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A Framework for Devotion in Trecento Siena: a Reliquary Frame in the Cleveland Museum of Art

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The Fourth Lateran Council, summoned in 1215 by Pope Innocent III, attempted to regulate the authentication and display of relics; its sixty-second canon decreed that all relics be exhibited in appropriate vessels and that their veneration be officially sanctioned by the church.¹ Attesting to the great numbers of relics in widespread circulation throughout Europe by this date, this pronouncement also implicitly called for the creation of receptacles to enshrine these sacred remains. Although the production of relic containers had traditionally resided within the purview of the goldsmith, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Italy, the development of gold-ground panel painting encouraged innovations in the fashioning of the new reliquaries called for by the council.² Relics were increasingly incorporated into panel paintings whose gold grounds and architectural forms themselves recalled the three-dimensionality, precious materials,

¹ "Ne reliquiae sanctorum ostendatur extra capsam; ne novae habeantur in veneratione sine Romana ecclesia." See E.G. Grimme, *Goldschmiedekunst im Mittelalter: Form und Bedeutung des Reliquiars von 800 bis 1500* (Cologne, 1972), 164.

² The mid-thirteenth century *Madonna and Child* from Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence may be the earliest surviving Italian object in which a relic is incorporated into a panel painting. See M. Ciatti, "The Typology, Meaning, and Use of Some Panel Paintings from the Duecento and Trecento" in *Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento*, ed. Victor Schmidt (Washington, D.C., 2002), 21-26.

and architectural structures of traditional metalwork relic containers as well as luxury metalwork objects more broadly. The new reliquaries assumed a variety of forms, including diptychs, triptychs, and, uniquely in Siena, gabled tabernacles in which numerous glazed relic chambers enclosed central painted images.³ By the fourteenth century, Siena was one of Italy's foremost artistic centers, renowned for the refined craftsmanship of its painters, enamellers, and goldsmiths. Objects in which relics are unified with panel paintings were created throughout Italy in this period, but the inventiveness and quality of those made in Siena or by Sienese artists were arguably unsurpassed.

Seven Sienese gabled tabernacle reliquaries survive in varying states of preservation. Two sides of a mid-fourteenth century reliquary panel attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti (c. 1280-1348) are divided between the Berenson Collection at Villa I Tatti in Settignano and a private collection in New York,⁴ while the Walters Art Museum owns a panel attributed to Naddo Ceccarelli (act. mid-14th century) and dated circa 1350.⁵ **(Figure 1)** In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museo Civico in Montepulciano are examples from the second half of the fourteenth century, both by Francesco di Vannuccio (act. 1356-1389, d. before

³ D. Preisig, "Bild und Reliquie: Gestalt und Funktion gotischer Reliquientafeln und –altärchen," *Aachener Kunstblätter*, 61 (1995), 13-84, provides a review and catalog of medieval European panel reliquaries, while E. Rowlands, "Sienese Painted Reliquaries of the Trecento: Their Format and Meaning," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, 48 (1979), 122-138, treats the Sienese gabled tabernacle reliquary type as a distinct category, without, however, mentioning the Cleveland-Cambridge ensemble. See also *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (exh. cat. Cleveland Museum of Art; Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; British Museum, London, 2010), pp. 202-207 for some examples, including the Cleveland-Cambridge ensemble.

⁴ F. Zeri, "Reconstruction of a Two-Sided Reliquary Panel by Pietro Lorenzetti," *Bulletin Monumental* 95 (1953), 244-245 and K. Christiansen, "Paul Delaroche's Crucifixion by Pietro Lorenzetti," *Apollo* 157 (2003), pp. 8-14.

⁵ F. Zeri, *Italian Paintings in the Walters Art Gallery*, 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1976), 1:43-44; M.-M. Gauthier, *Les Routes de la Foi: Reliques et Reliquaires de Jerusalem a Compostelle* (Paris, 1983), 168-175; Rowlands, "Sienese Painted Reliquaries," 122-138; Preisig, "Bild und Reliquie," 19-25, 58; M. Steen Hansen and J.A. Spicer, eds., *Masterpieces of Italian Painting: The Walters Art Museum* (London, 2005), 24-27; C.G. Mann, "Relics, Reliquaries, and the Limitations of Trecento Painting: Naddo Ceccarelli's Reliquary Tabernacle in the Walters Art Museum," *W&J*, 22 (2006), 251-259.



Figure 1 Naddo Ceccarelli, Reliquary Tabernacle, Baltimore, Walters Art Museum. Photo: Walters Art Museum

1391).⁶ A double-sided panel in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, attributed to the Master of the Osservanza, is a fifteenth-century version of the same basic type.⁷ The seventh, a particularly splendid example of this genre, is preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art.⁸

(Figure 2)

⁶ C. Brandi, "An Unpublished Reliquary of Francesco di Vannuccio," *Art in America*, 20 (1931), 38-48 and Preising, "Bild und Reliquie," 19-25, 58-59. For the panel at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, see also Christie's, New York, *Important Paintings by Old Masters and Old Master Drawings*, January 19, 1982, lot 118, 84-85.

⁷ L.B. Kanter, *Italian Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston: 13th-15th century* (Boston, 1994), 182-186 and Preising, "Bild und Reliquie," 19-25, 59-60.

⁸ Gift of Ruth Blumka in memory of Leopold Blumka, 1978.26. W. Wixom, "Eleven Additions to the Medieval Collection," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (March/April, 1979), 128-132; D. Gordon, "A Sienese Verre Eglomisé and its Setting," *Bulletin Monumental* 122 (1981), 148-153; Gauthier, *Routes de la Foi*, 173; Preising, "Bild und Reliquie," 19-25, 58; H. Klein, S. Fliegel, and V. Brilliant, *Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures: Medieval Masterpieces from the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland, 2007), 264-265.

Double-sided and standing around two feet high, it comprises a gilded gabled wooden frame which sits upon a gilded wooden rectangular base.⁹ The frame and the base are two separate entities: two removable rectangular pegs fit into holes in both the frame and the base, helping to join them together, but also allowing them to be detached from one another. Foliate pastiglia patterning, inset glass cabochons, punching, and four heraldic panels made of reverse painted and gilded glass decorate the base. This supports a gilded, corbelled, and punched polygonal plinth, which in turn supports a gilded, gabled rectangular frame adorned with pastiglia; this is inset with sixteen glazed rosettes and, at the apex, a glazed trefoils, all of which were intended to contain relics.¹⁰ Mulchy and organic in contrast to their carefully wrought frame, the relics are bundled in red cloth, tied with string, and carefully labeled, announcing their identities through inscriptions on tiny strips of parchment pressed up against the glass windows. Carved crockets curl from the gable's outer edge with strips of foliate and geometric patterned reverse painted and gilded glass flank the frame. In 1981, Dillian Gordon demonstrated that the Cleveland frame once enclosed a piece of reverse painted and gilded glass now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.¹¹ This depicts the Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints above the Annunciation. **(Figures 3 and 4)**

⁹ The work's precise measurements are as follows: H. 63.5 cm/25 in, W. 50.8 cm/20 in, and D. 25.3 cm/9 15/16 in.

