

THE FELICI ICON TABERNACLE (1372) AT S. MARIA IN ARACOELI, RECONSTRUCTED: LAY PATRONAGE, SCULPTURE AND MARIAN DEVOTION IN TRECENTO ROME*

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The period of the Avignonese papacy (1309–77), when Rome lost her *raison d'être* as capital of western Christianity because of the departure of the popes, is considered a bleak period for Roman art.¹ Torn by the internecine wars of her leading families, the Eternal City experienced instability and decay, vividly witnessed by contemporaries: Boccaccio went as far as to write that Rome had turned from the head into the tail of the world.² Time and again the Romans sent delegations to Avignon to invite the popes to restore the 'captive' tiara to Rome, and Petrarch addressed passionate letters to Benedict XII and Urban V,

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thanks for having, very generously, allowed me to visit every corner of the church and convent. I would also like to thank Colin Wilcockson for reading through this paper for me.

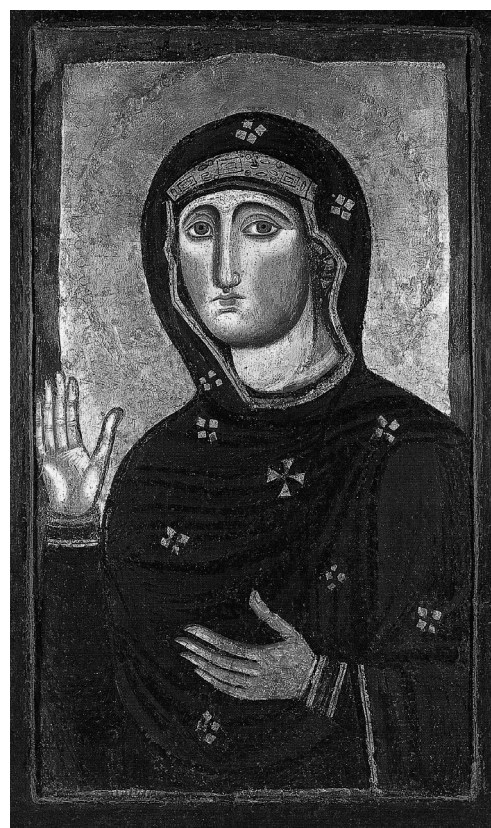
1. Rome during the Avignonese papacy has been thoroughly overlooked. The best work on the social history of Rome in the 14th century is still R. Brentano, *Rome before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth-Century Rome*, New York 1974 (2nd edn, London 1990) which, despite the title, draws considerably upon 14th-century material. Important insights can also be found in *Roma nei secoli XIII e XIV: Cinque saggi*, ed. E. Hubert, Rome 1993 (Collection de l'École Française de Rome, CLXX); and S. Carocci and M. Vendittelli, 'Società ed economia (1050–1420)', in *Storia di Roma dall'antichità ad oggi: Roma medievale*, ed. A. Vauchez, Rome and Bari 2001, pp. 71–116 (99–115). On artistic production and commissions, see A. Tomei, 'Roma senza papa: artisti, botteghe, committenti tra Napoli e la Francia', in *Roma, Napoli, Avignone: arte di curia, arte di corte, 1300–1377*, ed. C. Bologna and A. Tomei, Turin 1996, pp. 11–53; P. Silvan, 'S. Pietro senza papa: testimonianze del periodo avignonese', *ibid.*, pp. 227–57; S. Romano, 'L'immagine di Roma, Cola di Rienzo e la fine del Medioevo', in M. Andaloro and S. Romano, *Arte e Iconografia a Roma: Dal Tardoantico alla fine del Medioevo*, Milan 2002, pp. 175–94, which focuses on Cola di Rienzo's patronage.

2. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, v.3: 'In Roma, la quale, come è oggi coda, così già fu capo del mondo' (ed. N. Sapegno, Turin 1956, p. 492).

pleading for their return and the restoration of the ruined city.³ The absence of the main patrons, the pontiffs and cardinals, had prompted a *diaspora* of artists.⁴

If one cannot deny the almost complete lack of curial patronage in Rome during the 'Babylonian captivity' of the popes, it is, however, another thing to assume—as is commonly done—that the Avignonese period provoked a lengthy hiatus in artistic commissions in Rome and that a 'resurrection' of art, in particular of sculpture, took place only after the definitive return of the popes under Boniface IX (1389–1404).⁵

Unfortunately, very few works of art survive from the time. Several *disiecta membra* of remarkable works are extant, though, and are not only unpublished but completely unstudied. It is the purpose of this article to show that significant commissions were promoted in Rome in the period of the papal absence, and, in particular, to reconstruct and discuss a monument of great significance for Roman late-medieval art, which was dismantled in the sixteenth century but can be precisely dated in the Avignonese period. Ignorance of its original aspect and exact location has resulted in its complete scholarly neglect. Its



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

1. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, high altar, icon of the Madonna Advocata (11th–12th century?)

3. Petrarch, *Epistolae Metricae*, 1.2 and 1.5, to Benedict XII. *Seniles*, VII.1, to Urban V: 'Ma come puoi dormir tranquillo sotto i tetti dorati in riva al Rodano mentre il Laterano cade in rovina e la chiesa che di tutte è madre scoverchiata dal tetto non ha più difesa dai venti e dalle pioggie?' (Petrarch, *Lettere senili*, ed. G. Fracassetti, 2 vols, Florence 1892, I, pp. 379–435).

4. E. Castelnuovo, *Un pittore italiano alla corte di Avignone. Matteo Giovannetti e la pittura in Provenza*

nel secolo XIV (1st edn 1962), revised edn, Turin 1991; J. Gardner, 'Bizuti, Rusuti, Nicolaus and Johannes: Some Neglected Documents Concerning Roman Artists in France', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXIX, 1987, pp. 381–83.

5. The idea was first expressed by L. Ciaccio, 'L'ultimo periodo della scultura gotica a Roma', *Ausonia*, I, 1906, pp. 68–92 (68), and has been repeated ever since.

reconstruction will shed light on artistic patronage, workmanship, liturgical and devotional practices in fourteenth-century Rome.

The monument in question is a marble structure that housed the famous icon of the Virgin in S. Maria in Aracoeli until the 1560s, when it was transferred to the high altar.⁶ This icon (Fig. 1), which represents the *Madonna advocata* icon type (the western equivalent of the Byzantine *Haghiosoritissa*) and is considered by modern scholars to be an eleventh- or twelfth-century copy of the so-called Madonna of S. Sisto, has been the subject of several studies.⁷ In the Middle Ages it was believed to have been painted by the Evangelist Luke and to have performed numerous miracles.

According to legend, the icon stopped the two most devastating plagues that ravaged Rome, in 590 and 1348.⁸ In 590, while it was being carried in procession by Pope Gregory the Great, an angel appeared on top of Hadrian's mausoleum (henceforward called Castel S. Angelo), sheathing a bleeding sword to signify the end of the pestilence, and left his footmarks imprinted on a stone. In 1348, during a similar procession, the marble angel that had been placed on top of the mausoleum in commemoration of the previous miracle bowed several times in reverence to the holy picture of Mary (having recognised it as the true icon that had stopped the pestilence in the sixth century), and the plague was halted again. The impact of the event on the Romans is witnessed by the monumental marble flight of steps leading to Aracoeli, built as an *ex voto* with the impressive sum of 5,000 florins of alms offered by the Roman people to the miracle-working image.⁹ A surviving marble plaque on the façade, to the left of the main entrance,

6. On the transference of the icon to the main altar see Casimiro da Roma O.F.M., *Memorie storiche della chiesa e del convento di S. Maria in Aracoeli di Roma*, Rome 1736, p. 30.

7. E. Lavagnino, 'La Madonna dell'Aracoeli e il suo restauro', *Bollettino d'Arte*, xxxi, 1938, pp. 529–40; L. Grassi, 'La Madonna di Aracoeli e le tradizioni romane del suo tema iconografico', *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, xviii, 1941, pp. 65–94; B. Pesci, 'Il problema cronologico della Madonna di Aracoeli alla luce delle fonti', *ibid.*, pp. 51–64; H. Hager, *Die Anfänge des italienischen Altarbildes. Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des toskanischen Hochaltartabells*, Munich 1962 (*Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, xvii), pp. 49–50; M. Andaloro, 'Note sui temi iconografici delle Deesis e dell'Haghiosoritissa', *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, n.s., xvii, 1970, pp. 85–152 (126–29); P. Amato, *De vera effigie Mariae: Antiche icone romane* (exhib. cat.), Milan 1988, pp. 40–49; G. Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter*, Weinheim 1990, pp. 229–35; H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, Chicago 1994 (tr. E. Jephcott), pp. 311–29; M. Bacci, *Il pennello dell'Evangelista. Storia delle immagini sacre attribuite a S. Luca*, Pisa 1998, pp.

263–65, 272, 291, 322–26. For the icon of S. Sisto (from S. Maria in Tempulo, and now in the Oratorio del Rosario at Monte Mario, Rome) see C. Bertelli, 'L'immagine del "Monasterium Tempuli" dopo il restauro', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, xxxi, 1961, pp. 82–111.

8. Both miracles are reported in their entirety by William Brewyn, who claims to have copied the accounts from a tablet at Aracoeli. See Appendix, no. 11.

9. This piece of information is found in the *Diario romano* attributed to Gentile Delfino (containing news from 1341 to 1409): 'In nelli 1348 fuoro fatte le scale dello Aurucielo per Rienzo Simone, che fuoro guadagnate de elemosine fatta [sic] alla imagine di nostra Donna che sta nello Aurucielo cinque mila fiorini che fo la mortalità'. See 'Il Diario attribuito a Gentile Delfino', in Paolo di Lello Petrone, *La Mesticanza*, ed. F. Isoldi (*Rerum italicorum scriptores*, xxiv, II), Città di Castello 1910–12, pp. 65–79 (71–72). The construction of the stairway as an act of thanksgiving for the end of the plague is confirmed by the title of a lost chapter (chapter 21) of the *Cronica* of the 'Anonimo romano', probably written in the late 1530s: 'De la crudele mortalitate per tutto lo munno e delle scale de Santa Maria de l'Aurucielo';

provides the starting date of construction, 25 October 1348, together with the name of the skilled master mason: the 'magister principalis' Lorenzo di Simone Andreozzi, described as a Roman builder from the *rione* Colonna.¹⁰ This imposing staircase, constructed by re-using ancient pieces of marble, provides an outstanding example of an urban project in Trecento Rome, and indicates how misleading is the view that the city was in a state of complete abandonment and decay.

The miraculous end of the epidemic was not the only event to contribute to the icon's fame and cult. Following his victory over the Colonna on 20 November 1347, Cola di Rienzo (who had been crowned as a Tribune in S. Maria Maggiore at the culmination of the Assumption procession that very year) had proceeded triumphantly to the Capitol, where he had offered his sceptre and his crown of silver and olive branches to the image of the Virgin Mary in S. Maria in Aracoeli.¹¹ This gesture, confirmed by a letter of 1350 addressed to the Archbishop of Prague, Ernst von Pardubitz,¹² had great symbolic value: by publicly depositing his arms over the Marian altar, the tribune placed himself and Rome under the protection of the Aracoeli Virgin. With this impetus the icon soon began to overshadow the fame of the image of S. Sisto and the other Roman Marian icons.¹³ For centuries, copies of the miraculous panel were commissioned by powerful patrons: the earliest surviving example outside Italy, preserved in the Treasury of St Vitus Cathedral in Prague, seems to have been a gift of Pope Urban V to Charles IV of Bohemia in 1368.¹⁴

Unlike the Aracoeli image itself, the icon's original shrine is completely unknown. The only extant sculptural fragment that certainly belonged to it is preserved in the Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia.¹⁵ This is a screen of

see the edition of G. Porta, Milan 1979, p. 9. On the staircase, see I. Lori Sanfilippo, 'Roma nel XIV secolo: riflessioni in margine alla lettura di due saggi usciti nella Storia dell'arte italiana Einaudi', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*, xci, 1984, pp. 281–316 (306–09); and Bolgia (as in n. *), pp. 143–46.

10. The inscription, in Gothic characters, reads: '+ MAG[ISTE]R LAVRE[N]TI[VS] SYMEONI ANDREOTII ANDREE KAROLI FABRICATOR DE ROMA DE REGIONE COLVNE FV[N]DAVIT, P[RO]SECVT[VS] E[ST] ET CO[N]-SVMAVIT VT P[RO]NCIPA[LIS] MAG[ISTE]R H[OC] OPVS SCALARV[M] INCEPT[VM] ANNO D[OMINI] MCCCXLVIII DIE XXV OCTOBRIS'.

11. See P. Piur, *Cola di Rienzo. Darstellung seines Lebens und seines Geists*, Vienna 1931, pp. 111–12, and Appendix, no. 2.

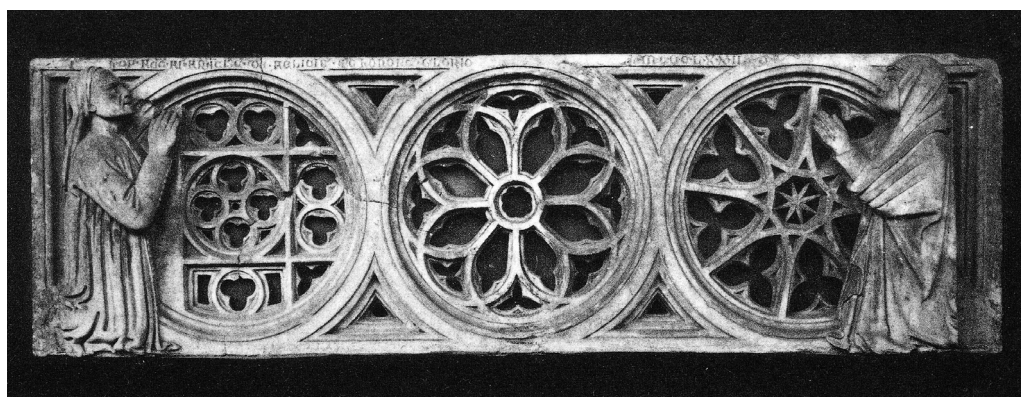
12. See Appendix, no. 3.

13. On the rivalry among Roman icons (that is, among the institutions they represented) see Belting (as in n. 7), pp. 320–23; G. Barone, 'Immagini miracolose a Roma alla fine del Medio Evo', in *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*,

ed. E. Thunø and G. Wolf (papers from a conference in Rome 2003), Rome 2004 (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, *Supplementum* 34), pp. 123–33 (128–33).

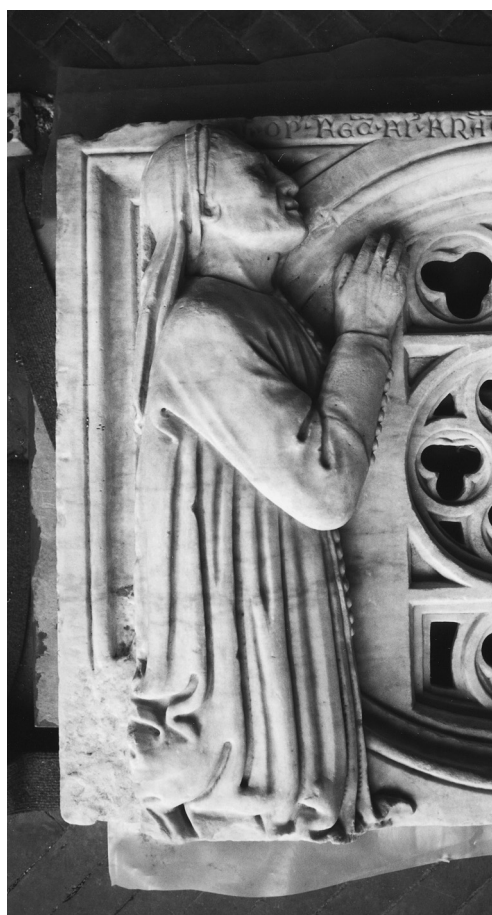
14. Prague, Treasury of St Vitus, no. K98. An engraving of c. 1690, depicting the most valuable objects of the Treasury of St Vitus, shows the copy of the Aracoeli icon with the legend 'Imago Beatae Mariae Virginis a Sancto Luca Depicta Carolo IV ab Urbano V Anno 1368 donata'. See O. Pujmanová, 'Studi sul culto della Madonna di Aracoeli e della Veronica nella Boemia tardomedievale', *Arte Cristiana*, n.s. LXXX, 1992, pp. 243–64, fig. 21.

