarisse (Rinaldo da Siena?)	1266	Panel	Ambiguous: ?Book or spindle and cloth	Standing	NG 6571
Unknown	Magdalen Master	1269	Panel	? None	Standing	Garrison No 322A
Princeton	Guido da Siena	1270	Panel	None	Standing	
Camerino, Santa Maria in Via	Camerino Master	1270	Panel	None	Standing	
Antwerp, Mayer van den Berg Museum	Simeone and Machilone	1273	Panel	? None	Standing	
Museo d'Arte Sacra, San Miniato	Girddo di Jacopo da Como	1274	Sculpture	None	Standing	Panel from pulpit in Duomo

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail Attribute	Pose	Notes
Moscow, National Pushkin Museum		1275	Panel	None	Standing	
Florence, Uffizi	Master of Greve	1275	Panel	Spindles	Standing	
Paris, Musèe des Arts Dècoratifs	Magdalen Master	1278	Panel	? None	Standing	
Perugia, Gall. Nat. dell'Umbria	Master of the Perugian Triptych	1280	Panel	Spindle	Standing	"The Marzolini Triptych"
Siena - PN di Siena	Guido da Graziano	1280	Panel	Spindle	Standing	
Monte S Savino, Sta Maria delle Vertighe	Margarito d'Arezzo	1283	Panel	? None	Standing	
Assisi - Sta Chiara		1287	Panel	? None	Standing	
Unknown		1287	Coffer	None	Standing	Garrison No. 624
Unknown		1287	Coffer	None	Half length	Garrison No. 625
Pisa, Mus. Nat. di S. Matteo	Maestro di San Martino (Ugolino di Tedice?)	1288	Panel	None	Standing	
Florence, S. Stefano al Ponte	Corso di Buono	1290	Panel	None	Standing	
Unknown	School of Magdalen Master	1290	Panel	None	Standing	Garrison No. 252
Florence, Museo Stibbert		1290	Panel	None	Standing	Garrison No. 667
Turin, Private Collection		1290	Panel	?None	Seated	Garrison No. Add. 45 Angel is genuflecting.

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail Attribute	Pose	Notes
Oxford, Bodleian		1290	Illumination	Spindle	Standing	Canon Lit. 393, f. 240r
Florence, Uffizi	Vigorosa da Siena	1291	Illumination	None	Standing	
Assisi, Upper Church	?Jacopo Torriti	1292	Fresco	Book	Standing	
Rome, Santa Maria in Trastevere	Pietro Cavallini	1295	Mosaic	Book	Sitting	
Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore	Jacopo Torriti	1295	Mosaic	None	Standing	
London, H.M. Queen	Duccio	1300	Panel	Book	Standing	
Padua, Arena Chapel	Giotto	1307	Fresco	Book	Kneeling	
Siena, Opera del Duomo	Duccio	1310	Panel	Book	Sitting	
London, National Gallery	Duccio	1311	Panel	Book	Standing	
New York, Met. Mus., Robert Lehman Coll.	Neri da Rimini	1312	Illumination	None	Standing	Leaf from a sanctorale
New York, Met. Mus. Robert Lehman Coll.	Maestro Daddesco(?)	1312	Illumination	None	Standing	Cutting from an antiphonary
Orvieto, Duomo, Facade	Lorenzo Maitani	1320	Sculpture	Book	Standing	
New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library	Pacino di Bonaguida	1320	Illumination	None	Standing	MS M.643

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail		Notes
				Attribute	Pose	
Arezzo, Pieve	Pietro Lorenzetti	1320	Panel	Book	Sitting	
Museo di San Matteo. Pisa	Lupo di Francesco	1320	Sculpture	Book	Sitting	Panel from pulpit
New York, Met. Mus.	Follower of Duccio	1323	Panel	None	Standing	
Vatican	Master of the St George Codex.	1327	Illumination	Book	Sitting	MS C.129, f. 1v.
Vatican	Master of the St George Codex.	1327	Illumination	Book	Standing	MS C.129, f. 4v.
Dorking, Polesden Lacy		1328	Triptych	Book	Standing	
San Casciano, S. Maria del Prato	Giovanni di Balduccio	1330	Sculpture	Book	Sitting	
Florence, Santa Croce	Taddeo Gaddi	1331	Fresco	Book	Sitting	
Florence, Uffizi	Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi	1333	Panel	Book	Sitting	
New York, Cloisters		1335	Altar Cloth	Book	Sitting	
Paris, Louvre	Simone Martini	1340	Panel	Book	Sitting	
Siena , P.N. di Siena	Ambrogio Lorenzetti	1344	Panel	Book	Sitting	
London, British Library		1350	Illumination	Book	Sitting	MS Add. 15265 f.10v.
Private Collection		1350	Sculpture	Book	Standing	Venetian, marble.