¹⁰ Molded gilded gesso was used to create the six-lobed rosettes and trefoils around roundels of glass.

¹¹ Gordon, "A Sienese Verre Eglomisé," 148-153. I would like to thank Julia Poole of the Fitzwilliam Museum for generously allowing me to inspect their reverse painted and gilded glass so closely and thoroughly.



(left) **Figure 2** *Reliquary Frame*, Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art. Photo: Cleveland Museum of Art.

(right) **Figure 3** *Reverse Painted and Gilded Glass*, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum. Photo: Fitzwilliam Museum.



Figure 4
Reconstruction of
the Cleveland-
Cambridge
Reliquary
Tabernacle. Photos:
Cleveland Museum
of Art, Fitzwilliam
Museum;
reconstruction: Jared
Bendis.

The Cleveland-
Cambridge reliquary
ensemble offers a
fair bit of
information
concerning its
manufacture. An
inscription on the

frame dates it to 1347, one year before the Black Death, while another inscription on the frame offers the patron's first name and patronymic, Mino di Cino.¹³ On the base, two gold and red

¹³ The inscription begins on the object's obverse: HOC/OPUS : FACTUM . FUIT . SUB . ANNO . DO/MINI. It continues on the reverse: [small loss] /CCC . XLVII . TEMPORE . DOMINI . MINI/CINI. [This/work : has , been , made . under . year . of . the . Lord [small loss] /300 47 . in . the . time . of the Lord . Mini/Cini.]

diagonally quartered and indented coats of arms indicate the patron's surname: Cinughi.¹⁴ Two other two coats of arms on the base, in which golden crosses surmount golden ladders on black backgrounds, belong to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena's foremost hospital and charitable institution.¹⁵

The Cinughi were a Sienese patrician dynasty, a branch of the Pazzi family of Florence.¹⁶ Mino di Cino Cinughi is documented as the rector of the Ospedale from 1340 until his death in 1351.¹⁷ From the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, it was traditional and typical for the Ospedale's powerful, wealthy, and aristocratic rectors to place their family arms as well as those of the Ospedale on works of art they commissioned for the foundation. Surviving works of art including reliquaries, altar frontals, intarsia paneling, and liturgical implements made during the rectorates of members of several ruling Sienese families – including the Bulgarini, Chigi, Capacci, Sansedoni, and Saracini – bear the coats of arms of the both the rector's family and the Ospedale.¹⁸

Several documents in the Archivio di Stato of Siena make reference to the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary and confirm its presence in the Ospedale between the fourteenth and the

¹⁴ Identified by Wixom, "Eleven Additions," 131. For the Cinughi arms, see V. Spredi, ed., *Enciclopedia storico-nobiliare italiana* (Milan, 1928-1953), 2:468.

¹⁵ Identified by R.E.A. Drey in a letter of October 18, 1979 to the Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland Museum of Art, Department of Medieval Art, Curatorial File). Drey noted that the three-rung ladder surmounted by a cross appears on maiolica jars from Santa Maria della Scala and cites B. Rackham, *Catalogue of Italian Maiolica: Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1978), no. 34 and R.E.A. Drey, *Apothecary Jars* (London, 1978), 40.

¹⁶ Spredi, *Enciclopedia*, 468. The Sienese branch of the family was founded around 1250.

¹⁷ Archivio di Stato di Siena, Spedale di S. Maria della Scala, 5930, Annali 1341-1363, 3: "Nel 1340 fu eletto rettore Miss. Mino di Cino di Ugo. Quest'uomo della nobile Famiglia Cinughi ... morì nel 1351." *Archivio dell'Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala: Inventario*, (Rome, 1960-1962), 2:129: "Elenco dei Rettori dell'Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala di Siena...Mino di Cino Cinughi (1340-1351)." For Mino's rectorate, which coincided with the Black Death during which the Ospedale was extremely active in caring for the Sienese populace and also became extraordinarily wealthy owing to a spate of testamentary bequests, see L. Banchi, *I Rettori dello Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala di Siena* (Bologna, 1877), 42-45.

¹⁸ For examples, see C. Ricci, *Mostra dell'antica arte senese* (Siena, 1904), 9, 46, 50, 175, 191, 298, 325.

eighteenth centuries. The work is likely one of the “due reliquiari di legnio lavorati” recorded in the Ospedale in 1356.¹⁹ Writing in 1719, the Ospedale’s archivist Girolamo Macchi offered a highly specific description of the work, which usefully notes that the Cambridge panel was mounted back-to-back with another reverse painted and gilded panel depicting the Crucifixion.²⁰

The reliquary also offers its artist’s name via identical inscriptions on the base’s sides: LUCAS ME FECIT. Several artists documented in Siena in the mid-fourteenth century, including Luca di Tommè, have been proposed as candidates for authorship.²¹ It has also been suggested that the inscription references St. Luke, legendarily the first Christian artist who painted the Virgin from life, and can thus be understood as a claim of authenticity for the object, the central image of the Virgin and the relics surrounding it.²² More convincing, however, is Dillian Gordon’s suggestion that the inscription be associated with a goldsmith called Lucas;²³

¹⁹ Archivio di Stato di Siena, Spedale di S. Maria della Scala, 120, *Sacre Reliquie, Memorie*, 2:486-487. This document cites a *Libro dei Inventari* of 1356. The second reliquary mentioned may have been either the Walters reliquary, the Berenson-New York reliquary (see below, note 37), or a now-lost work made for the Compagnia dei Disciplinati attached to the Ospedale (after suppression in 1785 and reformation in 1792 the Compagnia was known as the Society of Executors of Pious Dispositions), see P.L. Leone de Castris, “Un Reliquario Senese a Vetri Dorati e Graffiti,” *Antichità Viva*, 18 (1979), 7-14.

²⁰ Archivio di Stato di Siena, Spedale di S. Maria della Scala, 120, *Sacre Reliquie, Memorie*, 2:252, 2:254: “...conservasi un antico tabernacolo di legno ed intagliato e posto tutto a oro da ambe le parte con suo Piedestallo pur scorniciato ed intagliato a basso rilievo...incui vedonsi a caratteri Goti queste parole = Lucas me fecit =. Questo tabernacolo viene incavato nel mezzo in figura quadrata nell’inferiore sua parte, nella superiore di arco di sesto acuto, la quale incavo viene occupato da due lamine di cristallo in una delle quali vien rappresentata in campo d’oro, o pur d’argento l’immagine del Crocifisso Signore nell’altra della Madonna Santissima da antico eccellente pennello molto bene espresso. Intorno alle dette Imagini servono di religioso ornamento varie aperture incavate nel codo del tabernacolo, in cui si racchiudevano per mezzo di due proporzionati cristalli piu e diverse sagre reliquie...” There are two other references to the work in the same document. In 2:416: “nel cavare tutte le reliquie del cassone, fu cavato ancora un reliquario grande antico con la BVM in vetro e all’intorno con dei occhietti tondi con vetro e dentro con reliquie e in esso si legge Gio di Mino di Cino Ughi Rettore e il ciborio sta cosi.” In 2:436: “del cassone cavo ancora un ciborio antico con la BVM in vetro dipenta e all’intorno dell’occhietti in vetro con reliquie dentro, e in esso si legge Mino di Cino Ugo rettore.”