15. After the dismantling of the shrine, the fragment was immured in the first cloister of the church. When the cloister was demolished in the late 19th century, the piece was removed to the Tabularium capitolino and then to Castel S. Angelo from where, in 1920, it was transferred to Palazzo di Venezia. It is currently kept in the loggia of the Palazzetto di S. Marco, an area of the museum which is presently closed to the public and used as a storeroom. See M. Carta and L. Russo, *Santa Maria in Aracoeli*, Rome 1988 (Le chiese di Roma illustrate, n.s. xxii), p. 224.



AFTER SANTANGELO, CATALOGO, 1954

2. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen (1372)



PHOTOGRAPH, AUTHOR

3. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail of the male donor



PHOTOGRAPH, AUTHOR

4. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail of the female donor

white (Carrara) marble showing three *oculi* with Gothic tracery patterns and two lateral figures kneeling in prayer, carved in deep relief (Fig. 2): on the left a middle-aged man in profile dressed in a buttoned secular costume with tight sleeves, his lips half-open, his forehead corrugated in a vibrant expression of intense devotion (Fig. 3); on the right (also in profile and on the same scale) a woman with smooth complexion and veiled head (Fig. 4). An inscription in Gothic characters along the top reads: 'H. OP. FEC. FL. FRACISC. DE FELICIB. AD HONORE. GLORIOSE ... M ... ANN ... NI. M.C.C.C.L.X.X.I.I.', i.e. 'Hoc opus fecit fieri Franciscus de Felicibus ad honorem gloriosae Virginis Mariae anno Domini MCCCCLXXII' ('this work was commissioned by Franciscus de Felicibus in honour of the glorious Virgin Mary in the year of our Lord 1372').¹⁶ That this *transenna* originally formed part of the icon shrine is not only suggested by the dedication to the Virgin, but attested by a document of 13 March 1476, recording that the noblewoman Angelozza, widow of Giovanni di Santo Beccaluva of the *rione* Campitelli, wished to be buried 'in the church of Aracoeli, in the chapel of the Virgin image painted by St Luke, which was commissioned by the late Cecchulus de Felicibus, ancestor of the testatrix'.¹⁷ In the Middle Ages Cecchulus (or Cecchus, Ceccus) was the most common abbreviation for Franciscus (still today Cecco is the usual abbreviation for Francesco); therefore it is clear that the screen formed part of the 'chapel' (*capella*) which had been built by Franciscus de Felicibus, i.e. Francesco Felici, to house the icon of the Virgin. The female figure in profile, gazing intently upwards, a powerful pendant to Francesco's portrait, must be his wife, Caterina.¹⁸

I. Location of the Icon Shrine

Around 1382, the anonymous Benedictine author of the *Memoriale de mirabilibus et indulgentiis quae in Urbe Romana existunt* reported that an image painted by St Luke was preserved in the church of Aracoeli, and that it was 'honourably placed in a new ciborium, entirely made of whitest sculpted marbles, at the entrance of the choir (*in ingressu chori*)'.¹⁹ The account of the English traveller William Brewyn, who visited Rome around 1470, affords further significant information: 'Also, beneath the lower (*inferius*) altar of the same church—on the western side—is the following inscription: "Beneath this tabernacle resteth the body of the

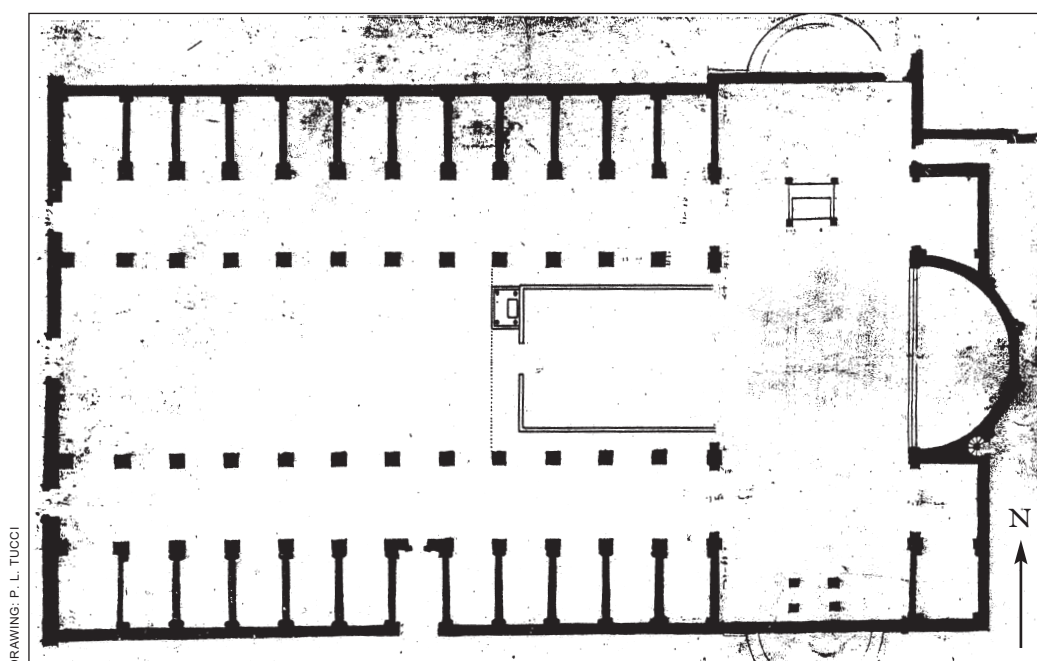
Preparations for the re-opening of the loggia and a new display of the marble collection (the Lapidario) are currently underway, led by the museum director, Giulia Barberini.

16. The fragment is published in F. Hermanin, *Il Palazzo di Venezia*, Rome 1948, p. 259; A. Santangelo, *Museo di Palazzo Venezia. Catalogo delle sculture*, Rome 1954, pp. 11–12. The nose of the female figure and the central portion of the central traceried *oculus* are products of restoration. The stucco central part of the rose was removed sometime after 1954 and before the most recent restoration campaign in 2000.

17. See Appendix, no. 13.

18. Along with her husband, she was buried at Aracoeli, where their anniversary Mass was celebrated: 'In eccl[esia] S. Marie de Araceli. Per ... Cecco de Felice. Mad[onna]. Caterena sua moglie'. P. Egidi, 'Libro di anniversari in volgare dell'Ospedale del Salvatore', *Archivio della Reale Società romana di storia patria*, xxxi, 1908, pp. 169–209 (201). The anniversary Mass was always said at the place of burial unless otherwise stated in the anniversary book; *ibid.*, p. 71.

19. See Appendix, no. 5.



5. Reconstruction drawing of the original setting of the Felici icon shrine at S. Maria in Aracoeli, imposed on the late 15th- or early 16th-century Spada plan (Vatican City, BAV MS Vat. lat. 11257, fol. 185^r). The dotted line indicates the western boundary of the remade floor

blessed Joan, sometime daughter of Franciscus de Felicibus”, and it is under the picture of the Virgin Mary’.²⁰ This blessed Joan was also mentioned by the Franciscan friar Mariano da Firenze, in his *Itinerarium urbis Romae* of 1518: he noted that in the same chapel where the image of the Virgin painted by St Luke was preserved, and beneath the icon, was buried Giovanna Felici, a noble Roman *Beata* of the Third Franciscan Order. He also remarked that the stone bearing the footprints of the angel who had appeared on Castel S. Angelo was inserted (‘insertus est’) in the choir wall under the icon (‘in pariete chori subter imagine iam dictae Virginis’).²¹ The *Memoriale* thus specifies that the ciborium housing the icon was set against the choir enclosure, near its entrance; Brewyn mentions the altar above which the icon was preserved as the lower altar of the church, on the western side; Fra’ Mariano adds that the stone with the footprints was inserted in the wall of the choir precinct, under the image of the Virgin.

The pavement of the Aracoeli nave is original up to west of the eighth pair of columns (counting from the façade), while it is remade up to the transept steps (Fig. 5).²² The alteration of the floor in the upper nave must have taken place

20. See Appendix, no. 11.

21. See Appendix, no. 15. The association of the icon and the stone with the angelic footprints had already been recorded, although less precisely (in terms of setting), by Brewyn and before him by two

sources we shall encounter below, the anonymous author of the *Descriptio lateranensis ecclesiae*, and Nikolaus Muffel from Nuremberg. See Appendix, nos 11, 4 and 10 respectively.

after the dismantling of the choir precinct (the *schola cantorum*) around the late 1550s or early 1560s, when, in a spirit of post-Tridentine reform, many church naves were cleared of such structures.²³ If, as attested by Fra' Mariano, the Felici chapel was accommodated against the choir enclosure and near the choir's entrance, it must have been set in the proximity of the eighth column, either on the left (north) or on the right (south) of the entrance. The presence of painted images of the Madonna with the Child on the third, fourth and sixth columns on the left, as well as an image of St Luke (supposedly the painter of the icon) on the fifth column on the same side (Fig. 6) favour a location of the shrine on the north side of the entrance (Fig. 5).²⁴



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

6. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, fifth column on the left (counting from the façade), image of St Luke

22. On the Aracoeli medieval pavement see D. F. Glass, *Studies on Cosmatesque Pavements*, Oxford 1980 (B.A.R. International series, LXXXII), pp. 107–09. On the removal of the *schola cantorum* in the Aracoeli upper nave see Casimiro da Roma (as in n. 6), p. 33. My reconstruction is imposed on the so-called Spada plan, a late 15th- or early 16th-century plan of Aracoeli included in one of the two volumes of architectural drawings preserved among Virgilio Spada's papers in the Vatican Library: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (henceforth BAV) MS Vat. Lat. 11257, fol. 185^r. My reconstruction drawing does not show the original width of the *schola* but only the extent of the remade pavement in the upper nave. This floor is original only in the area adjacent to the colonnades where medieval supplchral slabs (measuring about 70cm. in width) are set. The original choir enclosure must have been narrower than the area where the present pavement is, since two ambos flanked the *schola*.

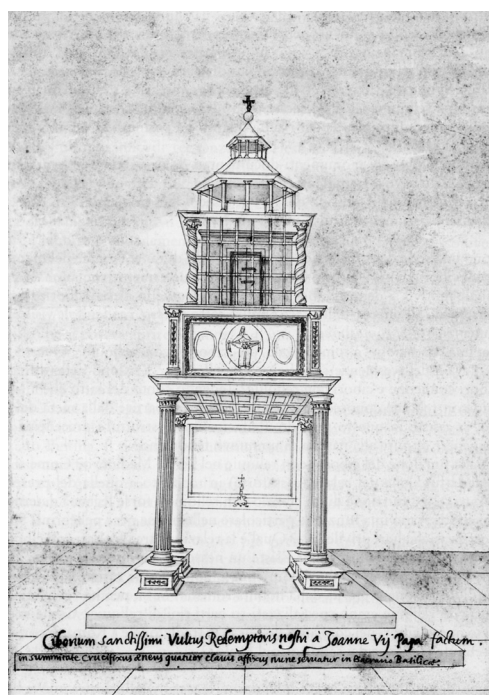
23. The almost systematic demolition of choir enclosures in Italian churches in the 1560s and 1570s does not seem to be related to specific liturgical necessity or function. See E. De Benedictis, 'The *Schola Cantorum* in Rome during the High Middle Ages', Ph.D. thesis, Bryn Mawr College 1983, repr. Ann Arbor 1985, pp. 149 and 167; D. Cooper, 'Franciscan Choir Enclosures and the Function of Double-Sided Altarpieces in Pre-Tridentine Umbria', this *Journal*, LXIV, 2001, pp. 1–54 (2–3).

24. The possible connection of these paintings with the icon tabernacle was first suggested by R. E. Malmstrom, 'S. Maria in Aracoeli at Rome', Ph.D. thesis, University of New York 1973, p. 126 and n. 283. These images date from the end of the 14th to the late 15th century. The seventh column on the north side is incorporated in a 17th-century wooden pulpit, therefore the possible presence of images cannot be ascertained. There are no images on the south colonnade.

II. Original Appearance of the Icon Shrine

We are informed by the *Memoriale* that the shrine was a ‘ciborium’ (a canopied structure resting on four columns), made entirely of ‘the whitest sculpted marble’, and by Brewyn that the icon was housed in the tabernacle superstructure, above the altar.²⁵ Niccolò della Tuccia, in his *Chronicle* entry for 1440, provides us with a significant detail: the presence of a half-figure of St Anthony among the sculptures adorning the shrine (Niccolò records that during a rain-storm on 21 July, lightning struck the crown of the icon of the Virgin, burning her face, and threw down the half-figure of St Anthony of Padua).²⁶ Fifteenth-century sources term the shrine a ‘tabernaculum’.²⁷

By assessing these pieces of information in the light of the typical features of medieval Roman icon shrines, and by associating them with unpublished sculpted elements that can be connected to the shrine, we can propose a hypothetical reconstruction (Fig. 9). The Felici chapel was an icon tabernacle, a type found elsewhere in Rome. At least six examples dating from the late twelfth to the fourteenth centuries are documented by written and/or visual evidence: SS. Bonifacio e Alessio, S. Maria in Portico, S. Maria Nova, S. Maria Maggiore, S. Maria del Popolo, and the tabernacle of the Veronica in Old St Peter’s (Fig. 7; the Veronica had a special status, being at once a relic and an image).²⁸ This type of ciborium for images was similar in its structure to the relic ciborium found in Rome and Lazio from the twelfth century. A comparison between the icon tabernacle in S. Maria Maggiore and the relic tabernacle in the same church,



7. Drawing showing the tabernacle of the Veronica in Old St Peter's. Archivio di S. Pietro, G. Grimaldi, *Album* (A64 Ter), fol. 30^r.

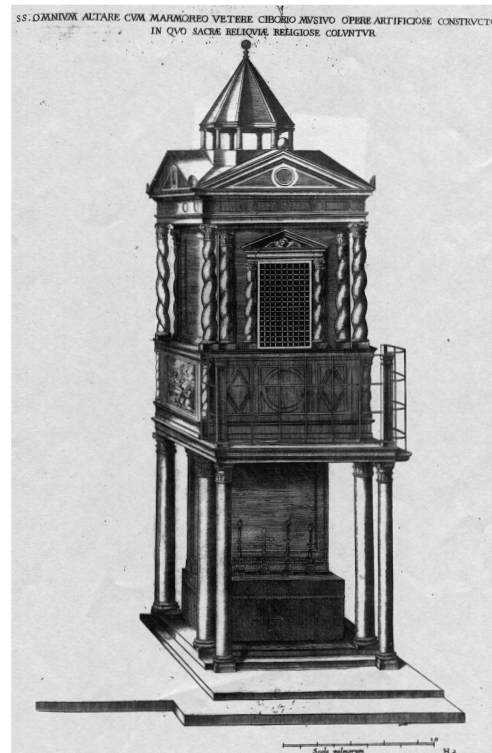
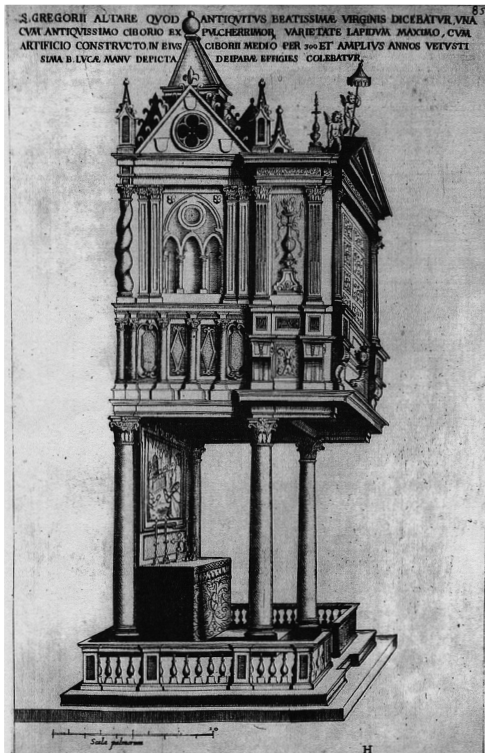
25. See Appendix, nos 5 and 11.