Location now	Artist	Date circa	Type	Iconographical detail		Notes
				Attribute	Pose	
Florence, Orsan Michele	Andrea Orcagna	1357	Sculpture	Books	Sitting	
Siena, San Leonardo al Lago	Lippo Vanni	1365	Fresco	Book	Standing	
London, National Gallery	Giusto de' Menabuoi	1367	Panel	Books	Sitting	
Montalcino, Museo Civico	Angelo di Nalduccio	1369	Sculpture	Book	Standing	
Siena, Opera del Duomo	Lippo Vanni	1370	Illumination	None	Sitting	MS 98-4, f. 8r.
Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza	Lorenzo Veneziano	1372	Panel	Book	Sitting	
London, British Library	Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci	1375	Illumination	Book	Sitting	MS Add. 35254
Florence, Accademia	Att. Giovanni del Biondo	1380	Panel	Books	Sitting	
Los Angeles, County Museum, Balch Coll.	Bartolo di Fredi	1388	Panel	Book	Sitting	
New York, Brooklyn Musum	Don Simone Camaldolese	1391	Illumination	Book	Sitting	MS. X1015
Chicago, Newberry Library	Don Simone Camaldolese	1393	Illumination	Book	Sitting	MS. +74, Vol 1, f. 1r.

Light, Optics and Divine Illumination

This appendix is a brief summary of the state of knowledge of light and optics and shows that its study was one of the activities undertaken by Dominicans and Franciscans and that it was associated with the Theory of Divine Illumination.

With minimal exceptions, the works of Plato were not available in the Middle Ages. Nor were the works of the founder of Neoplatonism, Plotinus. The main author by which knowledge of Neoplatonic thinking was made available to the late Middle Ages was St Augustine (354 – 430), for whom light was a central and essential feature of a synthesis of theology and philosophy. Augustine identified God with light, the Trinity with light, and knowledge with light. One short passage from the *Confessionies* and two passages from *De trinitate* serve to illustrate this:

> 'The mind needs to be enlightened by light from outside itself, so that it can participate in truth, because it is not itself the nature of truth. You will light my lamp, Lord.'
>
> *Confessiones, IV, 15,25.*[1]

> 'For the Word of the Father is the Son, which is also called His Wisdom. What is, therefore, remarkable about Him being sent, not because He is unequal to the Father, but because He is 'a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God'? But there, that which emanates and that from which it emanates are of one and the same substance. For it does not issue as water from an opening in the ground or a rock, but as light from light…For what is the brightness of light if not light itself? And consequently, it is co-eternal with the light of which it is the light.'
>
> *De Trinitate, viii, 3.*

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[1] Translation by Henry Chadwick (Oxford, 1991) quoted in Pasnau, *Divine Illumination*. June 2011).

'...the intellectual mind is so formed as to see those things which, according to the disposition of the Creator, are subjoined to intelligible things in the natural order, in a sort of incorporeal light of its own kind, as the eye of the flesh sees the things that lie about it in this corporeal light, of which light it is made to be receptive and to which it is adapted.'

De Trinitate, xii,15.[2]

As David Lindberg states: 'This is the doctrine of divine illumination, one of the hallmarks of the Augustinian tradition. For a grasp of intelligible things, the mind must be irradiated with divine light.'[3] And it was by divine illumination that Christ had access to the human soul and the mind perceived the Word of God.[4]

In the thirteenth century a similar position with regard to the role played by light was adopted by the Franciscan St Bonaventure (1217-1274) who stated that all knowledge came by divine illumination and that light was the vector that connected body and soul.[5] An explanation of how this was achieved in terms of optics was constructed by another Franciscan, Roger Bacon (c.1214-1294), with his theory of 'Multiplication of Species'.[6] This held that an object repeatedly replicated its likeness (or 'species') and thus could imprint itself, via the eye, on the mind and hence the soul of the observer. The Baconian optical synthesis reconciled the differing theories of a whole range of philosophers including Augustine, Aristotle and Averroes as well as Euclid, Ptolemy, al-Kindi, Avicenna and Alhazen. While Bacon's explanation would later be challenged (notably by William of Ockham) it was, none-the-less, the prevailing theory of optics in the early decades of the fourteenth century.

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[2] Translation by Stephen McKenna (Washington, 1963) quoted in David C Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. xl & xli.

[3] Ibid., p. xli. It was this idea that divine illumination was necessary for knowledge that was rejected by Thomas. See Jan A Aertsen, "Aquinas's philosophy in its historical setting," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 21.

[4] R A Markus, "Augustine Reason and Illumination," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A H Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 366.

[5] Lindberg, "The Genesis of Kepler's Theory of Light: Light Metaphysics from Plotinus to Kepler," p. 17.

[6] Bacon cites a number of sources for his ideas, the detail of which is not relevant to this study. See Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature*, pp. xxxv ff.