²¹ For a review of early attributions attached to the Cambridge glass, see Gordon, “A Sienese Verre Eglomisé,” 150-153. A number of unlikely attributions for the ensemble, several of which were based on documents mentioning painters named Luke who worked in the service of the Ospedale, were offered by G. Moran in 1979 (Cleveland Museum of Art, Department of Medieval Art, Curatorial File).

²² Wixom, “Eleven Additions,” 131, Gauthier, *Routes de la Foi*, 173, and Preising, “Bild und Reliquie,” 58 endorse this view.

²³ Gordon, “A Sienese Verre Eglomisé,” 153.

documented in Siena in 1348, 1361, and 1363, he was the brother of Ugolino di Vieri, who in 1338 made the translucent enamel Reliquary of the Holy Corporal for the cathedral of Orvieto.²⁴ **(Figure 5)** Although Lucas is not documented as a participant in the Orvieto commission, the Orvieto and Cleveland-Cambridge reliquaries may be favorably compared. The Reliquary of the Holy Corporal and the Cleveland frame are structurally similar in their rectangular bases with convex corners, gables, finials, and buttressing. They also share unusual decorative and pictorial motifs including acanthus leaf borders, tiled floor and background decorations, and six-pointed stars. An attribution to an artist trained and practicing as a goldsmith seems particularly appropriate in the light of the Cleveland-Cambridge piece's particularly strong allusions to luxury metalwork objects, including its extensive use of reverse painted and gilded glass, which simulates the appearance of enamel.²⁵

Ultimately, the imagery of the Cleveland-Cambridge ensemble derives from the oeuvre of the Sienese master Simone Martini (1280-1344) and his workshop.²⁶ The Virgin and Child in the Cambridge glass depend chiefly upon Simone's fresco of the *Maestà* in

²⁴ Gordon, "A Sienese Verre Eglomisé," 153.

²⁵ For a useful recent discussion of reverse painted and gilded glass, see S. Pettenati, "The Decorated Glass," in *Giotto: The Crucifix in Santa Maria Novella*, ed. M. Ciatti and M. Seidel (Berlin and Munich, 2002), 203-216. This kind of glass is often called *verre eglomisé* a term coined from the name of an eighteenth-century French paintings restorer, Glomy, who revived the technique of applying gilt to glass for picture frames. See R. Eswarin, "The Terminology of 'Verre Eglomisé,'" *Journal of Glass Studies*, 21 (1979), 98-101 and C. Eisler, "Verre églomisé and Paolo di Giovanni Fei," *Journal of Glass Studies*, 3 (1961), 31-38.

²⁶ Gordon, "A Sienese Verre Eglomisé," 149-150, makes such an argument for the glass.



Figure 8 Simone Martini, *Maestà*, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico. Photo: Art Resource, NY.

Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, executed in 1315 and restored by Simone himself in 1321.²⁷ **(Figure 8)** The Cambridge glass abbreviates the fresco's composition to include only two saints and two angels, but copies almost exactly its Gothic throne raised on a platform, elaborate brocaded draperies, alert curly-haired Christ Child, and crowned Virgin. The orb held together by the Virgin and Child in the Cambridge glass derives from the seal of Siena, which the Commune

²⁷ A. Bagnoli, *La Maestà di Simone Martini* (Milan, 1999).

commissioned in 1298 from the celebrated goldsmith Guccio di Mannaia: an image of the seal also appears in fresco in a roundel in the lower border of Simone's *Maestà*.²⁸

The Annunciation scene on the Cambridge glass can be related to several depictions of this subject produced by Simone and his workshop. The slight overlap of the figure's robes over the edge of the ledge on which they are poised derives from Simone's 1333 altarpiece for the chapel of St. Ansanus in the cathedral of Siena.²⁹ The division of the scene into two frames, each containing a single figure, echoes the small folding polyptychs made by Simone and his workshop for use in private devotional practices. The Archangel's general appearance and pose relate to the panel in Antwerp from the so-called Orsini Polyptych, while the quatrefoil border surrounding both Gabriel and the Virgin is an abbreviation of the quatrefoil borders in another panel depicting the Annunciate Angel in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.³⁰ The pendant to this panel, now in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, has the same quatrefoil borders and provides a source for the pose of the Virgin.³¹ Furthermore, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary's frame echoes the border of Simone's *Maestà* in its quadripartite decorative flourishes, and just as roundels containing images of saints and prophets punctuate the frescoed border's patterns, so the rosettes protecting the saint's relics intervene between each unit of pastiglia patterning.

²⁸ For the seal, see E. Cioni, *Il Sigillo a Siena nel Medioevo* (Siena, 1989), no. 2. For its appearance on the *Maestà* see I. Hueck, "Frühe Arbeiten des Simone Martini," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, 19 (1968), 29-60 and more recently D. Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State* (New Haven and London, 1999), 58.

²⁹ P.L. Leone de Castris, *Simone Martini* (Milan, 2003), 274-286.

³⁰ For the Orsini Polyptych panel, see J.E. Brink, "Simone Martini's 'Orsini Polyptych,'" *Jaarboek des Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten* (1976), 7-23 and Leone de Castris, *Simone Martini*, 2003, 300-310. For the Washington panel, see F. Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, 1979), 1:430-431 and Leone de Castris, *Simone Martini*, 330-333.

³¹ Leone de Castris, *Simone Martini*, 330-333.



Figure 5, Ugolino di Vieri, Reliquary of the Holy Corporal, Orvieto, Cathedral. Photo: Art Resource, NY



Figure 6 Naddo Ceccarelli, Virgin and Child, Private Collection. Photo: Christie's London.