26. See Appendix, no. 7.

27. See Appendix, nos 6a-b and 8.

28. P. C. Claussen, 'Il tipo romano del ciborio con reliquie: questioni aperte sulla genesi e la funzione', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome. Historical Studies*, LIX, 2000, pp. 229–49 (242–43); C. Bolgia, 'Icon Shrines and their Visitors in Medieval Rome', in *Architecture and Pilgrimage 600–1600*

(conference proceedings, CRASSH, Cambridge July 2005), ed. G. Clarke, P. Davies, D. Howard and W. Pullan, in press; I discussed them also in a paper 'Icons in the Air: New Setting for the Sacred in Medieval Rome', presented at the Symposium *Locating the Medieval Object: Space, Place and Spectatorship*, organised by Beth Williamson, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bristol (Nov. 2005).



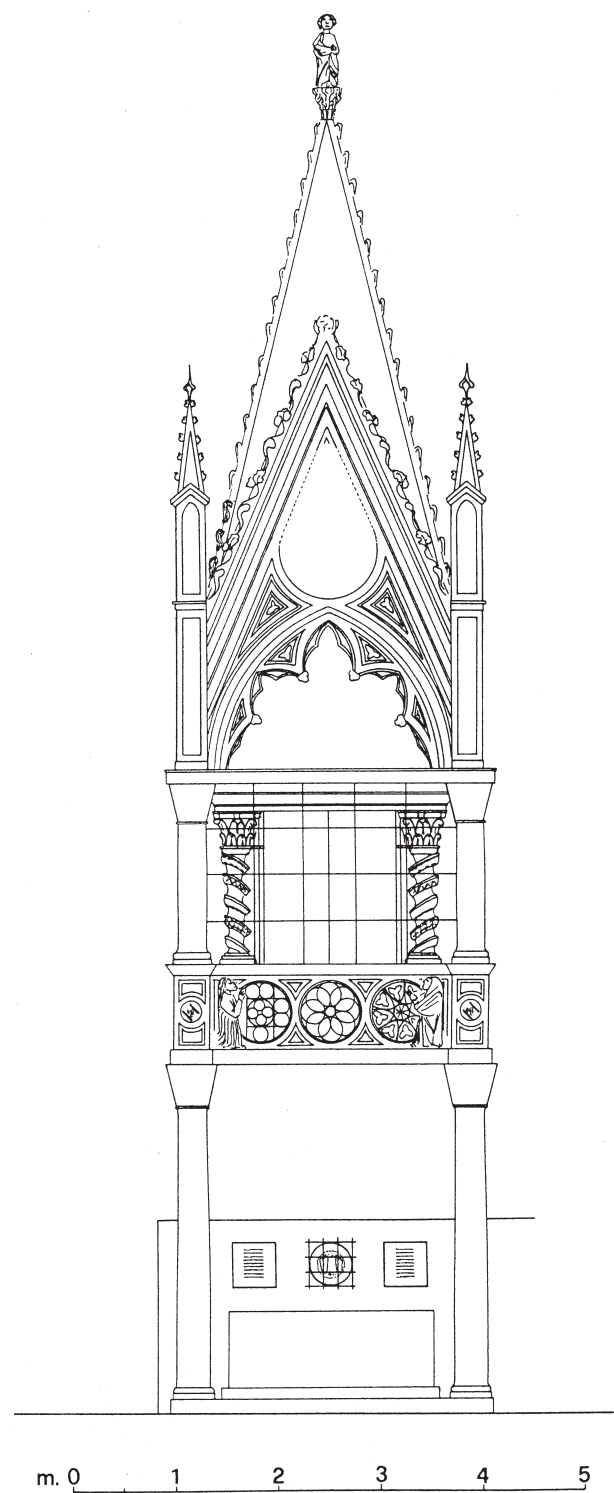
8. Engravings showing (left, fol. 85) the icon tabernacle and (right, fol. 87) the Capocci relic tabernacle formerly at S. Maria Maggiore. From P. De Angelis, *Basilicae S. Mariae Maioris de Urbe a Liberio Papa I usque ad Paulum V Pontifices Maximum descriptio et delineatio*, Rome 1621

both dismantled but known from seventeenth-century engravings (Fig. 8),²⁹ shows the similarity between the two types. Like the relic tabernacle, the icon tabernacle responded to the practical need of creating a structure that could guarantee protection for the holy image, while permitting its occasional public display; it was also a satisfactory solution in terms of access and devotional practice.³⁰ The diffusion of icon tabernacles in Rome in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries might be explained as a response to the rise in the cult of the Virgin Mary, which not only brought an increasing number of pilgrims, but also encouraged new liturgical practices, primarily the multiplication of Masses in honour of the Virgin.³¹

29. P. De Angelis, *Basilicae S. Mariae Maioris de Urbe a Liberio Papa I usque ad Paulum V Pontifices Maximum descriptio et delineatio*, Rome 1621, fols 85 and 87. Folio 85 shows De Angelis's reconstruction of the appearance of the icon shrine before 1613, when the image was moved to the Cappella Paolina. It is clear that the shrine had been considerably altered by 16th-century additions, of which the most visible is the wooden front (the so-called *custodia*). For a detailed discussion of the original tabernacle

see Wolf (as in n. 7), pp. 223–27; and for the Cinquecento interventions see B. Wisch, 'Keys to Success: Propriety and Promotion of Miraculous Images by Roman Confraternities', in *The Miraculous Image* (as in n. 13), pp. 161–84 (177–78).

30. Claussen (as in n. 28); Bolgia (as in n. 28). See also B. Cassidy, 'Orcagna's Tabernacle in Florence: Design and Function', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LV, 1992, pp. 180–211.



9. Reconstruction drawing of the Felici icon shrine

DRAWING: P. L. TUCCI



PHOTOGRAPH AFTER HEIDEMAN, 'ROMAN FOOTPRINTS', PL. 29, FIG. 1

10. Rome, Musei Capitolini, Sala delle Colombe, stone with footprints, formerly at Aracoeli

The Aracoeli icon, a beech panel measuring 82×52 cm., was supported above the altar in the tabernacle superstructure, and housed in a chamber, the receptacle or *cella* (see Fig. 9): no known example lacks this feature. The receptacle window was closed by two *sportelli* (small doors) inlaid with silver, one of which was still extant in the eighteenth century, when it was described by the then Guardian of the convent, Father Casimiro, as having two *specchi*: one represented the angel sheathing his sword on top of Hadrian's mausoleum, and the other St Gregory on the Aelian bridge, kneeling with clasped hands in an act of thanksgiving.³² Casimiro provides significant information on the artefact

itself, by stating that it should be ascribed to the fourteenth century because of the crudeness of the carving and the appearance of Castel S. Angelo, as yet unmodified by Boniface IX (1389–1404): this description shows a sensitivity to chronology and an observation of style which makes it trustworthy.³³ The dating

31. The literature on the rise of the cult of Mary is too vast to be cited *in extenso*; see notably D. B. Botte, 'La première fête mariale dans la liturgie romaine', *Ephemerides liturgicae*, XLVII, 1933, pp. 425–30; B. Capelle, 'La liturgie mariale en Occident', in *Maria: Études sur la sainte Vierge*, ed. H. du Manoir, 8 vols, Paris 1949–71, I, pp. 217–45; G. Frénaud, 'Le culte de Notre Dame dans l'ancienne liturgie latine', *ibid.*, VI, pp. 157–211; H. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (1st edn 1963–65), London 1985, pp. 210–346; R. Fulton, 'Quae est ista quae ascendit sicut aurora consurgens? The Song of Songs as the *Historia* for the Office of the Assumption', *Mediaeval Studies*, LX, 1998, pp. 55–122. On the feasts of the Virgin in the 13th-century Roman liturgy the best article is S. J. P. Van Dijk, 'Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thirteenth-Century Roman Liturgy', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XLVIII, 1955, pp. 450–56. For the architectural consequences of the change in the cult of the Virgin, see P. Draper, 'Seeing that it was Done in all the Noble Churches in England', in *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context. Studies in Honour of Peter Kidson*, ed. E. Fernie and P. Crossley, London and Ronceverte 1990, pp. 137–42 (140–41); this article discusses the consequences of the introduction of daily Lady Masses in England (which

seems to have determined a multiplication of Lady Chapels); similar research on Rome (from both liturgical and architectural points of view) is still to be done, but see the discussion in Bolgia (as in n. 28).

32. Casimiro da Roma (as in n. 6), p. 136: 'Oltre alla riferita memoria manoscritta, altra intagliata in argento serbasi parimente nella nostra Chiesa. Questa si è uno degli sportelli, dai quali nascondensi alla pubblica vista la venerabile immagine; e contiene due specchi, l'uno de' quali rappresenta la mole Adriana, con l'Angiolo nella cima, che ripone la spada nel fodero; e l'altro S. Gregorio, vestito degli abiti pontificali, ginocchione sul ponte con le mani giunte in atto di rendere grazie alla maestà del Signore'. As the word 'specchio' is ambiguous in this context, it remains uncertain whether the representations were on the two sides (external and internal) of the door, or both on the same side. As a comparable example for the latter, one might cite the *sportelli* of the silver cover of the *Acheropita* in the Sancta Sanctorum, where each door bears two episodes (one above the other).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 136: 'Questo lavoro stimasi fatto fino dal secolo XIV, e forse anche più addietro; sì per essere molto secco, e corrispondente alla rozzezza del tempo accennato; sì per mostrare la mentovata mole



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

11. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, north transept, marble block with the Felici coat of arms, re-used as a step



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

12. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Sacrament, marble block with the Felici coat of arms, re-used as a base for a statue

proposed by Casimiro for the *sportelli* agrees well with the date of the tabernacle (1372), confirming that the small door still in use in his time was one of the original two.

The stone with the angelic footprints was inserted in the choir wall beneath the icon and protected by an iron grating (Fra' Mariano); a tablet reporting the legends was set nearby (Brewyn)³⁴ (see Fig. 9). This circular angel's 'relic', 40 cm. in diameter, bearing two 12 cm.-long footprints, still survives in the Capitoline Museums (Fig. 10); in reality it was an ancient votive gift to the goddess Isis, as witnessed by the epithet 'FRVCTIFERAE' inscribed on it.³⁵ Since S. Maria Maggiore was also claiming to own the authentic image of the Virgin that had halted the plague in Gregory I's pontificate,³⁶ the evidence of the footprints doubtless served to strengthen the belief that it was really the Aracoeli image that had performed the miracle.

In the north transept of Aracoeli, a carved marble block is re-used as a step to a small storeroom (Fig. 11). This block, measuring 72.5 × 33 cm., displays a coat of arms within a roundel: a diagonal band including a *semivolo* (half-wing). These arms can be identified as those of the Felici family.³⁷ The left-hand short side of the piece shows traces of housing slots for a socket and a pin, while the surface of the long side reveals that a slab or screen (c. 8.5–8.7 cm. thick) was linked to it. Therefore we can deduce that the piece was originally mounted vertically and surmounted by another component. A piece identical in size, shape, relief (including the Felici arms), and with identical signs of original assemblage, can be found in the chapel to the south of the apse (the chapel of the Sacrament), re-used as the mount for an eighteenth-century statue (Fig. 12).³⁸ Two other identical small blocks are found in the Vittoriano (the monument to King Victor Emmanuel), built on the site of the Aracoeli monastery in the late nineteenth century. They are incorporated in the so-called *camino del Sacconi* (named after the architect of the Vittoriano), a bizarre pastiche of marble

sotto figura molto diversa da quella, che in oggi apparisce: ma come per l'appunto si vide persino al pontificato di Bonifazio IX, il quale ridussela in forma di rocca per lo tempo della guerra'.

34. See Appendix, nos 15 and 11.

35. J. E. L. Heideman, 'The Roman Footprints of the Archangel Michael: The Lost Shrine of S. Maria in Aracoeli and the Petition of Fioravante Martinelli', *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome*, n.s. xii, 1987, pp. 147–56; eadem, 'Orme romane ed il perduto reliquiario delle "pedate" dell'Arcangelo Michele', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma*, n.s., iv, 1990, pp. 17–26. The appellation *fructifera* is always found associated with the name of Isis in this type of votive offering with footmarks. In this case, only the epithet is still readable, while the remaining portion of the dedication has disappeared; perhaps it was erased when the piece was redeployed as a 'relic' of the Archangel's footprints.

36. The miracle is ascribed to the Marian icon of S. Maria Maggiore by one of the most authoritative texts of the second half of the 13th century: see Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea, vulgo historia lombardica dicta*, ed. J. G. T. Graesse, Osnabrück 1969, pp. 191–92 (ch. 46, 4).

37. The Felici coat of arms was described by Theodor Amayden (1586–1656); see *La storia delle famiglie romane*, ed. C. A. Bertini, 2 vols, Rome 1910–14, I, pp. 396–97. Arms in roundels appear in Rome from the late 13th century; see J. Gardner, 'The Capocci Tabernacle in S. Maria Maggiore', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, xxxviii, 1970, pp. 220–30 (223).

38. The statue was put in place in 1722; see Carta and Russo (as in n. 15), p. 163. The block is now hidden by the frame of the window behind which the sculpture is preserved, and can be seen only by opening the window.



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

13. Rome, Vittoriano, so-called *Camino del Sacconi*, upper part

sculptural fragments, vaguely recalling a fireplace (Fig. 13). Here the blocks are disposed vertically, as pillars (as they were in their original location), and one can see that the same coat of arms features on two adjacent sides of each one (Fig. 14). The connection of these small pillars to the Madonna tabernacle is highly pertinent because of the Felici *stemma* and because their mouldings are identical with those of the Felici screen. The four blocks share a height of 72.5 cm. with the screen (which is c. 8.7 cm. thick), making their association certain. This *transenna* (Fig. 2) has so far been interpreted as either the front of an altar or part of a balustrade surrounding a chapel,³⁹ but



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

14. Rome, Vittoriano, so-called *Camino del Sacconi*, marble block with the Felici coat of arms

39. Amayden (as in n. 37), I, p. 396, Casimiro da Roma (as in n. 6), p. 155, and J. E. L. Heideman, *The Cinquecento Chapel Decorations in S. Maria in Aracoeli in Rome*, Amsterdam 1982, p. 7 n. 6, interpreted it as an altar-front. The identification as a balustrade

component is found in P. Cellini, 'L'opera di Arnolfo all'Aracoeli', *Bollettino d'Arte*, s. 4, XLVII, 1962, pp. 180–95 (188 and 192 n. 2), who unconvincingly suggested that the tabernacle stood above the altar of Augustus (or 'ara coeli') in the north transept and



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

15. Vico nel Lazio, S. Michele, donor mosaic of the Capocci relic tabernacle from S. Maria Maggiore (1256)

the signs of assemblage on both its upper and lower sides rule out these hypotheses.⁴⁰ It is likely that the Felici screen formed the front of the support structure for the receptacle: the donors' upward glances, their hands joined in a gesture of concentrated surrender of body and soul, and the dedication to the Virgin are consistent with a very close relationship to the icon, set immediately above. Images of donors on the superstructure of a ciborium find a ready comparison in the dismembered relic tabernacle formerly in the nave of S. Maria Maggiore, dated 1256, where the patron Giacomo Capocci and his wife Vinia were represented (Fig. 15).⁴¹ If my reconstruction is correct, the four small blocks formed the corners of the support structure (Fig. 9).