The study of optics was continued by, amongst others, John Peckham (c.1230-1292, Franciscan, man of Sussex and Archbishop of Canterbury)[7] who also railed against the teachings of Thomas and the Aristotelian movement.

> 'I do not in any way disapprove of philosophical studies, insofar as they serve theological mysteries, but I do disapprove of irreverent innovations in language, introduced within the last twenty years into the depths of theology against philosophical truth and to the detriment of the Fathers, whose positions are disdained and openly held in contempt. Which doctrine is more solid and more sound, the doctrine of the sons of Francis, that is, of Brother Alexander (of Hales) of sainted memory, of Brother Bonaventure and others like him, who rely on the Fathers and the philosophers in treatises secure against any reproach, or else that very recent and almost entirely contrary doctrine, which fills the entire world with wordy quarrels, weakening and destroying with all its strength what Augustine teaches concerning the eternal rules and the unchangeable light, the faculties of the soul, the seminal reasons included in matter, and innumerable questions of the same kind, let the Ancients be the judges, since in them is wisdom, let the God of heaven be judge, and may he remedy it.'[8]

As Gilson points out, the first in Peckham's list of differences between the schools of thought (and the two orders of friars) is the doctrine of divine illumination.[9]

The Dominican Ulrich Engelbert of Strasbourg (1225 - 1277) was a direct contemporary of Thomas Aquinas and a fellow-student under Albertus Magnus.[10] As Weisheipl has noted, Ulrich and his fellow German students were more impressed by the Neoplatonic aspects of Albertus's teaching than the Aristotelian,[11] and Ulrich, who was apparently Albertus's favourite pupil, went on to write *De Summo Bono* ("On the Supreme Good"), that cast God

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[7] See David C Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), Ch. 6.

[8] From a letter by John Peckham to the Bishop of Lincoln, dated 1285. (*Registrum epistolarum, III, 871*) quoted by Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 359. An abbreviated version is also quoted in Pasnau, "Henry of Ghent and the Twilight of Divine Illumination," p. 49.

[9] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 360.

[10] Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, p. 314.

[11] Weisheiph, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works*, p. 43.

as the Absolute Truth at the summit of a hierarchical order. Knowledge flowed down this hierarchy by divine illumination and was a form of 'Light Metaphysics' that was clearly Neoplatonic and Augustinian in its origins.[12]

A second Dominican disciple of Albertus was Dietrich of Frieberg (1250 – 1310).[13] Characterised by Hinnebusch as 'Neoplatonist and Augustinian in theology and as Aristotelian in philosophy',[14] Dietrich was active in natural philosophy (optics), metaphysics and theology. He opposed certain doctrines of Thomas as to the nature of existence and accepted the traditional Neoplatonic concept of an hierarchical order. In *De visione beatifica* Dietrich reworked the Doctrine of Divine Illumination and argued that the 'hidden recess of the mind' allowed a continuous knowledge of, and by, God.[15] In 1304 Dietrich was attending the General Chapter in Toulouse and was asked by the newly elected Master General of the Dominican Order, Aymeric Giliani of Piacenza, to write a treatise 'on the causes and mode of generation and apparition of rainbows and other radiant phenomena'. This treatise, *De iride et radialibus impressionibus*, was completed by 1310 and is the work by which Dietrich is best known as he was the first person to correctly explain the phenomenon of the rainbow. In the preface of this work Dietrich notes that scientific knowledge is 'one of the most esteemed goods in the Dominican household' and that the science of the 'rainbow and of radiant phenomena' ranks among the most valuable of scientific matters.[16]

The doctrine of Divine illumination was challenged by John Duns Scotus and William Ockham and was largely discredited by the middle of the fourteenth century.

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[12] Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, pp. 299-300. Also Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 431-3.

[13] Often referred to in the literature as Theodoric of Freiburg. It is actually uncertain whether Dietrich did even meet, leave alone study under Albertus. See Markus Führer, *Dietrich of Freiberg*, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dietrich-freiberg/.

[14] Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, p. 300.

[15] See Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 437 and p. 754, note 18. However, Markus Führer states that it is unclear whether Dietrich accepted or rejected the Doctrine of Divine Illumination and that it depends on how his writings are interpreted. He contrasts the writing of Dietrich on this subject with those of Albertus Magnus and takes the view that when Dietrich writes 'All beings shine forth in its essence' he is not advocating a doctrine of divine illumination but merely that 'the intellect reflects all things'. He also indicates that Dietrich's attitude to the doctrine mirrored the general decline in its support at the end of the thirteenth century. Führer, *Dietrich of Freiberg*. Aug 2010) Section 11.

[16] The text of *De Iride* is given in Joseph Würschmidt, *Dietrich von Freiberg* (Münster: 1914). See also William A Wallace, *The Scientific Methodology of Theodoric of Freiberg* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1959), p 174.

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