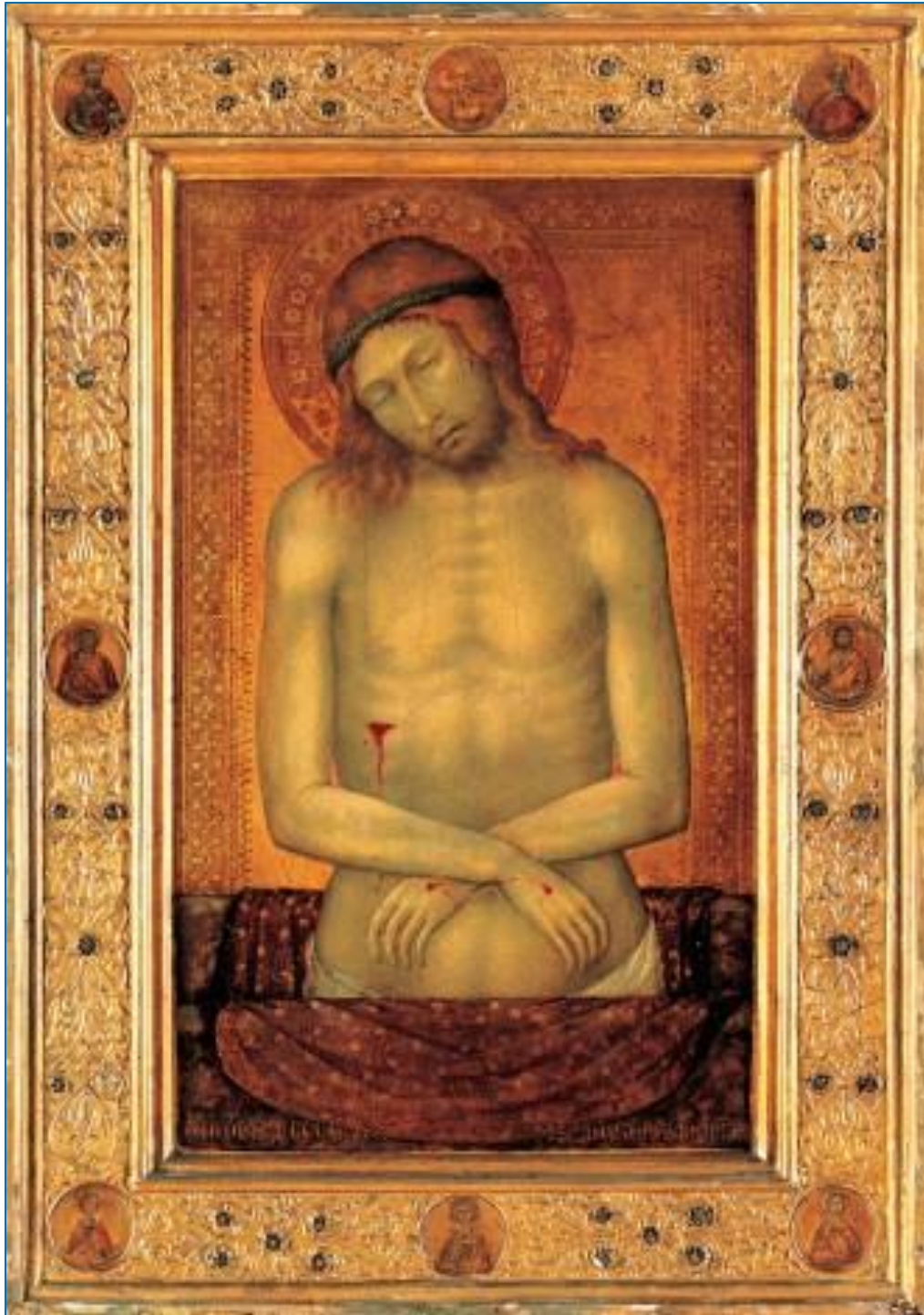


Figure 7 Naddo Ceccarelli, Christ as the Man of Sorrows. Vienna, Liechtenstein Collection. Photo: Liechtenstein Collection.

Favorable comparisons may also be drawn between the Cleveland piece's decorative encrustation and that on works attributed to an artist active in the mid-fourteenth century in Siena, Naddo Ceccarelli. Naddo Ceccarelli was a close follower of Simone Martini, and may have accompanied him to the papal court in Avignon in 1339, returning to Siena after the master's death in 1344.³² His own style is indebted to and likely deliberately capitalized on the popularity of, Simone's, and so too would have been the style of his associates and workshop. The decorative elements on the frame of a diptych depicting Christ as the *Man of Sorrows* and the *Virgin and Child* signed by Naddo Ceccarelli are especially similar to those on the Cleveland frame.³³ **(Figures 6-7)** The punching on the Cleveland frame and on the diptych appear to have been made with identical tools and their decorative motifs are comparable.³⁴ On Cleveland's frame the pastiglia designs are well-defined, regular, and rhythmic, while those on the base of the same object are complex, interlocking, and flowing. The pastiglia on the frames of Naddo's diptych echoes that on the Cleveland frame, but combines the two modes of treatment evident in the object as a whole; it is at once clearly cadenced like the Cleveland frame, but shares the freedom of handling evident in the base.³⁵ Roundels containing images of saints punctuate the diptych's pastiglia border, much like the rosettes on the Cleveland frame. Remarkably, an inscription dates Naddo's diptych to the same year as the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary:

³² There is very little known about Naddo Ceccarelli. C. De Benedictis, "Naddo Ceccarelli," *Commentari*, 25 (1974), 139-154, suggests the Avignon sojourn, although the evidence for this is by no means conclusive.

³³ The panels of this diptych are now split between the Liechtenstein Collection in Vienna (*Christ as the Man of Sorrows*) and Christie's London, where it was sold in 2005 and awaits export (the *Virgin and Child*). The base of the panel depicting *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* bears the inscription: "NADDUS CECCHARELLI DE SENIS ME PINSIT." The comparison between the Cleveland frame and Naddo's diptych was first made by J. Polzer, "The 'Master of the Rebel Angels' Reconsidered," *Art Bulletin* 63 (1981), 563-584.

³⁴ Polzer, "The 'Master of the Rebel Angels,'" 570-573.

³⁵ For differences between the pastiglia work on the base and frame of the Cleveland piece, see C.R. Drabik, *Pre-Renaissance Italian Frames with Glass Decorations in American Collection* (MA Dissertation, State University of New York, 2002), 91.

1347.³⁶ Might Lucas have worked in the atelier of Naddo, specializing in the decorative elements that make such panels so closely like goldsmith's work in appearance?

As for the connection to the Ospedale, it has been suggested that Naddo's reliquary tabernacle in the Walters Art Museum was made for a confraternity attached to the Ospedale, and Naddo can furthermore be linked to the hospital via an altarpiece produced c. 1350.⁴⁴ This latter work may have been made for the main church or perhaps for the confraternity of the Disciplinati della Madonna attached to the foundation.⁴⁵ Highly unusually but clearly resonating with both the Walters and the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquaries, the predella of this altarpiece comprises roundels containing images of saints associated with healing flanking an image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, each separated by areas of decorative patterning punctuated at their centers with the armorials of the Ospedale and of the Malavolti family. Certainly testament to the relationship between Naddo and the Ospedale at the midpoint of the trecento, this work may also attest to the success of the visual format of the two reliquary frames in the material culture of the foundation. It is furthermore possible to suggest that it was through Naddo's connections that his associate Lucas came to the notice of the foundation and secured the Cinughi commission, or perhaps even vice versa. One of the reliquaries may even have been produced owing to the success and popularity of the other, indicative of a wider enthusiasm for and interest this type of object within the foundation.⁴⁶

³⁶ The date appears at the base of the panel depicting *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*.

⁴⁴ The main register of the altarpiece is in the Pinacoteca in Siena, no. 115, while the predella is at the Princeton University Art Museum.

⁴⁵ For this work see J. Steinhoff, *Sienese Painting after the Black Death: Artistic Pluralism, Politics, and the New Art Market* (Cambridge, 2007), 99-100, 191-195, 204.