At Aracoeli, in the fourth chapel from the west opening off the south aisle (the chapel of the Crucifix), fifteen loose sculpted fragments are preserved. All but one are at present hidden behind the chapel's altar, leaning one against the other, which makes it very difficult to examine them. Most of them are evidently

surmised that the tracery screen permitted the faithful to see the mosaic *confessio* behind it.

40. In particular, they prove that other elements were mounted on the screen, which also excludes the possibility that it could have formed the front of a balcony projecting from the tabernacle superstructure.

41. Gardner, 'Capocci Tabernacle' (as in n. 37), pp. 220–30. The iconographical solution of a kneeling patron in prayer is found in another screen of the 14th century, now in the Louvre; it was commissioned

by the Canon of Paris, Pierre de Fayel (†1344), and destined for the eastern part of the choir enclosure of Paris Cathedral (demolished in 1699). It bears the inscription: 'MAISTRE PIER / RE DE FAYEL / CHANOINE DE PARIS A DON / NE CC LIBRES PARISIS POVR AIDIER / A FAIRE LES HYSTOIRES ET POVR LES NO / VELLES VOIR / RIERES QUI SVNT / SVS LECVER DE CERS'. See *Musée du Louvre: Sculpture française, I, Moyen Âge*, ed. F. Baron, Paris 1996, p. 119. The image of the donor is surmounted by his coat of arms.



PHOTOGRAPH: MUSEI VATICANI, ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO

16. Rome, Lateran Basilica, relic tabernacle (1368–70)



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

17. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Crucifix, fragment of marble tympanum with the image of St Francis

components of a gabled structure. At least five of these pieces form part of two gables with three-quarter-length images of saints in low relief and elegant foliated borders. One of the two saints is unquestionably St Francis, showing the wound in his side through a prominent tear in his habit (Fig. 17). The other, a tonsured friar wearing a habit with a knotted rope and holding a bound book, is very probably St Anthony (Fig. 18): in the Trecento he was usually represented as a tonsured and beardless young man in mendicant attire, holding a closed book.⁴² Furthermore, the presence of a bust of St Anthony in the Aracoeli icon tabernacle is confirmed by Niccolò della Tuccia's account; even the poor state of preservation of this fragment in comparison with the others (his mouth is badly damaged; part of the chin and the nose are lost; see Fig. 22) seems to agree perfectly with Niccolò's report that the lightning which in 1440 struck the crown of the Virgin icon also threw down a half-figure of St Anthony.

The stylistic resemblance between these reliefs and those of Francesco and Caterina is very striking. One can compare, for instance, the folds of the drapery of Francesco's tunic (Fig. 19) with those of St Anthony's habit (Fig. 20): the two

42. L. Marri Martini, 'L'iconografia antoniana e gli artisti senesi', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, II, 1931, pp. 81–100; G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Saints in Italian Art, I), Florence 1952, cols 77–88; and *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Saints in Italian Art, II), Florence 1965, cols 103–15; idem and

F. Bisogni, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy* (Saints in Italian Art, III), Florence 1978, cols 73–77; and *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy* (Saints in Italian Art, IV), Florence 1985, cols 88–92; C. Semenzato, *Sant'Antonio in settecentocinquanti anni di storia dell'arte*, Padua 1985.

PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR



18. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Crucifix, fragment of marble tympanum with the image of a tonsured friar (presumably St Antony)

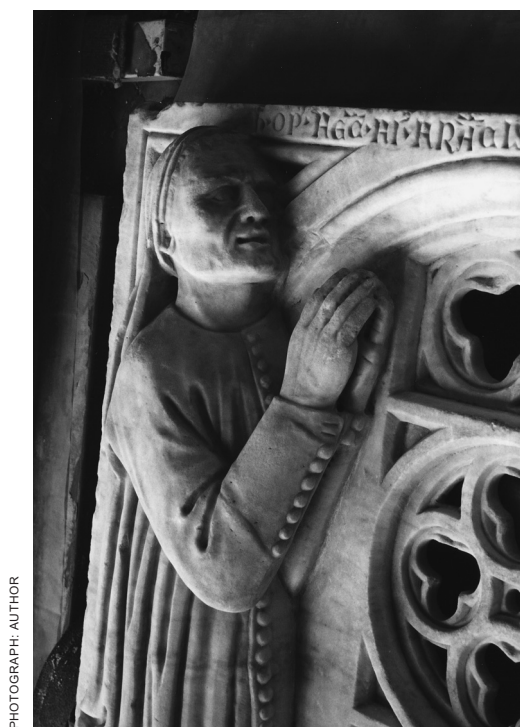


19. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail: Francesco Felici's garb



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

20. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Crucifix, fragment of marble tympanum with the image of a tonsured friar, detail



21. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail of the head of Francesco Felici



22. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Crucifix, Fragment of marble tympanum with the image of a tonsured friar, detail of the head

deep depressions at the level of the elbow, with their flat beds and rounded terminations, are identical in both the donor figure and St Anthony, and so are the rendering of the eyes, the mouth, and the expressive lines to either side of the nostrils (Figs 21–22). A comparison with the head of Caterina is also telling (Fig. 23). There is no doubt that the fragments now in the chapel of the Crucifix and the Felici screen are by the same hand, and it is very likely that they belonged to the same monument. The presence of St Francis and St Anthony in the iconographical programme of an icon shrine at Aracoeli, one of the headquarters of the Franciscan Order since the mid-thirteenth century, is unsurprising.⁴³ Unfortunately, lack of written documentation makes it impossible to ascertain the respective contributions of the lay donor and of the Aracoeli friars in the formulation of the sculpted scheme.⁴⁴

The Felici screen measures 2.35 m. in width, while the gables originally measured 1.65 m. at their base (Fig. 25): it seems plausible that they were the side gables of the tabernacle. The front *tympanum* probably showed a low-relief

43. On Franciscan Aracoeli see Bolgia (as in n. *), pp. 70–222.

44. A well-documented discussion of the different parties involved in the elaboration of design and

iconography of significant commissions in northern-Italian Franciscan buildings is found in L. Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy*, Cambridge 2004.



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

23. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail of the head of Caterina Felici



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

24. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli, Chapel of the Crucifix, crocket marble fragments

image of the Virgin, perhaps in a nimbus of light, with the infant Christ in her arms, in accordance with the Aracoeli legend of the vision of Augustus.⁴⁵ If the screen formed the front of the ciborium superstructure and the blocks with coats of arms (measuring 0.33 m. in width) formed its corners, the dimensions of the area occupied by the chapel would have been approximately 3 m. ($= 2.35 + 0.33 + 0.33$) by 2.3 m. ($= 1.65 + 0.33 + 0.33$).

Other fragments in the chapel of the Crucifix include three small portions of crocket motifs (Fig. 24). These probably decorated the pyramidal apex of the tabernacle, as suggested by a comparison with the Lateran relic ciborium, commissioned by Pope Urban V only a few years earlier, between 1368 and 1370, when he had temporarily returned the papacy to Rome (Fig. 16).⁴⁶

45. On the legend and its iconography see C. Hülsen, 'The Legend of Aracoeli', *Journal of the British and American Archaeological Society of Rome*, IV, 1907, pp. 45–47; B. Pesci, 'La leggenda di Augusto e le origini della chiesa di S. Maria in Aracoeli', in *Incoronazione della Madonna d'Aracoeli*, Rome 1938, pp. 18–33; P. Verdier, 'La vision de l'Ara Coeli au monastère d'Emmaus à Prague', in *Études d'art médiéval offertes à Louis Grodecki*, Paris 1981, pp. 259–65;

idem, 'La naissance à Rome de la vision de l'Ara Coeli: Un aspect de l'utopie de la Paix Perpétuelle à travers un thème iconographique', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge et temps modernes*, XCIV, 1982, pp. 85–119.

46. On the Lateran tabernacle see A. Monferini, 'Il ciborio lateranense e Giovanni di Stefano', *Commentari*, XIII, 1962, pp. 182–212. On Urban V in Rome, J. Osborne, 'Lost Roman Images of Pope

A statuette of white marble (Figs 26–28) is preserved in the small courtyard of the Aracoeli convent. It is 70 cm. high and represents a pensive God the Father blessing with his right hand and holding a globe with the other.⁴⁷ No possible original location for the statuette has been suggested, although a dating in the last quarter of the fourteenth century has been proposed by comparison with Simone Talenti's Apostle in the northern tribune of Florence Cathedral (dated 1377).⁴⁸ However, a better stylistic match can be drawn with the low-relief gables (Figs 17–18) and the Felici donor screen (Figs 3–4, 19, 21, 23, 29). In particular, the rendering of the drapery folds and of the hands links the statuette to the same workshop as these pieces.⁴⁹ Even the unusual detail of the buttons in the tunic of God the Father (Fig. 27) finds a significant parallel in Francesco Felici's civic garb (Fig. 21). It is highly likely that the original support for the statuette was a foliated element now re-used upside-down as a support for a modern Crucifix on the altar of the chapel of the Sacrament (Figs 30–31). In fact the present base of this fragment shows an approximately semicircular tracing of 17 × 16 cm. (Fig. 32), which corresponds exactly to the size of the statuette at its base.⁵⁰ It is highly probable that this figure, borne by the foliated element, was located on top of the tabernacle (Fig. 9): it is carved in the round, and was meant to be seen



DRAWING: P. L. TUCCI

25. Reconstruction drawing of the tympanum with tonsured friar

Urban V (1362–1370)', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LVII, 1991, pp. 20–32; C. Bolgia, 'Cassiano's Popes Rediscovered: Urban V in Rome', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, LXV, 2002, pp. 562–74. On the presence of the apostolic heads at the Lateran see C. Bolgia, 'Celestine III's Relic Policy and Artistic Patronage in Rome', in *Pope Celestine III (1191–1198): A Diplomat on the Papal Throne*, ed. J. Doran and D. Smith, in press.

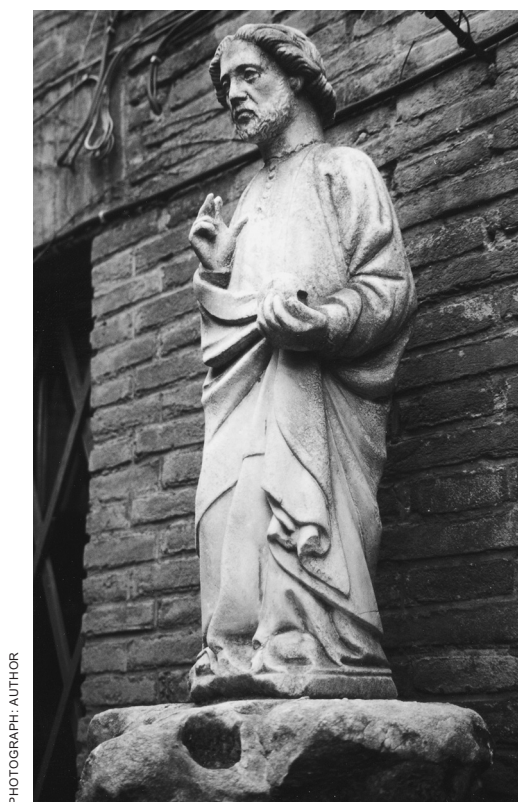
47. *Die Mittelalterlichen Grabmäler in Rom und Latium vom 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, vol. II, *Die*

Monumentalgräber, ed. J. Garms, A. Sommerlechner and W. Telesko, Vienna 1994, pp. 78–79.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–80. The Aracoeli statuette measures 70 × 17 × 16 cm.

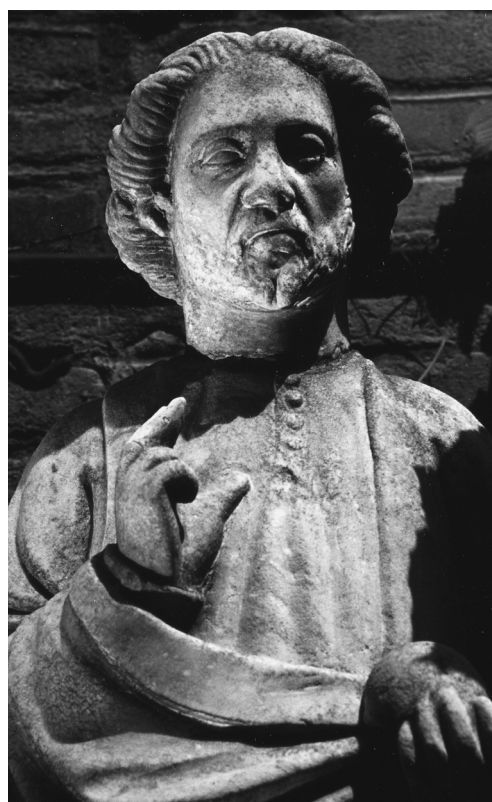
49. The forefinger and the middle finger of the blessing hand are modern.

50. It also shows a housing slot for a pin measuring 2 × 2 cm. On the other side there is a housing slot for a bigger pin measuring 9 × 4.5 cm.



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

26. Rome, Convent of S. Maria in Aracoeli, small courtyard, marble statuette of God the Father



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

27. Rome, Convent of S. Maria in Aracoeli, small courtyard, marble statuette of God the Father, detail of the head



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

28. Rome, Convent of S. Maria in Aracoeli, small courtyard, marble statuette of God the Father, detail of the tunic

from beneath and from a distance, as revealed by the optical distortions (Fig. 33) and the rough, almost unfinished, carving of the beard (Fig. 27).

Other fragments incorporated in the *Sacconi* ensemble might be associated with the shrine. Two spiral semi-colonnettes (Figs 13, 34), measuring c. 1.5 m. in height, can be ascribed stylistically to the second half of the fourteenth century.⁵¹ Their shafts show

51. Cellini (as in n. 39), pp. 188 and 192 n. 2, associated these colonnettes with the Felici screen. His (untenable) identification of both screen and colonnettes as part of a balustrade surrounding the tabernacle is accepted by Carta and Russo (as in n. 15), p. 224.

PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR



29. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail: garb of Caterina Felici

PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR



30. Rome, Chapel of the Sacrament, foliated fragment, side

PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR



31. Rome, Chapel of the Sacrament, foliated fragment, front



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

32. Rome, Chapel of the Sacrament, foliated fragment, base

a peculiar pattern, alternating a moulding with dentils and one with prominent fleurons, formed by four trefoiled leaves growing from a central diamond-pointed square. Exactly the same motif is found in a small spiral shaft attached to a half-figure of a deacon, now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana and generally ascribed to a Tuscan artist (Figs 35–36). The pattern of the spiral of this colonnette has been compared by Garms with that of spiral colonnettes of Lombard workmanship dating from the second half of the fourteenth century.⁵² Although this dating can be accepted, the Lombard examples only vaguely recall the design of the Vatican piece, the pattern and style of which are identical to those of the shafts mounted in the *camino del Sacconi*. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence regarding the date and provenance of the Vatican colonnette does not help in dating the Vittoriano fragments. Since the colonnettes in the Vittoriano are not carved in the round, but are semicolumns against pilasters (Fig. 34), it might be suggested that they formed part of the uppermost compartment, perhaps marking its corners (Fig. 9), as was often the case in this type of ciborium (Fig. 8).⁵³ The Gothic pinnacle

52. For the colonnette in the Pinacoteca Vaticana see *Die Mittelalterlichen Grabmäler*, vol. II (as in n. 47), pp. 176–77, ascribing the piece to the second quarter of the 14th century on the basis of the style of the figure. The design of the colonnette and the parallel with Lombard sculpture of the late Trecento

(in particular an altar polyptych in S. Eustorgio, Milan) is also discussed. Illustrations of comparative examples can be found in C. Baroni, *Scultura gotica lombarda*, Milan 1944, figs 264–66.

53. See, for instance, the Capocci tabernacle (Fig. 8, on the right).

PHOTOGRAPH: GARDNER, UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION



33. Rome, Convent of S. Maria in Aracoeli, small courtyard, marble statuette of God the Father



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

34. Rome, Vittoriano, so-called *Camino del Sacconi*, spiral semi-colonnette

crowning the left Felici block in the *camino del Sacconi* (Fig. 13) might also have belonged to the tabernacle. Since its high location allows neither direct analysis nor measurement, however, this suggestion must remain conjectural.

Fra' Mariano's statement, according to which the stone with the angelic footprints was inserted in the choir wall beneath the icon, seems to indicate that the ciborium did not have a closed back and that its altar was located against the choir screen, as is hypothesised in my reconstruction (Fig. 9).⁵⁴ This is different from the Roman icon tabernacles documented in drawings or engravings—the Veronica shrine in Old St Peter's (Fig. 7), the Virgin shrines in S. Maria Maggiore (Fig. 8) and S. Maria in Portico—which are shown with closed backs. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the backs are original, since from the visual evidence it appears that all the lower parts of these shrines have been reconstructed.

54. See Appendix, no. 15. Altars attached to the walls of precincts are attested for 14th-century chapels in both S. Maria Novella and S. Croce in Florence (in which cases the altars were located against the walls of the *tramezzo* according to the reconstruction in M. Hall, 'The *Tramezzo* in S.

Croce, Florence, Reconstructed', *Art Bulletin*, LVI, 1974, pp. 325–41; E. Giurescu, 'Trecento Family chapels in Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce: Architecture, Patronage, and Competition', Ph.D. thesis, University of New York 1997, pp. 197–205).



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

35. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana, spiral deacon-colonnnette of unknown provenance, side



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

36. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana, spiral deacon-colonnnette of unknown provenance, front

Knowledge of the setting of the icon prior to the construction of the Felici tabernacle would help shed light on the novelties of the Felici commission. Presumably, the miraculous panel was already displayed in the church in 1257, when it is said to have caused a novice praying in front of it to levitate.⁵⁵ This seems to suggest that the icon was supported considerably above the altar and was already housed in a tabernacle of comparable type, provided with a superstructure for the image. Cola di Rienzo's letter to the Archbishop of Prague (1350) proves that, before the construction of the Felici chapel, the icon was located in the church and already associated with an altar dedicated to the Virgin.⁵⁶ This could have been either the high altar, or the so-called 'ara coeli' (the high altar of the previous Benedictine church on the site, preserved by the Franciscans and still extant in the present northern transept),⁵⁷ or an altar in the nave, perhaps in the same location as the present one. The presence of the prestigious icon in the church and the intense devotion for it before the construction of the tabernacle in 1372 is confirmed by the will of the noblewoman Paola Savelli da Ripa, rogated

55. See Appendix, no. 1.

56. See Appendix, no. 3.

57. On the 'ara coeli', an ensemble formed by a Cosmatesque *confessio* and a porphyry sarcophagus

surmounted by a ciborium, see Bolgia (as in n. ★), pp. 54–69.

at Aracoeli in 1364: she left to the image of the Virgin at Aracoeli her precious sapphire ring worth twenty florins, and also twenty florins to the Franciscans there for Masses.⁵⁸

III. *An Attribution to Giovanni di Stefano*

The best comparison for the sculptures of the Felici tabernacle is found in the ciborium built in the Lateran basilica between 1368 and 1370 by Pope Urban V (Fig. 16), to house two of the most revered and venerated relics of the Roman Church: the heads of St Peter and St Paul.⁵⁹ The design of this tabernacle is attributed to the Sienese architect and sculptor Giovanni di Stefano, described in a papal letter of December 1369 as ‘architector per nos ad opus et fabricam ecclesiae Sancti Johannis Laterani deputatus’.⁶⁰ The sculptures of the Lateran tabernacle that have been ascribed to Giovanni are the statuette of St Peter in one of the Gothic aedicules in the corners of the supporting structure for the relic-chamber (Fig. 37) and the head of God the Father in the vault (Fig. 38); the other figures are weaker and have been attributed to assistants.⁶¹

On the basis of both documentary and stylistic evidence, the head of the Redeemer in the rose window of Orvieto Cathedral has also been assigned to Giovanni di Stefano (Fig. 39).⁶² Some distinctive features in Giovanni’s work find cogent parallels in the sculptures that formed part of the Felici tabernacle: compare the rendering of the eyes of the Orvieto head (Fig. 39) and of the Lateran St



PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER CARLI, *SCULTORI SENESI*, 1980

37. Rome, Lateran Basilica, relic tabernacle, St Peter

58. BAV, Fondo S. Angelo in Pescheria, vol. 1, 2, fols 68^v–70^r, recorded in Brentano (as in n. 1), p. 281 n. 47. In order to finance her bequests, Donna Paola instructed her executors (including the Prior of Santa Maria Nova, the Abbot of San Gregorio, the Guardian of Aracoeli and the Guardian of the Society of the *Raccomandati*) to sell her wardrobe.

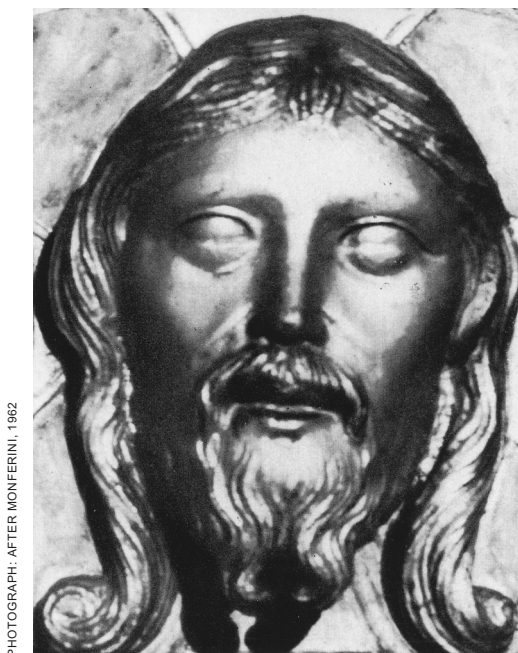
59. See n. 46 above. Santangelo (as in n. 16), pp. 11–12, drew a parallel between the architectural structure of the *transenna* and Pisan-Sienese works of art, but he also tentatively associated the screen with

the activity of Giovanni di Stefano in the Lateran. J. Garms, ‘Bemerkungen zur römischen Skulptur im Spätmittelalter’, *Römische historische Mitteilungen*, xxi, 1979, pp. 145–59 (151), compared the screen with the work of Giovanni di Stefano, in the Lateran ciborium and the Cathedral of Orvieto.

60. Cited after G. Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell’arte senese*, 3 vols, Siena 1854–56, 1, p. 269.

61. Monferini (as in n. 46), pp. 203–8.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 206–7; E. Carli, *Gli scultori senesi*, Milan 1980, pp. 26–27.



PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER MONFERRINI, 1962

38. Rome, Lateran Basilica, relic tabernacle, head of God the Father in the vault



PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER MONFERRINI, 1962

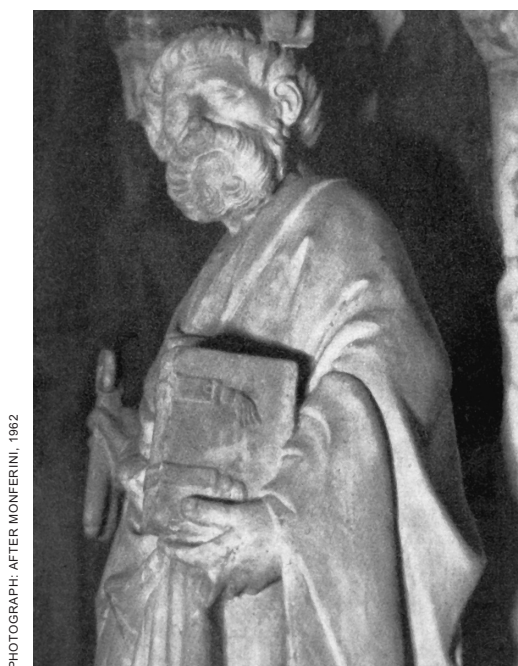
39. Orvieto, Cathedral, rose window, head of the Saviour

Peter (Fig. 40) with that of the Aracoeli God the Father (Fig. 27). The junctions between the eyebrow and nose are also identical, as well as the expressive lines beside the nostrils.⁶³ The same details are found in the head of Caterina Felici (whose nose has been remade in stucco) (Fig. 23) and the tonsured friar (although his face is damaged and part of the nose, lips and chin are missing) (Fig. 22). Also the left ear of the friar is very similar to the left ear of St Peter (Fig. 40). The realistic hand of the latter, large, with marked nails and visible veins, compares well with Francesco Felici's hands (Fig. 21).

If we analyse the draperies, the comparisons become even more convincing. The folds of St Peter's tunic at elbow level are quite peculiar: large and deep, with a round termination (Fig. 40). Identical folds can be seen in the figures of the tonsured friar (Fig. 20) and Francesco Felici, in the very same position (Figs 19, 21). The large, flat folds of St Peter's mantle, crossing his chest horizontally (Fig. 37), bear a close resemblance to the folds of the cloak disposed over the right arm of the Aracoeli statuette (Fig. 33). The layered overlapping folds of drapery falling from St Peter's left hand (Fig. 37) resemble the treatment of the mantle of the Aracoeli God the Father (Figs 28, 33). Even the organic and naturalistic

63. The head of the Aracoeli God the Father is less polished than the Orvieto and Lateran heads, but this is probably because of its original location, very high up, on top of the tabernacle (which did not

require a high level of polishing), as well as the fact that it has been exposed to the weather in the small courtyard of the Aracoeli convent.



PHOTOGRAPH: AFTER MONFERINI, 1962

40. Rome, Lateran Basilica, relic tabernacle,
St Peter, detail

PHOTOGRAPH: MUSEI VATICANI, ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO

41. Rome, Lateran Basilica, relic tabernacle,
foliated finial

foliage of the Aracoeli fragments (Fig. 24) is very similar to the foliated motif decorating the finials (Fig. 41) and the pyramidal apex of the Lateran tabernacle. It is very probable that the Aracoeli ciborium was by the hand of the same master or of a skilful artist from the same workshop.

This attribution, if correct, enables us to extend our knowledge of the activity of Giovanni di Stefano. Until now, the only surviving sculptures attributed to the artist were St Peter and the head of God the Father in the Lateran ciborium, and the head of Christ in Orvieto Cathedral (Figs 37–40).⁶⁴ As for Giovanni's career, we know that in 1366 he was executing marble columns and capitals for the hospital church of S. Maria della Scala in Siena; in 1369 he was in Rome, working at the Lateran; in 1373 he is documented as responsible for making the drawings for the rose of Orvieto Cathedral, where he is recorded as *caput magister* between 1373 and 1378.⁶⁵ It now seems likely that he did not leave Rome after

64. Despite the high quality of this work, Giovanni di Stefano is a thoroughly overlooked artist: he is listed in U. Thieme and F. Becker *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, XIV, p. 144, but does not appear in any of the major encyclopedias on Italian artists or medieval art. No Giovanni di Stefano entry can be found in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* or in the *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*; J. T. Paoletti, 'Giovanni di Stefano', in *the Dictionary of Art*, London 1996, p. 717, discusses the better known homony-

mous artist, Sassetta's son (c. 1446–before 1506), but includes in the bibliography Monferini's article (as in n. 46) on 'our' Giovanni di Stefano.

65. Milanesi (as in n. 60), I, pp. 269, 272–74, and III, p. 279; L. Fumi, *Il Duomo di Orvieto*, Rome 1891, pp. 31 and 479–82; Monferini (as in n. 46); Carli (as in n. 62), p. 26. The support structure for the relic chamber in the Lateran ciborium has been partly reconstructed: the paintings decorating it date in fact to the end of the 15th century. See Monferini,



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

42. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana, spiral deacon-colonnnette



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

43. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana, spiral deacon-colonnnette, detail of the head

the completion of the Lateran tabernacle, but was hired by Francesco Felici for the Aracoeli icon ciborium, apparently inspired by the papal shrine for the heads of Sts Peter and Paul.

Before his last documented work, the wooden stalls for the Cathedral of Ancona, executed in 1391 (now destroyed), Giovanni di Stefano seems to have been in Rome again, to build a chapel in Old St Peter's, as revealed by a letter of 1386.⁶⁶ This important piece of information prompts a tantalising question: could the deacon-colonnnette now in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Figs 35–36, 42), whose spiral pattern is identical to the *camino del Sacconi* colonnettes (Fig. 34), be associated with Giovanni di Stefano's activity for the chapel in Old St Peter's? In the catalogue of the Pinacoteca Vaticana the colonnette is recorded as 'provenance unknown, Old St Peter's?' with no further information.⁶⁷ The rendering of the eye and ear of the deacon saint (Fig. 43) resembles that of the Lateran St Peter (Figs 37, 40) and the tonsured friar of the Aracoeli gable (Fig. 22). There is an

ibid., p. 211. It is possible that they replace marble screens, which would make the parallel with the Felici ciborium even more striking.

66. A. Gianandrea, *Di Maestro Giovanni di Stefano da Siena, architetto, scultore e intagliatore del secolo XIV e di una sua ignota opera in Ancona*, Florence 1889. The 1386 letter is published by Fumi (as in n. 65),

p. 482: 'pro quadam capella in basilica principis apostolorum de Urbe fienda'.

67. *La Pinacoteca Vaticana: Catalogo-guida*, ed. C. Pietrangeli, A. M. de Strobil and F. Mancinelli, Vatican City 1993, p. 19, no. 81. The dimensions of the colonnette are 1.03 × 0.27 m.



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

44. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana, spiral deacon-colonnnette, detail of the right arm



PHOTOGRAPH: AUTHOR

45. Rome, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Loggia, marble screen, detail of Caterina Felici

even more telling detail: to make the figure of the Aracoeli friar more expressive, the sculptor has drilled a dot in the centre of the cheeks (Fig. 22). A similar feature is found in the face of Caterina Felici, where the dot appears in the centre of the chin, immediately below her lower lip (Fig. 23). The Aracoeli God the Father shows a drill dot in an identical position (Fig. 27). The same peculiar device appears in the Vatican cleric, below the lower lip (Fig. 43). This figure also exhibits the same deep round-ended folds at the level of the elbow (Fig. 44) as the figures of St Anthony (Fig. 20), Francesco Felici (Fig. 21) and the Lateran St Peter (Fig. 40)—apparently another distinctive feature of Giovanni di Stefano's work. The large, 'peasant' hands common to both St Peter (Figs 37, 40) and Francesco Felici (Fig. 21) can be recognised in the Vatican figure (Fig. 44). The way in which the drapery adheres to the advancing right leg (Fig. 42) recalls the treatment of drapery in the Aracoeli God the Father (Fig. 28). Also, the execution of both the vertical fold on the sleeve of the deacon and the vertical folds of his tunic (Fig. 35) is almost identical to that of the drapery folds around the tonsured friar's neck (Fig. 22), on St Francis's habit (Fig. 17) and on Francesco Felici's garb (Fig. 19). The only difference is that the Vatican fragment seems to be from a more accomplished hand, and the result is more refined. If Giovanni di Stefano was indeed the author of the Vatican colonnette, however, then he sculpted it

around 1386, that is about fifteen years after the Felici tabernacle was built. The work would therefore date from a more mature stage of the artist's career.

Giovanni di Stefano's design for the Lateran tabernacle must have been very successful: it became an influential model, which was adopted not only in the icon shrine of Aracoeli, but also in the shrine of St Elzéar de Sabran in the Church of the Friars Minor at Apt, commissioned 'ad instar Romani S. Joannis in Laterano' by Urban V's brother, Cardinal Anglic de Grimoard, a few years later.⁶⁸ Evidently, then, the temporary return of the Pope to Italy had significant consequences not only for the artistic production of Rome, but as far as southern France.