⁴⁶

However, given the lavishness of the Cleveland-Cambridge piece in relation to the Walters work, it would perhaps be more likely that the confraternity sought to capitalize on the success of and create resonances with the ornate and prominent ensemble made for the rector, rather than the other way around. Pietro Lorenzetti's Berenson-New York ensemble may also be part of a wider culture of the Ospedale commissioning such object. In it diminutive figures of Augustinians supplicate before the holy figures. Lay Augustinians were responsible for the Ospedale's administration while Pietro Lorenzetti can be connected to the Ospedale via frescoes he executed on its façade *c.* 1335⁴⁷ and thus the commissioning of this object might perhaps relate in some way to this group.

When compared with other surviving gabled tabernacle reliquaries, the Cleveland-Cambridge piece, with its richly worked, tooled, and inlaid surfaces and painted and gilded glass, is a veritable tour-de-force in its experimentation with the limits to which the techniques of panel painting can be pushed in attempting to emulate another medium, namely metalwork.⁴⁸ The frame's painstaking simulation of ornate metalwork objects combined with the highly sophisticated and even painterly draftsmanship of the scene on the glass – a medium typically treated in a cruder manner – render it a demonstration par excellence of a single artist's mastery of a hybridized set of skills and techniques, as well as of various media and their visual idioms.⁴⁹ For these reasons, the hypothesis that Lucas the goldsmith created the decorative frameworks of both Naddo's panel paintings and the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary, and was thus a highly inventive and versatile craftsman of unusual talents and skills, is an especially compelling one.

⁴⁷ See Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*, 87-103 for the façade fresco.

⁴⁸ See C. Hoeniger, "The Painting Technique of Simone Martini" (Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 1989) for a useful discussion of the developments of the techniques used in the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary ensemble.

⁴⁹ Gordon, "A Sienese Verre Eglomisé," 149 discusses the refinement of the glass. For other, indeed less-refined, irecento examples of reverse painted and gilded glass, see D. Gordon, "The Mass Production of Franciscan Piety: Another Look at Some Umbrian Verres Eglomisés," *Apollo* 394 (1994), 33-42.

The prominent artist's signatures on the work may also be accounted for by an attribution to this artist and the foregoing characterization of his activities. In this period artist's signatures were a key factor in determining a work's price and enhanced its value.⁵⁰ Thus the signatures on the Cleveland-Cambridge work might have sought to elevate the work to the more prestigious status accorded luxury metalwork reliquaries by merit of associating its creation with the hand of a goldsmith. At the very least, they proclaim and advertise the unusual abilities of the work's supremely inventive and versatile creator. The piece itself was likely prized above all for its ingenuity and virtuosity, which were far more valuable than its relatively inexpensive materials: the signatures might have added a further dimension of established extrinsic value to the work, much as the labels accompanying the relics not only identify them, but, written by a literate and thus ostensibly authoritative hand, confer authenticity on and assert the value of the sacred remains contained within it.⁵¹ Moreover in his *Libro dell'Arte* Cennino Cennini described the adornment of reliquaries, not least reliquaries decorated with reverse painted and gilded glass, a technique and medium he deemed especially appropriate for this purpose, as "a branch of great piety."⁵² As such the Cleveland-Cambridge work's signatures may also assert its artist's piety through his association with this esteemed practice, thus serving as a visible and privileged bid for his own salvation.

In terms of its function the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary is a highly versatile object. Detachable from its base, the upper part could have been carried aloft in processions, a typical

⁵⁰ S. Weppelmann, "Collective Ritual and Personal Devotion: Small-Scale Panel Painting in the Trecento" in *Kult Bild: Das Altar- und Andachtsbild von Duccio bis Perugino*, ed. J. Sander (Petersberg, 2006), 229.

⁵¹ For a consideration of these issues surrounding the authentication of relics, see A. Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator*, 20 (1989), 183-205. Given the low levels of literacy in this period as well as the quality of the object, it is likely that these labels were produced by a high-ranking ecclesiastic attached to the Ospedale or by the rector himself. Unfortunately I have been unable to locate any document written in Mino di Cino Cinughi's hand.

⁵² Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, trans. Daniel V. Thompson (New York, 1933), 112.

reliquary function.⁵³ When removed from the base, the frame's underside is unfinished, so it might have been mounted onto another structure which could in turn have been mounted on a pole in order to facilitate processional use.⁵⁴ Paraded through Siena's sunlit or candlelit streets, at some distance from viewers, the reliquary's gold and glass would have glittered gloriously, rendering its simulation of metalwork quite convincing and even deceptive. As medieval viewers associated precious materials with an aura of sanctity, in procession, the object and its relics' authenticity would have been heightened.⁵⁵ Its double-sidedness, which implies that complete viewing can only occur in the round, is also compatible with this function. So too are the glass panels, whose surfaces could have been kissed and touched by the faithful en masse without suffering quite the same degree of wear and tear that would be the case with panel paintings or enamels. Nonetheless, such exposures to the elements likely occurred on a limited basis. For example, the object may have been brought out only once a year, perhaps participating in and representing the Ospedale at the celebrations for the Assumption, Siena's most important feast day.⁵⁶ Alternatively it might have played a part in rituals associated with the feast of the

⁵³ As processional objects the reliquary tabernacles may be seen as painted versions of the gilt silver reliquary of San Galgano made in the mid fourteenth century by a Sienese goldsmith in which twenty-six round relic windows surmount a base decorated with an enameled narrative depicting the life of San Galgano. E. Cioni, *Scultura e smalto nell'oreficeria senese dei secoli XIII e XIV* (Florence, 1998), 267-334 and F. Geens, "Galganus and the Cistercians: Relics, Reliquaries, and the Image of a Saint," in *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. S.J. Cornelison (Tempe, AZ, 2006), 55-76.

⁵⁴ A panel made for private devotion in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin was later adapted for processional use with this kind of structure. For this object see W.D. Löhr, "Die Perle im Acker. Francesco di Vannuccios Berliner Freuzigung und die Eröffnung der Wunden," in *Zeremoniell und Raum in der frühen italienischen Malerei*, ed. S. Weppelmann (Petersberg, forthcoming). I would like to thank Stefan Weppelmann for very generously sharing the proofs of this essay with me.

⁵⁵ C. Hahn, "Seeing and Believing: the Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines" in *Approaches to Early-Medieval Art*, ed. L. Nees (Cambridge, 1998), 121-148.

⁵⁶ For a description of this festival, see Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*, 1-3.