IV. *The Donor, his Family and the Functions of the Chapel*

Francesco Felici, the man responsible for commissioning this significant and elaborate monument to house one of the most venerated Roman images, was a powerful and well-off figure. He was a prominent Roman notary of the *rione* Campitelli, one of the eighteen men who drew up the Roman civic Statutes of 1363.⁶⁹

Notaries played a considerable rôle in fourteenth-century municipal life: they were literate (*boni gramatici*) and their notarial activity was usually part-time, compatible with trade, medicine, inn-keeping and even with several crafts; a number of them were entrepreneurs, others were involved with the business of money, acting as merchant-bankers proper.⁷⁰ Many notaries became politicians, chroniclers, scholars and poets (men such as Dino Compagni, Francesco da Barberino, Coluccio Salutati, Salimbene de Adam; Petrarch's father was a notary and he himself was pushed in that direction in his youth).⁷¹ The status and power of notaries in Trecento Rome was higher than in any other medieval city in the peninsula: they were highly reputed as repositories and distributors of legally binding social and economic contracts.⁷² The notary was the keeper of 'the truth, so that it is not altered by being forgotten', according to the Statutes of 1363.⁷³ More than a thousand notaries are known to have lived and worked in Rome in the fourteenth century; the best among them occupied key-offices in the

68. This comes from Constantin Suysken's *Life of the saint in Acta Sanctorum Septembris*, VII, Antwerp 1760, p. 570. This monument is now lost, but several statuettes, the work of a local sculptor, survive, and the similarity to the Lateran tabernacle is documented by 17th-century descriptions; see F. Baron, 'Le mausolée de Saint Elzéar de Sabran à Apt', *Bulletin Monumental*, CXXXVI, 1978, pp. 267–83 (277–78).

69. The Statutes are signed by 'Cecchus de Felicibus notarius de dicta regione [Campitelli]': *Statuti della città di Roma*, ed. C. Re, Rome 1880, pp. 1–2. See also I. Lori Sanfilippo, *La Roma dei Romani: Arti, mestieri e professioni nella Roma del Trecento* (Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, Nuovi

Studi Storici, LVII) Rome 2001, p. 82. The elite patronymic form of the surname, 'de Felicibus', is used in both this signature and the inscription on the Aracoeli icon tabernacle, perhaps an indication of Francesco's aspirations.

70. D. Waley, *The Italian City-Republics*, Verona 1969, p. 29.

71. A. Collins, *Greater than Emperor: Cola di Rienzo (ca. 1313–54) and the World of Fourteenth-Century Rome*, Ann Arbor 2002, p. 204.

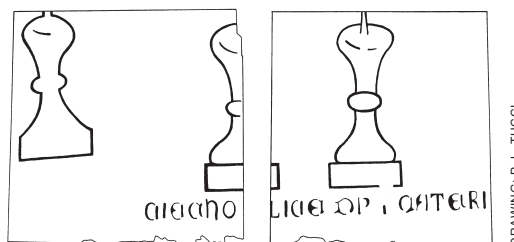
72. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

73. *Statuti* (as in n. 69), pp. 74–75; Collins (as in n. 71), p. 205.

Commune—Conservators, diplomats, financial administrators, judges—and were often vested with a political rôle.⁷⁴ The most famous case is probably that of Cola di Rienzo.

Aracoeli, located on the Capitoline hill, in the *rione* Campitelli, had been the Felici family burial church at least as early as c. 1300, when Luciana Felici was laid to rest there.⁷⁵ It was also the church of the notaries: the elections of the *collegium notariorum* were held in the first cloister of Aracoeli, only a few metres from the Senatorial Palace, the heart of Roman communal life.⁷⁶ Every year, on the feast of St Luke, Mass was celebrated at the church in the presence of the Palatine judges, the doctors of the city and all the procurators and notaries of Rome:⁷⁷ none of the peers of Francesco Felici could ignore his lavish commission, prominently displaying his portrait and the family coats of arms, nor remain impervious to his wealth and munificence.

Francesco Felici died before 1394 and was buried at Aracoeli.⁷⁸ His wife Caterina was buried in the church too.⁷⁹ Two fragments of a marble slab have survived at Aracoeli, re-used in the nave pavement, in the area between the eighth and ninth column on the north side—exactly where, as suggested above, the Felici chapel once stood. One of the fragments shows a portion of inscription in Gothic characters reading ‘CIECHO’, the other shows another segment of the same inscription reading ‘LICE DN... CATERI’ (Fig. 46).⁸⁰ When reconstructed, the inscription, surmounted by three candelabra, reads: ‘Ciecho Felice Domina Caterina’. The two fragments may have formerly



46. Reconstruction drawing of the Felici marble slab at S. Maria in Aracoeli

DRAWING: P. L. TUCCI

74. Collins (as in n. 71), p. 208; Lori Sanfilippo (as in n. 69), p. 458.

75. Her sepulchral slab still survives in the church, set in the floor near the westernmost pier of the north colonnade, though it is not certain whether this was its original location. The epitaph reads: ‘+ HVMILIS ET PLANA TV/MVLO IACET H[IC] LVCIANA / PRVDE[N]S SE[N]SATA MORV[M] SPECTAMINE GRATA / LEX CO[N]IVGALIS THEBAL/DVM IV[N]XERAT ISTI / STIRPSQ[VE] PARE[N]TAL[IS] FELI/CES HA[N]C TIBI SISTI FAC D[EV]S IN CEL[O] QVIA VIXIT ME[N]TE FIDEL[I] / AM[EN]’. V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d’altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri*, 14 vols, Rome 1869–84, I, p. 447, no. 408. Ascribed to c. 1300, it is considered to be the earliest preserved sepulchral slab of a woman in Rome. See *Die Mittelalterlichen Grabmäler in Rom und Latium vom 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, I, *Die Grabplatten und Tafeln*, ed. J. Garms, R. Juffinger and B. Ward-Perkins, Rome and Vienna 1981, pp. 112–65, at pp. 117–18. The coat of arms, originally probably of mosaic, is lost.

76. Lori Sanfilippo (as in n. 69), pp. 438 and 456. Generally, on the Senate and the Commune of Rome, see Brentano (as in n. 1), pp. 93–136 and 258–59.

77. Lori Sanfilippo (as in n. 69), p. 438.

78. He appears to be already deceased in a document of 1394, rogated by the notary Antonio Scambi; see Lori Sanfilippo (as in n. 69), p. 457 n. 138. The place of burial is documented in the *Liber anniversariorum della fraternita dei Raccomandati del S.S. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum* published in P. Egidi, *Necrologi e libri affini della provincia romana*, 2 vols, Rome 1908–14, I, pp. 311–541 (330): ‘Ceccho Felice de reg[ione] Campitelli in eccl[esia] S. M. de Araceli’.

79. See n. 18 above. Caterina’s representation at the same scale as her husband, as opposed to the smaller scale of Vinia Capocci in the 1256 tabernacle of S. Maria Maggiore, is worth noting.

80. These fragments (measuring 41.5 × 41.5 and 39 × 41.5 cm respectively) were published in *Die Mittelalterlichen Grabmäler*, I (as in n. 75), p. 146, but without reconstructing the surname.

belonged to the tombstone or sepulchral monument of either Francesco or his wife, or to the tomb of someone else (not necessarily from the Felici family); it is interesting to note that a number of extant medieval tombstones in Rome show at least one 'added' candelabrum accompanied by a name (or names) other than that of the person referred to (and usually effigiated) on the slab.⁸¹ The candelabrum featured prominently on the *insignia* of the Confraternity of the Saviour, the most powerful lay sodality of the time,⁸² and a cross-check between the names associated with candelabra on the surviving tombstones and the people listed in the necrological records of the Confraternity (taking into account dates, lacunae in the written sources and lost slabs) reveals that the people whose names were associated with candelabra on marble sepulchral slabs had requested in their testaments that the Confraternity of the Saviour celebrate an anniversary Mass for their souls.⁸³ It would appear, therefore, that the Confraternity put its own 'stamp' on the tombs of those whose anniversary was in its care, or even added a candlestick and name on someone else's tomb, in the case of deceased persons who did not have their own: a way for the brethren to easily identify the soul for whom Mass had to be said (and make sure no one would be forgotten), but also to stress visually their extensive control over care of the dead in Trecento Rome. Suffrage Mass was not only a way of securing a shorter stay in Purgatory, but a form of memory of the dead entrusted to the brethren (and to the family and descendants of the deceased), a way of keeping the deceased's memory alive in society throughout time.⁸⁴ The person's name engraved on marble, accompanied by a candelabrum, must have played an important rôle in ensuring that anniversary services would be celebrated throughout the years and that memory of the dead would be preserved.

81. This can be easily verified by consulting the photographs published in *Die Mittelalterlichen Grabmäler*, vol. 1 (as in n. 75), figs 1 ('missore Andrea de Eramo' in S. Giovanni della Pigna), fig. 53 ('Rienzo I[oh]anipaoli et uxo[r] ei[us]') in S. Maria in Aquiro), fig. 94 ('Vasc[o], Lagle di Iacovo Vasco, Cola Vaschi, Domina [...]javola' in S. Maria in Monticelli), fig. 101 ('Paulus Richizi de Barocinis et Domina Angela eius uxor' in S. Maria Nova), fig. 121 ('Cateri[n]a Cec[c]ho Tasca' in S. Marcello), fig. 128 ('Maria de Cinciis uxor quondam magnifici domini Poncelli de Ursinis' in S. Agostino), fig. 197 ('Ioannis Synodi' at S. Maria del Popolo).

82. On the Confraternity of the Saviour (Confraternita dei *Raccomandati del S. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum*) see P. Pavan, 'La confraternita del Salvatore nella società romana tra Tre e Quattrocento', *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma*, v, 1984, pp. 81–90; the *insignia* are published, among others, by Wisch (as in n. 29), fig. 6.

83. The names listed above, n. 81, may be compared with the necrological records in Egidi, *Necrologi* (as in n. 78), 1, p. 318 ('Cola Vasco, de regione Arenulae' in S. Maria in Monticelli), p. 325 ('Paulo

de Riccherze, de regione Columnae' in S. Maria Nova), p. 327 ('Rentio Ioannis Pauli, carpentario, de regione Columnae' in S. Stefano del Trullo), p. 347 ('domina Catherina uxor quondam Cecchi Tasche, de regione Trivii' in S. Maria della Cannella), p. 357 ('m[agnanima] d[omina] Maria ux[or] q[uon]d[am] magn[animi] v[iri] Poncelli de Ursinis', name of the church missing), pp. 388–89 ('Ioanne Synodi' in S. Maria del Popolo); and in Egidi, *Libro di anniversari* (as in n. 18), p. 183 ('Pietro de Biasio' in S. Cecilia in Trastevere), p. 200 ('missere Andrea de Eramo' in S. Giovanni della Pigna). In the cases of Rienzo Ianipaoli and Caterina Cecchi Tasche, the discrepancies between the actual setting of the tombstones (S. Maria in Aquiro and S. Marcello) and the original places of burial as documented by the necrologies (S. Stefano del Trullo and S. Maria della Cannella) is clearly due to the fact that both the latter churches do not exist any longer and the tombstones that were originally there must have been shifted to the nearby churches of S. Maria in Aquiro and S. Marcello at the time of the demolitions.

84. Pavan (as in n. 82).

Mass for Francesco and Caterina was very likely performed at the altar of the Felici chapel. It seems probable that the notary and his wife were entombed in front of the chapel rather than within it, since liturgical treatises insisted on a decent distance from the altar. Their daughter, however, the Tertiary Giovanna, was a special case as a *Beata*:⁸⁵ she was later buried in the chapel itself, as reported by Brewyn and Fra' Mariano, both recording her resting place as beneath the tabernacle and under the icon.⁸⁶ Very little is known about this woman, described as 'sanctissimae vitae foemina' by Luke Wadding (1588–1657), who mentions her in his annals of the three Franciscan orders.⁸⁷ In my opinion, she can be plausibly identified with the wife of Paluzzo Ponziani and sister-in-law of Sta Francesca Romana. Maria Benedetta Rivaldi has convincingly demonstrated that the saint's sister-in-law, her affectionate and supporting companion who is always recorded in the sources simply as Vannoza (a common medieval abbreviation for Giovanna), was a Felici, not a Santacroce as previously surmised.⁸⁸ However, Rivaldi did not go further and identify Vannoza with the daughter of the founder of the Aracoeli chapel.⁸⁹ Vannoza died in 1431 and was honourably buried at Aracoeli in the presence of a great multitude of people, as is recorded by contemporary accounts.⁹⁰ An argument in favour of the hypothesis that she was Giovanna Felici, the daughter of Francesco and Caterina, is found in an unnoticed document of 1419 summarised by Domenico Iacovacci, stating that Giovanna, wife of Paluzzo Ponziani, took part in a transaction with the Guardians of the Lateran hospital concerning a sum of 21 florins donated to the hospital by Francesca, daughter and heir 'quondam Dominae Catherine uxoris quondam Cecchi Felicis de Regione Campitelli'.⁹¹ Although the brief summary by Iacovacci does not state explicitly that Giovanna was a relative of Francesco and Caterina, her involvement in this transaction renders it likely that she was the sister of Francesca,

85. William Durandus, *Rationale Divinorum officiorum*, I–IV, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau, Turnhout 1995 (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievals, CXL, 140), p. 61 (= 1.5.12): 'Nullum ergo corpus debet in ecclesia aut prope altare ubi corpus Domini et sanguis conficitur sepeliri nisi ... laici summae sanctitatis'. This passage occurs also in Belet and goes back at least as far as the *Capitularia* of Theodulf of Orleans in the early ninth century. See P. Hofmeister, 'Das Gotteshaus als Begrabsstätte', *Archiv für Katholisches Kirchenrecht*, 1931, pp. 450–87. I owe these references to Julian Gardner.

86. See Appendix, nos 11 and 15. We do not know if Angelozza Felici, a descendant of Francesco, was granted her last wish to be buried in the chapel. See Appendix, no. 13, discussed above, p. 32.

87. Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum seu trium Ordinum a S. Francisco Institutorum*, 25 vols, Rome etc. 1731–1886, II, p. 26, no. 57.

88. M. B. Rivaldi, 'Il patronimico di Vannoza cognata di Santa Francesca Romana', *Benedictina*, xxx, 1983, pp. 97–108.

89. Implausibly, Rivaldi, *ibid.*, posited two blessed Giovannas, one the ancestor of the other.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santa Francesca Romana: Edizione critica dei trattati latini di Giovanni Mattiotti*, Vatican City 1994, pp. 75 and 409: 'Et portato lo cuorpo de Vannoza alla chiesa de araceli ce fu grande concorso de popolo. Era lo dicto cuorpo defoncto in tucte genture ad palmare come cera morbida. Et per devotione parte delli panni della decta Vannoza fuoro portati dalli puopoli'. An interesting portrait of Vannoza, bearing the inscription 'BEATA JOANNA FILIA QVODAE NOBILIS VIRI FRANCISCI DE FELICIBVS VXOR QVODAE NOBILIS VIRI PALVTII ANDREOTII DE PONTIANIS', still survives in the Oblate nunnery at Tor de Specchi, Rome. Published by Rivaldi (as in n. 88), p. 101 (ill. p. 106), its presence in a nunnery of strict *clausura* makes examination impossible.

91. BAV MS Ottob. lat. 2550, fol. 128^v (Domenico Iacovacci, *Repertori di famiglie*, tomo III, part II).

daughter of Francesco and Caterina. The choice of the name Francesca for their other daughter and heir (was she the first-born?) confirms the couple's attachment to the Franciscan Order; and it is possible that the name Francesco already indicated a family sympathy for the Order.

We know there was a burial area in front of the Felici icon tabernacle, for in 1444 a certain Giuliano, son of Coluccio Marcuzzi, having negotiated with the friars, donated 50 florins in order to be entombed in the burial place (*loco sepulture*) before the image of the Virgin Mary, in 'the place where the arms that are said to have once belonged to Nicola, the Tribune of the City, are'.⁹² This reference to the sceptre and crown that Cola had offered in 1347 over the altar of the Virgin proves that these items had been accommodated in the Felici arrangement. It is impossible to establish whether the arms were preserved there just because they were a gift to the icon (not too different from the ring donated by Paola Savelli, save for the political implications) or whether there was an intended association between the donor of the shrine and the donor of the arms: in other words we cannot say whether Francesco Felici wanted to associate himself with Cola di Rienzo. One should recall, however, that Cola was not only the other great notary who had been a devotee of the Aracoeli icon, but he had founded a 'popular' regime that can be seen as the foundation of the successful anti-magnate Roman regime of the 1360s.⁹³

A lost inscription dated 1468 reveals that Francesco's descendant Angelozza, wife of Giovanni Beccaluva, 'mestissima mater', buried her beloved twenty-eight-year-old son, Angelo di Giovanni Beccaluva, in a monument at Aracoeli.⁹⁴ Whether the word 'monumentum' meant a sepulchral monument proper or simply a plain tomb slab is unknown. According to a second-hand source, Father Casimiro, the tabernacle was surrounded by the 'depositi' of distinguished people who, after their death, 'wanted to show the world the devotion they had always had for the Mother of God'.⁹⁵ A sarcophagus (*pilo sepolcrale*) bearing the Felici arms and said to have come from Aracoeli was seen in the seventeenth century in the garden of the villa of Prince Andrea Giustiniani outside Porta del Popolo.⁹⁶

What other devotional and liturgical practices was the tabernacle designed to serve? With its famous image, the ciborium was a focus of pilgrimage in the church (the second attraction after the 'ara coeli' in the north transept). The icon

92. See Appendix, no. 9.

93. On Cola's regime see Collins (as in n. 71), pp. 131–203; T. Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Cola di Rienzo*, Rome 2002.

94. Forcella (as in n. 75), I, p. 144, no. 529: 'IOANNI ANGELO BECCALVAE NOBILI IVVENI ANIMI CORPORISQUE BONIS PLVRIMVM ORNATO ANGELOZIA MESTISSIMA MATER FILIO DVLCISSIMO BENE MERENTIQUE HOC MONVMENTVM TURBATO ORDINE POSVIT VIXIT AN XXVIII DECESSIT ANNO SALVTIS MCCCCLXVIII DIE VIII IVLI'.

95. Casimiro da Roma (as in n. 6), p. 24: '... cui nobil corona faceano vari depositi di segnalati personaggi, i quali anche dopo il loro trapasso vollero contestare al mondo la divozione che sempre avevano portata alla Gran Madre di Dio'.

96. Amayden (as in n. 37), I, p. 397. Analogous information can be gleaned from Francesco Gualdi, recording that 'nel giardino del principe Giustiniano fuori di Porta del Popolo in un pilo a cassa vi è una simile arma [Felici] intagliata antica': see BAV MS Vat. lat. 8253, vol. I (*Epitaphia et insignia nobilium familiarum in ecclesiis Urbis*, c. 1640–45), fol. 274^r.

was favoured by mothers, who entrusted the life of their children to the Aracoeli Virgin; significantly, at least since c. 1375, the icon was interpreted as a *Mater dolorosa*, a portrait of the Virgin lamenting her Son at the foot of the cross.⁹⁷ Aracoeli itself was a church for mothers: according to the legend of the site, the Virgin Mary appeared on the Capitoline hill with her Son in her arms even before Christ was born. It is not coincidental that, in the late Middle Ages, recently widowed Roman women would be summoned to Aracoeli to be granted tutelage of their own children. The area near the original side-entrance of the church (sometimes inside and sometimes outside) was used 'as a court' (*pro tribunali*), where palatine collateral judges gave widows authorisation to manage the family's goods and placed minors into their mothers' custody. Aracoeli had therefore become the place in Rome where mothers' rights were legally recognised.⁹⁸

The most famous mother known to have fervently prayed for the life of her son before the Aracoeli icon is Sta Francesca Romana.⁹⁹ The tabernacle must have attracted many female pilgrims, especially mothers wanting to entrust the health of their children to the Virgin of Aracoeli, who is curiously referred to as 'mamma celi' in a fourteenth-century edition of the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*.¹⁰⁰ The large numbers of female pilgrims in Trecento Rome are confirmed by the construction of houses and hospitals to provide accommodation for foreign women: these include the German hospital of S. Andrea, built by a secular priest from Kulm and a priest from Wales, in the very same year (1372) as the erection of the Felici tabernacle.¹⁰¹

The icon was usually concealed behind the *sportelli* of its receptacle, as attested by accounts of a miracle involving Sta Francesca Romana herself: the records state that while she knelt in prayer 'before the image of the blessed Virgin, closed in a tabernacle and hidden from view as was customary, the image miraculously appeared to her, as if the tabernacle doors were unlocked and open'.¹⁰² The icon was locked in the tabernacle and shown ceremonially to the faithful only on particular days of the year ('certis dumtaxat diebus anni Populo solet spectabilis exhiberi');¹⁰³ certainly the feasts in honour of the Virgin and, presumably, other major festivals. In 1258 an indulgence of 100 days had been granted to those visiting Aracoeli on the Virgin's feast days; in 1291 this indulgence was extended to 140 days.¹⁰⁴ The Marian feasts included at least the Annunciation

97. *Mirabilia Romae e codicibus Vaticanis emendata* (Vat. Lat. 4265), ed. G. Parthey, Berlin 1869 (a late version of the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, datable around 1375), p. 56: 'Ad sanctam Mariam mamma celi est ymago beate Virginis divinitus depicta cum lacrimis sicut stetit sub cruce'.

98. C. Bolgia, 'The so-called tribunal of Arnolfo di Cambio at S. Maria in Aracoeli, Rome', *Burlington Magazine*, CXLIII, 2001, pp. 753–55.

99. See Appendix, nos 6 and 8.

100. See above, n. 97.

101. A. Esposito, 'Pellegrini, stranieri, curiali ed

ebrei', in *Storia di Roma dall'antichità ad oggi* (as in n. 1), pp. 213–39 (219).

102. See Appendix, nos 6a and 8.

103. See Appendix, no. 6b.

104. Bull *Licet is de* of Alexander IV, ed. F. Annibaldi de Latera, *Bullarium franciscanum romanorum pontificum. Supplementum*, Rome 1780, pp. 112–13, no. 32; bull *Vitae perennis gloriae* of Nicholas IV, ed. E. Langlois, *Les Registres de Nicholas IV: Recueil des Bulles de ce Pape* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, ser. 2), 2 vols, Paris 1905, II, p. 766, no. 5671.

(25 March), the Assumption (15 August), the Nativity (8 September) and the Purification (2 February), that were introduced into the Roman liturgical calendar by the seventh century.¹⁰⁵ Since the pontificate of Urban IV (1261–64), both the Assumption and the Nativity had an octave,¹⁰⁶ during which period it is likely that the icon was on public display. According to an early sixteenth-century source, in the Middle Ages the icon also left her shrine on Assumption day—the day of the Virgin’s greatest glory—to be carried in procession by the Romans.¹⁰⁷ The image was very likely displayed also on the octave of Christmas, when Mass was said in commemoration of the reality of the Virgin’s motherhood of Christ, and at Easter, as the procession that resulted in the miraculous halting of the plague in 590 had taken place ‘in festis paschatis’,¹⁰⁸ and a commemoration of the event (with the singing of the Antiphone *Regina Coeli, laetare, alleluia*, first chanted by angelic voices when the miracle was performed)¹⁰⁹ is highly probable. The display of a Marian icon in Rome in the period between the fourth Sunday of Lent and the week after Easter (called ‘in albis’) is later attested for the icon of S. Maria del Popolo by the very detailed description of the Augustinian friar John Capgrave (c. 1447–52):¹¹⁰ this custom may have reflected earlier practices, common to other Marian icons. Capgrave also recorded the great afflux of visitors on the Saturday afternoons; that was, in fact, the day of the week especially dedicated to the celebration of the Virgin. It remains an open question whether the Marian icons were shown every Saturday during the Mass in honour of the Virgin.

It is also possible that the Aracoeli image, as the work of St Luke, was displayed on the feast day of the Evangelist (18 October) and that Mass (attended by all the notaries, doctors and procurators of Rome, as recorded above) was celebrated at the Felici chapel altar, located just under the icon and not far from the column with the image of St Luke. If so, the image of the notary Francesco Felici, in such a privileged position in close proximity to the icon (and above the altar), must have had an even more outstanding impact.

The construction of a new monumental setting for the Aracoeli icon can be explained by the increased devotion for the image after Cola’s offer of his symbols of power in 1347 and the miracle of 1348 (presumably Francesco Felici himself had survived the plague when he was a child), but it must also be contextualised

105. T. Klauser, ‘Rom und der Kult des Gottesmutter Maria’, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, xv, 1972, pp. 120–35 (126).

106. Van Dijk (as in n. 31), pp. 450–53.

107. The source of information is Fra’ Mariano da Firenze, *Itinerarium urbis Romae* (1518), ed. E. Bulletti, Rome 1931 (*Studi di antichità cristiana*, II), p. 189. It is worth recalling that the importance of the Virgin of the Assumption grew considerably thanks to the Franciscans, as witnessed by the great prominence given to her cult in S. Francesco in Assisi and S. Croce in Florence; see W. Tronzo, ‘Apse

Decoration, the Liturgy and the Perception of Art in Medieval Rome: S. Maria in Trastevere and S. Maria Maggiore’, in *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: Functions, Forms and Regional Traditions*, ed. W. Tronzo (Villa Spelman Colloquia, I), Bologna 1989, pp. 167–93 (190).

108. Appendix, no. 15.

109. Appendix, no. 11.

110. John Capgrave, *Ye Solace of Pilgrimes. A Description of Rome, circa A.D. 1450*, ed. C. A. Mills, London 1911, p. 165. See Bolgia (as in n. 28).

within the greater importance given to the Virgin in the liturgical life of the Church, including the multiplication of Lady Masses. It is a telling coincidence that the celebration of the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin was authorised in Avignon by Pope Gregory XI the very year of the construction of the icon shrine.¹¹¹

It is also noteworthy that a confraternity was attached to the Felici chapel at Aracoeli, although the date of its foundation has not yet been established.¹¹² According to a papal bull of 19 May 1475, the confraternity was formed by clerics and lay-people of both sexes, and had been founded in honour of the Virgin as a consequence of the numerous miracles that had occurred near her image, 'honourably located in Aracoeli from time immemorial'.¹¹³ Apparently the chapel was a useful source of income for the *Societas Sanctae Marie Aracoeli*, which perpetrated several abuses.¹¹⁴ To end these, the Franciscan Pope Sixtus IV gave the friars the full custodianship of the icon: the charge of the keys to the tabernacle and the rights to administer the financial emoluments were therefore transferred from the confraternity into the sole hand of the Franciscans.¹¹⁵

The reconstruction of the Aracoeli tabernacle fills a notable lacuna in our knowledge of artistic production in Trecento Rome. It reveals that wealthy and devout powerful laymen could afford to commission exquisite works of art rivaling those of the papacy. If the work can be attributed to Giovanni di Stefano, who was also responsible for the Lateran ciborium of a few years earlier, we might conclude that Rome had no very accomplished sculptors left after the departure of the popes and that, for important commissions, it was necessary to look outside the city, in particular to Siena, where sculptors combined productivity with high artistic quality.

The study of the Felici chapel also sheds important new light on the function of icon tabernacles in Rome. The Felici commission was an interesting combination of private and public chapel. Built by a lay patron of a prominent Roman family, it performed no funerary function proper, but attracted the burial of members of the family and other lay-people devoted to the icon. At the same time, the chapel had a prominent public use, to enshroud and display, on special occasions, one of the most charismatic miraculous icons of Rome. The chapel's altar was used for both private Masses in memory of the dead who were buried

111. M. Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica*, 4 vols, Milan 1964–69, ii, p. 393; M. Hayez, 'Gregorio XI', in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, 3 vols, Rome 2000, II, pp. 550–61 (558).

112. I am grateful to Barbara Wisch, who is currently working on the confraternities of the Virgin at Aracoeli, for discussing her research with me at the 2003 International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo. See also Wisch, 'Keys to Success' (as in n. 29), pp. 161–84.

113. See Appendix, no. 12.

114. Appendix, no. 14.

115. Ibid. See also L. Ruggeri, *L'Arciconfraternita del Gonfalone*, Rome 1866, p. 146. On the neglect of the papal decision by the confraternity see *Bullarium franciscanum continens constitutiones epistolas diplomata romani pontificis Sixti IV ad tres ordines S. P. N. Francisci spectantia (1471–1484)*, ed. J. M. Pou y Martí (Bullarium Franciscanum, n.s. III), Quaracchi 1949, no. 1278. P. L. Tucci, *Laurentius Manlius. La riscoperta dell'antica Roma. La nuova Roma di Sisto IV*, Rome 2001, pp. 69–70.

in front of it and public Masses in honour of the Virgin, perhaps even daily, given the great importance of the Marian cult in the fourteenth century.

Was this chapel—in its multiple functions—an isolated case? Much more research needs to be conducted into Roman icon and relic tabernacles to answer this question fully.¹¹⁶ But it is worth remembering that Cardinal Agapito Colonna (†1380) requested (and obtained) burial before the fourteenth-century tabernacle housing the *Salus populi romani* in S. Maria Maggiore.¹¹⁷ If, as has been suggested, this is an indication that the donor was a member of the Colonna family, it is likely that icon tabernacles (and probably also relic tabernacles) had a private and funerary importance, as well as encouraging pilgrimage and public devotion.¹¹⁸

Appendix

Relevant Documents and Pilgrims' Descriptions Referring to the Icon and/or to the Tabernacle

(1) 1257: Miracle recounted by Bartolomeo da Pisa, *De Conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu*, c. 1385–90

‘In sancta Maria de Aracaeli ... minister, ... tum erat frater Raynerius de Picholonibus de Senis ... Et venit ipse novitius in profunda nocte, dormientibus fratribus, et ivit ad orationem in ecclesia ante imaginem, quam pinxit sanctus Lucas de Domina nostra, et statim fuit elevatus in aera et stabat cum brachiis apertis, et plorabat fortiter et dixit “Domina mea, cui me totum dedi, non permittas, me repelli de isto sancto ordine”; et duo angeli stabant ad pedes eius et colligebant lacrymas eius et ponebant ante Dominam et dicebant: “Domina, te pereat petitio lacrymarum istarum”, et Domina respondit dicens: “Fili mi, ne dubites; quia tu eris receptus et perseverabis in isto ordine bonus frater Minor et in fine perducam te ad Filium meum” ...’

Bartolomeo da Pisa, *De Conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu*, I, Quaracchi 1906 (*Analecta Franciscana*, IV), p. 456, ll. 1, 6, 15–25.

(2) 1347: Account from the life of Cola di Rienzo

‘... Puoi che lla vittoria fu per lo puopolo, lo tribuno fece sonare soie tromme de ariento e con granne gloria e triomfo recoize lo campo e pusese in capo la soa corona de ariento de fronni de oliva e tornaio con tutto lo puopolo triomfante a Santa Maria delli Arucielo e là rassenao la verga dello acciaio e lla corona della oliva alla Vergine

116. A preliminary study is in Bolgia (as in n. 28).

117. ‘... Meam eligo sepulturam in navi illa propinqua imagini Virginis gloriosae, vel ante tabernaculum Virginis depictae manu Beati Lucae, dum tamen sit possibile’: cited after S. de Blaauw, *Cultus et Decor. Liturgia e architettura nella Roma tardoantica e medievale: Basilica Salvatoris, Sanctae Mariae, Sancti Petri*, 2 vols, Vatican City 1994, I, p. 406 n. 291.