Annunciation, whose image appears on the Cambridge glass and to which the Ospedale church was dedicated.⁵⁷

Otherwise, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary likely resided upon the altar of a small chapel. Such a location would have provided individuals or small groups with the necessary proximity to renders its imagery, relics, and their labels fully legible.⁵⁸ The image of the Annunciation, whose placement beneath the Virgin and Child is highly unusual in trecento art, may refer to this chapel's location; in the hospital church dedicated to the Santissima Annunziata.⁵⁹ Commissioned prior to the Ospedale's 1359 purchase of the famous collection of relics from Constantinople, the present reliquary would have constituted a very prominent locus of relic devotion within its church, as well as a conspicuous display and assertion of the rector's wealth, power, and exquisite taste.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ In 1359 the Ospedale was formally asked by Commune to celebrate this feast, as mentioned in 1697 by Girolamo Macchi, *Origine dello Spedale di Sta. Maria della Scala di Siena*, Archivio di Stato di Siena, MS D-113, f. 11v. Such statutes typically record practices that had already been long underway.

⁵⁸ It is for this reason that the reliquary's relegation to a sacristy when not in processional use seems unjustified. Nonetheless, it is possible that the reliquary was later placed along with all of the Ospedale's relics in the famous *armadio* painted by Vecchietta and placed in the sacristy decorated with frescoes by the same artist. Later the *armadio* was placed in the chapel of the Madonna del Manto. Girolamo Macchi writing in 1719 discusses this in Archivio di Stato di Siena, Spedale di S. Maria della Scala, 120, Sacre Reliquie, Memorie, 2:486-487: "...la chiesa era piccolo, non era per ancora ingrandita, le colloconno nella Cappella detta del Cancelllo...di poi fatta la Nuova Sagrestia...fu fatto un Armario Grande nel muro e cio fu l'anno 1446 nel quale fu dipinto tutta la Passione di Nostro Signore il quale dispense Maestro Lorenzo di Pietro ditto dell Vecchietta Pittore Sanese con alquante figure per di fuori a ditto Amario, e intorno a detta Sagrestia e nel medesimo Armario ci colloconno tutte le Sante Reliquie. E doppio ingrandita che fu la sudeta chiesa e fattoci la Cappella per il Santo Chiodo, ci furono collocate tutte le alter reliquie che oggi si chiama la Madonna dell Manto, la quale ci fu collocate l'anno 1610." It seems that in 1719 the reliquary resided in a *cassone*, as per the same document, 2:487: "L'anno 1478 fu fatta la Cappella e Cassone per tenere le sante reliquie...che per il passato le tenevano nell'Armario di Sagrestia." On Vecchietta's projects for the Ospedale, see H. Van Os, *Vecchietta and the Sacristy of the Siena Hospital Church: a Study in Renaissance Religious Symbolism* ('s-Gravenhage, 1974).

⁵⁹ The first document in which the consecration to the Annunciation is mentioned dates to 1328. See Van Os, *Vecchietta*, 4-5.

⁶⁰ For the purchase of relics from Constantinople, see Van Os, *Vecchietta*, 5-6 and L. Bellosi, ed., *L'oro di Siena: il Tesoro di Santa Maria della Scala* (Milano, 1996), which also considers the broader culture of relics, reliquaries, and precious objects owned by the Ospedale.

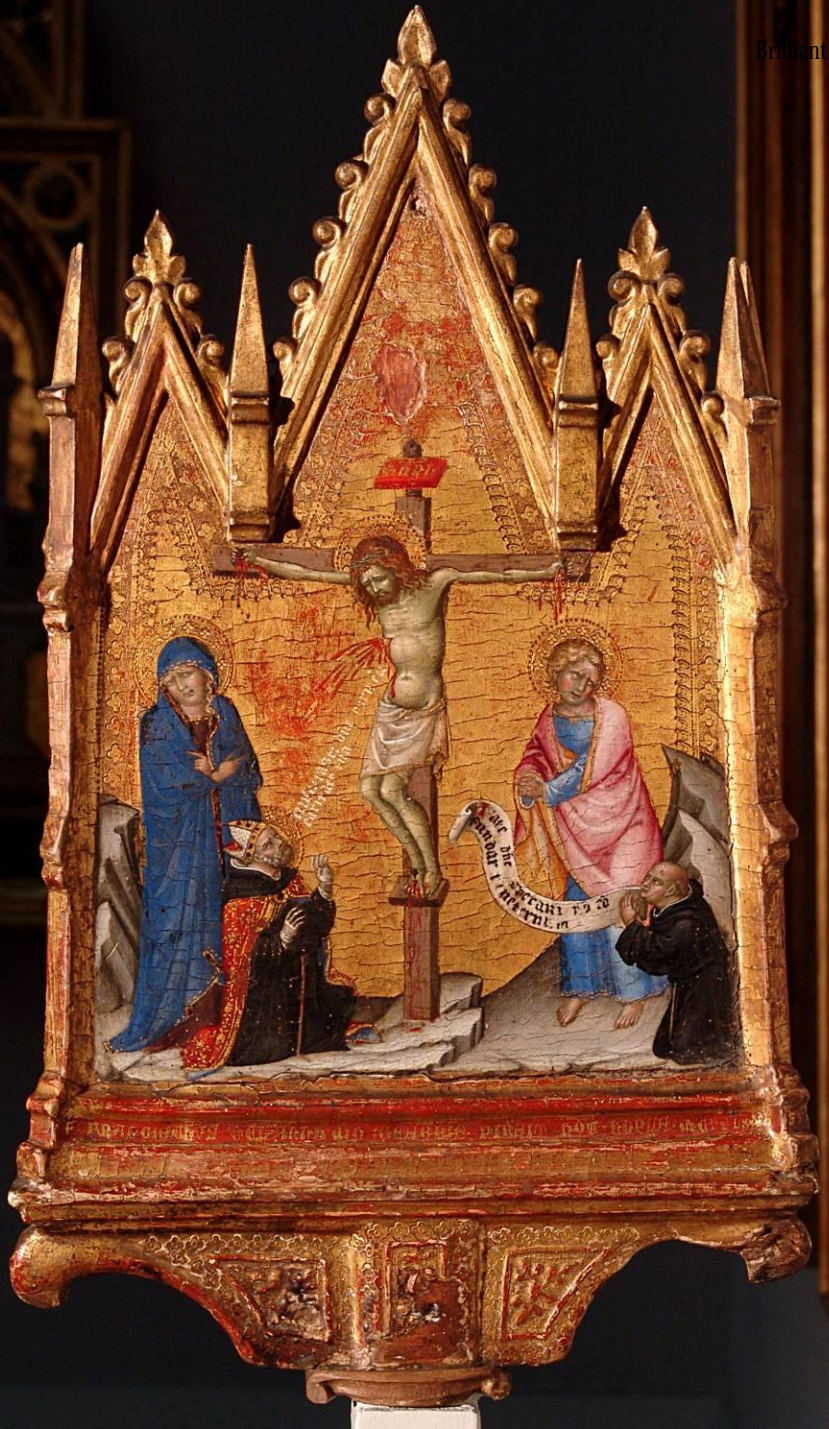


Figure 9 (left) Francesco di Vannuccio, Crucifixion. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie. Photo: Gemäldegalerie Berlin.



Figure 10 (right) Francesco di Vannuccio, Virgin and Child with Saints. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie. Photo: Gemäldegalerie Berlin.