118. The burial of Agapito before the tabernacle is

attested by Onofrio Panvinio’s *Schedario* of S. Maria Maggiore, published in G. Biasiotti, ‘La basilica di S. Maria Maggiore di Roma prima delle innovazioni del secolo XVI’, *Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire*, xxxv, 1915, pp. 15–40 (36): ‘Cardinales Agapitus et Cassinus in media nave ante beatam Virginem’. The hypothesis about Colonna patronage for the icon shrine at S. Maria Maggiore was advanced by Claussen (as in n. 28), pp. 229–49 (248 n. 38).

Maria. Denanti a quella venerabile maine appese la bacchetta e lla corona in casa delli frati minori. Da puoi mai non portao bastone, né corona, né confallone sopra capo'

'Anonimo Romano', *Cronica*, ed. G. Porta, Milan 1979, pp. 202–3. For an English translation see *The Life of Cola di Rienzo*, ed. and tr. J. Wright, Toronto 1975, p. 87.

(3) August 1350: Letter from Cola di Rienzo to the Archbishop of Prague

'... His igitur supernis stimulis et terroribus circumventus, Romano clero et populo convocato in ecclesia Araceli, Capitolio Romano vicina, psalmis quampluribus decantatis a clero et oratione illa salomonica quae sic incipit: tuum est, Domine, regnum, tuum imperium et potestas etc., coronam argenteam tribunitiam, virgam ferream orbemque iustitiae ac omnia tribunitia paramenta volenter exutus, altari eiusdem Virginis, in cuius assumptione elatus et indignus assumpseram, illa in multis comitum meorum lacrimis et stuporibus resignavi'

A. Gabrielli, *L'epistolario di Cola di Rienzo*, Rome 1890 (Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, VI), pp. 144–69 (161).

(4) After 1370: *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*

'In hac ecclesia, in qua est ara celi, est etiam lapis in quo sunt vestigia angeli stantis tempore Gregorii in Inghellenburch. Item et ymago quam depexit sanctus Lucas et quam Gregorius in die sancti Marci contra pestem inguinariam in processione portavit, et veniens ad castrum vidit angelum levare gladium, et evanuit relictis vestigiis, in lapide de quo supra'

P. Lauer, *Le Palais de Latran*, Paris 1911, pp. 408–9.

(5) c. 1382: 'Anonymous of Vich' (an anonymous Benedictine writer), *Memoriale de mirabilibus et indulgentiis quae in Urbe Romana existunt*

'Item in dicta ecclesia est ymago media depicta in quadam tabula per beatum Lucham evangelistam et est honorifice collocata in cimborio novo totum de marmoribus albissimis et sculptis in ingressu chori'

Codice topografico della città di Roma, ed. R. Valentini and G. Zucchetti, 4 vols, Rome 1940–53, IV, pp. 82–84 (84).

(6) 1408–9 or 1413–14: Life of Sta Francesca Romana

(a) 'Genibus flexis, orationi se dedit coram Genitricis Filii Dei imagine, quae, ut moris erat, in suo tabernaculo clausa erat. Ista vero Dei famula ita ipsam imaginem vidit, ac si tabernaculum apertum et reseratum esset'

A. Bartolomei Romagnoli, *Santa Francesca Romana: Edizione critica dei trattati latini di Giovanni Mattiotti*, Vatican City 1994, pp. 342–43.

(b) 'Eoque dicto in genua se posuit coram Beatissimae Virginis imagine, quae intra suum conclusa tabernaculum, certis dumtaxat diebus anni Populo solet spectabilis exhiberi. Tunc autem (quaemadmodum ipsamet dixit) conspecta fuit a se, transeunte per ipsum tabernaculum, sic ut erat conclusum, visu'

Joannes Bollandus, *Acta Sanctorum*, IX (19–31 March), ed. J. Carnandet, Paris and Rome 1865, p. 187.

(7) 21 July 1440: Niccolò della Tuccia, *Chronicle*

‘In quel tempo [1440] accadde a Roma una cosa meravigliosa. Un giovedì, 21 luglio, venne gran pioggia e colse il trono in S. Maria d’Araceli su la corona di Nostra Signora, e tutto il viso abrugiò, e gettò in terra mezza figura di S. Antonio da Padova’

Niccolò della Tuccia, *Croniche di Viterbo e di altre città*, in *Cronache e statuti della città di Viterbo*, ed. I. Ciampi, Florence 1872, pp. 76–77; in the Riccardiano manuscript *saetta* (=fulmine) is found instead of *trono* (=tuono).

(8) 1444: ‘Processo informativo’ for the canonisation of Sta Francesca Romana, art. 9, fol. 4^r

‘...et genibus flexis se coram imagine beatae Virginis orans in dicta ecclesia, existente in suo tabernaculo, illo tempore clausa ut moris erat; quam imaginem ipsa beata Francisca reseratam vidit stando in orationibus suis’

B. Pesci, ‘Il problema cronologico della Madonna di Araceli alla luce delle fonti’, *Rivista di archeologia cristiana*, XVIII, 1941, pp. 51–64 (63).

(9) 1444: Testament of Giuliano di Coluccio Marcuzi

‘Julianus Colutie Marcutii alias Sciuscie, macellarius de regione Ripe et contrata insule Licaonie, reliquit ecclesie sancte Marie de Araceli florenos quinquaginta si contingat eum seppelliri in loco sepulture ante ymaginem beate Marie Virginis in quo loco sunt arma que dicuntur fuisse olim Nycolai tribuni Urbis, secundum quod ipse testator tractavit cum fratribus dicte ecclesie’

A. M. Corbo, *Artisti e artigiani in Roma al tempo di Martino V e di Eugenio IV*, Rome 1969, p. 177 (Ospedale del Santissimo Salvatore, Reg. 374, fol. 174^r).

(10) c. 1452: Nikolaus Muffel, *Beschreibung der Stad Rom*

‘Und do ist auch das pild von unser frawen, das sand Lucas gemacht hat, hat gar ein klein antlitz ... Und dozey in dem merbelstein, do sind die fusstapfen des engels eingetruckt, der auf der Engelpurck das bluting schwert einsties, do got seins zorn vergessen het uber das volk’

Nikolaus Muffel, *Descrizione della città di Roma nel 1452: Delle indulgenze e dei luoghi sacri di Roma (Der ablas und die heiligen stet zu Rom)*, ed. G. Wiedmann, Bologna 1999, p. 96.

(11) c. 1470: William Brewyn, *Description of the Principal Churches of Rome* (ed. Woodruff; see note below)

‘Also, beneath the lower (*inferius*) altar of the same church – on the western side – is the following inscription: “Beneath this tabernacle resteth the body of the blessed Joan, sometime daughter of Franciscus de Felicibus”, and it is under the picture of the Virgin Mary. Also on a tablet, hanging near (the above), is the following inscription:

“Cupientes scire aliquid et efficaciam huius sacre ymaginis Virginis Marie quam beatus Lucas evangelista depinxit, prout eam depingere cupiebat, picta tempore passionis, cum ante crucem laniatum filium deploraret, hanc scripturam legentes intellectualiter et retineant cum effectum, ante tamen omnia sciant fideles presentes

litteras inspecturi quod tempore beati Gregorii pape eximii doctoris in illa mortalitate magna que Romam adeo vehementi pestilencia laniavit, ut etiam corporali visu sagitte celitus venire, et singulos quosque percutere viderentur, que in mense xi veniens primum omnium percussit papam Pellagium (ii. d. Feb. 8 590) et extinxit, igitur sine mora ordinata letania per leuitam Gregorium Septiformi illo, eodem die in tantum lues ipsa iudicio divino excrevit, et deseuit, ut infra unius hore spacium, etiam dum voces plebs ad Dominum emitteret misericordiam invocando, octoginta homines at terram corruentes spiritum exalarent. In ista processione hac sacra ymagine deportata ecce aeris tum tribulencia cedebat ymagini, ac si ipsam ymaginem fugeret et eius presenciam nullatenus ferre posset, sicque post ymaginem mira serenitas et aeris pitas (?*puritas*) remanebat, tunc mire voces in aere cantencium et dicencium 'Regina celi letare Alleluia' iuxta ymaginem sunt audite. Statim autem beatus Gregorius id quod sequitur adiunxit 'Ora pro nobis Deum.' Post hoc vidit beatus Gregorius supra castellum Crescensii [*fol. 28a*] angelum qui revocabat in vagina gladium cruentatum, ex quo intellexit quod pestis ilia cessasset, et sic factum est, et ideo illud castrum Castrum Angeli deinceps est vocatum, et ipse angelus cum gladio in vagina sculptus in lapide mire magnitudinis ab illo tempore vi antea invasit in cacumine dicti castri, inde tamen deiectus, sinistrante fortuna, per ictum machine obsidionis tempore per Romanos."

Also, at the time of the great mortality in the year of the Lord mcccclviii (*sic*),* which began to afflict the city of Rome at the beginning of the month of June, and was at its full virulence during the month of August, this picture, with other relics, was, with due honour, devoutly carried through the city; and when it reached the fount (*fontem*)** of St Peter the marble angel which is on the top of the castle showed reverence to this picture, by bowing to it several times, which miracle more than lx trustworthy men swore upon the holy gospels that they saw with their bodily eyes, while they were imploring the picture to have pity on them. There were, however, others who did not see the miracle, either because they were not worthy to do so or because their sight was not good enough, or, because they did not at the moment happen to look that way. Wherefore there was so much confusion that no one could give a clear account of the matter, and the best thing a man could do was to make what he could of the vision, and then bring out his goods and jewels and offer them before the picture, with the price of which the magnificent steps in front of the church were built ... All worshippers of Christ should pause devoutly here, because in the time of Gregory, by the goodness of Jesu (*bonitate Jesu*) this stone bears the impression of the Angel's feet.'

W. Brewyn, *A XVth-Century Guide-book to the Principal Churches of Rome*, translated and partially transcribed by C. E. Woodruff, London 1933, pp. 45–50 = Canterbury, Cathedral Archives AddMS-68, fols 27a–29a. This manuscript reflects Brewyn's sources. In places, including the folios cited here, it is exceptionally difficult to read, which might explain why Woodruff did not provide the whole text in Latin; I gratefully reproduce his version here, with the addition of note **.

* (Brewyn's note) The text here is obscure, the Latin is: "ob quam causam planctus omnium tantus erat quod nullus sufficeret ad narrandum, quapropter ille beatus erat qui expolire [*sic*] poterat et bona ante ipsam ymaginem producere, etc.

** *fontem*: probably a misreading for *pontem* (whether Brewyn's or an error copied from his source), meaning the Aelian bridge where the miracle was said to have taken place (and which was represented on the icon's receptacle: see above, n. 32).

(12) 19 May 1475: Bull of Sixtus IV

‘Cum itaque, sicut accepimus, propter crebra miracula, quae meritis Virginis Mariae gloriosae Altissimus dudum operabatur et continuo operatur in ecclesia S. Mariae de Aracaeli apud figuram Virginis eiusdem Mariae, quae inibi honorifice collocata existit a tempore, cuius initii memoria hominum non exsistit, fuerit ibidem erecta quaedam confraternitas clericorum et laicorum utriusque sexus et ex tunc usque in hodiernum diem conservata ad laudem omnipotentis Dei ... et in ipsius Virginis gloriosae honorem ...’

Bullarium franciscanum continens constitutiones epistolas diplomata Romani Pontificis Sixti IV ad tres ordines S.P.N. Francisci spectantia (1471–1484), ed. J. M. Pou y Martí, Quaracchi 1949 (*Bullarium Franciscanum*, n.s. III), no. 713, pp. 326–27.

(13) 13 March 1476: Testament of Angelozza Felici

‘Nobilis domina Agnelotia uxor quondam Johannis sancti de becchaluvius Rionis Campitelli ... voluit sepulturam in Ecclesia Araceli in capella ymaginis Virginis marie quam pinxit sanctus lucas quam Capellam construxit seu construi fecit quondam Cecchulus de felicibus avus ipsius testatricis’

Rome, Archivio di Stato, Collegio Notai Capitolini, vol. 1666, fols 161–62.

(14) 5 October 1479 : Bull of Sixtus IV

‘... Sane, sicut accepimus, dilecti filii confratres confratriae seu societatis S. Mariae de Aracaeli de Urbe, asserentes imaginem Virginis Mariae, quae in eiusdem Virginis honorem in quadam tabula depicta in ecclesia domus S. Mariae de Aracaeli huiusmodi, ordinis fratrum Minorum de Observantia nuncupatorum, eorumdem confratrum curae commissam, et ea quae eidem confraternitati seu societati aut eius guardianis seu imagini aut simpliciter S. Mariae pro tempore pie erogantur, legantur, donantur, distribuuntur seu aliter largiuntur, ad eos pertinere et per ipsos distribui debere in alios quam dictae domus et ecclesiae in ea pro tempore degentium guardiani et fratrum utilitatem, prout eis videbitur; oriunturque inter eosdem guardianum et fratres ac confratres praedictos nonnumquam contentiones et iurgia ratione piarum largitionum praedictarum, et huiusmodi assertione ac pie relictorum et oblatores appropriatione minime contenti confratres, diebus quibus christifideles visitantes ecclesiam ipsam vere poenitentes et confessi ex concessione nostra consequuntur plenariam omnium suorum peccatorum indulgentiam in ecclesia praedicta, tenent mensam paratam cum bacili argenteo ad colligendum eleemosynas pro puellis pauperibus maritandis et dotandis, ac puellas ipsas ibidem exhibentes more quaestuariorum, fideles visitantes dictam ecclesiam ad erogandum eis pia suffragia alta voce sollicitare non omittunt. ... et quod omnis cura et custodia dictae imaginis et ornamentorum eius semper esse consuevit penes dictos fratres cum onere ibidem luminaria manutenendi et illam honorandi ac locum, in quo conservatur, claudendi et aperiendi; quodque sicut in ecclesiis eorumdem fratrum, iuxta dicti ordinis regularia statuta, non possunt trunci licite teneri ad colligendum eleemosynas, ita longe minus licet tenere mensam et quaestorum more sollicitari fideles ad eleemosynas erogandum. ... decernimus et declaramus curam et custodiam dictae imaginis ad guardianum et fratres, non autem ad societatem et illius confratres pertinere, ac omnia legata, relicta, oblata et donata

pieque quomodolibet erogata eidem imagini, etiam dum contingit illam deferri per Urbem, et etiam S. Mariae de Aracaeli, ac etiam ecclesiae S. Mariae de Aracaeli ad domum praedictam pertinere et in illius ac fratrum usum converti debere, et societatem praefatam de illis se impedire non posse ...'

Bullarium franciscanum, ed. Pou y Martí (as in Appendix no. 12 above), III, no. 1229.

(15) 1518: Fra' Mariano da Firenze, *Itinerarium urbis Romae*

'In capella quoque sub imagine Virginis plangentis quam sanctus Lucas pinxit, beata Johanna de Felicibus nobilis romana ac de Tertio Ordine Minorum sepulta est. In pariete chori subter imagine iam dictae Virginis lapis marmoreus insertus est, ferrea crata circumdatus, super quem angelus evaginato gladio in arce Hadriani quae et Crescentii item dicta, adstare visus est cum divus Gregorius cum dicta imagine in festis paschatis processionaliter ad sanctum Petrum pergebat et tunc ante eam aer infectus purificabatur; circa quam etiam angelorum voces summus presul audivit, *Regina caeli laetare, alleluia*, decantantes. Et ipse respondit: "Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia; sicque omnis pestis cessavit: qua causa talis processio fiebat" ...'

Fra' Mariano da Firenze, *Itinerarium urbis Romae*, ed. E. Bulletti, Rome 1931 (*Studi di Antichità Cristiana*, II), p. 42.

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