More practically, the piece would have satisfied the requirement that all altars possess at least one relic.⁶¹ When the Crucifixion was visible, it would also have satisfied the requirement that all altars be equipped with a crucifix.⁶² Its unusual double-sidedness also suggests the roles it might have played in services and devotional practices. The use of a double-sided or reversible panel by Francesco di Vannuccio made in Siena in 1380 and now in the Gemäldegalerie Berlin, whose back-to-back images of the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child reflect those in the present work, has been connected to the prayers said at the canonical hours, which concentrate on the Passion or the Virgin Mary.⁶³ **(Figures 9-10)** It has been suggested that the Berlin work was simply turned to suit the content of the user's devotions; perhaps the Cleveland-Cambridge piece was likewise adapted throughout the course of each day.

In terms of its imagery, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary celebrates Siena's principal patron saint, the Virgin, and reiterates the Ospedale's devotion to her. In the first half of the fourteenth century, major Marian images were commissioned for each of Siena's three principal civic institutions, demonstrating the vigor with which the Sienese pursued devotion to their patroness. These include Duccio's *Maestà* for the high altar of the cathedral, four further altarpieces depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin for altars dedicated to Siena's patron saints in the cathedral, Simone Martini's frescoed *Maestà* in the Palazzo Pubblico, and a series of now-lost frescoes on the facade of the Ospedale portraying the Virgin's early life.⁶⁴ The Virgin

⁶¹ This law was instituted at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 and remains in effect today. Y. Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine: a Study of the Poetry and Art of the Catholic Church* (London, 1912), 12 and William Durandus, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments*, trans. John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb (Leeds, 1843), 149.

⁶² Weppelmann, "Collective Ritual," 231.

⁶³ Löhr, "Die Perle im Acker."

⁶⁴ For these commissions and their civic significance see Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*, 21-43 (Duccio), 67-85 (patronal altars), 45-63 (Simone Martini), and 87-103 (Ospedale).

was also celebrated in altarpieces throughout the most important churches in the city, as well as on the city gates and in a number of street tabernacles.

Like the panels in the Walters Art Museum and the Berenson Collection, the reliquary's depiction of the Virgin and Child within an architectural setting can be interpreted as an image of Mary Ecclesia enshrined within the church of which she is herself a symbol.⁶⁵ The constellation of relics surrounding her constitute a communion of her heavenly court of saints, as well as the "living stones" of I Peter 2:4-5 from which the Church is constructed and the precious stones adorning it, as in the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation.⁶⁶ The reliquary does not, however, simply represent a generic aedicule symbolizing the church in the abstract.⁶⁷ Instead it evokes in miniature the portal of a very specific church: the cathedral of Siena whose facade sat opposite that of the Ospedale's and was, along with the Palazzo Pubblico, the Torre della Mangia, and the Campo, a preeminent visual symbol of Sienese civic identity. **(Figure 11)** The gables, finials, buttressing, crockets, and colorful inlay decoration of the two structures may

⁶⁵ See Rowlands, "Sienese Painted Reliquaries," and Mann, "Relics, Reliquaries," for discussions of this aspect of the reliquaries. In contrast to the Walters and Berenson-New York reliquaries, the Virgin in the Cleveland-Cambridge work is sitting rather than standing. Rowlands links the standing Virgin type to Byzantine icons in which standing Virgins are framed by busts of saints, while Mann rejects this idea suggesting that they relate more closely to contemporary small-scale polychrome sculpted images of the Virgin.

⁶⁶ For this imagery see K. Möseneder, "Lapides Vivi: über die Kreuzkapelle der Burg Karlstein," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1981), 39-69.

⁶⁷ S.J. Cornelison, "Art Imitates Architecture: the Saint Philip Reliquary in Renaissance Florence," *Art Bulletin* 86 (2004), 648-650 offers a useful review of Trecento and Quattrocento Italian reliquaries made to imitate specific buildings.

be compared, and the cathedral's steps echo the shape of the reliquary's base. Like the frame, the



Figure 11 Siena, Cathedral. Photo: Art Resource, NY.

cathedral had an image of the Virgin at its center: Duccio's panel for its high altar, which might have been visible, if at a distance, through the main portal.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, as mentioned above in relation to the reliquary's style, its image of the Virgin and Child image depends upon two prominent trecento Sienese models, Simone Martini's frescoed *Maestà* in the Palazzo Pubblico and the seal of Siena. Thus, by evoking prominent visual focal points and powerful emblems of civic devotion to the Virgin in its imagery, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary seems to have been designed to create a locus of Marian veneration and civic devotion in the Ospedale. Given the cycle of images of the Virgin's early life on the façade but the lack of any prominent representations of her within its walls, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary's imagery must have been an especially conspicuous and important addition to the Ospedale's visual culture.

The selection of relics housed in the reliquary is also closely linked to the Ospedale's activities and civic role, and likewise to its constituents' devotional desires.⁶⁹ The prime function of the Ospedale was the housing of pilgrims.⁷⁰ In the scene on glass, the presence beside the Virgin of St. James, the patron saint of pilgrims whose shrine in Northern Spain was the West's

⁶⁸ Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*, 26-28.

⁶⁹ On the work's obverse, the relic labels read clockwise beginning with the upper trefoil: (no label); S MARIE MAGDALENE; SANCTI PELLEGRINI ---PI; (no label); SANCTA FELICITAS; SANCTI NABORIS A FELICIS; SANCTI LEONIS PAPAE; SANCTAE UDILIE A CORDULE; SANCTAE FLORENTIAE VGI; SANCTAE URSULAE A JULIANNAE; SANCTI STEPHANI PP MAR; SANCTI ANTONI; SANCTAE IXITIABETIS UNG---; S XI MILIA MARTYR; SANCTI MACAR---; SANCTI CUTIUPU CONFESSORUM; (no label); inner trefoil (two pieces of wood set in the form of a cross, no label). On the work's reverse, the relic labels read clockwise beginning with the upper trefoil: (no label); S LAURENTIUS M; S RUFU MTRI; SANCTI MACAR---; S XI MILIA MARTYR; (no label); SANCTI ANTONI; (no label); SANCTAE URSULAE JULIANNAE VRG; SANCTAE FLORENTIAE VGI; MARTYRUM INNOCENTUM; SANCTI LEONIS PAPAE; SANCTI NABORIS A FELICIS; SANCTA FELICITAS MRIS; ---TIEPHAM; SANCTAE ALEXANDRA; S MARIE MAGDAL; inner trefoil (no label or relic).

⁷⁰ The plural function of the Ospedale is laid out in its thirteenth- and fourteenth-century statutes, published in L. Banchi, *Statuti Volgari de lo Spedale di Santa Maria Vergine di Siena Scritti l'Anno 1305* (Siena, 1864) and L. Banchi, *Statuti Senesi Scritti in Volgare ne' Secoli XIII e XIV* (Bologna, 1863-1877), vol. 3. For the Ospedale as a pilgrimage destination, see Van Os, *Vecchietta*, 2.

foremost pilgrimage destination, certainly would have appealed to these viewers.⁷¹ So, too, would several relics related to St. Ursula and her virgin companions, who were martyred on pilgrimage.⁷² Also relevant to pilgrims were the relics of the True Cross situated in one of the trefoils above the aperture which once circumscribed the glass panels.⁷³ Together with the image of the Crucifixion above which it was likely poised, this relic would have conjured for viewers the story of a pilgrim and her quest for holy remains, as the sainted Empress Helena legendarily found the True Cross during her pilgrimage to Jerusalem to gather relics.⁷⁴ The inclusion of a relic of St. Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem who accompanied Helena to the site where the Cross was found, might have strengthened the reliquary's allusions to this story.⁷⁵

Given their thaumaturgic properties, the veneration of relics must have been an important and popular devotional practice in a functioning hospital. Some of the relics are particularly appropriate to this setting: St. Juliana was the patroness of childbirth and sickness while St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) was closely associated with nursing, healing, and charity.⁷⁶ Indeed, the Ospedale was also Siena's foremost charitable institution, a function echoed by the relics of the deacons St. Lawrence and St. Stephen whose role, like the hospital's, was the care of

⁷¹ For James' legend, see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. G. Ryan and H. Ripperger (New York, London, and Toronto, 1941), 368-377.

⁷² In addition to a relic of Ursula herself, the frame contains a relic of St. Cordula, one of her companions. The label on another relic window indicates that it contains remains of the eleven thousand Virgins who were martyred with Ursula. For Ursula and her companions, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 627-631, and for Cordula in particular, 630. For the proliferation of the relics of Ursula and her companions, see L. Moulinier, "Elisabeth, Ursule et les Onze Mille Vierges: un Cas d'Invention de Reliques à Cologne au XIIIe siècle," *Médiévales*, 22-23 (1992), 173-186.

⁷³ In the case of the corresponding trefoil on the opposite side of the reliquary the glass is set directly upon the wood with no relic set behind it.

⁷⁴ For the legend of the True Cross and the Empress Helena, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 269-276.

⁷⁵ For Macarius, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 94-96, 274.

⁷⁶ For Juliana, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 166-167. For Elizabeth, see H.D. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford, 2004), 169.

the poor.⁷⁷ The Ospedale further served as an orphanage providing childcare for foundlings and, once they were grown, finding work for the young men and dowries for the young women so that they might marry or enter a convent.⁷⁸ Relics of the Holy Innocents martyred by Herod may refer to the Ospedale's rescue of children,⁷⁹ while others belonging to mothers, such as Felicitas, a Roman matron martyred with her seven sons, evoke the foundlings' absent mothers and the Ospedale's own parental role.⁸⁰ The preponderance of the relics of women saints in the reliquary – including in addition to those already mentioned, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Alexandra – may also have appealed to the female foundlings. A relic of St. Anthony Abbot may refer to devotion to this saint on behalf of the Augustinians, whose lay brothers oversaw the daily management of the Ospedale.⁸¹

Several relics refer to the idea of civic piety and protection, an important theme for the Sienese citizenry. For example, a relic of St. Leo, the fifth-century pope who protected Rome from the Huns, is included.⁸² Other relics relate to the idea of communal life, a theme that would have resonated strongly with Siena's citizens and the Ospedale's inhabitants specifically. These include relics belonging to saints who founded religious communities, such as the abbesses Odilia of Hohenberg (c. 662-c.720) and Florentia, a Spanish nun.⁸³ A significant number of the

⁷⁷ For Lawrence, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 437-445 and for Stephen, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 54-57.

⁷⁸ Norman, *Siena and the Virgin*, 93.

⁷⁹ For the Holy Innocents, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 64-68.

⁸⁰ For Felicia, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 347.

⁸¹ L. Meiffret, *Saint Antoine Ermite en Italie (1340-1540): Programmes Picturaux et Dévotion* (Rome, 2004), for Augustinian devotion to St. Anthony.

⁸² For Leo, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend*, 231-232.

⁸³ For Odilia, see Farmer, *Dictionary of Saints*, 393-394 and for Florentia, see F. Caraffa, ed., *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* (Rome, 1964), 5:849-850.

relics also belong to saints who died in groups, such as the Holy Innocents, Ursula and her virgin companions, and the Roman soldiers Nabor and Felix.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, the labels belonging to the relic nestled in the large trefoil at the work's apex are illegible. It is tantalizing to suppose that the prominence of the Virgin in the Cambridge glass might suggest that the relic contained within this most conspicuous of all the reliquary's windows is associated with Siena's queen, protectress, and patron saint.

To conclude, the Cleveland-Cambridge reliquary ensemble was carefully custom-designed to achieve a place of visual and devotional distinction within the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena. Combining a highly unusual and ingeniously wrought material structure with imagery and a choice of relics specific to the interests and needs of the Sienese and the Ospedale, the reliquary would readily have attracted notice and curiosity, and in turn impressed upon viewers the foundation's and its rector's power, wealth, and taste, as well as providing them with a variety of devotional possibilities and experiences closely linked to civic identity and institutional loyalties. Seen beyond the Ospedale's walls, in a procession, it would likely have incited the kind of veneration offered to any reliquary in this context. Gravitating towards the emblematic image of the Virgin, their foremost patron saint, the Sienese crowds would have sought contact with the holy remains surrounding her, hoping to avail themselves of their miraculous powers and through them draw closer to their patroness. If viewed, however, with the intimate proximity possible in a small chapel inside the Ospedale church, the reliquary could have stimulated and participated in the more personalized devotional experiences of the Ospedale's various inhabitants and visitors. Clustered around the work in veneration, all viewers would have sought to position themselves on the outskirts of the community of sanctity assembled in the reliquary's frame, and through those relics draw closer to the divine; seen as

⁸⁴ For Nabor and Felix, see Caraffa, 9:689-693.

such this object becomes a true framework for the piety of the community of Siena, and of many smaller communities within that city.

Abstract:

During the trecento in Italy, new reliquary types emerged as the result of the development of gold ground panel painting. A group of seven surviving tre- and quattrocento Sienese gilded, gabled wooden tabernacles whose frames were inset with glass windows through which relics were visible, constituted one new reliquary genre. One such work made for the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena's foremost hospital and charitable institution, is now divided between the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. So painstakingly embellished that it rivals counterparts fashioned by goldsmiths from precious stones and metals, the reliquary is, however, made from comparatively humble materials using techniques associated with painting on panel. This study will consider the implications of this unusual material structure, both for the reliquary ensemble's attribution and for its status and visual appeal. As highly customized as it is luxurious, the object rewards close consideration with a great deal of information about its purposes, functions, and meanings. The study will consequently present new hypotheses regarding the work's ritual uses, arguing that it served both as a processional device and as an adornment for an altar in the Ospedale church. Iconographic and compositional analysis elucidates a pronounced relationship between the reliquary's imagery and decorative elements and several major visual focal points of civic devotion in Siena; the study suggests that this reliquary sought to propose itself as one as well. Identifying the relics for the first time, the study addresses the roles these sacred remains played in the devotional practices of the Ospedale's various constituencies.